

Parishes of the XVII century

For thirty five years, there was but one parish on the Island of Montréal. The officers celebrated mass in the fort, then in the chapel of the Notre-Dame Hospital, and finally in the Notre-Dame church which was consecrated in 1678.

The organization of the parish of Notre-Dame was the same as in France: the assembly of inhabitants, annual elections, reports received at the end of each exercise by a member of the Parish Administration. Between 1657 and 1684, these administrative members comprised of; five merchants, three officers, an innkeeper, two surgeons, fourteen farmers and tradesmen, and one baker; Jean Gervaise, (husband of Anne Archambault, daughter of our ancestor Jacques) was elected to the first group of Parish Administrators. It was on the 21st of November 1657 during the first discussions and opening of the register of the Parish in which the election was held. Jean Gervaise accepted his post, as we find his name mentioned on several occasions in the register of the notaries¹.

The tithing

The question of the tithing² during the beginning of the colony, and especially for the region of Québec, caused much concern for the ecclesiastical and civil governments. The regulation by Tracy on the 4th of September 1667 would regulate the payment of the tithing in a manner which would follow for more than two centuries.

While the question was being discussed at Québec, the paying of the tithing was not mandatory in the young colony of Montréal. They would content themselves with paying the expenses of the cult from donations received. Supplies were dropped off at the churches store. At the counter, one could acquire grain, provisions, some furs, hunting supplies, domestic tissues (souliers françois), etc. In 1670, Gilles Lauzon, (brother in law of Jean Gervaise, married to Marie Archambault)



was Church Administrator in charge in 1670 and was re-elected in 1671 as Parish Accountant. He was therefore responsible for the store. On August 12, 1668 the settlers of the Isle of Montréal, in order to conform to the Episcopal ordinance, settle the question of the tithing in a generous manner, in a large solemn assembly of the principal citizens of the colonies of Montréal. Among it's inhabitants we find three brother in law; Jean Gervaise, Gilles Lauzon and Laurent Archambault son of our ancestor³.

Les paroisses rurales...

Already towards 1665, the Sulpiciens were serving the farthest distances. A priest would celebrate mass every Sunday for three years at Pointe-aux-Trembles. In 1674, inhabitants of Pointe-aux-Trembles elected François Bot and Laurent Archambault as Parish Administrators to see to the construction of the chapel of L'Enfant-Jésus (Notre-Dame Street) and the handling of funds for this project. Laurent Archambault was a citizens well regarded within the parish. The chapel was blessed in 1678, making it one of the first erected outside of Ville-Marie. It measured 36 feet by 24 feet.

-
1. Louise Dechêne, *Habitants et marchands de Montréal au XVII^e siècle*.
 2. A donation to the church ie : 10% or ones salary.
 3. O. Lapalice, *Bulletin des recherches historiques*, vol. 35, 1929.