The *Great* Canadian
Catholic Hospital History Project

Documenting the legacy and contribution of the
Congregations of Religious Women in Canada,
their mission in health care, and the founding and operation of Catholic hospitals.

Projet de la *Grande* Histoire
des hôpitaux catholiques au Canada

Retracer l'héritage et la contribution des
congrégations de religieuses au Canada,
leur mission en matière de soins de santéainsi que la fondation et l'exploitation des hôpitaux catholiques.

Amanda Viger: Spiritual Healer to New Brunswick's Leprosy Victims 1845-1906

by
Mary Jane Losier

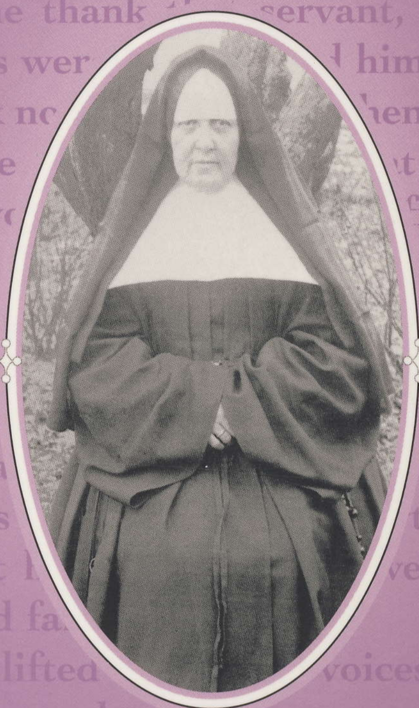
Source: Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph

Copyright: © 1999, The estate of Mary Jane Losier. Used with permission.

Digitized: March 2019

Amanda Viger

Spiritual Healer to New Brunswick's Leprosy Victims 1845-1906



Mary Jane Losier

Amanda Viger

Spiritual Healer to New Brunswick's Leprosy Victims 1845-1906

Mary Jane Losier

Copyright © Mary Jane Losier, 1999

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means without the prior written permission from the publisher, or, in the case of photocopying or other reprographic copying, permission from CANCOPY (Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency), 1 Yonge Street, Suite 1900, Toronto, Ontario M5E 1E5.

Nimbus Publishing Limited
PO Box 9301, Station A
Halifax, NS B3K 5N5
(902)455-4286

Design: Arthur Carter
Printed and bound in Canada

Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data
Losier, M.J. (Mary Jane), 1940-
Amanda Viger
ISBN 1-55109-299-9
1. Viger, Amanda, 1845-1906 2. Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph — Biography. 3. Nun — New Brunswick — Biography. 4. Leprosy — Hospitals - New Brunswick — Tracadie — History. I. Title.
BX4705.V57L68 1999 271'.97062 C99-950094-5

Nimbus Publishing acknowledges the financial support of the Canada Council and the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements		v
Introduction		vii
Chapter One:	**A Child of Her Time**	1
Chapter Two:	**Faithful Unto Death**	7
Chapter Three:	**Challenge and Possibility**	17
Chapter Four:	**The Religious Spirit**	33
Chapter Five:	**The Tracadie Foundation**	50
Chapter Six:	**As Though Invisible**	63
Chapter Seven:	**Germination**	76
Chapter Eight:	**God's Will**	90
Chapter Nine:	**Everything Passes Away**	101
Chapter Ten:	**A Kind of Glory**	111
Chapter Eleven:	**Battered by the Tempest**	124
Chapter Twelve:	**Peace Settled Upon Her**	137
Endnotes		149
Bibliography		154
Glossary		163

Acknowledgements

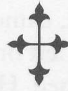
This book was made possible with the help of a literary award from the Canada Council.

I want to thank my husband Aldéo Losier who has read every manuscript page not once but several times, and is—sometimes to my chagrin—my most honest and accurate critic.

Amanda Viger, Sister St. Jean-de-Goto, was one of thousands of Canadian women religious who lived their lives inside the confines of their institutions. Whether as educated professionals or blue aproned domestics, they performed all manner of service, in every province, often ignored, seldom understood or appreciated. I chose to write about Amanda Viger because I became acquainted with her when writing *Children of Lazarus*. She was something of a legend among those—clergymen, doctors, politicians, reporters—who came to the Tracadie lazaretto.

Studying her life gave me an opportunity to explore the history of her order, *les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph*, and the growth of their foundation in Tracadie. I had a wealth of material available to me, thanks to the co-operation of the hospitallers today who allowed me the freedom to research the rich vein of documents and materials stored in their archives. Sister archivists, Florence Bertrand CND, of the Congregation of Notre-Dame, Montreal; and Nicole Buissière RHSJ of the Hotel-Dieu Montreal; Claire Perreault RHSJ, of the Hotel-Dieu Arthabaska; Dorina Frigault RHSJ, Curator of the Tracadie Museum; and particularly Corinne LaPlante RHSJ, of Our Lady of the Assumption Provincial House, Bathurst, spent many hours answering queries and looking up documents for me. The late Edouard C.N. Lanctot married to Hermine Demers, Amanda Viger's great-niece, kindly provided biographical and genealogical details concerning her natural family.

Doctor Gail Campbell, Professor of History at the University of New Brunswick, my former thesis advisor, instilled in me the necessity of not only knowing and understanding Amanda Viger, but the need to give my readers an appreciation for the role time and place had in shaping her personality and the direction she took in life.



Introduction

Riding over rough corduroy roads, with forests looming on either side, through the isolated and thinly populated region of northeast New Brunswick, must have been an extraordinary experience for twenty-three-year old Amanda Viger on this fall day of 1868. Less than two weeks earlier, Amanda, known in her religious life as Sister St. Jean-de-Goto, a cloistered nun, a sister pharmacist, and a member of the large and newly reconstructed Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Montreal, had left the shelter of her religious house to become a founder of the Hôtel-Dieu Monastery (historically a term that could be applied to both male and female religious institutions) in Tracadie, New Brunswick. The nursing order, *les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph* (The Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph), had been called to the province to take over the care of leprosy patients sequestered in squalor in a lazaretto. This was her first journey and the first time she had been able to venture beyond the grounds of her convent since she had entered eight years earlier.

People stood on their porches, or lined the roadway straining for glimpses of the nursing sisters, as she and her five companions rode past the small clusters of white-washed houses which appeared from out of the heart of the forest, or clung perilously close to a craggy shoreline. People fired guns in salute to them and a few homes were decorated in bunting. A large crowd surrounded the nuns on either side of the lane as, late in the afternoon, their carriage drew up before the chapel. Some handed Viger their babies, fingers tentatively reached for her long, black skirt, many called out to '*les soeurs docteurs*.' Those leprosy victims able to go outdoors lined the fence on the other side of the lazaretto boundary some distance away, tears streaming down their cheeks. The sisters, the nursing sisters from Quebec, were coming to care for them.

Amanda was overwhelmed. For six of her eight years in the monastery she had been one of five pharmacists in a community of sixty religious, responsible for an institution population of over eight hundred. The

youngest of the six founders of the Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu, September 28, 1868 marked the beginning of her first days in 'exile.' Amanda, who remained in Tracadie until 1902, came to love this village, its people, and her 'dear lepers.' She reluctantly left only when she was asked to take over the direction of the impoverished Hôtel-Dieu in Arthabaska, Quebec. There, she died of cancer in 1906.

Viger's arrival marked a change in direction for the lazaretto. For the first time, the New Brunswick government, the Roman Catholic Church, and the medical community all came together to attempt to deal with leprosy, a disease which had first appeared in the province in the 1820s. In 1844, authorities had approved the renovation of an abandoned quarantine hospital on Sheldrake Island in the Miramichi River near Chatham. The responsibility for running the institution and managing the disease was turned over to a provincially appointed board of health. The sick: men, women, and children—mainly Acadians but a few of Irish or Scottish origin—were left there. Medical treatments were attempted but with little effect. The board employed a washer woman, usually someone with relatives in the lazaretto, and hired a keeper, along with his wife who did the cooking and lived nearby to supervise the institution. Other than the washer woman, no one stayed in the lazaretto itself. Fear of the illness made finding caregivers difficult, if not impossible. Even without that obstacle, authorities—ever conscious of their budget—maintained an idealistic idea that within the lazaretto those less sick would look after those more severely afflicted by the disease. Conditions in the lazaretto deteriorated. Frustrated and angry, the victims often expressed their desperation by running away, breaking the furnishings, or even setting the premises on fire.

Families of leprosy victims hid their relatives when symptoms of the disease became evident, and stringent laws were enacted aimed at forcing the sick into the lazaretto, moving them miles from their homes and families. Finally, following petitions from clergy and residents of Tracadie—where most of the early victims lived—the lazaretto was relocated to that village in 1848. Conditions inside showed little improvement, so the Board of Health and a number of clergymen approached the government for permission to bring in nursing sisters to assume the day-to-day care of leprosy patients.

Before having been thrust into such an intense association with the disease, Amanda had never heard of leprosy except as it was alluded to in the Bible. Even if she had, the idea of nursing leprous sick would hardly have crossed her mind. As a young boarding school student, Amanda had excelled in mathematics and chemistry. Religious life might have been her likely destiny because of the particular period of Quebec history she was living through, but her choice of religious community—a nursing order over one of the more popular and more numerous teaching communities—

was based on an instinctual sense that it was the order best able to meet her intellectual needs. She came to Tracadie loaded with supplies and materials to set up an apothecary, and within ten days her small medical establishment on the lazaretto grounds opened. She began treating the leprosy patients by conducting experiments—concocting mixtures of ointments and medicine—in an attempt to cure the disease, and when these proved unsuccessful, she developed a systematic method of care that, at least, made the sick more comfortable, drastically improving their lives. Her reputation was such that soon members of the public were lining up outside her apothecary or waiting in the hospital's tiny parlour while Viger undertook numerous prescriptions, treating everything from colds to cancer. For more than thirty years, Viger, with the assistance of her sister associates, was the only local source of medical advice for the people of Tracadie.

This book is a biography of Viger's life, the men and women who influenced her, and the social and religious history through which she lived. Much of this biography centres on her thirty-four years in Tracadie, illuminated by her own letters, and the letters of her colleagues to and from their mother house in Montreal. The daily events noted by the hospitallers themselves in their *Annals* and in the *Chronicles* of the Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu paint a vivid and compelling picture of everyday life within the small monastery and lazaretto.

While her time in Tracadie likely comprised the best years of Viger's life, it would mean little if this biography didn't also focus on her early years, her term in a convent-run boarding school, and what compelled her to enter a religious institution. This biography takes a unique look at women's lives behind the cloister, and, by tracing the career of only one individual sister in one religious community, it offers a window to the evolution of that community over fifty years of Canadian and New Brunswick history.

Amanda Viger was born in Boucherville, Quebec in 1845 and entered the cloistered *Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph* when she was barely fifteen years old. It is no surprise that this intelligent and ambitious young woman chose monastic life, since the church shaped and directed her from the earliest years of her childhood. She came of age at a time when the dogmatic Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, initiated a campaign to expand and develop religious communities, and recruit many of Quebec's brightest and healthiest young people to the priesthood or convents. They were needed to provide labour for the church which had gradually taken control of education, health care, and social services in the province. Amanda, like many members of female religious communities, was educated in a convent-run boarding school. Even her summer holidays, which she spent with an uncle priest, Father Narcisse Trudel, were heavily enveloped in a religious atmosphere.

During her time in Montreal, Amanda apprenticed under the city's best doctors and surgeons. The hospitallers cared for two hundred sick as well as over six hundred elderly people and orphans. When her order was asked to send members to Tracadie, she was ready—indeed eager—for the call. The new foundation, after its shaky beginnings, took root, thanks, in large measure, to Viger's own efforts and it initiated for her order an unparalleled period of expansion in New Brunswick.

Few places required nursing services more than the mainly Catholic population of northern New Brunswick in the mid-nineteenth century. The diocese of Chatham was only eight years old. Catholics in the region, most of whom were French, and a sizable minority of English-speaking people of Celtic heritage, were concentrated on the lower rungs of the social and economic ladder. James Rogers, the first bishop of the diocese, was not able to enjoy the secular authority the civil government of Quebec granted the Roman Catholic hierarchy of its province. Sectarian prejudice ran deep in New Brunswick and the legislature of the day was largely in the hands of the Protestant community.

Anxious to avoid any controversy that might reflect negatively upon him, and create difficulties for his congregation, Bishop Rogers had not sought the service of the hospitallers, and he had serious reservations about their mission. It was one thing if the church owned and operated the lazaretto, quite another to work in an institution owned and controlled by the government—and this would be the fate of any new religious foundations in New Brunswick. It meant they would be subject to the whims of politicians and could be dismissed from Tracadie at any time, with their property and funds going into the the government's purse. In addition to being under the influence of the provincial government, Tracadie was a very remote part of Rogers' diocese, far from his control. Chatham, on the other hand, was his episcopal seat and it had a large population of Irish Catholic refugees in need of charitable services.

Thus, faced with the prospect of spending money on a new religious foundation, Rogers was insistent that the monastery's location be in Chatham, rather than Tracadie. It was Monseigneur Paquet, Rogers' vicar general, who made the arrangements for the hospitallers to move to Tracadie while the bishop was attending an apostolic conference in Rome. Rogers would never have sent for the sisters at this time and, even if he had, his first choice would not have been a cloistered order such as the hospitallers, but a non-cloistered, less restricted nursing congregation, such as the Grey Nuns.

By the time they arrived in New Brunswick, standing on the steamer just after it docked, Rogers had returned and he told the weary storm-tossed and sea-sick group of sisters, and the Tracadie pastor, Father Ferdinand Gauvreau, who had gone to Montreal to escort the party, that

he could not support them so long as they were to be located in Tracadie. Father Gauvreau wept. It looked like the bishop would succeed in scuttling the sisters' plans until he met with Monseigneur Paquet in Caraquet two days later. Their debate on the subject raged into the wee hours of the morning. But finally, it was agreed; the hospitallers would go to Tracadie, but until the provincial government allocated a stipend for them, the complete costs of their upkeep would be met by Paquet, Gauvreau, and the people of Tracadie. The founding mother superior of Tracadie, Marie Pagé, guaranteed that her order would send English-speaking hospitallers within the year to establish a foundation in Chatham. Eventually, Rogers built a mother house in Chatham for the hospitallers, but he never did acknowledge the autonomy of the Tracadie foundation, nor did he ever contribute anything towards their financial support.

Throughout her thirty-four year career in New Brunswick, Viger contended with her bishop's indifference, and other political realities—both secular and religious—that influenced the foundation's growth. She was a superior, mistress of novices, pharmacist, bursar, secretary, head nurse, educator, and director of music. Many of these offices she held simultaneously. She opened a school that set new educational standards in the region, but obediently closed it fifteen years later because of concern about its proximity to the lazaretto. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, after the federal government took control of the lazaretto and built a modern stone facility, she oversaw construction of a new monastery on the adjacent wing. She and her friend and mentor, Tracadie pastor, Father Auguste Babineau, eventually erected a general hospital and orphanage, all part of the lazaretto complex.

Amanda was a daughter of Pierre Bonaventure Viger, a patriot and hero of the 1837 rebellion. Her family occupied a prominent position in the society of Boucherville where she lived, and this fact gave her a sense of confidence from an early age. She was strong- willed and, like her father, adventurous. Her intellectual and spiritual ideals were gifts from her mother's side of the family. It might be thought that her 'elite' upbringing coloured her impressions of the Acadian people or altered her relations with the young New Brunswick women who entered the Tracadie foundation, influencing the way she dealt with peers, but the evidence suggests she was highly esteemed and deeply loved by them.

In the course of her time in Tracadie, Viger adapted her religious lifestyle to the needs and realities of her new environment. The Tracadie sisters lived without an official cloister since the bishop would not permit them to build one. This allowed visitors access to their quarters and, in effect, allowed the nuns and guests to mingle. She was not always free to leave her duties to attend the various rituals in the choir—the spiritual heartland of the monastery—or to perform every prayerful exercise. She

was obliged to sometimes commandeer the sisters' parlour to change dressings and treat injuries. Through it all, she continued to believe that Divine Providence guided her and gave her strength in adversity. If, for any reason, she was not able to complete what she started she accepted her defeat only temporarily as "God's will," rather than a sign that she should give up.

Amanda Viger could be bossy and opinionated. Toward the end of her time in Tracadie, undoubtedly her pride contributed to a conflict with the mother superior of the day, Marie Anne Doucet, one of Viger's own protegées. "The troubles," as the Tracadie hospitallers named this sad period of their history, started when Father Babineau, the convent's chaplain, began to resent the increasing influence his curate was having with Mother Doucet and several of the sisters. The discord escalated, culminating when Bishop Rogers refused Doucet's request for another chaplain to be appointed. Viger was forced to choose between her loyalty to her house, or her loyalty to Father Babineau and obedience to a bishop's decree. The foundation, with the majority of members supporting Viger, split in two opposing camps. Rumours spread beyond the monastery walls to the lazaretto and to members of the public. Priests in the region were drawn into the dispute. Everything that Amanda had worked so hard to create was nearly destroyed. An investigation, conducted by the Vatican itself through its representative, the Canadian apostolic delegate, exonerated Viger but it concluded that her influence in the Tracadie house would make it impossible for the two factions to reconcile, therefore, the report recommended her transfer. Viger, an excellent administrator, was sent to the Hôtel-Dieu in Arthabaska—a foundation threatened with total financial collapse—in August of 1902.

Amanda was elected mother superior shortly after her arrival in Arthabaska. Reasoning that their best chance of resolving their debt, was to expand their services, Viger—with the full support of the Quebec bishop—convinced church and town officials to back her plans to build an orphanage and general hospital. But sadly, in the midst of the construction, and before she could see the work succeed, she died of cancer in 1906.

Viger trained over thirty New Brunswick Acadian women, many of whom went on to occupy the highest offices in provincial homes for the aged, hospitals, sanitariums, schools, and orphanages in Saint-Basile, Caraquet, Lamèque, Campbellton, Perth, Grand Falls, Edmundston, and Bathurst. Hospitallers are still in Tracadie, and although the lazaretto closed over thirty years ago, they continue to bring health care, education, and social services to the people of the region. On the silver anniversary of their arrival, Viger said that the small sacrifices she had made in establishing the lazaretto, and later a school and orphanage, represented "a kind of glory" which were more than made up for by the fruits of her labour.

CHAPTER ONE

A Child of Her Time

An industrial park, a shopping centre, a military base, and an airport overshadow the few small farms that remain on the Savanne, the section of Boucherville where, nearly 130 years ago, the Viger family lived. Nonetheless, driving along the byways of this municipality, a short distance from Montreal, it is not difficult to imagine the scene as it might have been when Marie Louise Amanda Viger was a chubby four-year-old playing around her habitant home. Boucherville still possesses much of the beauty that first attracted its founder, Pierre Boucher, holder of the fief. Boucher established the settlement on the banks of the Saint Lawrence river in 1664. The less majestic Rivière aux Pins, which opens into the Saint Lawrence, rims the borough in a south-easterly direction. The land is flat except for low mountain clusters which occasionally rise, pushed out of the earth like air bubbles on a pie crust. While Montreal looms on the other side of the Saint Lawrence, cattle quietly feed on belts of fertile green land on Boucherville's perimeters.

If she returned today, Amanda Viger might still recognize the older part of town. Stone or wood houses with pitched roofs and broad chimneys line a series of narrow streets. Most are well maintained. Some have been converted to cafés, bars, or art galleries. Along the main thoroughfare, Marie-Victorin Avenue, the Holy Family Church and the former Boucherville Convent stand more or less on their original site.

Opposite the church, on the other side of the road, the sidewalk invites pedestrians to stroll beside the green-banked riverfront under the shade of ancient oaks, chestnut, and maple trees. Small crafts sway lazily on the waters of a nearby marina. Further along the avenue, set back on a wide expanse of lawn and shaded by foliage, modern town houses share the landscape with their ancient but elegant cousins, the roofed houses with flared eaves and multi-paned casement windows that distinguished Amanda Viger's world of old Quebec.

Her father, Pierre Bonaventure Viger, the local hero of the rebellion of

1837 was ready to put his past behind him when he married Eudoxie Trudel, also from Boucherville, on October 11, 1841. The Vigers were one of 457 families in a bustling community of about five thousand people. Their farm on the Savanne consisted of a thirty-acre-long, about two-acres-wide area of narrow flat land that bordered the bank of the Pine River. Their home, a modest one-floor wood structure, common among the habitant families, was not as elegant as the two-floor stone or the wood and gabled frame houses around it; however, since most people lived in similar homes, their income was on par with the majority of their neighbours.

Their first child, Marie Eudoxie Orpha, was born in 1842. Their second, Marie Louise Amanda on July 26, 1845. Eventually, the couple would be the parents of three more daughters: Marie Anne Anatalie (1848), Marie Julie Aldina (1849), Laura (between 1850 and 1854), and two sons: Hormisdas (1855), and Oscar (1857). The children's father was a respectable farmer and a highly regarded member of the Holy Family School Board. Those who disapproved of his exploits during the rebellions of 1837 and 1838 were beginning to forget, but, for those who supported the aims of the rebellions, Viger's feats were taking on—with every telling—the stuff of legend.

Tall ships, steamers, and sloops of all sizes crossed the short distance between Boucherville and Montreal. The borough provided a number of services for the rural area and was a ready market for local farmers. The town was likely still in the process of rebuilding. Only two years before Amanda's birth, sparks sputtering from the chimney of a steamer ignited a nearby shed. The flames engulfed more than a third of the village, including fifty-five homes, ninety-two buildings, the church, and the convent belonging to members of the Congregation of Notre-Dame.

Pierre Bonaventure Viger—who was known by his second name, Bonaventure, rather than Pierre—the son of Bonaventure Viger and Marie Louise Levasseur dit Carmel, both of Boucherville, was born in 1804 and came of age during a period of growing unrest in Quebec. At this time, individuals from several Protestant denominations, including the Church of England, tried to convert the Quebecois away from Roman Catholicism. They failed because of internal acrimony and the strong hold the Catholic clergy had on their members. Regardless, during the twenty years immediately following the Rebellion of 1837, two thousand Catholics left their church for Protestantism, and several hundred of these became evangelists.

Although the Rebellions of 1837 occurred in both Lower and Upper Canada, the insurgency in Quebec and Lower Canada was, to a great extent, the expression of a re-awakening of French nationalism. Particularly since the war of 1812, economic, social, and political power

in Quebec had become concentrated in the hands of a wealthy establishment, mainly made up of anglophone business men and members of the Catholic church hierarchy. These groups had arrived at a mutually satisfying arrangement, as the church did not interfere in the political sphere and politicians did not attempt to take control of education or social programs.

An increasingly large and vocal middle and upper class mainly composed of well-educated francophones wanted more political and economic autonomy and influence. At the same time, in rural areas, a scarcity of land had left many—mostly francophones—with no means of economic survival. This, combined with increased immigration, left land-starved farmers even poorer and, along with trades people and artisans, this group was drawn to a growing revolutionary movement whose followers were lured by the movement's appeals to Quebecois nationalism.

During the 1820s and 30s, led by Louis-Jospeh Papineau, these so-called nationalists or patriots, deliberately inflamed revolutionary sentiment in their attempt wrest control from the Roman Catholic hierarchy and the anglophone business elite. The patriots became more extreme in their positions and tactics, eventually leading to widespread civil disobedience and the taking up of arms against British authority. When the government arrested patriot leaders, further rebellions took place resulting in looting and burning on both sides. Papineau and several other patriots eventually sought refuge in the United States, others were wounded, killed, and captured, some of whom were executed.

It was in this climate of turmoil and heightened cultural factionalism that Bonaventure Viger, a rural farmer, became an ardent follower of Papineau's cause. To the establishment, including the Catholic church Viger was traitor and rebel, while to French nationalists he was a patriot.

While Viger's reputation as a local hero went largely unchallenged after the events of 1837 were well behind him, not everyone in Boucherville supported the aims or tactics of the revolutionaries. Most church officials, fearing the loss of economic and social privileges should the partisans succeed, were vocal in their opposition to the rebels. Monseigneur Lartigue, the Bishop of Montreal, supported by his then-assistant, Monseigneur Ignace Bourget, forbade his parishioners from participating in the rebellion under threats it would bring mortal sin and ex-communication. The bishop decreed that if a partisan died in battle, he would not be buried in consecrated ground. Not all of the Catholic clergy followed the edict but the zealous Bourget, who toured the rural parishes, succeeded in silencing most of the dissenters.

In the village of Boucherville, as in other parts of the province, a number of people denounced—in depositions and affidavits—the activities of the patriots, including those of Bonaventure Viger. On one occasion, the

unrepentant Viger stood on the church steps and recruited volunteers while, inside, the curate railed against him. When friends and neighbours donated funds to pay for, what he assured them was a high mass honouring the aims of the rebels, the money was actually going towards patriot-bought gunpowder. Viger led one of the opening skirmishes—an attack on a detachment of British soldiers near the adjacent parish of Longueil. The untrained partisans succeeded in freeing two of their local leaders: Dr. Joseph-François Davignon and lawyer Pierre Paul Desmaray. He took part in battles at St. Denis and elsewhere over the next two days, but was taken prisoner when the rebels were routed at Saint Charles that December.

Bourget visited the prisoners, hearing confessions and granting forgiveness. The future bishop also lobbied the government on their behalf. History fails to record if the hot-tempered Viger sought forgiveness but it is known that he constantly challenged authority. Bonaventure Viger was one of eight prisoners exiled to Bermuda, only to be exonerated by a court in England three months later. The patriot made his way to the United States on his release where he continued forays into Lower Canada. He and his brother, Hilarion, were later arrested on the Canadian side of the border on suspicion that they were part of a group who had attacked and killed a loyalist named Vosburg. The two men languished in jail for more than a year before a jury found there was not sufficient evidence to convict them. Although he often talked about his exploits, Viger never mentioned the Vosburg incident. Descendants today think that only his family connections saved him from execution. He was a distant cousin of Jacques Viger, the first Mayor of Montreal, and a second cousin of legislature member, Denis Benjamin Viger who was arrested for complicity in the rebellion but was released without trial.

The Report on the Affairs of British North America, written by John George Lambton, the Earl of Durham, in the aftermath of the rebellion, articulates English attitudes to the French Canadians. Durham arrived in 1838 and served five months as Governor-in-Chief of British North America. He called the people of francophone Quebec backward, gullible, and easily manipulated through nationalistic appeals by their leaders who were intent on holding onto outmoded customs and traditions. Durham recommended the union of upper and lower Canada and the establishment of responsible government. This would result, he thought, in a majority of English-speakers in a legislature where English laws, language, and institutions would prevail. Durham recommended increased immigration of English-speaking people in order to assure the assimilation of French Canada.

The aftermath of the rebellion left the countryside ransacked, and a society in disarray. The industrial age attracted many workers from fields

to factories. Family structures began to crumble, and numerous social problems arose. Monseigneur Bourget became the Bishop of Montreal in 1840. Bourget, an ultramontane prelate, grasped the opportunity provided by the lack of leadership in the lay community to appropriate and reshape the nationalists sentiments of French Canadians. He allied himself closely with the Holy See and pursued his goals through cultivating a close relationship within the secular political arena. Bishop Bourget encouraged French religious communities already in Quebec to expand and he invited other religious institutions to establish themselves. Priests and nuns were in urgent demand because the Catholic church had taken over the complete control of social programs, education, and health care. Church and state overlapped to such an extent, that, for the most part, they evolved into a single system.

Amanda Viger could not forget that she was a daughter of a patriot. The rebellion had a direct impact on her in several ways. Born just eight years later, and under the union of Upper and Lower Canadas imposed as a result of Lord Durham's report, she and her siblings were often entertained by her father's stories. Orpha Viger passed the stories down to her grandchildren, who, according to granddaughter Hermine (Demers) Lanctot, would "sit all around her and make her tell us about Bonaventure and how they put handcuffs on his wrists." The tales stirred Amanda's imagination.

He might have been a hero to his children but, particularly from his in-laws, he was subject to lingering disapproval. Just as Amanda's father can be identified with the rebellions, her mother, the child of Joseph Pascal Trudel and Marie Elizabeth Charbonneau, can be identified with their aftermath. Born in Boucherville in 1820, she was the second daughter, and youngest of four children. Eudoxie's two brothers, Fathers Narcisse and Pascal Trudel, were twelve and sixteen years older than she. Narcisse Trudel was a member of the clergy during the rebellion, and likely supported the bishop. Eudoxie, too, was deeply committed to the Catholic church and its teachings. Not all women backed the rebel cause. While Eudoxie was not likely among the few who actively supported the British, she was certainly left unprotected along with most women, children, and the elderly while British troops pillaged and set fire to the houses of the patriots, and to whole villages, such as Saint-Denis, Saint-Benoit, and Saint-Estache. It is unlikely that Amanda would have been immune to such family tensions. While the Vosburg incident was not a part of the family lore, Amanda could hardly avoid all knowledge of it.

The Viger's farm provided a comfortable, if modest, living and maintaining it was a family affair. Men, women, and children laboured side by side assisting the often slow process of farming. A newly killed pig, for instance, would take several days to turn into ground pork, ham, and

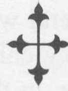
sausage. At least one day a week was needed to make bread. Viger's growing reputation as an excellent cheese producer meant that first his herd of cows had to be milked, before the milk, butter, and cheese made its way to the table, or the market. Most habitant families wore clothes from flax or wool that was carded and woven at home. Women and children looked after the domestic animals. Every fall they harvested the vegetables and preserved them in root cellars. Sometimes women helped their husbands with hay-making. Children as young as six years old learned to care for younger brothers and sisters, card wool, feed chickens, gather eggs, and a host of other responsibilities.

Amanda had few toys, but perhaps she was given a porcelain doll. More likely, she and her sisters enjoyed handmade dolls, either carved from wood or fashioned from rags. Even the better-off habitants had little in the way of material possessions. Regardless, parents were encouraged to develop maternal instincts in their young female children. The ideal little girl, according to one clerical author, was one who would stop her play immediately to rock an ailing brother or sister, using every measure at her disposal to bring comfort.

The church was omnipresent in the day-to-day life of the rural community. Amanda woke to the tolling of the church bell for the morning Angelus which sounded at 6:00 A.M. All Catholic households had a crucifix placed over the entrance of the home. Other religious images decorated the walls. When the church bells tolled again at noon, farmers in their fields, workers in the factories, women and children knelt wherever they were to recite the prayer before their noon-day lunch. The slow tolling of the bell at 6:00 P.M. marked the end of the workers' labours for the night. Bonaventure played the violin and the evening was a time for music, and stories, but Amanda finished her day with a catechism lesson taught by her mother, followed by night-time prayers.

Church officials used the family to exercise and maintain the church's power. They kept records on births, marriages and deaths. The Catholic hierarchy created elaborate ceremonies, organized social and service clubs, and kept careful watch on its population through confessional schools and family visits. According to popular tradition, Quebec women of the period were better educated than their male counterparts, and recent research tends to confirm that this was the case. Amanda and her siblings, as in most families, received their first lessons from Eudoxie. According to one relative, Eudoxie Viger was in poor health, and, for this reason, Orpha, Amanda and Aldina were enrolled in boarding school when they were very young. Their childhood years, from that time onward, would be spent alternately between the walls of the convent, or with their parents, or with their uncle, Father Narcisse Trudel.

Chapter Two



Faithful Unto Death

While concern over their mother's health was a significant issue, it was not the only reason the Viger daughters were sent to boarding school. The tradition of education in Quebec, particularly as it pertained to young women and girls, imparted a powerful influence upon this decision. The civil authorities paid for a public education system, but families counted on the church to structure and regulate it. The rigorous climate, the distance, and the scarcity of teachers available in part accounted for why standards in the province were not as high as those elsewhere. But, just as important, was the line between the elites in Quebec society and the lower classes. Education in the private sector was reserved for the Catholic gentry. The clergy believed learning to read and write was only needed insofar as it related to the study of religion. The public domain, therefore, consisted of rudimentary instruction, supplemented by some professional training offered only to men, by various government departments. Parents of daughters had to send them to the convent-run boarding schools if they wanted them to have anything more than a very basic level of knowledge. If girls remained in these schools, they could receive the equivalent of eleven years of schooling.

Amanda was taken to the makeshift convent, only a few miles from the Savanne, in the fall of 1850. Students and sisters were lodged in a manor house, the property of the Bishop of Montreal. The school was open to girls aged seven to fifteen, but younger children like Amanda, at five years old, were accepted, with the permission of the mother superior. The children would have a month off in the summertime plus the first week of January. Amanda's parents believed they were giving their daughters the best of opportunities, and, in turn, the little girl loved school.

Given her early influences, the question is not why did Amanda Viger

become a nun, rather how could she have done otherwise? A child who enters a convent at such a tender age will likely spend more time with the sisters than she can expect to spend with her parents. Even aside from the religious indoctrination, many children at five years of age feel a need to seek out a mother figure, in the absence of her own, and it is quite likely Amanda turned to the silent women, dressed in black, who took care of her.

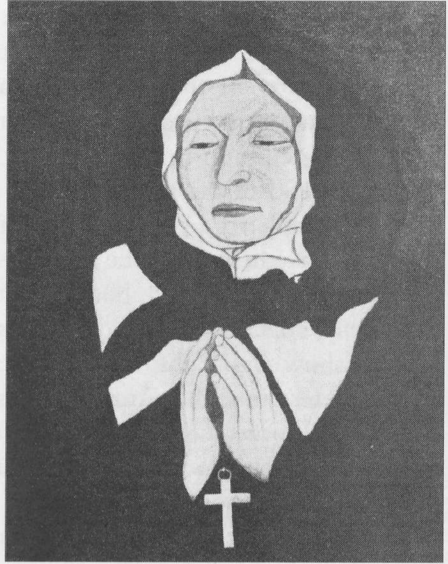
Few teaching orders enjoyed a better reputation than the CND (*la Congrégation de Notre-Dame*). The order, with its roots in seventeenth-century France, was an outgrowth of the Reformation of the previous century. Women, especially the wealthy, were segregated in a class-based society that had little regard for women in general, particularly unmarried females, unless they were nuns. They were not to work outside the home, or mingle unescorted in public places. Women in religious life enjoyed an extraordinarily high status, compared to their secular sisters, but only as long as they remained cloistered. Nuns cared for the vessels and other articles used in the churches, made lace, linens, and vestments worn by priests, prepared communion wafers, and performed a multitude of domestic chores, but nothing that brought them into contact with the secular world.

However, the Reformation ushered in a period of tremendous upheaval in French society, and in its aftermath the structures of traditional community life for religious women shifted. Large numbers of wealthy ladies, inspired by the writings of a Carmelite mystic, Saint Theresa of Avila, wanted to help the poor and the sick, preach and teach religion. Some entered convents, but a good number were drawn to the Protestant denominations. There, they not only received instruction in their new religion, but were also taught to read and write. Naturally, they influenced their families to do likewise. Church officials undertook to counter the trend toward Protestant conversion by opening education to women. According to the mores of the period, priests could not teach girls, nor could boys and girls be taught together so the logical solution was to establish female religious communities.

The Congregation of Notre-Dame adopted a modified form of seclusion in order to meet their religious requirements, and answer this new demand. The students were brought for instruction to separate quarters within the convents, and the nuns entered the classrooms through private doorways directly from their cloisters. The CND, like many others in France, attracted to their community a number of lay women who were known as the 'seculars' or, in French, *congréganistes externes*.

They were not restricted by formal vows, nor did they submit to the rules of a cloister. Among them was Marguerite Bourgeoys (Soeur Bourgeoys, or Soeur Marguerite Du Saint-Sacrement as she was later known).

Marguerite Bourgeoys arrived in Montreal under the protection of the governor, Chomedy De Maisonneuve, for the purpose of establishing a school to teach the native and colonial children in 1653. The colony was just over ten years old. One of her first contacts in the new world was Jeanne Mance, the founder of the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital in Montreal. The two women, so important to the city's history, became close friends. Authorities allowed Bourgeoys to open a school for girls. Determined that instruction should be offered free to all children, she and her followers travelled around the surrounding Ville-Marie countryside teaching boys and girls to read and write.



Marguerite Bourgeoys.

Boucherville was one of the communities on their circuit. According to legend, before Marguerite Bourgeoys died in January of 1700, she herself drew up the plans for the first Boucherville convent. Membership in the Congregation of Notre-Dame never exceeded eighty women during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century. But, in response to Bourget's call, a mass of recruits entered each decade that followed the rebellions. Between 1851 and 1860 when the Viger daughters were among their students, the congregation had an average membership of 188 women, and they were operating thirteen boarding schools.

The cost of board was high. Most parents paid in cash in Montreal, but the schools in the rural areas adapted fee scales to meet the needs of a varied clientele, accepting payment in agricultural products, and reducing costs if more than one child from a family attended, or if the children had relatives among the congregation. Occasionally, a bright student could hope to be accepted at little or no charge if she could convince the order that she was interested in religious life. Parents often approached

a more prosperous relative, or asked the local curate to assume the costs of a daughter's schooling.

From the few remaining documents, we know that Orpha and Amanda were both only five years old when they were first enrolled. Orpha's name was among those in the register of October 1849, while Amanda's is on the list for April 1851. Their younger sister Aldina began in September 1853. The information these lists contain is scanty but intriguing. There were about sixty students registered throughout the year, with forty of them boarding, and the others attending the day school. Bonaventure usually paid with a measure of stove wood, wheat, or other agricultural product. He, as well as other parents, settled the fees at the end of the term, in small increments, and usually after the children completed a period of time in residence. It was not unusual to have a relative help settle the accounts, especially when several children from one family attended, but the fact that Father Trudel paid for most of Amanda's 1853–1854 school year, and that he did not, as far as these records show, assist the other Viger daughters, suggests that he had already determined that Amanda's destiny was with the church.

Bishop Bourget could assure the teaching congregations complete autonomy in the education sector, but he counted on them to organize the public day schools, since, among their membership, were the most competent teachers of the era. The children were grouped according to age rather than by class. Schedules, uniforms, and curriculum in the Boucherville convent were similar to those in the other schools. The children were taught French and English, writing, arithmetic, geography and the globe, ancient and modern history, rhetoric, chemistry, natural philosophy, botany and music, including voice lessons and instrumentals (harp, piano, or guitar). They learned needlework, as well as how to cut and assemble vestments and embroidery. The congregation introduced to Boucherville the study of English in 1844, and piano in 1849.

Such a broad-based educational programme seems to contradict some researchers who argue that the courses taught in the convent schools were destined to orient young women towards a very limited future. The CND's aim, in fact, was to direct young women towards careers as housewives or a life of religious worship. Nevertheless, should they need employment later on, work in education or domestic science would be open to them, and they would be well qualified to handle most roles in those fields. The standards were flexible, especially in the rural areas, where children were coming and going all the time.

Les classes externes, or day classes, as they were called, were free and

open to both sexes. Besides catechism, the day students were taught the basics, and it is possible both day students and boarders attended at least some classes together: reading, writing, and arithmetic were on the curriculum, as well as skills of particular value to children from a rural milieu, such as sewing for girls and agricultural techniques for boys. The congregation received no government remuneration and were operating the day school with money generated by the boarding students.

The little girls lived by nearly all the same rules that the sisters followed. The religious trappings and conventions encompassed them all. They slept in large dormitories, rose together and went from chapel to refectory to classroom, two by two, in procession. Silence was maintained in the dormitories so that they could offer their souls to God. They were quiet during meals so they could listen to the spiritual message read to them by one of the sisters or an older student. They assisted at mass every morning before breakfast. Aside from music, art and sewing, the only activity permitted outside of the classroom was membership in the Children of Mary. There were numerous religious celebrations which followed the calendar year. Hymns, credos, and couplets were repeated to them by the sisters, priests and visiting missionaries. No doubt influenced by this environment, when she was the secretary of the Children of Mary, the fourteen year old Amanda wrote into the minutes, "Let us be faithful unto death."[1]

The children were under constant surveillance. They were disciplined for such infractions as laughing, running or talking in the corridors; turning their heads from side to side in chapel or asking inappropriate questions; singing songs; giving, loaning, buying or selling something without permission; opening the windows at night; picking flowers or fruit from the garden; arguing against authority; touching each other or developing close personal friendships. The boarding school girls were expected to maintain their dignity at all times, speak in soft voices, remain politely reserved and cautious in relationships between themselves and others, and never to enter into conversation with strangers. One of the sisters slept in the dormitories with them, so that she could ensure the youngsters dressed and undressed modestly. They were frequently reminded that they had a guardian angel who watched everything they did, and that God was a party to their every thought.

While freedom did not flourish under this regime, arts and culture, albeit within the religious context, often did. Programmes from this era give an indication of the talent developed in the students of Ville-Marie in Montreal. Three children in the first class in music at the end of term

ceremonies in 1856 performed works by composer Norma De Bellini; several youngsters read their own compositions; the choir presented a number of pieces; piano renditions were given of *sucis de sammermoor* and *ouverture à 24 mains*; three young ladies sang solos; and a play, *délices de l'étude*, or the pleasures of study, was presented. In the same institution, six years later, ceremonies opened with eight pianos (forty hands) and three harps in harmony. Special guests at this event included the Governor General of Canada, Charles Stanley, Bishop Bourget, a number of clergymen, and the elite of Montreal society, many of them parents of boarders. Children wrote and performed their own play. There were often reading clubs, poetry groups, and writing circles in the larger boarding schools.

Aside from her formal instruction, Amanda took piano lessons, and, with all the other youngsters, participated in the choir. They staged exhibitions to demonstrate their art and needlework, singing and physical fitness. The Bishop of Montreal, frequently attended closing ceremonies and questioned the girls on their knowledge, not only of religious dogma but of history, mathematics, and other subjects as well.

Austere as conditions were for the Viger children, the little girls who attended the boarding schools two decades earlier in the 1820s and 1830s had it even tougher. These children woke up fifteen minutes after the sisters, that is at 4:30 A.M. in the summertime and 5:00 A.M. in the winter. Mass was at 5:30 A.M., fifteen minutes earlier on the mornings when communion was distributed. Some children arrived in chapel half dressed or still wearing night dresses and bonnets. Sometimes they continued their sleep by reclining back on their ankles against the seats behind them. After breakfast, the children made their beds, swept and cleaned their dormitories, the refectory, and their classrooms.

Life had improved a bit for the girls by 1842. Amanda would rise at 5:00 or 5:30 A.M., depending on whether or not there would be communion. Mass was at 6:00 A.M. followed by breakfast. In schools, where domestic servants did the housekeeping duties, a study period was initiated between 8:00 and 9:00 A.M. Amanda and her schoolmates were still expected to tidy their dormitory, make their beds and sweep the floors. Lessons, which included dictation and writing exercises, spiritual reading and needle work, began at 9:00 A.M. After a short break for recreation and dinner, classes began again at 1:00 P.M. There was an hour break at 3:00 P.M. for a visit to the church, recreation and lunch. Lunch was plain, consisting of a slice of dry bread washed down with water. A study period followed. Evening prayers were said at 5:00 P.M. and after

this the children put on their night clothes in order to protect their uniforms. There was a visit to the chapel for a fifteen minute period of meditation before supper, which was served at 6:00 P.M. There was a period of worship at 8:00 P.M., just before bedtime. Two days a week, one-and-a-half to three hours were spent in catechism lessons. The Viger daughters and their classmates spent Sundays, following a high mass, in spiritual reading and studying.

Amanda was expected to have six sets of underwear, six pairs of socks, six pocket handkerchiefs, six hand towels, two navy blue dresses, a few night dresses, and a box of toiletries. Her uniform was a black long sleeved chemise which hung from her shoulders to about mid-calf. It was covered with a royal blue apron. She wore a white dress with a black silk apron on Sundays, and a navy blue coat and a black bonnet with a black veil to go outside. When she went to church in early summer, Amanda sported a straw bonnet with a blue or white net (depending on whether or not she was going to communion) draped over her face. The children put black veils over their heads and shoulders before entering the convent chapel.[2]

As with all the young women educated in convent schools, Amanda was expected to fulfill French Quebec's ideals of femininity. Who better to mould her young life after than the mother of the church the holy virgin Mary? Marian worship had its roots in seventeenth century France when the image of Mary became the personification of virginal purity. Children were taught that Mary, raised and educated in the temple of Jerusalem with, "many other holy virgins," dedicated her life to God.[3] The proclamation of the Doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1854, which asserted that Mary was preserved from any taint of original sin, assured that her image in the church, as a woman free from, "carnal knowledge or desire," set an impossible standard of female behaviour.[4] However, it was one that religious women of the time were expected to attain.

One outcome of the Marian worship was the formation of the Sodality of the Children of Mary, an organization that became popular not only in Quebec, but throughout Catholic Canada. The Sodality of Mary had its beginnings in Sicily before 1560, but it was only after 1751 that a few women, "empresses and other ladies of distinction," were allowed to form women's sodalities. The Oblate Fathers brought the concept to Canada from France in 1841. The congregation organized a Sodality of the Children of Mary for their older students in Montreal on January 12, 1846. A short time later there were branches of the Children

of Mary in every one of their schools. Their purpose was to perform good works for others, while creating in girls an alliance with the Holy Mother so they would learn to love her, and to emulate her as much as possible.

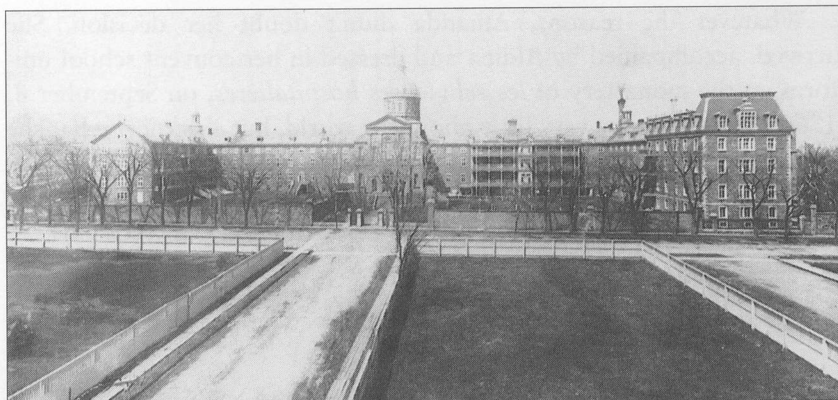
Only children who reached a certain level of maturity, and stood out as models in the school, could belong. Orpha, Amanda and Aldina were all members. Aldina Viger, one of several candidates, was received at a ceremony on May 1, 1855. Sister Ste-Anne, their spiritual director, taught them about the goals and purpose of the association. Father Bécard, the curate of Boucherville's Holy Family Parish, admonished the girls in his sermon to obey each and everyone who held a position of authority. Following his address, the children knelt before the curate and pronounced an act of consecration. The directress led the new members to the communion table where the priest presented each one with the distinctive medal of the Children of Mary, along with a holy card. Later that day, Orpha Viger was named to the office of sacristan, one of six executive positions.

At the annual general meeting on November 5, 1859, Amanda was re-elected Secretary of the Children of Mary. President of the sodality was Marie Sicotte. Sicotte, three years older than Amanda, eventually became a nursing sister, and in 1869, she joined Amanda in Tracadie. The two girls, as well as the other candidates for office, had their nominations confirmed officially the following Sunday. Viger was already exhibiting a certain zeal when it came time to enforce the rules. She wrote that one of their members was expelled from the sodality because of her bad conduct. Earlier, she noted that the girls decided the best way to reprimand a cohort was through 'fraternal correction.'

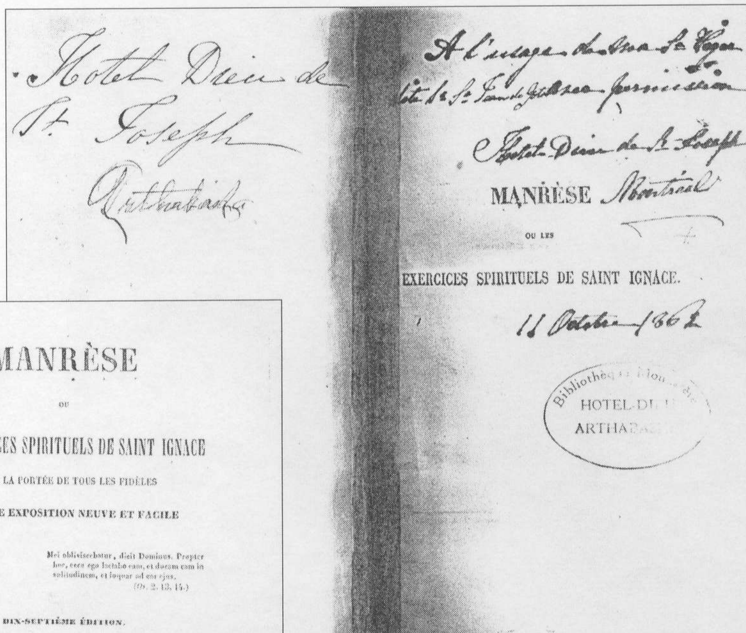
Undoubtedly, Amanda's decision to enter religious life was forged during her years with the congregation. She told her sisters that she felt called to serve God at the age of nine on the occasion of her first communion while kneeling in prayer at the foot of the altar. There were other, equally significant, factors that led her to select the hospitallers. Family tradition would have held some influence as among Amanda's ancestors were three members of *les Religieuses Hospitallers de Saint-Joseph* who had served sisters in during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

More significantly, Amanda's childhood included annual summer holidays that she and her siblings spent with Father Trudel, their maternal uncle, a distinguished priest and curate, who also imparted a strong influence upon Amanda's developing religious direction.

Whatever the reasons, Amanda didn't doubt her decision. She arrived, accompanied by Aldina and dressed in her convent school uniform, at the monastery of *les religieuses hospitalières*, on September 8, 1860. Amanda knew very little about the world, but she knew what she wanted—an opportunity to study, and a chance to attain everlasting salvation, while at the same time living a professional life. Whatever her motives, she was, "received by our mothers with great expectations."



The new Hôtel-Dieu de Montreal, *Mont Sainte-Famille*, 1861.



Hotel Dieu de St. Joseph

Arthabaska

Hotel-Dieu de St. Joseph

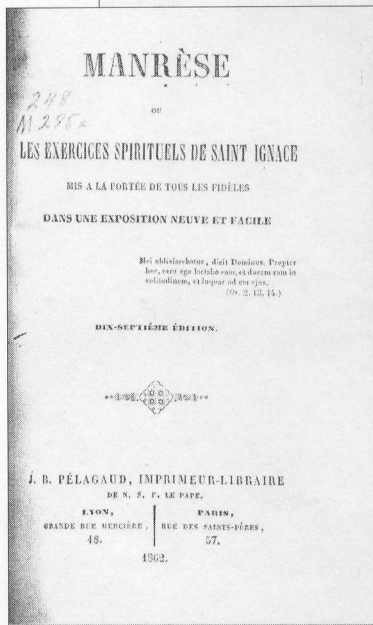
MANRÈSE Montreal

OU LES

EXERCICES SPIRITUELS DE SAINT IGNACE.

11 Octobre 1862

Bibliothèque ... HOTEL-DI... ARTHA...



MANRÈSE

248 M285a

OU

LES EXERCICES SPIRITUELS DE SAINT IGNACE

MIS A LA PORTÉE DE TOUS LES FIDÈLES

DANS UNE EXPOSITION NEUVE ET FACILE

Mei obliviscebatur, dicit Dominus. Propter hoc, ecce ego lactabo eam, et ducam eam in solitudinem, et loquar ad cor ejus.
(Os. 2. 13, 14.)

DIX-SEPTIÈME ÉDITION.

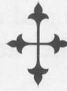
J. B. PÉLAGAUD, IMPRIMEUR-LIBRAIRE
DE N. S. P. LE PAPE,

LYON,	PARIS,
GRANDE RUE MERCIÈRE,	RUE DES SAINTS-PÈRES,
48.	57.

1862.

Pages from Amanda Viger's prayer book.

Chapter Three



Challenge and Possibility

Amanda Viger inherited a cultural and spiritual tradition that dated to seventeenth-century France when she joined *les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph*. Like Viger, the co-founders of the nursing order were a product of Catholic reform. Yet, conditions in seventeenth-century France were very different from those in Boucherville. The years of war that accompanied the Reformation left the French government bankrupt. Unlike Quebec, where the church was able to consolidate its power after the failure of the 1837 and 1838 rebellions, the church in France was in disarray, and many of the hierarchy blamed women. They reasoned that through their control over the menfolk in their lives, women had undue authority over its outcome, so the Catholic church thus undertook to limit female power and influence by making them completely subservient to the men in their families, or by cloistering them in monasteries.

Fortunately, some clergymen, such as Vincent de Paul, believing Catholic action to be a legitimate and necessary part of a devout life, saw no reason to prevent female participation. Born in France in 1576, de Paul believed that no Catholic could be saved unless he or she attempted to help the poor both materially and spiritually. His message was so well received that in Archdiocese of Lyon where he was a curate, certain poor families were overwhelmed with visitors who preached to them and brought donations of food and clothing. In 1625, de Paul founded a congregation of priests and coordinated groups of female parishioners to minister to the poor.

During this period in France, there were thousands of displaced persons. Hunger and disease were prevalent. The country was seething with religious fervour, which found expression through lengthy prayer services, intense devotions, and self-inflicted penances. Pious women, like Marie de La Ferre, who later went on to be a co-founder of *les Religieuses Hospitallers de Saint-Joseph,* were exactly the kind of workers Vincent de

Paul needed. La Ferre wanted to live with others like herself but she also wanted to work in the world, and help solve some of the problems in her society. However, her appearance and attitudes conflicted so much with gender norms of the period that her activities, and those of her friends, generated intense animosity.

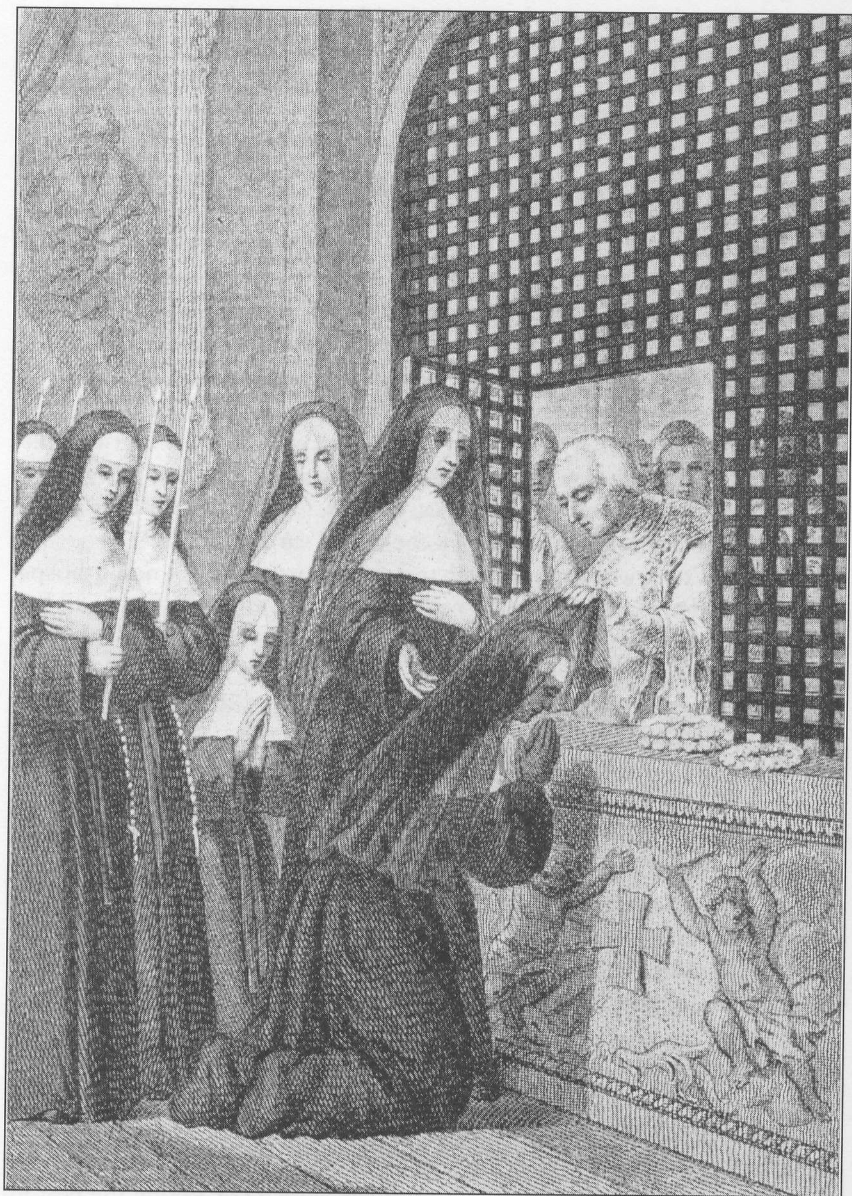
Marie de La Ferre who had initiated her apostolic work at the age of sixteen, discarding her fine clothes, dressing as a peasant, and to the dismay of her family, teaching religion in some of the worst areas of La Flèche, gradually accumulated followers. She and the women she worked with added a poorhouse to their circuit of care. A wealthy businessman named Jérome Le Royer served on the board of directors of the poorhouse, and the two frequently met. One day, in 1634, Marie told Le Royer of a vision she had had in which she would one day be in charge of a large hospital ward.

Le Royer knew, he told her, through dreams and visions of his own, that she would be instrumental in helping him fulfill his mission: to establish a religious congregation of hospital sisters in La Flèche, to participate in the overseas development of Montreal (Ville-Marie), and to see to the construction of a hospital to be staffed by this order. Both Le Royer and La Ferre discussed their visions with spiritual advisors. The thirty-seven-year-old Le Royer, married and the father of five children, was told his was nothing but a pious dream. Nonetheless, he arranged with the town's administrators to renovate the poorhouse, renaming it *l'Hôtel-Dieu de La Flèche*. Marie and her followers were contracted to run the hospital on condition that they cease their work on the streets, and live as a religious community under simple vows. The opening chapter of their constitution, Le Royer believed, was dictated to him by God.

Both Le Royer and La Ferre were typical of the lay workers of the period known as *les dévots*. Both of them invested their entire personal fortunes in their work. La Ferre did not have enough money to even pay her own dowry by the time the hospitallers held their first profession ceremony, January 22, 1644. Similarly, when her husband died in 1659, Le Royer's widow, with all but one of their five children in religious communities, was left destitute.

Notwithstanding their personal financial losses, Le Royer and La Ferre established four foundations in France before an active volunteer, Jeanne Mance brought the hospitallers to Ville-Marie. La Ferre steadfastly resisted demands from authorities and from a few within her own community, to change the structure of their house, impose the cloister, and require the nuns to take perpetual vows, until her death in 1652.

It is unlikely that Jérome Le Royer would have succeeded in establishing the order in Ville-Marie without the work of Jeanne Mance. Marie de La Ferre and Le Royer were religious zealots, guided by voices and



An artist's etching of the first group of hospitallers pronouncing their vows in 1659.

visions they cultivated through intense prayer rituals and meditation. Mance, who was born in Langres in 1606, nursed soldiers and civilians during France's many years of civil strife. Later, she became a member of a group of secular women who worked with the poor. Learning that there were women, teachers and nurses in Quebec, she determined to go to the New World, and she used her gifts as a charismatic speaker to raise funds for her cause. Eventually, a member of the aristocracy, Angélique Faure de Berlise, the Duchess de Bullion, donated the necessary money to establish a hospital for Ville-Marie and asked Mance to be its founder; Mance finalized her plans to do so in April of 1641.

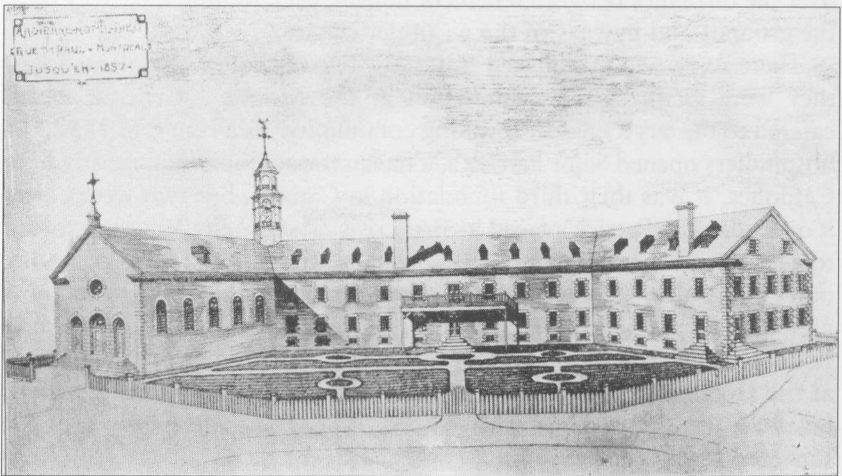
Joining the society of Notre-Dame (*la société Notre-Dame*) as the bursar and nurse, she sailed for Quebec in April of 1641; the party landed near Sainte Foy where Mance apprenticed under the nursing sisters. By the time spring arrived, she had learned the rudiments of medical care in the New World, such as how to treat serious injuries and diseases like scurvy, cholera, and unexplained fevers. She made ointments, poultices, and salves. Just as Amanda Viger would do in New Brunswick more than two hundred years later, Mance searched out the plants and herbs that grew in the region, and learned their medical uses. Mance, and her friend Marguerite Bourgeoys, journeyed back to La Flèche in the spring of 1659.

When the two women returned to Canada with the founding hospitallers, the rules of cloister, which had already been implemented in all but the La Flèche foundation, were imposed on them as soon as they arrived. Back in France, the mother superior of the *l'Hôtel-Dieu de la Flèche*, angry that the new founders would be cloistered, recorded that each of the sisters left without the consent of her community. Times had changed and people in the La Flèche did not want their finest and brightest young people taken to the New World.

When Amanda Viger was growing up, *les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph*, and the Congregation of Notre-Dame, along with other nursing and teaching orders, were integral to the smooth functioning of Lower Canadian society. As a general rule, teaching was considered a more respectable profession for women than nursing, but few professions had more status than that of the hospitaller. The hospitaller was renowned for her training and expertise, as well as for her link to the city's past. Her foremothers nursed soldiers, settlers, and native peoples, sharing with them the dangers and hardships of life in the New World. They survived the downfall of the French regime, and they learned to adapt to the demands of a large nineteenth-century Canadian city. The Hôtel-Dieu was a teaching hospital and doctors who trained there were among the best in Lower Canada. The hospitallers offered Amanda, and others interested in science or health care, one of the few opportunities they would have to develop a career.

The women in religious communities were grouped in one of several classes. The choir sisters or *Soeurs de choeur* generally occupied the most important functions of the institutions; they supervised all offices, and took the fullest part in religious services and celebrations. Only choir sisters, and only those choir sisters who were professed for at least three years, were permitted to vote. While some religious orders reduced the number of chapter meeting to one or two per month, the voting members of the hospitallers were still meeting weekly in 1860, and all of the decisions affecting the governance of the order were made at these assemblies. The domestic sisters, or *soeurs converses*, were assigned the more menial functions in the congregation. They did not have the franchise, nor was every office within the community open to them. The lay sisters and domestic sisters were usually from poor families. Generally, they were less educated than the choir sisters since they had little opportunity for schooling. Sometimes a candidate, accepted by the community as a choir sister, preferred to enter as a lay sister. At other times, a candidate's ability would show itself, and she would be accepted as a choir sister and educated by the hospitallers, even if she did not have the necessary dowry. The choir sisters and domestic sisters were both subject to cloister. Only the *soeurs tourières* or lay sisters, who ran errands, took messages, answered the outside door, were permitted to enter and have dealings with the secular world.

Amanda eagerly embraced the cloister, knowing little or nothing about the debate which surrounded its implementation. Two hundred years had passed after all, and the hospitallers found that they were able to perform



The former Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal where Amanda was the last postulant accepted and she moved to the new institution a few months later.

all of their duties within its confines, and still enjoy the privileges, including the social status, conferred upon those who chose this life. Many hospitallers not only accepted it, but, perhaps because the cloister afforded a degree of security and protection in a rapidly growing urban centre, they also resisted any attempt to change the policy.

The demographics of the city of Montreal were far different from those envisioned by the founders two hundred years earlier. The British government encouraged entrepreneurs to take advantage of the economic possibilities open for exploitation in Lower Canada after the conquest of 1756. Warehouses and offices lined Montreal's harbour. There was a flourishing commercial district and a variety of factories. Famine in Ireland in the 1840s forced numerous Irish Catholics to flee their country, and many immigrated to Montreal, where most of them were clustered, with a large number of francophones, at the lower end of the economic ladder. Anglophones outnumbered francophones in the 1850s, but the trend started to reverse itself, and, by 1860, Montreal's population of 90,323 was quite evenly split between the two language groups. Cultural and economic life, however, was dominated by the English.

Seventy-five to eighty thousand Catholics resided in the diocese, made up of the city and its surrounding suburbs, measuring approximately eleven miles in length and just over five miles in width—under the spiritual guidance of Bishop Bouget. Although no different from other large urban areas by the standards of the time, the city was dirty. The stench from slaughterhouses, tanneries and soap factories filled the air. Butchers left animal parts to rot in open fields. Animal and human waste spilled over the dirt lanes between tenement houses, even finding their way onto the grounds and byways of the wealthier classes.

There were two established hospitals, but Catholics complained that they were victims of discrimination at the Montreal General, which catered to the city's English speaking community. As a result, in 1852, the hospitallers opened Saint Patrick's, a haven for anglophones, mostly Irish Catholics. It was their third foundation in Canada, but two weeks after it opened, Saint Patrick's faced its first crisis. The hospitallers were forced to welcome a large number of Irish orphans after a fire destroyed, among other properties, *l'Hospice Saint-Jérôme-Emilien*, an orphanage and hospital run by the Sisters of Providence. A few weeks later, when Bishop Bourget asked the hospitallers if they could make room for Irish elderly at the Hôtel-Dieu, they complied even though it was obvious that both hospitals were now dangerously overcrowded. The monastery too was squeezed for space.

Ville-Marie, the motherhouse for the Congregation of Notre-Dame, which was adjacent to the Hôtel-Dieu, was also coping with a large number of boarding students, plus an influx of entrants. The hospitallers sold

Saint Patrick's Hospital and commenced a new construction in the parish of St.-Laurent on the northwest fringe of the city, now the corner of Pine Avenue and St.-Urbain Street. The hospitallers, who had owned the 150-acre tract since 1730, named the future complex *Mont Sainte-Famille.* It would consist of a modern hospital, with separate wards for French and English patients, an orphanage, a shelter for the aged and a more spacious monastery for themselves. *Mont Sainte-Famille* had just begun taking patients when the voting sisters accepted Viger's candidacy. Demolition of the old Hôtel-Dieu would commence a few days after her arrival. In short, the community of sixty-nine hospitallers were in the midst of a major transition.

Amanda, dressed in her boarding school uniform, said good-bye to her sister, Anatalie (known affectionately as Anna), who had accompanied her that morning, and, through Anna, an adieu to her former life, with a mixture of sadness and anticipation. She would miss her home, but she could continue to study, and eventually embrace a career. Her future was full of challenge, and pregnant with possibilities.

Amanda, a short, stocky but well developed teenager, was younger than the requisite age of fifteen for entrants years. She was fair-skinned, blond-haired, and there was a regal look to her stance, and a slightly haughty cast in the way she held her head. All prospective entrants, widows or maidens, needed references from a priest, preferably one from their own diocese. They had to be members of good Catholic families, and provide certificates of baptism and confirmation. Postulants were not accepted if they had financial debts, or were obliged to support parents, or other relatives. Nor could they be involved in any unsettled legal entanglements. Care was taken to make sure no force, moral or physical, was used to induce an applicant's choice of vocation.

Amanda fulfilled all of their initial requirements. She demonstrated genuine signs of religious piety, and a desire for Christian perfection. There was also good reason to assume that she possessed sound judgment, candour and talent. She appeared humble and submissive, both requirements for entrance, but her religious mothers would soon learn that these attributes were not basic elements of Amanda's character. The sisters wanted entrants who got along well with others, were enthusiastic and carried out their tasks, no matter how demanding or menial, with good will and determination. While they were somewhat disappointed in Amanda's attitude the first few months after she arrived, it became obvious after Amanda completed the initial phase and could begin her training outside of the novitiate, that their faith in this particular candidate was well placed. She would not shirk from anything.

Amanda and another new entrant, Eulalie Bonneau, were taken to an ante-chamber adjacent to the choir where they participated in a brief

reception, the first of hundreds of observances over the years. Ceremonies were used to inspire members, and keep them committed. The choir, the spiritual heartland of the community, was where the religious gathered for all the ceremonials.

Amanda was told to leave behind her family, friends and all that she held dear, to strive to lead a life devoted to the glory of God, the salvation of souls and to her own perfection. She and Bonneau were given a lighted candle, and, in unison, they prayed that the fire of divine love would help them leave the world and its attractions behind. They carried the candle into the choir where all the religious of the community had gathered. The assembly sang "*Veni creator.*" Amanda prayed: "I live now not I but Christ liveth in me." She knelt at the feet of Mother Superior Marie Pagé: "Behold I come to do thy will," she said. Following the ceremony, each postulant embraced every one of the sisters. Pagé introduced them to the mistress of novices, Sister Josephe Marchessault. The novitiate was the cradle of their spiritual infancy. The mistress of novices would guide the new postulants in their religious development, respond to their doubts and instruct them on the lives of the saints and the meaning behind their devotions.

Women's communities were ordered to house the novices in separate quarters in order to ensure that the newest entrants would not be exposed to any "unseemly" conduct on the part of professed members. Behaviours that fell into that category could be anything as innocent as running, breaking silence, loud laughter; or more serious infractions such as gossiping, arguing, boasting, answering back, refusing to obey an order, or failure to carry out an office. They were striving for perfection, but they were no more successful than any other group of humans. The longer the new entrants were kept from that knowledge, the more time they had to grow and develop spiritually within the novitiate, before they had to confront and deal with the frailties occasionally exhibited by some of their more advanced colleagues. The postulants remained in secular clothes until their habit ceremony, but they were taught to keep their arms crossed like the professed sisters, and they participated in all the spiritual exercises and observances. They learned to meditate, to examine their conscience minutely, to shore up their faith with spiritual readings and to assist piously at mass and other religious exercises. They were encouraged to discuss their doubts, or even the slightest inclination to transgress, with Marchessault. They had to accept all their sisters in religious life as equals, and to resist any preference they might feel for individuals among them.

Three books—*Constitutions for the Religious Hospitaller of Saint Joseph*, *The Customary and Little Rules of the Religious Hospitallers of the Congregation of St. Joseph*, and *Manual of the Religious Hospitaller*

of Saint Joseph—were studied assiduously by the new entrants, often referred to by the professed, and read aloud in full to all once each year. They contained their rules, and the ways they were to be interpreted. The postulants discussed with one another and their mistress their thoughts on heaven, God's judgement, punishment for sins, their favourite virtues, the zeal they felt for God's glory, the welfare of the church, and their desire to convert the unfaithful and win souls for Christ.

Amanda was among five postulants and the last admitted to the old monastery. There were two novices. The demolition was well underway. In October, the seven of them were relegated to one room which had previously served as the postulants' dormitory. The hospitallers found it difficult to keep this relatively small group isolated, since parts of the

A group of novices. Those with the bonnets are postulants; those in white veils are novices and the group in 'regular uniform' are newly professed. The year of this photograph would be 1902 but the uniforms were basically the same when Amanda entered the order.

monastery were already being razed.

According to the annals, a written history of the foundation, the professed sisters were impressed with the postulants and novices. Some had left luxurious homes and were now crowded together in a room that could be compared to the stable in Bethlehem. Yet, they did not show the least sign of loneliness. The historian, however, failed to note one postulant who was quite unhappy. Amanda was playful, undisciplined, and sometimes vain; traits which made her initial months a trying period for both her, and her teachers. She was not a particularly introspective per-

The refectory, *Mont Sainte-Famille* where the sisters would gather to eat their evening meal.

The choeur, *Mont Sainte-Famille*. This is the room where Amanda took her habit and veil, and was later professed. All of the religious ceremonies were carried out here. The choeur was where they gathered to hear mass, at which time the grill at the centre was pulled across to allow a view of the chapel altar.

son, and no doubt felt stifled under the limitations of the novitiate. The fact that she entered in this period of transition made these first weeks even more difficult. She was lonely and dejected. Many times, she was fed up with the situation, once she threw her shoes on the floor, "I am tired of this," she said, "I won't take any more of it." The hospitallers tolerated Amanda's outbursts philosophically. Though they did not expect perfection in their postulants and novices, Marchessault believed that it was often those with passionate natures who advanced further than others.

The mother superior of *Mont Sainte-Famille*, Marie Pagé, would become the most important influence in Amanda's life, but she saw little of her in this early stage of Viger's training. Born on Christmas Day, 1811

The visitors' parlour, *Mont Sainte-Famille*, where Amanda met her parents and other relatives after her habit ceremony.

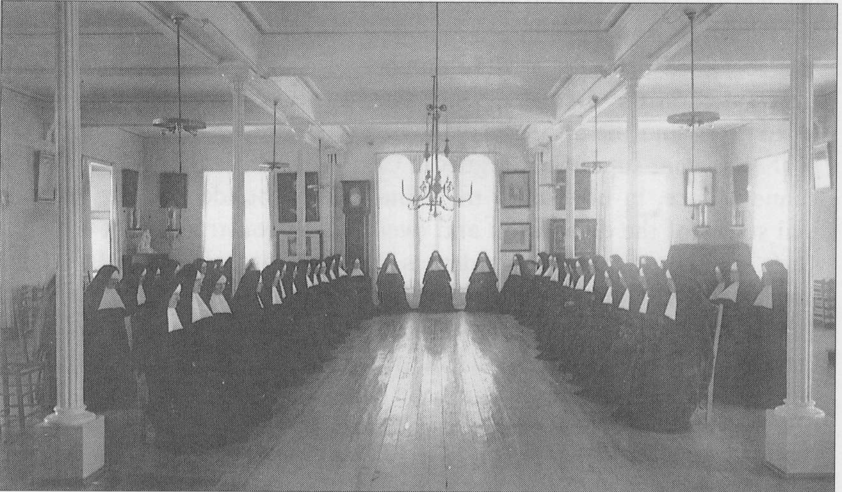
near Montreal, Pagé had entered the hospitallers at twenty-two, a relatively senior age for the time. The attitudes and approach she brought to her life as a nun worried the older religious because she was thought to be too innovative. However, Pagé's keen administrative abilities helped propel her to a position of leadership and she was first elected a mother superior in 1857, and in that capacity guided the Hôtel-Dieu Montreal, in its St. Paul Street location, though the difficult years of demolition and reconstruction. Pagé then guided the new Hôtel-Dieu through its construction. She was living in the new residence but dividing her time between the two locations, and on the work site daily, supervising, cajoling, and pleading with the workers to get the job completed.

It was a tradition for the hospitallers, like other Catholic religious

The novitiate, *Mont Sainte-Famille* where Amanda and all novices received their spiritual training. Unless they had duties elsewhere in the convent, or were attending a service in the choeur, they spent most of the days here.

The sacristy, *Mont Sainte-Famille*. Located behind the convent altar, the sisters could enter the sacristy from their choir, and prepare the vestments and accoutrements for the mass.

foundations, to preserve the remains of their departed members in a vault on the premises. Once a year the nuns held a mass and prayers for the dead in the underground location. For the older hospitallers, some of whom were reluctant to leave their former monastery, the remains of their departed colleagues could not be left behind. Pagé made plans to include their orderly transfer to the new premises. Invitations went out to Catholics all over the city. One hundred and ninety-two sisters had died since the arrival of the first hospitallers to Ville-Marie. Most of the bodies were entombed in two vaults within the old institution. These were exhumed, along with the remains of Jeanne Mance. The coffins, draped



The Community Room, *Mont Sainte-Famille.* The sisters gathered here for their hours of recreation. What is not shown here is the knitting, sewing, or other handiwork they were expected to work on during their period of relaxation.

in white fabric and adorned with flowers, were stacked in a pyramid in the nave of the chapel where they remained from January 29, 1861, until the morning of January 31. Although many caskets were damaged by at least two fires over the years, the community's records were such that Amanda, and others who came to pay their respects, knew in which casket their relative had been placed. All of the members of the Congregation of Notre-Dame visited, including their novices and postulants. The secretary noted that it was a touching sight to see, "All those virgins on their knees around the bier." Bishop Bourget conducted a high mass for the dead, and the church was decked in black. When the public services were over, the bishop, fighting to control his emotions, announced to the crowd that it was the last time mass would be cele-

brated in this, the oldest church in Montreal. Many, including the hospitallers, were openly weeping. The cortege, including the hospitallers riding in carriages donated by friends of the community, made its way to *Mont Sainte-Famille* where the coffins were entombed in the new vault underneath the church.

Some members of the community remained in the old, partially demolished building. It was impossible to keep the novices and postulants sequestered. The rules of the cloister, the observance of silence, the periods set aside for prayers and meditation were increasingly difficult to maintain. Pagé, who believed their training would be compromised if they were not soon in their own novitiate, arranged to have them moved that February. A make-shift pharmacy on the second floor of the old hospital remained open for a small number of orphans and homeless who still resided on the premises. Only after all the wards were closed, did these sisters shut the dispensary down.

The assistant superior, Marguerite Céré (who chose the religious name Jeanne Mance, in honour of the Hôtel-Dieu's founder), supervised the final stages of the demolition and oversaw the construction of the convent's warehouse and storage depots. Eulalie Quesnel, a founder of the Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu, was among this last group of five sisters to leave. Quesnel and her companions slept outside, sheltered under the walls of a former chapel and awoke drenched in rain on their last night. Five open-air masses were said that morning, on August 21,1861. A host of clergymen assisted Father Billaudèle, the Vicar-General, and Bishop Bourget. The priests formed a caravan of carriages to escort the remaining five or six hospitallers to their new residence.

The convent entrance, as it is today, was found on Le Pin Avenue. The door was tended by a lay sister. The portress would come to the grate, look first though the wicket to see who was there, and say one "Hail Mary" before greeting the guest. Visitors who arrived outside of visiting hours were dismissed unless, "They were persons of consequence." The yard of the monastery was surrounded by a high stone fence. Large gardens furnished fresh vegetables and fruit. There were wood sheds, hen houses and stables. The grounds, which featured small grottoes, the stations of the cross and a tiny chapel, were beautifully landscaped.

The major offices inside the convent included the choir, refectory, community room, and visitors' parlour. The religious exercises and ceremonials took place in the choir, the soul of the convent. The choir allowed the sisters to hear mass, away from the gaze of the public. Any observance, no matter how trivial it might seem today, required the hospitallers to gather silently in the "avant-choeur," before entering the choir two-by-two: the lay sisters first; followed by the postulants, the novices, domestic sisters, and choir sisters, with the mother superior walking last

and alone. Places were usually assigned according to the date each sister was professed. However, although all the sisters were taught the liturgical music, the more gifted singers, Amanda Viger among them, were positioned where their voices would be most effective. The sisters sat in long pews aligned at right angles to a draped window fitted with a latticed wood screen. The curtain was opened for mass, but it was nearly impossible to see any service that took place in the chapel, and very difficult for anyone but those in the very front to hear. They received communion through the window, which measured eighteen inches by fourteen inches. Even the chapel sacristy was off limits to them. The articles used on the altar were prepared by the nuns in an inner sacristy between the choir and chapel and conveyed to the priests by a turntable. The sisters could go to confession from the choir, or in this inner sacristy.

The protocol continued in the refectory. Those who were not on duty entered in formation at meal time. Each hospitaller took her personal eating utensils, tied in a napkin, as she passed a sideboard. She washed these in cold water after the meal, in individual jugs placed on the table in front of her, and returned them to the sideboard when she was finished. The mother superior and her assistant sat at separate tables at each side of the room.

The hospitallers gathered for recreation in the community room. Since they were never idle, a large closet at one end allowed them to store their needle work, which they picked up when they arrived, and returned when recreation was over. The chapter room was located a distance away from the choir, the refectory and the community rooms, so the voting sisters could deliberate without the fear of being overheard. The depository for the monastery, and the community parlour, with a wood grill which separated the sisters from their families during visits, were near the entrance. Chairs were provided in the parlour, but the grill prevented any real intimacy.

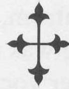
The sisters had their own small library, and separate rooms for music, dressmaking, and linens. A smaller wing contained the sisters' infirmary, as well as their own dispensary. There was a closed-in courtyard with a wash house, a bake house with stone ovens, a stable, and hen house. Religious reliquary—pictures of saints, statues, crucifixes, and framed religious mottoes—adorned walls and pillars. The statues in each room were decorated with flowers, and sometimes there were kneelers in front of them. Each choir sister had her own cell, furnished with a bed exactly five feet eight inches by two feet, nine inches, a small table with a drawer, a straight back hardwood chair, a kneeling desk, and shelves. The domestic sisters had their own beds, a crucifix, a table, a chair and a small chest of drawers, but they might have to share a cell, or live in dormitories.

The vault was not without a sombre beauty. Archways marked a small

altar. The coffins were recessed in walls in rows of three. Plaques identified the dead. There were ornate pillars with religious sayings and designs. On All Souls Day a high mass was celebrated here. All of the sisters, each holding a lighted candle, wound their way down a narrow staircase and entered the darkened tomb, in procession, singing.

One of the nicest rooms was reserved for the postulants and novices: "*c'est ici le beau Palais du Saint-renoncement*" was painted over the archway of the novitiate in large ornate letters; in English, "Palace of Holy Renunciation." It was on the second floor, at the head of a long wide corridor. Facing this hallway, at the back of the room, was a small shrine to the Sacred Heart. Other statues, including those of Mary, Joseph and the Infant of Prague, were surrounded with vases of flowers. Large lace curtained windows allowed sunlight to dapple the hardwood floors. Holy pictures and objects filled most of the available wall space. A few black, very straight, high-backed wood chairs were placed around the room and there was a kneeling bench in front of each statue. This, then, was the setting where the serious work of converting Amanda Viger from an idealistic but immature school girl prone to temper tantrums, to a respected member of the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph, would begin.

CHAPTER FOUR



The Religious Spirit

Amanda embarked on her career as only a pious, somewhat sanctimonious young woman might; fairly bursting with ardour and glorious anticipation. But she was quickly disillusioned. Life in the monastery was even more regulated than life in her convent school had been. She chafed under the constrictions and tedium of the novitiate. The bell was the "voice of God" Amanda awoke to every morning in predawn darkness, and it reverberated frequently throughout the day. "Let the spirit of Jesus dwell in my heart," she murmured before rising. Once up, she sprinkled herself with holy water, made the sign of the cross, and knelt by her bed for her morning prayers. Lastly, as an act of humility, she kissed the floor. There were further votives for her to say while washing and dressing, when she was ready to start her day she murmured: "I unite my intentions with those of Jesus Christ. May I model my life on Thy example."

She had to remain in her room until a second bell summoned all the hospitallers to the choir for additional prayers and meditation followed by mass. The goal of these supplications was to attune her will to God's will, and channel her intentions to His.

Amanda was drawn to the monastery because the mores of the day had cultivated in her a genuine desire to seek religious perfection. Yet, her personality did not readily adapt to the structure of the institution, or its limitations. It is likely, had she been born in the latter half of the twentieth century, that she would have chosen a career in science or medicine rather than follow a religious vocation, for her interests lay more in secular matters than in spiritual ones. It was difficult for her to silence her curious mind, and sit through hours of lectures on spiritual matters. Amanda was inclined to pray as she worked.

The postulants were not permitted to hold any office, and they were not to leave the novitiate except for their meals, and for the observances that took place in the choir. Amanda's schedule revolved around study-

ing her handbooks, praying, meditating, and receiving instructions from the mistress of novices. Nothing made her stand out as a religious. She continued to wear her school uniform, and it seemed obvious to those who had charge over her that she was still more of a school girl than a young nun. If she ever doubted her vocation, it must have been in those first troubling months after her entrance. Adapting herself to the methodical and ponderous pace of the novitiate was a trial not only for the entrant, but for her mistress of novices, the mother superior, and her Uncle Narcisse.

Detailed obituaries outlining their family backgrounds, career highlights, and transfers, as well as personality traits and quirks, are written on each sister, after her death. Copies of these testimonials, sent to each of their houses, were read as an example to the living of the challenges their predecessors faced, how they overcame them, and their achievements. While they were often flowery, they were also surprisingly frank and insightful. The anonymous sister who wrote Viger's obituary said Amanda was prone to temperamental outbursts culminating the evening she threw her shoes across the floor of her dormitory and threatened to quit. Despite such an episode, she never refused to pray, but she was fed up with the harshness of her physical surroundings, and the endlessly dreary routine.

In this rigid and disciplined culture such a minor fracas was enough to call in Father Trudel. The priest watched his niece's initial struggles closely and frequently gave her advice and support. He urged the sisters not to give up on his young ward. "She has the makings of a fine nun," he told them. Gradually, her outbursts became less frequent; nevertheless, to her great disappointment, the hospitallers delayed her investiture ceremony for three months, due to concern over her volatile temperament. The practice was not unusual. Many postulants and novices found these milestones in their religious development were postponed for similar reasons.

It was not enough to have the approval of the mistress of novices nor the mother superior. Amanda had to have permission to wear the habit from the entire community before any investiture date was set. According to the *Manual*, she would stand before them in the refectory, just at the start of the evening meal, and following the format, plead her case: "Reverend Mother and honoured sisters, I most humbly [ask]...the favour of being allowed to wear the holy habit although I may not deserve this...on account of my lack of fervour and exactness in fulfilling my duties; I hope ... to give you more satisfaction in the future."[1] The voting sisters accepted Amanda's petition on October 11, 1861.

Amanda withdrew from the society of others, and entered a three day period of total silence and meditation prior to the ceremony, which was scheduled for November 16, 1861. The purpose of the retreat was to help

her identify and examine her personal shortcomings, and see how these might effect the way she carried out her duties. She was enjoined to continually seek God's will in all of her efforts, and to ask for the support of the Holy Spirit whenever she was confronted with her own limitations. On the first day of this period, she followed these instructions: "forget your family, friends, material possessions and any desires for a husband and children," she was told. "Suppress any need for recognition, esteem or distinction of any kind...be governed entirely by whatever is for the glory of God, and the good of your neighbour." On the second day, she meditated on the subject of the habit, her official acceptance as a hospitaller, and her ongoing search for perfection.

New habits were only given to the highest ranking hospitallers, and only after it could be demonstrated that the old was in tatters. Amanda's would be a second-hand black frock repaired in several places. It was closed in front with deep pleats, and was chosen at random by the sister in charge of their uniforms. The sleeves were long, and wide enough for her to fold over her arms and hands. There were two veils; the under one hid a small white cap. A white gymp surrounded the neck and the shoulders. The wool serge fabric of her dress was so coarse it would chafe her skin if she were not protected by the layers of undergarments that she wore. When it was no longer suitable for a young novice, it would be handed down again to the domestic sisters. Its weight, its colour, and its shabbiness all symbolized their poverty, Christ's sacrifice and their own mourning over His death. The veil was a reminder to Amanda that she was a "Bride of Christ...fervent, generous and full of faith."

Amanda spent the last and final hours leading up to the ceremony, meditating on the crosses her career might bring her. Did she have difficulty dredging her mind for unforeseen disasters? Sister Dorina Frigault, curator of the Tracadie Museum, interviewed in the spring of 1977, pointed to a motto painted in black letters on a white washed piece of lumber that hung in Viger's office in Tracadie. It was Amanda's and reveals her attitude towards adversity: "I search in solitude for the crosses they said I would have to carry but nowhere do I find them."

The bell calling the hospitallers to the choir for the ceremonial sounded at 8:00 A.M. on November 16, 1861. The nuns gathered silently around Amanda, the only candidate receiving the veil that day, in the *avant-choeur*. Amanda, as befitting a bride, was dressed in a full-length, loose fitting white shift; her face and shoulders were shrouded in white. Earlier that morning, her habit had been pressed and folded and laid on a silver tray awaiting the bishop's blessing. Her veil, white for the novitiate, and a crown of flowers, lay on a second tray. Already, Amanda had learned to walk with silent steps, to keep her eyes modestly downcast, and to subdue her mounting joy. Tapered candles were distributed, and

the sisters passed the flame one to the other until all were lit. The choir began the singing of Psalm 83, "How lovely are thy tabernacles." Amanda, walking softly to the music, headed the procession. She genuflected, knelt on a carpeted Prie-Dieu positioned in the centre aisle, placed her candle in a holder in front of her, and rested her hands in prayer on a lace pillow. The religious behind her genuflected and took their usual places, snuffed out their candles, and waited for them to be collected.

Bishop Bourget, assisted by the chaplain, Father A. Narcan and Viger's uncle, Father Narcisse Trudel, commenced the mass. Amanda's parents, siblings and possibly her aunt, Madam Laurent, were in the church. They would only see her through the window of the grill, but she would meet them for a few minutes in the visitors parlour, later. Mid-way through the mass, the bishop, wearing the mitre and carrying his staff, proceeded to the grill. Pagé and Marchessault escorted Amanda to the window where the three knelt.

The bishop asked: "Sister Amanda Viger what is your wish?" Amanda replied, "I very humbly request permission to wear the holy habit of the *Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph* and the grace to be received with them into the house of our Lord...."[2] So began a series of questions and responses. Bishop Bourget blessed Amanda's habit, her veil, and the crown of flowers while Pagé and Marchessault arranged her headdress. Amanda bowed while the bishop spoke to her about the beauty of redressing herself in the ways of God; Fathers Narcan and Trudel held the trays with the newly blessed costume, and as the bishop finished speaking he handed them to Amanda who passed them onto the superior, and to Sister Marchessault. They then escorted Amanda to a small room where she could change. The priests knelt at the altar, and the sisters sang the lengthy *Litany of the Saints*, and another Psalm.

Amanda returned, dressed in the long black robe of the hospitaller, the wimple, and the underveil; draped over these was a length of white fabric. She walked, holding her lit candle, between the superior and the mistress of novices as the choral music resounded around them. Bourget took the white veil worn by novices, and placed it on Amanda. Pagé and Marchessault adjusted it so it would remain secure. The bishop then set a crown of flowers over her veil, and Amanda, who was kneeling in front of the grill, made a profound bow to receive the bishop's blessing. The singing of Psalm 132 signalled the end of the ceremony.

Amanda knelt before Pagé who then embraced her, and, as on the day she entered, she was hugged in turn by each of the sisters. When the embraces were over, all genuflected; the window slid shut, and the curtain of the grill was closed. Amanda led the sisters out of the choir. She was permitted to wear her flowers for the rest of the day.

Marchessault, who marked their every move, was often hardest on the novices she thought would ultimately make the best nuns. Singling out Amanda, as she did, was not a sign of rejection although the fact might not have been clear to the newly veiled. Luckily her mistress' barbs would lose a lot of their bite since Amanda could now work outside the narrow walls of the novitiate. Although she was not yet allowed on the public wards, the monastery itself, home to seventy religious women, had its own infirmary and drug dispensary where she trained as an assistant pharmacist. She also assisted the secretary, documenting and cataloguing a myriad of items in the archives. Amanda was among those whose place in the choir was based on her voice rather than her rank so it is no surprise that she was consistently assigned to assist the choral director who was responsible for teaching liturgical music consisting of masses, Gregorian chants, psalms, and hymns.

Funds donated for the Hôtel-Dieu were used exclusively for the upkeep of the hospital, not to support the nuns. Their foundations were expected to remain self-sufficient, drawing much of their income from investments made with their dowries. This was scarcely enough to maintain them so they augmented their stipends with other sources of revenue. Among their members were women who toiled far from the hospital wards. The hospitallers operated a productive farm where they raised pigs, cattle, and hens. They grew and preserved most of their own food, and much of what was used by their patients. They had their own granary, and owned and operated an on-site bakery. The sisters made their own clothing, even their own shoes. There was a sister seamstress who taught dressmaking and needlework, and a sister shoemaker to make a particularly formless and uncomfortable style of footwear—one size for all. Little was thrown away. Knitted items beyond repair were unravelled, washed, re-carded, and spun again, reappearing as mittens or socks a few weeks later. They made church vestments and linens, sheets, towels, blankets, draperies, and bandages, as well as candles and straw tick mattresses.

As bookkeepers, secretaries, administrators, and contract negotiators, the sisters were as skilled as any in an era when few regulations governed these professions. Their records had some discrepancies; sometimes dates were missing, other times merchandise was accepted in default of monetary payment, but, on balance, the registers kept by the hospitallers were on a par with those of other institutions in a time before strict accounting practices were in place. The sister secretary had a full docket of correspondence that included letters from Bishop Bourget, from Kingston, from their houses in France, from contractors, doctors, lawyers, clergymen, bankers, and businessmen. Ledgers were kept on orphans and patients, on the activities of the monastery, on the entry, investiture, and

the solemn profession of each religious. Separate inventories were maintained for each pharmacy, listing all drugs and medicinal plants in stock. All other supplies were similarly inventoried. There was a sister to oversee renovations and construction; others kept track of investments, and revenues from loans and land use agreements, including the rental of warehouses built on the former Hôtel-Dieu site. Since they never charged for their work, accurate and separate records for the hospital and the monastery were a necessity.

Every hospitaller had not one, but several duties, known as offices, and Amanda, in the first year or two "after taking the veil," was given the most menial tasks in every department to which she was sent. The professed sisters used the opportunity of working with her to observe her conduct. The chief office holder in these departments was obliged to correct her, and, it is likely that sometimes, given the structure of the system, there were those who criticized unjustly. Her performance was discussed with the mistress of novices at the weekly chapter meetings. While she became familiar with the institution's infrastructure, certain hospitallers around her, particularly the sister secretary, Sister Raymond, took heed of their newest novice, and marked her progress with a good deal of anticipation.

While the bishop of the diocese had complete authority over the house, he usually did not interfere with its internal governance. Nonetheless, if a confrontation between the mother superior and the bishop ensued, the nuns had to obey the bishop. Such conflicts were rare and extremely painful but it was precisely the type of difficult dilemma that Amanda would one day face. The superior furnished the bishop with an account of her administration once a year. If he did not approve of the way she carried out her duties he could order her removal from office. Obviously, the superior who enjoyed his goodwill had the best chance of seeing her foundation progress. Pagé and Bourget had worked together since the Kingston Foundation—a group set up to assist the large influx of impoverished Irish Catholic refugees who had arrived in this Ontario garrison town—was established in 1845, and over the years formed a partnership that was both positive and productive.

The executive structure was well within the guidelines Bishop Bourget set out when he required all Catholic religious communities to standardize their governing systems in the 1860s. There were forty-four members, all of them choir sisters and all professed at least three years, who held the franchise. The elections of the mother superior and her four person council, a triennial event, was presided over by the bishop, or a priest appointed by him. Two choir sisters were chosen to act as scrutineers, and they along with the chapter secretary, did not vote. The names of those eligible for an executive office, (candidates had to be professed for not less than ten years), were written on slips of paper in sufficient num-

ber so as to allow for a possible four ballots. The winner needed at least fifty per cent of them. According to the rules of the hospitallers, the mother superior could not remain in office for more than two consecutive three year terms, although she might still be reelected at a future date. Postulants, novices, and the newly professed, along with the domestic and lay sisters, did not vote or participate in chapter meetings.

In 1861 the executive council consisted of Pagé, Céré, Marchessault, Gignon, the head nurse, and Davignon, the bursar. This council witnessed all of the ceremonies. These five determined the agenda for the weekly deliberations held each Friday afternoon, and they signed all resolutions that were passed. All the important measures were presented, discussed and decided in the chapter meetings, "In them the Rule is explained, its true meaning defined, abuses corrected; in them candidates are admitted or rejected; hence on these...decisions depend the future welfare of the house."

The mother superior opened the meeting by outlining the agenda, and giving her personal point of view on the issues under discussion. Each hospitaller, in order of rank, added her opinion. They were not allowed to interrupt each other, and there were no debates. Decisions were made by a secret vote at the end of the caucus, using beans in place of ballots, white for "yes," and black for "no." It was considered a sin for a hospitaller to reveal anything discussed in the chapter, the gravity depended on the nature of what was divulged, and whether or not it resulted in discord, or any other unfortunate outcome. The secretary wrote a full account of the procedures.

Marie Pagé, as the mother superior, was responsible for the overall welfare of the house. Her assistant, Sister Margueriet Céré, supported the superior, and helped her enforce the observance of the rules and constitutions. The only member allowed to criticize the mother superior was the sister monitress, a role usually assigned to the assistant superior. A hospitaller with a grievance would speak to the monitress privately, and she would discuss it with the mother superior, never revealing the source of the complaint. The monitress could report a superior who showed no sign of changing, to the community chaplain. It was up to him to determine where to take it from there.

The hospitallers believed that their strict observance of the standard monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and their commitment to work with the poor, brought honour to their institute, and perfection to the individuals in it. Their vows defined who they were as women, and distinguished them from any other group in society. Clarification and details of these promises were in their *Constitutions*, and expanded upon in the *Manual* and *The Customary*. They owned no material goods other than small religious articles of little monetary value. A hospitaller with

property or money was obliged to cede its administration to others until she was ready to make her final vows, whereupon, if it was still in her possession, she arranged for its disposal in her will—a will that could not be altered without permission from the Holy See.

Amanda shared the common wardrobe; she ate whatever food was served, accepted the fact that the best of their supplies went to the hospital wards. With the exception of the superior, her assistant, and the bursar, no sister could keep anything under lock and key in her room, "Nor may anyone have pots of flowers at her window."[3] The mistress of novices could examine Amanda's cell whenever she wished, and would confiscate anything she thought the novice particularly liked.

The vows, notably that of chastity, shaped the way Amanda worked, or greeted visitors, or interacted with her associates. Sex was an idea so abhorrent to the author of the *Manual*, that he or she enjoined the hospitaller, "while having a body," to "live as if she had none."[4] Amanda's life "should be pure, angelic and free from all stain." Any display of affection was seen as an affront to purity. She was to refrain from showing sentiment even to children, and to shun occasions of being kissed and embraced by relatives or friends. Her vow of obedience required her to surrender her will completely to the mother superior. She had to publicly confess transgressions that might in any way inconvenience another: breaking silence, speaking abruptly, forgetfulness, failure to carry out orders were only a few of such infractions. The refectory was chosen for the site of the 'Accusation of faults.' The superior usually gave a simple penance that could be performed in private, but she might order the sister to stand forming a cross with her arms until the meal was finished, or even more humiliating gestures such as to kiss the feet of the others, or to prostrate herself, or even to eat off the floor. Hospitallers, "Have nothing and are incapable of nothing by themselves...they are never really better off than when they are neglected, forgotten and despised," stated *The Customary*.[5]

Amanda's forbearance must have been tested when her profession, like her investiture, was delayed for three months. Nonetheless, it was likely Marchessault who first recommended to the mother superior that the ceremony be postponed. It could have been worse. On the same day they delayed Amanda's profession, the chapter prolonged the profession of Sister Collette for six months. Under the constitutions, the newly professed made their vows for a term of not less than three years, and for any further period which would bring them to the full age of twenty one. After that, they were permitted to make their perpetual commitment. Vows were renewed each year, on January 23, the marriage feast of the Blessed Virgin.

On the afternoon of January 31, 1863, Amanda Viger was summoned

to the depository, or business office, where her parents and Father Trudel were waiting. Bonaventure and Eudoxie, with their younger children, had recently moved to Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville, where Bonaventure was the local coroner, and captain of the militia. Her father, who did not want Amanda to become a nun, believing the life too hard, had accepted what he was powerless to change her mind. They were here to sign the Certificate of Profession, a civil contract in which Amanda's formal request to spend the rest of her days as a hospitaller was acknowledged, and the terms of the covenant between her and her family on the one hand, and the community on the other, were spelled out. Father Trudel paid the final costs of her trousseau.

Generally, the hospitallers kept their own name unless another member of the community carried it, in which case the novice would take her mother's maiden name. The last Sister Viger had died nearly twenty-five years earlier so it would appear logical that Amanda was free to take her father's name. Perhaps he was still smarting from Bonaventure's defiance during the Rebellion of 1837, or perhaps he was worried the notoriety of her family name would draw undue attention to her—whatever the reasons—Bishop Bourget decided Amanda would be neither Viger nor Trudel, but Sister Saint Jean-de-Goto, after one of twenty-six Japanese Jesuit martyrs who had been recently canonized. Pagé, Céré, the head nurse, Josephe Dupuis, and Davignon, the bursar, signed the contract on behalf of the order. Notary publics M. Content and J.E. Badie, who had prepared the document, added their signatures as witnesses.

The provision of a trousseau was an important component of the contract and represented a significant contribution to the community. For a choir sister, like Amanda, it included two mattresses and bolsters, three Normandy blankets, one bed curtain, one length of green serge drapery, two spoons, two forks and one knife, five pairs of shoes, some clogs, several pairs of socks for winter and summer, a dressing gown, thread, needles and pins, ten shirts, gloves, two aprons, one camisole, strong jute, a supply of linen, one chair, one table, and one Prie-Dieu. Some of these articles were ordered by the community, and others the entrants purchased on their own. Not every sister could afford this large an outlay, and those who could, did not bring all of their supplies at one time. Some candidates made donations of wheat, firewood, or other produce in exchange for items in the trousseau.

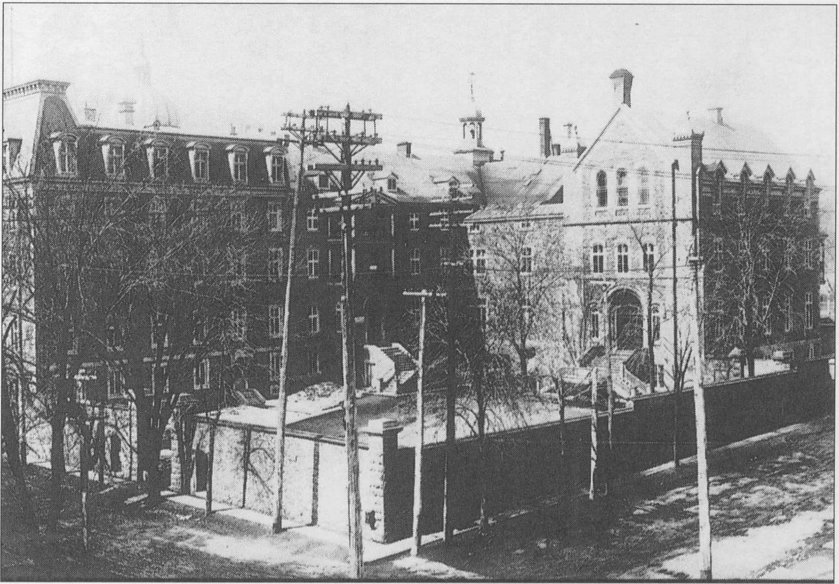
On the first day of a three day retreat leading up to her profession, the novice was required to meditate on her vows in general, on the second day she considered each vow individually. Amanda knew she wasn't promising her heart to a man, "but to the omnipotent God." The formula of the vows would be placed in her hands after her death and that document "will be the cause of my accusation or my justification before

the Sovereign Judge." On the third day, Amanda contemplated her role as a, "Bride of Christ," and considered the words of her *Manual*: "My heart must be a garden productive of every kind of fruit...closed to every one except my spouse; He alone has the right to enter and gather the fruits."[6] She was anxious to cultivate her particular 'garden,' and become a part of the real world of religious life.

Amanda, still in her eighteenth year, was prepared for this significant event on the early morning of February 2, 1863, the Feast of the Purification of the Virgin. If it had not been already, her hair was cut. The *Manual* told her she should proceed to the choir on the day of her profession, with the same spirit that Jesus went to Calvary. But Christ understood what Calvary meant, and He approached the final hours of His life with a mixture of dread and resignation. Amanda's future demanded sacrifices all right, but, in her mind, they paled compared to the endless opportunities and the ultimate personal salvation that awaited her. She made her way to the choir as quickly as decorum would allow, trying to steady her racing heart. Like most graduates, she was full of dreams and expectations.

The hospitallers were assembled in the *avant choeur*. Sister St. Louis, who was celebrating her investiture, would share the ceremony with her. The singing of the Psalms surrounded them, as the line of sisters followed the two young women in a candlelight procession. The Vicar-General of Montreal, Pierre Billaudèle, officiated, assisted by Fathers A. Narcan, the Spiritual Director of the Community, and Thomas Pepin, Curate of Boucherville. Father Trudel was also present, proud to be assisting his niece in the completion of this first part of her journey. "Do you want to live and die in the service of Jesus Christ and the poor who are his members, and be consecrated as his bride?" asked the celebrant. Amanda replied: "I wish it with all my heart, and I humbly beg you to grant me this mercy."[7] While the hospitallers sang the *Litany of the Saints*, Amanda prostrated herself on a carpet that extended from the grill to the Prie-Dieu, her face against a cushion. Over her, four newly professed sisters extended a death shroud in a graphic depiction of the end of her former life. There, she asked the help of all the saints so that she could completely reject the things of this world and live for God alone.

The chapel separated the monastery from the hospital complex. Amanda, using a maze of connecting corridors that kept the religious, as much as possible, secluded from public view, could at last cross over that divide. The Hôtel-Dieu, like other hospitals of the day, did not usually admit those suffering from small-pox, leprosy, malignant itch, palsy, or scrofula. The hospital also refused admission to children under seven, pregnant women, epileptics or persons with any incurable disease. Patients had to furnish a letter from an attending physician, but the



The hospital entrance in Montreal.

The pharmacy where Viger did most of her training in Montreal.

Saint Brigitte ward for women, Montreal.

Saint Joseph's ward for men, Montreal

hospitallers could receive emergency cases, provided they called in a surgeon for consultation. There were 200 sick as well as over 600 homeless, elderly people and orphans. The institution had been affiliated with *l'École de Médecine de Québec* since 1850.

The main entrance to the hospital was located on St.-Urbain Street. A reception room was on the left of the entryway, across from the pharmacy. Viger cultivated her powers of observation as she learned how to prepare medicine, dress wounds, and treat bleeding patients. The enthusiastic and good humoured 'newly professed' undertook the most trying and repellent tasks. Whether she cared for the sick and the poor, or watched with the dying, or shrouded the dead, she was humble, patient and forebearing. While these qualities were required of all hospitallers, Amanda's execution of them was outstanding.

There were four floors and three wings to the hospital complex. Three large wards with forty-four beds in each housed the sick. Each bed was given the name of a saint, as were the wards themselves. Close-stools, the primitive toilet facilities, were in stalls recessed into the walls at the back of the wards, and these could be opened from behind to allow the cleaning staff to empty the pots. Each ward had a warming room opening off it, with fire-places where sheets and towels were heated, and where new patients undressed. There were smaller isolation wards for the contagiously ill, and rooms reserved, as needed, for operations and dressings. A separate kitchen, refectory, and dormitories for workers were all located on the first level. Here, too, were the hospital depository, a large laundry, and a furnace room.

The hospitallers conducted daily prayer services and taught religion. However, in public institutions of this era, such lessons in morality were not uncommon. There is little historiography on the evolution of nineteenth century hospitals, but most, like Montreal's Hôtel-Dieu, evolved from charities whose primary concern was the moral fibre of their impoverished clientele. Only the very poor went to a hospital. People of means remained at home, cared for by their families, and treated by an attending physician. Authorities associated poverty with character, and disease with punishment for a sinful lifestyle, so hospital surroundings were designed as much to improve the moral fibre of the clientele, as to cure their physical ailments. Work, since it required discipline, responsibility and routine, formed part of the treatment programme. It was not unusual to recruit unpaid helpers from among the residents for the kitchens or dormitories. In Montreal's Hôtel-Dieu, as in the lay hospitals of the period, there was a punishment cell: "A private strong room well fitted with bars." In most hospitals, patients could be dismissed for the use of tobacco, gambling, alcohol consumption and foul language. In the Hôtel-Dieu, patients who swore, quarrelled, spoke

The cloister garden, Hôtel-Dieu, Montreal.

The monastery entrance in Montreal.

'immodest words,' or committed any similar transgression, were first warned by the head nurse or her assistant, if that failed to curb the transgressor, the mother superior would be brought in, and, if these actions had no effect, the director was asked to have the patient expelled.

Sister Raymond wanted her newly appointed assistant secretary, Sister Saint Jean-de-Goto, to assist her full time. With the archives and the *Chronicles*, a daily recording of the events that happened in the monastery, besides all of the necessary correspondence, there was enough work for more than two. But Amanda was assigned to a variety of different tasks, to ascertain where her particular abilities lay. She assisted in the sacristy and in the linen department; she was also an assistant nurse on the women's ward.

It was soon evident to all that Amanda was happiest, and did her best work in the pharmacy, where she was apprenticed with two or three others to the head pharmacist, Sister Monique Reid. Her analytical ability, attention to detail and sense of observation helped her in a career that demanded accuracy and precision. Not only was there a highly skilled pharmacist for her to train under, there was ample opportunity for her to follow and observe the doctors on their rounds. There were no less than sixteen rules that outlined her responsibilities. She compounded medicines and ointments, sorted the medicinal herbs that were gathered for

The secretariat where Amanda worked in the first years after her profession.

use in the pharmacy, and tracked the application and effectiveness of their drugs and preparations. The pharmacy was scrupulously clean and organized, inventory and financial records were maintained, and as soon as supplies grew short, the superior was informed, and provided with a statement of their estimated replacement cost.

Few, if any, New Brunswick pharmacists at the time would have studied in such a large medical institution. Amanda, or the pharmacist on duty, met the patient on arrival, and, if she thought it necessary, summoned a physician or surgeon. She accompanied the doctor on his rounds and noted his orders in a ledger. She prepared and applied poultices and liniments to the women. (A valet on the wards applied these to male patients.) Although she could not make decisions without a doctor's order, she could act in emergencies, and use any temporary remedies she thought might be necessary. Amanda monitored the patients, noting any change in condition, and reported her findings to the doctor on his next

visit. The pharmacist attended the surgeon when he bled a patient, or dressed wounds.

The highest offices were generally occupied by the same group of women throughout the 1860s: Pagé, Céré, Davignon, Quesnel, and Dupuis. All of them could expect to remain at the top of their profession for many years to come. Community work in hospitals, schools, and orphanages needed a lot of labour, for every bursar there were ten to twenty sisters changing beds and working in the kitchens. Viger would have more autonomy, and more chance to develop her career, as one of the few founders in Tracadie, than would have been possible for her if she remained in Montreal.

It is doubtful that she anticipated, in the first few years after her profession, that she would one day head a foundation of hospitallers in far away New Brunswick, the institution's third in North America. Nevertheless, she and her sister founders would inaugurate a great period of expansion for the community, and in the process vastly improve the field of opportunity for themselves and their youngest member.

Chapter Five

The Tracadie Foundation

In 1861, James Rogers, the Bishop of Chatham, New Brunswick suggested to Father Ferdinand Gauvreau, then Curate of Tracadie, that the lazaretto hospital be placed in the care of a religious order, specifically the Grey Nuns. They were a missionary community charged with the operation of several Quebec hospitals including the Montreal General Hospital. The young bishop was less than a year into his mandate and on one of his first tours of the newly created territory that encompassed his diocese. His hands were full coping with not only the wide geographic area, but with a Catholic population as divided by language and custom as they were by tracts of uncleared forests and wide waterways.

Rogers was born in Ireland but grew up in Nova Scotia. He became the first bishop of this largely French-speaking diocese when he was appointed in 1860 at the young age of thirty-four. The Archbishop of Halifax, Thomas Connolly chose his former secretary over older more experienced Quebec francophones prelates who knew the region, and worked with the Acadians of Northern New Brunswick for years. Needless to say, the appointment was controversial. Rogers' first priority was to retain priests. The only way he could recruit the number he needed was to open a small seminary. He was already planning the construction of Saint Michael's College, cathedral and episcopal residence in 1861. By the time it was completed in 1866 the diocese of Chatham was in debt for over $12,000. That fall, when he left to attend an apostolic conference in Rome, he was in no financial position to support a religious foundation. There is no documentary evidence that he gave any further thought to the off-handed suggestion he made to Father Gauvreau several years earlier.

His vicar general, Joseph Marie Paquet, Curate of Caraquet, one of those passed over when Rogers was appointed bishop, was in charge of the diocese while he was away. Paquet had been treated in the Hôtel-Dieu Hospital, he stayed in the monastery when he visited Montreal, he knew

the hospitallers, and he initiated the process on behalf of the church that brought them to Tracadie. His actions were not, however, supported by Rogers.

It is understandable why Rogers took so little interest in the affairs of the provincially run lazaretto. Contending with deep sectarian prejudices that never troubled church and state relationships in Quebec, he was anxious to avoid the possibility of any outright confrontation with public officials. There were 40,000 Catholics among the general population of 60,000 scattered along the northeast region from Chatham to Madawaska and including the Acadian Peninsula. The bishop had twenty-one priests compared to only seven in 1860, to serve about sixty missions. Travel was difficult. The Catholic population, seventy per cent of them French, was concentrated on the lower rungs of the economic and social ladder as well. Rogers gave little thought to the problems particular to the Acadian experience. "For the diocese of Chatham," he wrote, "the priests required should speak both French and English, but especially the latter; for it was the English speaking portions of our people that most needed priests."[1]

Bishop James Rogers

Rogers was often at odds with his clergy the majority of whom were from Quebec. Historians such as Mason Wade have noted that Quebec clergy were more concerned about issues of language and culture than were the Acadian priests. There were, in fact, few Acadian priests because there was little opportunity for Acadians to acquire an education. The few anglophone priests, mainly of Irish heritage, made no distinction between language and culture. Nor did they believe Acadians were in any greater need of help than other parishioners. It was not until the turn of the nineteenth century that Maritime Catholics could participate in public affairs. It was the mid-nineteenth century though before Acadians had the educational infrastructure to allow a few of their elite to occupy positions of power and influence.

The lazaretto in Tracadie was administered by a provincially appointed board of health. Father Gauvreau was the lazaretto chaplain. Members were almost always political appointees. The lazaretto was poorly maintained. Few wanted to work there, and no one wanted to

look after the sick. When Father Gauvreau suggested to the board that they seek government permission to find a religious order to take over their care, the motion was quickly passed. Authorities began initiating the necessary procedures that would allow a religious community to manage the lazaretto, shortly after the bishop's departure.

It is apparent that both Gauvreau and Paquet used Rogers' absence to open the dossier and speed it forward, hopefully to have it completed before Rogers returned. The House of Assembly, in the summer of 1867, authorized the board to enlist the aid of four female members of a religious community, budgeting the sum of £400 (about $1,500) for the required renovations. Early in 1868 Paquet wrote to the Religious Hospitallers of the Congregation of Saint Joseph, addressing his letter to the mother superior, Marguerite Céré. Paquet had the necessary authority to act for the bishop, but wittingly or unwittingly, the vicar general misled the superior by implying he also had Rogers' approval. Paquet was merely reflecting the conventional wisdom of the time when he assured her, in the same letter, that leprosy was not contagious but hereditary.

Two articles published the same day, one in the English press and the other in the French, show that provincial interest was focused on the hospitallers in particular. Saint John physician, and a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA), Dr. Robert Bayard was given a tour of the Hôtel-Dieu by Dr. William Hales Hingston, a prominent Montreal physician and the hospital's chief of surgery early in 1868. The two doctors were discussing the subject of the lazaretto in front of the pharmacist on duty, Amanda Viger, when Viger, left the ward for a few minutes and returned with the mother superior. When the superior asked if they would be allowed to take charge of them, Dr. Bayard had to point out the horrors of the disease and "what a terrible strain it would be upon the delicate sensitive nerves of a woman," Bayard told the reporter.

Dr. Bayard was more familiar with the impact of leprosy on New Brunswick families than any other physician with the exception of lazaretto physician Dr. Alfred Corbett Smith. He and his colleague, Dr. William Wilson, had conducted a lengthy investigation into the disease for the New Brunswick government in the summer of 1847. In keeping with the beliefs of most physicians of the time these doctors maintained that leprosy was an inherited condition, and they buttressed their conviction with a table of consanguinity. By 1874, various research had disproved this theory and a medically sound understanding of the disease evolved. Today's scientists maintain that leprosy—a chronic bacterial disease of the skin, nerves of the hands and and feet, and sometimes, of the lining of the nose—can only be transmitted through prolonged direct contact, and if treatment begins early and is continued, the disease is no

longer disfiguring. There are several thousand leprosy cases in North America at the present time. Once they begin treatment most people with leprosy are no longer infectious, and are able to live normal lives.

Researchers to date have not been able to positively identify the causes of the occurrences in New Brunswick during the nineteenth century. According to two of several legends, the blight was brought to the Acadian peninsula, either by Norwegians who escaped from a lazaretto and made their way by ship to Montreal, where they were taken on board one of the boats trading between Quebec and the Acadian Peninsula, or sailors from France introduced the disease to this part of the world. However, it is also possible the disease was an effect of the Expulsion of the Acadians between the years 1755 and 1760. There was no record of leprosy cases in the Maritimes prior to the nineteenth century. It is plausible that one or two of the Acadian refugees slowly making their way back to New Brunswick picked up the bacillus in their time of exile. The disease lies dormant in the system, and the incubation can last from one to thirty years. About ninety-five per cent of persons exposed to the bacterium are immune. It is feasible the disease affected others before it was confirmed in the first known victim among the Acadians, Ursule (Benoit) Landry of Tracadie.

If New Brunswick's first victims shared a link, it lay in their common poverty, their refugee status and/or that of their parents, and their generally impaired physical condition prior to its onset. Mary (Moore) Gardner, who was Irish, living in the Miramichi, developed the infection around the same period as Ursule Benoit. Both women died in 1828 or 1829. Thirty years later a few incidents of leprosy were verified among the Scotts living in the pristine Lake Ainslie and Lake O' Law areas of the Margaree on Nova Scotia's Cape Breton Island. Nearly all of the leprosy victims were either immigrants themselves, or the children of immigrants. The majority were offspring of the Acadian dispersion, settling with their parents in isolated areas of New Brunswick, and suffering the same hardships as any impoverished exiled group trying to re-establish themselves. Crowded into poorly constructed one- or two-room houses, they shared beds, bedding, as well as drinking and eating utensils. Many families had to draw water from local rivers or streams because they had no well. In lumber camps, believed the source for a number of casualties, it was quite normal for two or three men and boys to sleep in the same lice-infested, filthy bed.

The situation for the leprosy patient was far different in 1868 than it is today. At this time, twenty-five years had passed since provincial authorities opened a lazaretto in a former quarantine barrack on Sheldrake Island in the Miramichi River off of Chatham. The sick were promised regular treatments by a physician, visits from family, food, clothing, and comfort-

able surroundings. It was the first of many commitments the government could not or would not keep. The sick, more or less abandoned on the island, with only a keeper and a couple of guards, became angry and disillusioned. Many ran away, and those who remained, or who were caught and returned, burned the premises to the ground on two separate occasions. The Sheldrake Island lazaretto was closed in 1848 and the sick were transferred to Tracadie. The change in location did not solve the problems. Again, there were runaways and evasions. Again, the sick burned the property. High-spiked fences went up, guards were posted. And again, relatives and friends were shut out.

Isolated from their families, unable to provide for themselves, the group of twenty men, women, and children housed in the lazaretto in the summer of 1868 lived lives of utter desolation. Dr. Alfred Corbett Smith, paid $640 a year to diagnose suspected cases, operated a private practice from his nearby office, but was not accountable for the state of the hospital.

When the prospect of caring for the leprosy victims emerged, the hospitallers of the Congregation of Saint Joseph did not agree to the mission without doing some research on their own. Bishop Bourget allowed Sister Marie Pagé and the Hôtel-Dieu bursar, Sister Davignon to visit New Brunswick that May. Rogers had not yet returned from Rome, and Monseigneur Paquet was ill, nevertheless, the sisters were warmly received by Father Gauvreau and the Secretary of the Board of Health, A. K. McDougall. Pagé and Davignon, escorted by Gauvreau and McDougall, set out from Chatham to tour the region and visit the lazaretto.

The two women were impressed by the sight of small white washed houses either cleaving to craggy shorelines, or nestled against thick black forests. There were just over 2,100 residents in the civil parish of Saumarez, which included Tracadie and the surrounding environs. The greater number were descendants of Acadians, but there was a sizable mix of French whose ancestors were from Quebec or elsewhere, some Irish and Scottish, and a few English. The economy was dependent on a combination of fishing, lumbering, and farming, but none of these industries were highly developed. Many families eked out a living from all three. Pagé and Davignon noted the fragile infrastructure, the lack of priests, and the expanse of territory separating the missions, and made a full report to Céré and Bourget. Bourget was disappointed that the pair was not able to meet with either Rogers or Paquet. Céré needed Paquet's reassurance that he had full authority from the bishop to engage the hospitallers, and that he knew the hospitallers were founders not missionaries, meaning they needed their own motherhouse in Tracadie with space for a novitiate. Some revenue for their support must be guaranteed. Knowing the kind of religious community they were, Paquet replied

tersely, "In the dossier regarding the hospitallers....It is the bishop who speaks, it is the bishop who writes, and it is the bishop who is asking this of you."[2]

Despite its obvious difficulties, the work appealed to the order because, according to Catholic beliefs, leprosy victims, being shunned by society, are actually closer to God, and caring for them brought their caregivers closer to God as well. Céré decided it was time to discuss the proposals with all of the hospitallers. She spoke candidly and then asked for volunteers. According to Dr. Hingston, every one of them stepped forward. Given that conformity and obedience were the norm, and sacrifice the objective, it would have been quite a courageous act to be the only hospitaller left standing in the rear. Few were more eager than Amanda. Perhaps she already harboured the hope that one day she would discover a cure for leprosy.

Monseigneur Paquet.

When she met with her father's objections she retorted: "No one stopped you from going to California to look for gold....Do not prevent me from going where I will have the means to earn eternal happiness."[3] Amanda felt challenged by the prospect of treating this disease and anxious to use her talents as researcher and pharmacist.

The community was alive with a sense of anticipation. Yet they had to ponder, to pray, and to seek "Whatsoever was God's will." The chapter members gathered on Thursday, July 16, 1868, and after each had a turn to speak on the matter they voted to accept the call with the hope that, in time, their convent in Tracadie would become a "regular foundation." They had to make a number of compromises. Their quarters were inadequate, they did not have a cloister nor did they have clear title to the house. Father Gauvreau would act as their chaplain, but there would be times when he would be so busy elsewhere in the parish, they would have to forgo their daily mass. The government had not yet granted a separate stipend for their personal use, and they still hadn't heard from Bishop Rogers since he had returned to Chatham that June. Céré obtained permission to establish a third foundation of hospitallers in North America from the Vatican on July 25.

The voting sisters elected the six founders that same day. Each one

possessed individual qualities that made her uniquely suitable for a particular office, and all of them were among the best and brightest in the Hôtel-Dieu. The seasoned Pagé, aged fifty-seven, had the expertise and wisdom to get the institute established, and manoeuvre it over the first difficult months. Amanda, the youngest at twenty-three years old would prescribe suitable treatments for the sick, set the program of care on the wards, and establish a pharmacy. Eulalie Quesnel, the assistant superior, would see that the sick received daily religious instruction and prayers, and that the details of community life, the rules and ceremonies, were followed. Pagé and Quesnel worked well together, and Pagé relied on the good judgement of her 'silent' partner. Delphine Brault, would set a high standard of nursing care as well as keep careful financial records. Brault's good humour and gift for storytelling bolstered the morale of the company in their first difficult days. Brault and Quesnel, both originally from Sainte-Marguerite de l'Acadie, a small village in rural Quebec, both descendants of Acadians, were going to look after their own. Strong and healthy, Clémence Bonin, a domestic sister, and Philomène Fournier, or Soeur Luména, as she was known in her religious community, a lay sister, and the cook, were not strangers to long hours and backbreaking labour.

The venture captured the imagination of the entire city. The mission seemed full of mystery and danger. They were viewed as "angels on earth," sent by Jesus Christ to look after the "poor lepers." If the Tracadie foundation was unparalleled in the history of the hospitallers, it is safe to say it was unparalleled in the history of most religious communities in North America. Only the later departure of hospitallers from Tracadie, New Brunswick to look after leprosy victims in San Pablo, Peru, in 1948, could compare to this adventure.

The women of the Hôtel-Dieu prepared their daughters well. The chief office holder in each department checked her inventory, and turned over a portion of the supplies. Each sister was to have one new habit plus one "not quite so new," six each of veils, gymps, head-bands, neckerchiefs, outside veils, and smaller inside veils. The Montreal motherhouse gave the founders nearly $900 to cover their expenses, but $100 was included for the lazaretto. They sent ten sets of blankets, two dozen towels, twenty yards of bleached and unbleached cotton, pewter table settings for twelve including serving dishes and utensils, all delivered to father Gauvreau in Tracadie on August 22, 1868. Wash basins, soap dishes, pitchers and chamber pots, buckets, twenty pounds of candles, fifty pounds of soap, brooms, hair brushes, and tooth brushes were among the goods, which also included one cooking stove and 175 pounds of stove pipe. Still to come from the board of health were four beds at $16 each, three stoves at $8 each, four tables at $4 apiece, and four washstands at

$2 each. No wonder Bishop Rogers complained it was too late to turn them back.

Amanda, the third of five assistants in the pharmacy, spent the remaining weeks assembling equipment, and, with the help of the Hôtel-Dieu physicians, learning as much as she could about leprosy and other skin diseases. Bonaventure might have been troubled by his daughter's departure but Father Trudel had no such reservations. The head pharmacist, Sister Monique Reid, compiled a ledger to guide Viger when she organized her own apothecary. She listed medicines as to whether they were chemical, acid or antacid. She noted the narcotics, anti-spasmodics, tonics, or astringents in separate columns, and detailed their subgroups and interactions. She filled thirty-five pages with prescriptions; everything from the treatment of mundane problems such as colic, colds and toothache, to serious illnesses such as heart disease, cancer and tuberculosis. Reid catalogued over three hundred suggested remedies. Some of the recipes originated in France, and were over two hundred years old. She included long columns of drugs, and their properties. Viger would have no trouble putting the drugs in the right places: codes for the cupboards, shelves and spaces on them, would be matched with the labels on the drug supplies she carried with her. Over the years, Viger and the other sister pharmacists added their own recipes to the ledger, or clipped relevant articles from newspapers and medical journals.

Father Ferdinand Gauvreau.

There were some opponents to the scheme in the New Brunswick provincial assembly. They were led by the Tracadie representative Robert Young. His objections were not over the hospitallers' appointment, but over their number. The MLA thought two to four religious sufficient to run the institution. He also objected to the suggestion by A. K. McDougall, that the stipend for the sisters be found by firing the lazaretto physician, Robert Young's brother-in-law, Dr. Smith. As a result no separate stipend was budgeted for the hospitallers in 1868. Father Gauvreau advised them not to push the issue which would raise the level of debate in the house, and instead draw their funding from the lazaretto budget until such time as their position was formalized through an Act

of Incorporation. Once that was passed, Gauvreau assured them, the founders would have full ownership of the whole establishment...and the Board of Health will be abolished in favour of the nuns.

This proposal was not acceptable to either Bourget or Céré. The number of sick in the lazaretto fluctuated every year and with it the stipend. The nuns needed the security of a regular income, notably $800, specifically for them. There was still no word from Bishop Rogers. Would they be like birds on a branch, Bourget wondered? Unless or until the Bishop of Chatham guaranteed to support them, he could not let them leave. Rogers finally replied, and his letter, although it did include a document authorizing the foundation, was evasive. Should the legislature not grant the allocation, Rogers told Céré, the diocese did not have the financial means to support the hospitallers in Tracadie. He could only hope, he added, that the government would continue to look favourably toward the work which they themselves created.

The issue of their support was still not settled when Father Gauvreau, who arrived in Montreal on September 9, 1868 declared he would not return to New Brunswick without them. Mance sent a telegram to Rogers: "Would it be wise for the sisters to leave Montreal before the government gives them an allocation?" she asked. Rogers wired back: "I cannot support the sisters in Tracadie, that would depend on the priests in the region, but if the sisters establish in Chatham, I will give them a place near my residence, and I will do everything possible for them."[4] Bourget was satisfied. The hospitallers could leave their house in Montreal to found a monastery in Tracadie.

Heartfelt farewells came after dinner on the departure date, Saturday, September 12, 1868. Viger, with Pagé, Quesnel, Brault, Bonin, and Fournier, the Hôtel-Dieu chaplain, Father Narcan, and Father Gauvreau boarded a coach for the Church of Our Lady of Sorrows, where they gathered for a benediction service with the sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame, and their students. The church was filled with well wishers, and there were very few dry eyes when the hymn *Ave Maris Stella* was sung at the end of the Benediction service. After a supper with the congregation, they embarked on a steamer *Le Montréal* for the fourteen hour crossing to Quebec. Members of the clergy, some of the Hôtel-Dieu doctors, and a good many friends and relatives saw them off. A carriage belonging to the Grey Nuns met the ship the next morning and brought them to their monastery for a mass and communion breakfast. The hospitallers rested with them until Monday. That afternoon the founders were the guests of the Congregation of Notre-Dame in Quebec city.

A harrowing voyage on *Le Secret*, which brought them to Chatham, commenced on the evening of September 14. Amanda and the others became so desperately sea sick they were in need of help from Father

Gauvreau, and a few fellow travellers. That night they were thrown from their bunks in the heaving ship, and were forced to shelter in total darkness, in the women's lounge. Barrels came loose and shattered the glassed-in ceiling sending shards down on them all. Many people wept. The next morning the sea was calm but their bunks and bedding were so soaked they were forced to huddle together, wrapped in blankets, on the deck. *Le Secret* docked in Chatham on Thursday, September 17, 1868. Their arrival, marred by sea sickness, tiredness, and wetness, proved only a forerunner of the trials that lay ahead. Rogers met the party, and while they were still on the ship, told them they would not be going to Tracadie.

The patriarchy was polarized. The bishop, to whom they owed obedience was determined to keep them in Chatham, and Gauvreau was equally adamant that they go with him to Tracadie. Pagé decided to address Rogers' practical nature. "We six women were chosen specifically for the work in Tracadie," she pointed out. "There is no hospital in Chatham, and even if there is work for us, we do not speak English well enough to help the Irish Catholics living here. We would be a burden on you," she said, "while in Tracadie there is much for us to do." Rogers replied: "We are all a burden for our Lord...and he bears all....As to the difficulty of speaking English, it is not the language you need to look after the sick but the heart." Pagé had little choice but to follow the bishop's wishes. Gauvreau, making no attempt to hide his resentment, refusing even to look at the mother superior, left for Tracadie the next morning.

Rogers knew it was not Gauvreau but Paquet who would really challenge him. The ailing vicar general, old enough to be the bishop's father, was not afraid to stand up to him. Rogers asked Pagé to go to Caraquet with him. Ordering Brault and Viger to begin unloading their supplies, an exhausted Pagé and Quesnel were on the road again. They spent Sunday night with William Davidson, a member of the Board of Health, where they continued to discuss the issue. Father Gauvreau, still bitter, greeted the bishop and his party when they stopped on Monday, but, his temper paled in the face of an angry crowd which greeted the bishop. Tuesday morning, when the party made their way from the priest's residence to the nearby church, some threw stones. "Give us our holy sisters. we can support them as well as the people of the Miramichi!" they shouted. The sick joined their countrymen, shouting through the slats of their enclosure. The bishop, still in an excellent frame of mind, pushed his way past the mob.

Finally Paquet, after sixteen hours of continuous negotiation with Rogers, convinced him to allow the hospitallers to go to Tracadie, but only after Pagé consented to Rogers' terms. Paquet would undertake their financial support until the province voted for their stipend. Pagé

promised that more hospitallers from Montreal would be sent, within the year, to found a house in Chatham. "By mutual agreement between the sisters and myself," Rogers wrote to Céré, "the foundation will take hold in Chatham, on the condition that a mission of sisters, enough to serve the lepers, will be sent from the said community."[5] In other words, the Bishop would not have an autonomous foundation of hospitallers in Tracadie. Céré replied carefully. More sisters would come from Montreal and, "There would be enough of them to serve the lazaretto hospital, while living in conformity to our rules."[6]

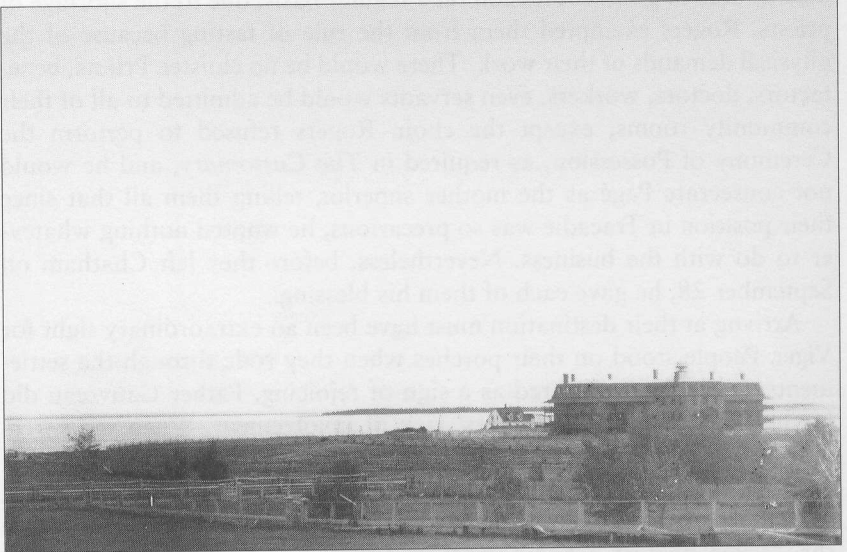
Rogers would think of the Tracadie foundation as a mission for the rest of his life, but as far as Pagé and her associate founders were concerned, the Tracadie house was a foundation, and it was going forward. Viger was only too happy to reload what had been unpacked. Before they left Chatham, Pagé convened her small chapter and the list of offices was drawn. Quesnel was the assistant superior, bursar, the secretary for the chapter and in charge of the ceremonies and protocol in the choir. Amanda was mistress of novices. She wrote, "I am anxious for the community to grow so that when someone is the mistress of novices, the house is well full of subjects." Nevertheless, she added, "I am filled with glory and happiness," to be the pharmacist, and assistant head nurse.[7] Amanda was also the assistant secretary, the lead singer, and in charge of music for the services. Brault was the head nurse, and the bursar for the poor, Viger's assistant in the pharmacy and in charge of clothing and linens. Bonin was the third assistant in the hospital wards, shoemaker, responsible for cleaning the sisters' dormitory, the laundry and kitchen assistant. Luména was the cook, did laundry, kept the habits in good repair and tended the doors. Both Luména and Bonin would be responsible for the garden and barnyard. The hospitallers were given the task of looking after the altar linens, vessels, priests' vestments and communion hosts for twelve mission churches. They would spend many of their hours of recreation knitting, mending or doing the fine needlework required on some of these items.

Marie Pagé.

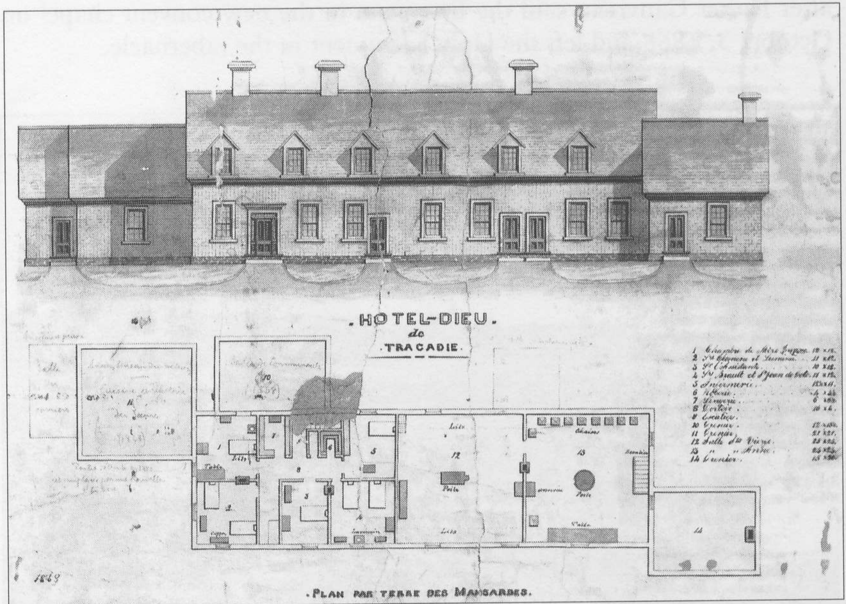
The new community would not have a daily mass, nor would members be able to go to confession on a regular basis, due to the shortage of priests. Rogers exempted them from the rule of fasting because of the physical demands of their work. There would be no cloister. Priests, benefactors, doctors, workers, even servants would be admitted to all of their community rooms, except the choir. Rogers refused to perform the Ceremony of Possession, as required in *The Customary*, and he would not consecrate Pagé as the mother superior, telling them all that since their position in Tracadie was so precarious, he wanted nothing whatever to do with the business. Nevertheless, before they left Chatham on September 28, he gave each of them his blessing.

Arrivng at their destination must have been an extraordinary sight for Viger. People stood on their porches when they rode through the settlements, and rifles were fired as a sign of rejoicing. Father Gauvreau did his best to make up for Rogers' lack of involvement. When the sisters arrived, they found the houses and the church were decorated with bunting, the church bell chimed, and the sisters, led by Father Gauvreau, walked two-by-two between a throng of people, a few of whom called to the "sister doctors." Some reached out to touch their skirts, others pushed babies into their arms. More than 250 people gathered inside the church to give thanks. The founders were gladdened, a few days later, after Father Gauvreau said the first mass in the new convent chapel on October 3, 1868 and left the Holy Sacrament in the tabernacle.

Tracadie circa 1900.



The first Tracadie lazaretto.



Plans for the Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu, c. 1868.

CHAPTER SIX

As Though Invisible

The hospitallers, squeezed into the dimly lit lazaretto barracks, tried not to show their horror when they came face to face with leprosy for the first time. The patients were living in two small wards on the main floor. The ten men and ten women were covered in running scabs, "The noses red, the hands contorted...," Quesnel recalled. They slept on straw ticks thrown over roughly hewn wooden bunks of different heights, styles and lengths. Hay poked through filthy, vermin infested mattresses. There were no pillows or sheets, only a few dirty blankets. Fleas and ants crept from crevices, crawled about, hopped from beds, and walls. The stench was stifling. Quesnel called the building a 'disgusting hovel' so dirty, and so covered in spittle the sisters dared not sit.[1]

The lazaretto was a jail within a jail, where the sick were the victims of anyone who had more power than they did. There was no one to come when fighting broke out, no parent to help a child, and no one to prevent the worst offences against the weakest. Some of the men knocked out part of a wall so they could have full access to the women's ward. The most violent ruled the institution by force, Gauvreau wrote, swearing and cursing went on continually; it was a, "den of bandits and thieves." Fear and superstition about the illness increased their suffering. Many were convinced leprosy was a sexually transmitted disease, or, at least, the consequences of leading a morally depraved lifestyle. Within the institution, patients felt the same revulsion for one another, as the public did for them. Nearly all of them believed that while he or she did not have leprosy, their neighbour certainly had the disease. They refused to socialize, or even sit near each other at the same table. Many families hid their sick relatives, or sent them away from the area, or only surrendered the victim when the symptoms were so pronounced it could no longer be denied.

Father Gauvreau said a weekly mass for them in a lean-to, on the back of the building, off the main floor. They followed the service through a

glassed-in doorway, one section of which opened so they could receive communion, and so the curate could hear their confessions.

Two weeks passed before the sisters could turn their attention to improving the state of the lazaretto, since they had to remodel the quarters prepared for them by the Board of Health, to make them suitable for a religious community. Amanda was busy organizing her pharmacy. The hospitallers took over Gauvreau's tiny residence while the renovations were underway. Few would rise as early as they; fewer still would be passing through the village; but anyone who did, would see a shadowy procession of nuns leave the back of the presbyter, plod along in the predawn light, cross a footbridge, traipse through a narrow field-path, and, two by two, make their way to Saint John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church. Here, they attended a mass said by Father Gauvreau, and intoned their morning office before trekking over to the lazaretto hospital/monastery. Walking as though invisible, their eyes downcast, keeping their arms folded in the sleeves of their cloaks, only the most curious amongst this group, would steal even a sideways glance towards the source of the sea winds washing over them— a nearby tributary off the Gulf of St Lawrence. After a light breakfast prepared by Sister Luména, they started the first of many days filled with unrelenting labour.

The hospitallers were astounded to see a large number of people, rich and poor, Catholic and Protestant, turning up with provisions the day after they arrived. Volunteer labourers were already undertaking the renovations. Everyone in Tracadie and beyond wanted a glimpse of the 'holy women,' the 'sister doctors,' the 'angels of the earth,' who would take care of their sick ones. A few came on horseback, others in wagons, but there were men and women with small children and babes in arms, walking, tired and dusty, up the lane to the lazaretto. One pressed a small coin into Amanda's palm; another reached out and touched her skirt. The volunteers travelled long distances to get to the site, and the sisters shared their own meagre food supplies because their workers did not have enough to eat.

Father Gauvreau oversaw the work under the direction of the astute mother superior. He managed, Quesnel wrote, to include the chapel, choir, and sacristy in the plans—rooms that the hospitallers needed, but which the government might not be disposed to provide. A passageway the width of the building, linked their choir to the refectory to hospital wards, giving the nuns access to and from the lazaretto, and the monastery without appearing in public.

There were three staircases, two from the hospital to newly created upstairs wards, and one from their monastery to the sisters' sleeping quarters. Doors at each end were installed on all three. These were kept locked most of the time. The chapel served to partition the two units.

Before too long, the grill they brought with them from Montreal, was in place in their choir. The altar of the chapel was placed closer to the grill, and the space behind made the sacristy. They used some of the money they received from Montreal to purchase the chapel accoutrements like church vessels, altar clothes, and linens. Men would see the services through a window in their ward, while the women would have to be content listening through a grate in the floor of their quarters upstairs. The nuns soon discovered that visitors awaiting medical prescriptions from Amanda could overhear conversations from their all-purpose community room, refectory and kitchen so they requisitioned a former laundry on the lazaretto property for their *salle de communauté*.

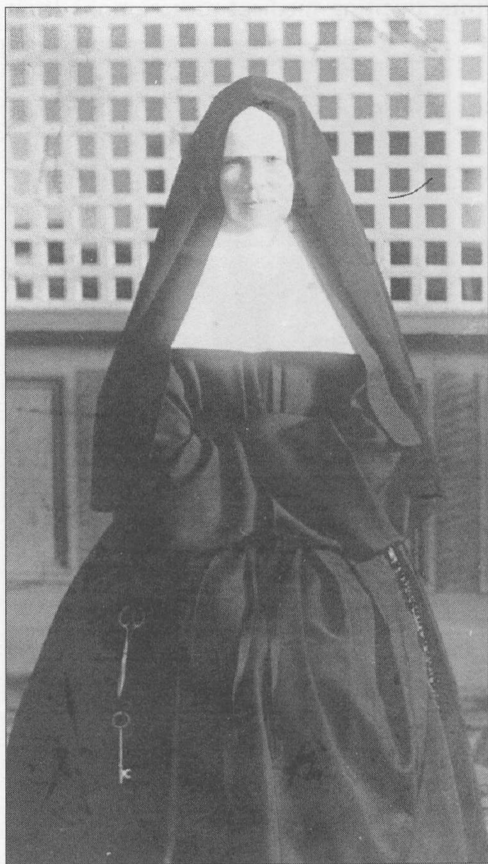
Dr. A. C. Smith.

Their sleeping quarters and a small infirmary was on the second floor of the monastery. Limited space was reserved for storage, linens, and wardrobe. The steep incline of the mansard roof made the ceilings low and stuffy especially in winter. Amanda and Delphine Brault shared one sleeping cell, Bonin and Luména another, each measured eleven by twelve feet. Quesnel and Pagé had separate cells. Pagé's was slightly larger than the others, about twelve by twelve feet.

The nuns had few furnishings. There was no dining room table in these first days. The sisters ate at the little tables in their cells. They had to carry their chairs with them if they wanted to sit down. Although all the work should have been done before winter, one of the chimneys was not complete. Smoke and soot spilled from the stove. The floor of the refectory and kitchen, even the benches, were layered in frost. Sister Luména had to put warm ashes in her shoes to keep her feet from freezing.

Amanda appropriated Father Gauvreau's 'lean-to chapel' for her pharmacy, but it was Dr. Smith who hired the workers and furnished the cost for its repairs. The prosperous Young family, and the Smiths, were not only anglophones but amongst the very few non-Catholics living in

Tracadie, and Dr. Smith, himself was an agnostic. Their generosity, particularly in the first weeks after the nuns arrived, was frequently noted, sometimes with some bemusement. Smith was pleased to have someone with Amanda's training and experience able to dispense prescriptions. When she opened her apothecary, there were no formal standards regulating the practice of pharmacy in the province. Pharmacists learned from one another through a system of apprenticeship and, prior to the formation of the Pharmaceutical Society in New Brunswick in 1884, there were no regulations. Most doctors prepared the medicines themselves, or trained their own assistants. Moreover, Amanda was not the only competent pharmacist in the monastery. Their education in Montreal prepared all the choir sisters for a number of professional roles and, as the list of offices indicated, just as Viger could assist Brault on the wards, Brault was able to fill in for Viger in the pharmacy. Dr. Smith had reason to believe that his association, examining and diagnosing suspected leprosy cases, would continue. After all, the nuns were not doctors. It was another few weeks before he learned that the House of Assembly would not renew his contract.



Sister Brault.

The apothecary measured about eleven-and-a-half square feet. Amanda placed her ledger and her record books on what had been the altar. Except for the cost of outfitting their chapel, the rest of the money from Montreal was given to Amanda for pharmaceuticals. This, plus a gift of $120 from Father Trudel, gave her nearly $700 to buy the stock. "The flasks I received from Montreal last June crammed the shelves so full that I had to bring down the pots and store them under the counters," she wrote.

"The pharmacy gets more and more comfortable." She put a small marble table between the window and the outside door, and took delivery of fifty feet of boards to build an armoire to hold supplies that were being kept some distance away. She painted the armoire in Viennese red; the large bureau, the door and the table were white and black. It was, "as full as an egg," she declared proudly.[2]

The hospitallers generated a sense of renewal in the lazaretto that was as physical and moral, as it was spiritual. They cleared out the hens that occupied the second floor over the lazaretto, and after repairs and a thorough cleaning, a respectable residence for the female patients was ready. A few of the men were not happy that the women were moved upstairs. Perhaps they were husbands or brothers who didn't see the need to keep the women apart. On one occasion, Father Gauvreau, with the help of the other patients, had to subdue three or four who threatened to break down the doors leading to the upstairs ward if they were not unlocked. One male patient was so angry he refused to move his bed, but Pagé stood up to him, and getting no assistance from his comrades, he eventually relented. The nuns washed down the building's interior, scraping the dirt off windows, floors, and walls with a knife. They tackled the furnishings, utensils and dishes. Many of the articles were beyond laundering. Mattresses, blankets, even clothing had to be burned. They went over and over the premises several times before it appeared clean. Once sufficiently scoured, religious objects, in the form of statues, holy pictures and crucifixes, plastered the walls in every direction.

Amanda's first task was to disinfect wounds, and try to rid them of the worms that had invested deep into layers of tissue. "We do all in our power to be with our dear lepers who are so good," Amanda wrote. "We would never have believed they would be so easy to treat." She applied dressings twice daily, sat up with the worst cases, and, under a spiritual impulse that Pagé soon curtailed, even kissed their sores. According to Quesnel, one of Amanda's patients was completely disfigured: "Her whole countenance was a hideous lump of rotten skin.... Only with a great deal of difficulty was she able to open her mouth, and in great suffering eat a bit of food. Needless to say, the smell is revolting."[3] The wards were segregated but not locked during the day. Men and women were allowed outside within the lazaretto property.

All of the hospitallers felt the effects of the heavy work, but Viger, who worked harder than anyone else, worried them. "Sister St. Jean was sick and she is still coughing a lot," Pagé wrote. "If she isn't dead, it isn't because she hasn't looked after the lepers, and, in addition to that, taking care of all the sick outside. Quesnel is in bed with a high fever doing only part of the work that Sister. St. Jean does routinely." Viger never mentioned her illness when she wrote only a few days later, but, she did

betray a certain melancholy: "We have been so busy, we have no time to pray, or to visit the choir. Without the lifeline provided by our letters to and from Montreal we would not survive."[4] Evidently Pagé chose to fast even though Rogers had exempted them from this particular rule. "Our mother is sick with a sore throat and ear-aches," Quesnel wrote, "provoked by the fatigue of fasting, and the cold." They were all pale, and everyone was thinner, but, she said, "Sister St. Jean lost so much weight her petticoat went around completely without touching her waist at all."[5]

It is not surprising that Viger was lonely, with almost every vestige of her former life gone in a space of a few weeks. She and her sister founders had become pioneers for their community, opening and expanding the roles of *Les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph* and, like most who forge new paths, they toiled alone. Besides their medical skills, the religious aura that surrounded the hospitallers encouraged families to bring their ailing relatives to the lazaretto that winter, some hoping cures might be possible. A total of seven new cases were admitted, several in advanced stages of the disease.

There were victims of leprosy no older than twelve, some were younger, and many were only in their early teens. Eight of the nineteen patients in the lazaretto in 1870 were between thirteen and fifteen. Of five women, the oldest was only twenty-one. Although the medical community generally agreed that leprosy was incurable, most of the doctors, who came into contact with the victims, even in the years when the lazaretto was on Sheldrake Island, tried to find a suitable antidote. Dr. Alexander Key, the lazaretto's first appointed doctor, dosed his patients on Sheldrake Island with bichloride of mercury and iodine. Another physician, Dr. Charles LaBillois used what he called, 'mercurial frictions,' on the Tracadie patients between 1849-1850. Several he pronounced cured, and released them that year, but most of these were re-admitted later. In the 1850s, even Father Gauvreau purchased a couple of medical books, set aside a section of the lazaretto for those who he thought might benefit, and undertook a treatment program.

Like the others, Amanda was reasonably confident, that, with the right medicine, the sick could have their health restored. Therefore, she experimented with a variety of compounds designed, she hoped, to cure at least, "...a few of them." The mildest remedy she used was strong tea, because, she said, it appeared to fade the amber spots. Her other formulas, though extremely toxic preparations, were still part of the standard medical repertoire of the era. She was giving some of her patients up to five drops of liquid arsenic a day. A resident on this treatment had all his wounds but one clear up and the red spots on his legs were disappearing. She tried bichloride of mercury on those she considered in the worst

state. Nor was she above using patent medicines like, "Fowle's Humour Cure." She wrote, "It caused certain pains in the limbs, but appeared to improve the condition of their mouths and throats."[6] When he heard of the success of this experiment, Fowle sent a large supply of his product free of charge.

A recipe from an elderly gentleman, whispered to her lest someone else overhear and steal the credit for the concoction, called for a combination of roots and spruce bark, gallons of water, and lots of wood. "The stove in the laundry room doesn't cool," and the solution boiled for a full seventy-two hours, Quesnel noted. The resultant liquid was strained and the sick were given the drink several times daily over the next two months. "Anything," one patient told Amanda, "that tasted that awful was bound to make them well again." Amanda was equally eager to try a formula recommended in an old medical text belonging to Father Gauvreau. Amanda wrote: "It is expensive, smells terrible and an awful grey colour but our poor *lépreux* are joyous. They imagine that surely, this time, they will get better."[7] Sister Quesnel said the sisters and the sick were praying to the Holy Family that the recipe would work.

Cures for the patients proved elusive: "In spite of all my treatments, nothing [works] with regards to the 'maladie', it always has the upper hand," Amanda wrote. Nevertheless, she was still not dissuaded, "Without some sort of medicine," she said, "they will have no hope."[8] She finally gave up experimenting, and returned to remedial therapies that would at least ameliorate the condition—good nutrition, a clean environment, fresh air, plenty of rest and regular dressing changes. Though some of the side effects of Amanda's treatments were unfortunate, they were essentially no more primitive or random than those used now by medical practitioners in tending to the terminally or chronically ill.

The changes the hospitallers wrought in the lazaretto, were welcomed by most. One group of sick told Amanda that if the sisters were transferred to Chatham, then they too would go to Chatham, and if the nuns returned to Montreal, they would follow them there. "I don't think you would refuse the community, nor our 'dear lepers' either," Amanda added, "but you might have to wait a long time. It is likely Tracadie will take root."[9]

Bishop Rogers, presiding over confirmation ceremonies for six young patients that January 1869, did not fail to notice how gratified the residents were to have the hospitallers with them, or ignore the visible changes since their arrival. Father Gauvreau wrote in April 1869, "Two of the worst rebels of the earlier period died, deeply regretting their past behaviour and filled with religious spirit. A third is bed-ridden and full of pain. The fourth, hit by what has happened to his associates, is as quiet

and gentle as a lamb." The sick, at first edified by the ambiance of piety and devotion, have now become, themselves, the source of edification for others. "Certainly, the peace and calm reflected in the faces of those who are about to receive Holy Communion, is evidence that the Spirit of God is upon them."[10]

Although not officially ratified until April, the provincial House of Assembly prepared to allocate part of the $800 a year requested for their stipend from Dr. Smith's salary. Smith knew that without the livelihood guaranteed by his lazaretto position he would not be able to scratch out a living. The local families had little money or material possessions. He had no choice but to leave Tracadie in January of 1869, making Viger the unofficial chief medical officer within a radius of more than thirty miles. If she felt overwhelmed by this development, she did not complain. But Pagé apparently resented the doctor's presence and made no attempt to disguise her feelings: "We cannot express how happy we were to hear about the doctor's resignation from the hospital," she wrote.[11] "The news was all the more joyous," she said, "because it was so unexpected." "Thirty people came to the dispensary today," Sister Quesnel wrote, "How strong is their faith! How poor and miserable they are. It makes me pity them." Viger told her Montreal community she was looked on not only as a dispenser of medicines but as a "doctor of medicine," and she added, "...the sick are coming to us from fifty, sometimes sixty miles away.... We have to give them, at least, some attention."[12]

It appears Viger's reputation spread quickly because large numbers of people began to come for consultations. Contributing to her success, on one hand, was her desire to keep up to date with developments in the world of medicine through a store of medical books and journals. Shortly after she arrived in Tracadie, for instance, she received nine books on medicine, five of which came from Father Gauvreau. On the other side, though, was her reliance on preparations that were not necessarily a part of, or approved by, the medical mainstream. The mid-nineteenth century was a time when confidence in traditional therapies waned, and the public, seeking less interventionist approaches that caused fewer side effects, turned increasingly to homeopaths, and 'quacks' for various forms of folk medicines. Viger had a large number of home remedies in her repertoire; therapies that required nothing stronger than eggs, butter, honey, oatmeal, vinegar, and wine. As well, she kept a variety of herbs for use in medicines, teas, and washing solutions.

Furthermore, Viger brought a spiritual dimension to her work that was not often found in the healing arts. The mystique which surrounded all the hospitallers likely attracted more than one curiosity-seeker, but no matter the motive, Amanda's habit, her serene demeanor, and soothing approach calmed the sick or injured, and inspired their confidence. She

believed that the importance of faith was often overlooked by the medical profession. She rejected one medical book because it failed to recognize the soul. The late Sister Louise Légère, 104 years old in 1976, said that local residents believed Amanda Viger had the 'gift of healing.' She still recalled her first meeting with Sister St. Jean—one which was likely a factor in her decision to later enter the Tracadie Foundation. Her father, a Caraquet fisherman, injured his arm in an accident. Infection set in and he was brought to the monastery in Tracadie. Amanda was gracious, Légère recalled, her presence filled the tiny establishment. Légère, a young girl, looked on, while Viger cleaned and dressed the wound, which was "black with decay." Viger told Mr. Légère not to remove the bandage for a week. When the bandage was taken off the arm, "it had completely healed."

Amanda told her Montreal community that people were arriving in groups of twelve, fifteen, or even twenty. They waited in the sisters' parlour while the prescriptions were written out and filled. "Today I had sixteen, twelve were from Kouchibouguac," she wrote. Sister Monique Reid, who arrived to replace Pagé in May of 1869 found them all, "sick enough to be in hospital."[13] On one occasion, two women, commissioned by thirteen others, journeyed from Bathurst, New Brunswick, a difficult seventy-five mile circuit along the Acadian Peninsula. A sizable minority of her patients spoke only English. In one six-month period Viger saw a total of 1,695 individuals.

The laity were not the only ones seeking help from the 'Sister Doctors.' They were also preparing medications for ailing priests and missionaries, among them Fathers Gauvreau, and Charles Hachey, a friend of Bishop Rogers. The medications they sent to Father Hachey were very effective, Rogers told them, and now that Hachey was feeling better, Rogers was sending him to Tracadie, "in order to receive further treatment and advice with regards to his health." Gauvreau was ailing during the summer months. Viger said they arranged a rest area in their sunny garden, using benches sent from Montreal and intended for their refectory. Bishop Rogers sent his former secretary, Father Joseph Auguste Babineau to help Gauvreau with his pastoral duties, but when Gauvreau's health did not improve, Mother Reid asked the Bishop to assign a confessor for their house: "It would only be necessary to have one during the first week of each season of the church year." Father Gauvreau was so ill he was not able to say mass in their chapel by February 1870, and he needed their almost constant nursing care.

If the success of Amanda's practice had translated into income, the small foundation would have reached economic independence within the first year. However, they accepted donations but did not charge for any of their works and long periods of time went by when no money came in

at all. "For several weeks we got nothing," Amanda wrote a few months after opening the dispensary. Total offerings for the whole twelve month period of 1869 came to $106.31. On the other hand, expenditures amounted to $102.16. The only other source of earned income in 1869 came from the production and sale of dairy products: butter and milk brought in $19.20—hardly a livable wage, let alone enough to pay for pharmaceuticals. Clearly, without Father Trudel, who sent her a further $20 in July of 1869, she might have run out of supplies.

Amanda, in her efforts to save money, agreed to a proposal presented by Board of Health member, Mr. William Davidson, a Néguac businessman, who advised her to buy medicines from Halifax instead of Montreal. He would have the supplies brought in on his own schooner, he told her, and the hospitallers would save on the shipping costs. She was shocked to learn later that the bill came to $112, much higher than the $40 she had budgeted. Happily for Mr. Davidson, as well as the sisters, the boat capsized at the entrance to the Tracadie Harbour. The businessman salvaged the medicine, which he turned over to the nuns, who also collected a $94 insurance claim. Although insurance adjusters might debate the issue, as far as Amanda was concerned, the incident was evidence that Divine Providence was favouring their work.

They were never as poor as "birds on a branch" but the small sums of money coming in seldom let them forget their essentially meagre financial resources. Fortunately, the rules required their motherhouse to lend recent foundations a reasonable sum for each sister in the establishment. The community had to repay the amount within three years, or pay an annuity to the house from which they received the loan.

The Montreal hospitallers were true to their word and the Chatham foundation was established in 1869. Rogers, undertaking another European voyage for a Vatican Council meeting in 1870, requested a list of their houses in France. "I will make it my duty to visit at least the one in La Flèche, the cradle of your holy community, to thank the Holy Family for creating this holy institute and establishing their foundation to comfort the poor sick in my diocese." The bishop visited La Flèche, Laval and Ernée, Beaugé, Beaufort, Nimes, and Avignon where he collected a total of 2,900 francs (approximately $500 U.S.); funds specifically intended for the New Brunswick foundations in Tracadie and Chatham. Rogers, ignoring the design of the donors, gave the money to his secretary, Reverend Thomas Barry, for diocesan work. He was about to build a monastery/hospital complex for the hospitallers in Chatham, so by turning the funds over to general revenues instead of to the two New Brunswick houses, at least some monies would help defray building costs, while Rogers saw to it that none of the amount would go to Tracadie.

More troubling, perhaps, than the lack of support from their bishop

was his attempts to use charm as a tactic of manipulation. His ingratiating ploys kept them off guard, while his tendency to blame the government, or Father Gauvreau, or Protestants for their unfortunate circumstances, left the hospitallers suspicious of others and permanently insecure.

The Common Schools Act passed in 1871, which banned the teaching of religion and the use of religious objects in the schools of New Brunswick, is a good indication that he had reason for concern over who would own or control public institutions such as the lazaretto. However, what Rogers overlooked was the disparate complexities of the education system, and the Tracadie hospital. The former, serving the needs of the general population, catered to students of all denominations and, in the southern part of the province, most would be non-Catholics. These parents did not want their children influenced by members of other faiths. But as its supporters argued, there was no reason for the House of Assembly to restrict the religious practices of the hospitallers within the lazaretto, which, while also a public institution, was one that, *de facto*, served only a minority within a minority population group, all of whom were Roman Catholic. It would only result in a return to the province, of a host of problems the sisters seemed to have so easily resolved. Nor was Rogers unmindful of the acrimonious relationship (no doubt intensified by the influx of famine Irish escaping Hibernia in the mid-1840s) between Irish Catholic and Irish Protestant populations in his own episcopal town. But no matter the Catholic and Protestant dissension in other regions of the province, the possibility such strife would erupt midst the homogeneous hospital population was exceedingly remote.

There was more in Rogers' opposition than his oft-stated fears of government legislative powers; it is obvious that his distress was compounded by the fact that Paquet, Gauvreau, and Pagé established the foundation in spite of his disfavour. This was not the first occasion that these two priests had disregarded the bishop's desires. They both were united in their opposition to Confederation, for example, when Rogers was using his position to urge parishioners to vote for the union. However, on that occasion, the argument was settled by the voters, and in the bishop's favour. This time, from his point of view, the outcome of the debate was not so happily resolved; thus, he only grudgingly allowed them to go to Tracadie, and notwithstanding their initial successes, he would never entirely approve of the enterprise.

Furthermore, because of their situation in Tracadie, Rogers felt forced to undertake the construction of a motherhouse for the hospitallers in Chatham. He purchased the land before the fall of 1868 was over, and, he promised, "...as soon as the said community is legally incorporated they will have the judicial power to become land owners and to gather

monies, with the goal of building the convent and Hôtel-Dieu." In the meantime, Rogers turned over his former residence for their, "use and possession." Thus, because he believed the hospitallers in Tracadie to be in a 'perilous' position, Rogers was initiating an undertaking that would add considerably to his debt. If his original assumption proved false, then what excuse would he have for this additional cost? Having predicted the hospitallers' failure at every opportunity, any action that threatened to increase the security of the hospitallers in Tracadie, also threatened to expose a hollowness in his own position.

Imagine his consternation, then, when he learned that Father Gauvreau, without consulting the bishop, took it upon himself to draw up and circulate a petition asking the House of Assembly to incorporate the sisters, and allocate a grant of $800 a year, over and above the lazaretto budget, for their stipend. Needless to say, Rogers—who knew nothing about it until, Mr. Moore, the MLA for Gloucester, presented it to him for his signature—did not support it but he must have grappled with his legendary temper when he noted that one of the people who did sign the document was Marie Pagé.

There is no copy of the bishop's letter to the mother superior, but we know that one was sent to her by the obviously contrite tone of Pagé's response. "I deserved to be reprimanded," she wrote in April 1869, "for having signed the petition sent to the government." She believed Father Gauvreau had the bishop's authorization since, "He always talks to me as though he was working in concert with you."[14] Rogers made his position quite clear a few weeks later. Father Gauvreau, according to Rogers, having taken such an important step without seeking 'the advice of his bishop,' promoted discussion of the issue in parliament, stories in newspapers, conferences between deputies, priests and bishops, in their various localities, all creating a certain notoriety for the hospitallers and so, "by his impudence, a good and honourable community, which was known for its obedience, seemed to dissociate itself from the proper Superior."[15] Pagé attempted to mend the rift with Rogers and Gauvreau by pointing out that Father Gauvreau, "often talks about your holy endeavours, and appears sincerely pleased by the success of your work." [15]

After several delays, the Act of Incorporation was passed in April of 1869. It allowed the sisters to raise money, own or sell real estate, collect rent and keep any profits. It also entitled them to full control and administration of an $800 allocation, although it was June of that year before the sisters received the first installment. The act, however, was flawed. An amendment tabled by Robert Young left the community subject to government caprices. They could receive donations, but they could not legally dispose of anything without permission from the

province since the legislature retained the power to rescind the act. As Rogers said, "It makes your community property simply government property." Matters which require negotiations with the government, "the majority of whom are Protestant and enemies of our religion, must be handled with the utmost prudence."

Gauvreau, of course, could not have anticipated that the act would be amended in such a way, and, seeking to incorporate the hospitallers so that they would have the legal right to own property and raise funds, was a legitimate recourse for charitable organizations. Despite its flaws, if the Act of Incorporation had not passed, it is unlikely the legislature would have approved their $800 allocation, thus imposing such an additional strain on their precarious financial position that their work in Tracadie may have ended. At the very least, the act, which legitimized the hospitallers' role and affirmed the government's acceptance of them, should have served to allay, to a certain degree, Rogers' initial mistrust.

Gauvreau was unapologetic: "This incorporation, as well as the allocation of $800, are the beginning two big steps made for the primary foundation of your institute in New Brunswick," he wrote to Mother Céré, even though, "[t]he main goal, that is the legal acquisition of the land on which the convent and the hospital are built, has still to be reached...put your trust in Divine Providence, God is never stopped midway."[16] Father Gauvreau proved his devotion to them, and the hospitallers' mission when he donated two land tracts, about fifty acres each, bordering the lazaretto property with half the area cleared for agriculture. It was worth $630. He managed to get around the act by making the title out to Julie Céré and Césarine Raymond, both of the Hôtel-Dieu Montreal. The hospitallers, in appreciation, named Father Gauvreau an Honorary Founder of the Community. The contract would prove to be a model for other New Brunswick Catholic religious communities.

Chapter Seven

Germination

Viger maintained *The Chronicles*, a daily—or sometimes weekly or monthly—diary of events where she documented many of the problems they encountered with an intransigent church, a prejudiced civilian government, and the lazaretto management board, relations with which were increasingly contentious. Fortunately, Pagé knew how to manipulate her ship around the secular and ecclesiastical shoals that characterized New Brunswick politics, but the mother superior was not a young woman, and the physical and mental exertions were affecting her health. Pagé suffered from chronic fatigue, a sore throat and an ear infection for several weeks. Pagé was recalled to Montreal after only nine months in Tracadie. Céré was seriously ill, and Pagé replaced her as the mother superior of *Mont Sainte-Famille* a few weeks later. The founders, profoundly distressed by the loss of their superior, "...did not want to be seen weeping," so Brault, in her role as sacristan, moved up the scheduled hour for Pagé's departure. Nevertheless, "the community chapel was as full at 4:00 A.M. as it would have been at 6:00 A.M.," Viger wrote. "Sister Brault is angry with the Holy Spirit who...let people know about the change."[1]

Sisters Monique Reid and Marie Philomène Sicotte, sent to reinforce the number of hospitallers, arrived in Chatham late in May, bringing so much cargo with them Mr. Davidson needed a second conveyance to transport it all. Reid, Amanda's former pharmacy instructor, had enough education and experience to make her a more than capable administrator and she was appointed to replace Pagé as mother superior. Sicotte and Amanda, former schoolmates in the Boucherville convent, worked well together. Eventually Sicotte became Viger's 'right hand.' "People come asking for the new 'sister doctors,'" Quesnel wrote. And, Viger noted, "I just received two sugar breads from a religious woman who wanted to show her sincere gratitude to the new arrivals."[2]

Just as he failed to conduct a ceremony of possession for their Tracadie

house, Rogers took little interest in the hospitallers' annual retreat, or in presiding over the election of the mother superior at its conclusion. However, the Montreal house obtained his permission to send their own chaplain, Father Narcan, to act as Rogers' commissary. The hospitallers hosted a chicken dinner for their guest, and Amanda dubbed herself the 'Sister Doctor with the hard heart' because she was the only one willing to dispatch one of their two month-old pullets for the cause. The election formality ended on July 26 with benediction, and the singing of the *Te Deum*. Quesnel, whose descriptive letters give such a vivid picture of everyday life in their foundation, was recalled in June of 1871.

Viger might have given little thought to sacrificing a chicken, but her

The Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph and their patients at the Hôtel-Dieu, Tracadie, circa 1873-4. Amanda is third from the right. Also in the group are Mother Superior Monique Reid, Sisters Brault, Sicotte, L'évêque, Clémence, Luména, with their first postulant Sister Parent.

heart was certainly not without tenderness. Further, from all accounts she was an attractive young woman, and being much more in public view than she ever would have been in Montreal, she was being noticed and-to her consternation—noticed by certain young men in the area. "Charlo continues to hang around," she wrote, "He doesn't respect my religious position at all." The suitor apparently brought her a present, "A pretty little lamb. Isn't that nice?"[3] It is possible that one of the young men of the village was making advances to her, but it is equally possible, as Sister LaPlante speculated, that Amanda was using a metaphor to describe her own sexual desires; with, 'Charlo', her acronym for the devil, and the

'pretty little lamb', the 'lamb of Christ.' There was no further reference to 'Charlo,' so either the issue was not a serious one for her, or she dealt with it privately.

Amanda's heart was most vulnerable when it concerned her cherished Montreal community. "Time has not erased the memories of all of you who have been more than mothers to me," she wrote near her second Christmas in Tracadie. "We are about to start another year in exile, laden with crosses." One year later she penned this tribute to them, "My love for you is stronger even than death, because it bridges the great distance that separates us." Her birth family also remained close to her heart, and when in December 1871, she received a letter recounting a series of tragic losses in her family, she was so moved she wrote of it to Pagé. "The worst," she said, "was Anna's death at the age of twenty-two, only seven days after she gave birth to a "charming little girl....Oh! This death has affected me deeply. Dear Anna, next to me in age, was the little one who was with me when I entered." The same letter announced the death of her Uncle Samuel, and that of a little nephew who was only a few months old. "Please remember them, particularly dear Anna, in your prayers," she beseeched her hospitaller family.[4]

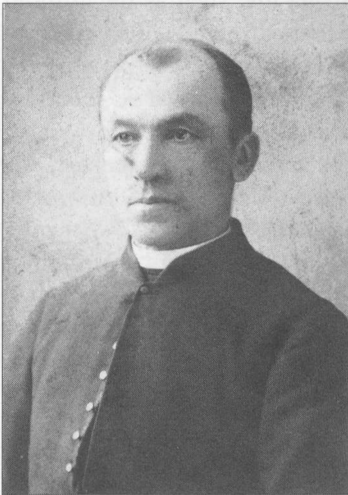
If there were no indications earlier, it is clear from these letters that Amanda was not overly scrupulous about adhering to her rules, nor did she worry about breaking them by taking advantage of available moments to write a few lines, such as during the hours that she sat at the bedside of a dying patient or when she was on duty. Although they were discouraged from forming individual friendships, few hospitallers failed to develop deep and heartfelt bonds with certain of their colleagues. For Viger, friend, mentor, and parent figure were all personified in Marie Pagé: "Today should be a day when the soul converses with God alone," she wrote to Pagé on Pentecost Sunday in May of 1872, "But I don't think the dear Lord would mind if I take a sweet satisfaction in visiting with you; for me it is essential to come from time to time, and pour out my heart." Pagé was more than a mentor, particularly after the nine months they worked together in Tracadie. "After the Lord Himself...it was you who directed my first years in the profession, and later guided my steps and fortified my courage in the first days of exile."

She told Pagé she worried that if she did not learn to control her strong will, her health would suffer. "I am only twenty four now...I who want to live to be eighty." In spite of her repeated vows to do better, she broke her resolutions after only a short time. Whenever she was upset, she sought a few stolen moments of solitude so she could read and meditate and, as she wrote in this same letter, she found comfort in the letters of Saint Peter: "What they say about prayer and obedience leave me profoundly impressed." She remained, in spite of her anxieties, optimistic,

noting that all the sisters were well, "living under the wings of Divine Providence...in spite of the efforts of our enemies, we are at peace."[5]

The nuns themselves had few enemies, but they were often caught in the middle of the intrigues surrounding their administration of the lazaretto, and the government-appointed members of the Board of Health. There was little time, though, for Viger to dwell either on these, or on her personal problems. The sisters were continually busy, supplying communion wafers, repairing not only their own clothing and linens but vestments for the priests and missionaries, the laces, and altar cloths needed in the churches in Tracadie, Caraquet, Pokemouche, and eleven other missions.

Father Babineau, who had taken over many of Gauvreau's duties during his illness, was appointed curate of Tracadie when Father Gauvreau retired in September of 1871. "Even though I knew Father Gauvreau was determined to return to Quebec...the news is very painful," Monique Reid wrote. "This dear priest has earned our eternal gratitude." The twenty-five year old curate also took on the duties of chaplain, and Reid, who was old enough to be the young priest's mother, was somewhat lukewarm in her comments with regards to this news. "We are pleased that you chose Babineau for us," she wrote to Rogers. "Whatever the case...we want to assure you that we are completely submissive to your decision."[6]



Father Joseph Auguste Babineau.

The amicable alliance between Rogers and Father Babineau, one of few Acadian priests, was a complete contrast to the bishop's acrimonious affiliation with Monseigneur Paquet and Father Gauvreau. Babineau, born in St.-Louis-de-Kent, New Brunswick in 1844, was eager and anxious to please. There would be little that transpired in the monastery that the chaplain would not know about since he was the sisters' confessor and chief advisor. Rogers gradually relegated responsibility to Babineau for almost every official duty with regards to the sisters. He trusted him to keep watch on developments, and use his influence to make sure the members of the Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu remained docile. Babineau, who continued to be their confessor for over thirty years, was not as compliant as he appeared to be. He became an ally of the hospitallers, particularly Viger, managing to intercede on their behalf with the bishop, as well

as with members of the Board of Health. The priest was not afraid to circulate petitions, write letters to newspapers or lobby government representatives; but by focusing on the lazaretto rather than on the religious community, he was able to influence officials on their behalf, without implicating their order or casting public attention upon them.

Even in their earliest days, the hospitallers brought not only health care but many other benefits to Tracadie. They were a source of employment for low-skilled workers; businessmen in the region supplied them with provisions; they hired locally for minor renovations and construction projects. Young women had role models that revealed to them a career choice other than that of homemaker. Slowly, and rather subtly, they infused the region with some culture, music, and religious ceremony. They were delighted by events which seemed to suggest that their foundation was becoming an integral part of village life, such as the autumn day of 1870, when one hundred villagers attended the unveiling ceremony for their chapel bell, and gave $44 in donations for the privilege of striking it. Amanda, in turn, joined in the general elation when the town of Tracadie showed signs of progress, as it did on one June morning of 1872 when flags were hoisted to celebrate the arrival of the telegraph. "It linked the village, always a bit behind times, with the modern world, while we are all overjoyed because it brings us closer to you,"[7] Amanda wrote to her Montreal house. She went on to say that Tracadie would not forget them, nor would she and her sisters forget Tracadie because, "It is a bridge to our first founder Marie de La Ferre." Like La Ferre, Viger was mingling with people from various backgrounds, negotiating business arrangements with those of different faiths, and gaining insight into the workings of politics and government.

Whether guests were visiting clergy, doctors, bureaucrats, inspectors, politicians, reporters, or merely curiousity-seekers, she was the designated guide for a steady stream of callers. Amanda escorted the visitors through the wards, answered questions, assisted with examinations, and, if necessary, acted as a translator.

The federal Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Dr. Joseph-Charles Taché, who undertook a study of leprosy, made an initial stopover in August of 1872. Establishing the presbyter as his headquarters, the doctor came to the lazaretto every day. Amanda was impressed with the high-level official, "...a simple man, a holy man, a man without pretension, he has an extraordinary memory. I think he knows all of the inhabitants of Tracadie by their first names." Taché appointed her his private secretary. "I copy documents into his journals all day long. No doubt there are errors," she said, "since much of the information in them was provided by 'popular' historians."[8] Viger was forced to make use of every available free moment to transcribe the material, which had to be written in

English and gave her much difficulty. This was not the first time Viger had been asked to assist a doctor in his research. Dr. Monro of the Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal sent her an article on leprosy from *The Gazette*, with the request that she compare the symptoms in the lazaretto patients, with those described in the newspaper clipping.

When concerned members of the Chatham house paid a visit to Tracadie it was a particularly gratifying event for all concerned since the founders in both had a chance to revive friendships, and relive the times when they were together at Mont Sainte-Famille. However, Viger, who often worked until after 9:00 P.M. and rose again at 4:30 A.M., was so tired in June of 1873 that even a visit from her beloved Pagé failed to cheer her. It was overwhelming to entertain her former superior, the bishop, and the superior founder—the sister chosen to be the first mother superior of a new foundation—of the Chatham house, Mère Davignon, in the tiny Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu. Pagé wanted to assure herself that the Tracadie and Chatham houses were quickly establishing the standards and regulations imposed by their rules. She brought copies of *The Customary*, pointing out how they could use it to improve the ways they followed their regulations. She instructed Amanda on the importance of keeping an archive, and she showed her how to set one up. Pagé suggested they move the harmonium into their choir, and she solicited a promise from Amanda that she would try to use it more often. Understandably, by the time the three day visit was over, Amanda was exhausted.

Pagé was summoned back to New Brunswick by Bishop Rogers, not only to regulate the Chatham and Tracadie houses, but to initiate steps to open a third house, this one in Saint-Basile. It was challenge enough to keep the two foundations operating. Replacements were being sent from Montreal on a regular basis but since many of these women were middle-aged or older, it wasn't long before they were overcome by the amount of labour, deprivation, and fatigue. Although it was gratifying to know that the bishop appreciated them, Pagé was hard pressed to find the number of well-educated, healthy, and adventurous women needed to open yet another New Brunswick house. Fortunately, Chatham was actively recruiting novices, a liberty Rogers continued to deny the Tracadie foundation.

The hospitallers, Amanda among them, were doing their best to reproduce their rites and ceremonies long before Pagé raised the issue in her 1873 visit but it was somewhat unrealistic to expect that they could live exactly as they had done in Quebec. There were hardly enough of them to perform every ritual, and still find time to execute their secular responsibilities for one thing. Secondly, with only their choir off-limits to visitors, they were not free to execute the public humiliations such as confessing

small transgressions before meals, or performing individual acts of humility, when anyone from the village might overhear them; even maintaining the rules of silence was difficult. "It goes without saying the lack of a cloister is a major drawback, but [as] 'seculars' are everywhere," Viger wrote, "we abstain from leaving the lazaretto property." Amanda tried to keep up with her music, "Because without it, there would not be many to sing," but she found it, "very troubling to practice when you know there is so much else to do."[9]

They decided to reduce religious instruction for the sick to two or three times per week, since their patients, being long-term residents, hardly needed daily lessons. The foundation was nearly four years old, when Reid submitted the first "Triennial Report of the Hôtel-Dieu Tracadie" to the Vatican. "There are some points in the rules which we cannot observe," she wrote. "The major one being the lack of an enclosure. "Our choir is the only area where we can feel cloistered." There were seven hospitallers, twenty-four sick in the lazaretto, and many impoverished sick, seeking their help. The hospitallers had land holdings now worth $680, chiefly the parcel given them by Father Gauvreau. "With God's will," she wrote, "we hope to construct a hospital and an orphanage." The religious rituals that were not already in place would be imposed, "As soon as we have the proper locale, and a sufficient number of personnel to implement them."[10]

The lack of an enclosure, and the inability to take in and train candidates frustrated the members of the Tracadie house, particularly Amanda, who continued to hold the empty office of Mistress of Novices. While Tracadie would never be fully autonomous until they too had a noviciate, they were not lacking aspirants, they had turned away prospective subjects as early as 1869.

With all of their skills, as well as their resources extended to their limits, Viger was alarmed to learn, shortly after Pagé's visit, that Sister Brault might be sent to Chatham. "Brault cannot be spared. No one else can keep track of the inventory, or run the bursar's office," Viger told her former superior.

The authoritarian tone in her letter suggests that Amanda was no longer the idealistic, young and obedient pharmacist who first arrived in Tracadie. The reality of their situation had not really dimmed her faith, but rather infused it and her with a deeper determination to persevere in spite of the odds against them. And, if that meant challenging even so illustrious a figure as Marie Pagé, so it would be. This letter would also help Pagé in her negotiations with Rogers since Amanda made it clear that the shortage of members was not only limiting the growth and development of their house, but the number of services they could provide. Amanda noted that Rogers had asked them to open a school, and two of

their number were working continually on that project. Only Brault or Mère Reid could help her in the pharmacy. Moreover, whenever one of them was called on to sit through the night with a dying patient, it left fewer available the next day to cope with the rest of the work. Their numbers were at a minimum as it was. Brault was not transferred. A few days later the hospitallers were notified that Rogers would allow them to open a novitiate at last. "We could not be happier," Viger wrote. "We are now in accord with the most essential of our holy rules which stipulate that each house must develop a completely independent community."[11]

The Common Schools Act, passed by the New Brunswick legislature in the autumn of 1871, was the catalyst that caused Rogers to ask the Tracadie hospitallers to the open a novitiate. The act, which launched a free non-sectarian school system in the province, banned the teaching of religion, as well as the wearing of religious robes or symbols, or the public display of these articles in the classroom. Roman Catholics of both language groups were at the forefront of the dispute that followed its passage. The bishops of Saint John and Chatham ordered their parishioners not to send their children to the public schools.

The controversy led Bishop Rogers to rethink his position with regards to the Tracadie foundation. The average daily attendance at the only school in the district of Saumarez was just sixteen in 1868, and even this school was closed, leaving Tracadie with no educational facility. Over half the adult population in the area was illiterate. When Rogers asked the hospitallers to open a private institution, they lacked land, money, and a novitiate from where they could recruit a teaching staff. If he wanted a school, at the very least, he had to allow the Tracadie foundation to accept novices.

While Viger's role in establishing and running *l'Externat Saint-Joseph*, (Saint Joseph Day School), parallels other important events in her life, it is useful to examine this aspect in more detail, because it serves to illustrate how the progress of her community was restricted by the nature of their principal work, that of caring for leprosy victims. In fact, their determined and continuing dedication to their initial purpose frequently led to a pattern of failure in the midst of success. Now, for the first time since her arrival, Viger was no longer the head pharmacist. The mother superior, Mère Reid, fulfilled that role, while Sicotte acted as Reid's assistant. Viger was responsible for the inauguration and administration of the school. Although she had never taught, she was appointed the head mistress. Luckily, the sisters found their first novice, Luce Parent, from Paspébiac, Quebec, a teacher with four years of experience.

Tracadie businessman, William Ferguson, obtained land adjacent to the monastery, and, for the nominal sum of $30, deeded seven-and-a-half acres to Sisters Baudin (who replaced Quesnel) and Sicotte. Informing

Rogers only after the fact, Reid asked the bishop to bless the property and to "consider this land as making a part of our cloister since it is adjacent to our present quarters, and we might have to go there someday." William Davidson proffered a former carpentry shop which he had hauled to the site. The work began in June of 1873. Many villagers provided shingles and lumber, and others their labour; but through the summer the lack of materials and funds resulted in frequent delays. Father Babineau loaned them an antiquated table. Another make-shift table was fashioned out of an old door. A covered access, which led from the convent to the school, drew the curiousity of the entire village. It linked seven buildings and, according to Viger, looked like the Victoria Bridge in Montreal. Amanda asked her Montreal community to obtain some French language text books.

The interior of the school was not finished, and the materials were less than perfect, but, nevertheless, Saint Joseph's Day School opened on December 9, 1873. Notwithstanding the season, Viger and Parent had fifty students within ten days, and more were coming all the time. A number of their pupils were young women, several in their early twenties. Viger, who taught first level English and French, said they were all "eager to learn." Amanda introduced her class to Bishop Rogers and to an entourage of seven priests on August 2, 1874. The bishop examined them on their catechism, as well as on their knowledge of English and French. "They performed well enough," Viger wrote, "considering they had only been in school for seven months."[12] Viger had hoped to use the second floor of the school house for their novitiate but it was apparent that they would need it for another classroom.

Their success in attracting pupils did not result in a corresponding growth in revenue. The hospitallers set a fee of $3 a year for children in Tracadie. Those from outside the area were charged $4. Few families paid the sum, but their children were educated anyway. The financial records show that their school brought in very little money. For example, in 1875, the hospitallers received $62 in revenues, mostly from the sale of books and other supplies, while operating expenses amounted to $56.

With her resources strained to the limit, Amanda recorded her frustration: "We absolutely need novices if we are to fulfill the different offices we have now, and will need in the future." Yet, they wanted only choir sisters because there was so little space, and in Tracadie there was no distinction between the work the choir sisters and domestic sisters performed. The Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal responded by sending two more sisters. However, there was simply no room to house them, and the Tracadie hospitallers had to send them to Chatham. They were able to take one new postulant, Sister Marianne Losier, the daughter of the former lazaretto keeper Philias Losier, and one of their first pupils. But the short-

age of teachers remained acute. Parent did not complete her novitiate, and Viger herself could scarcely give her full attention to teaching, while greeting guests, showing them through the hospital, and answering queries from the medical profession. Often, this left the school with only one teacher.

Meanwhile, although the clergy considered the province's school law anti-Catholic, the government had moved some way towards a compromise, and pressure was being put on the church to conform to the new regulations. In response to the charges, Viger, in her usual direct manner, formulated a series of conditions which she felt would have to be met if Saint Joseph's Day School was to continue to operate. The school was a sideline anyway, she said. "We are nurses. Our real work is with the sick."

The trustees of the school district signed a contract that spelled out the terms under which they agreed to work. The trustees would hire the hospitallers as teachers for the school. The hospitallers could continue to use the text books already in place, and the teachers were exempted from, "certifying an oath to the school returns at the end of term or any other time."[13] The Common Schools Act had been amended in 1873 to allow for the wearing of religious garb in the classroom. Under the compromise of 1875, trustees were given permission to rent, for school use, buildings belonging to religious orders. Furthermore, the superior of any Roman Catholic teaching order would not have to attend the Normal School, but would have to go to Fredericton to write an examination for license, or teach under a local license which carried less salary. Because the Normal School did not offer training in French, the great majority of teachers in the Acadian districts continued to teach under local licenses. The results of an 1893 government investigation suggest that such compromises on the part of both local trustees and religious orders were not uncommon in Gloucester County.

Not only would the school remain open, it would receive a much needed government subsidy. But the trustees told Viger that, in order for the school to have a higher designation as stipulated in the contract, the hospitallers would have to submit to the teacher examinations held at the Normal School in Fredericton. This would break one of the few rules regarding the cloister that they were able to impose. Since the children would be left without instruction if they closed, Viger lowered her expectations. They would live with the fees accorded teachers with Class III (or local) licenses. The foundation would receive $95 a year for the school and, if the number of students required more than two teachers, they would receive an additional $30 for each teacher needed. Viger was pleased with the outcome. They never removed the religious symbols from the walls. In fact, "We have all the benefits of the law without being subject to it," she noted.[14]

Viger actively searched out novices with some teacher training, and by 1881, two young Acadian entrants had taken over the teaching duties. Newly professed Marie Anne Doucet had taught under local licenses in Bathurst and Saint John, before she entered the congregation in 1878. Doucet entered as a domestic but the chapter decided a year later to make her a choir nun because of her abilities and education. Other staff included postulant Margaret Hachey who held a valid teaching license. She had begun her teaching career in Bathurst five years earlier at the age of sixteen. Doucet, classified as a teacher assistant, received no salary from the province. Hachey, who was granted only a third class license, because she could not leave the monastery to write the teacher examination, was to receive $150 per year. The staff was hampered by a continued shortage of adequate resources. Viger made two requests for a French language mathematics text, which was approved by the province, but a full year later, she had not yet received one.

Despite such difficulties, the two young women proved capable indeed. When school inspector Valentin Landry visited Saint Joseph's, sixty-two of seventy students were present; thirty-seven students wrote exams, and twenty-seven passed. The inspector ranked the school 'Excellent,' with a very good standard of teaching, and a good level of proficiency. In comparison, not one of the twenty students present in the public school in Saumarez took examinations. The register was not kept up, and the teacher was ranked 'Fair' with weak teaching skills.[15]

The school's fine reputation did not guarantee adequate remuneration for its staff, however, and for Viger, now serving her second term as mother superior, the struggle to wrest the sisters' salaries from government officials remained a constant irritation. In 1882, she was forced to make repeated requests for Hachey's salary. Apparently, the money was held up because Hachey and Doucet would not go to Fredericton to write the teacher examinations. "Inspector, you know it is impossible for us to fulfill this condition," Viger wrote, referring to their rules forbidding them from leaving their religious communities. "We have a right to this salary which was very conscientiously earned. I was under the impression that as long as you granted us the license, we would be paid."[16] In spite of these difficulties, the school remained open throughout the summer months. The milder climate attracted more students. Viger reported an enrollment of ninety-nine children in the summer of 1883.

Still the financial problems continued. "I am letting you know Sister Hachey has not been paid for the last three terms," she wrote in January of 1884. Viger appealed to the chief superintendent of education in the fall of 1885 to have the school drafts for Hachey and Doucet, being held pending their attendance at the Normal School, released. "Sister Hachey died in January," she informed him, and, "when Sister Doucet received

her license from Inspector Landry we understood she would get the government allowance, because the salary from the district is extremely small." The community could not afford to lose this sum, Viger wrote. "In the name of justice...let us have this money which has been earned."

Viger continued to operate the school throughout 1885 in spite of the difficulties. A lay teacher, Mary McDonald, was hired to strengthen the teaching staff. The educational standards remained high throughout 1886, the last year Saint Joseph's Day School operated. McDonald and Doucet were joined by postulant Alodie Landry, who had earned a valid teaching license from the Fredericton Normal School before she entered the Tracadie hospitallers. She had just begun teaching that term. Viger asked if Sister Landry, whose three year license would soon expire, could go to Chatham or Newcastle and stay in the Chatham Hôtel-Dieu to write the exam. She also noted that Inspector Mersereau would give Landry an excellent recommendation. Sister Doucet had not been paid for three consecutive terms.

Ironically, it was not the financial difficulties that caused Viger to close the school. The first hint of the trouble appeared in Mersereau's 1885 report. "There is some dissatisfaction in the district over the present location of the school," he wrote referring to its proximity to the lazaretto. As people became more aware of the nature of leprosy, they became more fearful. It is little wonder, then, that a school in close proximity to a lazaretto, taught by personnel who were in charge of the sick, would cause a certain amount of concern, as the contagious nature of leprosy was better understood. Babineau, as chaplain and chief spokesperson for the lazaretto, was sensitive to any bad publicity, so with the approval of Bishop Rogers, Babineau advised the hospitallers to close it. Nearly a decade later, in a letter to Viger, Rogers admitted as much: "The school work which the...sisters had so efficiently performed...for several years ...was abandoned, because it was feared that serious objections would be made, which might mitigate against the interest of the lazaretto...."[13]

The inspector hoped the friction would simmer down. However, in 1886, a trustee opposed to having the school so close to the lazaretto was elected and in November, the school was 'moved.' The lay teacher Mary McDonald told Viger she had come to teach in the sisters' school, not in any other. When the school trustees were not able to procure the services of a teacher willing to move as well, attendance dropped. Saint Joseph's Day School never reopened.

Writing to her motherhouse about their decision, Viger explained that the sisters closed the school on December 18, 1886 because of difficulties created by the machinations of "a few Protestants." She told Bishop Rogers that she and Father Babineau had decided to close the school for the sake of "religious honour" and "to teach a lesson" to the villagers,

who had let themselves be influenced by Protestants. The inspector did not state in his report whether the trustee who objected to the location of Saint Joseph's was Catholic or Protestant; however, in 1885, Father Babineau was one of the trustees for the district. James Young, a Protestant, served as a trustee in 1882 and 1883. It would be easier for both the priest and the bishop to blame the closure of their school on the complaints from the Protestant community, since it allowed the hospitallers to remain hopeful that they would be able to reopen, once objections had been quelled, perhaps even in the near future.

Although there were strong rivalries between Catholic and Protestant businessmen that affected how the lazaretto was administered, the hospitallers were, nevertheless, highly regarded by nearly everyone. Catholic and Protestant families sent their children to the monastery for music lessons, paying a fee of from $2-$3 a month beginning in 1883. The small number of non-Catholics in Tracadie may have been intimidated by the church-dominated school, but its loss was more likely the result of the peculiar role of the Tracadie foundation.

No other school in the district had a higher standard of education than Saint Joseph's Day School. It was classified by school inspectors as a "graded" school. Nearly all others were designated as "miscellaneous." Moreover, it was the only one in its district to offer the 'superior' levels. There were only two schools, both classified as "miscellaneous," open in Tracadie by May of 1887.

It is extraordinary that Saint Joseph's could close with so little attempt made to re-open it. Education in the Acadian community was slow to develop for several reasons, including an apathetic attitude on the part of the Catholic clergy for whom public education was not a priority. The popularity of privately-run Catholic boarding schools operated by various male and female teaching orders, assured them that the children of Catholic elites, those few who could afford it, would attain a good classic education, while allowing the church to control its direction.

The church hierarchy was not enthusiastic about encouraging a free and liberal system that they could not control. Many priests and nuns tended to share the popular belief that formal schooling was wasted on working class children expected to follow tradition and work as homemakers, or domestics if you were a girl; if you were a boy, labour in fishing, lumbering or farming where reading and writing were not required. Even for the youngsters who were in school, there were few French language text books, and teacher training for francophones was practically non-existent. Although New Brunswick's public education system was supposed to be accessible to all, each county had its own school board whose trustees relied on county taxes to pay teacher salaries and maintain the buildings. Therefore, there was a built-in disparity between

school systems in the more prosperous southern part of the province, and the impoverished northeast area, where schools were frequently closed for lack of funds.

Saint Joseph did have a rebirth or sorts, when the hospitallers opened *l'Académie Sainte-Famille* (Holy Family Academy) in 1912. This was a private day and boarding school, and, as Saint Joseph before it, appeared to offer a higher quality of education than the struggling public institutions. Unlike their previous school, attendance at Holy Family Academy was not free. The hospitallers, at their own expense, as most of the private church-run schools and colleges did, educated many poor children, sometimes accepting them as boarders. These children often assisted in the kitchen or with other menial chores to earn their keep.

Despite these conditions, the legacy of Saint Joseph School was, in some important ways, revived.

Chapter Eight

God's Will

People in the region usually turned to the hospitallers when they were sick or injured, going to the dispensary themselves or on behalf of someone else. Nevertheless, in the late fall of 1874, when they were needed to treat the victims of an outbreak of smallpox, the chapter once again decided to break their rules by sending members of the house to Caraquet, in the interest of the public good.

The pestilence, which had originated in Montreal, was carried to Caraquet and Pokemouche, a parish about twenty kilometres northeast of Tracadie, by a local resident. Father Allard, the curate of Pokemouche, took ill while visiting the curate of Caraquet. Leaving his guest in the care of his housekeeper, Father Pelletier turned to the nursing order for help. The nature of Pelletier's visit was alarming; most parents pulled their children out of school, leaving only twenty of the 123 students. It was just as well, Amanda wrote, since the sisters were working twice as hard to make up for the absence of the two who were in Caraquet.

Amanda's letters provide most of the information available on the source of the contagion. According to her, the first smallpox victim, a native of Pokemouche, caught the illness in Montreal where there were 647 deaths from smallpox that year. The gentleman, receiving word that his brother was ill, travelled to the city with the intention of taking his ailing relative to the hospitallers in Tracadie, but the victim died before those arrangements could be made. The surviving brother came down with smallpox on the ship bringing him back to New Brunswick, spreading the infection to other passengers, as well as transmitting it to his family in Pokemouche. Again, the hospitallers were lucky that the sick man was never sheltered in their wards. Even if they had kept him in isolation, given their crowded conditions, the lack of proper ventilation, poor sewage system, and a host of rats which scurried between the walls from one side of the building to the other—all contributing factors to contagion—smallpox would surely have devastated the nuns and leprosy victims

alike. The infection swept over the victim's family, and he and seven of his eight children succumbed in less than three weeks. Father Allard caught the disease when he tried to help them. Sisters Brault and Sicotte, the two nuns who had been selected for the mission, remained in Caraquet for two weeks, taking over the home of two of the victims, and gathering the remaining sick under the one roof. Of the fifteen people who had smallpox—among them Father Allard's attendant, and Father Pelletier's housekeeper—only four survived.

As devastating as the sickness was, the epidemic proved a diplomatic triumph for the nuns. Rogers was elated that the sisters' role in helping the sick was reported in three provincial newspapers. Plaudits for the hospitallers came from everywhere. "Rogers wrote a very flattering letter," Viger noted, "and all the priests were most satisfied." Amanda was piqued, however, by the attention given her colleagues, noting that Sister Sicotte wanted to write a few lines to their sisters in Montreal. She added. "Everyone talks of nothing else but smallpox, smallpox, smallpox."[1]

Viger proved her value to the Tracadie foundation many times over, but it is not likely, in the late summer of 1875, when she had just turned thirty, that she was prepared for the new challenge of being elected mother superior. Once again, in choosing a candidate a good ten years younger than the required age, the community departed from their rules and, again, necessity—not choice—influenced the decision. Amanda was the only one in a position to carry out the responsibility. There were five choir sisters among nine of them. Viger, Sicotte, and Brault were all underage. Amanda wrote to Montreal on their behalf requesting permission to re-elect Reid for a third term. However, Reid's vision was failing and she had difficulty walking. Besides, if she were assistant superior and monitress rather than mother superior, the fifty-two year old Reid would be in a better position to train whoever was chosen. Sister Sicotte was chronically depressed, a melancholy that had settled on her shortly after her arrival in Tracadie. Elderly Sister L'évêque, who was supposed to take over the school, was seriously ill. Thirty-six year old Brault, the mistress of novices, head nurse, and bursar was 'on loan' to the Chatham community for an undetermined length of time. That left Amanda. Viger, elected September 1, 1875, was stunned: "I am totally devoid of qualities, certainly those needed by a superior...," she wrote. "It is God's will, but God must be very angry with me to lay such a charge upon my young and inexperienced shoulders." She was overwhelmed, and actively seeking the reassurance of her Montreal colleagues. Though, she noted, those who shared her life in Tracadie were confident that she could shoulder the work. "Dieu le veut (God's will), it will be my strength, and my rallying cry," she concluded.[2]

Whatever her shortcomings, Amanda did not lack leadership qualities,

but they did need time to ripen. Her competence would be tested in her first trimester as mother superior. She headed a foundation of seven professed sisters, one novice, and two postulants. There were twenty-four leprous sick in the lazaretto, and from ninety to one hundred children in their school. The value of their land holdings, in 1875, amounted to $980. The little foundation had revenues amounting to $1,753, and expenses of $1,402 leaving them a balance of $350 at the end of December. As early as 1873, Reid told Rogers, "If the government should withdraw its funds from us....I believe we would be able to remain in Tracadie without government support."[3] They were still hard pressed to meet their increasing obligations but they were not without resources.

Viger was learning to channel her drive and concentrate her talents towards building the foundation. She had built the school. She treated the sick with skill. She was decisive. Her letters, occasionally clouded by romanticism, especially when addressing her Montreal religious community, could also be acerbic, but she always penned a vivid portrayal of life in the community. Bishop Rogers not only signed the list of offices, he likely oversaw Viger's election held the day after he presided at the investiture ceremony for Marianne Losier. The newly veiled Losier would later become the first professed sister in their Tracadie house.

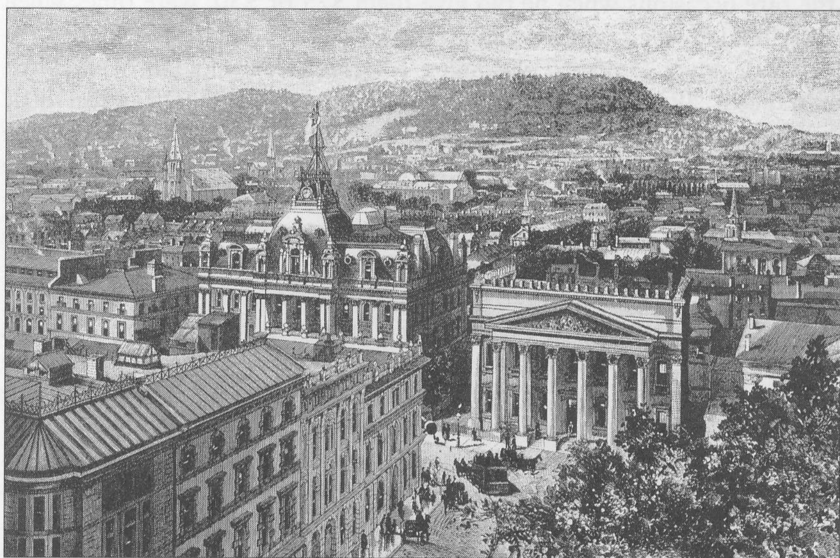
The election results were promptly reported to the motherhouse, but several weeks went by before the Tracadie foundation received any reply from the Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal. This lack of response weighed heavily on Amanda. "I am convinced," she wrote," that the sad burden our sisters placed on me, seems so unrealistic to all of you that you do not know what to say." Amanda was not only anxious for a sign of approval, she needed replacements. Clémence and Luména were both worn out. Luména was too tired to make their shoes. The sisters were ordered to switch the footwear from one foot to the other each week so they wouldn't wear out as quickly. Considering their discomfort, it is hard to imagine how they performed their duties. Linen and wool were piling up unspun, and there was no one to make lace. Five weeks had passed, Viger noted, "and the whole community is waiting for some small news."[4]

Loneliness dogged Viger almost constantly. "My memories of all of you are as vivid now as if it were only eight days that passed instead of eight years," she wrote in February of 1876. Two of the Tracadie sisters had recently returned and she imagined their reception:

> The scene which took place in Montreal when Sisters L'évêque and Bonin returned, must have been a sharp contrast to the one that transpired at their departure when we gave a last kiss to those two, who, happier than we, retook the road to the homeland...How I would like to hold you all tightly in my arms and

> squeeze myself into your hearts. I want to thank you profoundly for the services they have given our community. As members of the corps, they worked in your name. Each spring and fall we look forward eagerly for the little packages and candies that you send us.[5]

Viger was anxious to see Father Babineau, who had accompanied L'évêque and Bonin, and who remained at *Mont Sainte-Famille* for over two weeks. The priest arrived back in the early morning of March 3, 1876; but he managed only a few hours of sleep before he appeared at the convent in time to say mass at 7:30 A.M. Viger wrote, "We invited him for breakfast, but the poor priest couldn't eat. We made him talk the



A view of Montreal about the time two of the sisters returned to the city.

whole time."[6] The superior granted a prolonged recreation so everyone would be able to enjoy the beautiful cards and letters Babineau had brought from their sisters. He returned again at 4:00 P.M. for benediction, and after that they all gathered in the parlour, where Viger gave him the news from Tracadie.

Amanda thanked her Montreal community for the hospitality they extended the priest during his sojourn with them, leaving no doubt of the developing alliance between herself and Babineau: "What you have done for our Father Babineau, you have done for us for he has attached himself to our little house for which he is devoted, and for which he looks

after our interests so well." He likely knew at least as much as she did about her community, and the individual members in it. The priest understood the forces that surrounded Viger, and was in a better position than she was to negotiate between the various factions. And the confessional presented him with an excellent means to dispense advice. As the chaplain for the lazaretto, he was responsible for convincing leprosy patients to leave their families and enter the institution.

Money continued to come, albeit sporadically, from their houses in Montreal and in France. Those who contributed the most, however, were the local clergy, formerly Father Gauvreau and then Father Babineau, and notably Théberge, curate of St.-Isidore, a parish with a number of affected families. Rogers provided very little money to their community, and the rare occasions when he did give them $25 or $30, were times when they had launched fund-raising activities such as bazaars and socials.

While Viger lamented the living conditions, newcomers were often entranced. "Right now I want to tell you about the beautiful little monastery...so silent, so meditative. A dear little novitiate, small but large in virtue," wrote Sister Catherine, a choir nun, who arrived in Tracadie on June 11, 1876. "Before I sign off I want you to know that I am spinning and doing all the common jobs that Sister Luména does," she added. Sister Catherine did not last long in the wards, she said. "Those dear sick told Sister Luména that even though I appeared good, I goaded them." Sister Laferre, who arrived with Sister Catherine, found herself teaching. "I want to tell you how I feel surrounded by so many children at the school. I love them a lot. Even though this office seemed strange to me at first, I am carrying it out. I only wish I had more education...."[7]

Amanda was anxious to build a proper monastery with a regular cloister. Even more important, as far as she was concerned, was to have a hospital for the sick who were not suffering from leprosy. This need was evident to Viger but it should have been equally obvious to the bishop; and it was a need acutely underlined by various events. One such incident took place in December of 1876, when Viger and Brault left the institution to examine Father Nugent, curate of Pokemouche, seriously ill with typhoid fever. Viger found it necessary to appoint two sisters to sit with him through several nights, leaving them short of workers. "Even an apartment," she said, "would allow us to take in someone." Frustrated by the lack of space, she had workers quarry fifty cords of stones, with the hope she could begin construction. However, the cost to acquire a sufficient number of stones would be $4,000. "My head spins," Viger wrote, "When will we have enough for all that?" Nevertheless, in 1877, she had an extension added for the novices. Amanda raised the funds by organizing a bazaar, and, as the featured attraction, auctioning the right to cut wood on some of the community's lots. Reid returned to Montreal

at the end of that year, and Viger was left with no senior religious to give her advice. "The solidity of our work will be known with the passing of time, we have nothing to fear for ourselves," but "the future of our dear house is covered with a thick cloud," Amanda wrote.[8]

Little wonder that Viger needed Father Babineau. By the time she was elected mother superior, the small community of hospitallers seemed stranded midst a sea of hostile factions. Because contracts with the lazaretto were fairly lucrative, political patronage played a large part in how they were awarded. Throughout the 1860s and early 1870s, there were usually six members on the Board of Health, generally businessmen, who competed with each other to win the supply contracts. On September 30, 1868, just after the hospitallers arrived, the board decided to appoint members John Young and William Ferguson to a supplies committee. These two would be responsible for managing the provisions, and the hospitallers could apply to them when an item was needed for the lazaretto. Shortly thereafter, Young began sending supplies for the lazaretto which were not authorized or needed. The practice stopped when the board refused to pay unless Young consulted his colleague.

Lazaretto patient.

However, in 1874, when the provincial government appointed four new members to the Board of Health, Young, according to Father Babineau, increased his control. In a series of articles dealing with the matter, Babineau alleged that John Young's brother, MLA Robert Young, President of the Executive Council, as well as the Surveyor General Mr. Adams, a close friend of John Young's, were both influential in arranging for these new appointments. A short time later, the then ten-member board voted to dismiss the long-time lazaretto keeper, Philias Losier. It was no coincidence that the vote in favour of this move was six to four, with all four newly appointed members voting with Young. A series of keepers were sent in who were a nuisance to the hospitallers and patients. The restructured board replaced the lazaretto cook, and, according to secretary/treasurer, A.K. McDougall, the new personnel were people who were, in some way, indebted to Young. Young was now free to manipulate the supplies committee, and set his own prices. Two more appointments were

made to the Board of Health in 1878, including Young's brother-in-law, Doctor Smith. The hospitallers had no control over staff or supplies, and no more authority than any hired hand.

As Viger's first trimester ended, Dr. Smith, after completing postgraduate work at the University of New York City, was appointed as the consulting physician to the lazaretto. He applied for the position, informing the provincial authorities that the hospitallers declined the responsibility of diagnosing leprosy, and saying they had difficulty recognizing it in its early stages. Dr. Smith said people were admitted who did not have the illness because of examinations from physicians who were not experienced in determining the disease. His application was accompanied by a recommendation from Dr. Taché.

Lazaretto patient.

Father Babineau did not relinquish any part of his authority in the lazaretto easily and Amanda would share his uncertainty, so Dr. Smith's reappointment was not received with much enthusiasm on her part, but the move could be considered an attempt by the provincial government to set a more professional tone for the hospital. Viger need not have worried about her position since Dr. Smith remained in Chatham, and confined his activities to visiting the lazaretto and the region three or four times a year, inspecting homes and businesses, and authorizing admissions. He greatly respected the sisters, and had a particularly high regard for Amanda, who never quite reciprocated, mainly because Smith did not share her religious beliefs. Amanda, with ten years of experience on the lazaretto wards, and in constant touch with the sick, was as able as Smith to diagnose leprosy, but she could not conduct on site visits, nor travel from region to region. Even if she were granted such permissions she would not have the weight of authority that Smith commanded. Occasionally there were healthy people, especially children, deliberately admitted to the lazaretto even after 1898, when Smith became its full time administrator. They were members of families where both parents had the disease, and no one could be found to care for their dependents. Once inside there was little freedom for the inmates, and few were released even when the illness had been dormant for years.

Problems with the management of the lazaretto dominated Amanda's first trimester, while the public—if they were aware of the lazaretto at all—considered Viger its voice of authority. Bishop Rogers, for instance, presented a series of questions to her about the illness: "It has only attacked the French, does it extend to other races?" he asked. Viger told him there were only two victims who were anglophone, since the disease broke out in the country. There were nineteen patients currently in the lazaretto, and four or five with the disease outside. Leprosy was not on the rise in the interior of the province, and numbers were declining in the region, she said. The two anglophones who Viger referred to were brothers transferred to the lazaretto in Tracadie from Sheldrake Island in 1849. The earliest government documents show four victims from the Miramichi area were of Irish and Scottish extraction, and many of those from the Tracadie area, while French-speaking were from Celtic/French backgrounds. Concerning the outbreak in Cape Breton, all affected were of Scottish extraction.

Technically speaking, leprosy victims were still governed under "An Act to Prevent the Spread of a Disorder now Existing in Certain Parts of the Counties of Gloucester and Northumberland," passed by the New Brunswick Legislature in 1844. They were to be sequestered, by force if necessary, and anyone harbouring a known victim was subject to fines and the confiscation of property. Amanda said there was no need to enforce the legislation since Father Babineau could usually persuade them to enter the lazaretto as soon as he was aware of their condition. While most went in on their own, a few stayed with their families until in the advanced stages of the illness, often transmitting the disease to the caregiver, generally the mother, wife or daughter-in-law. From there it spread to other family members, particularly the youngest—not because leprosy was highly contagious, but because there was little or no effort made to prevent infection. There was a prevalent attitude, encouraged by religious beliefs, that if God meant them to take this illness nothing could stop them from getting it; they must resign themselves to God's will. Even without this attitude, the most vulnerable to the disease were the poor, who were still living in overcrowded conditions with little or no sanitary facilities. Thus, the incidence of the illness declined as the standard of living rose.

Their house appeared to be flourishing in June of 1878 when Amanda wrote the third triennial report to the Vatican. She noted the hospitallers numbered ten: six choir, and two domestic sisters, one novice, and one postulant. Nineteen patients were in the lazaretto. They were preparing medicines for from three thousand to four thousand people a year, as many from the surrounding parishes as from Tracadie. There was an average attendance of ninety to one hundred students in the school. Their

land holdings amounted to $1,255 in value. Amanda noted the construction of a spacious monastery, with a proper cloister was still a long-term goal, and they had $180 in savings for that purpose.

The fog Amanda felt engulfing her community in 1877 only intensified by the end of December 1878. Their $180 savings were gone, and their pecuniary outlook was not nearly so rosy. Their near financial collapse was due, in part, to the fact that Amanda found it politically expedient to give $200 to Bishop Rogers. The account books not only show that Viger gave Rogers the money, but she borrowed the funds from her house in Montreal. Yet, there is no reference to Amanda's largesse towards the bishop in *The Chronicles,* nor in any of her letters to Pagé. Did she not consult with her colleagues before she conceded the funds? Rogers never asked the Tracadie house for money, so how is it possible to conclude that the sum paid him was an obligation rather than a gift? Earlier that month Rogers called the twenty-six priests of his diocese to a meeting. The purpose was to discuss an accumulated diocesan debt of $30,000, to determine a method of settling his outstanding accounts, and to establish a fund of $20,000 with which to build a cathedral. Coincidentally, in the early morning hours of February 14, 1878, the day the meeting was scheduled, a fire demolished the church, college and episcopal residence. Even in the face of this catastrophe, Rogers did not change his prepared address. He told the clergy that the debt was the result of expenditures he had made on their behalf, singling out Tracadie because of the Hôtel-Dieu foundation. This, according to the bishop, resulted in his undertaking the expense of building a motherhouse and hospital in Chatham. The priests were allowed to deliberate, and finally the nineteen priests attending agreed to levy a financial subscription totalling $20,000 to be shared among them all, and those of their parishioners willing, and able to make a contribution. A sum of $800 was levied on Tracadie. By April 17, 1879 a total of $23,000 had been collected from across the diocese. In the end, however, most of the money was used to rebuild what was lost in the fire, and the diocesan debt rose to $36,000.

It seems very likely that Father Babineau put pressure on Viger to pay a part of Tracadie's share of the levy. An older and more experienced administrator might well have resisted. Had Pagé or Reid been in charge, there would have been numerous delays before any such amount left their monastery. Viger, dependent on Babineau for counsel, and failing to consider the fact that he was not much older, or more experienced than she, may have felt inclined, or even compelled, to follow his advice.

Likewise, an older priest than Babineau, one less influenced by the bishop, might have argued that the hospitallers were providing free health care to everyone who sought it, and educating the village's chil-

dren. Indeed, the bishop had received a fair return on his investment, since of the Tracadie house, Chatham and Saint-Basile each had a foundation, where hospitallers were running pharmacies, hospitals and schools. A good number of young Catholic women, mainly Acadian, joined their order, and were actively involved in community development, education and health care. The bishop overlooked the fact that the institution provided a significant economic benefit for his people.

Viger made a precarious situation worse by taking a loan of $300 from William Davidson, apparently to purchase a further thirty acres of land, in close proximity to their other lots. The bishop might not have known the Tracadie community was in debt, since he gave his permission for the purchase. Fortunately, they had friends in higher places than Father Babineau, working, if not on their behalf, at least on behalf of the sick. Dr. Taché succeeded in winning a federal grant of $1,500 in the hospitallers' name, to renovate the lazaretto. They decided to bank the money until they were able to determine what work to be done, and allocate the contracts, without worrying about interference from the Board of Health. The federal money was not meant for their personal use, thus, by the end of 1878, their total revenues, including the loans, came to $1,982 their living expenses amounted to $2,105, and they were over $100 in debt.

Marie Pagé was back in the province and elected that September as the mother superior of the Chatham foundation. This enabled Brault to return to Tracadie where she was elected the mother superior. If Amanda found it hard to surrender her leadership, her letters do not reflect it. "I am really proud to take up our age-old office of secretary again, since it will frequently bring me in touch with you," she wrote; and then, flashing her occasional sarcastic wit, Amanda noted that Sister Sicotte, who wanted novices at all costs, had recruited, "a grey haired domestic sister with only one tooth," as a postulant who was outstanding, at least by virtue of her age. She was preoccupied with the state of her patients, relaying the somber as well as the more light-hearted news of their progress; Amanda wrote to her mother superior in Montreal:

> We have twenty sick at the present time, and among them is a young man of eighteen in a truly pitiful condition. The worms are eating him alive. They swarm in his bed when we get him up. We have one who is touched in the head, and who is giving Sister Laferre a great deal of trouble. Fortunately he fears her a little. He said lately 'that little Sister d'Affaire is tiny but she is as mean as the devil.' Sometimes he says really funny things.[9]

Implications of corruption on the Board of Health resulted in a joint federal and provincial task force to investigate the issues. They concluded that every member of the board had a financial interest in the hospital,

furnishing either supplies or services of various sorts. The practice set up a rivalry among them, which made effective management nearly impossible. Their report exposed the deplorable conditions of the thirty-six year old lazaretto, and declared it to be inadequate for the needs of the patients. They also noted the awkward location of the cookhouse (in the keeper's residence), and the lack of space for food stores.

The task force recommended that the present Board of Health be disbanded and new members appointed who would look after the lazaretto on a temporary basis, while provincial and federal authorities worked out terms for the transfer of the hospital to the federal government. Although there was considerable evidence that John Young was reaping the greatest share of the benefits, the task force refused to single out any one member of the board. The final report did, however, recommend that after the temporary board was in place, the hospitallers should be given a greater latitude in the deployment and the dispersal of the lazaretto budget.

Viger was not optimistic, in spite of the positive outcome of the investigation. "In the ten years that we have existed," she wrote, "we have formed plans, and nourished our hopes but the years pass and we are always in the same spot and still waiting for the results."[10]

Chapter Nine

Everything Passes Away

Nearly twelve years elapsed before Viger and Brault were able to visit *Mont Sainte-Famille* or, as Viger always referred to it, their "dear home." With the transfer of the lazaretto from provincial to federal control, the nursing sisters needed to upgrade their medical and management skills, since complete responsibility for its administration was soon to be theirs. Their long absence from Montreal left them ignorant of many new developments, Viger pointed out to Bishop Rogers, and they needed some exposure to the larger well established foundation. But, aside from the business aspect of the trip, they yearned to enjoy the fellowship of friends and colleagues they hadn't seen in many years. Amanda looked forward to participating in the daily life of a large, well-ordered community, and delighting in its vibrant and stimulating bustle.

Bishop Rogers not only saw the wisdom of Viger's request, he used the opportunity to send, in the winter of 1880, five New Brunswick hospitallers to *Mont Sainte-Famille* with her: Sisters Anastasie Guimont and Azilda Houde (a Tracadie novice), in addition to Brault and Viger. They were in Montreal from four to five weeks, long enough, at any rate, for Amanda to re-acquaint herself with her former companions, and come to know the newest members of the house. She was no longer confident, that with the passing of time, the Tracadie foundation would become just like the others. Life in the large, thoroughly modern *Mont Sainte-Famille* contrasted vividly with the spartan conditions she and Brault lived under in New Brunswick. In Montreal she took in the well-stocked pharmacy, the large hospital wards, the list of doctors affiliated with the institution; no wonder she yearned to remain.

Viger, Brault and Houde left *Mont Sainte-Famille* on the morning of April 3, 1880. "After we said good-bye, I dare say, [it was] even harder than the one we said twelve years ago," Amanda wrote, "we made our way to the good Sisters of Saint Anne...where the mother superior and several sisters greeted our arrival." The hospitallers from Tracadie toured

the novitiate and the infirmary, and were later presented to the children in the boarding school, who, in turn, welcomed them with music. They were the first 'Mothers of the Hôtel-Dieu' to visit the Sisters of Saint Anne. The reason for the unprecedented hospitality was because of their association with the leprosy victims. "My uncle had the goodness to respond on our behalf," Viger wrote, "thus removing a real thorn from our foot." This time, a train, not a boat, would bring them to Chatham. Father Trudel escorted them to the Montreal station where they joined the other members of the New Brunswick party. Several of their Quebec relatives waited with them until their train departed. It was to be Viger's last visit with her uncle who died in June of the following year.

Viger was surprised and relieved that Bishop Rogers met the train in Newcastle, as it was 3:00 A.M. Sunday April 4, and, other than the bishop and his driver, the station was deserted. "The bishop's carriage awaited us and we arrived at our dear sisters at four in the morning, tired enough, but glad to be back." They spent the next two nights in Chatham where they encountered friend and mentor, Marie Pagé, for the last time. Pagé, seriously ill in the infirmary, burst into tears upon seeing the younger women. She was in such serious condition that Mother Bonneau of *Mont Sainte-Famille* insisted Bishop Rogers allow Pagé to return to Montreal for the good of her health.

A lingering sadness engulfed Amanda. Behind her, this time perhaps forever, was not only the better equipped institution, but friends and colleagues, many of whom she would never see again. Ahead was Tracadie. They heard the guns being fired in their honour while they were still some distance away, and as their carriage approached the monastery, they saw all of the sisters at the door of the convent to greet them. The travellers went immediately to the chapel and renewed their promises. Viger wrote, "I had to use all my strength to control my feelings for fear I would upset the dear sisters who were so glad to have us back." The next morning at mass, Sister Hachey surprised them by playing two pieces on an accordion, a gift from one of her uncles. After breakfast, with Father Babineau as their guest, they entered the wards to hear recitations and speeches from the patients. "It was so beautiful tears came to my eyes," Amanda wrote.[1] Three weeks later, she wrote a few personal lines to each member of the Montreal house.

As they anticipated, the federal government took over the control of the lazaretto in November of 1880. The hospitallers were appointed, with no change in their allocation, the chief administrators. Father Babineau remained as the lazaretto chaplain and Dr. Smith continued as consulting physician. "Remember Father Babineau in your prayers," Viger urged her sisters at *Mont Sainte-Famille*, "for he worked night and day for our community and our sick."[2]

Brault outlined the financial terms of the new arrangement: "We have the power to determine all the lazaretto's needs, provided the sum does not go over $125 a month or $500 per year." The $270 budgeted yearly for servants would remain, but the hospitallers could hire whomever they wished. "We look on this event as the surest guarantee of our future prosperity." Dr. Taché assured them that they would have no difficulty getting a new building, but warned them not to press the issue immediately because, "haste would ruin everything."[3]

Nonetheless, now that they were free to determine their own priorities and to contract the work, Viger and Brault were ready to spend the $1,500 grant given them for the hospital by the federal government in 1878. They added a wing onto the lazaretto. The new annex contained a kitchen, a new pharmacy and storage space for supplies.

Brault asked Rogers for permission to take $500 from their own funds to renovate their old monastery, since one part was nearly uninhabitable in winter. They could not spend their own money on "government buildings," Rogers replied, unless the state of the present structure threatened their health. "If Father Babineau recommends the renovations...,"[4] Rogers wrote, "I will have no further objection." And so, with Father Babineau's permission, some repairs were made to their convent. While they were more extensive than anticipated—partly because the beams in the addition of 1877 collapsed just as construction of the new wing was underway—they were not enough. The work included a furnace room, convent kitchen, sisters' refectory, a workroom for the lay sisters and four small cells. "We are over our heads in renovations, but so little compared to what we wanted," Viger wrote. Meanwhile, she added, "The number of seriously ill in the lazaretto increased, and we have been up with them every night since the first of November."[5]

Despite their high hopes, the new administrative structure of the lazaretto proved to be more beneficial to the federal government than it was for the hospitallers. The government had no problems of overruns, graft or patronage. Using a separate register for the lazaretto, the sisters kept a strict control of their costs, and even the smallest item, from shoe laces to hair pins, purchased for the patients, was noted. While they gained greater control, however, the sisters' responsibilities were considerably heavier. They hired a washer woman, but now added the lazaretto cooking department, building maintenance, and the office of lazaretto controller to their own tasks.

Dr. Taché returned to undertake a second inquiry on the subject of leprosy in the region, and, for a second time, Viger was obliged to take time away from her many duties to act as his personal secretary. She was not acknowledged as a co-author of a lengthy report on the question of leprosy

written by the doctor, "Questions Regarding Leprosy: Enquiry made by the Hawaiian Government," (a series of answers to queries posed by the government of Hawaii). Surely her notes and observations, carefully recorded in Taché's journals, helped Smith—(who shared the credit), and Taché—with their responses. There were other unexpected duties as well. Babineau, it appears, knew the value of good publicity for he seldom, if ever, turned away a reporter. A parade of callers found their way to the lazaretto in the 1880s: reporters for *Catholic World*, *Le Moniteur Acadien*, *The Daily Telegraph* in Saint John, and from *The Halifax Chronicle* to name a few. Amanda answered their questions and escorted them through the wards, giving them time to meet and talk with patients.

One illustrious guest, Jean Joseph Lynch, the Archbishop of Toronto, wrote to Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald on behalf of the hospitallers shortly after he returned home, sending a copy of his letter to Amanda, along with a donation of $25 he received from the Honourable Alex Galt, to pay for new ventilators in the wards. In his letter to the Prime Minister, Lynch stated that the lazaretto was in deplorable condition, and he urged him to authorize the building of a new hospital, or, at least, undertake extensive renovations. Lynch wanted to further help the sisters by using the subject of leprosy in New Brunswick, and the work of the nursing order in a sermon. Even though he had been to Tracadie, he wanted more information, which Amanda was only too happy to provide. "Better buildings and a larger administration centre are the only ways to improve conditions for the sick," she wrote, but, "just the fact that they stay in the hospital, such as it is, has a salutary influence on the disease....It has been noted that those who enter the lazaretto in the first stage of the affliction are never as disfigured as those who spend several years with their families."[6]

The last thing the federal government wanted was attention focused on the lazaretto in Tracadie. Even factual publicity about the disease could only hurt the area's chances in attracting investment and immigration. Unfortunately, the archbishop's sermon, which was widely reported, contained a number of errors that alarmed the public, angered the politicians, and embarrassed the nuns. Officials couldn't deny that the sick were housed in an ancient fetid building where the oppressive air lingered over everyone in spite of the sisters' best efforts to clean and disinfect the premises. However, the bishop's erroneous notion that there were a couple of thousand leprosy victims living outside the lazaretto allowed the bureaucrats to rouse themselves in righteous indignation, vigorously deny the bishop's figures and thus deflect and discredit everything that Lynch had said or wrote on the subject.

Amanda received a firm rebuke from Dr. Taché, but she was quick to defend herself. "While I told the Bishop we filled an average of 2,500

prescriptions a year," she explained, "I never thought he could believe there were a comparable number of leprosy victims in the parish. "We did our best to prepare for the reception." While Lynch found the odours unbearable, Amanda noted that, "we found the wards smelled good." At any rate, Viger told Taché, the $25 Lynch secured for them, was used to repair the old ventilators instead of installing new ones. "Many visitors to the lazaretto suggest we ask the government for new buildings, but we always say that we ask for nothing; we are content with whatever the government judges is apropos."

Amanda was elected mother superior for the second time in September of 1881, and she was re-elected to that position again in 1884. The foundation included eight professed religious, two novices, and two postulants. Viger was also the head pharmacist. Sicotte was her assistant and the head nurse. Brault was the bursar and mistress of novices. Sister Stanislas was the chapter secretary. Not only had it grown in numbers, its demographic profile had changed as well. A number of young Acadian women were now among their ranks, including: Marianne Losier, Marie Anne Doucet, Margaret Hachey, and Elizabeth and Octavie Landry.

Overall, Amanda had every reason to be optimistic when she assumed the leadership of her community in September of 1881. Their cost of living, $1,729 in 1878, was up to $2,400, but revenues from their land, school, donations, and other sources came to $2,700. The fund for a separate hospital stood at $425. Unfortunately, by the time the fifth triennial report was written in August 1884, this brief episode of economic well being was shattered. It shows that, while their community still numbered twelve, they had reduced their living expenses to $2,350, not enough, however, to equal their revenues of only $2,145. The report was written before the fall harvest, so those profits would reduce a little of their $205 debt. Further, Father Joseph Théberge, Curate of Neguac, helped them over this financial crunch, with periodic loans, amounting to $1,100, beginning in September of 1884, and continuing until mid-October of 1885. The hospitallers were required to pay a five per cent annual interest, but were never required to pay back any of the principal, which was eventually forgiven.

Financial difficulties plagued the foundation throughout the 1880s. Viger was still operating her dispensary with money from their personal government allocation. The number of prescriptions they filled had decreased but were still significant, averaging, according to the triennial reports, between 2,000 and 2,500 a year. Viger was the head pharmacist, though it was likely Sicotte who looked after the more routine cases. The donations that came in for the medicines fell far short of even meeting their operating costs. For example, the pharmacy took in $70 in 1883, a typical year for the period, while costs of its operation amounted to

$101. The sales of produce from their farm, and the work they did for the various mission churches, added only slightly to their income, and the figures varied little throughout the decade.

The financial problems were only one aspect of the many troubles that surfaced at this time. Viger was powerless to prevent illness and death from claiming their first New Brunswick members. Tuberculosis proved particularly devastating. Twenty-six-year-old Margaret Hachey died on January 25,1885, the first of three deaths over a twenty-two month period. When Hachey was dying, Viger informed Rogers that "the community was losing a subject in whom they had placed a great deal of hope." Hachey was the first hospitaller to be interred in Tracadie. Marianne Losier, who had spent the ten years since her profession on the lazaretto wards, died only eight months later. Of Azilda Houde, who passed away October 1,1886 at the age of twenty-eight, Amanda wrote, "This good sister sent her soul to God this morning at eleven forty-five...assisted by Father Babineau and surrounded by the entire community."[7]

The spectre of death did not deter others from entering. In April of 1885 two postulants, Alodie Landry and Madeline Pitre, were ready for their investiture. In August of 1886, Luce Blanchard and Margaret Marie (Adélaide Robichaud) were received as novices. Sister Marie-des-Anges (Elizabeth Doucet) was ready for her habit that September. The community had several boarders during this period. They included a teacher, Miss MacDonald, Amanda Sormany, and a Miss Ferguson. Hélène Savoie boarded with them in 1887. Sormany changed her status in June of that year, when she became a postulant. Viger also took in a Madame Gallant and her six children for five weeks. They charged her one dollar for educating the children and thirty cents for laundry services.

The recall of Sister Brault late in 1886, leaving Viger as the last remaining founder at Tracadie, came as a shock. "The departure of dear Sister Brault, fixed for January 3, lies heavy on our house, and fills our hearts with sadness so great only faith can relieve it," Amanda wrote. "This cross is one thousand times heavier than all the others Divine Providence deemed we submit to." Viger was still feeling the pain of Brault's recall when she remarked in a letter to Taché seven months later. "She was one of our founders, and one we regarded as the strongest pillar in our little community." Amanda dropped her other offices to take over as mistress of novices. "The formation of new subjects," she wrote, "is one of our most important tasks." Marie Anne Doucet became the first Acadian to be elected the mother superior of the Hôtel-Dieu Tracadie, in September of 1887. Five years younger than the forty-three year old Viger, Doucet—who had entered in 1877—was the second hospitaller to be professed in Tracadie. Sister Sicotte was the assistant superior and head nurse. Viger was the mistress of novices, the pharmacist, and the chapter secretary.

For the first time in their history, the Tracadie hospitallers could not pay their bills. In a letter to businessmen, M.J.O. Villeneuve, and another to Dupuis et Frères, both in November of 1888, Marie Anne Doucet, just ending her first year as mother superior, asked for an extension of credit, "Since we have had a number of uncommon expenses this year and we are at the gate, is it possible to extend our credit until next February at which time we receive a part of our government allocation?"[8]

Their financial problems were compounded by evidence that certain parents were not paying, or paying only part of, their daughters' dowries. Thus Doucet was forced to make explicit financial appeals: "The extreme circumstances that we find ourselves in forces me to ask you for the $25 owed for the habit, since it seems impossible for us to have the $600 we are owed. At the time of her entry you promised to pay the expenses of the novitiate, that is $75 in three payments, and further, to give $80 at her profession, which makes $155 in all."[9]

Whether it was because of pressure from illustrious visitors like Bishop Lynch, lobbying from Babineau, or Taché's intercession, some funds were finally allocated to improve the air circulation in the lazaretto, especially for the women on the second floor, where the air was trapped by the low sloping roof. Amanda told Dr. Taché about the results of the improvement, "You should see how happy the women are now with their large verandahs where the air is so pure and good."[10] They were also able to purchase a boat, a shallop with nine sails, large enough for all the patients. Dr. Smith's annual reports furnished Dr. Taché with statistics concerning leprosy, but Amanda's colourful letters kept him more up-to-date on the daily events within the hospital and furnished him with more details on the condition of those Dr. Taché had come to know:

> Since my last letter we had two deaths, Michel Doiron and Victorine Brideau. The latter passed away peacefully with no more marks of the 'maladie' than when you saw her last time. Michel Doiron, on the other hand was the worst case we ever saw, decomposing alive....Raymond Duguay deserted April 19, after a stay of five months, that reduced the number of sick to seventeen. We received two more cases from Caraquet since then, a little girl of thirteen, by the name of Ferre. She lived with Bridgit McGrath [a former lazaretto patient] when the latter was brought to hospital. She must have taken the disease there in view of the fact no one else in her family ever had it. Pierre Noel, William Plourde, Lucie, his sister, and little Marguerite Gionet are all very sick. Joseph Benoit and Télesphore are visibly losing strength. Big Judith has her right leg and foot so terribly swollen that she hasn't been able to

Some unidentified female patients circa 1887, after a balcony was added to the second floor to improve ventilation.

> walk since last fall. Madam Saulnier is always the same. She has a few little 'bobos' from time to time but that is all. Judith, 'la petite,' continues to be well. Dr. Smith was anxious to discharge her last winter. I think he intends to talk to you about it at your next visit."[11]

Their first patient from outside of the province was a Nova Scotian named Duncan McKinnon, who lived in Cape Breton. A member of a family group affected with the disease, he arrived in the summer of 1889, he was the first Protestant they cared for in Tracadie. And, as they did for most of the subsequent non-Catholic residents, the hospitallers succeeded in converting him to Catholicism within a relatively short period of time: "Mr. McKinnon died of dysentery only seven weeks after he got here. In his very short stay, we had the privilege of seeing him embrace our religion, and he died full of the love of our Lord."

By 1888, leprosy had not been completely eradicated but new incidents of the disease were on the decline, and those cases that were identified were from families previously afflicted. "We have received only two sick this year, a twelve year old little girl, Olésine Plourde, from Caraquet, sister of William and Lucille Plourde, both very sick. Plus Charlotte Plourde, wife of Georges Dignard, and sister of Marie Rose who came to the lazaretto last year."

Through Amanda's letters, leprosy is given a human face. From her descriptions, the disfigurement and acute suffering of Joseph Benoit and Joseph Comeau are rendered horribly real; and it is through her letters that we learn of how Hélène Ferre's seven year old brother came down

with the disease; and that, covered in sores, unable to hear or see, her lips fused, Lucille Plourde spent the last night of her life sitting on the side of her bed, unable to tolerate even a blanket, and signalling to the sister on duty only to have her back rubbed.

The hospitallers kept Taché informed of the harrowing cases and events in the lazaretto even after his retirement. Taché had proved himself to be a true friend of the hospitallers, as well as the leprosy patients. They kept the doctor abreat of their struggles in treating the patients. Viger wrote to tell the doctor, for instance, that no matter how often they bathed Joseph Benoit's legs in carbolic acid, or warm chlorine they couldn't prevent "worms from forming," and the man died. Fortunately, a new disinfectant ordered from Montreal proved effective in treating Joseph Comeau and his worms had completely disappeared. "We had a birth in the hospital last August....Marie Légère of Caraquet and married to a Thomas Forbes in Lamèque came to the hospital last November, and, being big, we noticed nothing until it was too late. We had to keep her. Dr. Smith sent a mid-wife to assist us, and he came himself to visit her. The little girl was baptised and her grandmother took her away. The father died of consumption at his home two months ago."[12]

The closure of *l'Externat St.-Joseph* at the end of 1886 meant not only a curtailment of an important area of growth for their institution, but, in the short term at least, a significant financial loss. The hospitallers were barely supporting themselves in 1887. Still, Viger was not willing to let the foundation decay. One of her last acts as mother superior in August of 1887 was to acquire a home and land in exchange for taking in the elderly couple who owned the property. The following spring they moved the home closer to their monastery, farmed the land, and undertook renovations to convert the house. Doucet told Rogers that their intention was to open rooms for ailing priests. It is more likely that they were preparing the house as a shelter for orphans, and as a site for their novitiate. At the time Amanda submitted the sixth triennial report, their immediate expenses in July of 1887, were $2,070; revenues were the same. Their savings were gone.

The loss of the school left Amanda feeling defeated, and created in her a need to seek another form of service almost immediately; an orphanage would fulfill that desire. She found an excuse to undertake the work when two hospitallers—both Acadians—Luce Blanchard and Marie-des-Anges, apparently recovered from tuberculosis. The community was in the second last day of a novena—a religious ritual lasting nine days, consisting of special prayers—to Saint Anne for Sister Blanchard, when Bishop Rogers, accompanied by Father Morrissey, a priest with some knowledge of medicine and a reputation as, "a holy person with a gift for healing," visited them. Father Morrissey prescribed some medicine, saying the two

sisters, "...were not without hope of cures." Nine hours later, "Good Saint Anne showed her power by instantly curing Sister Blanchard," Amanda wrote.[13] Filled with confidence, she added, the community began a second novena for their newest professed member, Marie-des-Anges. Both women were able to return to their duties. Neither sister was personally examined by a physician. The cures were miraculous, Viger wrote, and in thanksgiving, the hospitallers were opening an orphanage, with most of the $600 needed to renovate the house coming from Father Théberge.

Unfortunately, Blanchard's condition returned a few months later but by then Viger was overseeing the construction. The orphanage opened in July of 1888 with three children. Sicotte and Marie-des-Anges were assigned to care for them. Within the year they had ten. Twenty-two youngsters were in residence on the second floor of the house by April of 1890. Elderly people were lodged downstairs. Whereas the government had subsidized their school, the hospitallers assumed the full financial burden of feeding and clothing the youngsters. "Making shoes for forty four small feet is no easy task....We have an $800 debt to pay with nothing," Doucet wrote, "but the Lord will provide."[14]

One of Doucet's first administrative acts was to arrange for a special commemoration to celebrate Amanda's silver anniversary on February 2, 1888. "We will be forever grateful to you our mothers for having left [Viger] with us to help us establish and then to direct this poor little community," she told the Montreal house. "May she remain with us long enough to enjoy the shade of the vine she cultivated with so much care and sacrifice." Doucet invited Bishop Rogers to attend the celebration and he made the trip in spite of the treacherously snowy roads. Nine priests also braved the conditions. Cards and letters poured in, as many from France as from Canada. "The mass and dinner were more in keeping with a fiftieth anniversary," Viger wrote to her sisters in Montreal, and looking back on her years of work she reflected about the many changes:

> If I contributed something towards the establishment of this institution, at the cost of a few sacrifices, you have more than repaid me by the goodness with which you admitted me as a member of this holy profession, and gave me the opportunity to become a bride of our Lord....In speaking of my religious profession I commented on the transitory nature of things of this earth. There is not much vestige left of the ceremony in Montreal twenty-five years ago. Monseigneur Bourget, who heard my vows, is dead. Our dear Mistress Marchessault is dead. Mère St.-Louis, who took her habit that day too, is also dead; and our Mère Pagé, Superior then, is no longer at our dear home; and me, I am here. Is this not the point on which to inscribe in the firmament that nothing changes but everything passes away?[15]

Chapter Ten

A Kind of Glory

In the fall of 1891, Viger proclaimed that, "Great gladness was on the horizon." Father Babineau, with Amanda's support and encouragement, lobbied unceasingly to have the old lazaretto replaced, and his efforts culminated in the fall of 1891 when he presented a detailed account of the deplorable state of the lazaretto—overcrowded conditions, overflowing water closets, rats nesting between the walls, wind sweeping in through rotten boards and window sills—to the federal government, copies of which he gave to his friends in the press. Now, as the year drew to a close, the hospitallers learned that the government was seriously considering the proposal.

The overwhelming question, however, was not whether to replace the lazaretto but rather was it necessary to have one at all? The remaining victims were members of afflicted families, or had been living in close proximity to individuals with leprosy. These were cases that could have been prevented if normal precautions had been taken. Given the period's growing general consensus that the afflicted should be institutionalized, it is improbable that a serious debate on the merits of an in-home program was even discussed. While it would have taken herculean efforts to change public opinion, provide the necessary financial help, education, and medical management, one group was quarantined at home. They were those from Nova Scotia. The Cape Breton casualties provide an interesting contrast in the management of leprosy. Whether or not they were any better off than their fellow sufferers in the Tracadie lazaretto, however, is still a matter of conjecture.

Dr. Smith's preference was to bring everyone diagnosed with leprosy to Tracadie but Duncan McKinnon was the only Cape Bretoner taken to the lazaretto. The others, including McKinnon's sister, refused to leave the island. Thus, Smith isolated the sick—all from the Lake Ainslie and Lake O'Law regions—in their homes. The doctor was ruthless in his segregation methods, even appointing some neighbours of the afflicted to

furnish him with reports. As a result, the infection was contained, and there were no further outbreaks. What had not been done, however, was to see that the sick had someone responsible for their care. By the turn of the century, only two leprosy victims—a pair of sisters—remained. They lived alone, and, except for leaving food at their door, there was no one who would look after them. Dr. Smith, in 1907, was at the point of bringing the surviving sister to Tracadie, when he learned that she too had died. By this time, however, both provinces were relatively disease-free and, with few exceptions, later admissions were among immigrant populations from Upper Canada or the West.

Even in Tracadie there was a dual system of care. When the lazaretto remained on Sheldrake Island, victims were hunted down, and sometimes taken to the institution at gun point, but attitudes had gradually changed. After the hospitallers arrived, and until the new lazaretto was constructed in 1896, the sick were seldom forced to enter. A few came only in the final stage of their illness; others died at home, having been free to work, and to mingle with friends and families, until well into the dangerous phase of contagion. Leprosy spread, in some of these instances, from one family to another, and through the generations, affecting grandparents, parents, and children. "Only Father Babineau is able to pull them away...," Sister Sormany wrote, "...this good priest takes it as his duty to visit the poor...abandoned ones once or twice a year and encourages them to come to the hospital. He always manages to convince them of the necessity for this separation and to remove the idea from their minds that the lazaretto is little more than a prison."[1]

There were important sociological differences between the affected populations of Cape Breton and those in New Brunswick. There were fewer victims in Cape Breton and the outbreak, which first appeared there in about 1852 (almost twenty-five years after the first recorded leprosy victim died in New Brunswick), was restricted to two or three families. Nova Scotian authorities were able to benefit from the New Brunswick experience and Dr. Smith, who had just begun his more stringent methods of control in Tracadie, did not have to compete with church officials over jurisdiction. The families and neighbours of the Cape Breton victims did not socialize with the sick. Most victims were single men, and those people who were married separated themselves from their spouses and other relatives when the illness was first diagnosed. Indeed, there seemed to be a general consensus in the island population—one which was absent in New Brunswick—that leprosy could be prevented by prohibiting the afflicted from any contact with society.

The Acadians were used to banding together, particularly in times of hardship and peril. The thought of turning out their countrymen—leaving them without work and without friends—was hard, if not impossi-

ble, for some to accept. Since, as a group, experience had given them no reason to trust government agents, particularly not an anglophone Protestant doctor, they relied more heavily on support from their church. While the clergy did not encourage the sick to remain outside the lazaretto, one wondered if they did enough to prevent it, or to discourage others from associating with them? Or, were they inclined, like those victims who talked to reporters in the lazaretto, to believe that the disease was an act of God, and little could be done to hinder its progress? It is difficult to establish today how much this attitude undermined the doctor's efforts at isolating patients. Among those who remained at home, a few couples continued to have children, even after leprosy was confirmed in one of the partners. Men worked as long as they could, often well past the time when, for the good of their co-workers, they should have stopped. New Brunswick logging camps, where men and boys were confined for the winter months, provided a cover for the newly diagnosed, and a breeding ground for the disease in others.

On the other hand, the lazaretto should not be compared to most institutions, such as the insane asylums and poor houses of the nineteenth century. The lazaretto inmates were a homogeneous group. They were small in number, from the same region of the province. They shared family backgrounds, religion, and lifestyles. Among them were brothers, sisters, spouses and parents. Like the sick, their nurses were there for many years. Neither the patients nor the religious saw much of their natural families, so they formed friendships among themselves. By 1890, most of the hospitallers in Tracadie were young Acadians from families on the same low end of the economic and social scale. They spoke the same language, belonged to the same religion, and they made every effort to make life, if not pleasant for their patients, at least less than completely dreary. There was a small recreation room, stocked with a few books, games, and musical instruments. They organized sing-songs, recitals, and plays. There was a spacious yard where each had a garden plot. They were provided with a boat. Whatever the flaws of the religious indoctrination, the spiritual philosophy seemed to help them to endure their suffering. "Our Lord never leaves us without comfort, or without hope," Viger wrote; a sentiment that she often expressed to herself and to others.[2]

The leprosy patients were accepted in the lazaretto in a way that was denied to them outside. "If it is true that we speak about those we love, you can see by the length of this letter that we love our poor sick very much," Doucet wrote.[3] "Our leprous family, now numbering ... eleven men and nine women, give us a lot of work...apart from a few exceptions, nearly all are in the last phase of the illness, and consequently in extreme states of deformity," wrote Sister Robichaud. "We have always to see our Lord in their faces," she added.[4]

With Doucet leading the community, Amanda had a chance to put aside the burden of financial responsibilities, and the delicate task of collecting dowries and paying bills. The mistress of novices wielded considerable influence. She, Doucet, and Sicotte drew up the initial plans, later rejected by the government as too elaborate for the proposed lazaretto. Viger remained the foundation's best pharmacist, and the logical instructor for their newly professed members, particularly her protégée, the gifted Amanda Sormany. Viger undertook to teach the young novice everything she knew. From time to time, Amanda noted the passing scene in her letters to Montreal, and, after his retirement, to Dr. Taché. "A Grand Retreat, postponed for several years, was held in the parish in September.

The hospitallers in about 1890. Viger is in the second row, fifth from left; Marie Anne Doucet is sixth; Sister Louise Légère,, who the author interviewed in 1975 is third from the left. She lived to the age of 108.

What solace it is to see the large number of poor women who live far...rising at three or four in the morning, walking several miles in order to get to the church for the services. No doubt the Lord will bless such courage."[5]

Had it not been for the death of Amanda's dear friend Philomène Sicotte on November 3, 1891, there would be little to mar the relative tranquillity of this period in her life. Until she developed heart disease a few months earlier, Sicotte had appeared in excellent condition. While she shunned any kind of leadership role, she carried out an infinite number of tasks behind the scenes, and Amanda thought Sicotte's supply of energy practically boundless. In one of Amanda's letters to her sister Orpha (Viger) Rocheleau, she wrote that Sister Sicotte had "entered the

novitiate in Montreal one year after me...for the last thirty years, with the exception of the nine months that I was here before her, we were always together." Sister Blanchard was dying, Amanda wrote, and she was up all night with her. "All the sisters are tired and our poor legs could do with a rest. Would you believe," she added, "that I have gray hair?"[6]

Fatigue was their ever-present companion, but in the fall of 1891, with two of their members critically ill, energy levels were stretched beyond their usual limit. There were nineteen in the lazaretto, among them, Raymond Duguay, who had deserted the establishment a few years earlier. The outlying areas of the region were the sites of most recent cases. Four new admissions entered that October bringing the total number of patients to twenty-three. The group, members of the Plourde and Power families, were mainly from Pointe Marcel, a tiny hamlet on the Acadian Peninsula near Shippagan; all had relatives already in the lazaretto. "It isn't easy to pull them away," Mother Superior Doucet noted. "David Plourde should be in hospital...and we have been waiting for two months for a young Doucet...and still another woman..." Yet, it was fortunate no others arrived. Conditions in the packed wards were ripe for any infectious disease to take hold. Most of the sick came down with shingles that fall, and the contagion spread to the monastery as well. The hospitallers were up every night with the dead and the dying. "We believe...our greatest sufferings are but a prelude to great gladness," Amanda wrote.

Viger was convinced that it was the heavenly intercession of Sister Sicotte, "...who loved our little house so much, and who prayed so much for it in her life," that caused their long awaited plans for the new lazaretto to finally garner some serious government attention. Officials were more likely cognizant of the fact that, among the numbers of immigrants coming to Canada, some individuals were later found to have leprosy. The Tracadie lazaretto would be a logical destination for these new Canadians. It was well run, while being remote enough to ensure it remained rather unknown.

The preparations for the new building gave Amanda an opportunity for a second visit to Montreal. Doucet and Viger accompanied Sister Robichaud to *Mont Sainte-Famille* in May of 1893. Robichaud, who was losing her hearing, needed medical treatment but Rogers did more than just grant his permission for the travel, he took the opportunity to honour their 25th anniversary in Tracadie, noting that Viger had toiled twenty-five years in a field, "...where her intelligence and devoted labours effected so much good for the afflicted." The bishop encouraged Doucet and Viger to visit as many houses founded by the hospitallers as they thought necessary, "...for inspection and information." The party remained a few days at the Hôtel-Dieu Campbellton, founded in 1888, the site of their newest New Brunswick monastery. Doucet wrote, "We

were practically ecstatic the whole time we were in this charming place." They arrived in Montreal by train on the evening of May 12, 1893.

This visit 'home' was not as exciting as Amanda's first. One possible reason may have been the death that January of Marie Pagé, at the age of eighty-one. The elderly lady, semi-paralyzed and nearly blind, spent her last years in prayer and meditation. Surely after crossing the threshold of her former house Amanda must have been profoundly reminded of her losses. Marchessault and Reid, as well as Tracadie Founder Clémence Bonin had died years earlier. Even the joy of seeing Delphine Brault, now the bursar of *Mont Sainte-Famille*, Quesnal, and Luména was likely tinged with melancholy. Amanda's family connections, her role as a founder and pioneer in an inaugural period of expansion for her house, elevated her status in 1880 but by 1893 Amanda found herself just one of many founders, pharmacists, and pioneers; the brightest and best of her era were seeding a network of new houses. In addition to the four in New Brunswick, they had monasteries in Arthabaska, Quebec, founded by Pagé in 1884 one in Windsor, Ontario founded in 1888 and were in the process of establishing a foundation in Winooski, Maine, which later opened in 1894. The older sisters, the ones under which Viger had trained, were no longer in power. Amanda had little to say about her trip, but, on their return May 29, Doucet said they could not have been more satisfied. They had the opportunity to visit four of their houses including those in Saint-Basile, Kingston, and Montreal. Doucet told the bishop that they gathered important information from all of the houses, and gained knowledge which would help them enormously. The trip, Viger noted, "left unforgettable memories in our hearts."

Amanda's hopes for an orphanage and general hospital still seemed a long way off when she viewed the progress the other foundations were making. Their institutions, especially the monastery in Chatham, were modern buildings alongside her humble quarters. Chatham, Campbellton, and Saint-Basile were running schools, taking in orphans and elderly people, and were caring for the sick. While the Tracadie hospitallers were doing some of the same work it was always under constraint. Rogers never tired of pointing out to her that the Tracadie foundation was shaped by the transitory nature of politics, the hostilities between Protestants and Catholics, and Rogers' own financial difficulties. There were also the limitations imposed by the nature of their principal occupation, and the merits of operating other institutions with the lazaretto under the same roof. She could never forget that whatever they built might one day be taken from them.

Other than through Amanda's letters to Orpha, we know little about how close she remained to her sisters and brothers. However, the few references she makes about—and to—her relatives show that the dear faces

of long ago could be quickly recalled with a fresh, sometimes poignant, reminder. Notified by telegram from Bishop Rogers, she was shocked to learn her brother, Hormisdas had died on September 24, 1893. Hormisdas, a partner in the firm "Fraser, Viger et Cie," was thirty-eight years-old, ten years younger than Amanda, and would have just turned five when she entered. Still, Amanda wrote, his unexpected and sudden death, "was a terrible blow for me."[7] Three of her siblings, and both of her parents, were now dead. The youngest Viger, Oscar, had died in 1886, at the age of nineteen. Her mother, Eudoxie had died in 1865, her father, Bonaventure Viger in 1877.

Given her unique circumstances, one wonders if Viger, like most people in their mid-life, reflected on the direction her life had taken, on her faith, on her relationships, on what she accomplished, balanced against what she had given up. The hospitallers were permitted to write just one annual letter home, and Amanda chose the Christmas season to pen her few lines to Orpha. Christmas, she noted in one, was the season when she missed them most and when she placed the names of her relatives near the crèche beneath the tree, so that all the hospitallers would include them in their prayers.

Twenty-five years after she first walked through the gates of the lazaretto, and side by side with the other founders, began to put the crudely constructed monastery in order, Viger was elected mother superior for the fourth time. "Once again," she wrote, "the heavy burden of the Superior has fallen on my feeble shoulders."[8] All of the hospitallers were on retreat, she noted, except she and two novices, who were overseeing the house. Officially, there were sixty-six people living in the complex of buildings which served as the Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie. They included: twenty-two with leprosy, twenty-five orphans, eighteen religious, and a lay woman. Unofficially, there could have been more. Not counted were the elderly couple Viger took in, in exchange for their house. There were transients, convalescing priests, and temporary boarders. Ninety-four leprosy patients had died since the nuns arrived; they had filled over one thousand prescriptions annually, down from previous reports, but still a sizable number. Their operating expenses, not including the lazaretto, amounted to $2,800; they had $1,700 in the bank.

Amanda no longer had the stamina she did in her thirties, but she refused to give in to a series of accumulating health problems. She was obese: "Do you know I weigh 197 pounds?" she remarked to Orpha. "With such a big body, I don't walk very fast. I console myself by saying, 'One who takes small steps goes further.'"[9] Not surprisingly, she often felt dizzy, a fact that was distressing her colleagues. "We are in good enough health except for our dear mother," wrote Sister Robichaud, "Her apoplexy worries us that she will have a fatal blow....Please pray for her.

We want her to be at the head of our house for a long time."[10]

Parliament voted to commit $15,000 to commence construction of the new lazaretto in the winter of 1894. The location for the new building, a five minute walk from the old lazaretto, was on the land that Father Gauvreau turned over to the hospitallers in 1869. Before the work could start, the government bought the parcel for the same amount the priest had paid, $630. Sister Robichaud, the chapter secretary, wrote that March. "Our Father Babineau leaves for Ottawa Monday in order to hurry up the process." The construction began before summer and by the end of November 1894, when the work stopped for the winter, the outside of the building was complete. Amanda drew up a list of requirements for the monastery, including what was needed for a cloister: "The government agreed to all our requests with regards to the hospital and monastery," Robichaud wrote, including written permission to build a wing for their orphanage. "The architect and engineer, even though they are Protestant, were gracious enough to ask 'our mother' to see the plans and offer their services for this addition."[11]

"Construction of the orphanage is ready to begin this summer," Amanda wrote to Father Théberge. "The architect, Mr. Stuart, submitted a bid of $14,000." It would include all the outside work, masonry, tin roof, outside doors, first and second floor windows, and painting. A gallery linking the wing to the sacristy, the inside plastering, cement floor, walls and beams, lattice work and staircases would cost an additional $7,600. "We have only $2,850," Amanda concluded. "We would like to know how much we will have to borrow. In view of the interest and support you've shown in the past we wish to count on a contribution from you."[12] Théberge was able to give them only $70.

Bishop Rogers was even less helpful: "I cannot approve of your incurring for the Hôtel-Dieu a large debt for the projected orphanage—especially if that building be on government ground and without the formal consent and approbation of the government." Rogers added, "The orphanage would always be an object of attack by those who wish to attack the government," or by "supporters of the government who do not wish well to our religious institutions." He asserted:

> If it be desirable to continue the orphanage and if there be the means to do so without debt, then, in God's name, let it be in a distinct and separate building, erected on land owned by the diocese or by your community; and if this be found practicable, would it not be well to have in said building, apartments and accommodations for other sick patients, not lepers—such a general hospital would be a great benefit to all the country around and could not but have the good wishes of all the people—But there must be no debt: We should pay as we go.[13]

If Amanda was discouraged, she could also take heart, for the bishop appeared to agree, at least tacitly, that the region should have a general hospital, something which the community had considered building for a very long time. Viger applied for a loan through Mère Delphine Brault, now the mother superior of *Mont Sainte-Famille*. Brault referred the matter to Cyrille Laurin, a broker for the Montreal Hôtel-Dieu. Laurin would only agree to a loan if Viger could put the new monastery complex up for collateral. Cancelling her application, she told Laurin, "We cannot use the building we have started as collateral for a mortgage, because, even though this building will be constructed at our own expense, it is on government land. Likewise, Bishop Rogers will not permit us to mortgage any of our properties, it is another thing if we are able to borrow from our house in Montreal." At any rate, she wrote, "We decided to build as we have the means, trusting that Divine Providence will furnish us with the resources."

The lazaretto and monastery were nearly finished by the end of 1895, and the sisters could not help but feel nostalgic. As Amanda Sormany, the chapter secretary, wrote, "This is the last time we celebrate...advent under this blessed roof, witness to so much deprivation...where...a well loved mother [Viger] sacrificed for the good of her religious family, and the comfort of the poor afflicted ones." They were delighted watching the construction of the new structure progress and praised the developments: "The fruit of this heroic devotion, where our dear sick will no longer suffer from cold and numerous other discomforts."[14]

The deputy minister of public works, Mr A. Gobeil, visited on December 15, and toured the old lazaretto as well as the new. He ordered that none of the furniture be moved, telling Viger that the best thing to do with the old institution was to set the entire place on fire. They also had one of their smaller buildings brought to the new site. Three workers were renovating it to serve as a residence for the employees. "All these expenses aren't helping us save money for the orphanage, but we are sure Divine Providence will not leave these dear ones without shelter," Sormany wrote.[15]

They began moving before Christmas although the new lazaretto would not be ready for occupancy before the end of the winter. Amanda told Orpha the work was causing her a lot of exertion, "It is all I can do to get there." Early in March, Viger decided to close the old lazaretto complex. The new one was not completed she explained but, "Influenza suddenly broke out among our sick, and one had died. The fetid air and the insupportable cold of the old building also seriously threatened the health of the community." There was no time to ask the bishop to conduct the Ceremony of Possession, which had to take place before they could live in the new monastery.

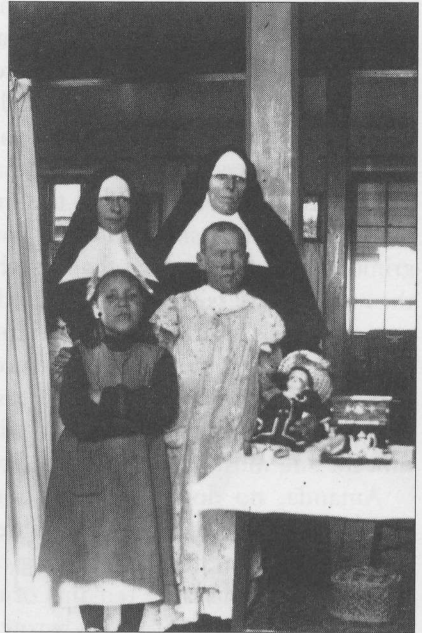
Amanda's failure to notify the bishop of her decision in advance of the move might be linked to the influenza outbreak, but it gave them an excuse to proceed without this formality, and it was likely more of a calculated risk than an oversight. Rogers, convinced that the government would force them out one day, would refuse to perform the ceremony of possession in which the bishop leads the convent members through the new establishment, blessing each room and department, as he had done nearly twenty-eight years earlier. Better they select Father Babineau to conduct the ceremony than chance asking Rogers and not having one altogether. Father Babineau had already, with Rogers' blessing, filled in for the bishop on many important functions for the Tracadie hospitallers, from conducting Habit and Profession ceremonies, to overseeing elections and retreats. Besides, who earned the right more than Father Babineau, who poured so many hours into seeing this establishment on a firm foundation at last?

Having moved the sick to their new quarters earlier in the day, and without even notifying Bishop Rogers, the hospitallers held their ceremony in the early evening of Sunday, March 8, 1896. They assembled in their former chapel for a brief closing service. Father Babineau then removed the Holy Sacrament—the consecrated host that Catholics believe represents the body and blood of Jesus—they followed in procession outside under the stars, each carrying a lighted candle. The group walked in pairs, with Amanda last and alone, slowly up the icy broken path. Behind them, near the sea, was their old disease-ridden and rat infested institution. They entered the new building through the main door, to the chiming of the chapel bell. Father Babineau placed the Holy Eucharist in front of the Tabernacle, while the hospitallers sang the *Tantum Ergo*. Benediction followed, and the services ended with the chanting of the *Laudate*. The chaplain led the community through the entire structure, blessing each of the departments. "Our poor sick were overcome with joy. A few wept when they saw the beautiful altar, and the lovely big rooms so different from those we just left." Babineau said the first mass a few days later and as Sormany wrote, "His happiness was equal to our own." Interestingly, Rogers was only notified of the lazaretto's opening the following month.

The orphans were housed in two dormitories, with a shared classroom in the loft over the lazaretto, the only space available to them. Five weeks after the move, two sisters who had been doing laundry in the old building, left a fire in the stove causing a blaze to start that went undetected until the smoke and flames were spotted around supper time. "We hurried to the site so we could save the few items which were still there, including the cement for our orphanage, wheat, salted meat, vegetables and so on. The church bell pealed as loud as possible, drawing nearly

everyone from the parish." Thus, just as the deputy minister of public works had hoped, the old structure was burned. It was sad, Sormany wrote, to see the cradle of the foundation, where the founders were sheltered and where so many generous acts were carried out, in flames: "How many memories would our good mother not recall of this little monastery so holy in its poverty. Our hearts were wrung watching it fall piece by piece."[16]

Bishop Rogers arrived on May 26, 1896, Viger wrote, bringing with him two hospitallers from the Chatham house: the mother superior Mère Kane and Sister Walsh. They toured the new building and were particularly impressed with the "water-closets." According to the pair they were the newest and best of their kind. They remarked that "in fact there is very little odour." They stayed for two days, and they would have stayed longer if the bishop was not in a rush. According to Viger, "These dear sisters appeared enchanted with the house."



Unidentified sisters with two children with leprosy, circa 1896.

Amanda concluded this letter with concerns over Sister Doucet's health. "She can barely contain the fatigue she's been laboring under for a year. She doesn't stop. She works all day and dear knows until how late at night."[17] But Amanda herself was far from fit. During her last seven years in Tracadie she coped with recurring and progressively more serious health problems. She seldom complained about this, but her community was clearly concerned. "It is no use telling her to rest," Sormany wrote, "because she refuses and her rare drive helps her overcome all sickness." Viger, instead of resting, commenced the next construction phase immediately—that of building the orphanage and hospital. But Sormany noted that, "as a result she is extremely tired. Her legs are swollen and the pain is so great she cannot sleep."[18]

You would never know from Amanda's letters that anything was wrong. Rogers' admonitions were little more than a temporary setback. There was no question of building on their own land since it would mean locating the orphanage in a separate building away from the institution,

and, in effect, having to run two houses. This was one of the arguments that Babineau presented to Rogers on their behalf. He told the bishop that written guarantees the hospitallers received from the authorities in Ottawa, allowing them to build their hospital on government land, were contained in a letter, but that the letter had somehow been lost. They were ready to proceed with the work, Babineau said, using designs drawn by Viger, and examined and approved by the government architect.

"Work started on the orphanage the first of June," Amanda announced, and, with the soil displaced for its foundation, they were in the process of preparing a new cemetery so they could transfer the remains of five hospitallers who had died in Tracadie. She was also cultivating an outside enclosure and garden on a small piece of low-land, which, while needing to be raised and dried, was in excellent condition. "The sisters themselves filled the drainage ditches with stones so as to save man hours," she wrote. As you can imagine we are all covered in grime, more often in gray than in white," referring to the white uniforms the nursing orders wore on the wards. Overall, she was so proud of their new residence, she could barely contain her joy: "Our processional [a walkway leading to an outside grotto or temporary altar], or I should say that of the parish since they use ours, is really lovely, with the temporary altar located under the portico of the main entrance. The effect is magnificent and must appear beautiful to these country people."

Amanda, no doubt recalling a similar occasion in Montreal many years earlier, arranged the ritual of removing the sisters' coffins from their old resting place, and transferring them to the new. "What happiness it was to contemplate the remains of these well loved ones who seemed to sleep so peacefully," Sormany wrote. "Their habits appeared the same as when we placed them in the tomb. But, when we touched them, they turned to dust. The bodies had not decomposed. We were not able to gather any bones." Each coffin was carried by four men, the church bell chimed, the hospitallers, the orphans and a few parishioners followed. Father Babineau blessed the graves before the coffins were buried once again.

The new wing consisting of four floors was added behind the Sacristy, giving the institution a 'T' shape. "I drew the plans myself," Viger wrote to her sister, Orpha. There was no contractor. The workers were hired on a daily basis, and, to save money, Amanda supervised the labour under the direction of Father Babineau. Besides the orphanage, she said, there would be a few rooms reserved for the non-leprous sick. Sormany told the Montreal community that Father Babineau, "completely supports Viger's 'grand designs.' He....oversees the construction, orders the materials and looks after all the correspondence which goes with a work of this nature. His servants as well as his horses and carriages are always available to

us...." In 1896, Father Théberge gave them $1,500 and this, together with their savings, "will allow us to complete the outside of the building."

In all, $11,253 of the $12,330 costs came from three principle sources. Babineau, by canvassing in the local lumber yards and other establishments in the region, raised $4,914; Father Théberge an additional $752 in 1897, and the hospitallers from their various houses, particularly Montreal, contributed $3,618. The rest of the funds were profits from bazaars, raffles and other projects organized by the Tracadie house. There was no debt. Both Viger and Babineau wrote the document enclosed in the corner-stone laid by Father Babineau on July 22, 1896. When this hospital burned in 1943, the document was salvaged and was included as part of a collection of items in the new cornerstone laid in July 1946. This hospital was torn down in 1995. The cornerstone was overlooked. One hundred years to the day when the first cornerstone was placed, Sister Dorina Frigault, Curator of the Tracadie Museum, strolling the fields near the newest hospital, found the second cornerstone with their historic documents in place, lying in a field. Amanda had written:

> Our orphanage had its origins because of the coincidental miraculous and instant cure of one of our sisters...through the intercession of good Saint Anne, and the premature death of a poor mother leaving four young children in extreme misery. The community saw in these incidents, both occurring on July 6, 1888, an expression of Divine Will, and moved by a feeling of thankfulness, gathered together the four little orphans. Forty-one other children since then have been sheltered in a...building which adjoined the old lazaretto which was destroyed by fire May 13, 1896.[19]

Father Babineau appended a few lines of his own on a second page of this text, noting important dates in the history of the parish, and the outbreak of leprosy which led to the arrival of the hospitallers. There were, he wrote, currently fifteen professed sisters and five novices.

The founders were usually recalled provided they had served for a period of six years in the new establishment, but according to *The Customary*, it was important to leave at least one founding religious in the house, especially "...those who have been superiors therein." Clearly, Amanda wanted to stay in Tracadie: "It is an honour to be the only one remaining among the first group of religious who came twenty five years ago," she wrote in 1893. "To have been a part of the modest but dear Tracadie Foundation was more than a comfort, but...a kind of glory."[20] Unfortunately, circumstances—most of which were beyond her control—would deny her a place under the shade of the vine she had sowed and nurtured through so many winters.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Battered by the Tempest

Once the federal government had built the new lazaretto, official involvement in its operation was no longer peripheral. Dr. Smith moved to Tracadie in 1895, and while continuing his general practice, he was gradually taking over the role of chief administrator. Even in the tiniest of settlements in the remotest corners of the region people were not safe from the doctor's inspection. He toured factories, fish plants, and lumber mills throughout northeastern New Brunswick. If he found the disease, the victim was soon without employment and friends and neighbours were warned to keep away. Unable to support themselves or their families, the remaining sick had no choice but to enter the lazaretto. The doctor was also journeying across the country on behalf of the federal government, and because of all these activities, the lazaretto population was in a state of flux.

The newest New Brunswick patients were those who least wanted to be there. Some had deliberately avoided detection until the last possible instant. They looked on the lazaretto as a jail, and the nursing sisters as little more than guards. And to some extent, the nuns *were* 'jailers' of sorts, since there was a 'punishment cell' in the lazaretto, and patients who were difficult to control, under orders from Dr. Smith, were sometimes locked in there. Added to that unhappy group of leprosy victims were new immigrants neither French nor English, non-Catholics, with different customs and a language completely foreign to Acadian ears. The first—two men and one woman—arriving in the spring of 1897, followed by another man a few months later, were no more familiar with the ways of the Acadians than the Acadians were to theirs. Nor did they like the religious customs, language, or diet imposed on them by these 'alien'-looking women. All four emigrated from Iceland to western Canada that winter. The woman, Elein Freeman, "left her three small children, including a newborn, in the care of her husband and was nearly out of her mind with grief," Sormany wrote.[1]

The first days in the lazaretto wards were very difficult both for new patients and novice hospitallers. The patients were awakened at 6:00 A.M. All sisters not busy elsewhere gathered in the wards to recite morning prayers. There were religious readings at noon, and spiritual exercises again at night; it is little wonder that one Icelander called the lazaretto a 'nunnery.' Those patients unable to care for themselves were washed and groomed. The nuns made beds, swept floors, and served breakfast. Wounds were dressed, a slow and painful process, at 8:30 A.M. and again at 4:30 P.M. It took one sister several attempts before she could handle the task. Another, trying to feed a patient for the first time, became nauseated when she saw the food go into his mouth, painfully deformed by his disease, and come out through his misshapen nose. The sisters received no increase in their personal allocation of $800, and the lazaretto's operating budget

The new lazaretto, monastery and general hospital circa 1898. The monastery is on the left and the lazaretto to the right, the chapel is in the middle and the hospital wing and orphanage is behind the chapel. To the right of the entrance is Dr. Smith's office, and to the left is the pharmacy.

remained at $2,000 per year, about $100 annually per patient. All the money, except the doctor's salary, was paid to Father Babineau. There was no funds available to improve the lazaretto diet or clothing allowances.

Few studies have been conducted on the history, administrative structure, or social policies of nineteenth-century institutions such as hospitals, prisons, or poor houses. What evidence there is does suggest that governments were reluctant to involve themselves in their operation. Once an individual became a ward, his or her fate was entirely in the hands of the administrators. The hospitallers, like Father Babineau, and like Dr. Smith, were products of a class-conscious society. They believed that those in the lazaretto were generally enjoying a higher standard of living than they

would have at home, and had no right to complain about their treatment. That leprosy generally attacked people from the lower end of the economic scale, who were assumed to have loose morals, was an idea that lingered in their minds, and accounted for their collective dismissal of the patients' grievances which began to surface as early as 1894.

Much of the patients' grief about the institution stemmed from their assumption that by coming to the lazaretto, they would be treated and cured. Instead, once they arrived they were confronted with the sight of others with leprosy, some of whom had symptoms far more advanced than their own. They seldom saw the doctor. Their only caregivers were the nurses. Intensely disappointed, they wrote to their relatives, who, in turn, began to lobby their provincial representatives in the federal government.

There were problems with the food. Meat and fish were sometimes tainted. The bread was often mouldy, and full of maggots. The sisters lacked food storage facilities; they needed a larger barn so they could expand the size of their dairy herd; and a large refrigeration unit to keep meat and dairy products fresh was essential. According to Sister LaPlante, the hospitallers always gave the best to their patients, so whatever meals the sick ate, the food served to the nuns themselves was likely worse. The doctor seldom visited the lazaretto wards and when he did, he did not see the patients alone. The patients said the sisters read their mail. The hospitallers denied this—and this was not a lie if letters were written in Norwegian—but if they were written in English or French, the chances are they were read, although perhaps not by the sisters. Father Babineau continued to have a lot of power within and outside the institution. Reading institutional mail was an accepted practice in their order. Fears they would transmit the disease meant the leprosy victims couldn't seal their letters without breaching regulations, so they were forced to give them unsealed to the head nurse.

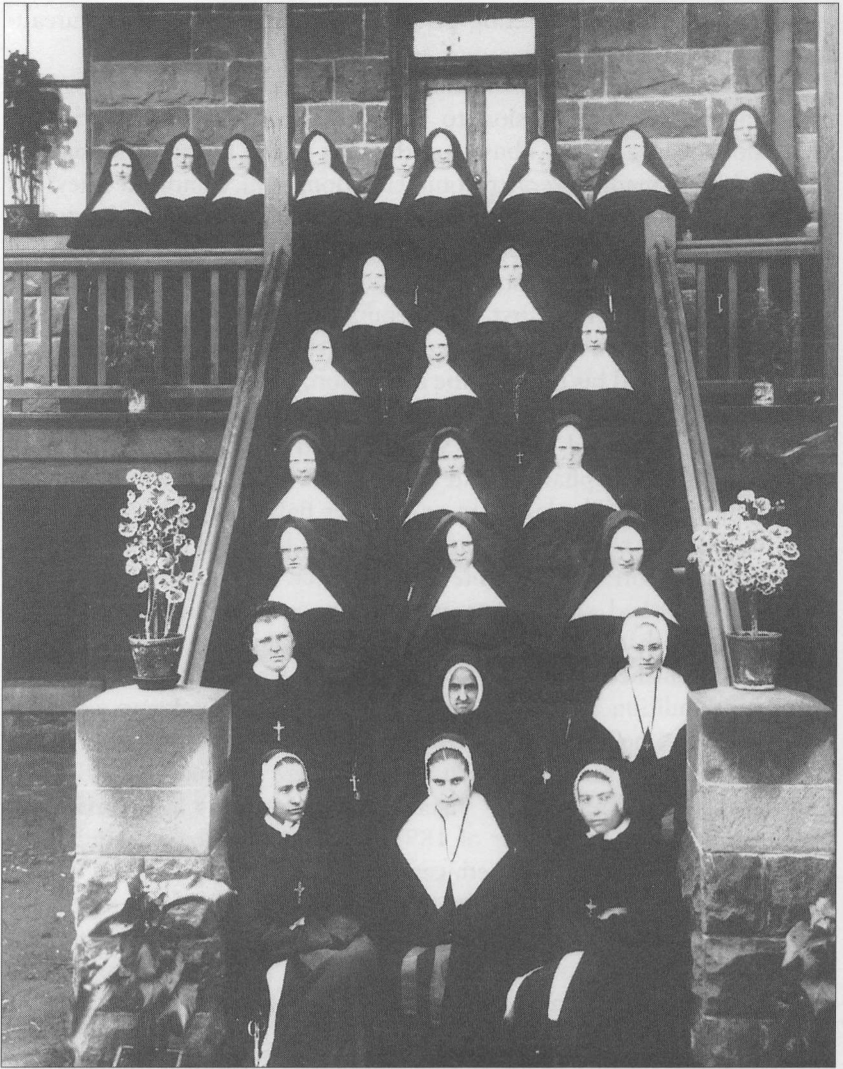
The sisters' rules prevented them from speaking out about these charges, or from defending themselves. Babineau and Viger blamed 'Protestants,' and 'enemies' for the agitation within the lazaretto. Although it was Robert Young who brought some of the charges to the government's attention, it was the relatives who turned to Young, now living in Caraquet, for help. The sisters were grateful that Father Babineau took it upon himself to deal with the grievances, but Amanda would have handled it more diplomatically had she been allowed. Unfortunately, the priest was abrasive and arrogant. Instead of trying to correct the poor quality of the food, back in 1894 when objections were first raised, Father Babineau made fun of the complainants. Instead of acknowledging the problems the newcomers were having adapting to the culture, he accused them of being ungrateful. Babineau did everything possible to prevent an

investigation, including meeting privately with politicians, and bureaucrats.

Unimpressed with Father Babineau's explanations, the federal government appointed a commission to conduct an official investigation. It found no evidence of any abuses on the part of the hospitallers, but the commissioners made several recommendations which indicate they did not exactly dismiss the charges. They suggested constructing a food storage area, purchasing a refrigeration unit, and building a bigger barn. They also implemented a system so the sick could send and receive mail without fear it would be read first. The deputy minister of agriculture noted that the problems within the lazaretto could not be completely regulated until the doctor had his office in the institution, and took full charge of its direction, including supervising the dietary needs.

Father Babineau and Amanda Viger reached the end of their era with the opening of the orphanage and the hospital. Dr. Smith was appointed the administrator of the lazaretto and Father Babineau's place was limited to his duties as chaplain. An office was made for the doctor to the right of the principal entrance, opposite the pharmacy. He could visit the wards whenever he wished, and patients were free to consult privately with him. Meanwhile, with the period of construction completed, his role in the lazaretto diminished, Babineau was listless and irritable. Dr. Smith diagnosed his condition as exhaustion and ordered him to take an extended vacation. When he left on his holiday shortly before Christmas 1900 the community missed him very much and they were looking forward to his return, "rested and refreshed." Viger had completed her last trimester as mother superior in September of 1899. Marie Anne Doucet would take the community into the twentieth century.

It is difficult to believe that the trivial episode which ultimately led to the bishop's forced resignation, Father Babineau's discharge from his chaplain's position in the monastery, and Amanda's transfer to Arthabaska began when Father Babineau confronted his curate in the monastery for hearing a sister's confession. Father Babineau was their chaplain for over thirty years, and their confessor far longer than the generally acceptable eight-year limit in religious communities, but brought about partly because of the shortage of priests, and partly because of his favourable image with Bishop Rogers. Like all disputes, the catalyst of the episode was only a manifestation of a number of deep-rooted issues troubling the village pastor, mainly his loss of control over the lazaretto's administration, followed quickly by his loss of status within the Hôtel-Dieu. Babineau, plunged into an emotional vortex, was determined to hold onto his position in the monastery by any means, and no matter who or what he hurt in the process. He was supported to the end by Bishop Rogers and his long-time friend Amanda Viger.



Hôtel-Dieu c. 1901, at the time of 'the troubles.' Left to right, seventh row (standing: Sisters Landry, Robichaud, Daigle, Sormany, Vautour, Mother Doucet, Viger, Maillet, Légère; sixth row: Sisters Pagee and Losier; fifth row: Sisters La Dauversière, Pitre, St.-Joseph; fourth row: Sister Elizabeth, Marie des Anges, Marthe; third row: Sisters Hedwidge, Marie, Marguerite Marie; second row: Miss Vautour (an associate), Sisters Octavie, and Elizabeth; first row: Sisters Haché, Marie Anne, Michaud.

Hearing their confessions, usually on a weekly basis, was an important function for the chaplain. He could monitor the sisters' most intimate thoughts and deeds, bestow forgiveness, and give advice. He could follow and even direct developments inside their house, and keep a watchful eye on the lazaretto. There were two other priests, known officially as, 'extraordinary confessors,' assigned to hear their confessions once each church season, that is four times a year. One of the extraordinary confessors would come if a sister had a problem she did not want to discuss with the regular confessor, provided her mother superior granted permission. The extraordinary confessor filled in when Father Babineau was ill, or when he was away.

The foundation was too small, and without the necessary funds to justify a resident chaplain, so it was dependent on the parish pastor or his curate to perform this role. Anyway, it seemed everyone loved the aging priest. Father Babineau's last act as their benefactor was to secure two raises for them—their first in thirty years—an increase of $200 in 1899; a further $200 in 1900 bringing their total yearly allocation to $1,200. A year later, that same man who had left for a trip to the United States a with the sisters saying how much they would miss him, and urging him to return safely; and Mother Superior Doucet weeping over her fear of dealing with government agencies without his expert help...returned to find all had changed.

Father Babineau's prolonged absence from Tracadie placed a burden on those assigned to fill in for him: Father Fitzgerald from Pokemouche; and Monseigner Stanislas Doucet, the vicar general from Grande-Anse were some distance from the monastery. Father Fitzgerald, with the bishop's permission, solved the problem by assigning Father Babineau's curate, Father John Wheten, the office of hearing the sisters' confession, until Father Babineau returned. Viger wrote an account of the events that led up to "the troubles"—as this period of their history was called —in a twenty-page memoir. A note on the bottom of the document, signed by Father L. N. Dugal, sent to investigate the troubles, and put a stop to the growing scandal, says she wrote it in Tracadie, at Dugal's request, in August 1902.

According to her memorandum, the problems began when she was ill for an extended period of time that coincided with Babineau's vacation. This left Mother Superior Doucet and her assistant Sister Sormany in complete charge of the community. Viger's condition was gradually improving, still she told Orpha that she lost more than fifty pounds, "I have no regrets about losing the fat, but I am weak as a result." Viger remained in the infirmary until the early spring of 1901. When she returned to active community life she found that Father Wheten was practically an established member of the house. "He came too often and spent his days here."

Doucet sometimes met him in the sacristy (the small room behind the chapel's altar), "With the door closed and locked." Wheten often joined the hospitallers in their community room during evening recreation, and, occasionally when he was there, Doucet extended the recreation period.

It is not surprising that Doucet enjoyed Wheten's company nor he hers. Life in a rural parish was lonely, particularly for the men. Nuns and priests were vigorous, single and healthy. Why wouldn't Wheten find the company of a community of religious women, looking fondly upon him, more appealing than a lonely supper prepared by an elderly housekeeper, and a long evening before a vacant hearth? No matter how much practical experience the nuns and priests had, most, certainly the women, had little experience dealing with their sexuality or in confronting sexual attraction. Only Wheten and Doucet know what actually went on behind the locked door, but years of sexual repression left the embers molten, not dead.

On the other hand, most successful mother superiors needed support from at least one male clergyman for their communities to thrive. They provided the expertise, and they were a link with the public, and government agencies. Even when Doucet was the mother superior, Father Babineau and Amanda Viger still dominated the direction of the house. Wheten was loyal to Doucet in a way that Babineau would never have been. Now, with Babineau and Viger out of the way, this was Doucet's chance to truly take the community on a different course—but all would end once the regular chaplain was back. Wheten would not be saying mass for the community anymore, and there would be no excuse for him to visit. Father Babineau returned to a cool reception the following June. Two or three younger nuns, notably Amanda (Sister Sormany); Isabelle (Sister La Dauversière); and Joséphine (Sister Marie-du-Sacré-Coeur), a postulant; all daughters of Henri Sormany a prominent Lamèque businessman, refused to have Father Babineau as their confessor, while Wheten continued to be a welcome guest, even though his services were no longer needed.

What happened to this normally tranquil, generally happy, and prosperous community can be garnered by reading the mound of letters from a number of the participants sent over a seventeen- or eighteen-month period which began in the summer of 1901. Rogers received at least seven from Mother Superior Doucet, six from Viger, and several letters from Monseigneur Thomas Barry, living in Bathurst and coadjutor of the diocese of Chatham. There are also letters regarding 'the troubles' from other priests, including: Fathers Stanislaus Doucet (Vicar General in 1901); A. Danel, a Jesuit missionary; and L.N.Dugal, curate of the parish of St.-Basile, (Vicar General in 1902). Several letters were sent either to Rogers or Barry from the apostolic delegate to Canada (the representative from Vatican City and the highest ranking Catholic prelate in the country),

archbishop of Larisse, Diomide Falconio. There is one from Mother Superior Brosseau, superior of the Hôtel-Dieu de Saint-Joseph, Montreal, addressed to Monseigneur Barry. Several letters, following Rogers' resignation, from the newly appointed bishop, Monseigneur Barry, to Archbishop D. Falconio, and to Father Babineau; one from Archbishop D. Falconio to Father Babineau.

Clearly, on the July afternoon when Babineau found Father Wheten hearing a sister's confession, there was already considerable tension in the house. Viger, in her office as the sister monitress (the one assigned to advise the mother superior), tried to have Doucet cool this friendship, while the Sormanys and others insisted on Wheten continuing his visits. The superior told Babineau that she granted permission for the change of confessor but she was unable to have either of the two extraordinary confessors, so she sent for Wheten, with the authorization from Monseigneur Doucet. Babineau, notwithstanding the mother superior's explanations, felt his authority was threatened. Moreover, Babineau asserted, Wheten did not have the power to absolve the penitent. The distraught and jealous priest had the mother superior assemble the members of the house, except for the novices, and, in front of the professed sisters, read a list of his complaints against her.

Doucet felt humiliated, embarrassed, and angry. She decided to meet with Bishop Rogers to formerly resign but no one in the house, including Viger, wanted that. Amanda Sormany, the assistant superior, determined to prevent the resignation, accompanied the superior to Chatham. In the meantime, Viger, the acting superior in Tracadie, was coping with an all-out rebellion on the part of, "two little hot heads," namely Sisters Landry and LaDauversière. The pair, Viger said, were enamoured of Father Wheten, did not keep the silence, giggled in his presence, and, after mass, without asking permission, met Father Wheten in the parlour. "The whole community, with the exception of four, are scandalized by such independence," Viger wrote.[2]

Rogers listened to Doucet, and after the hearing, refused to accept the mother superior's resignation. A few days later, he laid out the issues, and concluded that Doucet had followed all the correct procedures, and, "That Father Babineau also expressed to me his regret for having to arraign the Rev. Mother before the whole community." However, Rogers decreed, that all parties return to their respective duties: "...exercise charity in avoiding rash judgments...adhere to the strict observance of the constitution and rules of the community, sustaining authority and cultivating peace, union and charity."

However, peace, union and charity were not restored in the Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu. If Father Babineau was sorry, he made no apology to the superior, and, in spite of the bishop's decree, his position in the house

became untenable, particularly with the Sormanys and Mère Doucet. Viger urged them to remember his many contributions to the development of their foundation, and to put this incident behind them. "He has always been the most devoted father; the most generous of benefactors.... "Viger called her former apprentice young and inexperienced: "She has too much self-confidence and wants to be boss."[3] Forgetting that when she herself was thirty-years old, Amanda Sormany's age, and a member of the hospitallers for fifteen years, as Sormany was, she was mid-way through her first trimester as mother superior. Viger accused the third Sormany sister, Joséphine, (Sister Marie-du-Sacré-Coeur), a novice, of spying and reporting what transpired in the novitiate to the others.

Clearly a power struggle broke out in the house. Amanda's letters contain a few hints that Doucet had her own way of doing things, and was not about to surrender the autonomy that Viger's illness, and Father Babineau's absence had given her. The chaplain's diminished status was her greatest concern, but Viger resented some of the other modifications Doucet initiated. "The sisters who want to see the doctor now see him in his office, where they have to pass publicly in front of his other patients, instead of in the pharmacy in the presence of the pharmacist, as they did before." Nor did she like the fact that the practice of reading to the sick in the afternoons was also halted.[4]

The last time Bishop Rogers visited the community was September 12, 1901. He came to preside at the profession of Sister Haché, but he used the opportunity to try to dispel the tension between Doucet and Babineau. Rogers met all the sisters in the community room where he told them to remain submissive to their chaplain. "When you obey him it is myself you obey because he is my representative here."

"The bishop is senile and repeating himself," Doucet reportedly told Viger. LaDauversière added, "The bishop uttered nothing but stupidities." Such remarks about both the bishop and Father Babineau continued to be made during recreation. "A sort of war started then," Amanda wrote. Cliques developed with each side accusing the other of not following the rules, of disobedience, of plotting and of back-biting. "Oh! Peace. Holy peace wanted for the happiness of all those who are dear to me," wrote Amanda, never mentioning the controversy that was behind the strange plea, in her letter to Orpha shortly before Christmas in 1901.[5]

As some historians have documented, clerics often meddled in the affairs of the religious communities, causing divisions among their members, and also spreading rumours about sisters they disliked. Obviously, several clerics and laity alike were embroiled in this particular dispute. A letter from Sister Losier gives readers an idea of how Babineau exacerbated the situation. The chaplain sought her out when she was alone in one of the offices, Losier said, and told her the mother superior need not be

obeyed because, in wanting to change confessors, she was acting against the constitutions, "...and if I felt that way too, then he would take it as an insult." Nor was Father Babineau the only meddler. Father Wheten told Viger that he was a better person to hear their confessions than Father Babineau because, "He could advance them further towards perfection."[6]

Doucet and LaDauversière told Father Théberge, and Father Théberge asked Amanda why the hospitallers were not obeying the superior. Wheten was transferred to Campbellton, New Brunswick and ordered by Monseigneur Barry to have no further contact with the Tracadie hospitallers. Doucet and LaDauversière cultivated a friendship with the new curate, Father Mehew. Viger passed her letters for Bishop Rogers to Father Babineau for posting. Doucet, and "several other sisters" wrote to Reverend Wheten, and Dr. Smith became the conduit through which their letters were exchanged. Wheten told Mother Superior Gendron of the Hôtel-Dieu Campbellton. Doucet told Mother Superior Walsh of Chatham, and Mother Superior Brosseau of Montreal. The Sormany sisters, whom Viger noted, received more visitors than any of the other hospitallers, informed their parents, their brother, Father Wilfred Sormany and his friend, Father L.N. Dugal. "Mrs. Sormany spread it everywhere." Amanda noted.

It might have helped to dispel some of the tension if the issue, instead of being whispered about, had been raised as a topic for open discussion in the chapter. While only a third of the voting hospitallers favoured changing their confessor, by practising the rules governing the chapter meetings, each hospitaller would have had a turn to make her position clear. Doucet was either less than forthright in her first written communication about the troubles to Bishop Rogers, or peace was restored—at least temporarily—following the bishop's initial decree. On the eve of the annual retreat in August 1901, she wrote: "I hope these few days of prayer and solitude near the heart of Jesus will contribute more than a little towards maintaining the union and contentment actually reigning in our community. And, since we returned to that state of affairs thanks to Your Eminence, allow me to express my sincere gratitude."[7]

Doucet still had six of the hospitallers refusing to confess to Father Babineau, leaving her with little choice but to arrange for another confessor to come to the monastery every fifteen days. Needless to say, Babineau would not be placated. Doucet pleaded with Rogers for some sort of support: "Grave infractions of the rule go on everyday, and I no longer have the necessary authority to be respected." In December she wrote, "The community cannot stand to continue in this state of affairs without descending into ruin." Finally, in April, Doucet, her previous letters to him left unanswered, begged Rogers to appoint another confessor before the foundation in Tracadie collapsed:

> Several sisters can no longer tolerate the situation...It is certain they will either leave the community for other foundations or even...into the world. For my part, I cannot be held responsible for all that takes place here because, in the first place, I advised the authorities, and, in the second place, it is the confessor himself who told the sisters they are no longer obliged to obey me.[8]

Amanda notified Rogers as early as November that several of the sisters, including the superior, wanted to change the confessor. Doucet's dislike of Father Babineau bordered on hatred, Viger said, "She has vowed to see that he no longer has any connection with them." Amanda asked the Bishop to transfer Doucet and Sister LaDauversière. "I do not think a union of hearts is possible as long as she is in the house because she has a great influence on those who are on her side." LaDauversière, Amanda wrote, "is most responsible for maintaining the discord even though she is the youngest in the house."[9] Sister LaDauversière taunted Father Babineau, and goaded the other hospitallers by saying that she was the only one who dared to stand up to him. Shortly before Christmas 1901, Amanda again appealed to Bishop Rogers for help: "Those not in favour of changing the confessor... are treated like persons not worthy of trust....It is the unanimous view of the majority in the community that it is urgent to get rid of the superior."[10]

The younger priests, particularly, pushed the issue. Father Sormany contacted Monseigneur Stanislaus Doucet, and both Fathers Sormany and Dugal, the Vicar General of Chatham for 1902, and curate of the parish of St.-Basile de Madawaska, notified Monseigneur Barry. "The monseigneur knew it would be a difficult task to remove Father Babineau from his office. "If Pelletier, or Father Richard, or yourself would exchange parishes with Father Babineau I am sure the trouble would be at an end. Things might not work well with a [new] chaplain if Father Babineau remains in Tracadie."[11]

Rogers had dismissed any further attempts to deal with the dispute ever since his canonical visit to Tracadie in September of 1901. The Coadjutor Barry did not have the necessary authority to act on his own, so he took the matter to the Apostolic Delegate, Archbishop Diomide Falconio. Falconio implored Bishop Rogers to act: "I have received a string of complaints against Father Babineau....It would seem that his office as confessor of the religious community of the Hospital Sisters of St. Joseph is untenable....Could your Lordship give us any information in this matter? Is there any priest in the neighbourhood who could be appointed confessor?" Rogers, who never replied to Barry, or to Viger, or to the mother superior, or to any of the priests, chose to ignore the query from the official Vatican representative in Canada. Falconio decided to appoint Monseigneur Barry as his emissary. "Today, by letter, I informed Mgr.

Rogers that I, myself, would settle these difficulties of the sisters by putting myself in communication with Your Lordship."[12]

Father Babineau did not relinquish his role easily. "B[abineau] finds it very hard to resign before the election as he says that gives 'gain de cause' to Mother Doucet," Monseigneur Barry wrote. "Indeed, he spoke of resigning active ministry altogether and retiring." There was little choice but to give the chaplain a letter, which he was instructed to show Babineau only if he refused to resign on his own. It was from the Apostolic Delegate. Falconio told Babineau, "Having already served as confessor for the hospitallers far longer than allowed under Cannon Law, nothing would justify extending the mandate...."

Falconio appointed Father Dugal to carry out a canonical visit of the Hôtel-Dieu Tracadie, and report his findings to Bishop Barry. Amanda's recall from Tracadie was ordered by Falconio also, but the decision to send her to Arthabaska was the idea of Mère Brosseau, superior of the Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal. While it was a convenient way of removing Viger, whose influence in Tracadie would continue the fissure, Arthabaska was also badly in need of a superior with her excellent background and experience. Dugal found it a wonderful solution. "Sister St. Jean will render immense service to Arthabaska and it will be a very honourable door through which to leave Tracadie."

Father A. Darvel, a Jesuit, was appointed to act as their chaplain and he remained in the house for several months. Falconio ordered the hospitallers to take part in a retreat which would be conducted by another Jesuit, Father Filiatrault. Immediately following the retreat they wouold undergo the canonical visit (this being a formal investigation). Brosseau and Falconio, while not informing the Tracadie house of their deliberations, were already discussing the selection of Delphine Brault to replace Doucet. In the meantime, the members of the Tracadie Hôtel-Dieu were told they were "...strictly forbidden to consult with outsiders on the subject of choosing a superior, or campaigning or crafting 'cliques' for the upcoming election." The superior was to enforce strictly the rules of cloister whether visitors were clergymen or laity. The chapter was not to pass any resolutions until after the opening of the official visit. And, "the young postulant," Joséphine Sormany who was rejected by a majority of the votes in chapter, would be permitted to remain until the 'canonical examiner' had a chance to review her case.

Father Dugal arrived in Tracadie on the evening of August 12, 1902. He interviewed each hospitaller privately. Eighteen of the twenty-eight sisters appeared to support Viger, including nine of the fifteen choir sisters and all the novices and postulants except Joséphine Sormany. Nine sisters stood with Doucet. Dugal found both sides were too attached to certain priests, but he concluded that there had been no 'improprieties.' Dugal

was impressed with how capably they ran the lazaretto, hospital and orphanage but his report makes it clear that he found the Tracadie foundation had been flawed from its inception, and 'the troubles' were a result of these early problems. He concluded that the hospitallers were not well enough informed about religious life; they did not have sufficient instruction from their chaplain, and they had never learned how to meditate. They had all the room necessary to make a cloister in accordance with their rule, and enough land for an outside enclosure. However, they were under the impression that the rules of the cloister did not apply to them because the bishop had never officially proclaimed their foundation. "From there rested their too easy facility to receive priests in their community room, or to take walks outside of their land under the most frivolous pretext," Dugal wrote.[13]

Dugal went on to say that, in order for peace to re-establish itself in the institute, Father Babineau should cease all connection with it. The mother superior should have no important charge for a period of time, especially not that of mistress of novices as they, "Have a profound aversion to Mère Doucet." Amanda Viger's "departure should put an end to the schism," Dugal concluded. "Only St. Jean-de-Goto has permission to leave the convent at Tracadie....If the rules allow that a lay sister accompany her, this may be done. If, however, any other sister of the enclosure is to go with her you must apply to the Reverend Bishop Barry for permission," Falconio added.

So after more than thirty-four years, Amanda departed from Tracadie on August 17, 1902, right after a final benediction. "Jesus, who understands, wishes to test the courage of our faith...," wrote the chapter secretary. The hospitallers were weeping so hard they could only whisper the *Te Deum*, a hymn commonly sung at special celebrations. "Saying goodbye was cruel for all of us, but it was particularly hard for the 'dear little novices,' for whom [Amanda] was their guardian, model and leader," wrote one of the sisters.[14] Father Babineau won permission to accompany Amanda. The pair were not allowed to stop in Chatham. Viger later apologized for not seeing Rogers, and thanked the former bishop for all the help he had been to their community, now, "So rudely battered by the tempest." Delphine Brault returned to Tracadie to lead the foundation in the aftermath of 'the troubles' but calm was not yet restored; Father Babineau continued to harass the hospitallers throughout the fall and winter of 1902–1903.

The tragedy of this episode was that Amanda after years of service in Tracadie, after years of friendship with Doucet, and, just at the point when she could rest and allow others to lead, was forced to leave Tracadie and relinquish her right to remain with the house she founded, until her death.

Chapter Twelve

Peace Settled Upon Her

Most in the Arthabaska Hôtel-Dieu knew something of the circumstances that brought Amanda Viger to their house as was noted by the sister who wrote Viger's obituary. "As nothing happens on earth without the consent of God, without it being a part of Divine Providence, and without reason we must look for the Divine Will in the few difficulties which surged, in 1902, at the dear Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie: difficulties that are a part of the history of that house and not our circular letter." Whatever the rest, "God wanted Sister St. Jean-de-Goto for our foundation in Arthabaskaville and, whatever the means, He made use of them to serve His Holy will."[1]

The coadjutor of the diocese of Nicolet, which included Arthabaska, Monseigneur Brunault, presided at Viger's election on September 2, 1902 and he, with five of his colleagues, attended the reception which followed. "Your thirty-four years of success in Tracadie has filled me with confidence," he told her. Hurt and humiliated by her sudden and unexpected transfer, and emotionally drained from a year-and-a-half of turmoil, it was precisely the kind of reassurance she needed.

The beleaguered hospitallers of the Hôtel-Dieu Arthabaska were ready for a leader with a clear sense of purpose. Amanda's experience and innate capabilities made her just the person to resolve their financial problems and set the course for growth and development. They laid the scope for her grand design when they decided in chapter, shortly after her election ceremony, to "...leave her entirely and joyously at the divine call of her Celestial Spouse." That they were $7,000 in debt did not deter their resolve since, "They had the strength and courageous heart of the one who is loved so much by Jesus."

Brunault's esteem helped renew her spirit. The peaceful Arthabaska community was a welcome change. Her surroundings reminded her of her first days in *Mont Sainte-Famille*. "I thought I was well placed in Tracadie, but God wanted me elsewhere," Viger wrote to Orpha. "I

expected to be lonely since it cost me so much to leave my dear lepers, the house that I began, and thirty sisters I molded in religious life...but I am not lonesome at all. I feel stronger than I have been in the past six years." And she certainly did not go to Arthabaska to retire: "I have been so busy since I came that I could not find an instant to write."[2]

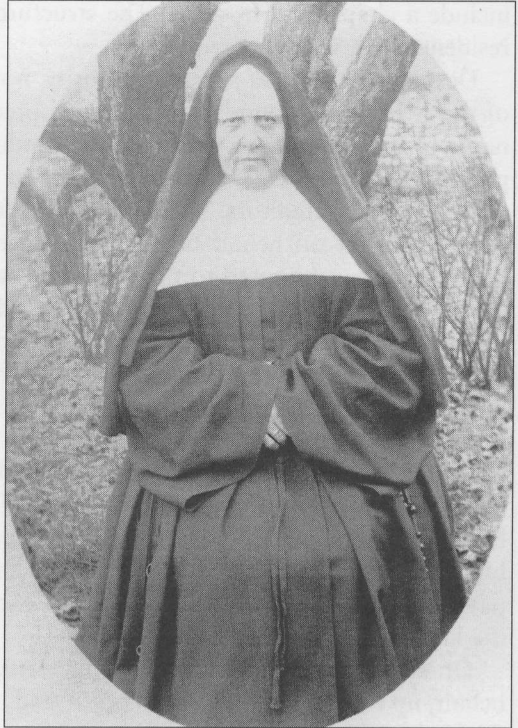
While Amanda was putting Tracadie behind her, the 'tempest', in the person of Father Babineau, who once championed their every battle, now turned his energies and political skills towards creating further discord in the convent and lazaretto. Brault accused him of interfering with contracts, and attempting to have another doctor replace Dr. Smith. The doctor believed the priest blamed him for the loss of his position, and alleged Babineau spied on him, and tried to have him replaced as the lazaretto physician. Reverend Danel, a Jesuit priest who was appointed by Bishop Barry to act as a temporary resident chaplain in Tracadie, wrote: "Mr. Babineau is a bothersome man...who hasn't succeeded in all his schemes....He continues to come and go freely, and I don't feel capable of maintaining the community."[3]

Bishop Barry decided that peace would not prevail until Babineau left Tracadie. The priest was sent to St.-Leonard, New Brunswick. The former chaplain found time to visit Amanda: "February 16 was a memorable date for us because on that day, Father Babineau, who, as you know, was not only confessor, but a wise counsellor, and a faithful friend to our dear house in Tracadie, paid us a visit," the secretary wrote. "You can imagine the great joy it was for our mother to see him again, and once more receive his paternal encouragement."[4]

Dr. Smith wrote to her in January of 1904. "Hardly a day passes since you left here without my thinking of my friend in times of trouble," he noted. "Tracadie has improved very much of late. Several fine stores built in city style. Many new buildings have gone up. I took down my old one and have just finished a new one." He brought two patients to the lazaretto, he told her, one from Nova Scotia, and one from Saint John, originally from Bermuda. "I told my wife I was writing you and she charged me to give you her love. How very glad I would be if you would only write in reply to these enquiries. Tell me—if you can—if you are happy."[5]

Viger not only replied, she sent him her picture. "Your letter has not found me indifferent. I have saved too many fond memories of you to forget....Like the song's refrain, 'once known never forgotten.'" Amanda said she could not be happier here, "where I enjoy the affection and esteem of all the sisters." She told him of the construction she started, and added that the town had given her $3,000 for the project. Amanda couldn't resist chiding him on his preoccupation with temporal matters: "You told me, my dear doctor, that you rebuilt your residence, congratulations. We look

for and love material comfort as if we were going to live forever, and yet soon we will all die." Smith claimed no religious tie, and Viger worried he would die, not only a non-Catholic, but perhaps not even a Christian. She did not belabour the point, but instead went on to tell her old doctor that she took a bad cold in November and was in bed until Christmas. "In spite of my attachment to Tracadie, and my constant memories, I have not been lonesome for a single instant."[6]



Amanda Viger (Sr. Saint Jean-de-Goto) in Athabaska after 1902.

Perhaps, because of the lessons she learned in 'the troubles,' Amanda restored the ceremonials, vespers, and other rituals, which had been dropped from their daily custom in Arthabaska because the community members maintained that they were too few in number to perform them. Nor would Amanda accept that they, being as impoverished as any who came to the door, should not perform their charitable works. They could not expect their new projects to be blessed by heaven, Amanda reasoned, until they restored their services to the poor.

Amanda not only followed in her mentor's footsteps, in inheriting the leadership of the house that Pagé founded in 1885, she took over an institution that had its own particular—and nearly fatal—flaw. According to historian and archivist of the Hôtel-Dieu Arthabaska, Claire Perreault, the Arthabaska house was initiated as the result of the work of Joseph-Auguste Quesnel, Eulalie Quesnel's brother, following the wishes of his late wife, Marie-Mélanie Quesnel. Quesnel, the sheriff of the district of Arthabaska, anxious to carry out his wife's last wishes, offered the founding hospitallers his home, until a monastery was ready. Under the contract, he and his family could continue to live in one wing of the house until his death, and until his children married.

The five founders, including Pagé, and Quesnel, had accepted the offer and arrived in Arthabaska on October 2, 1885. They resided, for a short time in a house owned by Quesnel, they named "Nazareth," adjacent to the Quesnel property. Here, they began sheltering the sick, the handicapped and a few boarders. The hospitallers moved into the Quesnel residence a little over a year later when the "Nazareth" house became too crowded. In 1887, Pagé decided to build a new monastery which would include a chapel and hospital. The structure was linked to the Quesnel residence by a walled corridor.

Despite Quesnel's apparent generosity, however, the financial position of the Arthabaska foundation remained precarious. Mr. Quesnel, in the name of the community, arranged the funding through a series of complicated negotiations involving members of his family, financial institutions and other creditors. Sister Quesnel defended her brother, saying he went bankrupt on behalf of the hospitallers, and that his devotion to them could be compared to the work and sacrifices of Jérome Le Royer de La Dauversière. If that were the case, then, from the evidence, the senior Mr Quesnel fell far short of Le Royer's business acumen. It seems Mr. Quesnel gave with one hand, and took back with the other, as when he allowed them to build on a parcel of land he leased to them for a period of fifteen years. Pagé was unaware, until it was too late, that each of his children held a mortgage on the land; and one, Arthur, wanted $1,000 in payment in return for releasing his part of the lien. The senior Quesnel borrowed the money to pay his son, but required the hospitallers to give him two post-dated notes for $500 each. The hospitallers also agreed to pay Arthur Quesnel one sixteenth of the capital realized from the use of the land each year.

On another occasion, Quesnel engineered a system of loans on their behalf, up to a total of $8,000. They found, though, after using an initial draft of $4,000, and after applying for a second, that Quesnel had withdrawn the balance. Every transaction carried with it conditions that left the hospitallers increasingly worse off. Finally, in 1888, Bishop Gravel of Nicolet ordered the community to settle their accounts with Quesnel, and cease to have any further agreements with him. According to Perreault, Pagé was tormented by the situation since it involved not only Eulalie Quesnel's brother, but the father of their first novice, and newly professed Sister Corinne Quesnel (Sister St.-Raphaël).

The sisters had few documents in writing, so at Mr. Quesnel's death in September of 1889, the gentleman's creditors estimated that the nuns owed $20,000 to the estate. Their property was seized by a sheriff: land, buildings, furniture, and livestock. They managed to keep their building, but most of the rest was auctioned. The hospitallers were reduced to living on dry bread, and wearing habits that were little more than rags. In

spite of the tough Quebec winters, their fuel was strictly rationed. The hospitallers in France, as they did for Tracadie, sent funds to help their sisters in Arthabaska. *Mont Sainte-Famille,* underwrote loans, and without their co-sign, the Arthabaska house would have had no operating funds.

An outstanding debt of $7,000 still remained in the fall of 1902, when Amanda Viger arrived. The Hôtel-Dieu Arthabaska, about the same size as the Hôtel-Dieu Tracadie, consisted of eight-five people, comprising twenty-eight hospitallers, and fifty-seven elderly, sick, boarders and a few servants. The sisters were washing and sewing for a religious community of men. Viger's first act was to resurrect a project to build a laundry, started by her predecessor, Mère Marie du Sacré-Coeur, in 1901, and vetoed by Bishop Gravel. Viger thought that a laundry would allow them to do the work more efficiently, and give them an opportunity to increase their revenues, by expanding this service. Since they were building anyway, Viger reasoned, why not enclose the new facility in an additional wing, so that they would be able to accommodate more of the sick? The rooms were vital. The laundry would generate revenue, and they would not have to turn away anyone for lack of space. The secretary wrote: "There are so many times during the year when the deficiencies in our location prevent us from responding to the needs of our two large counties, and force us to refuse the elderly of both sexes, orphans, the infirm and the sick, who come to us looking for a place to stay."[7]

Some of the voting sisters were not anxious to incur an additional debt, but Viger quashed their objections. "To delay," she said, "would show a want of confidence in God and a lack of charity to the poor who are without shelter, and without protection." Amanda benefitted from the support of an ally that the previous mother superior had not had. Bishop Elphège Gravel had refused to approve the earlier plan because of its promise of more debt, but Amanda's broader proposal intrigued him. Besides, Viger had excellent credentials from her years in Tracadie. Once he learned she had convinced the municipal council of the value of her idea, and won from the town fathers a grant of $3,000, he allowed her to go ahead with the construction. A small donation from Prime Minister Sir Wilfrid Laurier, who was in Arthabaska after visiting London and Rome, sent their hopes soaring, since the gesture seemed promising for future government support. Brunault, who was appointed bishop after Gravel's death in January of 1904, gave Amanda all his assistance saying that the Hôtel-Dieu de Arthabaska's time of testing was past. "*Qui bâti, pâti,*" he wrote (a French proverb meaning "one who builds, suffers"). Sister Perron, the secretary for the chapter, noted, "We will shoulder the suffering. It is our capital to be drawn on by the unfortunate."[8]

The initial contract was awarded in August of 1903 for the sum of

$10,940 payable, as each phase of the work was completed, in increments of $500. Viger, sustained by an "invincible courage and strength," was determined to see the work completed, and as in Tracadie, manage it all without incurring additional debt. However, her dedication and drive was already a subject of concern among the sisters. Perron wrote, "We shudder over the health of our mother who does not want to take care of herself, and invariably answers our supplications by saying that it is no worse for her than for us."[9]

A few weeks later Viger reported that Bishop Gravel had allowed them to negotiate a loan of $20,000, enabling them to pay off the present mortgage, and consolidate the remainder of the debt. Amanda, who needed the Montreal Hôtel-Dieu to guarantee the promissory notes she had given, was assured by her financial advisors that she would succeed. The new wing would "double our revenues," she wrote. There was no chance the community would find itself in the precarious financial state that had characterized its earlier history.

The wing consisted of five floors: The first in stone, the rest in brick. "The workers have placed the beams," she wrote. "The exterior is finished except for installing the window frames in the galleries." She sent one of the lay sisters to do some active fund-raising in the United States. "The dear child has been there since October, but it is not going as well as I would have wished," Viger wrote. "I don't know how I am made but I could not refuse the poor. I would prefer to sleep outside rather than reject a child of Christ, but we have to have money to house them, and we don't have any." Amanda appealed for some financial help in this letter to Orpha. "We started with nothing. I borrowed $20,000." She asked Orpha to collect a few dollars from among her friends and acquaintances. "We are praying to Saint Joseph, and we are breaking the ear drums off the Infant of Prague....I'm joking, but we are in extreme need."[10]

The construction was only one of several concerns Viger faced in 1904. A prolonged drought, which lowered water reservoirs throughout the district, caused critical shortages that winter. These were compounded by cold so intense the earth froze to a depth of six feet, and nearly all the water pipes broke. Viger wrote, "We have to cart our water from the river in barrels Monday to Saturday." Sometimes, she said, it was necessary to hire men and horses to help with the work. In spite of that, "We had to ration the water to the point where we were suffering." There were five cases of typhoid fever among the sick, and a number of seriously ill among the elderly. Three hospitallers were ailing, two with tuberculosis. The grant from the city, $2,772 instead of the expected $3,000 that had been pledged, did not quite cover the cost to equip their new laundry. However, Viger's fundraising efforts had garnered some

success. The lay sister returned from the United States. She had managed to raise, to the great joy of the entire community, $1,700. That summer the women in the surrounding parish organized a village fair which lasted eight days and brought in a further $1,275.

But this bit of good news was offset by two accidents: a gasoline reservoir exploded on August 3, 1904, setting the new building on fire. Fortunately, except for $200 needed to repair the washing machines, insurance covered most of their losses. The second mishap was more serious. One of the furnaces exploded when a workman forgot to open the damper. Several pieces of iron were driven into the walls, and the debris broke through the ceiling of the furnace room, stopping at the floor of the sanctuary where mass was in progress. "The altar was lifted by the jolt, the tables were displaced, the chandeliers fell....It caused a general panic." Bishop Brunault compared the trials the Arthabaska community were enduring to those suffered by the Montreal founders, and pointed out that l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal had become one of the most flourishing. One can only wonder what further misfortune Amanda expected when she wrote, "Do not be surprised to see our small Hôtel-Dieu Arthabaska tested by repeated accidents, by crosses of all sorts; from there rests the portent of a prosperous future."[11]

Amanda Viger would not be a part of that future. She learned in mid-December, 1905 that she had a cancerous tumour on her left side, and she was taken to Montreal for surgery. Madame Lanctot said that Dr. Hingston, who would have been seventy-four years old, remembering Viger from her earliest years as a religious, supervised her care. But, he would not operate on her himself. He said that for him, it would be like operating on his own daughter. Amanda returned to Arthabaska, supposedly cured, after only six weeks.

The members of the Arthabaska house were so encouraged by her apparent recovery that Sisters Dagenais, the assistant superior and bursar, and Hurtubise, the mistress of novices, informed the Hôtel-Dieu in Montreal that they had decided to nominate Sister St. Jean as their superior for a second three-year term. Viger wrote, following the election ceremony, "Bless me and bless the dear little family that I am devoted to, bless as well the arduous work confided to my hands." This was the seventh time that Amanda held the office of superior. But her letter belies that in spite of the optimistic tone of those around her, Viger herself was frightened. "It is no small burden...as you know from your experience reverend mother. Have pity on us, and through your fervour make up for the chill in my heart."[12]

Amanda felt compelled to complete what she started. Sister Perron, the order's secretary, wrote, "Her courage is only equalled by her great heart; remaining on her feet in spite of the overwhelming strain, her one

Dr. William Hingston, Viger's medical instructor. He refused to operate on Viger in 1904 because he said it would be like operating on his own daughter.

thought is to encourage us." Somehow, Amanda found the resources to begin sheltering ten orphans over objections from a few of the chapter sisters who believed they should concentrate their efforts on caring for the sick. Moreover, these positive developments were offset a few weeks later when the group of brothers and their small college were transferred to Victoriaville, and therefore withdrew their sewing and laundry. Bishop Brunault ordered all priests in the diocese to purchase their candles and communion wafers from either the hospitallers, or from the Sisters of the Precious Blood, who were equally in need.

Although ailing, Amanda was seldom in bed before midnight. She told Orpha, "The young people of today would have a hard time to do as well." She was preoccupied over the debt: "May we have a mild winter. Coal and wood are so expensive." Once again she appealed to her sister for help: "Don't forget we have to be in great need before I would beg...we are in an extreme condition....It is a great worry for a Mother Superior."

The cancer recurred. Amanda made arrangements to return to Montreal. "They tell me I have to do my best to cure myself, or, at least, prolong my life. It makes no difference to me whether I live or die. One's health is up to the will of God." What mattered more to Viger was the community of Arthabaska "...which I love more than myself...to leave it in this financial state is a sacrifice above all sacrifices." Once it was evident to the doctors that there was nothing further they could do for her, Viger insisted on rejoining her Arthabaska community. But the news that she would be back among them was not well received there. They worried that Amanda would not rest properly:

> The superior's room neighbours the community room, the choir, the telephone, and the cloister entrance where the bell rings continually, and further, her great desire to follow her work, and seeing herself incapable of responding, will be a more intense suffering than any other. Her devotion has never

> before known an obstacle because the Lord always relented before the great spirit of her faith, and her unlimited confidence. Her strong desire to return to her dear Arthabaska has affected us profoundly, thinking perhaps, that she has not seen it through.[13]

The mother superior of *Mont Sainte-Famille* tried, unsuccessfully, to convince Amanda to stay in their larger and better equipped infirmary. Amanda wrote: "I am filled with a gratitude so deep I will carry it with me as long as life itself, but my greatest wish was to go back to Arthabaska. I was contending with a mother's heart, and, Oh! I know one thing, the heart of a mother cannot misjudge her own child." Reluctantly, the superior allowed her departure and Amanda was back in Arthabaska by March 14, 1906 suffering from a severe cold and weak from the journey.

The Arthabaska community was moved by Viger's desire to remain with them, though they lamented that they lacked many things that would make, "The life of a sick person more comfortable." According to her obituary, Viger suffered severely, both physically and emotionally, over the next few weeks. "The weight of our debts, especially that portion she felt she was responsible for, pressed on her heart." The hospitallers reminded her to have confidence in Divine Providence. "The smallest expression of encouragement from the least among us did her good...." It pleased her when the individual members came to her room and sought her counsel. "Her simplicity drew us to her, perhaps, so much so, that we forgot the usual formality shown to a mother."[14] Father Babineau, to her great joy, was permitted into the cloister for a final good-bye. Sister Dagenais, the assistant superior, informed Orpha of Viger's condition. Were it up to them, she said, they would allow the family to come to the cloister to visit her, but Amanda did not wish them to see her in that condition.

If Viger had appreciated just how supportive Bishop Brunault was of her work, she might not have suffered so much over the debt. He was more interested in the Arthabaska community than Bishop Rogers had ever shown for her Tracadie House. Brunault sent the assistant, Sister Dagenais, a cheque for $400 that April to cover the interest on their loan which was due in May. "I am happy to do it," he wrote. "So that my dear daughters of the Hôtel-Dieu Arthabaska will find...another excuse not to lose courage in the midst of their troubles...the clergy and the faithful understand that you are in extreme need, and that I absolutely support the life and the prosperity of your house." Brunault visited Viger on April 23, 1906. Seeing how sick she was, he absolved her of all her duties.

Peace settled upon Amanda. The nursing sisters regularly gave her

medication to help her sleep, and, it appears, she began to drift in and out of consciousness. She told one of her care-givers that she felt she was dwelling more in heaven now than on the earth. Amanda awoke on the morning of May 1 to a vision of Mary holding out her arms towards her. She had always held a special reverence for the "Virgin Mother," she said, and she would like to die in May, the month dedicated to her. And so it was: Marie Louise Amanda Viger, Sister Saint Jean-de-Goto, passed away with the name of Jesus on her lips, in the early hours of Tuesday, May 8, 1906. The entire Arthabaska community of hospitallers were on their knees around her bed.

Amanda Viger's tomb in the vault of the Hôtel-Dieu, Arthabaska.

"Just as she never refused our Lord, He displayed His fondness for His dear bride by granting her, at the end of her life, all the spiritual favours and blessings it was possible for her to have," Dagenais wrote to Orpha. "She rendered her beautiful soul to God calmly and contentedly." Bishop Brunault permitted the hospitallers to open their choir for visiting religious, and four members of the *Congrégation de Notre-Dame* and two from *l'Assomption de la Sainte-Vierge* joined them. "The requiem mass was sung by a choir from the town, and served by a deacon and sub-deacon [student priests], something that rarely happens for us," Dagenais wrote. Many distinguished visitors attended. "She had the esteem and admiration of everyone who knew her from the very youngest of the poor orphans. Rain fell abundantly on the day of her funeral, but the religious noticed that during the singing of the "Libera," a dazzling sun radiated over the choir, and only disappeared after the last verse. "*C'était frappant*....It was as if our mother who knew how to emanate joy around her so well during her life... wanted to lighten our hearts one more time, with a sunbeam of hope and peace."[15] Amanda, who was the third superior to head the foundation, was the first to wish to be buried in Arthabaska.

To honour Amanda, the Hôtel-Dieu Tracadie held a thirty-hour prayer service culminating in a solemn High Mass on the morning of May 17, 1906. She was, according to their *Chronicles*, "The soul of our commu-

nity and of our works." Bishop Barry, who was in Rome at the time of her death, came to the Tracadie house upon his return in July to deliver his condolences personally. The next morning, July 5, 1906, he sang a solemn High Mass on her behalf. Fathers Babineau, L. O'Leary, J.E. d'Amour, F.C. Ryan and Eudists Fathers LeRoy and Guillemin crowded around the tiny altar, to assist him.

An early 1970s photo of hospitallers in the lazaretto cemetery opened in 1898.

Amanda might not have taught her Acadian novices to meditate, but she did teach the Acadian hospitallers many other valuable skills. The youngest Sormany daughter, Joséphine, was professed, but died of tuberculosis in 1904. Amanda Sormany was the chief pharmacist for twenty-seven years, and a very severe mistress of novices, a post she held for twelve years. She was elected the mother superior of the Hôtel-Dieu Tracadie several times, holding that office for a total of eighteen years. Marie Anne Doucet and Isabelle Sormany were credited with the founding of *Académie Sainte-Famille,* a private boarding and day school which opened near the hospital in 1912. They drew up the plans themselves, based on their visits to boarding schools in Quebec. Doucet was the Bursar during the construction of *Académie Sainte-Famille*, and, to save money, she did most of the interior painting, working day and night. In addition to offering an academic elementary and high school program, they taught domestic science, and a bilingual commercial course.

In 1922, the 'hot headed' Isabelle Sormany inaugurated a program of professional development, encouraging the hospitallers in Tracadie to obtain their nursing and medical diplomas in pharmacy. The hospital received its accreditation from the American College of Surgeons in 1930, and opened a nursing school the same year. Isabelle Sormany went on to become the founding superior of the *Sanatorium Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes* in Bathurst, a tuberculosis hospital that opened in 1932. She was also instrumental in founding the *Hôtel-Dieu Saint-Joseph,* a general hospital in Bathurst which opened in 1942. When all of the foundations underwent a structural and administrative change in 1946, Isabelle Sormany became the first superior general of the religious hospitallers of New Brunswick. The new administration united all the provincial foundations under one governing body, and, in their new constitution, the cloister was abolished.

Viger would have been most delighted to know that two lazaretto nursing sisters, hospitallers Eva Albert and Imelda Cyr founded a lazaretto in San Pablo, Peru in 1948. Later, Tracadie hospitallers would open schools, hospitals, and lazaretto in Lima, the Andes, and Iquitos, all in Latin America.

Today Viger rests, with all the deceased sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu Arthabaska, in the burial vault under the present monastery complex. But the story of Amanda Viger does not end with the death of Sister St. Jean-de-Goto. For her story is the story of the congregation itself and of the women who toiled under its mantle.

Endnotes

Chapter Two

1 CND Archives. Montreal. Thérèse Lambert, Histoire de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Montréal (Montréal: Maison-mère de la Congrégation Notre-Dame, 1970), Tome 1, vol. 8, "Annales de l'Institut 1840-1843," p. 100.
2 CND Archives. Montréal. "Mémoire de Mère Sainte-Justine (Casgrain)," S´rie 22, 100.51
3 Elizabeth Rapley, The Dévotes: Women and Church in Seventeenth-Century France (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), p. 170.
4 Rapley, The Dévotes, p. 146.

Chapter Four

1 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Chapter VII: Ceremonies Preceding the Religious Profession, and Rule of Conduct for sisters during their Noviciate: Article Second: Investiture," Manual, p. 209.
2 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. Ceremonial, p. 163.
3 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. Constitutions, pp. 23-31.
4 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Pure in her life," Manual , p. 39.
5 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. The Customary, p. 96. "Supplement to the Manual intended for Vocal sisters," Manual pp. 304-305.
6 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. Manual, p. 234.
7 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. Ceremonial, p. 184.

Chapter Five

1 Mason Wade. "Commentary: Québécois and Acadien" *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*. 9, 2 (May 1974).
2 Antoine Bernard, Les Hospitalière de Saint-Joseph et leur oeuvre en Acadie, Montreal: Les Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph 1958, p. 82.
3 RHSJ Archives Bathurst."Circulaire de notre très honorée Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto (M.L. Amanda Viger)" p.100.
4 Losier & Pinet. Children of Lazarus, p 68.
5 Provincial Archives of New Brunswick [PANB], Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Bishop Rogers à Rév. Soeur Mance, Supérieure des Soeurs de l'Hopital de l'Hotel-Dieu de St.-Joseph, le 16 nov. 1868.
6 PANB Microfilm # 7686. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. IV Religieuses de Femmes: Les Religieuses Hospitallières de Saint Joseph. Mère Mance à Bishop Rogers, le 18 nov. 1868.
7 RHSJ Archives. Montreal. Amanda Viger à Mère Mance, le 11 nov. 1868.

Chapter Six

1 Eulalie Quesnel. "Notes sur L'Institut," p.. 12.."
2 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 21 nov. 1869.
3 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. Quesnel à Mère Supérieure, le 10 fév. 1869.
4 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 9 fév. 1869.
5 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. Quesnel à Mère Supérieure, le 10 mai 1869.
6 Losier & Pinet. Children of Lazarus, p. 80.
7 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 26 août 1870.
8 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Sr. St. Louis, Hôtel-Dieu Montréal, le 4 juillet 1869.
9 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, Hôtel-Dieu Montréal, le 10 Nov.1868.
10 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Father Gauvreau à Mère Supérieure, Hôtel-Dieu Montréal, le 28 avril 1868.
11 PANB Microfilm # 7686. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. IV Religieuses de Femmes: Les Religieuses Hospitallières de Saint Joseph. Mère Pagé à Bishop Rogers, le 17 jan. 1869.
12 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 9 fév. 1869.
13 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 22 juil. 1869.
14 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondance. Mère Pagé à Bishop Rogers, le 20 avril 1869.
15 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. Bishop Rogers à Sr. Quesnel, le 2 juin 1869.
16 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondance. Mère Pagé à Bishop Rogers, le 20 avril 1869.
17 RHSJ Archives Montréal. Ferdninand Gauvreau à Mère Supérieure, le 28 Avril 1869.

Chapter Seven

1 Les Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph [RHSJ], Maison Générale, Montréal. "Lettres à La Maison Mère de Montréal, 1868-1902," Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure le 27 mai 1869.
2 Les Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph [RHSJ], Maison Générale, Montréal. "Lettres à La Maison Mère de Montréal, 1868-1902,"Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure le 27 mai 1869.
3 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 6 fév. 1870.
4 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 29 déc. 1871.
5 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 12 mai 1872.
6 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Mère Reid à Bishop Rogers, le 11 sept. 1871.
7 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 18 juin 1872.
8 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 9 août 1872.
9 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 19 déc. 1870.
10 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Premier Rapport Triennal de la Communauté des RH de l'Hôtel-Dieu de St.-Joseph de Tracadie," le 6 août 1872. Premier à septième rapports triennal, 1872-1890.
11 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 25 juil. 1873.
12 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 2 août 1874.
13 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst "Contrats avec la Commission Scolaire #3 de Tracadie," le 6 mai 1876.

14 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 9 mai 1876.
15 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Bishop Rogers à Mère St. Jean-de-Goto, le 30 juin 1895.
16 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Lettres d'Affaires", Sr. St. Jean à V.A. Landry, 14 jan. 1883. Viger made similar appeals to John Young, Secretary of the Trustees on Jan. 11, 1883; and to Landry on January 31 and February 6.

Chapter Eight

1 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 19 déc. 1874.
2 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 3 sept. 1875.
3 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Mère Reid à Bishop Rogers, le 16 sept. 1873.
4 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Mère St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 5 oct. 1875.
5 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Mère St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 11 fév. 1876.
6 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Mère St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 3 mars. 1876.
7 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Soeur Laferre à Mère Supérieure, le 4 juillet 1876.
8 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 18 déc. 1877.
9 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Mère St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 16 nov. 1878.
10 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 22 déc. 1878.

Chapter Nine

1 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 11 avril 1880.
2 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 30 nov. 1880. See also: Mary Jane Losier & Céline Pinet. The Children of Lazarus: The Story of the Lazaretto at Tracadie. (Fredericton: Goose Lane, 1984.) pp. 85-93.
3 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 23 déc. 1880.
4 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. Brault à Bishop Rogers, le 7 mars. 1881. The Bishop's reply was in the margin of this letter and initialed by him on March 17.
5 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 29 nov. 1881. Viger was once again the chief pharmacist.
6 "Lettres D'Affaires des RHSJ. de H.-D. de Tracadie." Mère St. Jean à Bishop Lynch, le 23 août 1885.
7 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 1 oct. 1886.
8 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Lettres D'Affaires des RHSJ. de H.-D. de Tracadie." Mère Doucet to M.J.O. Villeneuve,le 8 nov. 1888, and to Dupuis et Frères, le 9 nov. 1888.
9 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Lettres D'Affaires des RHSJ. de H.-D. de Tracadie."Sr. Doucet à Michel Vautour, le 3 juin 1889.
10 "Lettres D'Affaires des RHSJ. de H.-D. de Tracadie." Sr. St. Jean à Taché, le 5 juillet 1887.
11 "Lettres D'Affaires des RHSJ. de H.-D. de Tracadie." Sr. St. Jean à Taché, le 5 juillet 1887.
12 Sr. Marie Anne Doucet à Taché, le 14 sept. 1891.
13 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure, le 5 juillet 1888.
14 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. Doucet à la Maison Mère, le 12 avril 1890.
15 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean, le 3 fév. 1888.

Chapter Ten

1 RHSJ Archives Montréal. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure le 8 sept. 1896.
2 RHSJ Archives Montréal. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure le 5 déc. 1891.
3 Les archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph [RHSJ], Maison Provinciale Notre-Dame de L'Assomption. Bathurst. "Lettres D'Affaires des RHSJ. de H.-D. de Tracadie." Sr. Doucet à Dr. Taché, le 19 nov. 1891.
4 RHSJ Archives Montréal. Soeur Robichaud, La Secrétaire du chapitre, à Mère Supérieure, le 22 déc. 1893.
5 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure, le 5 déc. 1891.
6 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto à Madame Joseph Rocheleau, le 26 déc. 1891" See also RHSJ Archives. Lettres D'Affaires des RHSJ. de H.-D. de Tracadie." Sr. Doucet à Dr. Taché le 19 nov. 1891.
7 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 1 oct. 1893.
8 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 4 sept. 1893.
9 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto à Madame Joseph Rocheleau, le 27 déc. 1895.
10 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Secrétaire du Chapitre à Mère Supérieure, le 29 mars 1894.
11 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Secrétaire du Chapitre à Mère Supérieure, le 10 déc. 1894.
12 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto à Rev. Joseph Théberge, le 9 juin 1895.
13 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Bishop Rogers to Rev. Mother St. John of Goto, June 30, 1895.
14 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire du chapitre à Mère Supérieure, le 20 déc. 1895.
15 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire du chapitre à Mère Supérieure, le 20 déc. 1895.
16 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire du Chapitre à Mère Supérieure, le 8 sept. 1896. See also: Losier & Pinet. Children of Lazarus, p. 125.
17 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire du Chapitre à Mère Supérieure, le 8 sept. 1896.
18 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto à Mère Supérieure, le 14 juin 1896.
19 Musée de Tracadie, Tracadie NB. sr. St. Jean-de-Goto Supre.
20 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 7 mai 1893.

Chapter Eleven

1 RHSJ Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de St. Joseph (RHSJ), Maison Générale. Montréal. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure, le 19 mars 1897. See also: M.J. Losier & C. Pinet. Children of Lazarus: The Story of the Lazaretto at Tracadie. (Fredericton: Goose Lane Editions 1984) pp. 126-38.
2 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Soeur St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 4 août 1901.
3 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Soeur St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 8 nov. 1901.

4 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. "Mémoire de Soeur St, Jean-de-Goto."
5 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. "Mémoire de Soeur St, Jean-de-Goto.".
6 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Soeur St. Jean à Mgr Rogers, le 8 nov. 1901.
7 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. Doucet, Supérieure à Bishop Rogers, le 19 août 1901.
8 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. Doucet, Supérieure à Bishop Rogers, le 21 avril 1902.
9 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 8 nov. 1901. See also: PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. "Mémoire de Soeur St. Jean-de-Goto."
10 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. Sr. St. Jean à Bishop Rogers, le 15 déc. 1901.
11 Thos. F. Barry to Fr. Dugal, Jan. 21, 1902.
12 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. D. Falconio to Rt. Rev. Mgr Barry, June 28, 1902.
13 PANB. Bishop Rogers' Correspondence. L.N. Dugal, Vicaire Général à Monseigneur D. Falconio, Archevêque de Larisse, Délégué Apostolique au Canada, le 19 août 1902.
14 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. (?) à Mère Supérieure, le 20 sept. 1902. This letter is an excerpt believed to be addressed to the superior in Montreal.

Chapter Twelve

1 Les Archives des RHSJ. Maison Provinciale Notre-Dame de L'Assomption. Bathurst. "Circulaire de la très honorée Mère St. Jean-de-Goto (M.L. Amanda Viger) décédée 8 mai 1906," Lettres Circulaires Nécrologies, p. 105.
2 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto, L'Hôtel-Dieu Arthabaska, à madame Joseph Rocheleau, St.-Basile-le-Grand, le 21 déc. 1902.
3 PANB Bishop Barry's Correspondence. A. Danel à Bishop T. F. Barry, le 19 jan. 190(2). This is an error, since, given the chronology of the events, the year would have to be 1903. See also PANB Archives. Bishop Barry's Correspondence. A. Danel à Monseigneur T.F. Barry, le 19 déc. 1902.
4 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire (Sr. St.-Raphaël) à Mère Supérieure, le 13 avril 1903.
5 Université de Moncton, Centre Universitaire de Shippagan, Centre de documentation de la Société Historique Nicolas-Denys, Dr. Smith Letter Book. Dr. Smith to Rev. St. Jean-de-Goto, Jan. 1, 1904.
6 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto to A.C.Smith, April 22, 1904.
7 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure, le 18 sept. 1903.
8 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire du Chapitre à Mère Supérieure, le 18 sept. 1903.
9 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure, le 18 sept. 1903.
10 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à madame Joseph Rocheleau, le 2 jan. 1904.
11 Perreault. Les 100 ans de l'Hôtel-Dieu d'Arthabaska, p. 149. From a letter written by Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 27 sept. 1904, p. 150.
12 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. Sr. St. Jean à Mère Supérieure, le 16 sept. 1905.
13 RHSJ Archives. Montréal. La Secrétaire à Mère Supérieure, le 6 mars 1906.
14 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Circulaire de Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto," p. 112.
15 RHSJ Archives. Bathurst. "Circulaire de Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto." p. 114.

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Les Archives des soeurs de la Congrégation Notre-Dame: Montréal. "Les Annales des enfants de Marie de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Montréal 1857-1861." Série # 808.000-2.

_____"Les Annales des enfants de Marie de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame de Boucherville, 1855-1859." Série #301.220-70.

_____"Les Exilés des Bermudes." Le Populaire, le 22 déc. 1838, Québec: Boréal Express.

_____Meilleur, J.B. *Mémorial de L'Éducation du Bas-Canada: Étant un exposé des principaux faits qui on eu lieu relativement à l'Éducation, depuis 1615 jusqu'à 1855, inclusivement.* (Montréal: J.B. Roland & Sons 1860) call #370.971 4 M513 M 45.

_____*Mémoires de Mère Sainte-Justine* (Casgrain). Série #200.100.51.

_____"Programme de la Distribution des Prix du Pensionnat de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame à Villa-Maria," le 15 juillet 1856.

_____"Programme de la Distribution des Prix au Pensionnat de la Congrégation de Notre-Dame à Villa-Maria," le 3 juillet 1862.

_____"Les Registres des comptes." Couvent de Boucherville. Série #301-220.20.

Les Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph [RHSJ], Arthabaska, *Manrèse ou les Exercices Spirituels de Saint Ignace.* Inscribed "A l'usages de ma Sr. Viger dite Sr. St. Jean-de-Goto a sa profession. Hôtel-Dieu de St. Joseph. Montreal, le 11 octobre 1862."

_____"Les offices des RHSJ de Hôtel-Dieu de Arthabaskaville 1902-1906"

_____"Un Modele de Charite: La Superieure de l'Hôtel-Dieu de d'Arthabaska qui vient de Mourir," La Presse, le 9 mai 1906

_____Photo of Mère Saint Jean-de-Goto, Supérieure de l'Hôtel-Dieu de d'Arthabaska

Les Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph [RHSJ], Maison Générale, Montréal. "Décret d'érection par sa Grandeur Mgr. J. Rogers, Evêque de Chatham, N.-B., en faveur de la maison projetée à Tracadie," le 25 juillet 1868.

_____Gercom, André. *Vie d'Adèle Coulombe Religieuse Hospitalière de L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal en Canada.* Montréal: Les Soeurs de l'Hôtel-Dieu, 1863.

_____"Les offices des RHSJ de Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal," 4 sept. 1860; 4 septembre 1861; 4 septembre 1863; 4 septembre 1865; et 4 septembre 1867.

_____"Obédience de Monseigneur l'Evêque de Montréal Ignace Bourget aux Soeurs Marie Pagé, Eulalie Quesnel, Delphine Brault, St. Jean-de-Goto, Clémence Bonin, et Philomène Fournier," le 28 août 1868.

_____"Procès Verbaux de la Vêture et de la Profession des Religieuses Hospitalières de St.-Joseph de Montréal," 1858-1899.

_____"Profession de Soeur Marie Louise Amanda Viger dite St. Jean-de-Goto," le 31 janvier 1863, 1ère copie. #8242.

_____"Régistre des délibèrations faites dans les Assemblées Capitulaires des Religieuses Hospitalières de1731 à 1876" l'Hôtel-Dieu de St Joseph Montréal.

_____"Régistre des entrées des Postulantes depuis 1851-1868," l'Hôtel-Dieu de Saint-Joseph, Montréal.

_____Soeur Eulalie Quesnel. "Notes sur l'Institut et le premier Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal," le 15 sept. 1902.

_____Sr. Paquette. Les Annales de l'institution des *Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1860-1881*. Original Volume 3.
_____Soeur Raymond (Césarine). *Les Annales de l'institution des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph 1756-1861*. Original Volum
_____Sr. Saint Jean-de-Goto et autres. "Lettres à La Maison Mère de Montréal de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie: 1868-1902.
_____Sr. Saint Jean-de-Goto et autres. "Lettres à La Maison Mère de Montréal de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Arthabaska: 1902-1906."
_____Sr. Saint Jean-de-Goto. "Lettres à sa soeur Madame Joseph Rocheleau le 26 déc. 1891 à 11 mai 1906. (collection of 10, including 2 from Soeur Dagenais in Arthabaska to Madame Joseph Rocheleau).
_____"Translation des Corps des Soeurs Défuntes de L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal: Nécrologie des Religieuses Hospitalières de St.-Joseph décédées depuis L'Établissement de ce Monastère à Montréal ou Ville-Marie en l'année 1659 jusqu'en 1860." Montréal: plinguet & cie 1861.
_____*Vie D'Adèle Coulombe: Religieuses Hospitalières de L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal en Canada*, Montréal: L'Hôtel-Dieu à Montréal, 1863.

Les Archives des RHSJ. Maison Provinciale Notre-Dame de L'Assomption. Bathurst. *Chroniques des RHSJ de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie Fondée en 1868*.
______"Acte de Profession de Soeur Marie-Anne Doucet," le 14 octobre 1879.
______*Cérémonial des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph sous la Règle de Saint-Augustin*. Montréal: Le Nouveau Monde, 1872.
______Chroniques des RHSJ de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie Fondée en 1868.
______"Circulaire de Clémence Bonin décédée le 10 juillet 1887."
______"Circulaire de Delphine Brault décédée le 22 oct. 1918."
______"Circulaire de Marie-Anne Doucet décédée le 28 juin 1934."
______"Circulaire de Philomène Fournier dite Luména décédée le 22 mai 1895."
______"Circulaire de Marguerite Hachey décédée le 15 jan. 1885."
______"Circulaire de Marie Pagé décédée le 3 jan. 1893."
______"Circulaire de Eulalie Quesnel décédée le 4 mars 1903."
______"Circulaire de Monique Reid décédée le 27 oct. 1882."
______"Circulaire de Marie Philomène Sicotte décédée le 3 nov. 1891."
______"Circulaire de Amanda Sormany décédée le 4 fév. 1944."
______"Circulaire de St. Jean-de-Goto (M.L. Amanda Viger) décédée le 8 mai 1906."
______"Contract between School District No.3 Trustees in the parish of Saumarez on the one part and 'Sisters of Charity' [sic] as Teachers in our said district school of the other part," 6 May 1876. H2 Histoire de Tracadie DO3-100.
______"Contract made between Sister Marguerite Hachey on the one part and the Trustees of School District No. 3 in the Parish of Saumarez of the other part," 5 November 1881. H2 DO3-100.
______"Contract made between Sister Eugenie Basque as the assistant of the one part and the Trustees of School District No. 3 in the parish of Saumarez of the other part," 25 May 1882. H2 DO3-100.
______"Contract made between Sister Mary Ann Doucet as the assistant of the one part and the Trustees of School District No. 3 in the parish of Saumarez of the other part," 25 November 1882."H2 DO3-100.
______"Contract made between Sister Mary Ann Doucet as the teacher of the one part and the Trustees of School District No. 3 in the parish of Saumarez of the other part," 5 November 1884. H2 DO3-100.
______*Constitutions for the Religious Hospitallers of Saint Joseph*. Established at Chicago on the 21 day of November 1903. Chicago: George Cardinal Mundelein, Archbishop of Chicago, 1932.
______*Constitutions de la communauté des filles de Saint-Joseph Établies dans l'Hôtel-Dieu de la Flèche en l'Honneur de la Sainte Famille de Notre Seigneur*, de l'Autorité de Monseigneur l'Illustrissime et Révérendissme Evêque d'Angers. (le 19 octobre 1643)

______*Coutumier et Petites Règles des Religieuses Hospitalières de la Congrégation de Saint-Joseph*. La Flèche: Imprimerie de E. Jourdain. M. DCC.L.
______Customary and Little Rules of the Religious Hospitallers of the Congregation of St.-Joseph: (from the French edition) La Flèche: E. Jourdain. 1850. Kingston: Hôtel-Dieu, 1905.
______"Extrait des chroniques de la communauté RHSJ de Baugé," le 11 août 1870 (a typed copy).
______"Grand Livre de Recette: Pensions, viagères et autres revenus du Monastère des RHSJ de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie, 1868."
______Indenture between Victorine Baudin and Philomène Sicotte of Tracadie of the first part to Delphine Brault, Amanda Viger and Philomène Sicotte in or of the same. Received and Registered 24 September 1873 as number 335 and on pages 543 and 544 Vol. 23, Volume of Records of the County of Gloucester.
______"Lettres Circulaires Nécrologies" 1861-1884; 1884-1901;1900-1915; 1915-1935.
______"Lettres d'Affaires des RHSJ de H-D de Tracadie," 1 juin 1868 à 24 oct, 1902.
______"List of articles delivered at the sister house and the Rev. Mr. Gauvreau," Tracadie on 22 Aug. 1868.
______"Livre des Comptes des RHSJ de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie. Journal de la Recette et Journal de la Dépense du Monastère 1868-1888."
______Manual of the Religieuses Hospitalers of Saint-Joseph (translation approved by the ordinary.) Montreal: Institution for Deaf-Mutes, 1896.
______"Obédience à Marie Pagé et à une de ses soeurs donné à Montréal," le 24 août 1873.
______"Obédience de Monseigneur l'Evêque de Chatham Jacques Rogers," le 25 juillet 1869.
______"Offices de RHSJ de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie, 1868-1899."
______"Plan par terre des Mansardes," Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie, 1869.
______"Premier à Septième Rapports Triennal, 1872-1890."
______Proceedings of the Congregation Assembly. (Montréal: Les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph), October 1982.
______"Recettes et Prescription de Montréal: Catalogue de la pharmacie Hôtel-Dieu, Tracadie." RHSJ. Bathurst, 1868.
______"Registres des délibérations faites dans les Assemblées Capitulaires. RHSJ Hôtel-Dieu Montréal, 1731-1876.
______"Souvenir du 250 ème anniversaire de l'arrivée des trois premières religieuses hospitalières de Saint-Jospeh à Ville-Marie: 1659-1909." Montréal: W.F. Daniel, 1909.
______"Testament de Marie-Anne Doucet, le 30 août 1932."
______*Une Grande Ame: La Révérende Mère LaDauversière* , unpublished manuscript. Vallée-Lourdes, N.-B., 1957.

Bibliothèque de Boucherville. *Cadastres Abrégés des Seigneuries du District de Montréal: Vol. 1. Québec:* Stewart Derbishire et Georges Desbarats. (1863).
Bibliothèque Gagnon. Montréal. L.-O. David, *Les Patriotes de 1837-1838*. Montréal: Jacques Frenette Éditeur Inc., 1849.

The Miramichi Advance. "The Lazaretto", Chatham, NB. April 14, 1892

Le Moniteur Acadien . "Héroisme des Soeurs Hospitalières de St-Joseph: Un petit bout d'Histoire sur le Lazaret de Tracadie," Shediac, NB. le 25 oct. 1887.
______"Mort du Pére Gauvreau," May 13, 1875.

National Archives of Canada. "Canada East Census 1851." Chambly Co, Boucherville. Microfilm # C-1117.
______Archbishop of Toronto, John Joseph Lynch to Sir John A. MacDonald, Aug. 22, 1885; reply from the Minister of Agriculture, J.H. Pope, Sept. 7, 1885. MG 26A Vol. 323.
______"Documents related to the transfer of the lazaretto from provincial to federal control." RG 17, Dept. of Agriculture Vol. 296 File 30502.

______"Rapport de la commission Médical Nomeé le 26 octobre, 1898, pour faire enquête sur les plaintes portées contre l'administration du lazaret de Tracadie." RG 29 Pt 2 Vol. 5 File 116298. and RG 29 Pt 3 Vol. 5 File 117938.
______Reports of the Federal Dept. of Agriculture Can. Parl. *Sessional Papers*, 1881-1902.
______Mr. J. C. Taché. "Questions Regarding Leprosy: Enquiry made by the Hawaiian Government." Ottawa: June 1885. RC 154.55 C3 T33.
______Tracadie Lazaretto accounts for July 1, 1884, Dept. of Agriculture File # RG 17 Vol. 1603, file 1885-1888.

Provincial Archives of New Brunswick. Census 1871 Gloucester County: District of Saumarez; Shippagan: Le Centre de Documentation de la Société Historique Nicolas-Denys, 1980.
______Amendments to the Bill entitled "An Act to Incorporate the NB Pharmaceutical Society and to regulate the sale of drugs and medicines," 29 March 1884.
______"An act to Incorporate the Tracadie Sisters of the Hospital Sisters of the Hotel Dieu Saint-Joseph," *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1869. 21 April 1869.
______Copie des Permissions accordées aux Soeurs de L'Hôtel- Dieu de St.-Joseph à Tracadie, le 28 sept. 1868.
______Correspondance Monseigneur James Rogers. Microfilm #7686 and #7687, IV. "Religieuses de Femmes: Les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Tracadie," Diocèse de Bathurst, 1868-1902.
______Decree of the Bishop of Chatham, N.B., Aug. 9, 1901.
______Inspectors' Reports of the Public Schools of N.B. RS 113, Vol. 1880-1888.
______"Mémoire de Sr. Saint Jean-de-Goto écrit à Tracadie au mois août 1902."
______"New Brunswick Pharmaceutical Society Collection." Microfilm #1053 and 1054, Bill 51, "An Act to Incorporate the NB Pharmaceutical Society and to regulate the sale of drugs and medicines," 18 March 1884 and 27 March 1884. PANB.
______New Brunswick Pharmacy Act of 1884, "An Act to Incorporate the NB Pharmaceutical Society and to Regulate the sale of drugs and Medicines." *Journal of the House of Assembly*, 1884. 1 April 1884.
______New Brunswick Pharmacy Act Amended: "An Act to amend the New Brunswick Pharmacy Act." passed 22 March 1906. *Journal of the House of Assembly*,1906.
______Procès Verbal de la Prise de Possession des RHSJ de Montréal d'un couvent, chapelle et dépendance de St.- Basile/Madawaska, le 2 nov. 1873.
______Jas. Smith: Inspector's Report. County of Gloucester. *Journal of the Legislative Council of the Province of New Brunswick*, 17 February 1876 to 13 Apr. 1876.
______"Tracadie Lazaretto: Papers relating to the examination of applicants for admission to the Tracadie Lazaretto, and other matters in relation thereto." *Journal of the House of Assembly,* 1879.
______Visitation (ceremony) of Convents of the RHSJ by His Lordship the Bishop of Chatham (not dated).

Provincial Legislative Library. *History of Pharmacy in New Brunswick 1884-1934*. New Brunswick Pharmaceutical Society: Saint John: NB Pharmaceutical Society, 1934.
P. M. Sauvelle. "Le Lazaret de Tracadie," *Le Moniteur Acadien*, (Shédiac: le 23 oct. 1884).

Université de Moncton, Bibliothèque Champlain, "AN Vatican: Archives de la S.C. de la Propagande Index." Centre d'études acadiennes. #1186.
______Centre Universitaire de Shippagan, Centre d'études acadiennes. A. Danel, S.J. "Historique des Lazarets de Sheldrake et de Tracadie Nouveau-Brunswick," unpublished and undated typed manuscript. Probably written in 1902.
______Centre Universitaire de Shippagan, Centre de documentation de la Société Historique Nicolas-Denys, "Dr. Smith Letter Book".

Vatican Archives de la S.C. de la Propagande, Canada. "James Rogers' report of The Conference of the Clergy of the Diocese of Chatham including the Bishop's Address. 14 Feb. 1878." Rome, Italy, #SC Vol 21-1880-1881. (Reprinted in English in the Miramichi Advance, Chatham, 1878.)
______Série "Scriture Riferite mi congressi" (Diocesan Reports) Part V, Vol. 2.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Abott, John and Alison Prentice: "French Canadian Women and the New Social History: Some Suggestions for Archival Research." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 7, 3. (Fall 1986).
Abbott, Maud. *History of Medicine in the Province of Québec*. Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1931.
Les Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph [RHSJ]. Bathurst. "Oeuvres des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph du Noveau-Brunswick (1868-1986). *Revue de la Société historique du Madawaska* (janvier-juin 1986). Edmundston: Le Madawaska 1986.
Basque, Maurice, Debrah Kerry, and Roy Bourgeois. *Deux siècles de particularisme: Une histoire de Tracadie*. Shédiac: L'Imprimerie Chedik Ltée., 1984.
Béchard, Henri. *Jérôme Le Royer de la Dauversière: His Friends and Enemies. 1597-1659*. Bloomingdale: Apostolate for Family Consecration, 1991.
Bélanger, Diane and Lucie Rozon. *Les Religieuses au Québec: Au-delà des préjugés qui sont-elles? Quelle a étét leur implication dans notre société à différentes époques?* Montréal: Libre Expression, 1983.
Bernard, Antoine. *Les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph et leur oeuvre en Acadie*. Montréal: RHSJ, 1958.
Bernier, Hélène. "Marguerite Bourgeoys, dite du Saint-Sacrement." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700*. Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.
____ "Marie Morin." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700*. Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.
Bernier, Jacques. "La Standardisation des Études Médicales et la consolidation de la Profession dans la deuxième moitié du XIXe Siècle." *Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française*. 37,1 (juin 1983).
Bélanger, Diane & Lucie Rozon. *Les Religieuses au Québec: Au-Delà des préjugés, qui sont-elles? Quelle a été leur implication dans notre société à différentes époques*. Montréal: Libre Expression, 1985.
Bizier, Hélène-Andrée. "Le vrai fondateur de Ville-Marie," L'actualité (1er mai 1992)
Black, Robert Merrill. "Different Visions: The Multiplication of Protestant Missions to French Canadian Roman Catholics, 1834-1855." *Canadian Protestant and Catholic Missions, 1820s-1960s: Historical Essays in Honour of John Webster Grant*. John S. Moir and C.T. McIntire, eds. New York: Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., 1988.
Bliss, Michael. *Plague: A Story of Smallpox in Montréal*. Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1991.
Bourdages, Jeanne, RHSJ. "Biographie de la Révérende Mère LaDauversière, RHSJ 1876-1957." (unpublished manuscript) Vallée-Lourdes: Maison Provinciale de la province Notre-Dame-de-l'Assomption, 1963.
Cimichella, André-M. *Marie Morin: Premier historien canadien de Villemarie: Illustre Inconnue 1649-1730*. Montréal: Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal, 1992.
Coallier, Jean. "L'Incendie de Boucherville-1843," LUSTUCRU, 9 (1985)
Le Collectif Clio (Micheline Dumont and Michèle Jean, Marie Lavigne, Jennifer Stoddart) *L'Histoire des Femmes Au Québec Depuis Quatre Siècles*. Montréal: l'Imprimerie Gagné Ltée., 1983.
Cooper, Barbara. "The Convent: An Option for Québécoises: 1930-1950."*Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 7, 4 (Winter 1986).
Coté, Jean-René. "Feux d'automne." LUSTUCRU, 3 (automne 1976).

Coté, Suzanne. "Au Fil des Archives." LUSTUCRU, 3 (automne 1976).
Coté, Sylvie: "Les Orphelinats Catholiques au Québec de 1900." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme.* 7, 4 (Winter 1986).
D'Allaire, Micheline: "Conditions matérielles requises pour devenir religieuse au XVIIIe siècle," *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973*, Collection Histoire. (Montréal: Les cahiers du Québec, 1973).
___ "Les Prétentions des Religieuses de l'Hôpital-Général de Québec sur le palais épiscopal de Québec." *Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française* 23, 1 (juin 1969).
___ "Origine sociale des Religieuses de l'Hôpital-général de Québec." *Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française* 23, 4 (mars 1970).
Danylewyz, Marta. *Taking the Veil: An Alternative to Marriage, Motherhood, and Spinsterhood in Québec, 1840-1920.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1987.
Daveluy, Marie-Claire. "Chomedy de Maisonneuve, Paul de." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700.* Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.
___ "Mance, Jeanne" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700.* Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.
DeGrace, Eloi. "Henri-Armand Sormany." *Dictionnaire biographique du Nord-Est du Noveau-Brunswick: Premier Cahier.* Revue de la Société historique Nicolas Denys, 11, 3 (1983).
Desbiens, Albert and Yvan Lamonde. *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973.* Collection Histoire. Montréal: Les cahiers du Québec. Hurtubise HMH, Ltée., 1973.
Deslauriers, Jessie. Like a Bay Tree, Ever Green: The History of St.-Joseph Province, Religieuses Hospitallers of St. Joseph. Kingston: Religieuses Hospitallers of St.-Joseph, 1984.
Doucet, Philippe "Politics and the Acadians," *The Acadians of the Maritimes.* Jean Daigle, ed. Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 1982.
Ducharme, Jacques. "Les revenus des Hospitalières de Montréal au XVIIIe siècle" *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973.* Collection Histoire Montréal: Les cahiers du Québec, 1973.
Dugas, Luce, RHSJ. "Hommage: A nos vénérées soeurs de 1861 qui là-haut dans la cité des élus veillent sur la Maison Centenaire." a commemorative booklet, Montréal: Les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph, 1961.
Dumais, Monique: "Les Religieuses, Leur Contribution à la Société québécoise." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme* 3, 1 (1981).
___ "Générations de Femmes Religieuses." Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme. 7, 4 (Winter 1986).
Dumont, Micheline. "Le défi des Religieuses enseignantes d'aujourd'hui." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme* 7, 3 (Fall 1986).
___ *Girls' Schooling in Québec, 1639-1960.* Ottawa: The Canadian Historical Association, 1990.
Dumont, Micheline and Nadia Fahmy-Eid. *Les Couventines: L'Education des filles au Québec dans les congrégations religieuses enseignantes 1840-1960.* Montréal: Boréal Express, 1986.
Dunant, Jacques. "Bourg jadis, Ville aujourd'hui." LUSTUCRU, 5 (automne 1979).
Dupont, Jean-Claude. *Héritage d'Acadie.* Montréal: Leméac, 1977.
Durham, Lord. *Lord Durham's Report: An Abridgement of Report on the Affairs of British North America.* C.M. Craig. ed. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1963.
Fahmy-Eid, Nadia. "Éducation et classes sociales: Analyse de l'idéologie conservatrice-Cléricale et Petite-Bourgeoyse Au Québec au mil du 19 siècle. *Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française.* 32-2, (septembre 1978).
Fahmy-Eid, Nadia and Micheline Dumont, eds. *Maîtresses de Maison, Maîtresses d'Ecole: Femmes, Famille et Éducation dans l'Histoire du Québec.* Montréal: Les Éditions du Boréal Express, 1983.
Fauteux, Aegidius. "Bonaventure Viger." *Patriotes de 1837-1838.* (Montréal: Les Éditions des dix, 1950.)

Gagnon, Robert. *Histoire de la Commission des écoles catholiques de Montréal.* (Montreal: Boreal, 1996)
Gingras, Jeanne. "Le Couvent de Boucherville: Une fondation de Mère Bourgeoys." LUSTUCRU, 5 (automne 1978).
Gotscheck, Béatrice. "Sommes-nous Appelées à être femmes, vierges et mères?" *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahierssde la Femme.* 15, 2 (Winter 1983).
Gratton, Marie. "Eglise et sexualité: Un long malentendu." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme.* 15, 2 (Winter 1983).
Gyger, Tony. "Montréal sous la menace iroquoise (1642-1655)." *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973.* Montréal: Éditions Hurtubise HMH, Ltée., 1973.
Heagerty, John. *Four Centuries of Medical History in Canada and a Sketch of the Medical History of Newfoundland.* Toronto: The Macmillan Company of Canada, 1928.
Hody, Maud "The Anglicizing Common Schools Act of 1871: A Study in Folklore," *Les cahiers* 2-9 , (avril, mai, juin 1968) Moncton: La Société Historique Acadienne.
Howell, Colin and Michael Smith. "Orthodox Medicine and the Health Reform Movement in the Maritimes, 1850-1885." *Acadiensis.* 18, 2 (Spring/printemps 1989).
Jean, Marguerite. *Évolution des Communautés Religieuses de Femmes au Canada de 1639 à nos jours.* Montréal: Éditions Fides, 1977.
Jetté, René. *Dictionnaire généalogique des familles du Québec des origines à 1730.* Montréal: Université de Montréal, 1983.
Jung, Carl. "Modern Man in Search of a Soul." *The World Treasury of Modern Religious Thought.* Jaroslav Pelikan ed. Toronto: Little Brown and Company, 1990.
Kalisch, Philip A. "Tracadie and Penikese Leprosaria, A Comparative Analysis of Social Response to Leprosy in New Brunswick, 1844-1880 and Massachusetts, 1904-1921." *Bulletin of the History of Medicine.* XLVII (1973).
Kerr, Corinne RHSJ. "Notes sur les relations entre les Hospitalières de Montréal et les Irlandais," *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973*, Collection Histoire. Montréal: Les cahiers du Québec, 1973.
Lacoursière, Jacques and Hélène-Andrée Bizier, eds. "La Recherche du Pouvoir," Nos Racines: l'Histoire Vivante des Québécois. 14: Une Union Précaire. Montréal: Livres Robert Laffont, 1979.
____ "Au Rythme de L'Angélus," *Nos Racines: L'Histoire Vivante des Québécois, 19: Un Nouveau Visage.* Montréal: Livres Robert Laffont, 1979.
LaHaise, Robert "L'Hôtel-Dieu du Mont Sainte-Famille (1861-1973)" *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973.* Collection Histoire. Montréal: Les cahierss du Québec, 1973.
Lajat, Dom Félix.-M. *Le Lazaret de Tracadie et la Communauté des Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph.* Montréal: L'Action paroissiale, 1938.
Lajeunesse, Marcel. "L'évêque Bourget et l'Instruction Publique au Bas-Canada, 1840-1846." Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française. 23-1 (juin 1969)
Lambert, Thérèse. C.N.D. *Histoire de la Congrégation Notre-Dame de Montréal.* Vol. 3, Vol. 8 & Vol 9, Tome 1. Montréal: Maison-mère de la Congrégation Notre-Dame, 1970.
Lanctot, Edouard C.N. "Notes sur la famille de Pierre Bonaventure Viger." Saint Lambert de la Prairie, 13 mars 1989.
Landry, Nicolas. "Le Moniteur Acadien et sa Perception des relations entre Acadiens et Anglophones," *Les cahiers*, 14-1 mars 1983. Moncton: La Société Historique Acadienne.
Landry, Denise. "Médecine Populaire dans la région de Tracadie." *La Revue d'histoire de la Société historique Nicolas-Denys.* 2, 1 (jan.-fev. 1974).
LaPlante, Soeur Corinne et Eloi DeGrâce. "De L'Academie Ste-Famille aux Origines de Tracadie." Étude présentée au comité consultatif de l'Académie Sainte-Famille de Tracadie. Bathurst, avril 1977.
LaPlante, Soeur Corinne. "Soeur Amanda Viger: La Fille d'un Patriote de 1837, véritable fondatrice de l'H.-D. de Tracadie." *La Revue d'histoire de la Société historique Nicolas-Denys.* 12-1 (jan.-mai 1984).
____ "La Vie autrefois, au Lazaret de Tracadie." *La Revue d'histoire de la Société historique Nicolas-Denys.* 12-2 (mai-juin 1986).

____ *Mère Marie de la Ferre*, Religieuses Hospitalièrs de Saint-Joseph, Caraquet: Service d'imprimerie A. Roy et Ass. Inc.1986.

____ "Soeur Delphine Brault: Une Acadienne du Québec au Secours des Acadiens du Noveau-Brunswick." Bathurst: RHSJ Maison Provinciale Notre-Dame de L'Assomption (Unpublished manuscript).

La Serre, Claudette. "L'église et l'éducation des filles au Québec de 1850 à 1950." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 15, 2 (Winter 1983).

____ "Du Masculin au Féminin." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 7, 3 (Fall 1986).

Lebrun, Josée. "Des Charmantes Petites Perruches... Les étudiantes de sciences-lettres 1916-1960. *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 7, 3 (Fall 1986).

Lefebvre, Esther. "Macé, Catherine." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700*. Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.

____ "Maillet, Marie." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700*. Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.

____ "Moreau de Brésoles, Judith." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700*. Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.

Létourneau, Lorraine. *Célébrités Canadiennes:Jeanne Mance*. Montréal: Lidec inc., 1990.

Losier, Mary Jane & Céline Pinet. *The Children of Lazarus: The Story of the Lazaretto at Tracadie*. Fredericton: Goose Lane, 1984.

MacNaughton, Katherine F.C. *The Development of the Theory and Practice of Education in New Brunswick 1784-1900: A Study in Historical Background*. Fredericton: The University of New Brunswick, 1947.

Malouin, Marie-Paul. "Idéologie et pratiques scolaires." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 7, 3 (Fall 1986).

McGinnis, Janice Dickin. "Unclean, Unclean: Canadian Reaction to Lepers and Leprosy." *Health Disease and Medicine: Essays in Canadian History*. Proceedings of the First Hannah Conference on the History of Medicine. Charles Roland, Ed. The Hannay Institute for the History of Medicine. Hamilton: McMaster University, 1982.

Moranda, Jeanne. "Marguerite Bourgeoys, Féministe de la première heure." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 15, 2 (Winter 1983).

Moreau, Sister Florence, RHSJ Mother Marie de la Ferre, 1592-1652: *Foundress of the Congrégation of the Religious Hospitallers of St.-Joseph*. Sister F.C. Kerr tr. Montréal: Les Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph, 1964.

Mullan, Elder S.J. *The Book of the Children of Mary*. New York: P.J. Kennedy & Sons, 1907.

Nadeau, Jean-Guy. "Joseph Charles Taché." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Vol. XIII, 1901-1910*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Naylor, C.D. "The CMA's First Code of Ethics: Medical Morality or Borrowed Ideology?" *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*. 17, 4 (hiver 1982-83 Winter).

Ouellet, Fernand. "La Noblesse Canadienne en 1767: Un Inventaire." *Histoire Sociale/Social History*. (avril/April 1968).

____ "Les Insurrections de 1837-38: Un Phénomène Social." *Histoire Sociale/Social History*. (avril/April 1968).

____ *Lower Canada 1791-1840: Social Change and Nationalism*. Patricia Claxtorn. Tr. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980.

Pelletier-Baillargeon. "La Québécoise d'hier." *Canadian Women Studies/Les cahiers de la Femme*. 15, 2 (Winter 1983).

Penny, Sheila M. "'Marked for Slaughter': The Halifax Medical College and the Wrong Kind of Reform, 1868-1910." *Acadiensis*. 19,1 (Fall/automne 1989).

Perreault, Sr. Claire. RHSJ. *Les 100 ans de l'Hôtel-Dieu d'Arthabaska: 1884-1984*. Arthabaska: Les Editions pourquoi pas, 1983.

Pichette, Robert. *Les Religieuses pionnières en Acadie*. Moncton: Michel Henry éditeur, 1990.

Pierre-Deschênes, Claudine. "Santé Publique et organisation médicale au Québec 1870-1918." *Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française*. 35, 3 (décembre 1981).

Pouliot, Léon. *Monseigneur Bourget et son temps: Tome 1: Les Années de Préparation: 1799-1840*. Montréal: Éditions Beauchemin, 1955.
____ *Monseigneur Bourget et son temps: Tome II: L'Évêque de Montréal: Première Partie: L'organisation du diocèse de Montréal (1840-1846)*. Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 2e edition, 1977.
____ *Monseigneur Bourget et son temps: Tome III: L'Évêque de Montréal: Deuxième Partie: La marche en avant du diocèse (1846-1876)*. Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1972.
____ *Monseigneur Bourget et son temps: Tome IV: Affrontement avec l'Institut Canadien 1858-1870*. Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1976.
____ *Monseigneur Bourget et son temps: Tome V: Les Derniers Combats*. Montréal: Les Éditions Bellarmin, 1977.
Rapley, Elizabeth. *The Dévotes: Women and the Church in Seventeenth-Century France*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.
Religieuses Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph: Proceedings of the Congregation Assembly (May 21-24), Montréal: RHSJ, 1982.
Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha. Great Britain: Oxford University Press, 1989.
Rousell, Jean-Yves. "Les recettes et dépenses de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal" *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Montréal 1642-1973*. Collection Histoire. Montréal: Les cahierss du Québec, 1973.
Saint-Yves, *Atlas de Géographie Historique du Canada*, Boucherville: Editions Françaises, 1982.
Shortt, S.E.D. "The Canadian Hospital in the 19th Century: An Historiographic Lament." *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'études canadiennes*. 18, 4 (Hiver 1983-84 Winter).
Stanley-Blackwell, Laurie. "Leprosy in New Brunswick 1844-1910: A Reconsideration." PhD thesis, Queens University, 1988.
Stanley, Laurie C.C. "Alfred Corbett Smith" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Vol XIII, 1901-1910*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
____ "James Rogers" *Dictionary of Canadian Biography: Vol XIII, 1901-1910*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
Stewart, Brenton. *Medicine in New Brunswick*. Moncton: The N.B. Medical Society, 1974.
Tétreault, Martin. "Les Malades de la Misère Aspects de la Santé Publique à Montréal 1880-1914." *Revue d'histoire de l'amérique française*. 36, 4 (mars 1983).
Thériault, Léon. "Acadia: 1763-1978. An Historical Synthesis" *The Acadians of the Maritimes*. Jean Daigle, Ed. Moncton: Centre d'études acadiennes, 1982.
Thornton, Leon. "Grandmother's Pharmacy." *Collections of the New Brunswick Historical Society*. Saint John: Lingley Printing Company, 1963.
Tunis, Barbara. "Medical education and Medical Licensing in Lower Canada: Demographic Factors. Conflict and Social Change." *Histoire Sociale/Social History*. 14, 27 (mai-May 1981).
Vachon, André. "Thubières de Levy de Queylus, Gabriel." *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, Volume 1, 1000 to 1700*. Francis G. Halpenny *et al.* eds. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1966.
Van Lierde, Peter Canisius. *The Holy See at Work: How the Catholic Church is Governed*. James Tucek, tr. New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1962.
Wade, Mason. "Commentary: Québécois and Acadien" *Journal of CanadianStudies/Revue d'études canadiennes*. 9, 2 (May 1974).
Weisz, George. "The Geographical Origins and Destinations of Medical Graduates in Québec 1834-1939." *Histoire Sociale/Social History*. 19, 37 (mai-May 1986).

Glossary

Bishop: The highest order of minister in the Catholic Church. Unlike other priests, bishops have the power to confer Holy Orders and administer confirmation.

Choir: The part of the church containing the seats of the clergy.

Cloister: An enclosed space, generally found as part of a monastery or religious building.

Convent: Used to describe either the building in which a body of religious live or the religious community itself. Traditionally, the word described a religious community of either sex but its contemporary meaning refers to a religious community of nuns.

Curate: A clergyman who has the charge of the parish; commonly now used to describe an assistant clergyman.

Diocese: An area under the administrative control of a bishop. A diocese is then generally divided into parishes.

Monastery: The house of a religious community. Traditionally used to describe a house of either sex but its contemporary meaning generally refers to the religious house of monks.

Mother superior: The leader or head or a female religious community.

Motherhouse: The founding house of a religious order.

Novena: A nine-day period of public or private devotion performed in the hope of receiving a special grace.

Novice: A probationary member of a religious community.

Postulant: One who is undergoing a preliminary stage of testing as a candidate for a religious order.

Prelate: A high-ranking church official.

Profession: The taking of the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience.

Sacristy: A room of a chapel or church, generally behind the altar, in which the sacred vessels are kept.

Vicar general: An official desinated by the bishop to represent him in his jurisdiction.

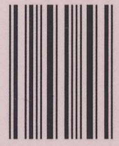
When Amanda Viger (1845-1906) became a cloistered nun with a religious order in Montreal she would never have imagined that her spiritual path would take her to Tracadie, New Brunswick and into the centre of a medical, political, and economic struggle to help the cause of the area's leprosy victims. But in the fall of 1868, Viger and five others left the grounds of their convent and travelled to remote and sparsely populated northern New Brunswick where the region's leprosy victims were institutionalized in squalid conditions.

Shunned and stigmatized because of their disease, those afflicted with leprosy have always been forced to endure isolation and neglect in addition to the physical symptoms of their illness. The devastating treatment of leprosy-sufferers in Atlantic Canada proved no exception. When Viger and her fellow sisters turned a government-run institution into a clean and orderly leprosy hospital —and later built a school—they set remarkable precedents for both the care of leprosy victims and the social role of their religious order. In the face of financial and ideological obstacles, the sisters managed to establish a flourishing centre for treatment and education, bringing health and possibility to the long-forgotten. The history and politics of religious life in the nineteenth century, and the remarkable contribution Viger and her order made to the development of New Brunswick are uncovered in this richly detailed biography.

Mary Jane (O'Neill) Losier was born in Amherst, Nova Scotia. After completing high school at Saint Charles in Amherst, she went to the Nova Scotia Normal College, and began a career in teaching. Since moving to Bathurst with her husband in 1968, she has worked as a newspaper columnist, researcher, and currently as a community liaison representative with the University of New Brunswick.

Losier co-wrote *Children of Lazarus: The Story of the Lazaretto at Tracadie* and in 1996 she earned her Master's of Arts with a thesis discussing the life of Amanda Viger and the role played by Viger's religious order in the Tracadie area.

ISBN 1-55109-299-9 $16.95



90000

9 781551 092997