

The Forks National Historic Site
Lieu historique national de la Fourche
45 Forks Market Road
Winnipeg, Manitoba
R3C 4T6

Strong Women of the Red River Colony: The Grey Nuns from 1844 to 1864

A lecture presented by:
Carole Boily, archivist
Grey Nun Archives

at St. Boniface Museum

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Lecture Notes

- ▶ Grey Nuns were founded in 1737 by St Marguerite d'Youville in Montréal (slide)
- ▶ Bishop Provencher seeks a religious community of women for his mission (slide)
- ▶ Grey Nuns accept the mission at the Red River (Document 1) of 38 Sisters, 14 volunteer for the new mission
- ▶ The four founders (Document 2, slide of Coutlée & Lafrance)
- ▶ Trip and arrival on 21 June 1844 (overhead 1, slides illustrating trip, Document 3)
- ▶ Poor housing conditions (slide of stone house, Document 4)
- ▶ Impact of their arrival (Document 5 and 6)
- ▶ In January 1845, Bishop Provencher makes them move into his house, where the sisters and children will not suffer as much from the cold
- ▶ 1845, 5 April, Marguerite Connolly enters the novitiate
- ▶ 1845, 28 August, arrival of 2 postulants from Montréal, Marie Withman and Cécile Cusson
- ▶ 1846, full blown epidemic of measles (Document 7)
- ▶ 1846, 5 September, arrival of Srs Scholastique Gosselin and Marguerite Ouimet
- ▶ Crowded quarters really preoccupies Sr Valade (Document 8)
- ▶ Construction of the new convent finally begins, Bishop Provencher experiences some difficulties, Sr Valade must really push to make the building progress (Document 9)
- ▶ 1847, 31 December, they move into their convent, that isn't completed
- ▶ 1849, July, Sr Valade leaves for Montréal and brings Sr Ouimet who is still sick

- ▶ 1850, September, Sr Valade returns from Montréal and brings with her Srs Laurent and Fisette and 3 young women
- ▶ 1850, November, foundation of a mission in St-François-Xavier, Srs Lagrave and Lafrance take charge of the new mission (slide convent of SFX, Document 10)
- ▶ 1851, September, the interior of the convent is completed
- ▶ 1851, Father Alexandre Taché is named auxiliary bishop
- ▶ 1852, flood (Document 11)
- ▶ 1853, Bishop Provencher's illness and death, the care provided by the Grey Nuns
- ▶ 1853, 11 September, arrival of Srs Mary Curran, Marie-Anne Pépin and Margaret Dunn, later Sr Mary-Xavier
- ▶ 1854, 4 September, separation (autonomy) imposed by Montréal (Bishop Bourget) and Bishop Taché's effort to resolve this problem
- ▶ 1855, 5 June, departure of Sr Marie-Anne Pépin who chose to return to Montréal following the autonomy of the missions
- ▶ 1855, 2 October, arrival of Srs Thérèse (Teresa McDonnell) and Marie both of Bytown, on loan for 3 years
- ▶ 1858, reunification with Montréal. Sr Valade returns from Montréal with 6 sisters, Emery (Zoé Leblanc) Adèle Lamy, Alphonse (Marie Jacques) Adéline Lassisseray, Vitaline Royal and Hedwige Dandurand
- ▶ 1859, 4 August Sr Lagrave dies
- ▶ 1858, 28 December, Srs Flavie Laurent and Hedwige Dandurand leave to open a mission in St. Norbert
- ▶ 1859, 3 November, arrival of Sr McMullen, general assistant for the official visit (first one!). She is accompanied by Srs Rose Clapin, Sophie Éthier and (guess who) Marie-Anne Pépin (2nd trip)
- ▶ 1860, the Grey Nuns agree to open a school in St. Vital

- ▶ 1861, in the spring, there is another flood, luckily not as fierce as that of 1852. The flood coincides with the last days of Sr Valade who dies on 13 May. Sr Lafrance becomes Superior
- ▶ Statistics of works (overhead 2 and 3)
- ▶ Individual portraits of certain Grey Nuns (Slides)

Document 1

Agreement between Bishop Provencher and the Grey Nuns

My Reverend Sister:

For many years now I have tried to find Sisters to provide girls with a solid education in religion and other matters that would encourage them to become good mothers, to teach them how to be good homemakers, to teach them how to make cloth, etc.; because sadly the women of the Red River ignore all this. We can't blame them, as they've never had the opportunity to learn.

You already know that I have considered your community, so capable in everyone's eyes, to be able to teach all these things.

I am here today, with the Bishop of Montreal's approval to ask for three of your girls to come to St. Boniface of the Red River. I am not wealthy and cannot offer much to those who will have the courage to devote themselves to the work that I propose.

Here is what I can offer:

- 1) the cost of travel, that goes without saying
- 2) a house proportioned to the needs (we can judge this better on site) with a lot large enough for gardens and other amenities.
- 3) a farm of 100 acres
- 4) 500 "louis, cours d'Halifax", that the community will invest, the interest generated should be about "30 louis argent" for purchasing clothing or other articles that cannot be produced locally and that must be payed for with money. Grain and meat provisions are usually plentiful. Parents should be able to pay something for their children's education, but it will most likely be in kind.

We must expect the establishment of this foundation to be a little difficult. I expect

that I will have other expenses apart from the ones for the building. But I can say with all honesty that my intention is that the generous and charitable girls who will come to help me with my work towards the end of my career will not lack any necessities to carry out their work, unless I am without myself.

What I propose has been approved by Bishop Signay, Bishop of Quebec and his assistant Bishop P. F. Turgeon; because as you know, the Bishop of Quebec is the first superior of my immense jurisdiction.

If by any unforeseen events this foundation came to fail, you would take your Sisters back, and keep for their lifetime the 500 "louis" mentioned above, and after their death, the capital would be return to the Red River Mission.

The rest of the foundation made by the mission will come back to the said mission at the time the Sisters would leave. They could however dispose of any improvements they would have made at their cost to the furnishings of the house. I really hope that one of the three speaks English and will able to teach in that language. I am truly my reverend Sister your humble and obedient servant.

J. N. Bishop of Juliopolis

Document 2

Sr Marie Louise Valade

Chronicles, Volume 1, page 14

“Sr Valade is 35 years old, she was born in Sainte-Anne des Plaines of virtuous Christian parents on 26 December 1808. She made her religious profession on 21 October 1828.

She is of above average size and her demeanor is serious and dignified, her intelligence is remarkable in the administration of community affairs, to which she contributes as an advisor. For a number of years she assisted Sister McMullen, whom she eventually replaced when she was elevated to the position of superior.

While commanding respect, Sr Valade also inspires confidence. She is sensible and compassionate and devoted to the relief of suffering. Strict with obligations, she however allows for weakness and her firmness is tempered by gentleness and kindness. ...

She is an excellent superior, judiciously chosen who will multiply the new talents that the Lord has given her.”

Sister Lagrave

Chroniques, Volume 1, page 15

“ We find in Sr Lagrave the lovable teenager, the jovial plump one ...

Marguerite Eulalie Lagrave was born in Saint-Charles on the Richelieu River on 2 May 1805, to one of our oldest and most honorable Canadian families, on whom, sadly, fortune had not smiled upon. However this did not prevent her from learning the principles of wisdom and virtue. At the age of 16, she relinquished all the advantages her many talents could have gotten her in the “world”. Indeed, she was

pleased to sacrifice all her exterior gifts to consecrate herself to the service of the poor. Her religious profession dates to 23 December 1823.

Her mind is quick and penetrating, her mood is lovable and gay and her manners are distinguished. She is well loved by her sisters and is a charm at recreation. People from outside, with whom she has interactions, hold her in high esteem. The good sister is 38 years old. She has been in community for over 20 years. Her powerful and suave voice has regularly been heard in our chapel. She is an untiring choir director and organizes everything with zeal and success. Her nimble fingers are proficient at a variety of needle works, and her good taste and aptitude for industrial arts are an important resource for the house.

She is equally capable of making candles or artificial flowers, and embroidering church vestments. In common work, she always takes on more than her fair share and often takes on the hardest and heaviest work. She is always offering herself to relieve others.

Isn't she an excellent choice to assist our good mother Valade?

The other subjects are still quite young and only count several years in community.”

Sr St-Joseph

Chroniques, Volume 1, page 17

“Sr Anastasie-Gertrude Coutlée said St-Joseph was born at Cèdres on 15 November 1819. Her great-aunt is the former Mother Coutlée, the third superior of our Institution. Her religious profession dates to the 1 June 1838, she is only 24 years old, of which 8 years were spent in community.

She chose to join the community of her great aunt and her oldest sister Rose Coutlée, who will later become superior of this pious institution.

Both had inherited patriarchal virtues from their respectable parents. The young Sr St-Joseph is ardent in action and possesses a strong constitution that promises a long life to the generous missionary.

Her mood is jovial and she has retained some of her childhood mischievousness which enlivens her rapport with her sisters.

She wasn't surprised to learn that she had been chosen to go to the Red River, she indeed desired to make that sacrifice. She would have been offended if she had not been chosen. She happily prepared her departure."

Sr Marie-Hedwige Lafrance

Chroniques, , Volume 1, page 17

"Sr Lafrance was born at la Pointe-aux-Trembles in Québec, on 12 May 1815. She made her religious profession on 13 July 1840. She is the sister of monsieur Lafrance, priest of Sainte-Anne.

She is small in stature, with a frail and delicate constitution, however she possesses courage and energy. Her profound piety and her precocious wisdom bear witness to a good education received in her paternal home. She will be a resource to her sisters by her good advice and her exemplary virtue will motivate fervour among them.

Document 3

Sr Lagrave to Mother McMullen

12 May 1844

En route to the Red River

“First, I will tell you how hard travelling is, I was expecting it to be, but seeing things from speculation and seeing things in reality are quite different. However, I trust God will see me to the end. We only have three hard portages to make, the others are numerous but short. If Mr. Doré stayed with us I would be less embarrassed, but who will give me a hand to help me climb over the steep rocks? I have confidence that my good Angel will lend me his wings and appease my poor heart; as it has not stopped palpitating since we left the Dorval Islands. Our Mother and I have almost not slept since our departure. Our 2 younger sisters on the other hand are managing quite well, especially Sr St-Joseph, she sleeps night and day. The weather has almost consistently been bad. When it is not raining the wind impedes our progress. Usually when we camp, our clothing is drenched and we are chilled to the bone. It’s true that we do make a big fire, however while one side is burning, the other freezes. We pitch our tent right away, a piece of lineolum covered with a blanket serves as our bed. Imagine how cold we are, especially when it has rained all day and then, when it rains all night as it often happens. Our canvas house doesn’t always protect us from the elements, water often drenches us. Our poor clothes are wet inside and out. I hardly ever get undressed, that way, only my cape is wet. We usually go to bed at 10 o’clock and rise at 4 depending on the weather. We eat salted beef, ham, butter, sausage, fish, tea, without milk of course, and biscuits. If we suffer a lot, we also have much fun, especially at meal times...

All the voyageurs call me the “big bad nun”, because I lecture them, especially the ones who swear. However, I must say that they are remarkably polite and pleasing

with us, as much as we could hope for from people of their class. They say the rosary with us in the canoe, and at night we gather them at the entrance of our tent for prayer and for our devotions of the Month of Mary ...

Speaking of Mr. Doré, I forgot to tell you that he has always found a way for us to get out of the canoe without being carried by the men ...

We haven't had any accidents to date. The portages are sometimes long and tiring, especially for me, when I must climb and make my way through branches and crossing rivers over logs isn't always much fun. ...

If the portages didn't tire me so, they say I would be the best voyageur in the world, for nothing scares me, except for snakes. On the rocks where we are camped today, we've killed 4 water snakes, it's the second time we've camped with them. Yesterday it was with toads, they jumped all over our tent, but we had taken precautions to make sure they did not get in, the men however were quite inconvenienced by them. Let me get back to the trip: Mr. Doré has much compassion for my largeness. He has seen that I am not fearful, so he lets me stay in the canoe to jump rapids that are not too dangerous. I much prefer this to walking. Sometimes the current is so strong that in spite of the strenght of 14 men, the canoe ends up on the other side of the river, and poor Sr Lafrance is all shrivelled up with fear, and I just laugh because I enjoy the sport. Yesterday when we jumped some rather dangerous rapids, water splashed up on my hat. Our voyageurs were enjoying themselves, while our young sisters were pale and incensed that I wasn't afraid ...

I was unfortunate to fall while getting into the canoe. My left foot slid between 2 rocks and the whole weight of my body came crashing on it. The pain was so excruciating that I feared my ankle was broken. Two men were obliged to pick me up and carry me into the canoe. I have suffered since this happened on the 13

(Monday). I am not able to walk and the pain is intense. ...

I can't continue writing for now, my ankle makes me suffer and I am frozen..."

Document 4

Sr Valade to Mother McMullen

5 July 1844

“You wouldn’t believe all the work we’ve had, and still have since our arrival here. The Bishop gave us his old house which is truly the Stable of Bethlehem. He had it cleaned to welcome us to our new home, however it was done in the local fashion. The Bishop was quite surprised when I told him we had to clean the house again. He did provide us with everything we needed, except for a cleaning lady, there aren’t any here. We had to do all the cleaning by ourselves with some help from a few little girls from the school. The house needed to be chinked, patched and caulked as best we could. And with all of that, we also had to ready 2 missionaries who were leaving, and with only what we brought! Anyhow, we still do not have enough straw mattresses for everyone. I can assure you that our nights have been short since we left. Our poor Sr Lagrave is better, but still can not walk. We take some time to care for her, but that certainly does not afford us much time to rest. The Grace of God must be strong to sustain us in the midst of so much fatigue, because we are holding up quite well, except for some stomach weaknesses that trouble me occasionally, but, like the others, I am holding up.”

Later she writes about Bishop Provencher

“It’s quite funny to see, he is always worried and asks if we have everything we need. He foresees everything and prevents everything, he really is like a good father with his children. If we work hard, we eat well, we have very good food. We are allowed to take whatever we need from his granary, his cellar and his dairy, although he worries that we will not take enough.

Document 5

Sr Lagrave to Mother McMullen

22 June 1844

“I am obliged to receive the numerous visits by local women, they come in bands of ten to twelve, and you must know that they do not always understand proper manners. Their visits are very long” ...

Sr Lagrave to the Mother House

25 June 1844

“I am continually hosting women who are very anxious to see us. Since I started writing this letter, I’ve already had 3 visits that were quite long , you can imagine that writing isn’t very easy under these circumstances.”

“She (Sr Lagrave) proved herself a woman of many talents, teaching music and starting a choir for the church. In this way, the mission centre at St. Boniface became a much more attractive place. When the church was finally completed the bishop asked the nuns to help in its decoration. This they did by decorating the walls, painting religious scenes and making statues to embellish the building, always with an eye to the Metis love of colour and movement.”

Joseph Norbert Provencher, Dennis King in the series *Manitobans in Profile*, 1982, Peguis Publishers Ltd.

Document 6

Sr Valade to Mother McMullen

? July 1844

“We started classes on the 11th of this month, using the Brothers technique and it’s going well. The children are adapting to it well, better than we had expected. The Bishop wanted us to take the little boys also, saying that he had discussed this with you. When we saw the rampant ignorance and how much the parents wanted us to take them, we agreed to it. I assure you that it’s a great charity to instruct the children here, they are so ignorant!

The majority, at age 10, 12, 14, 15 years old do not know their “Mon Dieu je vous donne mon coeur”. Isn’t it just pitiful? The school for little boys started on the 23 of this month, under the direction of Sr St-Joseph, and she is doing very well. Sr Lafrance has the little girls and she is also doing very well. We have 43 children, and the Bishop thinks that this will double when the hunters return in about a month. For each child we ask 20¢ and one cord of wood for winter.

If the price is mediocre, it’s because we must conform to the poverty here. Money is rare here, but the rest is abundant. It appears that the harvest will be good this year, the wheat is high and really spectacular to see. The parents are very happy with our school and find that we do not charge much for our effort. They come to talk to us about their children and tell us to correct them, not to spare them. They are persuaded that we will not be unjust with them. We really are encouraged by the children’s docility. We have to give them 6 hours a day for their school work and spirituality. Along with that we have other work to do, take care of the Church, the sacristy and the Bishop. Our Sisters St-Joseph and Lafrance are in charge of the Church, and little boys help with the sweeping. And your poor servant is charged with visits to the schools, answering to parents, keeping registers and accounts, seeing to the cleaning, the laundry and washing floors, etc.”

Document 7

Sr Lagrave to the Mother House

18 July 1846

“It is time that I inform you of the sad position we have been in for some time now, God has lifted his arm against our poor country! The Angel of Extermination strikes everywhere without any distinction, we are living under a reign of death, measles which haven’t been seen here for 27 years, is plaguing us. It’s been going on for 2 months and everyone who didn’t have it the last time, or who wasn’t born at that time has caught it. There are sick people everywhere, this certainly is a scourge from God who wants to punish his poor people. The usual remedies aren’t doing anything. You can’t believe how heart wrenching it is to see these good people reach out with such confidence asking for help that I cannot provide. Everyday, I see terror painted on faces, cheeks drenched with tears as they repeat this plaintive phrase “Sister, the Doctor has no remedy, and neither do you, what will happen to us?” They must resign themselves to die. I try in every imaginable way to help them, and sometimes it works if the patients take every precaution. ...

From morning to night I am with our poor sick people, to take care of them, to console them, to encourage them and assist them in their last moments. Everyday, without fail, there is a funeral service. For some time now, I am the only person singing at church on Sunday. In spite of all the work, I am holding up, and I know that my strength comes from your prayers my dear sisters, please keep them up, because in our situation we have a great need for them...”

Document 8

Sr Valade to the Mother House

23 November 1846

“The deprivation of our house has caused me much sorrow. A few days ago an old savage woman, poor, infirm, without family, without resources, but a good Christian, came to tell me that she had been thrown out of the place where she lived, letting me know, in broken French, that she wanted me to care for her. I consoled her as best I could and promised to try to find her a place until I could take her in. I did find her a place, but it’s very far from the Church, so she will be deprived of spiritual aid, this troubles me to no end. I can’t ask the Bishop to take her in, our house is bursting at the seams. Even though she is quite far away, I provide her with what help I can.”

Document 9

Construction of the convent, autumn 1846

Chroniques, Volume 1, page 173

“The Superior, Sr Valade, having discharged herself of some work, now has time to pay more attention to the construction of the convent. The work had to be abandoned during the epidemic and now she wants to make sure that the work progresses well. She has been very active and has had the satisfaction of seeing completed, the foundations and the woodwork of a spacious basement and also doors and windows. During winter, workers will cut the necessary lumber for the roof and the floors. If God allows it, we will be able to move into our new home next year.”

Sr Valade to Mother McMullen

16 July 1847

“Just as we were hoping to move into our home this fall, someone came to tell me that our lumber to complete the building has burned and that no one has any to replace it. ... We must now wait before more wood can be cut and dried. I can honestly say that this news made me cry... I believe that I even blamed St Joseph, I had placed this building in his hands, and he lets our wood burn! Some of it had already been carried here, but the workers told me there wasn't enough to finish the job. I told the foreman to keep working, but he argued that he didn't have enough wood. I decided to go count the boards myself, I don't know if St Joseph multiplied them, but I found enough to satisfy the foreman.

Document 10

St-Francis-Xavier, 1850

Chroniques, Volume 1 page 241

“Our dear sisters Lagrave and Lafrance have graciously accepted to open this new mission without any resources. They pleasantly say “It’s up to us to leave, as we are more hardened than our younger sisters are to fatigue and deprivation.” And so on 5 November, armed with their dedication and their charity, our sisters left the St. Boniface house to devote themselves, firstly to educate the children and secondly to care for the church, the sacristy and the housekeeping of the rectory and visit the poor and the sick.”

Document 11

The Flood of 1852

Chroniques, Volume 1 page 253-257

“In April, the ice broke up with a crash and caused considerable damage in low lying areas. The water kept getting higher, rivers soon spilled onto the prairie. We hurried to stow away our wood because it was quite obvious that we would be flooded. All the sisters, the girls and the students helped, their courage was remarkable. We baked a large quantity of dry biscuits to replace our bread during the flood. We were obliged to use the stove at the bishop’s house as ours is useless. The sisters who were bringing a batch of biscuits in a wheelbarrow from the bishop’s house were surprised by the rising water and got here with very wet feet.

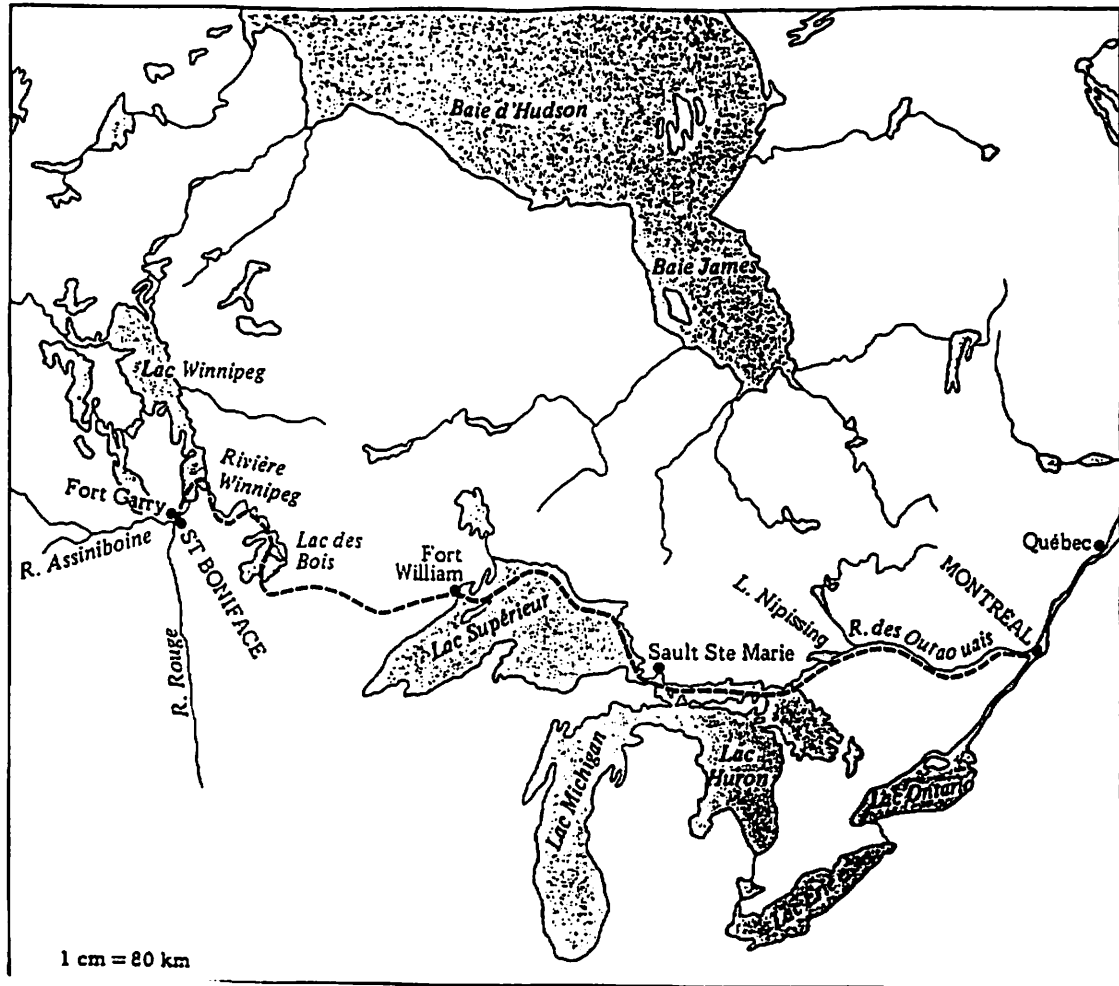
We had also emptied our basement to make sure nothing got damaged by water. ...

We were happy to extend hospitality to 3 families, that of Louis Galarnau and his wife, Néron and his wife and Félix Latreille his wife and their 4 children. They had to bunk in the attic among all the piles of grain that we stored up there. ...

The water just kept getting higher until 20 May when more than five feet of water covered the ground. We had more than a foot and a half of water on the first floor, we were like a vessel at sea. When the wind caused waves to crash on our immobile ark, the whole house shook. During the night of the 16 to 17 May the wind was so fierce that we thought we would be submerged. This awful torment gave us an idea of what a storm at sea might be like. The flood did rob us of all our firewood that we had worked so hard to protect. In spite of that loss, we came out of the flood quite fortunate. One day, our neighbour’s barn floated by so close to our house that we could see chickens chattering merrily on the thatched roof just as if they had been in their hen house. A small house landed on a little hill just behind our buildings. ...

The Bishop and his priests stayed in the bishop's house. The Reverend Father Bermond came every morning by canoe to celebrate holy mass. ...

On 19 May, the water started receding. It was a ray of hope when the water went down several notches the next day. By 1 July there was no more water on the first floor. It was good to be able to regain the use of our kitchen and we quickly cleaned up our chapel.”



Les Soeurs Grises et la colonie de la rivière Rouge

Dennis King

La Société Canadienne du Livre Limitée, 1983

“From the year 1844 to 1855, service to the poor was not neglected, since during that lapse of time our Sisters made over six thousand (6 000) visits. Medicine was almost always given free of charge.”

31 December 1854
Chroniques, Volume 1, page 306

Average of 600 visits per year
Average of 1.7 visits per day

Overhead 3

YEAR	SISTERS	NOVICES/ POSTULANT	SICK/ ELDERLY	ORPHANS	BOARDERS	PUPILS
1844	4		2		1	53
1847	8	1	2			
1850	9	2	5	4	10	80
1853	13	1	3	5	15	96
1856	15	1	3	4	14	35
1859	20		3	16	17	35
1862	21	2	4	44	16	47

S^r Flavie Laurent

Born in Montreal on 21 August 1832 of Charles Laurent dit Lortie and Émélie Gougeon.

Educated by the Soeurs de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame.

At 16 she approached the Sisters of Providence who rejected her because she was too young. The Grey Nuns accepted her.

Her novitiate was shortened by 3 months so she could travel with Sr Valade to go the Red River. On their trip, they missed a steamboat, that would carry them across Lake Erie, by 10 minutes. Later that night the boat sank, killing all of its 300 passengers.

She was a teacher, accountant, founded the mission in St-Norbert and did home care.

“Sister Laurent busied herself mostly with visits to the poor and the sick. The old timers of St. Boniface and Winnipeg will recall the courageous sister, accompanied by a child, knocking at all the doors where there was suffering. She did this for years. Protestants and Catholics, English and French Canadian, from both sides of the river revered her.” 25 March 1925

She died 1 March 1925 at the age 93.

Sr Marie-Xavier (Margaret Dunn)

Born in St John's, Newfoundland on 10 June 1837 of Michael Dunn and Elizabeth Kennedy.

Early on, she felt she had a religious vocation, but a birth defect, she had no left hand, precluded a religious vocation. She trained to become a teacher and offered her services to the Grey Nuns of the Red River. She arrived en September 1853.

After 6 months of seeing her in action, the Grey Nuns accepted her in their novitiate.

She taught for 33 years in the school in St. Boniface.

Worked at the St. Boniface hospital and participated in founding the Hospital in Edmonton and the residential school in Lebret, Sask.

She died 18 October 1897 at the age of 60.

Sr Cécile Cusson

Born 13 February 1821 in the parish of St-Esprit comté de Montcalm in Québec of Jacques Cusson and Angélique Picard.

She entered the novitiate of the Grey Nuns in June 1845 and in August she is sent, still a postulant to the Red River.

“A skilful weaver, spinner, accountant and carder, her spinning wheel spins with such speed that she provides the material necessary to outfit all the missionaries.”

Chroniques, Volume I

At the end of her life, she transformed her little cell into a workshop where she repaired broken dishes, statues and crucifixes.

She died 20 June 1906 at the age of 85.

Sr Marie Withman

Born on 30 August 1807, very little is known about her childhood.

One day while attending services at Notre-Dame she heard Bishop Provencher speaking about his missions out West.

Later she discovered that her cousin Sr Valade was heading up the Grey Nuns' mission at the Red River.

Mgr Bourget encouraged her to find a companion, she found Cécile Cusson.

She entered the Grey Nuns novitiate at age 38, and was sent to the Red River still a postulant.

During 30 years she was in charge of the sisters wardrobe, and also of that of the Bishop and the other missionaries.

She died on 22 October 1875 at the age of 68.

Sr Mary Curran

Born on 16 June 1875 in Montreal of Charles Curran and Sarah Kennedy,

She entered the novitiate of the Grey Nuns at age 15 and spent a year there. She was then sent to complete her training in Bytown after which she works as a teacher.

In 1853, the Sisters of Bytown loan her to St. Boniface for 5 years.

First she taught and eventually became Bishop Taché's secretary, the fact that she was perfectly bilingual made her ideal for the position.

She also chronicled much of the early history of the Grey Nuns at the Red River.

After 34 years at the Red River she returned to Montreal.

She died 25 February 1906 at the age of 75.

Sr Rose Clapin

Born on 26 March in Montreal of Joseph Clapin and Marie Dominante dite Godefroy.

She entered the Grey Nuns' novitiate in 1853 and in 1859 she was nominated for the Red River.

From 1864 to 1872 she is Superior.

In 1873 she saw to the foundation of the mission in Fort Totten N. D.

On a return trip from their farm at Stump Lake, she got lost and suffered severe frostbite. Her accident left her paralysed. She was called back to Montreal in 1888.

She died on 29 October 1898 at the age of 70.

Sr Ste-Thérèse (Teresa McDonnell)

Born 9 February 1835 in St. Andrews, Ontario of Angus McDonnell and Margaret McDonald (who died in childbirth).

She was placed with the Sisters of Charity of Ottawa in Cornwall, Ontario. She entered the novitiate in 1851 against her father's wishes.

In 1855 the sisters of Bytown loaned her to St. Boniface for 3 years.

After she is finished teaching, she roams the prairies providing medical care to those in need, they call her "the good mother of the poor, the Lord's healer."

When it's time for her to go back to Ottawa the people are outraged at the prospect of losing their "Sister Doctor". So they kidnap her from her caravan and bring her back to St. Boniface.

Her Superior in Bytown decides to respect the wishes of the population of the Red River and allows her stay here.

In 1871 she founded the St. Boniface Hospital.

She died on 4 November 1917 at the age of 82.

Sr Fisette (Marie-Justine Dupuy)

Born on 1 November 1829 in Contrecoeur of Louis Dupuy and Marguerite Fisette.

She was educated by the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary in Longueil.

She entered the novitiate of the Grey Nuns of St-Hyacinthe in 1847.

In 1850 she travels to St. Boniface with Sr Valade.

She is an excellent teacher, and was superior in a number of missions.

In 1905 she must resign from her position of assistant because of a severe hearing loss.

She died on 17 September 1914 at the age of 85.