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Archival Description, Land, Settler Colonialism, and World-Building in the Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie
Description archivistique, territoire, colonialisme de peuplement et construction du monde dans la Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie

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Article abstract

When the Society of Jesus returned to Turtle Island in the 1840s after the suppression of their order in 1773, searching for and consolidating the records they had been forced to leave behind was of utmost importance. The first Jesuit archivists set out to copy legal documents from Jesuits in Europe, records of their travels, and of correspondence between Jesuits in France, to build a coherent narrative of their order that foregrounded a sense of continuity with their forebears. The consolidation of these records led to the creation of the Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie (CACSM). This article puts forward a case study that explores the description of records in the CACSM catalogue and the persistence and normalization of the catalogue descriptions into its later forms such as the index and internal database. It builds on recent scholarly examination of cataloguing systems and archival descriptions that have defined these as systems of knowledge, infrastructures of power, and tools of colonialism. We begin by arguing that the descriptive indicators of both original records and copies emphasized land as a means to assert Jesuit presence and influence, revealing the profound connection between the archive and settler colonialism. Then, we show that these descriptions were crucial actors that mobilized knowledge production by naming, framing or erasing information to meet the settler-colonial worldview. Finally, we demonstrate that the persistence of these catalogue descriptions, through the creation of other indexes and finding aids in the 1950s and beyond, signify their structural impact and functions.

Archival Description, Land, Settler Colonialism, and World-Building in the Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie

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When the Society of Jesus returned to Turtle Island in the 1840s after the suppression of their order in 1773, searching for and consolidating the records they had been forced to leave behind was of utmost importance. The first Jesuit archivists set out to copy legal documents from Jesuits in Europe, records of their travels, and of correspondence between Jesuits in France, to build a coherent narrative of their order that foregrounded a sense of continuity with their forebears. The consolidation of these records led to the creation of the Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie (CACSM). This article puts forward a case study that explores the description of records in the CACSM catalogue and the persistence and normalization of the catalogue descriptions into its later forms such as the index and internal database. It builds on recent scholarly examination of cataloguing systems and archival descriptions that have defined these as systems of knowledge, infrastructures of power, and tools of colonialism. We begin by arguing that the descriptive indicators of both original records and copies emphasized land as a means to assert Jesuit presence and influence, revealing the profound connection between the archive and settler colonialism. Then, we show that these descriptions were crucial actors that mobilized knowledge production by naming, framing or erasing information to meet the settler-colonial worldview. Finally, we demonstrate that the persistence of these catalogue descriptions, through the creation of other indexes and finding aids in the 1950s and beyond, signify their structural impact and functions.

Keywords: archival description, catalogues, land-based classification, information and knowledge systems, Jesuits, settler colonialism

Introduction

In 1919, at a conference hosted by the Société historique de Montréal, Jesuit archivist Arthur Melançon held a presentation about the history and development of the Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie (CACSM) in honour of its fiftieth anniversary. Discussing the work of the very first Jesuit archivist in Canada[1], Félix Martin, S.J. (1804-1886), Melançon stated that "No sooner had he touched down in Canada, did he set out in search of every souvenir and document relating to the history of the Society of Jesus in Canada" (GLC BO-80-4.5a.1).[2] These records, scattered after the Jesuits as an institution ceased to officially exist in 1773, would eventually come to be known as the CACSM, and laid the foundation for what is now The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada (AJC). Melançon's words at the conference spoke to broader issues in the realm of settler-colonial archives: their

capacity to build worlds.

This article puts forward a case study that explores the consolidation and description of records in the CACSM catalogue and traces the persistence of the catalogue descriptions into its alternate forms as a card index and an internal database at the AJC. The archival unit at Collège Sainte-Marie, a Je-

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[1]There are many ways to refer to the settler-colonial state of so-called Canada, especially during the historical period examined in this article. For the French and British colonial powers, the territory changed names from New France, to Upper/Lower Canada, to the Province of Canada, to Canada. Moreover, so-called Canada is situated on what is known as Turtle Island to many Indigenous peoples, but Turtle Island also extends beyond Canadian borders. Keeping this in mind, the name Canada is used in the article to refer to the territory after the country was formed. It is a reference to a geographical area defined by imaginary borders—the settler-colonial state—something this article is concerned with.

[2]Original in French: À peine a-t-il touché notre sol, qu'il se met en quête de tous les souvenirs, de tous les documents se rattachant à l'histoire de la Compagnie de Jésus au Canada. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, GLC BO-80.4.5a.1.

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suit school in Montreal, was founded in the 1840s by Félix Martin and served as a dynamic repository of materials for Jesuits in Canada until the school's closing in 1968. Situating the CACSM within the context of settler-colonial archives, this paper is focused on the catalogue as a text that records, consolidates, and wields settler-colonial power by telling a particular story about a particular organization via the description of archival records. As J. J. Ghaddar and Michelle Caswell (2019) argue, archives have long been regarded as essential for forging national identities, histories, and myths. Citing Michel-Rolph Trouillot and Edward Said, they write that for every history recorded by an imperial or colonial power, there is a multiplicity of counter-histories that were silenced or obscured in order to consolidate said power. Recent scholarly examinations of cataloguing systems and archival descriptions have defined these as systems of knowledge and infrastructures of power that play an important role in knowledge creation (Ghaddar & Caswell, 2019; MacNeil, et al., 2020; Ghaddar, 2021). Some of this research explores cataloguing and classification structures as tools of colonialism (Duarte & Belarde-Lewis, 2015; Turner, 2020). This article builds on these studies by examining how the Jesuits used archival descriptions and catalogues in a way that naturalized their presence on Indigenous lands, similar to the Canadian government's use of archival records in the fabrication of a continuous historical national narrative.

Elucidating this process of naturalization, this article also contributes to ongoing, contemporary debates about religious archives and access to records in the context of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. In particular, historical and physical erasure and deterritorialization were key aspects of colonial Jesuit knowledge production, and set the stage for the genocidal institutions known as Indian Residential Schools.

We begin by arguing that the descriptive indicators of both original records and copies emphasized land as a means to assert Jesuit presence and influence, revealing the profound connection between the archive and settler colonialism. Then, we show that these descriptions were crucial actors that mobilized knowledge production by naming, framing, or erasing information to meet the settler-colonial worldview. Finally, we examine the indexes and finding aids created in the 1950s and beyond to demonstrate the persistence of these catalogue descriptions, their structural impact and functions, and the resulting challenges this poses for archivists and researchers wishing to access these records today. In this article, we frame the issues around legacy data and access as part of anti-colonial archival thinking and practice.[3]

The Society of Jesus and Jesuit History: The Old and the New

The Society of Jesus was founded in 1540 by Ignatius of Loyola as a missionary order in the Catholic Church. The Jesuits arrived in New France in 1611 to aid the Recollets of the Franciscan order in their evangelizing, apostolic mission among the Indigenous peoples. In the aftermath of New France's collapse, however, the British barred the arrival of any further Jesuits and, following political pressures at the time, Pope Clement XIV suppressed the order, declaring by papal bull Dominus ac Redemptor in 1773, "that the Society of Jesus is no longer able to produce the very rich fruits and usefulness for which it was founded and approved and enhanced with so many privileges by our predecessors" (Holt et al. 2003, 306). By the end of the eighteenth century, only one Jesuit remained in New France, and at his death he left behind considerable estates and a substantial number of documentary records. But in 1814, Pope Pius VII restored the order, and in 1842—four decades after the death of the last Jesuit missionary of New France—the Jesuits returned at the behest of Bishop Ignace Bourget of Montreal, who called upon them to establish a Catholic school in the city. A dozen missionaries arrived in Montreal to open Collège Sainte-Marie and to revitalize their missionary activities within the Indigenous communities with whom the old mission had worked and lived. However, they found that their position in Canada had changed considerably in the intervening years, and they returned to a debate over political power and claims to the vast estates they had left behind. To highlight these differences, this article refers to the Society of Jesus in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as the 'old' mission, and the renewed, nineteenth-century Society as the 'new' mission.

Thus, when Félix Martin arrived in Canada in 1842, he was already the inheritor of a complex history marked by political and religious upheaval. The suppression of the Society of Jesus in Europe and in the colonies had sought to curtail the political power of the Jesuits, who ran educational institutions and acted as advisors to powerful men. In New France, however, as in other missionary provinces, Jesuit priests did not wield the power and wealth that made them dangerous to certain parties on the continent. The Jesuit presence in New France, beginning in the seventeenth century, was instead characterized by isolated missions, limited success in the conversion of Indigenous peoples to the Catholic faith, war, and the famous death of eight missionaries now known by the Catholic church as the Canadian martyrs. Their struggles and successes made up the content of the *Relations*, an annual report on the mission, edited and published for audiences in Paris in the seventeenth century. The *Relations* established a

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[3]Following Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang, we begin with the assumption that decolonization in the context of Canada refers specifically to the return of land stolen by settlers and the government to Indigenous nations. This article focuses on explaining the CACSM catalogue as the product of colonial knowledge production and organization and looks for anti-colonial approaches to read the catalogue by confronting the archival descriptions within it. See Tuck, E., & Yang, K. W. (2012). Decolonization is not a Metaphor. *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education & Society 1*(1), 1–40.

sense of New France's vast potential for conversion, rooted in the European imaginary of Indigenous peoples and expansive, 'unpopulated' territories. It is these expectations and imaginaries that Félix Martin carried with him to New France and the creation of Collège Sainte-Marie.

Literature Review

Archival Description, Power, and Knowledge-building

Critical archival studies has lead the groundwork to examine how the CACSM catalogue's descriptions and structure operate as a site for 'world-building' that forges new structures of knowledge and power, though often at the expense of those who do not fit within the desired world. Wendy Duff and Verne Harris's (2002) oft-cited scholarly work suggests that the power of archival descriptions is the creation and recreation of certain stories through archival records. Building on the work of Terry Cook, David Bearman, and Tom Nesmith, Duff and Harris argue that "each story we tell about our records, each description we compile, changes the meaning of the records and recreates them," (2002, p. 272) and therefore archival description determines records' future use. As evoked by the title of their article, the process of description relies on the process of naming things. The power to name and describe archival records lies also in the language we use or re-use to frame said records—and as archivists working with historical materials know, the language found in records is often outdated and, at times, offensive (Wright, 2019; Brilmyer, 2018). As Kristen Wright (2019) and Gracen Brilmyer (2018) note, language is socially and culturally situated and reflects hegemonic worldviews; thus, when outdated language is re-used in archival description, it carries the weight of historical biases and injustices with it, creating "a public standard of acceptance of the categorization and fear of particular people" (Brilmyer, 2018, p. 113, cited in Wright, 2019, p. 334). As Brilmyer writes, evoking Emily Drabinski's (2013) work at the intersection of queer theory and library science, there is an inherent complexity to archival description and "there is never a single stagnant answer to the question of how to describe archival material" (2018, p. 105). For Elizabeth Yakel, the dynamic, active creation and recreation process of description, as described by Duff and Harris, requires archivists "to think less in terms of a single, definitive, static arrangement and description process, but rather in terms of continuous, relative, fluid arrangements and descriptions as ongoing representational processes" (2003, p. 4).

The power of archival work—and description in particular—is also a sign of what Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook (2002) refer to as "archival control," (p. 4) wherein controlling the archive and how it is represented and accessed gives one control over historical and social memory, as well as control over "what the future will know of the past" (p.

13). Crystal Fraser and Zoe Todd discuss archival control in the context of The Access to Information and Privacy Act and Library and Archives Canada, wherein access to Indigenous records is redacted and restricted, and "researchers are forced to grapple with power structures that trickle down from bureaucracies to individuals that hold sway over the materials, facilities, and accessibility" (2016). The catalogue, as a form of archival representation and an access point to records, wields archival control in both the representational and literal sense.

Cataloguing, naming, and describing thus amount to world-building activities, with the power to preserve certain perspectives over others (Turner 2020; MacNeil, Lapp and Finlay 2020).[4] In other words, the narrative quality of the catalogues, indexes, and databases in which information is inscribed is a "work of the imagination" that situates the action in a given context, despite the use of standards or descriptive systems (Duff & Harris, 2002, p. 276). The knowledge hierarchies created through catalogues are the product of their creators' biases, values, and interests and should not be seen as something neutral that exists in a vacuum. The work of archival description and cataloguing both produces and limits relationships, which is what Marisa Elena Duarte and Miranda Belarde-Lewis refer to as "the reductive work" or the "particularization" of sources of knowledge inherent to the act of cataloguing (2015, p. 686). Writing about the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, Hannah Turner (2020) analyzes how power structures are carried through the museum catalogue and into its extended forms, such as the museum database. Each iteration of the catalogue is imbued with "historical legacies" and has the potential to reiterate "colonial-era collection" biases (Turner 2020, p. 182).

Tonia Sutherland and Alyssa Purcell have shown that archival description is a potential weapon for the settler-colonial project "through which power structures, both colonial and decolonial, are reaffirmed and reinforced" (2021, p. 61). The overall effect of these practices "is the continual subjugation of Native systems of knowledge in favor of a centralized modern Western system of knowledge" (Duarte & Belarde-Lewis, 2015, p. 684). Writing about the North Saanich Treaty, Raymond Frogner criticizes archival description which does not address the "manifold power structures, cultures, and traditions" that colonial records purport to represent (2010, p. 49). This echoes Adele Perry's (2005) analysis of the settler weaponization of colonial archives in Delgamuukw v. British Columbia (1997), wherein Wet'suwet'en and Gitxsan knowledge systems such as oral history, were subjugated in favor of Western knowledge systems in the

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[4]For more recent scholarship on the privileging of some narratives and communities in archival description, see Elliot Freeman (2023) "Defying Description: Searching for Queer History in Institutional Archives," Archival Science 23(3): 447–470. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10502-023-09415-9.

form of archives. However, Sutherland and Purcell also argue that archival description, "when centered in Indigenous worldviews and epistemologies, can contribute to decolonization in the form of contested and alternative histories, proper representation, and discourse that radically critiques imperial notions of language, legitimacy, and power" (2021, p. 62). Indigenous scholars and educators Sandra Littletree, Miranda Belarde-Lewis, and Marisa Duarte propose to center relationality as a "decolonizing technique that allows Indigenous ontologies to emerge in otherwise colonial institutions." (2020, p. 423).[5] Moreover, in their work on feminist disability studies and archives, Brilmyer argues for the "political possibilities of archival description," that recognizes the "complex personal, material, political, and collective histories and connections of records" (2018, 97, 96).

Settler Colonialism and Archives

Land is at the centre of the settler-colonial project. It is through the land, and on the land, that settler colonialism structures and asserts itself (Kēhaulani Kauanui, 2016; Atleo & Boron, 2022; Wolfe, 2006; Veracini, 2010; Tuck & Yang, 2012). The settler-colonial relationship to land takes root in European, Lockean understandings of land, wherein settlers transform the land into their property through work such as agriculture (Atleo & Boron, 2022). Believing that settlers were adding value to 'vacant places,' Locke went so far as to suggest that "individual settlers were not taking anything away from Indigenous peoples" but rather "felt they were giving more back" (Atleo & Boron, 2022, p. 3). In other words, the settler relationship to land is defined by the cultural practices of white European settlers. Significantly, however, settler processes are not solely the product of state actors and actions; they are also "fundamentally characterized by non-state corporate forms," such as the westward movement of missionaries like the Jesuits across Turtle Island (Veracini, 2010, p. 60). In all its forms, settler colonialism "insists on settler sovereignty over all things in their new domain" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 5).

There is an emerging body of research on the importance of archives for the settler-colonial project, whether it be to serve as legal evidence and thus function as a tool for dispossession (Millar, 2006; Frogner, 2010; Ghaddar, 2021), or to create national narratives where none existed (Millar, 1998; Adams-Campbell et al., (2015); Ghaddar, 2021).[6] For instance, in his work on archival appraisal and the law, Raymond Frogner demonstrates how colonial narratives and stories prevail in a setting where Canada's shared archival memory "is overflowing with the settler communities' documentation of the indigenous colonial experience," such as missionary records (2015, p. 127). Frogner argues that this process caused the "'writing out' or erasing of the cultures and traditions of First Nation communities," an erasure that highlights the lasting consequences of archival description on these communities

(2015, p. 128). Similar arguments have been made about how settler histories and archives obfuscate and circumvent the question of national sovereignty, thus eliminating the histories that preceded the arrival of settlers (Adams-Campbell et al., 2015). Recent work by J.J. Ghaddar (2021) extricates the specific ways colonial archives were created in order to invent a national identity for settler-colonial society. As the nascent Canadian state attempted to assert its power over the territory in the late nineteenth century, archives and archivists were crucial players in writing histories that would foster a sense of belonging between settlers even as it erased Indigenous land and nations. Emphasis was on specific narratives and records that highlighted colonial ventures to weave a "celebratory origin story," wherein colonizers claimed total dominion over land and people (Ghaddar, 2021, p. 69).

As theorist of settler colonialism Lorenzo Veracini (2010) asserts, violence is disavowed in settler-colonial processes, allowing settlers to imagine their own connection with the land by delegitimizing Indigenous sovereignty. Indeed, "disavowal of both a founding violence and of indigenous presences systematically informs settler perception. Accordingly, the only encounter that is registered is between man and land" (Veracini, 2010, p. 84). This supposes what Veracini calls a "non-encounter" between settler-colonizers and Indigenous peoples (2010, p. 84). As Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri write, Indigenous peoples

> had to be excluded from the terrain to open its spaces and make expansion possible. If they had been recognized, there would have been no real frontier on the continent and no open spaces to fill. They existed outside the constitution as its negative foundation: in other words, their exclusion and elimination were essential conditions of the functioning of the [state] itself (2000, p. 170).

As actors within these settler-colonial processes, archival

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[5]Some institutions, such as Library and Archives Canada, have begun to engage in practices that shift focus towards Indigenous ontologies by, for instance, placing Indigenous knowledge directly alongside the legacy colonial archival descriptions in their catalogues. For more on LAC's naming conventions and the attribution of titles for Indigenous archival content, see: https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/research-help/indigenous-heritage/Pages/writing-titles.aspx.

[6]Though the focus of this article is on Canada, scholarship about archives and archival practices in Palestine provides a rich, critical body of work that connects settler colonialism and archives. See, for instance, Sayigh, R. (2015). Oral History, Colonialist Dispossession, and the State: The Palestinian Case. *Settler Colonial Studies, 5*(3), 193–204. https://doi.org/10.1080/2201473X.2014.955945; Sela, R. (2018). The Genealogy of Colonial Plunder and Erasure – Israel's Control over Palestinian Archives. *Social Semiotics, 28*(2), 201–229. https://doi.org/10.1080/10350330.2017.1291140.

records, interventions, and organizations contribute to the exclusion and elimination of Indigenous narratives through the silenced counter-histories that they carry. Settler archives "do a special type of work to maintain the story of the nation-state, its relationship to the 'placeness' of the nation, and the simultaneous double move of acknowledging and disavowing Native communities" (Adams-Campbell et al., 2015, p. 110). In other words, settler archives embody Hardt and Negri's above-mentioned "negative foundation", and it is on this foundation that the settler state begins its world-building (2000, p. 170). Settler archives originate from this dichotomy, but also from individual and institutional initiatives, topics that we now turn to.

The Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie

The CACSM was created in parallel with Collège Sainte-Marie in 1846 in response to a set of needs. Despite having returned to Montreal at the request of the bishop, the Jesuits were faced with obstacles caused by their multi-decade absence and a changed political landscape. In their minds, re-establishing what they viewed as their historical, territorial, financial, and spiritual inheritance was key to asserting and expanding their power. Félix Martin's approach to the CACSM was to create a repository of documents that would attest to the significant work of their Jesuit predecessors in New France and frame the new mission as its natural successor, "the heirs of their heroic confrères" (Codignola, 2020).[7] In doing so, John D. Meehan (2017) argues, Martin contributed to a "founding national myth" that emphasized the civilizing contribution of the seventeenth-century missionaries who "established schools, explored uncharted territory and expanded themselves in ministry to the First Nations."

The process of creating the CACSM was multifold. Some of the records related to the mission in New France had been entrusted to the religieuses de l'Hôtel-Dieu de Québec, an order of nuns, following the death of the last remaining Jesuit in New France in 1800, Jean-Joseph Casot (GLC BO-80-4.5a.1). Some documents were left behind and dispersed, others brought back to Europe, and more still were seized by the British colonial government in 1800 (GLC BO-80-4.5e). Martin, in addition to retrieving these documents, travelled back and forth to Europe between 1842 and 1848 in order to copy records that directly or indirectly testified to the extensive activities and relationships of the Jesuits in New France and their connections with Europe.[8] For example, copies of letters and diaries of European explorers, such as Jacques Cartier, were an integral part of the early collection. The result is a collection of records that was gathered opportunistically, varies in provenance and originality, and documents intertwined Jesuit and settler histories.

Creating the Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie Catalogue

Although Félix Martin and his immediate successor, Arthur E. Jones, S.J. (1838-1918), made crucial contributions to the CACSM through their decision-making and actions, the creation of the actual catalogue began with Arthur Melançon, S.J. (1879-1941). Melançon's approach focused on managing the ever-expanding archives, the product of Martin and Jones' impressive collection work. In 1919, Melançon began to create a catalogue that mirrored the physical arrangement of the records in the collection, an organizing structure more common in the early modern period (1500-1700) than in the early twentieth century, when logical structures were more popular (MacNeil, 2016, p. 48). However, the information included in the CACSM catalogue is generally similar to those of ethnographic museums and library catalogues produced at the time. It offers brief descriptions as well as the date records were created, which contextualize the content. It also specifies whether records are originals or copies, though this is not a systematic practice. The main difference between museum, library, and archival catalogues is the intended audience; while the former are meant for use by the public, the latter are usually meant for a closed user group, as was the case for the CACSM catalogue (MacNeil, 2016).

In the CACSM catalogue, records were added in the order they were acquired and numbered sequentially. For the most part, the entries are arranged and organized numerically—one entry for each individual record—and therefore, the subject or content of each record or file varies from one entry to the next. In some cases, a sequence of files is connected through shared subject matter, as when a particular individual's personal papers were acquired. This is the case, for instance, with the personal archive Félix Martin willed to Collège Sainte-Marie, which was processed by Arthur E. Jones. Some entries are grouped according to a specific sub-

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[7]Emphasizing and inflating this connection with heroic predecessors was an important discourse in other Jesuit missions across the world, as missionaries sought to gain trust and "affirm [...] their identity through the establishment of a living link with the 'old' Society" (Ruiu 2019, 976).

[8]There are fascinating parallels between Martin's collection process and the work of the first archivists of Canada, such as Douglas Brymner, who developed the Canadian national archives. J.J. Ghaddar (2021) explores how Brymner and others fabricated a nationalist origin story for Canada, consolidating colonial archival records across the colony and the metropole to invent shared narratives for the Confederation, at the expense of Indigenous nations and tribes (70-75). We also know that Martin was commissioned by the Canadian government to undertake archival research trips (Meehan 2017; Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, GLC BO-80-4.5e). Though it is outside the purview of this article, research into the interaction between Jesuit and government archivists would further reveal the relationship between archives, settler colonialism, and power.

ject that interested the archivists or related to their personal research. Particularly important events are also represented in sequence, such as records related to the debate over property the Jesuits claimed was owned by the old mission in New France and subsequently taken by the British government during their absence.

Subsequent archivists continued building on their predecessors' work and the collection continued to grow in the decades that followed Melançon's time. The mark of each archivist is apparent in variations in handwriting, in the scope of the descriptions they created for newly acquired records, and in the marginalia that is scattered throughout the catalogue. As Hannah Turner has argued in work on ledgers as "dynamic data," these types of modifications—usually traceable to an individual archivist's influence—have become "key indicators that show how actors constantly disrupt the discursive stability or form of the ledger through time" (2020, p. 75). The contribution of each archivist should not be understated but, as Brilmyer (2018) has noted concerning contemporary archival systems, this can be challenging because archival tools were not built to highlight the bias of the archivist producing descriptions, but rather to conceal it. While the catalogue was never published, it served and continues to serve as an essential tool to locate and retrieve information in the CACSM, first for teachers at Collège Sainte-Marie and a few privileged researchers, and now for all users both within and outside the Society of Jesus. The collection and catalogue continued to expand until Collège Sainte-Marie ceased its operations in 1968. In total, the catalogue now consists of nine physical ledgers.

Knowledge-Building in the CACSM Catalogue

From Exhibition to Catalogue

Some of the catalogue's earliest entries drew from the intellectual work of Arthur E. Jones, Melançon's predecessor, and his work for the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, also known as the Louisiana Purchase Exposition. During his time as archivist of Collège Sainte-Marie, Jones was considered an authority on Jesuit expeditions in New France, and he exhibited manuscripts from the CACSM at half a dozen events in multiple cities, including Montreal, Toronto, New York, and St. Louis (Biron, 2016, p. 47). His choice of records and how they were exhibited reflected what the Jesuits wanted to convey beyond the historical value of the collection—an authoritative claim that the Jesuits were central to the North American *settler-colonial project*. The manuscripts from the CACSM were crucial to this claim because they offered a window into remote adventures, encounters with Indigenous communities, and long-standing connections to the territory and land, legitimized by the hardships and suffering experienced by the missionaries. The manuscripts were, for many settlers, the only window into a distant, romanticized world.

Jones' extensive archival and exhibition work was crucial for Arthur Melançon as he began his work on the catalogue in 1919. For the Louisiana Purchase Exposition, Jones meticulously created cover pages for many of the manuscripts he exhibited, and included descriptive notices that provided context for the records. Melançon repurposed these cover pages, including the details about the content and historical context of the records. The result was a direct connection between Jones' world-building project and his desire "to make people talk about missionaries, to spread knowledge of them among the American people" (GLC BO-80-4.5a.1).[9] The records presented at these exhibitions were immortalized in the catalogue, an enduring legacy that shapes how the CACSM is seen and interpreted by archival users to this day.

Land and Indigenous Sovereignty

A recurring theme in the catalogue entries is land, especially as it relates to Jesuit missions or colonial settlements. An abbreviated look at the catalogue's entries between 1001 and 1006 demonstrates how the Jesuits represented their relationship to land and property (see Figure 1).

Figure 1

Snapshot of the CACSM catalogue, entries 1001-1002.

1001 Notre Dame des Anges or Charlesbourg
Concession 10 March 1626
Description 1667
Amortization 12 May 1678
Copy of the Title 10 March 1626
New title 15 Jan 1637 [...]
1002 Ile-Jésus
Taking of possession 16 August 1638 [...]
1003 Sillery
Donation 5 March 1639 [...]
1004 Ile-aux-Ruaux

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[9] Original in French: "[...] faire parler des missionnaires, en faire pénétrer la connaissance parmi le peuple américain." Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, GLC BO-80-4.5a.1

Taking of possession 2 July 1639
1005 Sillery
Taking of possession 19 February 1640 [...]
1006 La Prairie
Original parchment title 1 April 1647.[10]

Entries featuring a place name and followed by supporting documents related to land ownership, the transfer of properties, and legal titles established the Society of Jesus' influence in the seventeenth century. Notably absent from these entries are Indigenous place names or evidence of Indigenous peoples, other than the implication in an entry such as "Taking of possession".[11] In other cases, entries point to Jesuit interactions with Indigenous communities, but these descriptions, upon closer inspection, are riddled with gaps and inaccuracies. They often imperfectly represent the content of the records and erase Indigenous voices or warp them to fit into a more desirable narrative. The description for item Q-1.518 illustrates this issue. The archivist described the record as such: "Change proposed by the Iroquois ~~Savages~~[12]. of the Sault-St-Louis Mission. Council of the Marine. April 1, 1716. Land ownership".[13] By making use of the passive voice, this description suggests that the Haudenosaunee ("Iroquois") were seeking permission or approval, but the document itself records a demand. The Haudenosaunee notified a Jesuit missionary and French marshal that they would be moving, not making a request or asking for permission—the change was not "proposed". Moreover, the description naturalizes the idea that it was normal for the Haudenosaunee to make such "propositions", when in reality this new constraint on their movements was as novel as the arrival of the settlers.

This trend is repeated once again in item Q-1.1756, titled "The Hurons secede a part of their reserve lands to the government. September 20, 1836" (see Figure 2).[14] An actual look at the record shows that the land was not in fact seceded; a portion was sold, and another portion placed in trust in exchange for annual interest payments "provided the stone quarry which we at present occupy be retained for the use of the Wyandot Indians only". The catalogue entry is not only nonfactual, but revokes Indigenous agency from the event, turning an active negotiation with numerous demands into a withdrawal or secession. This language continues through the catalogue, as land is often described as seceded or conceded, or as being the 'property' of settler-landowners, as in the case of Q-1.215 "Remarks on land ceded to the ~~Savages~~ of Sillery by Fr. Jérôme Lalemant [...] 1650" and Q-1.218 "Boundaries between Mr. de Sillery's land and that of the ~~Savages~~ [...] 1652".[15]

Figure 2

Catalogue entry for Q-1.1756.
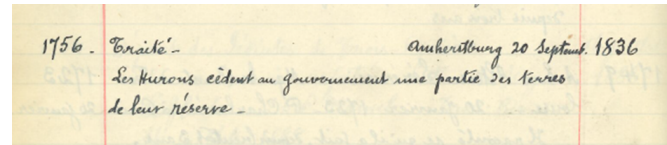
In addition, the descriptions often place the Jesuits in the role of the benevolent representative, as a mediator between Indigenous communities and colonial powers when it comes to treaties, agreements, and disagreements. This is the case of Q-1.1748, "[...] a memo containing the word of the Iroquois [...]" (see Figure 3).[16] The language in the description is vague, and the record offers no answers: what is meant by

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[10]Original in French: 1001 Notre Dame des Anges ou Charlesbourg / Concession 10 mars 1626 / Description 1667 / Amortissement 12 mai 1678 / Copie d'un Titre 10 mars 1626 / Titre nouvel 15 janv 1637 / 1002 Ile-Jésus Prise de possession 16 août 1638 / 1003 Sillery / Donation 5 mars 1639 [...] / 1004 Ile-aux-Ruaux / Prise de possession 2 juillet 1639 / 1005 Sillery / Prise de possession 19 février 1640 [...] / 1006 La Prairie / Titre original en parchemin 1 avril 1647. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1001-1006.

[11]Original in French: Prise de possession. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1001-1006.

[12]The decision to strike through racist language in this article was twofold. We felt that including these examples was essential for unpacking the colonial language in the catalogue, but also acknowledge the weight of reproducing such language. In searching for solutions, we were inspired by Temi Odumosu's article, "The Crying Child: On Colonial Archives, Digitization, and Ethics of Care in the Cultural Commons," from which the stylistic choice of striking through harmful language was taken. It is a gesture that points to and rejects the incorrectness and violence of the language, while acknowledging its historical use. See Odumosu, T. (2020). The Crying Child: On Colonial Archives, Digitization, and Ethics of Care in the Cultural Commons. *Current Anthropology, 61*(S22), 302. utl/https://doi.org/10.1086/710062

[13]Original in French: Changement proposé des ~~Sauvages~~ Iroquois de la Mission de Sault-St-Louis. - Arrêté du Conseil de Marine. 1 avril 1716. Propriété des Terres. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.518.

[14]Original in French: Les Hurons cèdent au gouvernement une partie des terres de leur réserve. 20 septembre 1836. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1756.

[15]Original in French: Remarques sur des terres cédées aux ~~Sauvages~~ de Sillery par le P. Jérôme Lalemant [...] 1650. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.215.

[16]Original in French: Un mémoire contenant la parole des Iroquois. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1748.

"the word"? Direct speech? Paraphrasing? Having been transcribed by a Jesuit, it is unclear whether the personal pronoun "we" is a transcription or a stylistic choice. Furthermore, in spite of this 'benevolent' role, the language used to describe Indigenous people reflects their actual perspective. One such example is the description for Q-1.213, "Petition to Governor Le Neuf in favor of the Trois-Rivières ~~Savages~~. - By the [Fr.?] Jacques de la Place, S.J. prosecutor - [Autographed?] letter. May 1650"[17], where the archivist uses racist language to describe Indigenous people while simultaneously speaking of Jesuit support of them. The vague, inaccurate, outdated, or outright racist language in these various examples highlights the significance of the words used in the archival descriptions and, as a result, in the construction of the Jesuit-settler mythos. Language choices reveal much about the attitudes of the records creator, and "unproblematised reproduction of this language in finding aids and other archival resources implies that the archives and record holders are also accepting of this language" (Wright, 2019, p. 335).

Figure 3

Catalogue entry for Q-1.1748.
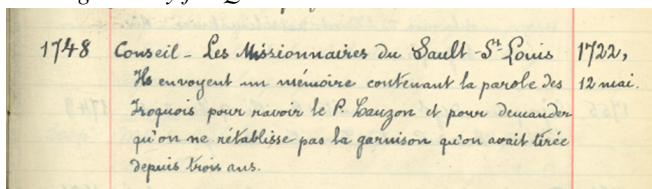
The descriptions of land in the catalogue cohere with the settler-colonial (or white, or European, or Western) worldview, and are revealing of the Jesuit role in settler colonialism. They demonstrate the understanding of land as "a commodity to be bought, sold or exploited", the settler perspective par excellence (Atleo & Boron 2022, p. 2). But in the catalogue, even when Indigenous peoples participated in a land transaction, as in the case of Q-1.1756, the event was conveniently reframed as a passive secession, erasing the fact that there ever was an Indigenous claim to property. The erasure of such claims becomes even more contentious when one considers that, in a settler-colonial society, property ownership is what makes one a "proper legal subject in the political sphere" (Bhandar, 2018, p. 4, as cited in Anderson & Christen, 2019, p. 121). This issue is compounded by differences in settler/Indigenous understandings of what a treaty, agreement, or transaction represents (Atleo & Boron, 2022; Millar, 2006). In these examples, and throughout the catalogue, descriptions about the land are part of a broader motivation to delineate land according to its use for white settlers. The misrepresentation of the information in the records speaks to the political power of archival description in the catalogue and its ability to carve out narratives for particular purposes, and therein lies its world-building capacity.

Land as a subject, and through the gaze of the settler, emerges in other instances with even more limited descriptions. Nicolas Point, S.J. (1799-1898) was a Jesuit missionary famous for his illustrations of the lands and peoples that he encountered throughout his travels and various missionary postings, from the midwestern United States to Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory in Northern Ontario. The several hundreds of illustrations he produced in the 1840s depict his encounters with Indigenous chiefs, lands, forts, and Jesuit missionary camps. He also drew maps of the territories he travelled. Despite his prolific work, Point's appearance in the catalogue is sparse (see Figure 4).

Figure 4

Catalogue entries for Q1.1600-1605.
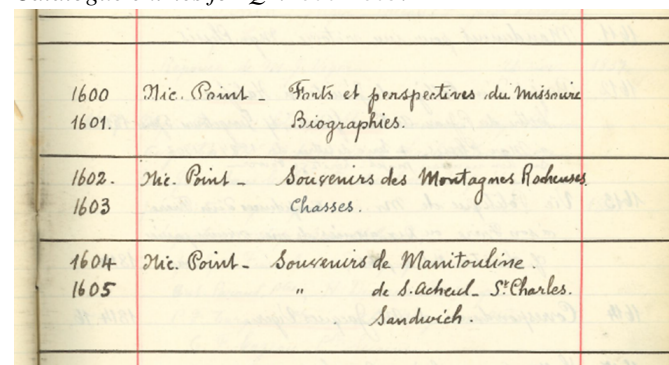
1600 Nic. Point – Forts and perspectives from the Missouri [River]
1601 Biographies
1602 Nic. Point – Souvenirs of the Rocky Mountains
1603 Hunts
1604 Nic. Point – Souvenirs of Manitoulin
1605 Souvenirs of S. Acheul. St Charles
Souvenirs of Sandwich.
[18]

The three entries reference the names that Point retroactively attributed to his work. No information is provided on when these materials were created and who their subjects were, nor when they were added to the catalogue. It is not apparent that these materials are illustrations. What stands out here is the lack of descriptive elements that would

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[17] Original in French: Pétition au Gouverneur Le Neuf en faveur des ~~Sauvages~~ de Trois-Rivières - Par le [P.?] Jacques de la Place, S.J. procureur - Lettre autographe. Mai 1650. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1213.

[18] Original in French: 1600 Nic. Point – Forts et perspectives du Missouri / 1601 Biographies / 1602 Nic. Point – Souvenirs de Montagnes Rocheuses / 1603 Chasses / 1604 Nic. Point – Souvenirs de Manitouline / 1605 Souvenirs de S. Acheul. St. Charles / Souvenirs de Sandwich. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1600-Q-1.1605.

better represent Point's work, which represents, in the sense employed by Veracini (2010), an extended "encounter" between himself and the Indigenous people he ministered to and taught. Instead, the catalogue creates a "non-encounter," erasing the Indigenous presence that characterizes much of Point's work by failing to name it, identifying only the settler as the records creator (Veracini, 2010, p. 84). Each example from the catalogue illustrates the settler-colonial worldview embedded into the catalogue descriptions, elucidated by asking why the archivists included certain information at the expense of other details, why certain language was used, and why Indigenous presence and topics were erased. It may be that the archivists felt as though the entries provided enough detail for the average user of the catalogue at the time (Jesuits), or that more detail was superfluous to their missionary purposes. But inherent in every description, every word used, and every detail included or omitted is the ideology that informed it, which then dictates "how history is written and recorded, as well as how meaning about events and identities are produced and circulated," referring, in other words, to the ongoing settler-colonial project (Anderson and Christen, 2019, p. 120). These examples are only a sample of the catalogue entries in the CACSM that reproduce "non-encounters" and "processes of erasure" (Veracini, 2010, p. 84; Anderson & Christen, 2019, p. 120), but they illustrate the lasting impact of the colonial-missionary gaze on Indigenous researchers seeking access not only to records but also to the spaces of archival knowledge production. It would require Indigenous researchers to "undo and reframe the materials within the metadata," before even bringing in "community perspectives" on how records should be used, where, and by whom (Anderson & Christen, 2019, p. 135).

The Jesuits Estates Act

As we have seen, the issue of land claims and property was of foremost importance to the new mission. One manifestation of its significance is the large number of catalogue entries related to perhaps the most extensive land-related conflict faced by the missionaries: the "Bien des Jésuites" and the Jesuit Estates Act of 1888.[19] The Act was the result of a long, intense judicial process centred on the land and estates that the Jesuits had been gifted by the King of France and other wealthy patrons, and that they were forced to leave behind due to the suppression of their order in Europe.[20] After Casot, the last Jesuit missionary in Canada, died, what the Jesuits considered their property in New France 'lapsed' to the British Crown.[21]

Much was at stake in the debate over their estates. Perhaps most immediately, the Jesuits were financially dependent on the land and properties, despite receiving generous donations from wealthy supporters.[22] Second, recognizing lands on which they lived and worked among Indigenous communities in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was key to

the argument that they were, historically and spiritually, the rightful heirs of the old mission. Proving this connection was also politically useful, as it created the "legal fictions" necessary for the Jesuits to establish jurisdictional legitimacy in the eyes of colonial law. Legal fictions, as defined by Raymond Frogner, were "designed to reconcile and articulate in measured textual detail, the social, geographic, and legal spaces necessary to build the colonial settlement project" (2010, p. 86). Seen in this framework, the CACSM's archival descriptions contribute to this concept: proof of ownership over land that never belonged to them.

In the catalogue, the debate appears through a series of entries first establishing Jesuit claims over properties (as discussed in the previous section) and, second, laying out the perceived wrongs done to the Society of Jesus by the government. Entries like the following are representative of the way archivists chose to record and describe writings linked to the Act:

1009 State of the Jesuits of Canada's lands 26 Nov. 1667
1010 Intention of the donors, Letter from Fr. Jér. Lalemant. A word on the [?] 17 Sept. 1670 [...]
1069 Report by the Permanent Committee on Jesuit properties 1836 [...]
1073 Dilapidation of Jesuit properties from 1826 to 1843 Report on the poor administration of the Honorable John

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[19]Debated in the House of Commons in Ottawa, the Act put forth several arguments. Those against restoring all Jesuit property spoke about their malicious and immoral political involvements in Europe. Those ready to restore it argued that the missionaries had no power and submitted themselves to great hardships in order to convert Indigenous communities. Of the $400,000 the Jesuits claimed, the Society was given $160,000 and the rest of the amount was given to educational institutions such as Université Laval and Catholic dioceses. For more on the politics and the role of Anglophone Protestants in the Jesuit Estates Act, see Miller, J.R. (1974). Honoré Mercier, la minorité protestante du Québec et la loi relative au règlement de la question des biens des Jésuites. *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française, 27*(4), 483-507.

[20]The Jesuits framed this question about "rights" and "property" through the lens of colonial law. These arguments obscure the fact that the land in question was on the territories of multiple Indigenous nations, including the Wendake-Nionwentsio, N'dakina, Nitassinan, and Wabanaki.

[21]Though it is outside the purview of this article to explore this idea, some primary sources reveal a tension over Casot's will and whether he willed Jesuit properties to the Crown. See Camille de Rochemonteix, Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.4028.26.P; and BO-39.6.3. According to the Jesuits, the Crown had no legal say about Jesuit properties because the papal bull had never been "applied" in Canada (Ruiu 2019, 987).

[22]Supporters include influential people such as the Commander of Sillery, Maître Gilles Daniom (a Jesuit novice), and Robert Giffard, a French seigneur, Donations were made through lands or money. See, for instance, Q-1.1003, 1006, 1018.

Stewart, by René Jos. Kimber. Copy and original. 7 Feb. 1843

1074 Jesuits Property in the land of government. 1843 [...]

1081 Protest of the Bishops of Canada against the legislative assembly's vote on the subject of Jesuit property. June 1846[23]

Other entries include contemporary newspaper articles about the case and correspondence between the Jesuits and the British government. The particular arrangement of these entries in the catalogue is also significant. The earliest set of entries about the Biens des Jésuites—about 160 of them—are immediately preceded by entries from the seventeenth century delineating the early mission's properties and rights.[24] The result is a visual and intellectual representation of a 150-year continuity between the missions, a legal fiction that, the Jesuits would suggest, supports a claim of continuity with their estates.

Though he did not participate in the creation of the catalogue, Félix Martin's successor Arthur E. Jones' work was key to the extensive coverage of the Bien des Jésuites in the catalogue. As an archivist, Jones was tasked with building a corpus of documentation to support the Jesuit claims for compensation from the British government over land that they contended, ironically, was taken from them. As his successor, Arthur Melançon, wrote, the Jesuits recognized that they needed strong evidence in order to be successful in their legal fights: "When we resolved to attempt a second time to obtain indemnity for our property, we understood that we had to dedicate a man exclusively to the in-depth study of this issue who could, at a given moment, provide all the information to those who have to fight" (GLC BO-80-4.5a.1).[25] This man was Jones, a French and English-speaking Jesuit and intellectual with the capacities to prepare for the legal case about the Jesuit estates, a job that, Melançon tells us, became his true vocation (GLC BO-80-4.5a.1). Jones understood the necessity of finding and producing records to act as evidence for the legal case between the Society of Jesus and the British government. Under his leadership, the archive became a key tool in the process of making claims, as is clear in the extensive catalogue entries related to the Act. Jones himself also contributed to the Jesuit claim about land ownership and to the corpus of documentation around the Act with his work, such as the report recorded in the catalogue as Q-1.2207.5, "Memo by Fr. Jones to demonstrate that the Champ-de-Mars property was part of the Jesuit estates".[26]

The continued acquisition of records related to the Act after it was passed in 1888, and the entries for these records in the catalogue, points to its importance to Jesuit history. More broadly, it points to the significance of land and property for the settler-colonial project. The Society was ultimately unsuccessful in its argument for full compensation from the government, and the loss symbolized a break in their relationship not only with those in power but also with the Jesuits of the old mission who received significant financial support

from the French monarchy.

The Many Afterlives of the CACSM Catalogue

The catalogue's influence and contributions to the writing of Jesuit histories in Canada are clear to this day. Over a period of almost forty years, from the 1950s to the 1990s, archivists created an extensive finding aid on index cards that covered all the fonds and collections held at Collège Sainte-Marie and later the Jesuit novitiate in St. Jérôme, where the Collège Sainte-Marie archives were transferred when it closed. Unlike the catalogue, the index cards are divided by subject—individual Jesuits, geographical places, residences owned by the Jesuits, publications, etc. It is clear, however, that the archivists who created the index used the catalogue's entry titles as the basis for their own descriptive indicators. For instance, in the case of entries on Sillery explored in the previous sections (Q-1.215, Q-1.218), the archivists chose to retain racist terminology in the index card. Adjustments are only made to add specific details such as dates or names. The reproduction of parts of the catalogue in the index has had long-term effects on questions of access at the AJC. While the catalogue is no longer frequently used, the index continues to serve as the primary point of access for resources on the Jesuits in New France and is thus widely used by archivists for reference requests and internal research.[27] It is a powerful

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[23]Original in French: 1009 Etat des Terres des jésuites au Canada 26 nov. 1667 / 1010 Intention des donateurs, Lettre du P. Jér. Lalemant. Un mot sur les Donnés. 17 sept. 1670 [...] / 1069 Rapport du Comité permanent sur les Bien des jésuites 1836 [...] / 1073 Dilapidation des Biens des Jésuites de 1826 à 1843 / Mémoire sur la mauvaise administration de l'Hon. John Stewart par Réné Jos. Kimber. Copie et originale. 7 fev. 1843 / 1074 Jesuits Property in the land of government 1843 [...] / 1081 Protestation des Évêques du Canada contre le vote de l'Assemblée lég. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1600-Q-1.1605. Au sujet des Biens des jésuites. Juin 1846. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.1009, Q-1.1010, Q-1.069, Q-1.1073, Q-1.1074, Q-1.1081.

[24]The catalogue ledger containing entries 810 to 999 is not held by The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada. It is unclear whether it was once. However, we know from other sources that these entries were overwhelmingly about the Biens des jésuites and Jesuit Estates Act.

[25]Original in French: "Lorsqu'on résolut de tenter une seconde fois l'aventure afin d'obtenir une indemnité pour nos Biens, on comprit qu'il fallait consacrer exclusivement un homme à l'étude approfondie de cette question, lequel pourrait, à un moment donné, fournir tous les renseignements à ceux qui devaient faire la lutte; [...]"

[26]Original in French: Mémoire du P. Jones pour démontrer que la propriété du Champ-de-Mars fait partie des Biens des Jésuites. 29 octobre 1886. Les Archives des jésuites au Canada / The Archive of the Jesuits in Canada, Q-1.2207.5.

[27]The index cards include fonds and collections beyond the CACSM, such as documents from particular Jesuit colleges, mis-

knowledge infrastructure that organizes and represents the CACSM collection. Where the catalogue used chronological numbers and groupings to guide the archivist and researcher, the index prioritizes a Jesuit/colonial perspective that makes it difficult, if not impossible, to locate records through any other lens. Successful searches in the index (those that result in finding useful information on a particular topic) are those that model settler-colonial search terms, including place spellings. Indigenous names, if they are in the index at all, appear in the entries of other people, missionaries and/or settlers. The result is another form of the "non-encounter". Even those index cards purportedly focused on Indigenous nations and lands reduce them to their appearance in Jesuit correspondence and publications. There are exceptions to this general approach, however. One of the fourteen index cards that make up the Haudenosaunee subject group (written on the card as "Iroquois") highlights an interaction in which an Onondaga chief, Teganissorens, is the primary actor in an important political exchange with the governor of New France (the Count of Frontenac or, as the Haudenosaunee called him, Onnotio)[28]:

23 Mai 1694: Words spoken by [Teganissorens] to M. the Count of Frontenac, in the name of the five Iroquois nations... Presentation and explanation of the eight necklaces. Onnontio's response to the necklaces presented by the five Iroquois nations. 7 necklaces in return. Quebec, 27 Mai 1694.[29]

In the catalogue, the entry that corresponds with the index card, Q-1.4013, reads "Canada—cf. Table of Contents". The manuscript itself contains 62 sections, of which the communications between Teganissorens and Onnotio constitute only one. In other words, the index's subject-based classification had the potential to counter the effects of the erasures that dominate the catalogue, reinforcing the idea that the decision not to do so was a conscious one. Here, reading the index against the catalogue reveals Indigenous history and power that was originally excluded and ignored by a series of archivists.

The CACSM catalogue, created over a century ago, continues to leak into our present. The AJC's internal database, Archilog, has brought the index's descriptive entries to the digital management of the collection. The reproduction of the entries and descriptions in the index and database is hugely important, preserving the CACSM's colonial knowledge infrastructure and bearing its legacy into the present.

Conclusion

This study has presented land as an inherent part of the narratives contained in a settler archival collection and its related archival descriptions, indexes, and access points. Settler-colonial knowledge production and world-building has been evidenced in the acquisition of records, the creation of copies from Europe, the description of records in the catalogue and

indexes, and even the showcasing of records at exhibitions. This article not only contextualizes the colonial dimensions of an important collection depicting missionary activities on Turtle Island but also contributes to the literature on archival description and the structural power of catalogues and other archival infrastructures by connecting these with settler-colonial processes.

As the archival discipline seeks to develop anti-colonial theories and practices, there is much to reflect on regarding how settler colonialism immerses itself into information management structures, infrastructures, and activities. Producing this article enabled us to deeply reflect on the CACSM catalogue and its power as a historical document. As archivists, we recognize the value of the legacy catalogues, ledgers, and databases that help us manage collections and make them available to researchers. Yet, their use in contemporary archival activities is under-theorized, which raises questions archivists in colonial institutions must face: what should be done with catalogues whose structure, built over decades and reproduced in other archival infrastructures, represents a colonial mode of thought centred around the histories of a missionary institution? How can we avoid perpetuating the harms of the catalogue and its iterations? Is it possible to study or use the catalogue and refuse to reactivate or perpetuate settler-colonial infrastructures? In thinking through these questions as we migrate much of the CACSM catalogue online, we turn to the work of Ghaddar, itself drawn from the work of Kanien'kehá:ka scholar Audra Simpson's (2014) concept of the politics of refusal. Ghaddar argues that "refusing to constantly recirculate the narratives of damage and displays of violence is based on an understanding that they are crucial to the exercise of power to begin with" (2021, p. 65).[30] Ignoring the catalogue's real impact on knowledge-building would be deceitful and undermine the important work of critiquing historical archival descriptions and even redescribing colonial records.

Crucially, we argue that any analysis must lead to con-

sions, and the personal papers of individual Jesuits. Its extensiveness made the index system a crucial tool to retrieve information.

[28]For more on the history and uses of wampums, see Lainey, J. C. (2004). *La "monnaie des sauvages" : Les colliers de wampum d'hier à aujourd'hui*. Sillery, QC: Septentrion.

[29]Original in French: 23 mai 1974: Paroles dites par Teganisorens à M. Le Comte de Frontenac, au nom des 5 nations iroquoises... Présentation et explication de huit colliers. / Réponse d'Onnontio aux colliers présentés par les cinq nations iroquoises. 7 colliers en retour. Québec, 27 mai 1694.

[30]Indigenous theories on if and how Indigenous communities should be studied are crucial interventions into archival practice. Audra Simpson's "politics of refusal" is echoed in the work of other Indigenous scholars, including Tuck, E. (2009). Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities. *Harvard Educational Review, 79*(3), 409-427 and Linda Tuhiwai Smith. 1999. Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples. London: Zed Books.

crete changes. Archivists must not only seek to understand and critique the harms provoked by tools like the catalogue, but must also seek to mitigate this harm. As Krystal Payne writes, "positioning archival harm reduction as a tool to bring about structural change requires explaining that archives are simultaneously sites of empowerment and disempowerment" (2002, p. 169). We submit that a closer, anti-colonial analysis of the tools we use to manage, retrieve, and share information is necessary if we are to do right by the Indigenous nations and communities who are the subject of the archive and the harmful language, misrepresentations, false claims, and dehumanizing descriptions it contains. Anti-colonial approaches in the archival realm insist on the necessity of prioritizing Indigenous worldviews and perspectives in every facet of archival activities that concern Indigenous peoples, including archival description and access (McCracken & Hogan-Stacey, 2023; Ghaddar & Caswell, 2019; Anderson & Christen, 2019). In other words, settler-colonial recordkeeping processes are in need of a radical transformation: one that is informed by a "historically-informed critical decolonial sensibility" (Fraser & Todd, 2016).

For Nishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, such a transformation must begin with new relationships based on consent and reciprocal engagement that recognizes that "part of being colonized is having to engage in all kinds of processes on a daily basis that, given a choice, [they] likely wouldn't consent to" (2014, p. 15). Indigenous researchers interested in the AJC's records about themselves and created without their consent have to engage with research tools like the index card inventory and the harmful archival descriptions these reproduce. As settler archivists, we must reframe our archival relations by seeking the consent and engagement of Indigenous peoples around these records, how they are described, and who can access them for what purposes. Thus, developing methods attuned to the concerns of current and future Indigenous researchers is evermore crucial. These interrogations are at the heart of our work on the catalogue and in our ongoing project to create anti-colonial ways of structuring and providing access to records.

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