

## **Subjects of Interpretation: Second Language Acquisition by Jesuit Missionaries among the Northern Ojibwa, 1842–1880**

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Volume 21, numéro 1, 2010

URI : <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1003043ar>

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.7202/1003043ar>

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Éditeur(s)

The Canadian Historical Association / La Société historique du Canada

ISSN

0847-4478 (imprimé)

1712-6274 (numérique)

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Citer cet article

Parent, G. (2010). Subjects of Interpretation: Second Language Acquisition by Jesuit Missionaries among the Northern Ojibwa, 1842–1880. *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association / Revue de la Société historique du Canada*, 21(1), 59–82. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1003043ar>

Résumé de l'article

Cet article porte sur l'apprentissage de langues secondes par les Jésuites et la disparition des langues autochtones au Haut-Canada de 1834 à 1877. Les pères Jean-Pierre Choné, Joseph Hanipaux, Nicholas Frémiot, Dominique du Ranquet, August Kohler, Nicolas Point et Joseph Jennesseaux ont été parmi les premiers missionnaires jésuites venus au Canada au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle à apprendre les langues algonquiennes. Leur but était alors de pouvoir évangéliser les populations Ojibwa du nord du Haut-Canada. La mission haut-canadienne, dirigée par le père Pierre Chazelle, a rétabli quelques-unes des anciennes missions jésuites et étendu leur territoire d'évangélisation au nord et à l'ouest, le long des lacs Huron et Supérieur. D'importantes missions furent établies parmi les Ojibwa à Wikwemikong sur l'île Manitoulin en 1844, à Sault-Sainte-Marie en 1846 et le long des rivières Pigeon et Kamanistikwa, près du Fort William, en 1848. Cet article explore à la fois les raisons ayant encouragé les missionnaires jésuites à apprendre les langues autochtones ainsi que l'influence que les importants défis du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (incluant l'anticatholicisme, la domination britannique, l'immigration des masses et l'extraordinaire développement industriel du Haut-Canada) ont eu sur les efforts des missionnaires pour acquérir de nouvelles langues.

# Subjects of Interpretation: Second Language Acquisition by Jesuit Missionaries among the Northern Ojibwa, 1842–1880

GABRIELLE PARENT

## **Abstract**

*This article focuses on second-language learning and “linguicide” in Upper Canada between 1843 and 1877. From the small group of Jesuits that made up the ranks of the Society of Jesus’ new missions to Canada in the post-suppression era, it was Jean Pierre Choné, Joseph Hanipaux, Nicholas Frémot, and Dominique du Ranquet, August Kohler, Nicolas Point, and Joseph Jenneaux that first learned Algonquin languages in order to proselytize to the Northern Ojibwa populations at the Upper Canada. The Upper Canada mission, led by superior Pierre Chazelle, re-established some of the Society of Jesus’ older Aboriginal missions, and expanded their evangelical territory north and west along Lake Huron and Lake Superior. Important stations were built among the Ojibwa at Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island in 1844, in Sault Sainte Marie in 1846, and along the Pigeon and Kamanistikwa Rivers, near Fort William, in 1848. This paper examines why the new Jesuits were motivated to learn the languages spoken at their Aboriginal missions in the nineteenth century and simultaneously investigates how the massive and unexpected psychological challenges of the 1800s, including anti-Catholicism, British rule, mass immigration, and formidable industrial development in Upper Canada, supported or discouraged the Jesuits’ language acquisition.*

## **Résumé**

*Cet article porte sur l’apprentissage de langues secondes par les Jésuites et la disparition des langues autochtones au Haut-Canada de 1834 à 1877. Les pères Jean-Pierre Choné, Joseph Hanipaux, Nicholas Frémot, Dominique du Ranquet, August Kohler, Nicolas Point et Joseph Jenneaux ont été parmi les premiers missionnaires jésuites venus au Canada au XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle à apprendre les langues algonquiennes. Leur but était alors de pouvoir évangéliser les populations Ojibwa du nord du Haut-Canada. La mission haut-canadienne, dirigée par le père Pierre Chazelle, a rétabli quelques-unes des anciennes mis-*

*sions jésuites et étendu leur territoire d'évangélisation au nord et à l'ouest, le long des lacs Huron et Supérieur. D'importantes missions furent établies parmi les Ojibwa à Wikwemikong sur l'île Manitoulin en 1844, à Sault-Sainte-Marie en 1846 et le long des rivières Pigeon et Kamanistikwa, près du Fort William, en 1848. Cet article explore à la fois les raisons ayant encouragé les missionnaires jésuites à apprendre les langues autochtones ainsi que l'influence que les importants défis du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle (incluant l'anticatholicisme, la domination britannique, l'immigration des masses et l'extraordinaire développement industriel du Haut-Canada) ont eu sur les efforts des missionnaires pour acquérir de nouvelles langues.*

From the small group of Jesuits who made up the ranks of the Society of Jesus' new missions to Canada in the mid-nineteenth century in the post-suppression era, it was Jean Pierre Choné, Joseph Hanipaux, Nicholas Frémiot, and Dominique du Ranquet, August Kohler, Nicolas Point, and Joseph Jenneaux who first learned Algonquin languages in order to proselytize to the Northern Ojibwa populations at the Upper Canada.<sup>1</sup> The new mission supported two sections: a Lower Canada Jesuit mission, concerned with the education of French-Canadians, and an Upper Canada mission, led by superior Pierre Chazelle, that re-established some of the Society of Jesus' older Aboriginal missions, and expanded their evangelical territory north and west along Lake Huron and Lake Superior. Important stations were built among the Ojibwa at Wikwemikong on Manitoulin Island in 1844, in Sault Ste. Marie in 1846, and along the Pigeon and Kamanistikwa Rivers, near Fort William in 1848.

A great deal has been written about the establishment of the earlier Jesuit missions among First Nations people during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and there exists a large body of research and critical analysis of Jesuit relations. However, works on the Jesuits who returned to Canada during the early nineteenth century to resume their evangelical work among Aboriginal people are extremely limited. Little is known about this period in Roman Catholic evangelical work. Consequently, we have hardly any information about these missionaries, as linguists, as writers, and as communicators in the execution of their mission, despite the supreme importance language held for the Jesuits. Their ability to communicate with a number of very distinct worlds, Canadian, European, and Aboriginal needs further recognition, in order to better understand and appreciate the Jesuits' position in nineteenth-century society. Critical research into the new Jesuits' linguistic training in order to establish dialogues with First Nation peoples is, for the most part, limited to location and duration. Missing is a basic discussion of why the new Jesuits were motivated to learn the languages spoken at their Aboriginal missions in the nineteenth century. How and

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to what extent did the massive and unexpected challenges of the 1800s — including anti-Catholicism, British rule, mass immigration, and formidable industrial development in Upper Canada — support the Jesuits in or discourage them from learning Aboriginal languages? In which ways did the dramatic and dynamic social setting of Canada during the mid- to late 1800s affect the development of the Jesuits' relationship with Aboriginal people?

As research concerning the Jesuits' return to Canada in the mid-nineteenth century is still emerging, information related to their language-learning experience in the post-suppression era is almost absent.<sup>2</sup> Most works that do address the Jesuits' relationship with Aboriginal languages in the nineteenth century do so in the context of the emerging residential school system and the consequent oppression of Aboriginal languages across the country.<sup>3</sup> These works are still very relevant, however, as they offer pertinent insight into anti-Catholic thought in Canada, as well as development of Canada's residential school system, which is crucial to understanding the social and political setting of the Jesuits' nineteenth century missions. Likewise, discussions on the collaborations between the Catholic missions and the Canadian government during the implementation of the aggressive assimilation policy help evaluate the influence of the state on the actions of missionaries during the late nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Histories focusing on the language learning experience of the Jesuits in the nineteenth century remain dependent on Victor Hanzeli and Margaret Leahey's ground-breaking research on language acquisition in seventeenth and eighteenth century Jesuit missions, which are fundamental to any era of missionary language learning.<sup>5</sup> Comparisons between French and English tactics to convert Aboriginal people in Canada in the seventeenth and eighteenth century, such as James Axtell's body of work, reaffirm the fundamental point that language learning and cultural immersion won far more hearts, minds, and allies than the British heavy-handed strategy of boarding schools and cultural bullying.<sup>6</sup> Considering the Jesuits' linguistic ambitions in contrast to that of Protestant missionaries at Aboriginal missions in the 1900s emphasizes how significant Aboriginal language acquisition really was to the proselytizing.<sup>7</sup> These histories work together to provide vital context to this discussion, helping to explain how the social, political, and religious relationships in Lower Canada during the early 1800s propelled the Jesuits' nineteenth century Aboriginal language learning efforts.<sup>8</sup>

The *Lettres des Nouvelles Missions du Canada: 1844–1852 (LNMC)* (Letters from the New Canada Mission) serve as the primary resources for this article. In addition to the *LNMC*, I also draw from Père Dominique du Ranquet's rich personal journals and the *Journals de Residence* (Residence Journals) from the Immaculée Conception Mission near Fort William from the 1840s and 1850s. The *LNMC* were first made public in 1973 and du Ranquet's journals and the *Journals de Residence*, covering intermittent years between

1843 and 1877, emerged in the last decade. Numerous Jesuit journals and letters from the nineteenth century Aboriginal missions are still being transcribed and have yet to be published. The absence of these sources is felt in this study, as well as in the larger body of research surrounding such a critical period in Roman Catholic missions and Aboriginal history.

The Jesuit's nineteenth century language-learning endeavors are notably short, especially when compared to the two centuries of effort put in by the early Jesuits. By the late 1800s, the study of Aboriginal languages was increasingly rare among Jesuit missionaries, as was proficiency. J.R. Miller correlates the steep decline in Aboriginal language learning among missionaries in the late 1800s to the "insistent pressure for suppression of Native languages in the residential schools that came from bureaucracy."<sup>9</sup> This paper examines the Upper Canada Jesuit missions between 1843 to the late 1870s in the hopes of demonstrating how the challenges of nineteenth century Canada — namely anti-Catholicism, British rule, Protestant competition, and industrial development in Upper Canada — motivated the new Jesuits to become fluent in Ojibwa, and, in the same breath, I aim to explain how these same challenges eventually rendered the Jesuits' commitment to learning and communicating in the Aboriginal languages unsupportable.

To appreciate the conditions which motivated the Jesuits' stationed in Upper Canada to learn Aboriginal languages requires an understanding of the Society of Jesus' place within Canada's political, social, and religious atmosphere. British domination over the Canadian government, economy, society, and clergy, as well as the growing anti-Catholicism in Canada and in Europe, proved to be a somewhat unexpected catalyst for the Jesuits to continue to learn Aboriginal languages and communicate with their intended converts in their intended converts' mother tongues. Canada in the early 1840s was greatly changed from the territory that the first Jesuit missionaries had encountered in the seventeenth century; the most significant difference being that the French were no longer the dominant European force in the area. The Seven Years' War saw the French lose French Canada, and in 1763 New France had become a Dominion of Britain. From the time they came to power the British had tried to "reconcile French Canadians to British rule."<sup>10</sup> The official churches of the Canadian provinces, the Anglican Church for the English and the Presbyterian Church for the Scottish, no longer represented the French Catholic population in Lower Canada. French Canadians were expected to recognize a non-Catholic monarch as their leader and be second-class citizens to British immigrants.<sup>11</sup> By the late 1830s, the friction between the French-Canadians and immigrants from the British Isles in Lower Canada was such to cause armed conflict.<sup>12</sup> The Act of Union joined Canada East (Lower Canada) and West (Upper Canada) in 1841, and afforded the less-populated British-dominated Upper Canada (Canada West) half of the seats in the Assembly. The predominantly French

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population in the East felt increasing pressure from the English-speaking minority biding for parliamentary control over Lower Canada. Immigration from the United Kingdom continued to rise and by 1850 the English-speaking population outnumbered the French in the Canadian provinces. Félix Martin, Superior of the Lower Canada mission, noted in 1843 that “Lower Canada has a population of 600,000 and almost one sixth of them are Protestant. The cities and some country areas are beginning to be filled with Anglophones.”<sup>13</sup> Religious animosity towards Roman Catholicism had been growing in Canada since Queen Victoria’s ascension to the throne in 1837, and the phenomenon continued to spark conflict in religious, social, and political arenas through the turn of the century.<sup>14</sup>

There is repeated evidence in the *LNMC*, as well as other *Jesuit Relations* from the 1840s through to the 1870s, that the Jesuits felt the powerful English population and the English Christian denominations to be a constant threat to their Aboriginal missions, as well as to other members of their Catholic congregations, namely the French Canadians, the Métis, and new Irish-Catholic immigrants. Ironically, many of the French Jesuits had come to Canada in the hopes of finding refuge from the increasingly hostile anti-clerical and anti-Jesuit climate that continued to erupt in France during the 1820s, 1830s, and 1840s.

The Society of Jesus, formally suppressed in 1773, was finally restored throughout the world in 1814. Even after restoration, their future was not assured. Within a decade of their restoration the Jesuit schools were under continual attack in France over allegations that they were actively teaching the principles of the monarchy and hindering political process during a time of revolution. The Catholic Church in general was seen as “the enemy of human progress.”<sup>15</sup> By June of 1828, Charles X had been pressured into signing an ordinance that saw all of the Jesuits’ schools in France closed.<sup>16</sup> Anti-Jesuitism only worsened with the violently anti-Catholic July Revolution of 1830, and shortly thereafter the revolutionary government expelled the Society of Jesus from France. Many of the new Jesuit missionaries to Canada had grown up in France’s turbulent revolution years and had experienced anti-Jesuit attacks first hand. Père Pierre Chazelle, the Superior of the Upper Canada missions in 1844, was among the Jesuits who fled France 1830 hoping to find safety in mission work in North America.<sup>17</sup> After 1830, the Society of Jesus continued to be expelled and restored in France. These periods of hostility often left the Jesuits seeking sanctuary abroad, and missionary opportunities in Canada and the United States were an escape from the antipathy back home. When anti-Jesuitism flared again in France during the Second Revolution in 1848, the Jesuits in Canada received requests from new recruits looking for refuge from the hostile climate in France. A correspondence between Fr. Choné and an unknown Jesuit recruit in France hoping to come to the New Canada Missions

emphasized the notion that the north was perceived to be a place of escape from the hostilities against them:

“If we leave France,” you asked me, “will you give us asylum in your vast forests?” — Not only asylum, but work! Yes, yes, come by all means Father. Our only desire is for workers to help us bring in the harvest. I conceived the hope that the troubles that are overwhelming your Europe will bring us fellow-workers, that the storm will cast up some shipwrecked persons on our shores.<sup>18</sup>

The north seemed to promise sanctuary to Jesuits from the inhospitable reception the Society of Jesus faced in Europe, as well as in Lower Canada. Anti-Catholicism in Canada was greatly influenced by the happenings in Europe, but it also had its own unique character. Miller’s work explores the development of anti-Catholic thought in Canada, which he argues was multifaceted, surfacing in many ways through the 1840s and intensifying through the 1880s and 1890s. “At its most extreme,” Miller states, “the anti-Catholic position was that Canada was a Protestant country in which Catholics had but limited political rights.”<sup>19</sup> Despite the Jesuits’ long absence from Canada, they were immediately associated with French Canadians, due to their language and religion. For obvious reasons, the Jesuits were regarded as the emblem of Roman Catholicism, and were therefore subjected to the some of the most severe anti-Catholic hostility. The society’s return to Canada met with strong opposition and competition from the English-speaking Protestants.<sup>20</sup> The *Montréal Herald*, an English Protestant newspaper in Montreal, printed the following after the Jesuits’ return to Canada:

The Jesuits are men whose annals are written in blood, whose history, right from its beginnings, has produced nothing but scenes of violence, greed, and profligacy, whose dominant passion is thirst for power; whose doctrine and teachings do not recognize any divine or human law which opposes its ends. Yes, this Society has been re-established in Montreal, to become the most diabolical curse. It has covered the earth with carnage, has plunged it into superstition, has corrupted morality and slowed progress.<sup>xxi</sup>

On 7 August 1849, the Jesuits in Montreal were placed on alert. On this occasion Fr. Havequez wrote, “It was feared that some churches and religious houses would be set on fire. One night, during a riot, some friends came to warn us that threats had been uttered against us in particular.”<sup>22</sup>

Anti-Catholic thought in Canada typically stemmed from discontent over the ties between the British government and organized religion, the notion that the Catholic Church was an oppressive body holding back progress, and anxiety over the flood of Irish Catholic immigrants. French-Canadian presence in

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Confederation was at the heart of the surge in anti-Catholicism in the 1870s, a sentiment fuelled by the general feeling that the divide between French Canadians and the rest of the population was to blame for Confederation's initial failure to unite the country. Kerry Abel explains that language served simultaneously to distinguish the French from the English, but at the same time language "formed very real divisions within the communities."<sup>23</sup>

The Jesuits were very concerned with the perceptions that others held of their own abilities as missionaries. They often obsessed over remarks made by Protestant ministers concerning the Society of Jesus' inadequacies. For example, Fr. Nicolas Point defensively recounted the comments of the unnamed Anglican minister of Manitowaning on Manitoulin Island after he had read the *Jesuit Relations*:

He admitted that the Jesuits had been the first to subject the people to what they once called the "yoke of the Gospel". However, he went on, despite all of their efforts and the great amount of help that they had at their disposal, the Jesuit missionaries had never been able to make anything but children of the people. Moreover, Catholicism, or rather the Roman Church that claims that title for itself, did nothing but halt the progress of *civilization*. Further, far from being Apostles of Catholicism, we [Jesuits] were not even members of it and the proof — he added in a triumphal tone — is that all the Catholic powers of Europe are driving us [Jesuits] out of their realm.<sup>24</sup>

The new Jesuits were frequent recipients of opinions similar to those of the Anglican minister in Manitowaning. At the same time, the Jesuits could not deny that English Protestant missionaries were having much greater successes with Aboriginal communities than were the French Catholic missionaries. Protestant denominations typically aimed to convert Aboriginal people who were in settled communities and who had already been exposed to European culture. For this reason, English missionaries were successful in southern Ontario among settled Aboriginal communities, such as the Ojibwa community on Walpole Island, where the Ojibwa "manifested the most stubborn resistance to proselytism. They declared that they were satisfied with the Protestant school for their children; that they were leaving them free to embrace the Minister's religion."<sup>25</sup> Fr. Durthaller believed that the Anglican minister on that island "makes the people believe that, if they embrace Catholicism, the Queen will not give them any more 'presents.'"<sup>26</sup> Walpole Island eventually became the site of one of the fiercest debates between the Jesuits and the Ojibwa regarding their faiths, which eventually saw Fr. Dominique du Ranquet's efforts completely and articulately rejected, and the church house burned to the ground.<sup>27</sup> When Fr. Durthaller came to visit Père du Ranquet on Walpole Island after the church had been burned down by either the Anglicans or the Ojibwa, he remarked,



If you had seen him [du Ranquet] before it would have been difficult for you to recognize him now. Even though he was only six or seven years older than me, he looked like an old man of between 50 or 60 years of age. Hardships, weariness, and privations had whitened his hair and wrinkled his face. He has certainly suffered a great deal since he lost everything.<sup>28</sup>

The widespread presence of Protestants in Canada added a new dynamic to the Jesuits' proselytizing efforts. Failures, such as the one on Walpole Island, took their toll on the Jesuits, yet at the same time served to motivate them to use the proselytizing tactics of their predecessors, which emphasized language learning and immersion in Aboriginal society.

As they did not find much success among the "Anglicized" Aboriginals in the Upper Canada Diocese, Martin concluded: "The native population belonging to this diocese is not very numerous. It is probable that the new Jesuits in Canada will leave this diocese and establish missions among the truly native peoples."<sup>29</sup> Encouraging the Jesuits to establish missions in Upper Canada was the belief they would have more success among the *vrais sauvages*.<sup>30</sup> The reputed innocence of the *vrais sauvages* in the north that had been so well promoted in the *Jesuit Relations* was no doubt appealing to the new Jesuits. The French had maintained better relationships with Aboriginal people than the English did during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the French generally treated Aboriginal people humanely, and in the case of the voyageurs and traders, as partners and family members.<sup>31</sup> In addition to forging a strong relationship with Aboriginal peoples, the French could point to a strong military history to unite them. The French and Anishnaabe had been allies in the Seven Years War. Revisiting this old alliance would have been an attractive alternative to the poor reception the Jesuits received among the Anglicized Ojibwa in the south. In fact, the mission at Pigeon River was taken over by the Jesuits in 1847 because they knew another Catholic missionary, Austrian priest Père Pierz, had managed to secure a number of souls there and the location was therefore promising.<sup>32</sup> The Immaculée-Conception Mission boasted many Ojibwa Catholics, with important figures such as Joseph La Peau de Chat, the chief of the Fort William band, among its clergy. Similarly, the Jesuit mission on Manitoulin Island was originally a Roman Catholic mission from 1830 that had already cut the teeth of the local Ojibwa on Catholic teachings.

Still, despite the Jesuits' best efforts to create distance from the turbulence in the South, Hanipaux, Frémiot, Choné, Point, and du Ranquet constantly reference the pressure from and the fear of Methodist, Episcopalian, Presbyterian and Anglican missionary efforts among both Aboriginal and French populations at their Upper Canada missions. In 1848, Père Choné wrote from La Pointe on Madeline Island, "[Protestantism is] getting ahead of us everywhere Its efforts are absolutely ineffective, it is true, but it does not cease to pervert the hearts of our Natives."<sup>33</sup> Point complained of the Anglican minister at the

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Holy Cross mission who sought to become pastor of the whole of all Wikwemekong through bribery, using pancakes and legs of beef.<sup>34</sup>

The Jesuits resorted to the society's traditional proselytizing methods and found they could gain the upper hand over the English missionaries by learning Aboriginal languages and being more accepting of the Aboriginal way of life. Dorsey explains, "Jesuits were more likely to act independently than were members of other religious orders — less by formal rules and more according to values internalized during their extensive academic and spiritual formation."<sup>35</sup> Protestant missionaries did not typically go to great lengths to learn Aboriginal languages. McKevitt concludes that while the Protestant missionaries also undertook publications of Aboriginal language-learning materials and the study of Aboriginal languages, these efforts were generally undertaken in order to teach Aboriginal people English rather than to instruct themselves to master languages that were not expected to survive much longer. Further, family life prevented married Protestant missionaries from engaging in intensive language learning in the field, an obstacle the celibate Jesuits did not encounter.<sup>36</sup> As Protestant missionaries were more likely to insist that the "civilization" process of Aboriginal peoples include the adoption of English, the importance the Jesuits gave to learning and communicating in the languages of their intended converts gave them a significant advantage, making them more useful and seemingly more in alliance with the indigenous communities in their missions.

Before investigating the new Jesuits' study and communication in Algonquin languages, it is imperative to examine whether at that time they needed to be completely fluent in Aboriginal languages. Unlike their predecessors in Acadia and New France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, for whom proficiency in Aboriginal languages was absolutely crucial, these new Jesuits found that such aptitude in Aboriginal languages was not always necessary in the post-suppression era. In fact, many of the new Jesuits were not involved with Aboriginal missions and therefore never needed to learn any of Canada's indigenous languages. When the Bishop of Montreal, Ignace Bourget, traveled to Rome and France in 1841 to appeal for the return of the Jesuits to Canada, his primary concern was for the education and the preservation of the faith of the French Canadians in Lower Canada, which were increasingly threatened by anti-clericalism.<sup>37</sup> Martin wrote on this matter in 1843: "The Bishop had not made any special offer in favour of the native missions. His Excellency had only spoken of a college he intended to entrust to the Society."<sup>38</sup> The Jesuits were but one of ten religious societies invited by Bourget to come to Canada in 1841 as teachers and missionaries.<sup>39</sup> It is important to note that the Jesuit missions in Canada could no longer count on the French royalty or rich benefactors in France for funding as the early missionaries had, nor did the Canadian government initially provide the Jesuits with

support. Their livelihood depended on donations from parishioners, and on their tithes.<sup>40</sup> To put this another way, the Jesuits did not dictate where their missions would be, but instead they were dependent on those who provided them with funding, work, and legitimacy.

The initiative to establish missions in Upper Canada among the Aboriginal people is in large part credited to Père Pierre Chazelle, the first Superior of the new Upper Canada Missions, who believed that “the mission field among the Indians of Upper Canada was much more promising than that of Quebec.”<sup>41</sup> Chazelle’s push for mission work in Upper Canada came to fruition in 1844, and the Society of Jesus sent Jesuits to Upper Canada to begin proselytizing among the Northern Ojibwa populations. Sandwich was the headquarters for the more northern Upper Canada mission stations on Manitoulin Island, Sault Ste. Marie, and near Fort William. These stations were but the launching pads for massive territories the Jesuits were tasked with proselytizing, and were notoriously undermanned. For example, Du Ranquet was largely left to his own devices to manage the territory of the Immaculée Conception Mission. The largest of the Upper Canada missions, Immaculée Conception’s territory spanned over 500 kilometres, including almost all of the north and northeast shore to Lake Superior, from Grand Portage and Grand Marais on the north-western shore of Lake Superior in the United States to White River, 320 kilometres east of Fort William.<sup>42</sup>

The handful of Jesuits who were assigned to Aboriginal missions in Upper Canada took language learning very seriously. We cannot ignore the Society of Jesus’ traditional position on language. Language learning has been an integral part of the Society of Jesus’ vocational training from its inception in 1534, and it went part and parcel with the Jesuits’ efforts to adopt the cultural practices of the targets of their missions, making language proficiency the *machine de guerre* in the Jesuits’ aggressive plans for salvation.<sup>43</sup> One of the earliest Jesuit teachings was tolerance of people and their customs: “become all things to all men in order to win all to Jesus Christ,” and much of the Jesuits’ success in Europe can be attributed to their willingness to appear to adapt to the people they intended to convert.<sup>44</sup> Initially a component of the recruits’ academic training, language learning was later undertaken on site at the Jesuits’ missions in Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Americas. Leahey explains that the Jesuits’ language training in Europe had been uniform, following the regulations of *Ratio atque Institutio Studiorum Societatis Jesus*, the “code of regulations for officials and teachers in the Jesuit education system.”<sup>45</sup> Jesuit recruits began learning Latin at age five; by age 14 the students were introduced to Greek, and later to Hebrew, Chaldaic, Arabic, and Indian. Ignatius de Loyola, the founder of the order, also strove to have the Jesuits learn the vernacular in order to communicate effectively with their potential converts in the French countryside.<sup>46</sup> No doubt, the linguistic abilities of the seventeenth and eighteenth century mis-

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sionaries to New France greatly determined the success and failures of the missions. These early missions proved that without open lines of communication the Jesuits were essentially without influence, without an offensive. The *machine de guerre* was, in effect, disarmed. Long before their departure from France, the new Jesuits were armed with the knowledge that language proficiency was absolutely fundamental to success in Aboriginal missions.

The second generation of Jesuits had studied the *Jesuits Relations* and had learned from their predecessors' earlier experiences that if they wanted to successfully convert Aboriginal people they had no alternative but to learn Aboriginal languages. Language was "the key to the interior consciousness — the "hearts and minds."<sup>47</sup> Attaining a high level of fluency was also necessary for undermining the Aboriginal populations' world views and religious beliefs. Language proficiency helped the new Jesuits to avoid some of the humiliation suffered by the earlier Jesuits as a result of their language deficiencies, and at the same time boosted their appearance as educated men to their potential Aboriginal converts. Fearing the position of inferiority and dependence described by the early Jesuits was a significant motivating factor to the new Jesuits' linguistic studies.

Language was so important that the new Jesuits' first order of business in Canada was to be able to communicate with Aboriginal people, not to convert them.<sup>48</sup> The new missionaries studied Algonquin before coming to Canada using many of the language learning tools their predecessors had created during the seventeenth century, which Hanzeli identified as the "heroic age" of the missionaries' language learning.<sup>49</sup> After disembarking in New York, the new Jesuits travelled directly to the Sulpicians at Oka to begin rigorous language training in Algonquin. Some, such as du Ranquet, also studied at Lake Abitibi and Lake Temiskaming.<sup>50</sup> This formal academic setting was similar to the training the Jesuits engaged in France to learn Greek, Hebrew, and Latin. Not only did the missionaries study Algonquin, they also studied English.<sup>51</sup> They began proselytizing in Ojibwa soon after their arrival to Canada. Within two years of their arrival, du Ranquet and Jenesseux were preaching in Ojibwa and English at their mission at Walpole Island. Choné was stationed on Manitoulin Island in 1844 and Frémot began proselytizing at Pigeon River in 1848. Though not without its challenges, the Jesuits' speedy language learning was due in large part to the availability of Ojibwa grammars and translated religious texts, their language classes, and to their use of interpreters and translators at their northern missions.

In addition to religious translations, by the nineteenth century Ojibwa vocabularies were numerous and varied, thus allowing the Jesuits to study a wider variety of words compiled by travelers, fur traders, and Aboriginal people. The Jesuits at the Immaculée Conception Mission even had an Ojibwa manual for the specific use of Aboriginal confessions.<sup>52</sup> By 1839, two books

were in circulation upon which the Jesuits relied heavily to learn Algonquin languages. In 1837 Abbé Frédéric Baraga published *Anamie Masinaigan* in Paris. Abbé George-Antoin Belcourt wrote *Principe de la Langue des Sauvages Appelés Saulteaux* in 1839. These books were traded between the missionaries, as Frémot made mention of on his trip up to Pigeon River:

I hurried during this week to study and analyze Fr. Belcourt's grammar .... I had only these eight days to look at it. Fr. Choné was going to take it to the Pointe for Fr. Barraga. However, I had time to read and have explained to me the *Pater, Ave, Creed, Confiteor*, the commandments of God and of the Church, along with four or five pages of catechism.<sup>53</sup>

Barraga was in regular contact with the Upper Canada missions and aided the Jesuits in their study. He later published *Theoretical and Practical Grammar of the Otchipwe Language* in 1850 and an Ojibwa dictionary in 1852, which were considered "indispensable tools for the missionary to the Ojibways."<sup>54</sup>

There is also substantial evidence to support the fact that a percentage of Northern Ojibwa at the Upper Canada missions spoke some French, most likely as a result of trade or marriage relations with the French and Métis. For instance, Johann Georg Kohl, a German historian, ethnographer, and writer, who spent the summer of 1855 with the Ojibwa on Lake Superior, related his encounters with a number of Ojibwa who speak "français sauvage."<sup>55</sup> Frémot also made note of the unexpected linguistic abilities of the Aborigines he encountered *en route* to his station at the Pigeon River mission when, despite his limited proficiency in Ojibwa, he was able to discuss Fr. Belcourt's translations:

It is true that for the Epistle and the Gospel I had let a Native read them to me and I read them to him several times to learn the correct pronunciation. As a result, I was understood in all this at least, and I understood what I was saying. As for the Catechism, there was a fine old woman there who personally explained to the children the answers they could not understand.<sup>56</sup>

The prevalence of French-speaking, and to a lesser degree, English-speaking Métis and Ojibwa allowed for easier communication between the Jesuits and the Aboriginal people, who did not speak French or English.

When direct communication in French was not possible skilled interpreters, who were easier to come by at this point than in the previous century, bridged the language barrier. The Jesuits' interpreters were most likely Ojibwa, Métis, or, more rarely, young French Canadians. Reliable Euro-Canadian interpreters were well paid by fur trading companies,<sup>57</sup> therefore they would be less likely to work for the Jesuits who would not have been able to pay them much, if anything at all. Chazelle relied on a young French Canadian to help interpret during visits with Ojibwa residents in Sarnia in 1844.<sup>58</sup> Frémot used an

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unnamed interpreter in 1848 in Pigeon River for his sermons and at Vespers.<sup>59</sup> Fr. Hanipaux wrote of a 14-year-old Métis boy, fluent in French, English, and Ojibwa, who traveled with him as his interpreter.<sup>60</sup> Ferdinand Roque served as an interpreter, teacher, and guide for Choné, as well as Fr. Proulx and Fr. Point at Wikewemekong and on proselytizing trips around Georgian Bay.<sup>61</sup> Chazelle and du Ranquet relied on an interpreter named George-Henri Mongotas during the Walpole Island debate.<sup>62</sup> Interpreters were used during most religious ceremonies and sacraments, including confession. The interpreter translated the words of the missionaries as they were spoken at mass, at meetings, in confession, and at social gatherings. Consequently, the abstract metaphysics of both French and the Algonquin languages were more closely translated. There were a number of Ojibwa translators who were literate in both John Evans' syllabics and in the Roman alphabet. For example, a number of Anishnaabe on Manitoulin Island were literate in the orthography system the Sulpicians had developed and by the time the new Jesuits arrived to Manitoulin in 1844, the Wikewemikong chief, Jean-Baptist Assiginack was writing in Ojibwa.<sup>63</sup>

Like the interpreters, the Donnés also eased the Jesuits' work and allowed them to devote more time to learning Ojibwa and to translating their sermons. The nineteenth century Donnés were typically Ojibwa or Métis who took charge of non-religious duties for the Jesuits, and were more akin to laymen as most did not intentionally remain celibate, nor were they necessarily devoted Catholics. They were essentially volunteers, paid with food and shelter.<sup>64</sup> In addition, the Aboriginal and Métis men and women employed at the missions further exposed the Jesuits to their cultures and practices, providing the Jesuits with the opportunity to engage in dialogue in the relevant context of Aboriginal life. Leahey argued that this combination of dialogic and contextual language learning was key to achieving fluency.<sup>65</sup>

What is interesting here is that the new Jesuits did not necessarily need to rely on the Northern Ojibwa to learn the language contextually; they had the opportunity to learn Ojibwa from the Métis-Catholics, who offered the Jesuits a number of attractive alternatives to learning the Algonquin languages from the Anishnaabe: familiarity, acceptance, and a warm welcome. The Métis-Catholics provided the Jesuits with an introduction to the Northern Ojibwa, but with cultural touchstones with which they were familiar. The Jesuits were welcomed into the homes and to the tables of Métis-Catholic friends and *obligés* and engaged in meaningful communication with them. They also helped ease the isolation and alienation the Jesuits felt at their missions. After his arrival in Pigeon River in 1848, Frémot initially lived in loneliness due to his poor Ojibwa:

This is no little penance, I assure you, to stay there for six weeks without being able to express myself in case of need. But instead of six weeks the trial only had to last a few hours ... lo and behold a good old man came forward and

said as he extended his hand, "Bonjour Monsieur le Curé .... It is a long time since we have ever seen any priests, and we really have wanted to see some."<sup>66</sup>

This Métis man, named Auster, was one of many Métis Catholics the Jesuits in the northern missions formed relationships with and relied upon for food, shelter, support, and company. In fact, the new Jesuits' closest relationships in the north were with Métis-Catholics, such as guide and trapper Pierriche Deschamps, and the de la Ronde family who resided at Lake Nipigon. Deschamps was bilingual in French and Ojibwa and the de la Rondes spoke Ojibwa, French, and English. Many men in the de la Ronde family served as interpreters for the Hudson Bay Company.<sup>67</sup> Frémot also noted that Louis-Denis de la Ronde's daughters were more fluent in Ojibwa than French or English, and were useful in singing hymns.<sup>68</sup> Throughout his 1856 journal, du Ranquet made repeated reference to Northern Ojibwa language and included vocabularies at the end of many of his entries, which he called "quelques mots recueillis."<sup>69</sup> Though du Ranquet did not allude to where he gathered these vocabularies, which included many obscure words and intricate expressions that could only come from a well-communicated interpretation, these lists are typically found at the end of entries that included conversations with a member of the de la Ronde family. In fact there is a notable absence of Ojibwa word lists in the entries where du Ranquet was around only non-Catholic Ojibwa. Did the de la Ronde family and the other Métis Catholics in new Jesuits' lives teach them dialogical and contextual Ojibwa? This is an important question, and it could explain how du Ranquet and the other Jesuits with a Métis support network were able to become fluent in the Algonquin languages despite initially having poor relations with the Northern Ojibwa communities in the mission's territory.

There were varying degrees of fluency among the Jesuits. At the Sault Ste. Marie Mission, Menet did not appear to be able to speak Ojibwa at all, leaving the long trips to the Aboriginal communities in the mission's territory for Kohler, who was much more proficient in Algonquin languages.<sup>70</sup> It was noted that Nicolas Point, who was moved from the new Jesuit missions in the Oregon and the Rockies to work at the Holy Cross Mission on Manitoulin Island, had an "arsenal of communication skills" that enabled him "to enter into some of the central meaning of Blackfoot culture."<sup>71</sup> However, once on Manitoulin Island, Point relied almost entirely on Ferdinand Roque to interpret between him and the Ojibwa.<sup>72</sup> Frémot and Hanipaux also appeared to have had much more difficulty learning Ojibwa than did Choné, Kohler, and du Ranquet, the frustration of which Frémot expressed, stating: "I tried in vain to find some expression that would suit the situation. One had to make virtue out of necessity and I resigned myself to everything annoying about my speechlessness."<sup>73</sup> Eventually, Frémot and Hanipaux were able to get by in the language and by

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1850 Frémiot's abilities were such that he was able to adapt to the Ottawa dialect on Manitoulin Island based on the Ojibwa he had learned at Pigeon River:

I imagined that my Sauteaux tongue and ears would make me just as unintelligible as unintelligent. I was wrong. The difference between the two languages is only a matter of a few endings, some substitutions of vowels, and a few words the meaning of which can easily be guessed from the context. I would say practically the same as Algonquin.<sup>74</sup>

Du Ranquet developed a reputation as the most skilled linguist amongst the new Jesuits. Du Ranquet was exceptional because even at the beginning of his missionary career, he rarely used an interpreter. He understood that direct communication with the Ojibwa as something powerful stating, "Une parole de la Robe-Noire vaut souvent mieux que cent paroles d'un interprète."<sup>75</sup> He owed his proficiency to the close working and living relationship he developed with the people at the Immaculée Conception mission, a relationship that lasted from 1852 to 1877.

Canadian linguist, Wallace Lambert, argues that the second language learner's success is directly linked to the motivation he or she has to integrate into the target language's culture.<sup>76</sup> While on one hand the Jesuits were supposed to become all things to all men, their journals from the Upper Canada missions provide numerous examples of the immense gap between the missionaries and the Aboriginal people they depicted in their narratives. The Jesuits were, after all, on a strict mission to convert "heretics" and "heathens." It cannot be overlooked that the Jesuits were patronizing and perpetuated their perceived superiority over the Northern Ojibwa, or that they were using Aboriginal people to ensure their own survival. It remains questionable to what degree and in what capacity the Jesuits cared for the Northern Ojibwa. Frémiot's statement in reaction to the death of large numbers of non-Christian Aboriginal people at Lac de Sables gives testament to the manner in which many of the Jesuits viewed their intended converts:

Measles and dysentery killed off more than a hundred and fifty persons, especially among the children. Only three had been baptized .... What a fine harvest a Black Robe would have gained for heaven! But alas!<sup>77</sup>

The harvest of souls was always essential to the Society of Jesus' larger mission. Modern socio-linguistic research now recognizes that social distances, "with one culture perceived to be dominant, where each group desires preservation and excludes the other, where the cultures are not congruent, and each holds negative ideas of the other — will result in a poor language learning situation."<sup>78</sup> Therefore, according to this analysis, the religious and cultural



differences between the Jesuits and Anishnaabe should have had disastrous repercussions on the Jesuits' language learning. On one hand, the flexible disposition that linguists agree is necessary to enter into a society and successfully learn the target language conflicts directly with the Society of Jesus' original mandate to devotedly harvest souls, while bound to the order's mandates of poverty and unquestioning obedience to the Catholic Church. However, the Jesuits did become part of the Aboriginal societies at their Upper Canada missions in the mid-nineteenth century. Significant similarities between the Jesuits and their intended converts encouraged language acquisition and communication between them. In Upper Canada, the Jesuits' fate was intimately intertwined with that of the Aboriginal communities: they had no future in these regions unless they could gain a significant number of converts to their missions. Financial and social support of their missions could only be secured through legitimacy, and legitimacy came from numbers. Ensuring their future in Canada was perhaps the greatest commonality between the Jesuits and the Northern Ojibwa. The circumstances that encouraged the revival of old French and Ojibwa alliances were part strategy and part desperation, and were far more political than religious in nature.

Like the Jesuits, the Northern Ojibwa were also on the defensive against the increasing English domination of land and resources in the north and so they actively sought the Jesuits' aid in securing their rights and livelihoods. By 1830, Canadian relations with Aboriginal people had undergone a significant overhaul. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the culture and lifestyle of Aboriginal people had largely been left alone by the European population in Canada, because their service and skills were indispensable both commercially and militarily. The Northern Ojibwa were serious players in the fur trade, as well as traditional fisheries, which provided them with a lucrative livelihood and made them a powerful force in the north. At the beginning of the nineteenth century the Northern Ojibwa still remained politically and economically independent from Europeans.<sup>79</sup> However, after 1830, Indian affairs became an issue for the British civil authorities to manage. Miller writes, "This change was a recognition that the military importance of Indians had disappeared and that British officials were seeking less expensive relations with Aboriginal peoples now that their martial utility had ceased to exist."<sup>80</sup> In the 1830s and 1840s, commercial fisheries and large-scale resource-extraction industries were introduced to Upper Canada. The independence the Northern Ojibwa had maintained from the Europeans began to falter by the mid-nineteenth century, particularly when their territories began to be appropriated for settlement and resource extraction purposes by the government, as well as English-Canadian businessmen and developers. The resource extraction industries attracted many new immigrants to the Lake Superior and Boundary Waters region and so settlement increased dramatically. Euro-Canadians, particularly the dominant

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English population, assumed more authority and control over Aboriginal people through policies, legislation, and the introduction of treaties.

It was under circumstances of increasing development interest of Aboriginal lands that the Jesuits' linguistic abilities became a tool the Northern Ojibwa used to fight the growing restrictions on their identity, culture, and self-sufficiency. In this way, the Ojibwa had more vested interests in the Jesuits' linguistic abilities, which further encouraged the Jesuits' language studies. Important members of the Northern Ojibwa bands asked the Jesuits for council and were willing to engage with them whereas before it had predominantly been the sick, the dying, and the lost members of the Ojibwa communities who had invited the Jesuits into their lives. The Jesuits were useful to the Northern Ojibwa as employers, interpreters, translators, and scribes, as well as consultants. They wrote letters on behalf of the Ojibwa, they interpreted news, and they participated in treaty negotiations, though they typically supported the Ojibwa chiefs who were allied with the French rather than the English. Frémont, for instance, was present during the Robinson Superior Treaty negotiations in 1849 and remarked to Chief Joseph *Peau de Chat*, who represented all of the bands along Lake Superior in the treaty, that the government was trying to replace him [*Peau de Chat*] with a chief more sympathetic to Protestantism and to the government's plans for industrial development in the area. He gave counsel to Chief *Peau de Chat*, urging him not to withdraw his name from the negotiations despite his frustrations with the government. Frémont advised him, "be careful not to let your name be erased; you will lose everything."<sup>81</sup> In September of 1850, as Captain Thomas Gummerson Anderson negotiated the acquisition of lands for mining in the region of Lake Superior, one of the chiefs appointed by the Hudson Bay Company, Miskouakkonayé (the man dressed in red), remembered the Ojibwa's history in the area to the crowd, stating, "It is not you, Englishman, who was the first to come. We hardly knew you. The one who was the first to visit us we called Ouemikojji, Frenchman."<sup>82</sup> Frémont's presence at the treaty commission was threatening to the superintendent of Indian Affairs, Anderson, who warned him not to interfere with the negotiations on behalf of the Ojibwa.<sup>83</sup>

Choné was engaged with the Ojibwa's politics and economic grievances on Manitoulin Island. Nicknamed *Kamuchkawittagosit* (*celui qui a de la force dans la parole / who speaks loud*), Choné developed enough fluency in Ojibwa to make him an asset to many different groups of people, who "wanted me to be everywhere, because I am quite fluent in the language."<sup>84</sup> By the 1850s, the Ojibwa from Manitoulin were expanding their literary pursuits to include politics. In 1861, the Ojibwa from Manitoulin drafted letters to both the governor-general and the superintendent general of Indian Affairs about their political grievances, which Père Choné translated for them.<sup>85</sup> Choné also accompanied to Toronto two deputy chiefs who sought to modify some of the

conditions of the 1850 Robinson-Superior Treaty.<sup>86</sup> Du Ranquet interpreted treaty negotiations for a number of Northern Ojibwa bands and served as a go-between for the Ojibwa and government agents.<sup>87</sup> Language knowledge also served the Jesuits' in their interaction with Euro-Canadians in the government and at their missions. For instance, John McKenzie, chief trader at Fort William, sought the Jesuits assistance in writing letters in Ojibwa in order to contact his *engagés*.<sup>88</sup>

In addition to their religious pursuits and their work with the Ojibwa's political affairs, all of the missions ran schools for the Ojibwa children in their charge. Education was paramount to the Jesuits. The Jesuits taught religion and secular subjects in Aboriginal languages. There was a degree of flexibility for the Ojibwa's way of life at the Jesuit day schools and the students were routinely dismissed to join their families in the maple syrup harvest, trapping, and the seasonal fishing that supplied most of the population with food. However, as early as 1850, the government advocated that the Jesuits on Manitoulin Island and in other Upper Canada missions stop teaching in Aboriginal languages and use only English in their schools.<sup>89</sup> It is important to note that it was not only the indigenous languages that were banned; French was also frowned upon which forced the missionaries to teach and speak in English. Du Ranquet experienced growing pressure to proselytize in English from parishioners. On September 6th, 1856, du Ranquet recorded the request of English parishioners who were not happy about attending services in Ojibwa, and desired service in English.<sup>90</sup> The pressure the du Ranquet felt to give sermons in English rather than Ojibwa was evident from the list of English words and Bible passages that replaced the Ojibwa vocabularies in du Ranquet's journals beginning in 7 September of 1856.<sup>91</sup> The aggressive civilization era was well underway.

In 1850, Kohler wrote to his superior about the situation of the Northern Ojibwa in the Sault-Sainte-Marie area after they had negotiated a reserve land with the British government: "Deprived of everything, the children of the forest find themselves forced to choose between certain death or life in the manner of the Whites."<sup>92</sup> The signing of the Robinson-Superior and Robinson-Huron treaties in 1850 marked increased efforts on the part of the government to civilize and assimilate Aboriginal peoples. The 1850s and 1860s saw the Jesuits' increasingly aligning themselves with the government. Smith emphasizes that the aggressive assimilation of Aboriginal peoples in Canada's residential schools system was a joint effort between the government and the religious bodies. There is significant evidence to support Smith's conclusion when the development of the residential school system is examined. Through the 1860s, the Jesuits in Upper Canada continued to run day schools for Aboriginal children, teaching in Aboriginal languages, and aided by Aboriginal staff.<sup>93</sup> This practice of teaching in Aboriginal languages was not well received by Indian Affairs agents and school inspectors, which Robert Carney explains had reper-

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cussions on the financing the Jesuits received from the government's Indian Affairs administration. The Jesuits were in effect punished for their day schools and their use of Aboriginal languages, once again losing out to the Protestants, whose schools were more quickly adopting the industrial-school model. Using the Wikwemikong Jesuits as an example, Carney explains:

Most of the Protestant Indian boarding schools had access to four sources of support: government grants, band funds, contributions from the sponsoring churches and donations from philanthropic organizations, such as the New England Company. By 1857, the Jesuits at Wikwemikong received a government grant of £50 per annum for one teacher, a sum that had to be divided among four teachers, some £12 each. None of the teachers received fuel or lodging allowances from the Indian Department. When these subsidies are compared with those provided the Anglican mission in the nearby settlement of Manitowaning, the government's lack of evenhandedness with respect to the two denominations is readily apparent.<sup>94</sup>

We can pinpoint the 1860s and early 1870s as the period in which Jesuit language learning began to wane. By the end of the 1870s, there was even less of a need for the Jesuits to learn Aboriginal languages because of settlement of Aboriginal populations onto reserves, the Ojibwa's proximity to the expanding European population in the north, and the English domination over commerce and politics: "The non-English speaking Indians were passing and the English speaking generation was rising."<sup>95</sup> Following the formal introduction of the residential school system, the Catholic Church was contracted to run 70 percent of Canada's Indian residential schools.<sup>96</sup> The Department of Indian Affairs insisted that English be used in the schools, the repercussions of which are well known. Aboriginal languages all but died out in schools and churches, as part of the government and church initiatives to assimilate Canada's indigenous populations.<sup>97</sup>

The Jesuits' Upper Canada missions were eventually transformed into residential schools: Spanish in Sault-St. Marie and St. Joseph's in Fort William. The Jesuits' collaboration with the government in the establishment and running of the residential schools brought an end to the Jesuits' missions, as well as their language learning. How were the Jesuits so persuaded to drop their traditional support of the study and communication in Aboriginal languages? Smith makes a convincing argument when he states:

Church-run residential and industrial schools had a specific, state-designed part to play in these policies in addition to their own agenda for control of Native peoples during the settlement of the West, especially after the U.S. and Canadian treaties of the 1870s and 1880s. Mission activities among U.S. and Canadian Native peoples thereby achieved a prominence and legitimacy under state mandate that they never had before.<sup>98</sup>

Legitimacy was of vital importance to all missionaries and the residential school system granted struggling missions in Upper Canada a chance to fulfill their ambitions in a more formal setting. The missionaries could at once civilize and Christianize.

This article has attempted to understand the Jesuits' motivation for and success in learning Ojibwa in the mid-nineteenth century. The Jesuits stationed at the Upper Canada missions undertook to learn the languages of their intended convert as part of regular Jesuit protocol. They were significantly motivated, however, by the intense competition they faced from Protestant missionaries vying for the same Aboriginal souls. The Ojibwa had more use for the Jesuits during the mid-nineteenth century and, therefore, they were more open to developing and maintaining a relationship with the missionaries, which also made language learning and communication worthwhile for both parties. As anti-Catholicism and a precarious future in Canada filled the minds of the Jesuits, and as treaty negotiations and English economic and political domination threatened the Northern Ojibwa's future, the two groups found it mutually beneficial to nurture their old alliances. The Jesuits' motivation to learn Ojibwa and develop amicable relations with their potential converts was not purely for self-preservation. The journals from the mid-nineteenth century point to the fact that the Jesuits simply were not very powerful during this era, in large part because their financiers dictated their missions and, to an extent, their livelihood. We cannot overlook that the funding, security, and legitimacy the residential school system provided religious bodies in Upper Canada and across the country also motivated the Jesuits, but this time to bring their linguistic endeavors to a halt.

This study of language learning among the nineteenth century Jesuits has attempted to underline the supreme importance of language acquisition and language loss during the mid-nineteenth century, which has been sorely neglected in histories to date. It is clear that the Jesuits still counted language acquisition as central to their proselytizing missions. They were pushed by both the Aboriginal population and Euro-Canadians to use their skills in political, social, and religious avenues. The Jesuits' language knowledge was an irrefutable gift, which makes their participation in a system bent on Aboriginal linguicide a significant tragedy.

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**Endnotes:**

- 1 I use the title Northern Ojibwa with many reservations, as it does not adequately represent the nuances of the Anishnaabe bands living and travelling through the Lake Superior and Boundary Waters region in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The Jesuits' from the nineteenth century often referred to the Ojibwa as Sauteaux. Throughout this paper the terms Anishnaabe and Northern Ojibwa will be used to refer to the peoples associated with the Jesuits' missions. Anishnaabe comprises the Ojibwa, Nipissing, Mississauga, Algonquin, and Ottawas.
- 2 Victor Hanzeli is the pioneer researcher on the subject of seventeenth and eighteenth century Jesuit language learning. See Victor Hanzeli, *Missionary Linguistics in New France: A Study of Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century Descriptions of American Indian Languages* (Paris: Moutin, 1969); Margaret Leahey, "'To hear with my eyes': The native language acquisition project in the 'Jesuit Relations'," (Ph.D. diss., Johns Hopkins University, 1990).
- 3 John Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System — 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999); J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 1996).
- 4 For instance, Derek Smith, "The policy of aggressive civilization and Projects of Governance in Roman Catholic Industrial Schools for Native Peoples in Canada, 1970–95," *Anthropologica* 43, no. 2 (2001): 253–72.
- 5 Peter Dorsey, "Going to School with Savages: Authorship and Authority among the Jesuits of New France," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd Ser., 55, no. 3 (July 1998): 399–420; Guy Lafleche, *Relations de 1634 de Paul Lejeune: Le Missionnaire, L'apostat, le Sorcier* (Montreal: Les Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 1973); Alan Greer, *The Jesuit Relations: Natives and Missionaries in the Seventeenth-Century North America* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000).
- 6 James Axtell, *The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
- 7 See Gerald McKeivitt, "Jesuit Missionary Linguistics in the Pacific Northwest: A Comparative Study," *The Western Historical Quarterly* 21, no. 3 (August 1990): 281–304.
- 8 Allan Greer, *The patriots and the people: the rebellion of 1837 in rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 1993, 1st ed.); Robert Bothwell, *Canada and Quebec: One Country, Two Histories* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1996).
- 9 Miller, *Shingwauk's vision*, 200.
- 10 Jacques Monet, quoted in *Canada and Quebec*, 26.
- 11 Bothwell, *Canada and Quebec*, 25.
- 12 For more information on the anti-clerical revolutions of 1837–1838, see Greer, *The patriots and the people*, 158.
- 13 Félix Martin, Letter #1, Fr. Félix Martin to a priest of the same Society in France, from Montreal, June, 1, 1843, *Lettres des Nouvelles Missions du Canada, 1844–1852* (hereafter *LNMC*), Part 1, 91.
- 14 J.R. Miller, "Anti-Catholic thought in Victorian Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* LXVI, no. 4 (1985): 474.

- 15 Joseph Moody, "French Anticlericalism: Image and Reality," *The Catholic Historical Review* 56, no. 4 (January 1971): 631.
- 16 Francis Curran, "Father Pierre Chazelle, S.J: 1789–1845," *The Catholic Historical Review* XLI, no. 1 (April 1955): 10.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 2–3.
- 18 Fr. Choné, Letter #52, Fr. Choné to a priest of the same Society, from La Pointe, Lake Superior, September 14, 1848, *LNMC*, Part 2, 45.
- 19 Miller, "Anti-Catholic thought," 478.
- 20 Pierre Point, Letter #3, Fr. Pierre Point to Fr. Clément Boulanger, Provincial, Paris, from Sandwich, May 10, 1844, *LNMC*, Part 1, 179.
- 21 *Montréal Herald* quoted in Martin, Letter #1, *LNMC*, Part 1, 105–6.
- 22 Fr. Havequez, Letter #60, Fr. Havequez to a priest of the same Society, from Montreal, August 7, 1849, *LNMC*, Part 2, 85; Durthaller, Letter #61, Fr. Durthaller to Fr. Provincial in Paris, from Sandwich, September 14, 1849, *LNMC*, Part 2, 86.
- 23 Kerry Abel, *Changing Places: History, Community, and Identity in Northeast Ontario* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2006), 290.
- 24 Fr. Nicolas Point, Letter #65, Fr. Nicolas Point to his Superior, from Holy Cross mission, March 18 1850, *LNMC*, Part 2, 108.
- 25 P. Point, Letter #3, *LNMC*, Part 1, 187.
- 26 Fr. Durthaller, Letter #61, Fr. Durthaller to Fr. Provincial in Parish, from Sandwich, September 14, 1849, *LNMC*, Part 2, 87.
- 27 Pierre Chazelle, Letter #13, Fr. Chazelle to a Priest of the Same Society, from Sandwich, January 24, 1845, *LNMC*, Part 1, 293–321.
- 28 Fr. Durthaller, Letter #61, Fr. Durthaller to Fr. Provincial in Parish, from Sandwich, September 14, 1849, *LNMC*, 86.
- 29 Martin, Letter # 1, *LNMC*, Part 1, 99.
- 30 *Ibid.*.
- 31 Bruce Trigger, *Natives and Newcomers* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1985), 298–9.
- 32 *Journal de la Residence*, 3.
- 33 Choné, Letter # 52, *LNMC*, Part 2, 61.
- 34 Point, Letter #65, Fr. Nicolas Point to his superior, from Holy Cross Mission, March 18, 1850, *LNMC*, 109.
- 35 Dorsey, "Going to School with Savages," 403.
- 36 McKeivitt, "Jesuit Missionary Linguistics," 288.
- 37 Lorenzo Cadieux, *Letters from the New Canada Mission: 1843–1852, Part 1: Letters 1 to 44; Part 2: Letters 45 to 93*, trans. by William Lonc and George Topp. *Early Jesuit Missions in Canada 6* (n.p.: the authors). Originally published as *Lettres des Nouvelles Missions du Canada, 1843–1852* (Montreal: Éditions Bellarmin / Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1973), 11–12; Martin, Letter #1, 85.
- 38 Martin, Letter #1, 87.
- 39 Cadieux, *LNMC*, Part 1, 12.
- 40 Martin, Letter #1, 97.
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SUBJECT OF INTERPRETATION: SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION BY  
JESUIT MISSIONARIES AMONG THE NORTHERN OJIBWA, 1842–1880

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