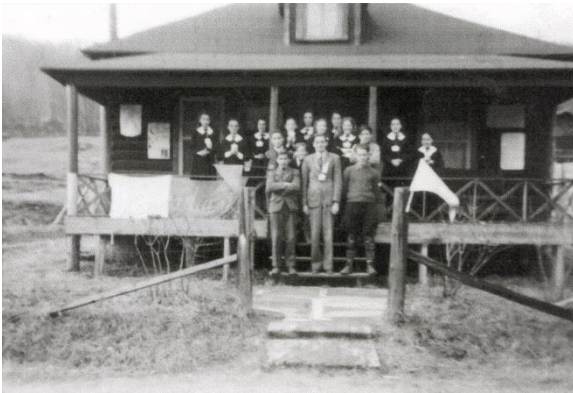


The nuns of Mont-Tremblant

August 30, 1945, was a good day for the people of Mont-Tremblant. On that afternoon, three nuns from the congregation of Sisters of the Holy Cross, dressed in their heavy black habits, stepped down from the train. Sister Marie de Sainte-Madeleine-Barat, Sister Marie de Saint-Gilles-Armand and Sister Marie de Sainte-Cécile-de-la-Trinité came to take charge of the instruction of the children of the municipality, which had been created five years earlier. In future, in Mont-Tremblant as in the majority of the villages of Québec, education would be entrusted to members of a religious community rather than to secular teachers.



Before the convent was built, the nuns also taught in this house, rented by the school board to cope with the increase in the number of pupils.



For a number of years, boys and girls studied in the same classes in the convent.

Source: SOPABIC.

Source: Marcelle Labelle collection.

The congregation, which had been established in Nominique since 1887, numbered more than twenty institutions in the Upper Laurentians and the Gatineau Valley, including the Mont-Laurier Normal School where future teachers were trained. The Sisters of the Holy Cross, nicknamed the “missionaries of the forest”, were not only experienced teachers, they were also known for their devotion and their courage.

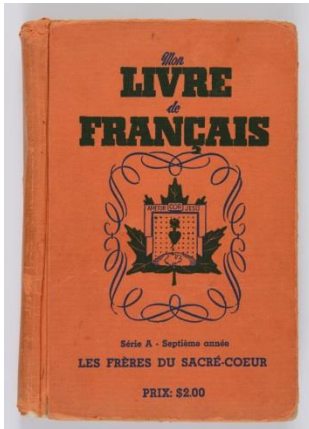
The newly arrived ladies set up shop upstairs in the village school (which today houses a business located at 1979 rue du Village). Just one week later, 58 children of all ages appeared at the door of the little school.... Because school attendance had been compulsory for the past several years, the number of pupils climbed to 69 the following year and to 83 as classes began in 1947. The local school board launched a major construction project: the



On May 22, 1948, a large crowd attended the blessing of the new convent.

Source: Société d'histoire Chute aux Iroquois.

families of Mont-Tremblant needed a real school with a number of classrooms, and the nuns needed to be housed appropriately. In May 1948, it was done. With great ceremony, the new convent of Mont-Tremblant, a beautiful red brick building in the centre of the village, was blessed and open for business.



The French textbook for students in the seventh grade, which was then the final year of the primary cycle.

Source: Marcelle Labelle collection



Sister Marie de Saint-Eustache, teacher at the convent of Mont-Tremblant, with Diane Ladouceur, a pupil.

Source: Diane Ladouceur collection.

For close to twenty years its occupants played a major role in the life of Mont-Tremblant. The nuns taught grades from one to nine: religion, proper behaviour, French, writing, mathematics, geography, history, drawing and “general knowledge” were on the curriculum. Religious practice permeated the children’s daily life: missions week was followed by vocation week, a Marian exhibition or the promise of the Crusades. Faithful to their mission as “evangelical workers”, the nuns also helped the parish priest, Charles-Hector Deslauriers, in his work with the parish poor, and organized community events and card parties to benefit the vestry.

In 1955, the boys left the convent to attend the Dominique-Savio School (now the Félix-Calvé building at 1875 chemin du Village), which had just been built only steps away. In 1964, the primary school girls joined the boys and the convent hosted classes for handicapped children. Five years later, educational restructuring tolled the death-

knell of the two schools. The Sisters of the Holy Cross left their little convent in the mountains. In the wake of the Quiet Revolution, a new educational system was established throughout Québec.

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