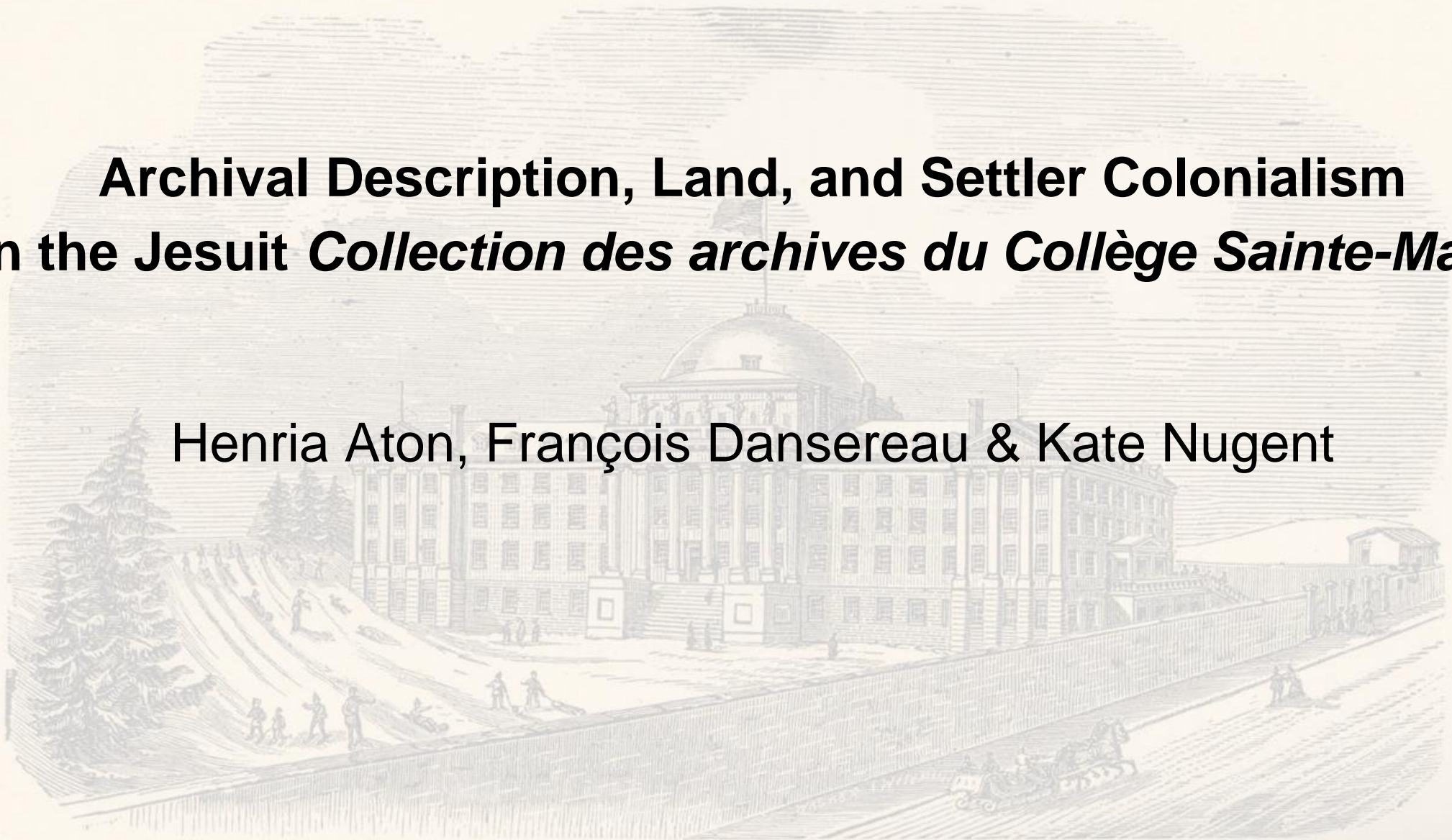


**Archival Description, Land, and Settler Colonialism
in the Jesuit *Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie***

Henria Aton, François Dansereau & Kate Nugent



Content Note

The Crying Child

On Colonial Archives, Digitization, and Ethics of Care in the Cultural Commons

Temi Odumosu

This article sketches key concerns surrounding the digital reproduction of enslaved and colonized subjects held in cultural heritage collections. It centralizes one photograph of a crying Afro-Caribbean child from St. Croix, housed in the Royal Danish Library, to demonstrate the unresolved ethical matters present in retrospective attempts to visualize colonialism. Working with affect and haunting as research material, the inquiry questions how museums and other cultural heritage institutions are caretaking historical violations, identifying themselves as hosting agents, and navigating issues of trust and accountability as they make their colonial collections available online. Speculating about what an ethics of care in representation could look like, the article draws on reparatory artistic engagements with such imagery and proposes how metadata could be rethought as a cataloging space with the potential to alter historical imbalances of power.

Why risk the contamination involved in restating the maledictions, obscenities, columns of losses and gains, and measures of value by which captive lives were inscribed and extinguished? Why subject the dead to new dangers and to a second order of violence? Or are the merchant's words the bridge to the dead or the scriptural tombs in which they await us? ("Venus in Two Acts," Saidiya V. Hartman, 2008)

While researching I become part of your army of ghosts. Haunting. Haunting. (Unearthing. In Conversation, Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński)¹

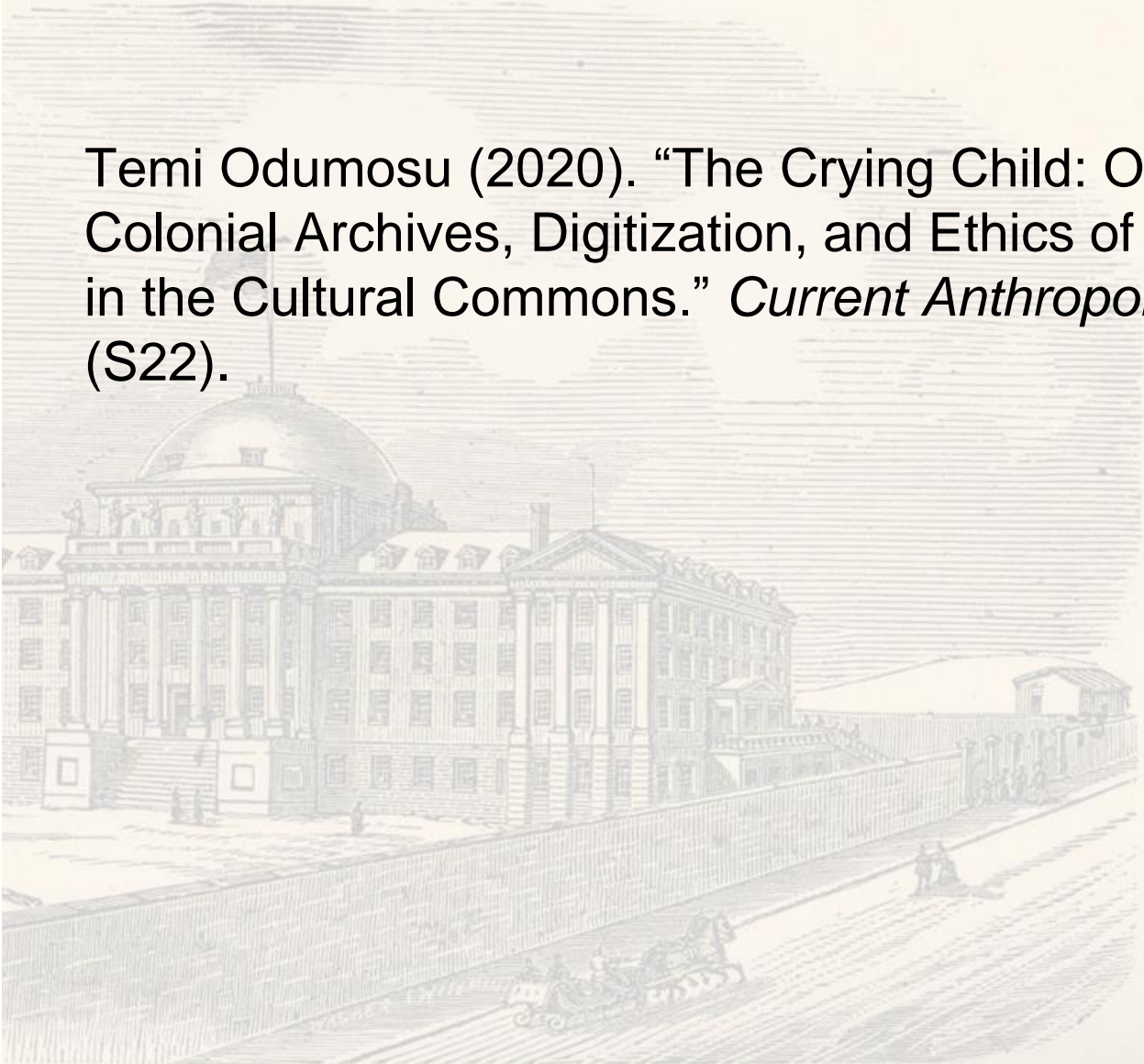
This article is concerned with how we attend to the dead represented in the open digital commons, those ancestors glimpsed in code, through substitute JPEGs and TIFF files. It considers how we welcome people into mindful encounters with representations of enslavement and colonization and how we guide people overall in the use and circulation of sensitive visual material. By "we" I refer to those of us doing the work of historical and cultural narration and caretaking, but I am also addressing our students as well. To borrow the words of Susan A. Crane in the context of Holocaust atrocity, I "want to highlight the ethical torque of knowing the [slavery or colonial] past through images for anyone who is historically conscious, and from that consciousness propose alternative responses" (Crane 2008:310). What is presented here, then, is a series of expanded reflections that draw on my art historical background researching African people and imagined types in early modern European art and also my current work on colonial archives and the performance of memory in Scandinavia. This experience is the window through which I delineate a speculative ethics of care in collections that is concerned with

"emotional justice," as Marika Cifor describes it: "framing records as repositories of affect" and then appraising them (working with, describing, and sharing them) as such (Cifor 2016:14). Responding to the delicate questions posed by Saidiya Hartman in her seminal essay "Venus in Two Acts," the whole discussion negotiates tensions surrounding access to representations and visibility of enslaved or colonized peoples, as they intersect with community needs for historical recognition, cultural ownership, and healing (Hartman 2008).

Critical thinking about the effects of digitization on cultural heritage politics, practices, and values is not new. In 1981 F. Gerald Ham called on the archive community to take seriously how technology was ushering in a new "postcustodial" era, which required the profession to reconsider its inherited roles and self-understanding as special gatekeepers of history (Ham 1981). Decentralization and mobility of information, datafication of culture, and negotiation of collaborative knowledge production are the ongoing concerns that have surrounded transformations in collections management systems. Ross Parry's invocation of the term "rescripting" in *Recoding the Museum* adequately describes what has been required along the computational and conceptual road to handle fundamental issues of trust and ownership central to what it means to be an institution (Cameron and Kenderdine 2010 [2007]; Parry 2008:82).

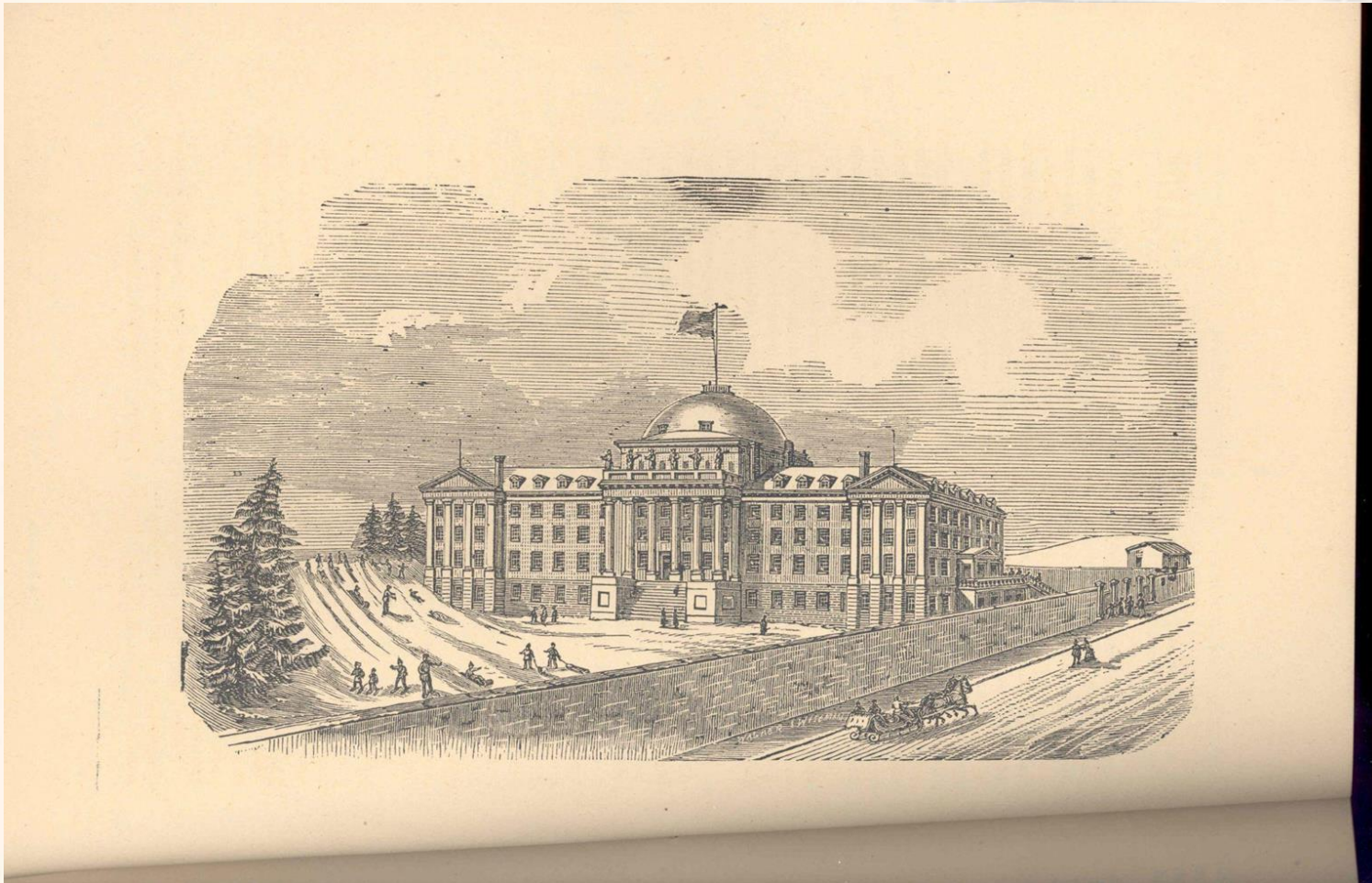
1. A quotation from the artwork: Belinda Kazeem-Kamiński, *Unearthing. In Conversation*, 2017, video, duration 13:00 minutes.

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Temi Odumosu (2020). "The Crying Child: On Colonial Archives, Digitization, and Ethics of Care in the Cultural Commons." *Current Anthropology* 61 (S22).

Outline



Part I: The Jesuits in
New France

Part II: Knowledge-
Building in the
Catalogue

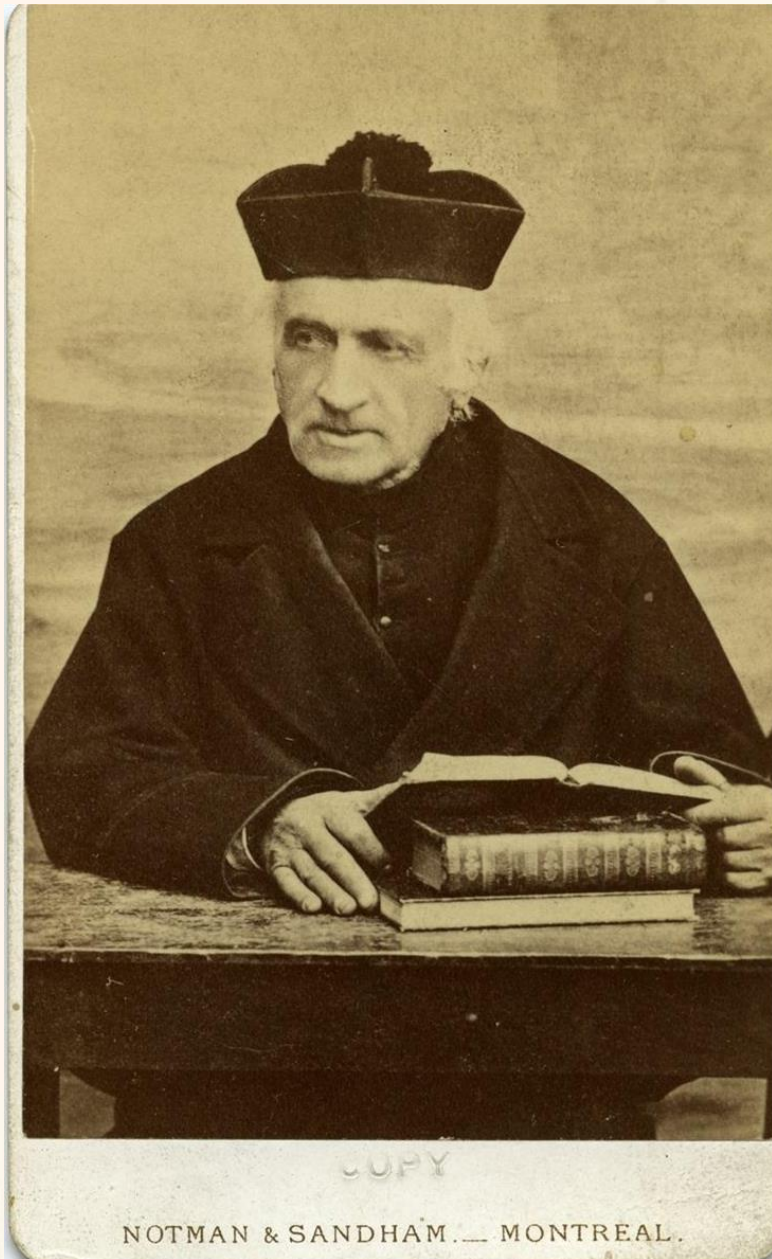
Part III: The Many
Afterlives of the
Catalogue

Le Collège Sainte-Marie, plan du P. Félix Martin.

Introduction

“No sooner had [Félix Martin, S.J.] 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.”

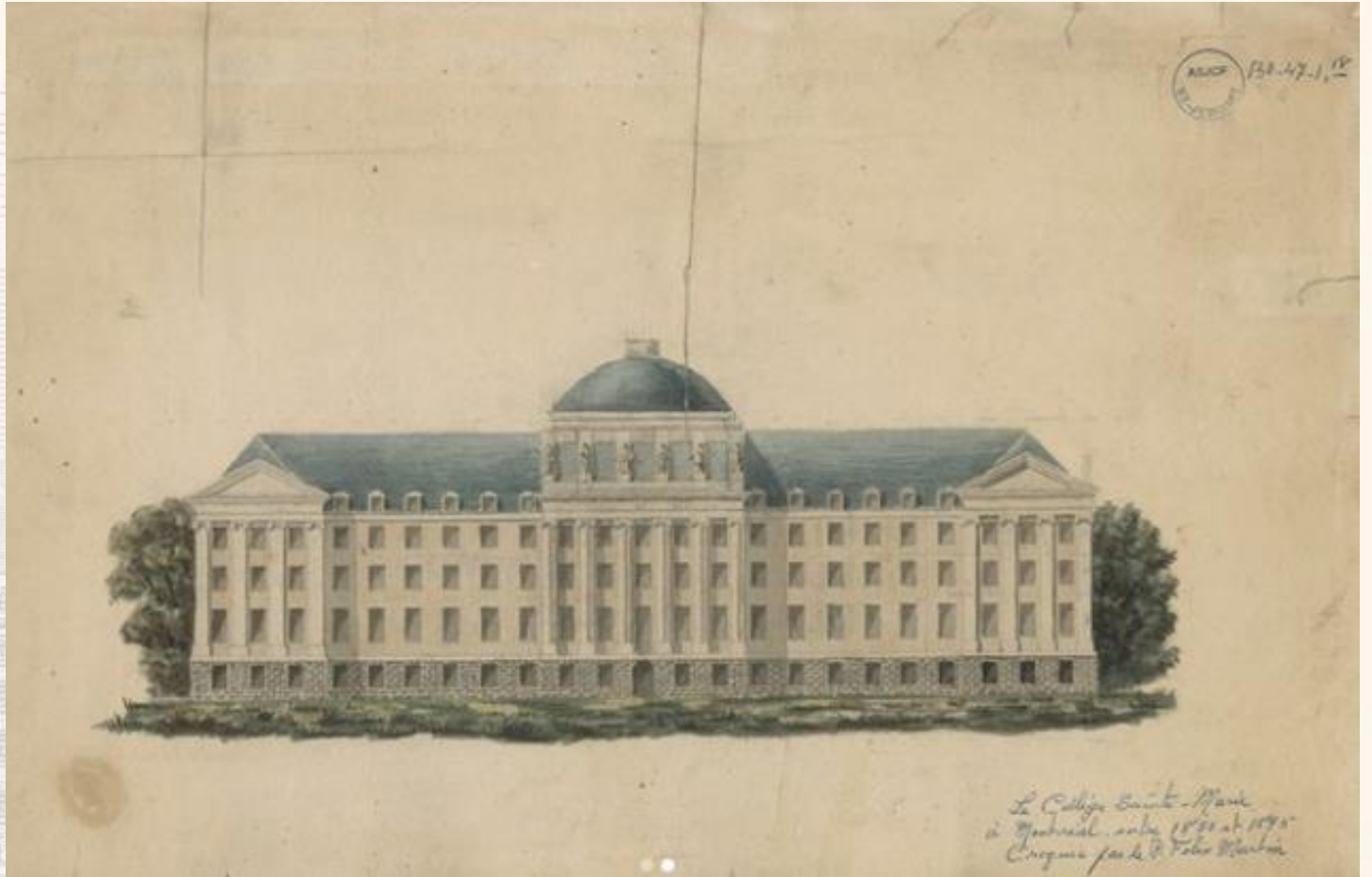
Arthur Melançon, S.J., speaking at the *Société historique de Montréal* (1919)



Félix Martin, S.J. (1804-1886)

Part I: The Jesuits in New France

Mgr. Bourget, Bishop of Montreal



Le Collège Sainte-Marie. Croquis par le P. Félix Martin. GLC BO-47-1.18.

The *Collection des archives du Collège Sainte-Marie*

Created in the 1840s
alongside the foundation of
the Collège Sainte-Marie

Repository of documents
and intellectual structure
that sought to make the
connection with the pre-
suppression Jesuits in New
France



Collège Sainte-Marie, Le Jardin des Pères.
C-1.S4.SS2.D6.3

Creating the CACSM Catalogue

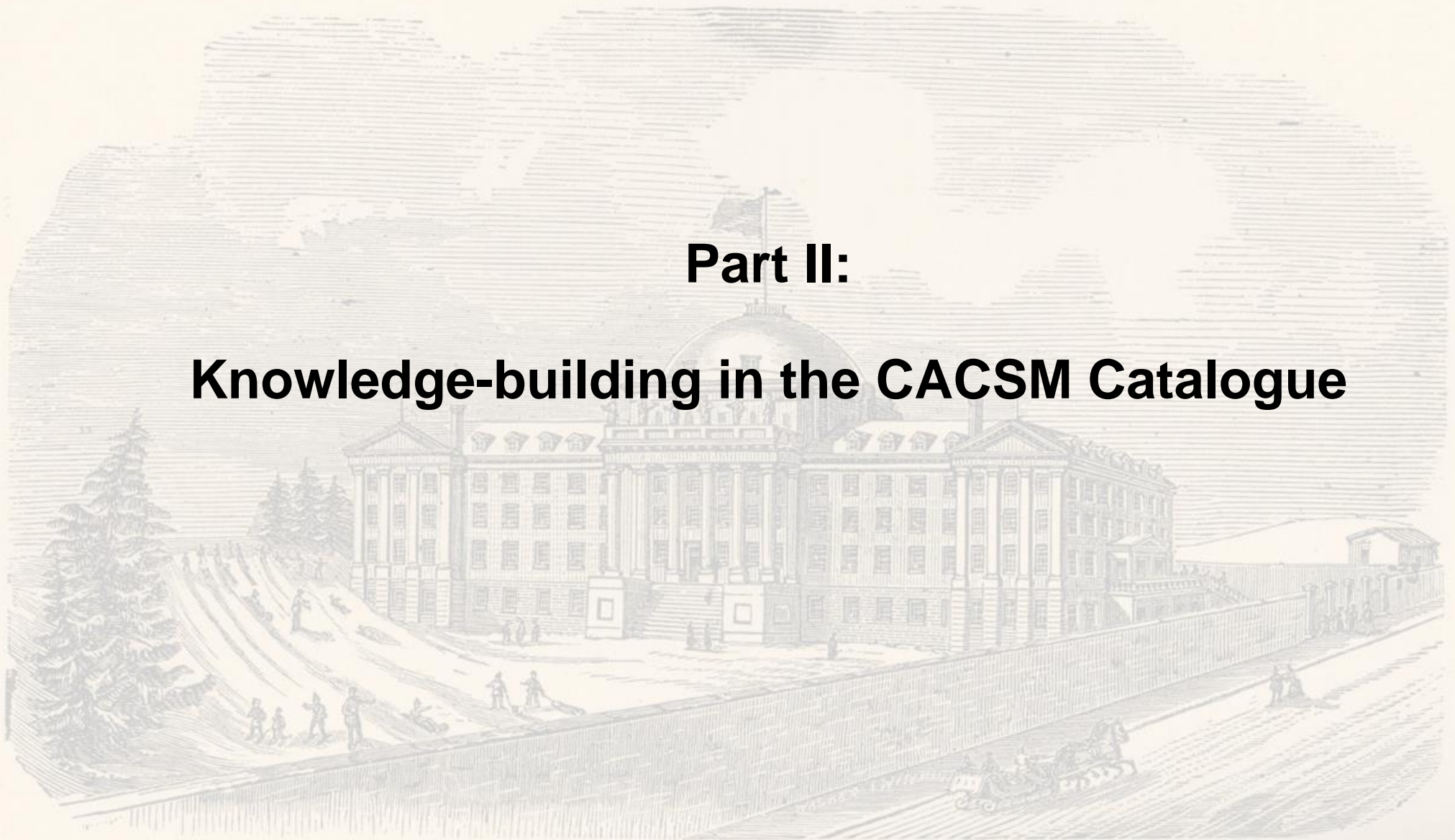


Arthur Melançon, S.J. (1879-1941)



Part II:

Knowledge-building in the CACSM Catalogue



From Exhibition to Catalogue

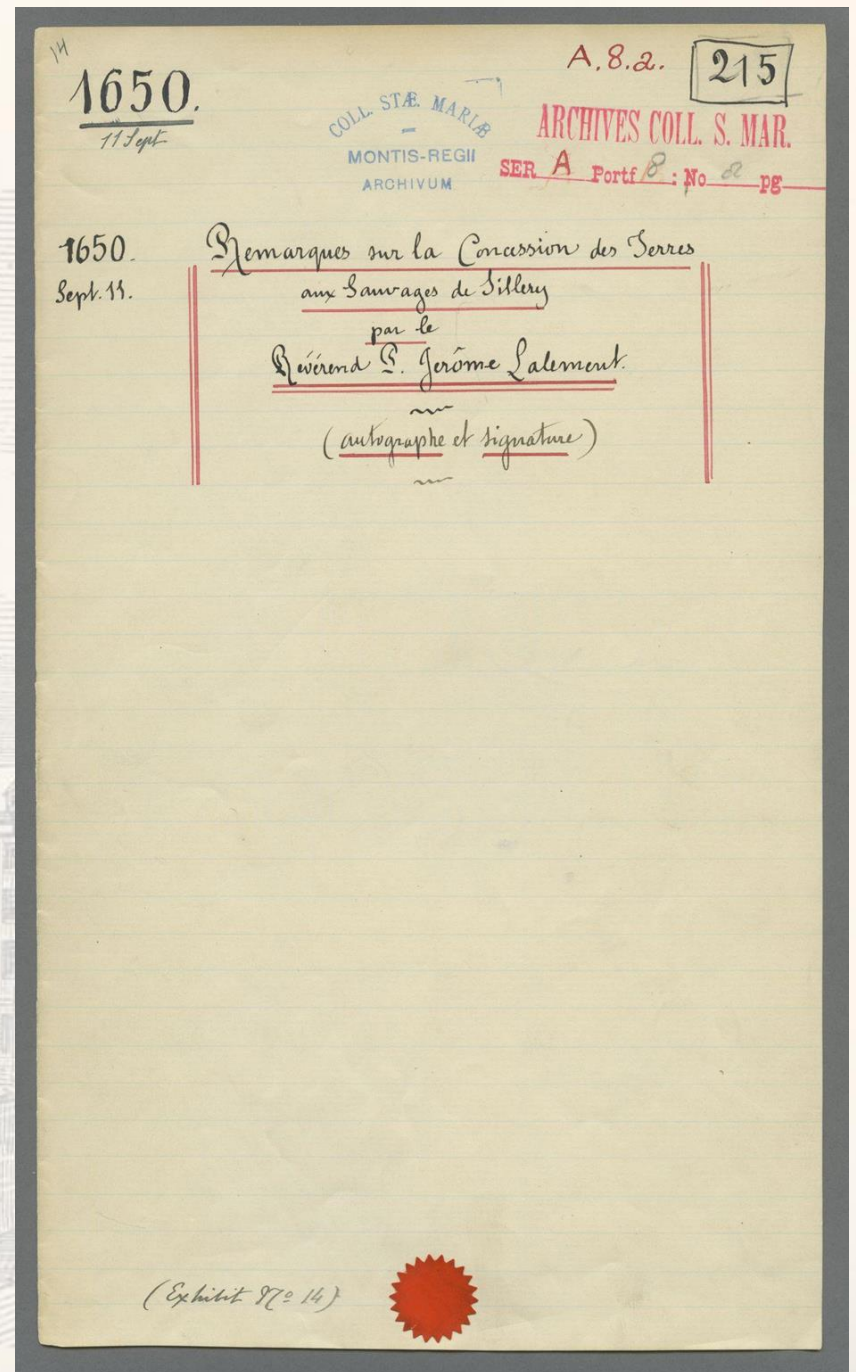
1904 Louisiana
Purchase Exposition

“ [...] to make people
talk about
missionaries, to
spread knowledge of
them among the
American people”

Jones (1919)



Arthur E. Jones, S.J.



Land and Indigenous Sovereignty

copie sur fiches.

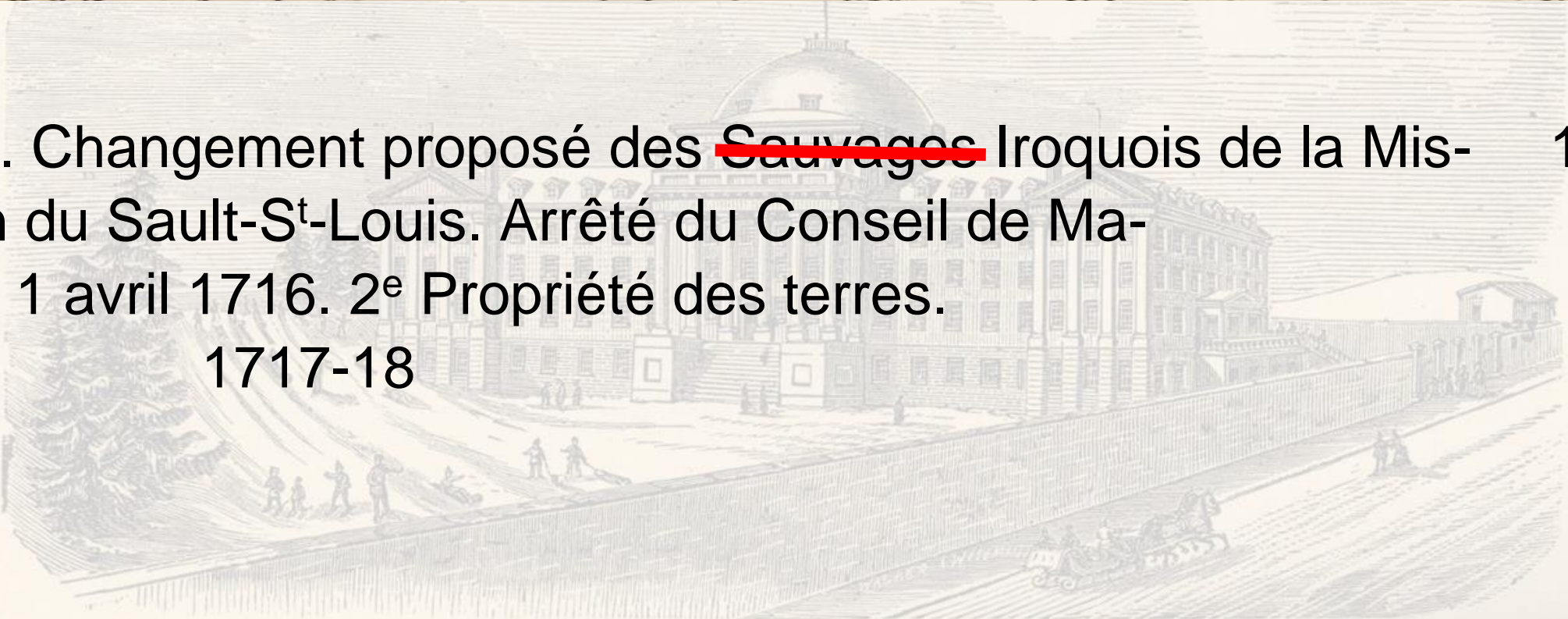
Biens des Jésuites			
1001	Notre Dame Des Anges ou Charlesbourg		
	Concession	10 mars	1626
	Description		1667
	Amortissement	12 mai	1678
	copie du Titre	10 mars	1626
	Titre nouvel	15 janv	1637
	Munnier, Maurice d'Héry	1698	1698
1002	Sle-Jésus	Prise de possession	16 août 1638
	Copie faite par M. Jacques Viger		

Q-1.1001-1002

Q-1.518

518 Changement proposé des ~~Sauvages~~ Iroquois de la Mis- 1716
sion du Sault-S^t-Louis. - Arrêté du Conseil de Ma-
rine 1 avril 1716. 2^e Propriété des terres. 1717-18
original
Sault St Louis - Fort - plan de Franquet.

518. Changement proposé des ~~Sauvages~~ Iroquois de la Mis- 1716
sion du Sault-S^t-Louis. Arrêté du Conseil de Ma-
rine 1 avril 1716. 2^e Propriété des terres.
1717-18



Q-1.1756

1756 - Traité -

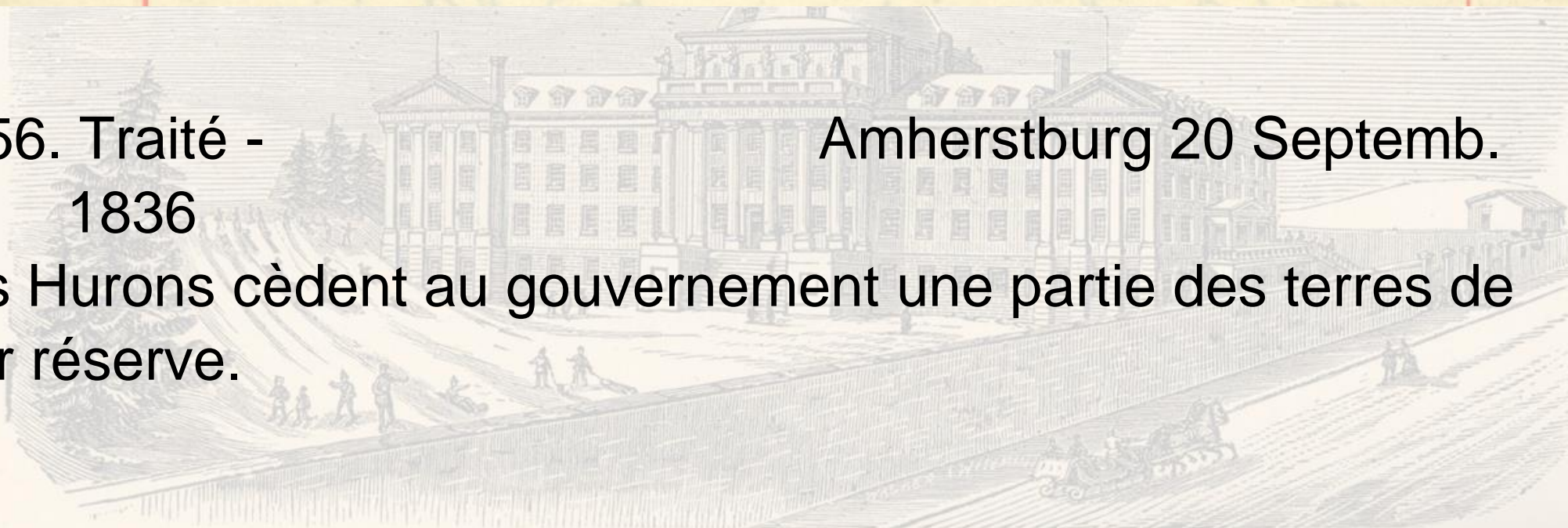
Amherstburg 20 Septemb. 1836

Les Hurons cèdent au gouvernement une partie des terres
de leur réserve -

1756. Traité -
1836

Amherstburg 20 Septemb.

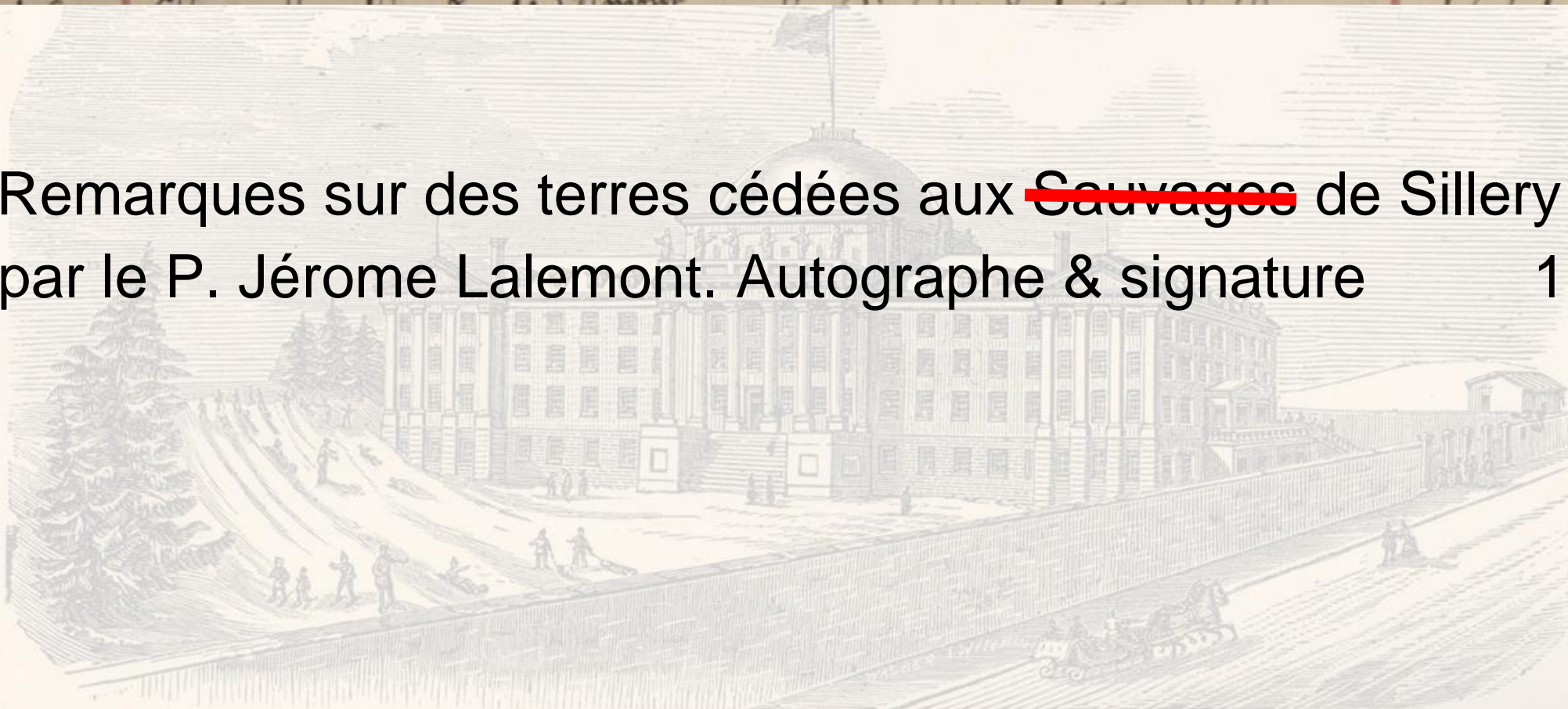
Les Hurons cèdent au gouvernement une partie des terres de
leur réserve.



Q-1.215

215 Remarques sur des terres cédées aux ~~Sauvages~~ de Sillery.
par le P. Jérôme Lalemont - Autographe & signature 1650

215 Remarques sur des terres cédées aux ~~Sauvages~~ de Sillery
par le P. Jérôme Lalemont. Autographe & signature 1650



Nicolas Point, S.J. (1799-1898)

1600 Mic. Point - Forts et perspectives du Missouri
1601. Biographies.

1602. Mic. Point - Souvenirs des Montagnes Rocheuses.
1603 Chasses.

1604 Mic. Point - Souvenirs de Manitouline.
1605 " de S. Acheul - S.^r Charles.
Sandwich.

Part III: The Many Afterlives of the CACSM Catalogue

- Creation of index cards from the 1950s to 1990s
- Cards divided by individual, location, subject



Sillery

1650

215

Remarques sur la concession de Terres

Aux ~~Sauvages~~ de Sillery.

11 septembre 1650

ORIGINAL

Autographe et signature du P. Jérôme Lalemant.

Irquois

1694

✓4013 Fonds Rochemonteix, p. 315

23 mai 1694: 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

Q-1.4013

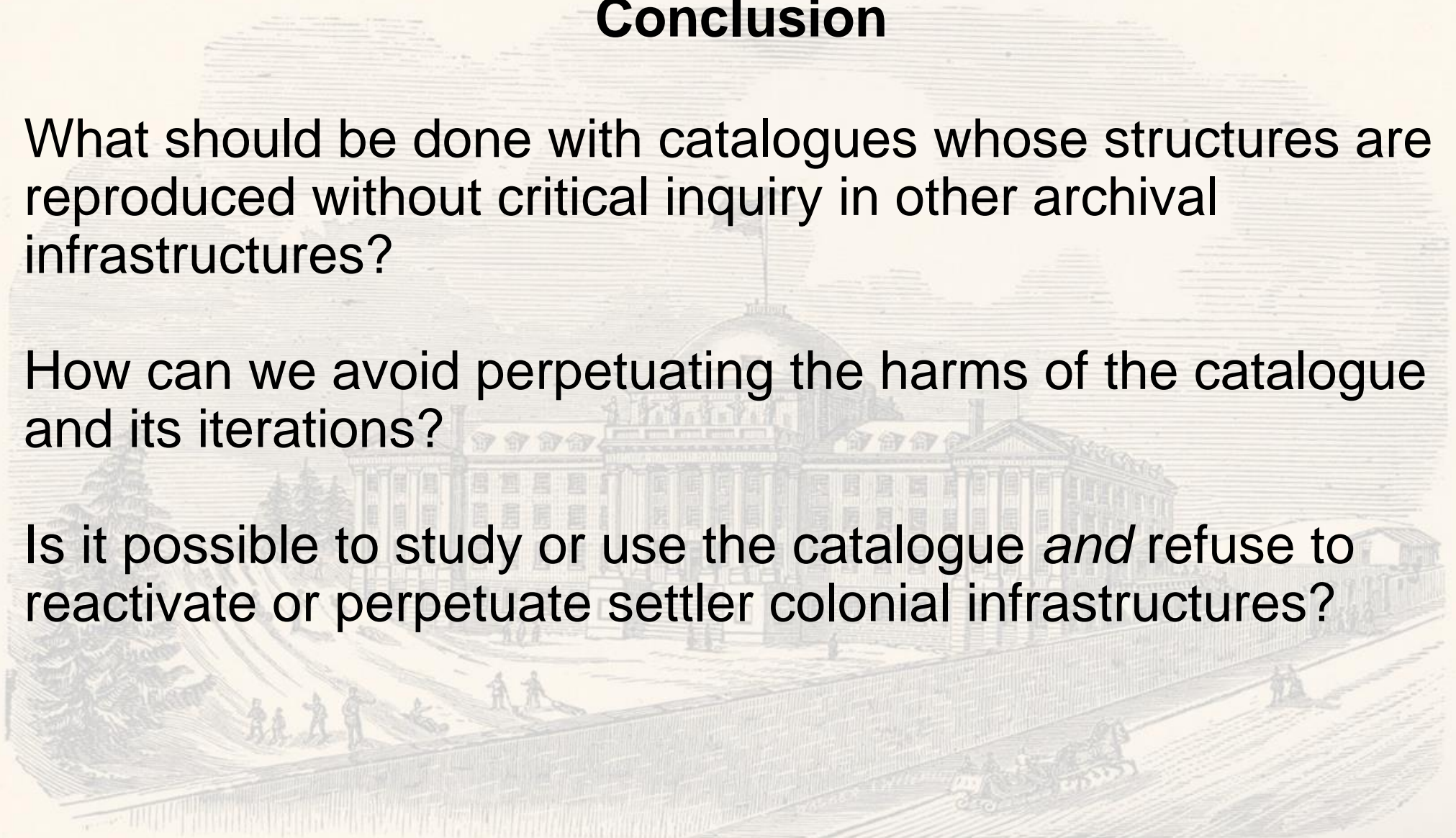
4013 - | Canada - cf. Table des matières - | 110105

Conclusion

What should be done with catalogues whose structures are reproduced without critical inquiry in other archival infrastructures?

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?



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Thank you!

Merci!

Questions?

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