

Some historical facts about the holiday sites of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary (SNJM)*

Dorval Farm (QC)

In 1914, the SNJM Sisters acquired three farms with the intention of building their Motherhouse there. These farms covered a surface area of 239 acres and in Dorval on Côte de Liesse. The war raging in Europe in 1914, forced the religious to put their plans for construction on hold and to rent out their farms.

In the fall of 1916, the management of agricultural operations was entrusted to Mr. Romuald Lachapelle who came to live on the property. On May 20, 1917, three Sisters were assigned to go and work in Dorval: Sister Francis of Paola, who would work there for 30 years, Sister Marie Damien and Sister Marie Victorin.

The Sisters used the farm in Dorval - named **Ferme Jésus-Marie** - to provide agricultural products to the convents in the surrounding area. Beginning in 1922, the Dorval personnel was increasing with Sisters who were sick or convalescing, and who went there temporarily to regain their strength. From 1918 to 1940, two Sisters taught girls and boys at the primary level in a school in the Municipality of Dorval.

In October 1940, through a decision taken by the Federal Government, 72 acres of the farm were expropriated in order to build an airport in Dorval. This decision necessitated the relocation of the Sisters' residence and the buildings on the farm, as quickly as possible. Over the years, the airport activities continued to intensify, the traffic sharply increased and the resulting noise became unbearable. The farm in Dorval was sold to Morgan Realities in 1951, with a right of occupation until October 1954. On September 14, 1954, the livestock and poultry were moved to a new farm in Lachenaie. The Sisters left Dorval on November 11, 1954.

Chalet Jésus-Marie (or Chalet Sacré-Coeur) - Saint-Sauveur (QC)

From 1921 to 1923, Chalet Jésus-Marie, located on the shore of Lake Millette, at 813 Chemin du Lac Millette in Saint-Sauveur-des-Monts (Quebec), was owned by Monsieur François Gobeille, the father of an SNJM Sister. Occasionally the Gobeille Family would invite some of the Sisters to come there to rest. In 1923, the Congregation acquired part of the land, and from 1923 to 1933, the Gobeille Family allowed the Sisters from the Hochelaga Infirmary to have free use of this chalet. It was in 1933, upon the death of Sister François d'Alcala (Alma Gobeille), that the chalet at Lake Millette officially became the property of the Congregation.

Chalet Jésus-Marie du Lac Millette, also known as **Chalet Sacré-Coeur**, was a house of rest and a holiday venue for the Sisters from the Motherhouse and other convents in Montreal and its surrounding area. In 1965, the chalet was modified so it could be used all year round. If necessary, the chalet could become a temporary residence for some of the Sisters; this was the case during the renovations of the Valleyfield Infirmary (1980-

1981), during the alterations of some of the rooms at the convent in Verchères (1982) and during the lockout of the employees from the Motherhouse (1998-1999).

Throughout the years, Chalet Jésus-Marie welcomed various groups for several days at a time. Such as the SNJM Finance Committee, Vocation Committee, and those who attended Sessions on the Vows, Meetings of Local Animators, Provincial Council and the College of Provincial Superiors of Quebec.

Other groups were also welcomed at Chalet Jésus-Marie: Associates, the Personnel from the Pastoral Services of the Diocese of Montreal, students from a green class (nature study) and many groups of young girls.

Chalet Jésus-Marie remained financially dependent on the Motherhouse until 1981 when it was then taken over by the canonical province of the Interprovincial Center up until 1990, by the Mont-Royal Province from 1990 to 2000 and by the Quebec Province from 2000 to 2008. Chalet Jésus-Marie closed its doors in 2008 when it was sold.

Jésus-Marie Farm - Lachenaie (QC)

In 1954, to replace its farm in Dorval, the SNJM Sisters bought two farms in Lachenaie. They added a new building to the farm by enlarging the already existing house. Of the nine Sisters who went to Lachenaie on November 11, 1954, the seven who came from Dorval already had the expertise for running a farm. The farm products continued to be offered to convents in the surrounding area. As they had previously done in Dorval, the Sisters from **Ferme Jésus-Marie de Lachenaie** welcomed into their residence Sisters who were sick or convalescing for short or long-term stays.

On September 18, 1960, Quebec's Department of Agriculture recognized the excellence of the farm in Lachenaie. It was proclaimed winner of the year for the *Mérite Agricole* and was awarded a Diploma of Agricultural Merit, as well as a silver medal. This honor was a reflection of those who had given the best of themselves in this undertaking.

By 1967, the aging of religious personnel and the difficulty in hiring an auxiliary staff were such that a plan for the sale of the farm was being drafted. In 1968, the dairy herd and in 1969, the poultry, were sold. In 1972, a portion of the land was expropriated by the Quebec Provincial Highway Network. The farm was eventually rented out for agricultural productivity, with no rights to the houses and the buildings. The Sisters continued to live there until the summer of 1976.

In August of 1976, through the inspiration of Sister Claire DuPont, a new project was evolving in the house on the farm in Lachenaie. It was a project - called **P.A.S. (Prayer, Art, Service)** – focused on prayer, the arts, retreats, animation and renewal services. Little by little, the shed, the hen house, and the stable, after undergoing minor or major changes, were used for P.A.S. The work continued until 1999. Sister Claire Dupont then continued her P.A.S. Project at 1845 Rue Préfontaine, in Montreal, until 2006.

In 1999, the house in Lachenaie became a place for meetings and retreats. The farm was sold to CPM Development Company, a general partnership on November 1, 2010.

Chalet Jésus-Marie - Val Morin (QC)

On June 5, 1954, the canonical province of the Montreal SNJM's acquired a resort property for the Sisters of the province. Located in Val-Morin (Quebec) and bordering Lake Raymond, this property had belonged to Mr. René Papineau-Couture's family until October 1952. On these huge grounds - **Chalet Jésus-Marie** - located at 2043 Chemin de la Gare, were five buildings: a large chalet, two smaller chalets, a games room, a garage and a storage area.

By the end of June, 1954, some of the Sisters were busy organizing this new holiday site, while benefitting from the surrounding beauty. Beginning then, many improvements were made to the land, and to this day, landscaping of the property is a priority of the management. Until 1968, the number of available rooms was about twenty, but because of the construction of a new large chalet forty sisters could be accommodated there. In 1970, improvements were made to the beach and in 1985, a heated outdoor pool was installed.

As of 1959, Val-Morin opened its doors to Sisters from other provinces from the Island of Montreal.

From 1989-1990, the main chalet was open throughout the whole year and a permanent team lived and worked at Résidence Val-Morin, allowing multiple groups and individuals to be welcomed at Val-Morin: SNJM Sisters who went there to rest; a number of Sisters from about a dozen other religious congregations joined the SNJM's for holiday stays; laypeople (groups and individuals) were also welcomed there. Val-Morin closed its doors in January 2013.

Cap-Saint-Jacques (QC)

On June 23, 1966, the General Council of the Congregation of the SNJM Sisters decided to buy a 98 acre farm in Cap-Saint-Jacques, in the City of Pierrefonds, property of the Horace Gohier Estate. In addition, a group of farms consisting of 402 acres, belonging to the Farms of Cap-Saint-Jacques, Ltée, was purchased. Another decision was made on October 26, 1968, with an end to acquiring a property owned by Madam Judith M. CAPC Benson, a property adjacent to the land already acquired and on which there were three houses, outbuildings and crop land.

From 1966 to 1972, Cap Saint-Jacques would be a place of rest for the Sisters. In conformity with a decision taken by the 1971 General Chapter, the General Council of the Congregation left the Motherhouse in Outremont to take up residence in Cap-Saint-Jacques. On March 21, 1972, Sister Marthe Lacroix, Superior General, and her two assistants, Sister Mariette Payment and Sister Catherine Clare, arrived at Cap-Saint-

Jacques. They shared the “Benson House” with some of the staff attached to the General Administration, while other staff members were accommodated in the “white house”, situated close to the main one. Improvements were made to the property: constructing a building for offices in 1972; digging an artesian well in 1972 and adding new offices in 1978.

On February 15, 1980, the Montreal Urban Community acquired all the Cap-Saint-Jacques property. The SNJM Sisters would only consent to this sale if a regional park was established in this area. Under the terms of the contract, a clause guaranteed that, for a period of five years, the Sisters would maintain the use of one million square feet, where the offices of the General Administration, the Sisters’ residences and that of the caretaker of the premises were located.

During the month of September 1984, the personnel attached to the General Administration gradually left Cap-Saint-Jacques. The members of the General Council left on September 19, 1984 and that same day, moved into the new Congregational headquarters, located at 80, rue Saint-Charles East, in Longueuil.

Val-des-Lacs (QC)

Beginning in March 1980, the SNJM Province of Outremont rented a chalet in Val-des-Lacs, in the Laurentians, to replace a chalet that they had rented in Val David.

In 1982, the province received permission to buy the property in Val-des-Lacs formerly owned by the Missionary Sisters of Africa (known as the White Sisters of Africa). The transaction was finalized in 1984. At 151 Chemin Charron in Val-des-Lacs, there were two chalets with access to Lake Gagnon, for holidays and days of rest for the Sisters. In 1988, a local community moved in on a permanent basis. The property was sold in 1997.

*Source: SNJM Archives Department - Exposition “*A time of rest - the SNJM’s on holiday*” – 2015