Meet Me at the Wayside Cross:
A Pilgrimage into Collective Memory

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Table of Contents

Abstract

Inhabiting the popular imagination of generations of Québécois and yet seldom noticed, over 3,000 monumental crosses adorn the roads of the province of Québec. Once at the center of ritual practices rooted in quotidian farm life, these wayside crosses continue to perform vital functions for Québécois folk by acting as evokers of collective memory. Following an autoethnographic model, this thesis examines how the *croix de chemin* fosters conversations about Québécois identity. More so, it foregrounds how affect, produced by sensory experiences, shapes an ever-evolving collective memory that remains intrinsically linked to these cultural artefacts.

Résumé

Habitant l'imaginaire populaire de générations de Québécois et pourtant peu remarquées, plus de 3 000 croix monumentales ornent les routes du Québec. Autrefois au centre de pratiques rituelles ancrées dans la vie quotidienne à la ferme, ces croix de chemin continuent de remplir des fonctions vitales pour les Québécois en agissant comme évocateurs de la mémoire collective. Suivant un modèle autoethnographique, cette thèse examine comment la croix de chemin favorise les conversations sur l'identité québécoise. Plus encore, cela met en avant la façon dont l'affect, produit par les expériences sensorielles, façonne une mémoire collective en constante évolution qui reste intrinsèquement liée à ces artefacts culturels.

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We speak so much of memory because there is so little of it left.

—Pierre Nora[1]

[1] Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," 7.

Introduction

J'ai roulé quatre cents milles	I drove four hundred miles
Sous un ciel fâché	Under an angry sky
Aux limites de la ville	At the edge of the city
Mon cœur a clenché	My heart sank
Les gros flashes apparaissent	Big flashes appear
Dans mon âme égarée	In my lost soul
Les fantômes se dressent	The ghosts rise up
À chaque pouce carré	At every square inch
Revenir d'exil	Returning from exile
Comporte des risques	Involves risks
Comme rentrer un' aiguille	Like inserting a needle
Dans un vieux disque	In an old record
Ouais ben, y a eu ben du progrès	Yeah well, there's been a lot of progress
Ben d'l'asphalte, ainsi d'suite	Lots of asphalt, and so on
J'me demande qui je serais	I wonder who I would be
Si j'tais resté icitte	If I had stayed here.

—Richard Desjardins, "…et j'ai couché dans mon char."[2]

In 1990, my parents first met in the town of Rouyn-Noranda, commencing a love story that brought about my birth. That same year, singer-songwriter Richard Desjardins evoked a series of haunting feelings that came to him upon leaving the city of Montreal and returning to his hometown of Rouyn-Noranda. Wondering who he might have been if he had stayed, the author uncovers an affective reality felt by countless Québécois folk with rural ties who have moved to the city: a sinking heart, a looming specter, a certain what-if. The road takes on both spatial and temporal qualities, marking the distance between the rural and urban, between past and present, between what was and what could be. For Abitibiens, Highway 117 is the main artery of our lives—the sole way in which we travel from Montreal to Abitibi. It is a road I travel several times a year, and one that is dotted with countless makeshift crosses commemorating those who have tragically died in road accidents. Echoing the forms of these crosses are the much more

[2] Richard Desjardins, "…et j'ai couché dans mon char," track 5 on *Tu m'aimes tu*, Les Éditions Foukinic, 1990. All translations are my own unless otherwise specified.

imposing *croix de chemin*, the monumental crosses that likewise adorn the highway as well as rural roads hidden within the most remote parishes. Measuring five to six meters in height and often lavishly ornamented, the *croix de chemin*, or wayside cross, dominates the Québécois landscape and popular imagination.

This thesis examines *croix de chemin* as markers of collective memory, arguing that they may be understood as *lieux de mémoire.* Theorized by Pierre Nora, the term refers to "any significant entity, whether material or nonmaterial in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community."[3] More specifically, as mnemonic cultural artefacts, wayside crosses take on a central role in grounding Québécois identity: They mark a continuous ancestral lineage between generations despite the loss of tradition while allowing distant members of a community to reconnect with the past and subsequently with each other. In accordance, my work speaks of a longing for affective connections between individuals, underlining how these can be generated by a shared understanding of the past that is evoked by the wayside cross. Places of memory at once immobilize time while also offering the potential for ever-changing meanings through their mutable qualities: "The *lieux* we speak of … are mixed, hybrid, mutant, bound intimately with life and death, with time and eternity; enveloped in a Möbius strip of the collective and the individual, the sacred and the profane, the immutable and the mobile."[4] Thus, the *croix de chemin* plays a pivotal role in shaping collective visions for the future of Québec by fostering important conversations regarding how we understand the nuances of Québécois identity through the constructed phenomenon of collective memory.

[3] Nora, "From *Lieux de memoire* to Realms of Memory," xvvii.
[4] Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," 19.

Collective memory exists within a social framework and is defined as the memories shared by members of a specific group, which may be of any size, ranging from a few individuals to an entire nation.[5] It serves to create and maintain the identity of the group, who in turn works to uphold these memories.[6] The group most closely connected to the *croix de chemin* is composed of predominantly working-class, francophone, Catholic, Québécois *de souche*.[7] In what follows, I examine collective memory held by this larger collective as well as by tighter familial circles. Every group, and every subgroup, has its own unique collective memory, and it is crucial to attend to such diversity as memories may be specific to family life, religious groups, and social classes.[8] For my examined group, these categories often overlap due to intrinsic ties between class, family, and faith in Québécois circles. In rural regions of Québec, the Catholic faith is inescapable. The land itself is visibly demarcated by a lingering Catholicism: Villages are centered on churches and defined by parishes sporting the names of saints, and the *rangs* of these villages are lined with numerous wayside crosses.[9]

Departing from Montreal and driving into numerous rural communities, I documented seventy wayside crosses within a 25,000-square-kilometer area in my home region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue, which is located on the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe.[10] Contrasting the role of the wayside cross as meeting ground, both physically and metaphorically, "Abitibi" is an Algonquin place name meaning "where the waters divide," outlining how the region lies on the watershed of two waterways, one heading north to the James Bay, and one flowing south to

[5] Corning and Schuman, *Generations and Collective Memo*ry, 1.
[6] Corning and Schuman, *Generations and Collective Memo*ry, 1.
[7] The term *de souche* refers to individuals whose ancestry traces back to 17th and 18th century French settlers.
[8] Corning and Schuman, *Generations and Collective Memo*ry, 6; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 40.
[9] *Rangs* are roads flanked by long, narrow rectangular strips of farmland that make up Québec's countryside.
[10] See table 3 for a map of my documented crosses. See table 4 for a list of crosses by location.

the Saint-Lawrence.[11] I stress this fact because the name Abitibi reminds us that the *croix de chemin* is intrinsically tied to the land—to unceded territory belonging to diverse Indigenous groups. In accordance, although the wayside cross may prove central to the identity of one group, it may act as a visible reminder of omnipresent colonialism for the traditional keepers of this land.

I craft my thesis in a series of stories which take shape upon performing essential fieldwork and speaking to a variety of community members about specific wayside crosses. In the opening section, I present my first sensorial encounter with a Montreal cross, underlining its role in world-making while showcasing the contrast that exists between these age-old artefacts and urban environments. Then, I explore a cross in the sector of McWatters, which I revisited over a period of several months, highlighting its position as a product of ambient faith and underscoring the role of commemoration in the production of collective memory. Centering on crosses located in Bellecombe and Gallichan, the following section explores the power of communication in terms of transmitting this collective memory across groups and generations, paying particular attention to affective experiences of love and trauma. Lastly, I enter agricultural territory and encounter a series of *croix de chemin* in Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues that evoke the strong links between land, family, and faith, foregrounding the importance of caretaking and conservation in relation to the maintenance of collective identity.

Literature Review and Methodological Approach

Research on the *croix de chemin* remains relatively sparse, having reached its peak in the latter half of the twentieth century yet stalling within a few decades. Earlier scholarship on the *croix de*

[11] This was brought to my attention by my childhood friend Olivier Beaudoin, who in turn learned of its meaning from Emilio Wawatie, Algonquin-Anishinaabe musician, filmmaker, storyteller, educator, and researcher from Kitigan Zibi and Barrier Lake.

chemin, namely the work of Paul Carpentier, Jean Simard, and John. R. Porter and Léopold Désy, written between the early 1970s and early 1990s, employ mainly a traditional ethnographic model, aiming to inventory wayside crosses and concretize them as objects of study worthy of conservation.[12] However, more recent work by Hillary Kaell (2016, 2017), while also successfully placing the wayside cross within a complex cultural context, has shifted the focus from the object to that of caretakers—a poignant term she employs for those who take on the role of maintaining crosses and from which I take inspiration—foregrounding their practices, beliefs, and stories.[13] Building upon Kaell's ground-breaking work and deviating from the ethnographic approach that has previously dominated research on the *croix de chemin*, my research employs an *auto*ethnographic methodology. As the name suggests, this research method entails looking both inwards, "into our identities, thoughts, and experiences," as well as outwards, "into our relationships, communities, and cultures."[14] It is a method that foregrounds a researcher's lived experience, demands careful self-reflection, and "balances intellectual and methodological rigor, emotion, and creativity."[15] Distancing oneself from the subject matter at hand has long been the norm in academia, offering the false promise of objective and neutral research.[16] However, removing myself from my topic would not only prove impossible but would be a disservice to my research. I remain forever linked to the *croix de chemin* and the culture from which it arose. Moreover, my unique position as an Abitibien who left the region to study in the city allows me to straddle the lines between insider and outsider, remaining critical of my positionality. This

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[12] Porter and Désy, *Calvaires et croix de chemins du Québec*; Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*; Simard, *L'art religieux des routes du Québec*; Simard and Milot. *Les croix de chemin du Québec: inventaire sélectif et trésor*. These inventories were built upon partial inquiries, namely that of Marius Barbeau in 1942.
[13] Kaell, "Les croix de Chemin du Québec et la naissance du dévotionnalisme Contemporain," "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," and "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road."
[14] Adams, Holman Jones, and Ellis, *Autoethnography*, 46.
[15] Adams, Holman Jones, and Ellis, *Autoethnography*, 1-2.
[16] Bochner, "On First-Person Narrative Scholarship: Autoethnography as Acts of Meaning," 159.

methodology is particularly effective for a study of collective memory, which itself is rooted in common lived experience. In the words of autoethnographer Carolyn Ellis, autoethnography, allows us to "find commonality of spirit, companionship in our sorrow, balm for our wounds, and solace in reaching out to those in need."[17] Collective memory evokes similar sentiments, as it generates affective bonds between members of a community and ultimately brings them closer together through a shared understanding of the past.

In line with this autoethnographic model, I do not position myself as a detached observer of *croix de chemin*, but instead prioritize affect as experienced through the senses. I travel through treacherous terrain just to feel the cracking wood of a cross with my own hands. I sense the heat of July or the frigid air of December as I take countless photographs of a cross. I take my time, I pause, and I allow feelings of delight, pain, sorrow, and awe to wash over me. Through an embodied engagement with these crosses and the environment in which they are situated, I develop an affective epistemology where feeling begins to elucidate my understanding of the world. As Yannis Hamilakis underscores, sensory experiences "allow us to be 'touched,' to be 'moved.'"[18] This sensorial engagement with the material world activates collective memory through "practices, experiences, rituals, and performances that produce and enact, voluntarily or involuntarily, remembering and forgetting."[19] Paying attention to sensory engagement prompts us to acknowledge complex entanglements between subjects and material things. As Bill Brown notes: "The story of objects asserting themselves as things … is … the story of how the thing really names less an object than a particular subject-object relation."[20] Tim Ingold likewise writes that "things are active not because they are imbued with agency but because of ways in which

[17] Ellis, *Revision: Autoethnographic Reflections on Life and Work*, 207-208.
[18] Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses*, 124-125.
[19] Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses*, 6.
[20] Bill Brown, "Thing Theory," 4.

they are caught up in these currents of the lifeworld."[21] When visiting a cross, I not only pay attention to its materiality but to everything that comes to life within the space that exists between myself and the cross. It is thus not the object itself but rather a relation between subject and object that evokes affect. As both noun and verb, affect "bypasses the subject–object divide, and connects with the sensorial field as a space of flows and encounters, as a sensorial contact zone."[22] Moreover, autoethnographers ultimately shape themselves into an object of research, thus breaking the traditional boundaries between researcher and studied object.[23]

This approach serves as basis for my research, as the *croix de chemin* is renowned for blending into the Québec landscape until its *thingness* makes itself known through a variety of environmental factors. Immersed in this "sensorial contact zone," both my situational- and self-awareness grow. My senses take me closer to my sense of self by igniting a plethora of memories—bringing me not only to my own childhood, but also connecting me to my ancestors and to a time before my own. Accordingly, my research works against notions of time as "linear and successive, cumulative and irreversible" and instead draws from Henri Bergson's "notion of experiential and mnemonic time" where "every perception of a present moment is replete with memories."[24] This sense of time proves crucial as, unlike personal memory, which is ephemeral, collective memory "transcends individual human temporality."[25] Similarly, autoethnography foregrounds not only a single moment but "connected lives across the curve of time."[26] Grounded by sensorial encounters resulting in poignant affective responses, I examine my own present relation to a series of wayside crosses, and through an entry point into collective

[21] Tim Ingold, "Materials Against Materiality," 1.
[22] Hamilakis, *Archaeology and the Senses*, 124-125.
[23] Bochner, "On First-Person Narrative Scholarship: Autoethnography as Acts of Meaning," 158.
[24] Hamilakis, *Archeology and the Senses*, 122.
[25] Russell, "Collective Memory before and after Halbwachs," 794.
[26] Bochner, "On First-Person Narrative Scholarship: Autoethnography as Acts of Meaning," 158.

memory, understand them through the eyes of both those who came before me and those who shall supersede me. In this sense, past, present, and future fuse together through sensorial engagement with the *croix de chemin*.

Historical Overview of *Croix de Chemin*

The history of wayside crosses is extensive, dating back centuries in their most rudimentary forms. In medieval Europe, they adorned pilgrimage routes and served as protection for pilgrims.[27] In North America, the first monumental crosses were erected in the sixteenth century as a means of claiming Indigenous lands under the name of the King of France.[28] However, the modern conception of the *croix de chemin* dates to the eighteenth century.[29] By this point, wayside crosses had developed a distinct appearance and many had been erected on the road between Montreal and Québec known as the Chemin du Roy.[30] In 1740, a typical parish held on average three crosses.[31] These crosses are never planted randomly but are usually located either at elevated points for maximum visibility or at the most convenient location for the people of a *rang*, often at intersections.[32]

With the escalation of colonizing efforts in the nineteenth century, *croix de chemin* began to appear in rural areas that were being settled and farmed. Additionally, there was an increased dissemination of religious images, which also resulted in a proliferation of the *croix de chemin* and the ritual practices centered on them.[33] Many crosses were erected during *Années saintes* ("holy years," or Jubilees in the Catholic Church), namely in 1933 and 1950.[34] For example, a

[27] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 132.
[28] Simard, *Les arts sacrés au Québec*, 251.
[29] Simard, Milot, and Bouchard, *Un patrimoine méprisé*, 16.
[30] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 132.
[31] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 42.
[32] Porter & Desy, *Calvaires et croix de chemins du Québec*, 122-125.
[33] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 42.
[34] Porter and Desy, *Calvaires et croix de chemins du Québec*, 74.

whopping 507 crosses were erected in 1950 alone.[35] This was followed by a slow period of decline, first occurring in increasingly urbanized areas and slowly affecting rural regions.[36] In 1979, Jean Simard estimated that there were roughly 2,800 *croix de chemin* within the borders of Québec.[37] Following attempts at creating inventories and registers, this number began to inflate. By 1995, Simard had accounted for 3,586 *croix de chemin*.[38] Today, the growing repertoire of Monique Bellemare serves as an important resource to researchers, including myself.[39] By 2014, she had photographed and inventoried more than 800 crosses with the help of community members. Bellemare has listed 192 crosses in the region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue. By these numbers, these account for 6% of crosses in all of Québec. However, the region, with its 148,493 inhabits, accounts only for 1.7% of Québec's total population of 8.7 million.[40] Put another way, there exists one cross for roughly every 2,400 inhabits in Québec, but there exists one cross per roughly 770 inhabits in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. This unusually high concentration demonstrates how *croix de chemin* dominate the province's countryside and thus play a key role in shaping the collective memory of rural folk.

My study draws on the important ethnographic scholarship of Jean Simard, Paul Carpentier, and John R. Porter and Léopold Désy, which laid the groundwork for the study of wayside crosses. At times, my autoethnographic approach complicates the understanding of *croix de chemin*, however. For instance, Carpentier and Simard have typically classified *croix de chemin* into four categories organized by religious function: The *croix de foundation* (founding

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[35] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du* signe," 55.
[36] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 42.
[37] Simard, Milot, and Bouchard, *Un patrimoine méprisé*, 10. Crosses are also documented in francophone communities outside Québec, namely in New Brunswick and Ontario.
[38] Simard, *L'art religieux des routes du Québec*, 8.
[39] Bellemare and I exchanged several emails, and she was pleased to hear that someone my age was interested in cultural patrimony. I followed her repertoire, and she shared a plethora of resources with me.
[40] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, Tableau de bord de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue édition 2023*.

cross) is a cross planted as a claim to a territory, such as those erected by Jacques Cartier in 1534; the *croix commémorative* (commemorative cross) is planted to remind a local population of a specific event; the *croix de dévotion* (devotional cross) is a general type used for prayer or ritual practice; lastly, the *croix votive* (votive cross) is erected specifically in relation to a wish or promise.[41] However, during the course of my research, I came to realize that these categories, established through an ethnographic lens over forty years ago, are highly mutable and commonly overlap. It is often impossible to know the original purpose of a cross, and they can generate practices that cut across the four categories or foster new practices. *Croix de chemin* are not only religious in function, but also possess practical functions, acting as reference points as well as a gathering places for the people of a community.[42] The precise function of a specific cross thus cannot always be neatly classified into one of the four main categories and instead is often malleable and open to a variety of interpretations.

In addition to the four types of crosses outlined, there exist three distinct typologies: simple crosses, crosses with the instruments of the Passion, and calvaries.[43] A simple cross possesses little to no ornamentation (fig. 1).[44] A *croix au instruments de la Passion* features instruments employed during the Passion of Christ (fig. 2). Also known as the *Arma Christi*, these symbols reference Christ's suffering before his death on the cross. These commonly include: the lance which pierced Christ's right side; the sponge, dipped in vinegar and offered to him to drink; the ladder which served to bring the cadaver to the ground; the hammer, nails, and

[41] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 41; Simard, *L'art religieux des routes du Québec*, 40. Many votive crosses were erected more specifically as ex-votos, meaning they were erected upon the fulfilment of a wish.
[42] Levasseur, *L'art populaire dans le paysage québécois*, 81.
[43] See table 1 for the prevalence of each category amongst my documented crosses.
[44] Some simple crosses have a heart at their axis and others have lost their instruments over time.

pincers used to attach and remove Christ from the cross.[45] Lastly, the third type, the *calvaire*, features Christ on the cross flanked by the Virgin Mary and John the Apostle.[46]

In addition to the numerous surviving crosses, researchers can also draw evidence from visual images of wayside crosses, which show a great deal of stylistic continuity across centuries. One of the earliest representations is a sketch recorded in the 1749 journal of Finnish-Swedish explorer Pehr Kalm (fig. 3).[47] Evidently, the most striking difference between Kalm's sketch and crosses erected today is the sheer number of instruments present. However, many of these elements continued to be echoed in crosses erected over 150 years later (fig. 4). The earliest known photographs of *croix de chemin* were taken by Édouard-Zotique Massicotte, who photographed nearly 400 wayside crosses between 1922 and 1926.[48] The crosses presented in these images resemble those of today (figs. 5-7). Early photographs of crosses in the region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue also exist, demonstrating the importance of hastily erecting a cross in the absence of a church (fig. 8).[49] Crosses erected today continue to exhibit a strikingly similar visual idiom 275 years after Kalm's sketch, showing minimal stylistic change. This visual continuity plays a key role regarding collective memory as continued traditions are central in maintaining ancestral links.

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[45] Certain instruments were pulled directly from religious texts, while others were conceived from popular imagination. See table 2 for a detailed graph on the prevalence of instruments on my documented crosses.
[46] Although I document the *calvaires* I come across, these are not the main concern of my research as they are commonly erected by the clergy rather than by laypeople.
[47] Erected between Montreal and Trois Rivières, this *croix au instruments de la Passion* possesses several *Arma Christi* including the rooster, *titulus*, sun, hand, spear, hammer, ladder, pincers, sponge, vessel, and moon. The elements on the lower portion of the cross are not as easily discernable though appear to represent other *Arma Christi* less prominent on today's crosses: thirty pieces of silver, possibly a lantern or torch, a reed, and scourges.
[48] Porter and Désy, *Calvaires et croix de chemins du Québec*, 71.
[49] A short text on the verso of this photograph speaks of colonization in Abitibi. See figure 9.

The First Encounter: Jarring Juxtapositions at a Montreal Cross

Our journey begins not in my home region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue but in the bustling city of Montreal, as although *croix de chemin* continue to hold immense popularity in rural regions of the province, they can also be found hiding in plain sight in larger cities. Embarking on my research on wayside crosses, I felt the need to visit one in person. As objects of material culture crafted by working-class individuals, they demand to be seen in person and felt with living hands, much as they are experienced by those who carve, erect, and care for them. I thus scrolled through Monique Bellemare's inventory of crosses, browsing the section "agglomération de Montréal."[50] Painted in a classic white and red, and lavishly adorned, the last cross listed called to me (fig. 10). Situated on a small lot owned by Hydro-Québec at the intersection of boulevard Jean-Talon and rue Lucerne since 1945, the cross was originally erected on a plot of land owned by Victor Fortier in 1900.[51] Fortier's descendant Roger Daoust has repaired the cross on several occasions (1950, 1971, 1983), and it was fully restored by Pierre and Benoît Caron in 2015.[52] Upon reading these facts, I headed out the door with great excitement, eager to experience a cross in the flesh.

It was the 30th of May, a warm and humid day in the city. As I approached my destination, I kept verifying whether I was in the right place. The frenetic boulevard flanked by endless car dealerships seemed like no place for a wayside cross. And yet, there it was. Standing high, the *croix de chemin* was dwarfing. There was a certain glory to it, to be sure, yet a certain awkwardness, too. Located on a paved lot and wedged between two bulky cement blocks, the cross seemed utterly out of place (fig. 11). From every angle, its position seemed so absurd that I

[50] Bellemare has since moved the listing, so the cross is now listed under a section dedicated to Mont-Royal.
[51] Bellemare, "croix no 1" under Mont-Royal, *Les croix de chemin au Québec: un patrimoine à découvrir*.
[52] Bellemare, "croix no 1" under Mont-Royal, *Les croix de chemin au Québec: un patrimoine à découvrir*.

found myself giggling. A true post-modern pastiche, it was located only a few meters in front of the busy street, while a massive billboard advertising a realtor stood directly behind it. Most strikingly, positioned on its right-hand side and equipped with countless colorful luxury cars, was a Ferrari dealership. Created decades prior to the popularization of automobiles, the cross was most definitely the oldest object standing in this commercial area.[53] Even beyond its religious nature, it felt sacred, creating an oasis in a sea of grey. It stood firmly among the chaos, and yet it felt fragile. Wrapped with planks of wood, much in the way the city protects urban trees, the threat of vandalism appeared to loom.[54] The two slabs of cement also spoke of dangers; positioned at an intersection, I could not help but imagine a vehicle slamming into the cross at full speed. How was I to interpret this seemingly incongruous match? Working out possible angles for my research, I asked myself: Could the cross symbolize the resilience of faith and tradition in an increasingly modernized and secular society? Or, was there perhaps something deeper at play?

As I stood there contemplating the *croix de chemin*, I found precisely what I came searching for: the visceral effects of embodied viewership. The environment was far from peaceful, contrary to the quiet, intimate devotion usually associated with such a cross. There was neither grass nor soil to ground myself; gravel and asphalt had to suffice. Among the deafening sounds of cars rushing down the boulevard, the cross beckoned me to be still. While observing it from the front, the moon greeted me graciously (fig. 12). Watching from the back, the setting sun crept along its edges (fig. 13). Circling around the cross in awe, I was immersed in this delightful encounter between celestial forces. This shifting relationship between myself, the cross, and the cosmos was more than enough to instill within me a moment of profound reflection. I paused,

[53] However, having been repaired and restored several times, it is unclear which parts of the cross are original.
[54] Beneath this protective layer is a commemorative plaque, now completely hidden.

and I began to question my position within the world. I began to think of my own heritage. I thought of my ancestors, known or otherwise—of the hardworking, labouring men and women of my family. I thought of how they had left the Saint Lawrence region seeking a better life in Abitibi, and how in a twist of fate I found myself doing the opposite nearly a century later. I thought of the intense devotion they felt, and the reasons why such a cross might be erected: a demonstration of a community's faith, a need to heal, in thanks for a healthy child or a plentiful harvest. The *croix de chemin* is a talismanic force, to be sure.

The power of the *croix de chemin* derives from its close connections to the life of the community. In this sense, the wayside cross is commonly understood as an emanation of popular religion, often put into contrast with the official dogma of the Catholic Church.[55] Prioritizing the perspectives of community members, I follow Hillary Kaell's assertion that "for Québécois caretakers there is no easy distinction between 'culture' and 'religion' or 'popular' and 'institutional' Catholicism."[56] Moreover, it is fruitful to underline how this faith was rooted in quotidian agrarian life from which specific practices arose. Many of these practices were, and continue to be, directly linked with the *croix de chemin.* The earth, moon, and sun play important roles in agrarian rituals, and cyclical prayers occurring at precise moments in the year would take place at the cross.[57] Prayers coincided with times for the sowing of seeds and harvest, and sought to avert disasters such as insect infestations, droughts, and floods.[58] These rituals, and the

[55] Simard, Genest, Labonté, and Bouchard, *Pour passer le temps: artistes populaires du Québec*, 12. As understood by Fernand Dumont, the former embodies a personal faith rather than studies of the sacred, prioritizes simple beliefs rather than abstract theology, typically exists within traditional societies rather than in urban environments, and is rooted in quotidian lived reality rather than in official doctrine.
[56] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 154.
[57] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 102-103.
[58] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 105-108. In these cases, the *neuvaine*—a series of prayers occurring over the course of nine days—would be practiced at the cross. Carpentier notes the presence of this practice at 26.53% of his crosses.

wayside cross itself more broadly, reflect "the double feeling of fear in the face of the unknown cosmos but also the desire to master the daily microcosm."[59]

Both local and cosmic, the *croix de chemin* is not inserted into a pre-existent world but rather creates that world. Creators and caretakers tell stories and perpetuate traditions through their craft and subsequently exert a certain power—that of shaping and understanding the world.[60] As a cultural artefact, the *croix de chemin* serves to fashion, transmit, and preserve collective memory.[61] Wayside crosses are commonly blessed upon erection. These benedictions were considered a major event in a parish and were often commemorated in local newspapers (figs. 14 & 15). Kaell writes that through these benediction rituals, "the cross becomes what Mikhail Bakhtin calls a chronotope—it points in the geography of a community where time and space intersect and fuse."[62] This notion is crucial, emphasizing a cross' role as a crossroads for past, present, and even future. In the case of replacement crosses (which make up the majority of new crosses), three distinct groups are joined as one during this blessing ceremony: "contemporary builders, descendants of the original family to embody the ancestral past, and the priest in his vestments."[63] These key players allow the cross to take on its role as crossroads, and through benediction, "their experience of the cross shifts from a physical one … to a cosmic one: it becomes … an instrument through which God can be present and attend to their prayers"[64] In simple terms, this is how the cross becomes activated. Unlike sowing rituals, the blessing of crosses is a practice which continues to this day.[65] Through ceremonial blessings, which are heightened by the presence of these descendants, the cross evokes the continued tradition of

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[59] André Leroi-Gourhan in Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 387. Translated from the French.
[60] Michel Côté in Levasseur, *L'art populaire dans le paysage québécois*, 9. Translated from the French.
[61] Fischer and O'Mara, "Chapter 1 - Neural, psychological, and social foundations of collective memory," 15.
[62] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 150-151.
[63] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 150-151.
[64] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 151-152.
[65] Joly notes that at least twenty crosses were blessed between 2006 and 2008.

croix de chemin—its 300-year-old legacy in Québec. This collective memory, in turn, can anchor a living individual to their long-lost ancestors, to the land which they cultivated, and to God, giving a sense of continuity despite significant societal changes.

The cross that stood before me in Montreal appeared to be in phenomenal shape. The bright white and warm red paint seemed fresh. The cross' edges were sharp and its ornaments fully intact, including a rooster which crowns the cross.[66] These elements suggest that the cross is still continuously maintained to this day.[67] I felt my neck starting to hurt, yet I could not stop myself from looking up—to the cross, to the heavens, to the unusual sight of the rooster's wattle seen from below. I could not help but touch the cross, my fingers following a crack that went up its right side. My gaze followed it too, ending at a piece of metal that reinforced the cross' axis and which hinted at a desire for preservation through the introduction of durable materials (fig. 16).[68]

The material qualities of wayside crosses often index practices that continue today. On this cross, a little niche was carved out at a reachable height; it features a figurine of the Virgin Mary encased behind clear plastic (fig. 18).[69] I understood this protected Virgin as both a literal and symbolic preservation of age-old practices; it was as if she stood behind a museum vitrine for all to see all while maintaining her original devotional purpose. In fact, the presence of the Virgin echoes the most common practice occurring at the *croix de chemin*: the *mois de Marie* (month of Mary).[70] During the month of May, which Catholics dedicate to the Virgin, devotions

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[66] The rooster is part of the *Arma Christi*, as a rooster is said to have crowed upon Peter's third denial of Christ.
[67] This is not true of every cross. Many have long been forgotten and have fallen into disrepair.
[68] This cross matches a Montreal cross photographed by Massicotte in 1922 almost perfectly. Whether this is an exact match or simply two crosses belonging to the same stylistic family, it perfectly exemplifies the relatively unchanging nature of the *croix de chemin.* See figure 17.
[69] Many crosses are equipped with a niche, used to house the figurine of a saint. See table 5 for a breakdown of niches in my documented crosses. Larger statues depicting intercessory figures, sometimes placed within niches or grottos, are also common and fulfil the same devotional function as niches. See table 6.
[70] Simard, Milot, and Bouchard, *Un patrimoine méprisé*, 11.

to the Virgin Mary through collective prayer would take place at the *croix de chemin*.[71] In 1979, Jean Simard noted that the *mois de Marie* was still practiced, though was increasingly rare, especially due to a fear of being struck by cars while praying at the cross.[72] My gut feeling rang true; one cannot help but feel as if a car could come at any second. These traditions are often at odds with our modern world yet persevere nonetheless, and although the Second Vatican Council ended what is colloquially known as the Marian Century, the month of Mary is still practiced at many wayside crosses today.[73] In fact, in 2017, Kaell joined a group of twenty-five worshippers around a cross in Saint-Jovite to recite prayers during the *mois de Marie*—something they repeat every Tuesday during the month of May.[74] Kaell, much as I did, noticed the sounds of cars whizzing behind her, noting their proximity to the road. One man began with the ancient prayer, "Hail Mary, full of grace …" and the rest responded, "Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners, now and at the hour of our death. Amen."[75] The combination of this timeless prayer occurring specifically at a wayside cross further reveals the cross' intercessory role—not only between people and God, but between past and present.

Many of these practices persist in agrarian areas. In accordance, in Québec, the rural is often construed as "immutable and timeless."[76] With a penchant for ancestral reverence, I began to feel an intense desire to visit wayside crosses back home. However, my mind came back from the fields of rural Québec to the cross' peculiar position on asphalt. In that moment, I understood that regardless of these various jarring juxtapositions, Québécois folk across the province—even in the most urban areas of Montreal—felt the need to preserve their heritage and honour a certain

[71] Le Réseau de diffusion des archives du Québec, "Le mois de Marie."
[72] Simard, Milot, and Bouchard, *Un patrimoine méprisé*, 11.
[73] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses,"146.
[74] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses,"130-131.
[75] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses,"131. "Je vous salue, Marie, pleine de grâces … Sainte Marie, Mère de Dieu, priez pour nous pécheurs, maintenant et à l'heure de notre mort. Amen."
[76] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses,"131. 153.

legacy. Looking at the cross one more time, I smiled as I began walking away from it, recognizing its position as an age-old, fortified symbol yet one that often goes unnoticed among the deafening city traffic, real estate advertisements, and luxury car dealerships.[77]

At the Intersection of Past and Present: The Role of Commemoration

I arrived in Abitibi in late June 2023 and spent my days accompanying my mother as she ran errands in town. On one particular day, she and I drove down that one road we have known all our lives, Highway 117. Along this road, between the major hubs of Val-d'Or and Rouyn-Noranda (the towns where I grew up and was born in, respectively) my parents built a house on a thirty-acre plot in the summer of 2022. Near this house stands a wayside cross hidden in plain sight (fig. 19). Despite having been erected for decades and being partially visible from the 117—a road my parents have travelled innumerable times over the course of their lives—none of us had ever seen this cross. It seemed as if it could only be found by those who actively sought it out.

The *croix de chemin* inhabits a peculiar space: it is seen, but rarely looked at; it is known, but seldom spoken of. Kaell accordingly positions the wayside cross as a form of ambient faith, a type of "religiosity that filters in and out of sensory and conscious space."[78] She notes that they usually remain invisible "unless a cross 'calls' someone to it."[79] This 'call' does not simply

[77] In March of 2024, Monique Bellemare noted that the cross was unfortunately no longer standing, attributing its fall to strong winds experienced in the region. In an email correspondence, however, she told me of rumours suggesting that the cross may have been destroyed by opponents of Bill 21. This is, of course, to be taken with a grain of salt, though a deeper exploration of religious tensions in Québec could be necessary. I visited what was left of the cross on a gloomy day in early April. Only its base remained—a wrecked piece of wood lodged in metal casing. Trash—an empty Gatorade bottle and plastic wrappers—was lodged behind it. The boards that once protected its base now lay flat on the ground. I now realize they may have been a desperate attempt at giving the cross extra support. This iteration of the cross was erected in 2015 and thus stood for less than a decade. More than ever, I feel blessed to have experienced it in person before its demise. It lives on forever in my memory, and although much sooner than I ever anticipated, my photographs now serve as an immortalizing source of what once was.

[78] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 1.

[79] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 1.

denote the independent agency of a cross itself but gathers "an assemblage of things in a shifting landscape."[80] In other words, the magic of the *croix de chemin* blurs the traditional subject-object divide; it happens in the sensory field, in the ambience, that draws someone to a cross. It is here that affective responses take place as they are activated through the senses and may in turn provide an entry point into collective memory. It is this response, whether one chooses to associate it directly to God or not, that can bring comfort and healing. Indeed, interviews on the subject of *croix de chemin* point out that their powerfully affective dimensions generate a sense of safety and comfort for a community where people experience and describe them as material expressions of joy and pride.[81]

It is also precisely through their role as ambient objects that wayside crosses possess the power to mediate "a dichotomy between 'modernity' and traditional Catholicism by laying claim to both at once."[82] These crosses mark a liminal space between past and present, and between visible and invisible. As a traditional cultural artefact, the wayside cross activates collective memory by virtue of its timeless qualities. Through a process which neuroscientists Vanesa Fischer and Shane O'Mara have described as "mental time travel," a wayside cross allows us to revisit a distant past and imagine the future through countless cognitive mechanisms, including "memory, self-awareness, temporal and spatial understanding, attention, imagination, and communicative language."[83] These mechanisms elucidate the ways in which a cross makes itself known when an individual chooses to look, feel, and become actively aware. A cross comes alive and speaks to us when we deliberately choose to pause, or when we are *made* to pause by the

[80] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 9.
[81] For interviews with creators of popular art, see Louise de Grosbois, Raymonde Lamothe, and Lise Nantel, *Les patenteux du Québec*. For interviews with cross caretakers, see the work of Hillary Kaell.
[82] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 1.
[83] Fischer, and O'Mara, "Chapter 1- Neural, psychological, and social foundations of collective memory," 11.

forces which surround us—a tragedy, a crisis, a deep need for consolation, for reassurance, for connection.

Partially tucked away on a hill, this specific cross peeks out just enough for it to be visible from the road. From the 117, my mother and I turn onto the intersecting street, rue Paiement. I step out of the vehicle, and I am greeted by a ditch overgrown with vegetation. I attempt to find the best path to traverse but to no avail. Instead, I decide to just go for it. I press my foot onto the tall grass and shrubs, flattening them in my path. Despite the foliage, my feet sink deeper and deeper, and before I know it, my shoes are soaking wet from the murky water at the bottom of the ditch. I trudge forward, laughing as my mother observes from the car. I make it out of the creek, but now a grassy hill awaits me. Filled with brambles and thorny stems, the field wreaks havoc on my bare legs as I walk uphill. Yet, I keep my sight on the cross as the need to look closely—and to *touch*—compels me.

The process of walking, trudging, and exploring is crucial. On a broader scale, even when following Monique Bellemare's repertoire, it was tricky to locate many crosses; many of them have no specific street address or may be hidden from sight. In addition, there are many crosses not listed in the repertoire which I came across serendipitously. Finding such crosses often requires that one takes the backroads—the long way around. It requires embodied engagement as you cross varying terrain and walk through foliage. I would describe this process as a key to the methodology of investigating these crosses. The insights of Jo Vergunst, who discusses walking as a method of re-enactment, can be applied to this experience.[84] He suggests that "through attentiveness … we might slip between the ordinary and extraordinary, and be able to question a

[84] For a breakdown of RRR methods (Reconstruction, Replication and Re-Enactment), see the work of Sven Dupré, Anna Harris, Julia Kursell, Patricia Lulof, and Maartje Stols-Witlox.

little more how things appear and how they came to be."[85] Like Hamilakis, Vergunst underlines the powers of the senses; paying special attention to the "sensuousness of the ordinary through habitual actions" can become a form of anthropological fieldwork.[86] Walking up to a cross, interacting with it, and kneeling before it re-enacts the ways in which my ancestors engaged with these crosses. My embodied experience of the cross activates centuries-old practices, creating continuity between the present moment and a collective past.

After a strenuous trek, I had finally made it to the cross. It was somewhat unassuming. Modest in its decoration and materials, it felt in harmony with its woodsy surroundings. It was over 30 degrees Celsius on this hot July day, and the sun shone brightly overhead. It cast gleams of light in all my pictures, making the experience feel all the more holy (fig. 20). With its bright white paint in unison with lavenders and greens, the cross stood in a field of purple fireweed (fig. 21).[87] I could not help but imagine that its sacred nature prompted such flowers to bloom around it. Behind it stood a row of aspen trees, creating a sense of enclosure, a sort of *hortus conclusus*. As I approached the cross, I observed its characteristics: simple rounded ornamentation on its extremities, a niche with a figure of the Virgin, and a series of *Arma Christi*—the spear and the ladder in their raw, unpainted state (fig. 22). A heart is affixed to its axis, and upon this heart is a plaque (fig. 23). It reads:

> *In memory of the family home built in 1943 by Éliodore Paiement and Lucie Coutu, demolished in 1984 to make way for this road.*[88]

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[85] Vergunst, "A Walk as Act / Enact / Re-enactment: Performing Psychogeography and Anthropology," 229.
[86] Vergunst, "A Walk as Act / Enact / Re-enactment: Performing Psychogeography and Anthropology," 230.
[87] Fireweed (*Chamaenerion angustifoliumis*) is also known as great willowherb, bombweed, or Saint Anthony's laurel. Harnessing nutrients from cleared forests, it commonly sprouts where disaster once struck. Such notable occurrences are on sites targeted by bombs in WW2 (hence *bombweed*) and after forest fires (hence *fireweed*).
[88] *En mémoire de la maison familiale construite en 1943 par Éliodore Paiement et Lucie Coutu démolie en 1984 pour laisser passage à cette route.*

The plaque speaks of a collective past marked by significant changes that occurred with the advent of the Quiet Revolution. Historically, the Catholic Church held immense influence in French Canada, controlling most social services all while shaping a "national ideal rooted in a romantic vision of the unchanging peasant farmer."[89] However, by the 1960s, Québec was conceived as being stuck in time compared to the rest of North America. As such, much of the Québécois population advocated for societal advancement into modernity, known as the *rattrapage* (catching up).[90] The cross evidently indexes this rupture between the past and present, between tradition and modernity. By the mid-1970s, roadways in Québec were significantly altered. Highway systems made certain rural roads obsolete, and many stopped visiting wayside crosses; others, as my intuition suggested upon visiting the Montreal cross, "drove so fast (and sometimes drunk) that they crashed into them."[91] In addition, many wayside crosses were knocked down to make way for new, larger roads. These changes also meant that many wayside crosses "lost their function as gathering places for prayer," as it became easier and quicker to reach the parish church.[92] Although caretakers lament the destruction of these crosses, they recognize the benefits brought on through such modernizations; the building of new roads "improved life immeasurably for farm families."[93] In fact, when praying at wayside crosses, certain families even specifically asked God "to bring them government roads."[94] This demonstrates a peculiar ambivalence commonly reflected by Québécois attitudes. Kaell makes this evident: "there is nostalgia for an imagined tight-knit communal family life (inseparable from parish life); there is also embarrassment, or anger, that French-Canadians were less

[89] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 16-17.
[90] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 16-17.
[91] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 137.
[92] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 137-138.
[93] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 137.
[94] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 137.

'modern,' less economically successful than their Anglo counterparts."[95] These sentiments are embedded within such commemorative wayside crosses. Road improvements inevitably resulted in the destruction of countless crosses, whether immediate or through incited neglect. However, as made evident with the Paiement cross, *croix de chemin* were also erected *because* of these new roads and the destruction they caused. This cross ultimately indexes significant societal shifts and subsequently hints at generational ruptures, though the continued presence of *croix de chemin* speaks of their enduring qualities and indicates a concern for continuity.

I felt incredibly moved upon reading its plaque (which, I must say, is nearly illegible without extending one's arms out high and zooming in to take a picture). Everything hit me just as the heat was bearing down on me. I pictured this couple, Éliodore and Lucie, now long gone, building their home in the midst of the war. In this home, a family grew—a family after whom the intersecting road was named. I did not know anything about them, except for the fact that they had built a home which was now demolished. I thought of the home my parents built just a few kilometers away—almost exactly eighty years later. I thought of my paternal grandparents, born around this area and around that time. I also thought of the sorrow brought on by having to tear down a family home that had stood for forty years. Was it naïve of me to feel a burgeoning disdain for urbanization and the development of transnational highways? I acknowledged that such developments brought new opportunities to rural regions, yet in this moment, I could not help but imagine an idyllic countryside. A discontent for the modern monotony of my own life was making itself felt, but I had to remove my rose-coloured glasses. I focus in on the Paiement descendants and those who erected this cross. I wonder if Éliodore and Lucie were alive to witness the tearing down of the house they built, and so I look up their genealogical records.

[95] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 153.

Éliodore lived from 1906 to 1981. Lucie lived from 1914 to 2001, meaning she was an elderly widow when she witnessed one more tragedy just a few years after her husband's death—the tearing down of her family home. I find myself spiraling in these thoughts, but I find it fruitful to feel—to imagine the reality of what such a cross represents.

I had read of roadside crosses commemorating a variety of things but never a family home. Not only did this speak of the particularities of each *croix de chemin*, but it put further emphasis on memory: *En mémoire de la maison familiale / In memory of the family home*. Funnily enough, I must point out that the word *mémoire* is nearly completely erased on the plaque, evoking the fleeting nature of memory. Commemoration is central to the revitalization of memories, as these may be lost over time and slip from popular consciousness.[96] Erecting a cross in aims of commemorating a family home allows for the retelling and retrieving of such memories. This connection to present experience outlines the importance of the commemorated event, all while reaffirming the identity of the group who chooses to commemorate.[97] Moreover, the erection of a physical reminder, and the rituals which accompany this act, serves to externalize collective memory by geographically anchoring it into place, where it may continue to affirm collectively held beliefs.[98]

However, I asked myself, what is the correlation between a cross and memory? Or a cross and the memory of a family home? Why not erect a simple plaque? Where does religion and faith come into this? Had the destruction of the home and the death of the patriarch a few years prior ushered a profound need for faith? More evidently perhaps, does the cross speak of the innate ties between family, home, and faith? In fact, religion and memory possess a peculiarly

[96] Corning and Schuman, *Generations and Collective Memo*ry, 191.
[97] Corning and Schuman, *Generations and Collective Memo*ry, 191.
[98] Hutton, "Collective Memory and Collective Mentalities," 315.

strong bond. Maurice Halbwachs' seminal work *On Collective Memory* provides insight on the connections between religion and memory, noting that while all social life develops through the passage of time, religion stands apart from this by "transporting us into another world."[99] This passage elucidates a set of memories that I hold deeply, and which I share collectively with my family. It involves the many times I visited the home of my paternal grandparents as a child. Here, I would often sit in silence and observe their religious paraphernalia in complete awe, not quite understanding what drew me to these holy figures until this very moment. Indeed, they transported me into another world and perhaps soothed my many anxieties by anchoring time in place. Religious objects like the *croix de chemin*, and the rituals that surround them, symbolize eternity and fixity as made evident "through their infinite repetition and their uniform aspect."[100] The ritualistic erections and blessings of today continue age-old practices, and so do the simple ritualized actions of walking up to a cross and kneeling before it. We may thus argue that religious artefacts like the c*roix de chemin* are significantly more effective/affective in conjuring collective memory than secular monuments or plaques for the very fact that Québécois collective memory is deeply rooted in Catholicism. For this specific social group, based on its unique relationship with its religious past, religious memory becomes conflated with an overarching collective memory.[101]

I examine every angle of the Paiement cross. I touch the painted wood's cracked surfaces, tracing my fingers along the fissures. I see a reflection of myself in the niche, both literally and figuratively. I walk all the way around it, where I notice this little wooden box attached in the back. Curious, I lift this little sliding piece and see a metal container (fig. 25). I ask myself

[99] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 92.
[100] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 92.
[101] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 98.

whether it's my place to open it, hesitating but ultimately deciding to do so. I see that it is filled with notes enveloped in plastic bags which read *ne pas déplacer* (do not displace). I do not dare to open the bags. In the presence of absolutely no one, the cross itself begs me to put everything back in its place. I am reminded that collective memory exists both within large groups, such as the one my research examines, but also within specific families themselves: "each family has its proper mentality, its memories which it alone commemorates, and its secrets that are revealed only to its members."[102]And so, acutely aware that it is not my place to read these notes (at least not without the family's consent), I bundle them up and place the container back in its slot. I give the cross one more caress, giving Mary one more look, and I make my way down the treacherous terrain, smiling and feeling content with not knowing.

Once I was back in Montreal by late August, my mother told me she had stopped by the cross again. She sent me a photo, showing me that a small bridge and steps had been added to allow people to cross the ditch (fig. 26). A certain feeling rushed over me. This sign of human intervention brought me immense joy as it revealed to me that the cross was actively being maintained. I also had the chance to revisit the Paiement cross in October (fig. 27). The bridge had disappeared, yet a trail had been mowed toward the cross (fig. 28). This simple act of maintenance brought joy to my heart, and the ephemeral nature of the bridge revealed how accessibility is often contingent on periods of maintenance.

In October, I arrived around 5:15 PM, which happened to be the exact same time I visited the cross in July. The autumn sun, however, was setting this time. Now pre-emptively equipped with rainboots, I crossed the ditch and began making my way up the terrain. I noticed how different it was this time around. No wet shoes. No scratched-up legs. The air was cool and crisp,

[102] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 59.

the sun and moon greeting me in unison, the former now casting very different gleams of light into my lens (fig. 29). The fireweed around the cross had died, but the bustling traffic of people heading home from work continued. I had made it my mission to visit the cross again—just to *feel* how seasons, how time, and how attitude impact ways of seeing and ways of knowing. I got to see the first snow in Abitibi just a few days before visiting the cross, and I could imagine how it would be covered in snow in just a few months. I could picture the ditch freezing over and filling up with snow, too. These sentiments revealed to me the magic that exists in revisiting. The cross, once completely new and unfamiliar to me, now felt like an old friend. Over three months had gone by, and there I was again: (re)visiting. I could not help but feel as if a ritual was forming; the cross had called to me. I already pictured myself coming back to Abitibi for Christmas and stopping by for a quick hello. *I thought of the future*. After spending a good quarter of an hour with the cross—after allowing myself to stand still, to breathe, to feel the sunlight on my skin, and to feel the splitting wood which someone once so thoughtfully carved—I made my way back to the car, where my mother awaited me. We drove off, and for the first time, I noticed the two crosses which hung from her rear-view mirror. I was in a state of heightened awareness.

I did in fact visit the cross once more, during the holidays this time (fig. 30). It was the 23rd of December. As soon as I stepped out of the car, I could smell firewood burning in nearby homes. I noticed this instantly, as it is one of my favourite smells; it takes me back to the days I spent at my father's hunting camp as a kid. *I thought of the past.* Going up and down the ditch was far different this time; one must practically slide down to make it back across. The snow is crisp and hard. I notice tracks from a snowmobile, or *Skidoo* as we affectionally call it; someone had come to visit the cross lately (fig. 31). I have to catch my breath once I reach the cross, and I

inevitably leave my own prints. They tell the story that, yes, someone else did indeed visit. I spend a few moments with the cross, and I notice that the ladder is cracked. I look back at my pictures from October and realize it was cracked then, too—the work of the unrelenting cold. However, I have hopes that it will be fixed once spring comes around. I pay special attention to the Virgin in her niche, I say a little prayer to myself, and I head back to the car. My mother and I then head to a thrift store. Here, in a strange twist of fate, I find the exact same figurine of the Virgin. I now had a piece of the cross for myself—a keepsake… a souvenir… *un souvenir*… a memory.

Conversations on Love and Trauma: The Role of Communicative Memory

Travelling within the MRC of Rouyn-Noranda in July, my parents and I found ourselves in the rural sector of Bellecombe, population 805.[103] We arrived head-on with a cross that stood at the intersection of route des Pionniers and rang Valmont. Against the soft backdrop of cream whites and subtle greens was a bright red sign and neon balloons advertising a *vente de garage*, or garage sale, happening a few houses down (fig. 32). This juxtaposition amused me, subtly reminding me of the Montreal cross. At a crossroads, both the cross and the sign maximized their number of viewers. The sign may have been placed there not only for its prime positioning (in conjunction with the cross), but *because* of the cross. Indeed, it is here that I learned of the *croix de chemin*'s potential as gathering place. Historically, not only did it serve as a physical meeting point, but it now played a key role as the locus of conversation concerning Québécois identity and collective memory.

[103] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Données de population par municipalité*, 12 January 2023. MRCs are the regional divisions of Québec. MRC stands for "Municipalités régionales de comté" (Regional county municipality).

I step out of the vehicle and notice a man roughly around fifty years of age mowing his lawn. The cross stood on his property, and I felt nervous stepping forward. My father reassures me: "vas y! / go on!" I am not entirely sure what made me nervous. Was I afraid of being perceived as an outsider based on the way I looked or held myself? Was I afraid of being unwelcomed in a place which I considered home? In other words, did the risk of being turned away haunt me? If I were unwelcomed, would it signify that I was not Québécois enough—that I had become a foreigner in my own home region? Perhaps all these fears were true, yet I went ahead regardless, facing this desire to belong head-on. I begin taking pictures from a distance. The man notices me and drives his lawn tractor closer to me. He turns off the ignition, gets up, and approaches me. I awkwardly attempt to spark up conversation, but his engine deafens my words. Laughing, he signals me to wait for it to cool down. We then began conversing, and all my worries washed away. I asked him typical questions about the cross: When was it erected? By whom? For what reason? He could not give me many answers pertaining to these detailed questions since much information is lost to time. He could still, however, tell me a few key facts I soon realized were much more relevant to my research. For one, outlining a preoccupation for preservation, he noted that he had removed a statue of Joseph from the cross' niche for fear of it being further damaged (fig. 33). He also spoke of how this cross acted as a replacement for an earlier cross that had stood at the same location—one made *en bois rond*.[104] Lasting just about a generation, the average lifespan of a wayside cross ranges from twenty to thirty-five years.[105] However, the high rates of replacement crosses speak of an enduring tradition and a cross' role in creating tangible connections to the past.[106] For example, another cross in a neighbouring

[104] "Round wood," literally, logs.
[105] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au delà du signe*, 79; Kaell, "Les croix de chemin du Québec," 87.
[106] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 132-133. Kaell notes that prior to the 1970s, only 27% of crosses were replacements. Today, this percentage stands at 79%.

sector was completely remade at least three times, though a piece of the original crossbeam continues to sit at the foot of the cross, illustrating a concern for continuity and preservation (fig. 34).[107]

The man spoke so gently of the *croix de chemin*, his eyes lighting up. He seemed enthralled that someone was interested in his cross. There was an evident sense of pride at play, and I could not help but smile as he spoke to me. He continued, telling me how many of these crosses acted as a gathering spot. Here, at first thaw, workers convened and spoke of their plans for the summer. I am told that settlers came to this area around 1935, and that his house was built in 1943. He also tells me he has a little piece of paper to show me. It is pinned inside his garage, he says. The man goes to fetch it and shows me (fig. 35). He had kept it from years ago, cutting it out from a larger work, now unknown. As well as noting visual qualities of wayside crosses, the text reiterated several points that the man had made, indicating that this was most likely the source of some of his information. I realized that beyond the cross itself, the preservation and dissemination of texts and photographs proved crucial to shaping and maintaining collective memory on the *croix de chemin*. I notice something scribbled in the upper left corner of this cut-out. He points to it, saying "ça c'est mon nom / that's my name." Jacques Grenier. I shout enthusiastically, "ma mère c't'une Grenier / My mother's a Grenier!" I turn around and approach the car. My mother rolls down the window, and I tell her. She smiles and exclaims "bin voyons donc! / you're kidding me!" The two begin to converse and immediately note where their respective families come from. They realize they are not related, at least not closely. Regardless, by sharing a family name, the two felt a certain connection—we all did. And by listing their

[107] A similar occurrence may be seen with a cross located in Poularies where an old fence post is attached to the lower portion of the cross' vertical pole. Carpentier notes that when a new cross is erected, it is customary to affix a piece of the old cross onto the new in a way of transmitting power between them.

place of origin, they identified themselves with a particular location. The connection between family and land became evident.

By this point, my parents are interjecting into our conversation on the cross, and I find myself feeling a great deal of joy. As we say our goodbyes, I ask Jacques if I may take a picture of the snippet, and in a perplexed tone he tells me that he was giving it to me. What felt like second nature to him startled me. I must have asked him three times if he was certain of this. To me, this piece of paper, dating from decades ago and having hung in his garage for who knows how long, held so much significance. I would have never asked to take it from him yet without hesitation he implored me to take it: "c'est pour toi / this is for you." As I headed back into the car and drove away, I almost shed a tear. To put it simply, I felt as he was passing me the torch. I feel the honour; I feel honoured. Merci Jacques. This little piece of ephemeral history is now framed in my Montreal apartment—a piece of Abitibi for myself in my home away from home.

Strangely enough, I now realize that throughout our entire conversation, we never once spoke of religion. No, we spoke of work and community and gathering. We reflected on the past. This conversation proved essential, as collective memory can be further divided not only into cultural memory (evoked by cultural objects like the *croix de chemin*) but also communicative memory brought on by conversation with individuals. By sharing our thoughts on the wayside cross, Jacques and I were actively solidifying our understandings of our own collective past. In fact, simple conversation and storytelling may enhance mental time travel as most memories come back to us when our friends, family, or others remind us of them.[108] Halbwachs underscores the role of communication in shaping collective memory, stating that "verbal conventions constitute what is at the same time the most elementary and the most stable

[108] Fischer, and O'Mara, "Chapter 1- Neural, psychological, and social foundations of collective memory," 4; Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 38.

framework of collective memory."[109] Collectively, Jacques, my parents, and I were granted the possibility of revisiting the past, and by consequence, were propelled to imagine possible collective futures as members of the same social group.[110] Remembering alongside others ultimately asks us to "place ourselves in their perspective," were we consequently "consider ourselves as being part of the same group or groups as them."[111] Furthermore, the more I visited crosses and the more I spoke of them, the more they felt like an inherent part of our collective past and the more I felt compelled to advocate for their preservation. Thus, even the simple utterance of collective memory contributes greatly to its promulgation.

The snippet of text that I received from Jacques notes that teens would meet up at the cross *pour se fréquenter* (to date each other). There appeared to be such a strong connotation between the *croix de chemin* and the gathering of young people that during the 1925 Saint-Jean-Baptiste parade in Montreal, the *croix de chemin* was granted its own allegorical float where it was presented as a meeting place for youths (fig. 36).[112] Echoing the name of the road on which Jacques' cross stood (route des Pionniers, literally Pioneer Road), the men at the front of float are dressed theatrically as imagined pioneers, or settlers, of yesteryears. They are ultimately recalling a history of colonization, here specifically of Montreal. However, a certain irony makes itself known as by 1925, the colonization of Abitibi-Témiscamingue was still in its early days.[113] In other words, ongoing acts of settler-colonialism were occurring contemporaneously with an imagined act of 'looking back.' Collapsing time itself, the cross is both representative of Québec's agrarian past but remains an active force capable of manifesting a collective memory

[109] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 45.
[110] Fischer, and O'Mara, "Chapter 1- Neural, psychological, and social foundations of collective memory," 11.
[111] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 38.
[112] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 45.
[113] Témiscamingue experienced its first waves of settlers in the last quarter of the twentieth century, while Abitibi began to be colonized around 1910. By the 1930s, the government began creating incentivizing colonization plans.

that is firmly rooted in the present. Collective memory, after all, recalls the past but ultimately centers around present interpretation.[114] However, this relation between active present and idealized past not only underlines the central role of the *croix de chemin* in the fashioning of collective memory but highlights the potential dangers at play. Evidently, the wayside cross may be employed to perpetuate whitewashing practices, creating a collective narrative that excludes Indigenous lived realities and erases a history of displacement. Through their intrinsic ties to the land, it must be stressed that in their earliest form *croix de chemin* were originally used to visibly demarcate and stake claims to territory, as seen with Jacques Cartier's sixteenth-century crosses.

If the wayside cross was a meeting place for couples who were courting or dating, then the recurring symbol of the heart on its central axis may have romantic significance. As made evident through popular culture, namely Philippe B.'s song of the same name, the heart dominates the cross and relates to themes of permanence: "On a wayside cross / I engraved your name and mine / Under a heart of wood chipped by frost / We will be eternal."[115] Its presence on most *croix de chemin* illustrates a common visual vocabulary imbedded in Québécois culture.[116] This heart possesses a double, often triple religious significance: Christ Himself, all of Christ's Passion assembled as one, and the love He has for humanity.[117] Moreover, it underlines the popularity of devotions to the Sacred Heart within Québec. Images of the Sacred Heart are found in many Québécois households, especially among older generations. I hold precious memories of these as a child: In my grandparents' master bedroom were a pair of paintings that hung above

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[114] Bachleitner, "Chapter 7 - Collective memory and the social creation of identities," 169.
[115] Philippe B, "Croix de chemin," track 12 on *Variations fantômes*, Les Éditions Bonsound, 2011. "Sur une croix de chemin / J'ai gravé ton nom et le mien / Sous un cœur de bois écaillé par le gel / Nous serons éternels." Philippe B, born Philippe Bergeron in Rouyn-Noranda, is a Québécois singer-songwriter and was named songwriter of the year at *l'ADISQ* in 2014.
[116] The heart is present on 38 of my 65 document crosses, or on 28 of my 36 *croix aux instruments de la Passion.* See table 7 for axis features. See table 8 for types of hearts.
[117] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 369.

the bed depicting the Sacred Heart of Jesus and the Immaculate Heart of Mary (fig. 37). Imagery of the Sacred Heart is so intrinsically tied to Québécois identity that prior to the adoption of the contemporary Québec flag, a flag sporting a large Sacred Heart at its center was waved well until the 1950s (fig. 38).[118] The heart also makes its way into many forms of popular art in Québec, appearing on a wide variety of home objects: door handles, butter molds, cabinets, dresser knobs, locks, and more.[119] It is also the shape *par excellence* of sugar molds (fig. 39). The maple syrup season, occurring at the first thaw and highlighting the influence of the seasons, plays a key role in the development of this iconography in Québec. Echoing the role of the cross concerning romantic encounters, Pierre Lessard writes:

> At the end of the long winter, joy returns and takes its place once again; we have a desire to live and love. While the children stretch their souls and their legs, a shy and not very talkative lover offers his girlfriend a sugar heart, still lukewarm, on which she can read: 'Dear miss, I love you very much.'[120]

At the axial center of wayside crosses and present on countless home objects, the heart acts as the symbolic embodiment of joy and love, underlining its role in shaping affective bonds between community members. Moreover, as it is heavily influenced by a Catholic past, the motif of the heart, as Lessard writes, "identifies, without doubt, our culture and our collective past."[121] Its presence at the center of hundreds of *croix de chemin* is no coincidence, as it "remains, forever, the most authentic signature of those who preceded us."[122] At the wayside cross, the heart and *Arma Christi* ultimately aid in stimulating "a viewer's memories and emotive

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[118] The flag was based on Elphège Filiatrault's 1902 design, and the Sacred Heart was added the following year.
[119] Lessard, *Les petites images dévotes,* 106. Just as I write this, I notice that even my mother's vintage plastic Tupperware potato peeler, sitting on the counter, is decorated with a cut-out of a heart.
[120] Lessard, *Les petites images dévotes,* 106. "Au sortir du long hiver, la joie revient et reprend sa place; on a envie de vivre et d'aimer. Pendant que les enfants se dégourdissent l'âme et les jambes, un amoureux timide et peu loquace offer à sa 'blonde' un coeur de sucre encore tiède sur lequel elle peut lire: 'Chère mademoiselle, je vous aime beaucoup.'"
[121] Lessard, *Les petites images dévotes,* 109–110. Translated from the French.
[122] Lessard, *Les petites images dévotes*, 109–110. Translated from the French.

responses to Christ's corporeality."[123] Thus, memory and affect become central for remembering the suffering of Christ, allowing for members of a community to subsequently identify with the martyred figure. Further reminiscent of the *croix de chemin*'s role as evoker of memory, Lauren-Kilroy-Ewbank writes that the heart functions "as a trope for writing, memory, love, and the self and soul's dwelling place."[124] She continues, stating: "A common and powerful trope in the Christian tradition is a person imprinting the word of God onto his or her heart, effectively linking the heart, printing, and memory together."[125] Even etymologically, the heart (*le cœur*) and memory are intrinsically linked: "To write on one's heart is to record (from Latin *cor*) something in one's memory."[126] Speaking with Jacques while reflecting upon his cross and the heart placed at its axis, I imagined my own late paternal grandparents as teenage lovers. I saw visions of them meeting up at the wayside cross, *pour se fréquenter*. As the most idyllic lovers I had ever laid eyes upon, I modelled my own dreams of love around them. I saw firsthand the love they had for Jesus, for each other, and for the eight children they bore. Faith, family, and love were one, and through this collective imagination, they still are.

When tracking down crosses in July 2023, I had the chance to visit the town of Gallichan, population 473.[127] This is the town in which my grandparents were married, lived a great portion of their lives, and are now buried. Much of my father's family once lived here on a road bearing our name: chemin Lirette. The town is home to multiple *croix de chemin*. One cross in particular, located at 569 chemin de la Rivière Est, spoke to me (fig. 40). As I approached the cross, which overlooks the rivière Duparquet, I heard a child yell from the house across the road. They were

[123] Kilroy-Ewbank, *Holy Organ or Unholy Idol*, 110.
[124] Kilroy-Ewbank, *Holy Organ or Unholy Idol*, 31-32.
[125] Kilroy-Ewbank, *Holy Organ or Unholy Idol*, 116.
[126] Kilroy-Ewbank, *Holy Organ or Unholy Idol*, 116.
[127] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Données de population par municipalité*, 12 January 2023.

yelling to their father, saying that was someone at the cross. Their father came out, and I will never forget the way I felt upon hearing his first words: "Tu suis le répertoire? / You're following the repertory?" That simple statement put a smile on face. He knew of Monique Bellemare's inventory. She had noted that in 2016 the cross was on the ground, but in 2021, it was repainted, re-erected, and equipped with a "un gros cœur" at its axis.[128] Another cross located at the center of town featuring statues of Mary and Jesus echoed this form (fig. 41). The man I met reiterated this story, telling me how he had contributed to the re-erection and restoration of the cross. The cross and the conversations I had with this man, combining once again cultural and communicative memory, channelled within me memories I never knew I had. In that moment, I had visions of my ancestors, living right up the road. I felt anchored to the town; I felt tethered to the ground. During our conversation, I felt the need to tell him I was a Lirette, and when I did, he lit up. I had never felt that sense of pride before, and it was quite a peculiar feeling for a stranger to recognize my name from a nearby road. My father had built his own home here, and so did many of my uncles and my grandfather. Slowly, however, everyone left. My parents moved to Rouyn-Noranda for work opportunities before my birth. I realize now, I was already the product of generational rupture: my parents had left this village to establish themselves in a bigger town, and I left the region twenty years later to do just the same in the city. My mother and I took the time to drive up and down the road, admiring the houses that still stand today. The stories they told were that of young love and tight-knit familial bonds, but also of financial troubles and future uncertainty. My mother reminisced, speaking of the times she could remember. Perhaps most notably, she noted what had changed about the homes and what remained the same, expressing shock at how similar the houses still looked nearly thirty years

[128] Bellemare, "croix no 3" under Gallichan, *Les croix de chemin au Québec: un patrimoine à découvrir.*

later. Ultimately, sitting in the passenger seat of my mother's Jeep, these stories and recollections allowed me to reminisce on a time before my own. Through these conversations, I was granted the power to tap into a collective memory of the familial realm—one that surely shares similarities with other Québécois families but one which ultimately remains unique to my mine.

Beyond happy memories of familial life, however, the *croix de chemin* often also reveals deeply traumatic collectively held memories. Most poignantly, the cemetery cross located behind the very church in which my grandparents were married evoked a plethora of emotions I could not fully grasp (figs. 42 & 43). It is also in this very cemetery that they rest, along with many more of my ancestors, including my grandmother's mother, Alice Gauthier, who died in childbirth at the young age of twenty-four in 1946. Being twenty-four myself, this peculiar alignment continues to put me at a loss for words. I become increasingly grateful for the position I am in which was gifted to me by the continuous efforts of my ancestors who sought to better the lives of their children. I recognize the necessity to move away for better opportunities despite the rupture it may cause. Escaping hardship and bettering one's life comes at many costs.

Notions of continuity and change make themselves known time and time again in Québécois popular culture. Songs are perhaps one of the most effective modes of communicative memory as they outlast generations and propagate commonly held ideas to a broad audience. For Québécois audiences, these include the works of iconic singer-songwriters like Richard Desjardins and Gilles Vigneault, as well as bands like Les Colocs and Les Cowboys Fringants. These figures take on a mythic role and play a central part in the formation of collective memory. Consequently, their passing is deemed a national tragedy—one surely to be engrained into

collective memory.[129] As it is a quintessential part of Québécois collective memory, many of these songs deal with themes of lineage and rupture, commonly harking on trauma and poverty.

A song that evokes many of these themes is "Dégénérations / Le reel du fossé" by Mes Aïeux:

> Ton arrière-arrière-grand-père a vécu la grosse misère
> Ton arrière-grand-père, il ramassait des cennes noires
> Et pis ton grand-père, miracle est devenu millionnaire
> Ton père en a hérité, il l'a tout mis dans ses réer
>
> Et pis toé, p'tite jeunesse, tu dois ton cul au ministère
> Pas moyen d'avoir un prêt dans une institution bancaire
> Pour calmer tes envies de hold-uper la caissière
> Tu lis des livres qui parlent de simplicité volontaire
>
> [Your great-great-grandfather lived through great poverty
> Your great-grandfather, he collected pennies
> And your grandfather, miraculously, became a millionaire
> Your father inherited it, he put it all in his retirement savings
>
> And then you, little youth, you owe your ass to the ministry
> No way to get a loan from a banking institution
> To calm your desire to hold up the cashier
> You read books that talk about simple living.][130]

Released in 2004, "Dégénérations" is one of the most well-known Québécois songs of the twenty-first century, commonly played at family gatherings and parties. Its verses illustrate an increase in quality of life over several generations yet emphasize how the present generation feels disconnected from their forefathers; they exhibit discontent with modernity and a desire to return to the old ways. This longing for the past, however, may be soothed through the exploration of collective memory as evoked by the *croix de chemin*. Through this process, we may begin to negotiate our "relationship with the past in contemporary social frames and its implications for our future choice, preferences, identities, behavior, and values."[131] However, it is

[129] We may be reminded of Karl Tremblay, lead singer for Les Cowboys Fringants, who passed away after a long battle with cancer in November 2023.
[130] Mes Aïeux, "Dégénérations / Le reel du fossé," track 1 on *En famille*, Disque Victoire, 2004.
[131] Bachleitner, "Chapter 7 - Collective memory and the social creation of identities," 172.

now twenty-years after the release of "Dégénération," which begs the question: do Québécois youth express the same sentiments today? I was four years old when this song was released, and it has become entrenched in my very being. It thus becomes nearly impossible to distinguish my actual sentiments deriving from my lived experience from beliefs which were engrained within me at an early age. In this sense, collective memory may become a self-fulfilling prophecy: what you hold to be true about your identity becomes your reality. It is in questioning collective memory—in reshaping the stories we tell and the narratives we develop—that we may work toward a more desirable future that incorporates (yet is not constrained by) the past.

Suffering, and especially ancestral suffering, plays a key role in Québécois memory.[132] For example, whenever I ask my mother about her mother, she never fails to tell me: "elle a pâti / she suffered greatly." To her own daughter, her suffering appears to be a quintessential part of her identity.[133] Retracing our ancestry, my mother and I visited the town of Duparquet in Abitibi-Ouest, population 726.[134] Many of my maternal ancestors, namely my great-grandparents, are buried at the local cemetery there. As we stroll through the graveyard, my mother points to every other grave, telling me how she knew the locals. More jarringly, she tells me their cause of death: suicide, car accident, suicide, car accident. The sheer number of traumatic deaths shocked me, showcasing how unspeakable events hold an important place in collective memory.

In Abitibi-Témiscamingue especially, rates of suicide stand significantly higher than overall provincial rates. Between 2000 and 2003, the suicide rate stood at 25.4 per 100,000 in the region (compared to the province's rate of 17.7), and men showed steady rates above 50 per

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[132] I recommend the poignant family story of Yvette Alarie, "Le crucifix à l'église de Rollet - voici son histoire," as seen in the official website of the Diocese of Rouyn Noranda.
[133] My grandmother Jeannine was born in 1928 in Saint-Clément de Tourville, near the city of Québec. Her parents, Eugène and Yvonne, relocated to Roquemaure, Abitibi-Ouest, shortly after.
[134] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Données de population par municipalité*, 12 January 2023.

100,000 in several age groups.[135] Lately, with a rate of 20.3 for 2018-2020, the region continues to rank third in the province (behind Nord du Québec and Nunavik) and is put in stark contrast with Quebec's overall rate of 12.9.[136] Moreover, 32% of men in the region are said to consume alcohol in excess (compared to 26% in Québec overall), and in 2004 the rate of alcohol-related infractions in Abitibi-Témiscamingue stood at 561 per 100,000 drivers licenses (compared to the provincial rate of 281).[137] The mortality rate from unintentional injuries in the region also stands significantly above the provincial average. Between 1994 and 1996, it stood at 58 per 100,000 in the region (in contrast to Québec's rate of 31), and for this same period the MRC of Abitibi-Ouest held the highest rate in the region with 71 per 100,000.[138] In other words, for its population of roughly 24,000 inhabitants at this time, Abitibi-Ouest experienced an average of seventeen annual deaths resulting from unintentional injuries. The heightened prevalence of traumatic deaths resulting from suicides and accidents is certainly relevant to the erection of crosses as they commonly hold memorializing purposes. The numerous crosses located on the 117, for instance, serve to commemorate those who died in road accidents. Ultimately, both this data and my personal knowledge of family and community experiences point to how death and suffering dwell in the minds of Abitibiens, playing a key role in the population's collective memory.

For many Québécois folk, the tradition of the *croix de chemin* serves a key role in processing trauma. In *Trauma and Lived Religion: Transcending the Ordinary*, Ruard Ganzevoort and Srdjan Sremac explain how such traditions may "provide a repertoire of

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[135] Agence de la santé et des services sociaux de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Le suicide en Abitibi-Témiscamingue: le point sur la mortalité en 2003*, January 2007; 25-44 years old: 53.8; 45-65 years old: 51.3; 65+ years old: 56.5.
[136] Institut national de santé publique du Québec, *Les comportements suicidaires au Québec: portrait 2023*, February 2023.
[137] Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Recueil statistique: la consommation d'alcool en Abitibi-Témiscamingue*, March 2023.
[138] Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux (CISSS) de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Taux de mortalité par traumatismes non intentionnnels*, November 2022.

language and actions that can express and transform … challenging experiences."[139] The everyday practice of engaging with wayside crosses is indicative of a "lived religion" that underscores "various relationships between memory, body, language, sensations, and space."[140] In consequence, these experiences become understood as "world-making processes" that hold regenerative qualities.[141] Moreover, the act of remembering, which is highly influenced by those who surround us, is crucial in terms of healing from trauma.[142] This group remembering in turn shapes what we define as collective memories. As the social process of looking to the past, collective memory allows us to make sense of who we are and to transform into whom we want to become.[143] In "Remembering for Healing," van Ommen eloquently summarizes the link between trauma, memory, and community, tying these together through themes of identity:

> By remembering trauma and by remembering God, the community will remember and shape its own identity. … Therefore, the questions 'Who is my neighbor?' and 'Who is God?' in a real sense are asking: 'Who am I?' The answers to the first two questions reveal and shape the identity of the community itself.[144]

It is through such questioning that communal identity is shaped. The cross, standing proudly and dwarfing the human figure, never fails to remind me of the unwavering faith which bolstered my ancestors through otherwise unsurmountable suffering. The *croix de chemin* grants me access to this collective memory, in turn instilling within me a sense of pride, honour, and belonging, thus calming any of my own anxieties surrounding my identity. However, I remain acutely aware of the fine line between looking back as an act of healing and engaging in discourses of collective memory in order to shape an exclusionary future through self-commiseration.

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[139] Sremac and Ganzevoort, "Trauma and Lived Religion: Embodiment and Emplotment," 1.
[140] Sremac and Ganzevoort, "Trauma and Lived Religion: Embodiment and Emplotment," 4.
[141] Sremac and Ganzevoort, "Trauma and Lived Religion: Embodiment and Emplotment," 4.
[142] van Ommen, "Remembering for Healing," 216.
[143] Bachleitner, "Chapter 7 - Collective memory and the social creation of identities," 173-74.
[144] van Ommen, "Remembering for Healing," 219.

Sowing the Seeds of Collective Memory: The Role of Caretaking and Conservation

> Ton arrière-arrière-grand-père, il a défriché la terre
> Ton arrière-grand-père, il a labouré la terre
> Et pis ton grand-père a rentabilisé la terre
> Et pis ton père, il l'a vendu pour devenir fonctionnaire
>
> Et pis toé, mon p'tit gars, tu l'sais pu c'que tu vas faire
> Dans ton p'tit trois et demi bin trop cher, frette en hiver
> Il te vient des envies de devenir propriétaire
> Et tu rêves la nuit d'avoir ton petit lopin d'terre
>
> [Your great-great-grandfather, he cleared the land
> Your great-grandfather, he plowed the land
> And then your grandfather made the land profitable
> And your father sold it to become a civil servant
>
> And then you, my little guy, you don't know what you're going to do
> In your little three and a half, way too expensive, cold in winter
> There comes to you the desire to become an owner
> And you dream at night of having your little plot of land][145]

The more crosses I visited in Abitibi and the deeper we travelled into rural territory, the more the connections between land, family, and faith became evident; Québécois collective memory is profoundly rooted in ideas surrounding our agrarian past. In this verse, Mes Aïeux speaks of the gradual improvement in quality of life across several generations of farmers. This generational crescendo terminates with the protagonist's father, who sells the land once cultivated by his forefathers. The protagonist is left distraught and dreams of one day owning a plot of land, much like his great-great-grandfather. These ideas are amplified in the song's music video. It begins with an elderly man filling a wheelbarrow with dirt. He then casually brings it to a middle-aged woman, who fills up her bucket with as much earth as she can. This woman then hurries across a field with her bucket and dumps as much dirt as can fit into a young woman's backpack. The young adult runs even faster through the field, jumping over a ditch and dropping her backpack several times. Finally, she reaches a young boy who collects as much of her earth as he can with nothing but his cupped hands. The amount of soil dwindles drastically at the intersection of each

[145] Mes Aïeux, "Dégénérations / Le reel du fossé," track 1 on *En famille*, Disque Victoire, 2004.

generation, and each figure becomes progressively more frantic as the story goes on. Once the boy receives the little amount of dirt that remains, he pulls out a photograph of his great-grandfather (the man with the wheelbarrow) from that very soil. He then proceeds to bury it in the field, where a plant then blooms. This poignant visual reiterates sentiments felt by countless Québécois. The further distanced from the land, the more disconnected we feel and the more we search for ways of anchoring ourselves to the earth. As the song's title suggests, a certain de-generation is at play. However, the final scene exemplifies a feeling of hope. With the remnants granted to him by his great-grandfather, which trickled down generations, the young boy sows the land. From this generates new life, establishing the generative qualities of immersing oneself in collective memory. As centuries-old cultural artefacts thriving within rural areas, the *croix de chemin* embodies the generational continuity that so many Québécois desperately search for. Thus, it became crucial to visit surviving agricultural communities, speaking to their inhabits and understanding the particularities of their numerous wayside crosses.

It was my first time visiting the MRC of Témiscamingue. My parents and I reached the hub of Notre-Dame-du-Nord, located right by the Ontario border, roughly 100 kilometers south of Rouyn-Noranda. By this point, the landscape had visibly changed. We quickly became surrounded by farmland, and the crosses appeared to take on a life of their own. The MRC of Témiscamingue is especially well known for its agriculture: 8.8% of workers in the region, or 12.4% of men, are employed in the "agriculture, forestry, fishing, and hunting" industries.[146] This data appears strongly correlated to the type of crosses found in these regions. As Jean Simard's research indicates, in areas where farming is prevalent, crosses tend to be more ornamented than

[146] Statistics Canada, 2021 Census. I include sex-specific statistics as farming in the region remains predominantly the domain of men. The only comparable MRC in Abitibi is the MRC of Abitibi-Ouest, with 6.5% of workers in this industry, or 9.1% of men. These statistics are contrasted by the provincial rates of 1.8% (2.4% for men).

in other communities.[147] My findings corroborate this. Of the nineteen crosses I recorded in the MRC of Témiscamingue, fourteen (74.68%) were crosses adorned with the instruments of the Passion.[148] In stark contrast, out of the nineteen crosses I documented in the MRC of Rouyn-Noranda, only five (26.32%) were decorated with instruments.[149] In general, fewer crosses are found in non-agricultural sectors. These areas tend to be more urban. For example, I could only record two crosses in the MRC of La Vallée-de-l'Or.[150] Here, the predominant industries are that of "mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction."[151]

I stress labour statistics as they underline the role of social class in shaping collective memory. 18.6% of the total working population in Abitibi-Témiscamingue are employed within the "blue-collar" industries of "agriculture, forestry and logging, mining, and public services."[152] This is in stark contrast to Québec as a whole, where that percentage stands at 2.96%.[153] Prior to the 1960s, the average male Québécois worked as a *cultivateur* (farmer) or as a *journalier* (day labourer) and possessed a level of education that hoisted him only slightly above illiteracy.[154] As the state rapidly took control of education, it raised literacy rates.[155] However, even today, within Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 18.8% of the population does not hold a high school diploma.[156] These statistics continue to echo long-held shame that was propelled to the forefront of the Québécois

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[147] Simard, Milot, and Bouchard, *Un patrimoine méprisé*, 16.
[148] Similarly, out of the 22 crosses record in the MRC of Abitibi-Ouest, 16 (72.73%) sported the *Arma Christi*. In both regions, nearly three-quarters of recorded crosses were ornamented.
[149] This may reveal their differing original functions; away from the farm, the cross would not have played the same role concerning sowing rituals and conjuration rites.
[150] My research is by no means exhaustive and the number of crosses in each region is assumed to be higher. Monique Bellemare notes the presence of eleven crosses in the region, only one of which is ornamented.
[151] Statistics Canada, 2021 Census. 15.2% of the working population, or 24.0% of men, are employed in this field.
[152] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Tableau de bord de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue édition 2023*.
[153] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Tableau de bord de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue édition 2023*.
[154] Carpentier, *La croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 387-388. An 1891 census lists my great-great-grandfather Ambroise Lirette, a *journalier*, as illiterate.
[155] Carpentier, *La croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 388.
[156] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Tableau de bord de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue édition 2023*. The least educated MRC is that of Abitibi-Ouest, where this percentage stands at 22.6%, or nearly one in four, in contrast to 11.8% province-wide. All four of my grandparents received no more than a primary school education.

imaginary during the advent of the Quiet Revolution. Low education rates in rural regions of the province serve as a reminder of Québec's delayed encounter with modernity that continues to haunt many community members in very concrete ways while visibly marking a generational disconnect. Kevin Christiano succinctly summarizes this drastic societal change: "In the space of little more than fifty years … Québec went from being one of the most socially traditional, politically conservative, and religiously devout regions of the developed world to one of the least."[157] This sudden societal shift affecting all aspects of daily life led to considerable anxieties pertaining to Québécois identity, and it created a need to access collective memory as a way to redefine what it means to be Québécois.

Informed by working-class ideals, the desire to return to simple living plagues the collective memory of Québécois folk. However, this is evidently clouded by a romanticization of agricultural life. What proves more beneficial instead is uncovering the genuine root of this desire—the meaning behind the symbolic face of farm life. Halbwachs writes: "In our societies, the peasant style of life is distinguished from all others in that work is done within the domestic framework."[158] It is therefore this domesticity—this everyday connection to family—that lies at the root of this desire. As such, Halbwachs underscores that it is "quite natural that the family and the soil remain closely linked to each other in common thought."[159] As I have noted, this yearning for the agrarian is ubiquitous within Québécois popular culture, as seen with Mes Aïeux's "Dégénération." However, it speaks not of a desire to return to farm life in and of itself, but to return to a mode of living that once brought us closer together. In other words, we do not necessarily yearn for a return to an agrarian society, but for each other. Whether or not these

[157] Christiano, "The Trajectory of Catholicism in Twentieth-Century Quebec," 21.
[158] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 65.
[159] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 65.

ancestors truly were closer to one another (long workdays and gruelling labour may have easily prevented such bonding), it is our conceptions of the past that propel our desires for the future.

Driving deeper into Témiscamingue, my parents and I reached Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues, population 1,175.[160] The crosses in this town were quite striking, not only because they were brilliantly painted and ornamented, but because so many of them looked nearly identical (figs. 47-50).[161] These were incredibly well maintained and featured recurring elements: white cross, niche with figurine of the Virgin, *titulus*, black instruments with yellow and red accents, bold red heart emitting bright yellow rays of light. To differing extents, several *paroisses* (parishes) across Abitibi-Témiscamingue express a united visual vocabulary. The crosses of Roquemaure repeat an identical heart and rays, and often opt for polygonal extremities (figs. 51-53). The crosses in the rural sector of Cléricy were identical: simple white cross with red angular extremities (figs. 54-56). The two crosses I visited in Poularies were nearly identical to each other as well (figs. 57 & 58). The several I saw in Sainte-Germaine employed their own recurring vocabulary, most visible through their red metal bases (figs. 59-63). As we saw cross after cross, driving among the bright yellow canola fields of Témiscamingue, it became clear to me that these *croix de chemin* were in dialogue. Some were located less than a kilometer apart.[162] We were struck by their abundance and proximity, much as early critics and explorers were.

By the early nineteenth century, there existed such an extreme fervour for erecting wayside crosses that church officials began producing written exchanges expressing concern. In one such notable instance, in March of 1810, Monseigneur Plessis, Archbishop of Québec, wrote to *curé* Michel Masse of Saint-Joseph de la Pointe-Lévis seeking to impose a minimum distance

[160] L'Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, *Données de population par municipalité*, 12 January 2023.
[161] These crosses looked so identical to the point that I had trouble differentiating them when creating an inventory.
[162] Three crosses are located in a 2.6 km strip along the same road (QC-101), two of which are 900 meters apart.

to be respected between wayside crosses.[163] The high number of crosses and their extreme proximity provoked worry within the clergy. Not only did they believe these would cause physical disarray but that the clergy's authority would be weakened through the proliferation of these visible and independent forms of popular piety.[164] Monseigneur Plessis, in addition to critiquing the number of crosses in his parish, also critiqued their excessive ornamentation in 1818: "The cross is respectable enough in itself … without adding all these ridiculous dependencies, ordinarily poorly executed and more likely to cause ridicule than to nourish piety."[165] Evidently, this did not deter the common people from continuing to erect countless ornamented crosses—an aesthetic which has survived in spite of reservations form church leaders.

Tensions between the clergy and rural populations continued well after the Quiet Revolution. By the advent of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, many felt betrayed by the Church for discouraging a variety of popular 'folk' practices.[166] Fernand Dumont's derogatory statement made in 1964 further puts this into perspective, as he wrote that Catholicism in Québec was nothing but "a dog's breakfast of pseudo-beliefs that are in reality superstitions barely disguised by a thin coat of Christian veneer."[167] Church elites thus sought to distance themselves from the popular faith of the people and to purge itself of "its kitschier, 'folkloric,' 'individualist' excrescences."[168] This contributed to the further alienation of rural communities from the

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[163] Porter and Désy, *Calvaires et croix de chemins du Québec*, 56.
[164] Porter and Désy, *Calvaires et croix de chemins du Québec*, 56.
[165] Simard, *L'art religieux des routes du Québec*, 42-43. "La croix est assez respectable par elle-même … sans y ajouter toutes ces dépendances ridicules, ordinairement mal exécutées et plus propres à donner du ridicule qu'à nourrir la piété."
[166] Simard, Milot, and Bouchard, *Un patrimoine méprisé*, 2. For example, in 1969 it demoted Saint Christopher, patron saint of travellers, who played a key role in the lives of truckers and taxi drivers; other discouraged practices include "the use of the rosary, the processions of the Fête-Dieu, the [use of] lace images, [and] the miracles of Saint-Anne."
[167] Gauvreau, "'They Are Not of Our Generation,'" 87.
[168] Gauvreau, "'They Are Not of Our Generation,'" 88–89.

institution of the Catholic Church. Regardless, post-1960s, the vast majority of Québécois still considered themselves Catholic.[169] Kaell puts it this way: "To be part of a Québécois family is to be Catholic; thus, working hard to raise one's children 'right,' with or without mass, is seen to be a Catholic act."[170] This enduring emotional connection between the Québécois people and Catholicism is significant. The continuous alienation of rural folk ultimately resulted in an even stronger adherence to popular faith, thus at least partly explaining the continued erection of wayside crosses which remain indicative of popular practices today.

The Saint-Bruno crosses are very well taken care of—perhaps more so than in any other town. Most of these feature *renforts* (reinforcements), additional pieces of wood bolted to each side of the cross. These pieces are planted into the ground, though the actual cross is not. This not only prevents the wooden cross from rotting but also facilitates maintenance; rather than using a ladder, the bolts may be loosened, and the cross may be brought down.[171] I first learned about this fact from my father: Intuitively, having never witnessed the construction of a cross, he told me exactly what they were for. We were both impressed by the ingenuity of these cross-makers, and I was further impressed by the intuitive knowledge my father expressed. At that moment, I knew that such knowledge was indicative of a working-class culture—of a man who had built his own house and learned everything he knew about manual labour through his own father. Evidently, that knowledge had not been passed down to me, demonstrating another generational disconnect. However, having these familial conversations sprouting from observations made at the *croix de chemin* soothed anxieties I had about this de-generation of

[169] By 2021, 53.8% of Quebeckers considered themselves Catholic. This percentage stands considerably higher in Abitibi-Témiscamingue at 66.2%. Statistics Canada, 2021 Census.
[170] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 22.
[171] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 136.

knowledge. In that moment, time collapsed; the continued presence of the cross reassured me that the embodied knowledge of my forefathers was alive and well.

Upon learning of these practices, I was inspired to create my own miniature cross as a way of paying particular attention to "production processes, materials, and bodily knowledge and sensory skills."[172] My attempt at a recreation aimed to examine the "tensions between past and present" and how "the materiality and sociality of repetition in its many variations informs particular ways of making and knowing."[173] Much like it may have been done in the past, I used wood that was repurposed, which my father happily cut for me. Although approximately 1/5th the size of an actual *croix de chemin*, the project proved labour-intensive. I kept my decorations simple and my extremities unornamented, yet it took me over a week to plan, cut, assemble, and paint. Crafted as a gift to my parents, I asked them where they would want to place it. Without skipping a beat, my mother suggested that we plant it by a tree at their cottage (fig. 64). It is here that some of my paternal grandparents' ashes were dispersed. The cross, a father-son initiative, was now not only a gift to my parents, but an homage to my late grandparents. The present, dedicated to the past and promising a sense of continuity, brought me great solace.[174]

The creation of cultural artefacts like the wayside cross is linked to the physical act of making, rather than learning through study. Knowledge about ways of making is commonly transferred from father to son through everyday tasks rooted in manual labour.[175] This method of learning outlines not only a local transference of knowledge from elder to youth but emphasizes the development of one's own personal style and methods. In one study, when asked where

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[172] Dupré, Harris, Kursell, Lulof, and Stols-Witlox, "Introduction," 9.
[173] Dupré, Harris, Kursell, Lulof, and Stols-Witlox, "Introduction," 28.
[174] This was also exercise in subconscious inspiration. It appears that my chosen colour scheme was inspired by the Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues crosses. See tables 9 and 10 for colour distribution. However, my chosen positions for the ladder and spear are in direct contrast to these crosses. Instead, they echo that of my most visited cross—the Paiement cross. See table 11 for spear and ladder positions.
[175] Simard, "Définition de l'art populaire ou analyse de la construction d'un concept," 5.

creators had taken their inspiration for their *croix de chemin*, two-thirds of artisans replied with "dans ma tête / in my head."[176] Paul Carpentier explains it like this: "Their model had imprinted itself very clearly in their subconscious every time they went to the village, because as they passed in front of the cross in the middle of the *rang*, they saw it even if they weren't looking at it."[177] Through this type of inspiration, the *croix de chemin* is further positioned as a product of ambient faith. Historically, inspiration also came from the dissemination of small-format images.[178] Images of wayside crosses circulated in books, solidifying their place within collective memory. For instance, an 1875 photograph of an unknown painting was reproduced in G. M. Adam's *Illustrated Quebec* of 1891 (fig. 65). Housed at the McCord Museum in Montreal, the photograph shows a winter scene complete with a wayside cross (fig. 66). Similarly, postcards of the 1930s and 1940s disseminated the work of illustrator Edmond-J. Massicotte, brother of photographer E. Z. Massicotte, whose drawings captured a range of themes in Québécois popular culture including the *croix de chemin* (fig. 67). These examples, further echoed through a variety of contemporary works of popular culture, demonstrate the ubiquitous nature of wayside crosses in the popular imagination of Québécois folk.

Returning to the *renfort*, this innovative feature exhibits considerable foresight regarding a cross' inevitable deterioration and thus illustrates an active concern for conservation; it allows for the cross to be taken down easily when performing restorative work all while actively delaying deterioration. After all, wayside crosses are most commonly made of wood (a vulnerable material) and experience harsh weather conditions, especially the extremes of Québec winters. Practical developments like *renforts*, not seen in any images or written accounts of

[176] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 382.
[177] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 382. Translated from the French.
[178] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*, 130.

crosses from the first half of the twentieth century, demonstrate a very real concern for preservation. Through this distinct choice in construction found in Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues, caretakers appear concerned not just with the now but with a distant future, subtly underlying the role of crosses in terms of community legacy and cultural heritage.

Foregrounding caretaker perspectives is crucial. In her work, Kaell recounts several stories of people who took it upon themselves to care for crosses that they grew up with, or who chose to erect their own. Speaking of a cross he would walk by everyday as a child, Henri-Paul Gagné of Saint-Ferdinand says: "I found it so beautiful. It stayed etched in my mind."[179] He went on to erect his own cross in 1993 and continues to take the time to plant flowers by its base.[180] Kaell underscores that it is this connection to nature, and "thus directly to God," that makes the *croix de chemin* so effective.[181] It allows the cross to take on its affective dimensions. Caretaking is a seasonal endeavour, as it "ends with the first frost and begins with the first thaw."[182] Also, tending to flowers around the cross is often understood as a form of caretaking and seen as an act of prayer. Echoing my sentiments about the Paiement cross and its *hortus conclusus* of fireweed, in one story about a cross in Rouyn-Noranda, a garden mysteriously bloomed overnight at its base.[183]

Open communication between youth and elders proves essential in the study of *croix de chemin*, as through email correspondences with Monique Bellemare, I was granted to possibility to have productive conversations with caretakers and take part in a transference of knowledge on caretaking. Bellemare published some of my photographs on her blog, and by consequence, I

[179] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 139-40.
[180] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 143.
[181] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 143.
[182] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 143
[183] Kaell, "Place Making and People Gathering at Rural Wayside Crosses," 144.

began actively taking part in the inventorying of crosses in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. These findings showed changes in several crosses: some had deteriorated considerably since last photographed, and others had been remade. Once Mme Bellemare posted my findings, a woman by the name of Raymonde Proulx found me on Facebook and messaged me about my research. Her name seemed familiar. Indeed, Hillary Kaell has cited Proulx in her work. The two of us shared emails and continued to communicate. Mme Proulx tells me that she has regularly maintained two crosses in her native village of Manneville.[184] In addition, Proulx has completely remade four crosses in the village and maintains one continually.[185] Although she tells me that she is "in no way a historian,"[186] she is deeply motivated by the conservation of cultural patrimony and has self-published two book volumes recounting the story of her village. Her aim is to "revitalize the community environment and preserve what remains of it."[187] Significantly, she implores readers to take the time to observe these places of memory—these *lieux de mémoire.*[188] She, too, understands the *croix de chemin* as a locus of collective memory, and this word choice instantly recalls the work of Pierre Nora. Understanding the wayside cross as a *lieu de mémoire* further concretizes its position as crossroads for past and present, as product of ambient faith, and thus as quintessential locus of collective memory for Québécois folk. Nora writes:

> For if we accept that the most fundamental purpose of the *lieu de mémoire* is to stop time, … to immortalize death, to materialize the immaterial … it is also clear that *lieux de mémoire* only exist because of their capacity for metamorphosis, an endless recycling of their meaning and an unpredictable proliferation of their ramifications.[189]

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[184] Officially known as Sainte-Gertrude-Manneville, it is a village of roughly 800 inhabits located 25 km from Amos, in the MRC of Abitibi.
[185] Proulx, "Les croix de chemin de Manneville, 1938-2020" 8.
[186] "Je précise que je ne suis nullement historienne, mais amatrice de la sauvegarde de notre patrimoine qui s'en va à la derive / I would like to point out that I am in no way a historian, but a fan of safeguarding our heritage which is drifting away." Email correspondance with Raymonde Proulx.
[187] Proulx, 4. "… vivifier le milieu communautaire et d'en préserver ce qu'il en reste."
[188] Proulx, "Les croix de chemin de Manneville, 1938-2020," 4. "Prenez la peine d'observer ces lieux de mémoire."
[189] Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," 19.

This metamorphosis that Nora speaks of reveals itself in the many ways that the *croix de chemin* is understood through the eyes of those who erect them, those who care for them, and broader members of a social collective. Kaell summarizes this succinctly: "caretakers insist on a capaciousness that unites multiple layers of belonging: to ancestors, the land, the nation, the church, and God."[190] Neither fully a matter of secular heritage nor purely religious in its essence, *croix de chemin* today possess a religious, patrimonial, and cultural dimension.[191] This multiplicity in meaning is precisely why wayside crosses remain objects of great interest to the Québécois people.[192]

Kaell poignantly recounts the stories of several caretakers, which underlines their role in shaping, preserving, and transmitting collective memory. For instance, she tells the story of Yvon Laramée and his wife Diane Larochelle who found a cross that was buried among foliage on an abandoned farm. The couple re-erected it, reinforced it with metal, and gave it a fresh coat of paint.[193] Larochelle then wrote a poem which they engraved on a plaque:

> I was lost and was found
> I was broken and was repaired
> I was in the shadow, was put in the sun
> I was forgotten, now I know you
> You have aged like me
> You hid my injuries but I see yours[194]

The couple had no innate ties to the cross though together developed the type of affective bond described by Kaell. Larochelle's poem gives agency to the cross while equating it to the human spirit, speaking of dichotomies of lost/found, broken/repaired, darkness/light, and forgetting/knowing. Now resurrected, the cross may return the favour to those seeking

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[190] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 18.
[191] Levasseur, *L'art populaire dans le paysage québécois*, 79.
[192] Kaell, "Les croix de Chemin du Québec et la naissance du dévotionnalisme Contemporain," 90.
[193] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 10.
[194] Kaell, "Seeing the Invisible: Ambient Catholicism on the Side of the Road," 10. Translation by Kaell.

consolation: *You hid my injuries but I see yours.* Similarly, seventy-year-old Guy Laverdière from Saint-Lazare-de-Bellechasse lives near a votive cross erected in 1941 and now takes care of it, even though he did not erect it.[195] He, too, had a strong affective bond and felt it was his duty to become a caretaker. When crafting replacement crosses, caretakers remain more than open to change, often employing modern materials in the creation of new crosses.[196] In fact, Laverdière rebuilt the cross in 1974 and 1997, and in 2003, he rebuilt it out of metal.[197] Emphasizing the durability of this material, he told Kaell: "If I die, even if no one takes care of it, it will be able to last for a while."[198] The idea of *lasting* is a recurring one, outlining the desire for permanence and continued legacy.[199]

The persistent presence of wayside crosses illustrates the ongoing importance of the Catholic faith for Québécois folk. Although most of the original crosses are long gone, their numbers remain steady through the erection of replacement crosses that make use of durable materials which gained popularity in the last quarter of the twentieth century.[200] Heritage consultant Diane Joly notes that the creation of new crosses and maintenance of old ones demonstrates a desire to get closer to one's ancestors.[201] She poignantly asks us: "Is this an appropriation of intangible heritage—that of the know-how of the craftsman of yesteryear? Or a

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[195] Kaell, "Les croix de Chemin du Québec et la naissance du dévotionnalisme Contemporain," 82.
[196] Kaell, "Les croix de Chemin du Québec," 94. Kaell notes that 90% of crosses were made of wood in the 1980s, but that percentage now stands at 74%. Proulx tells me how in 1998, with the help of Marie-Marthe Vézina, she created a replacement cross out of metal to ensure its longer preservation. See table 12 for a material breakdown of my crosses.
[197] Kaell, "Les croix de Chemin du Québec," 82.
[198] Kaell, "Les croix de Chemin du Québec," 82. "Si je viens à mourir, même si personne ne s'en occupe, elle va pouvoir durer un bon moment."
[199] Kaell notes that the Knights of Columbus, *Chevaliers de colomb*, also play an important role in restorations. She writes that at the end of the 1990s, they restored many crosses across the province, and groups of *Chevaliers* continue to take care of at least 8% of crosses in the province, accounting for more than 200 crosses. Kaell, "Les croix de Chemin du Québec," 86. There are over 90,000 *Chevaliers* today, and both my father and grandfather were once part of this religious organization.
[200] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 43. Many wooden crosses are now covered protective sheet metal or are crafted entirely from metal.
[201] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 64.

flight into the past, towards the utopia of happier times?"[202] The cross is indeed a physical manifestation of an intangible heritage and most definitely involves a looking-back—a reminiscing, a longing, an entry into collective memory. However, the act of remembering occurs in the present, always. The continued erection and care of these crosses exhibits a very real, active conservation of modes of creation and practices that originate from the past but decidedly point toward a collective imaginary regarding what lies ahead.

Little did I know before undertaking this research that I once had somewhat of a caretaker in my own family. Going about my cross adventures, I documented the *calvaire* in the Duparquet cemetery. As I spoke to my aunt about the cemetery weeks later, and more precisely when I showed her the pictures that I took of the *calvaire*, she remembered an old photograph in her collection. It showed my grandmother—her mother—who had painted that very *calvaire* years ago, around 1983. I lined up my photograph with hers, interpreting this alignment as a karmic encounter—a cosmic wink (fig. 68). There I stood weeks prior, observing the crackling paint upon the body of Christ, not yet knowing of the woman (now ninety-six years old) who once lathered it on in an act of piety. I had felt certain ancestral bonds nonetheless, but this newfound familial link intensified these feelings tenfold, emphasizing the role of familial collective memory as a subset of a broader cultural collective memory.

In addition to the work of caretakers, photography becomes a key component for conservation. Photographs of crosses act as invaluable documentation, allowing for such journeys into a usually intangible past. Considering the relatively short lifespan of a cross, a photograph can anchor a cross in time and serve as a key evoker of memory. It can also serve as a form of conservation by permanently archiving the cross and its iconography. Massicotte's

[202] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 64-65. Translated from the French.

photographs of the 1920s are a perfect example of this.[203] In conjunction to restorative work, such comprehensive documentation on the part of researchers contributes to the conservation of cultural patrimony. Elders are essential in this preservation as crosses are conserved in part as an attempt to evoke memories of the past.[204] More so than any other age group, they actively work towards reviving memory.[205] Encouraging dialogue between elders and youth, between present and future carriers of knowledge, is thus crucial for transmitting collective memory through generations. For this reason, I remain eternally grateful for my conversations with Raymonde Proulx and Monique Bellemare as their expertise and welcoming presence propelled this project to new heights. Conversation, conservation, and collective memory become innately interconnected.

I compulsively photographed every cross I came across—from every angle, with both my phone and my film camera. My insistence on developing film speaks to a desire to produce tangible media that may be touched, shared, and ultimately physically passed down generations. Nora underscores the archival nature of modern memory, noting how the creation of such archives delineate an attempt at "the complete conservation of the present as well as the total preservation of the past."[206] He continues: "The imperative of our epoch is not only to keep everything, to preserve every indicator of memory—even when we are not sure which memory is being indicated—but also to produce archives."[207] Indeed, I felt an innate desire to document my journey, intuitively crafting a living archive and shaping future collective memory. I felt the need

[203] Also, research in the 1970s skyrocketed knowledge on the wayside cross, and it became a popular subject to document. For example, the Fonds François Ruph of the *Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec* (BaNQ) features hundreds of photographs of religious patrimony, including *croix de chemin*, in Abitibi-Témiscamingue. Some of these crosses could be matched to those I documented, at least stylistically.
[204] Joly, "Des croix de chemin en quête de protecteurs," 46.
[205] Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory*, 48.
[206] Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," 13.
[207] Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," 14.

to preserve these crosses through photography just in case they were to disappear.[208] More so, I felt the need to immortalize the moment in which I saw these, and at times, to immortalize myself in tandem with them too as my parents photographed me with several crosses (fig. 69). As I begin to exist within the photographic frame along with the *croix de chemin*, I experience a shift similar to that described by Roland Barthes in *Camera Lucida*: "I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death."[209] These photographs reach the apex of collapse; the distinctions between subject and object, and between past and present, are dissolved. These photographs will almost certainly outlive me, and hopefully so will the *croix de chemin*. Observing these documents, I cement myself into collective memory: "I read a period contemporary with my youth, or with my mother, or beyond, with my grandparents, and into which I project a troubling being, that of the lineage of which I am the final term."[210] And, I gift friends and family these very photographs as a token of my love for them where they ultimately act as a plea: "Here, please remember with me."

Conclusion; or the Construction of Collective Memory

In our modern society, convening at a wayside cross may feel impractical or downright dangerous. However, I have implored readers to meet me at the wayside cross—to pause, to reach a heightened sense of awareness, to embark on a pilgrimage into collective memory—so that we may come closer to one another, even if just for a moment. Employing an autoethnographic approach, I have observed the *croix de chemin* firsthand, grounding my research in a range of stories and affective responses, both my own and those recounted in a

[208] The unexpected fall of the Montreal cross I documented brings newfound immediacy to these statements.
[209] Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, 14.
[210] Barthes, *Camera Lucida Reflections on Photography*, 98.

variety of sources. Through an embodied engagement with crosses and their surroundings, I immersed myself in a sensorial zone from which arose a series of poignant feelings and memories. Travelling across the province, my research began in the city but progressively went deeper into rural territory. My first encounter with a Montreal cross revealed the ways in which wayside crosses act as entry points into cultural memory. Even among seemingly incongruous urban surroundings, I noticed connections between the local site and the broader community, sensing a series of cosmic connections forged by the cross. In fact, through its strong contrast with agrarian settings, this particular urban environment creates a unique relationship with the Québécois collective imaginary—one capable of instilling profound longing and disrupting bustling city life. Entering Abitibi, the Paiement cross pushed these affective dimensions into a different direction through its commemorative role, all while bringing forth the nature of the *croix de chemin* as a product of ambient faith. In tandem with the cultural memory evoked by these crosses, the conversations I had with community members both in Bellecombe and Gallichan, as well as through email correspondences with Raymonde Proulx, highlighted the role of communication in shaping and transmitting collective memory. These caretakers perform a labour of love that illustrates the ways in which the Québécois people continue to cherish their crosses. Moreover, my exploration of crosses in Témiscamingue and Duparquet concretized the ways in which photographic documentation, re-erection, and repair all serve as key forms of conservation. This preservation, however, is not solely about conserving the material form of the *croix de chemin* but about keeping our collective memory alive and well, permitting us Québécois to proudly state: *je me souviens*.

In 1973, John R. Porter and Léopold Désy wrote: “We must hope that Quebeckers will be able to ‘remember’ by ensuring the perpetuity of their *calvaires* and *croix de chemin*, such deeply

significant elements of their cultural heritage."[211] Here, the French "to remember," *se souvenir*, plays on Québec's motto, *je me souviens,* binding the very act of remembering to Québécois identity. The notion of collective memory is directly and purposefully imbued within the province's official motto. Embossed on every Québec license plate, *je me souviens* comes into dialogue with the *croix de chemin*, located on Québec's many roads. Much like the wayside cross, this slogan is so ubiquitous that it has been permanently imbedded into the minds of Québécois folk. Although omnipresent, its meaning is often unclear, so much so that when I asked family members what exactly it referred to—what it implored us to remember—no one could give me a straight answer. Again, much like the *croix de chemin*, the motto holds a variety of meanings for us to interpret. In 1895, historian and politician Sir Thomas Chapais (1858-1946) put it this way: "This motto has only three words: *Je me souviens*; but these three words, in their simple laconicism, are worth the most eloquent speech. Yes, we remember. We remember the past and its lessons, the past and its misfortunes, the past and its glories."[212] In simple terms, it is our history that we must remember, from which we construct our collective memory. Linguistically, *se souvenir* is a reflexive verb—to remember (oneself). It involves a personal remembering intensively linked to self-reflection. In addition, it may be employed as a noun. A memory is *un souvenir*. *Un souvenir* is also an object, a keepsake that evokes memories. The English term borrows this latter meaning, filling in for a linguistic lack. I stress this linguistic difference as meaning is constructed through language. The gravitas of *je me souviens* cannot be

[211] Porter and Désy, *Calvaires et croix de chemins du Québec*, 141. "Il faut esperer que le Québécois saura 'se souvenir' en assurant la perennité de ses calvaires et croix de chemin, elements si profondement significatifs de son patrimoine culturel."

[212] Gaston Deschênes, "La devise québécoise 'Je me souviens,'" *L'Encylopédie du patrimoine culuturel de l'Amerique française*. "La province de Québec a une devise dont elle est fière et qu'elle aime à graver au fronton de ses monuments et de ses palais. Cette devise n'a que trois mots : « Je me souviens » ; mais ces trois mots, dans leur simple laconisme, valent le plus éloquent discours. Oui, nous nous souvenons. Nous nous souvenons du passé et de ses leçons, du passé et de ses malheurs, du passé et de ses gloires."

adequately translated to English and instead informs the unique particularities of Québécois collective memory.

Since at least the late nineteenth century, Québécois writers and poets have employed the *croix de chemin* as a literary device, solidifying its role in popular culture and its connection to memory. Composed by Léo-Paul Desrosiers and included in the 1916 literary contest *La Croix du chemin: premier concours littéraire*, the following passage reveals these themes:

> Crosses were raised in our countryside, by our ancestors, because they responded to a powerful instinct, to the intimate and deep tendencies of their being; we, very distant descendants of these believers, possess in the veins of our blood, in the essence of our souls, atavisms and heredities which have transmitted to us their feelings, their aspirations, their ideas; they and we have the same creative principle, an identical origin: how could they not satisfy our soul? How could we not have the same pious respect for them as our forefathers?[213]

To Desrosiers, as to many, the *croix de chemin* evokes our profound history and the soul of Québécois folk. Echoing Philippe B's song written nearly a century later, this text employs the wayside cross as a motif for themes of permanence, faith, tradition, and the past more broadly.[214]

These literary passages, heavily romanticized and dramatized through affective language, dictate the perception of *croix de chemin*, both reflecting and shaping the sentiments of generations of Québécois. Collective memory remains a constructed phenomenon. Patrick Hutton puts it this way: "Memory selects from the flux of images of the past those that best fit its present needs. One might say that memory colonizes the past by obliging it to conform to present conceptions. It is a process not of retrieval but of reconfiguration, for memory bends the data it

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[213] Desrosiers, "Notre Croix," in *La Croix du chemin: premier concours littéraire de la Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montréal*, 49. "Les croix ont été élevées dans nos campagnes, par nos ancêtres, parce qu'elles répondaient à un instinct puissant, aux tendances intimes et profondes de leur être; nous, descendants très lointains de ces croyants, possédons dans les veines de notre sang, dans l'essence de nos âmes, des atavismes et des hérédités qui nous ont transmis leurs sentiments, leurs aspirations, leurs idées ; elles et nous avons le même principe créateur, une origine identique : comment ne satisferaient- elles pas notre âme? Comment n'aurions-nous pour elles le même respect pieux que nos pères?"

[214] Carpentier, *Les croix de chemin: au-delà du signe*. 122.

selects to its conceptual schemes."[215] An emphasis on the use of "colonizes" is necessary as collective memory may fall prey to political manipulation, becoming "an active opportunity for policymakers, and a useful justification for present action."[216] Although it may be used to foster difficult conversations around future desires and past trauma, strengthen bonds between individuals, and concretize our identities, we must remain attentive to the ways in which collective memory may be manipulated to promote hostile policies disguised under a thin veneer of Québécois nationalism and overly romanticized versions of the past that erase harsh realities of settler colonialism. *Croix de chemin* remain inherently connected to the unceded territory on which they are erected, and while they may bring Québécois folk closer to their ancestors, the collective memories that they may trigger for a variety of Indigenous groups resonate with the devastating effects of ongoing colonial practices and the loss of traditional territories. Let us also remember that memory is faulty, and that collective memory is never set in stone. Nora importantly puts memory in direct contrast with history: "Memory is a perpetually actual phenomenon, a bond tying us to the eternal present; history is a representation of the past."[217] The malleability of collective memory is thus both its downfall and greatest asset, for it may be continuously adapted to meet the needs of a specific group. However, if we as Québécois remain actively aware of our subjective position, a pilgrimage into collective memory may prove incredibly healing. And as entry point into this imaginary, the *croix de chemin* acts an anchor of permanence—of comfort—in a rapidly changing and anxiety-inducing world. For Québécois folk with rural ties, regardless of how modernized the countryside may become, or how different our lives may seem from that of our ancestors, the affective dimensions of the wayside cross

[215] Hutton, "Collective Memory and Collective Mentalities," 314.
[216] Bachleitner, "Chapter 7 - Collective memory and the social creation of identities," 171.
[217] Nora, "Between Memory and History: *Les Lieux de Mémoire*," 8.

bond communities infinitely closer together by acting as constant reminders of ongoing traditions—and of potential futures. And, *luckily, some things in life refuse to change.*

> Tes arrières arrières grands-parents, ils savaient comment fêter
> …
> Heureusement que dans vie certaines choses refusent de changer
> Enfile tes plus beaux habits car nous allons ce soir danser
>
> [Your great-great-grandparents, they knew how to party
> …
> Luckily, some things in life refuse to change
> Put on your best clothes because, tonight, we are going to dance][218]

[218] Mes Aïeux, "Dégénérations / Le reel du fossé," track 1 on *En famille*, Disque Victoire, 2004.

Appendix

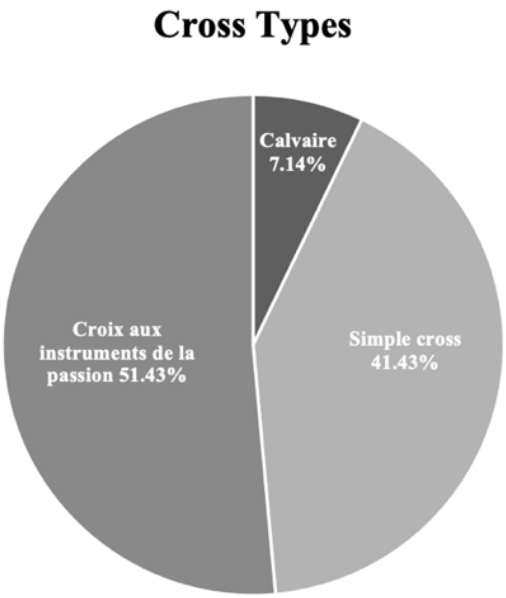


Table 1. Prevalence of each category of cross among my documented crosses.

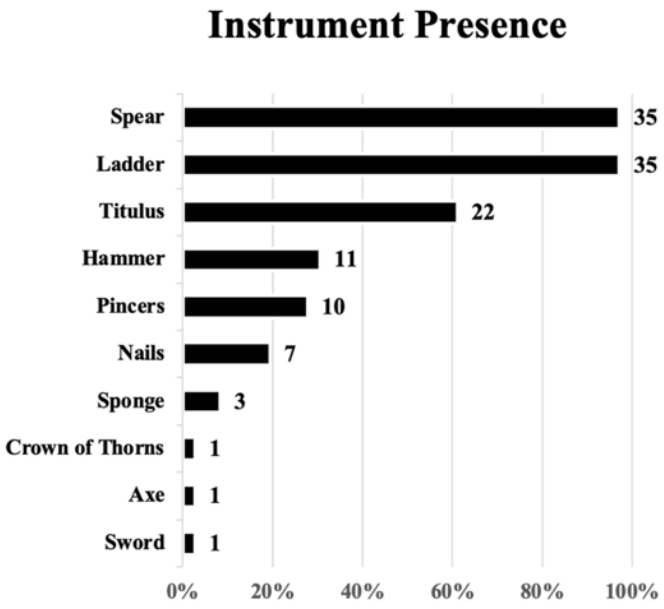


Table 2. Prevalence of *Arma Christi* among my documented crosses.[219]

[219] The presence of instruments is calculated out of the 36 crosses I have categorized as *croix aux instruments de la Passion.* However, certain crosses listed as "simple crosses" possess a titulus. Thus, the titulus category is calculated out of 65 crosses.

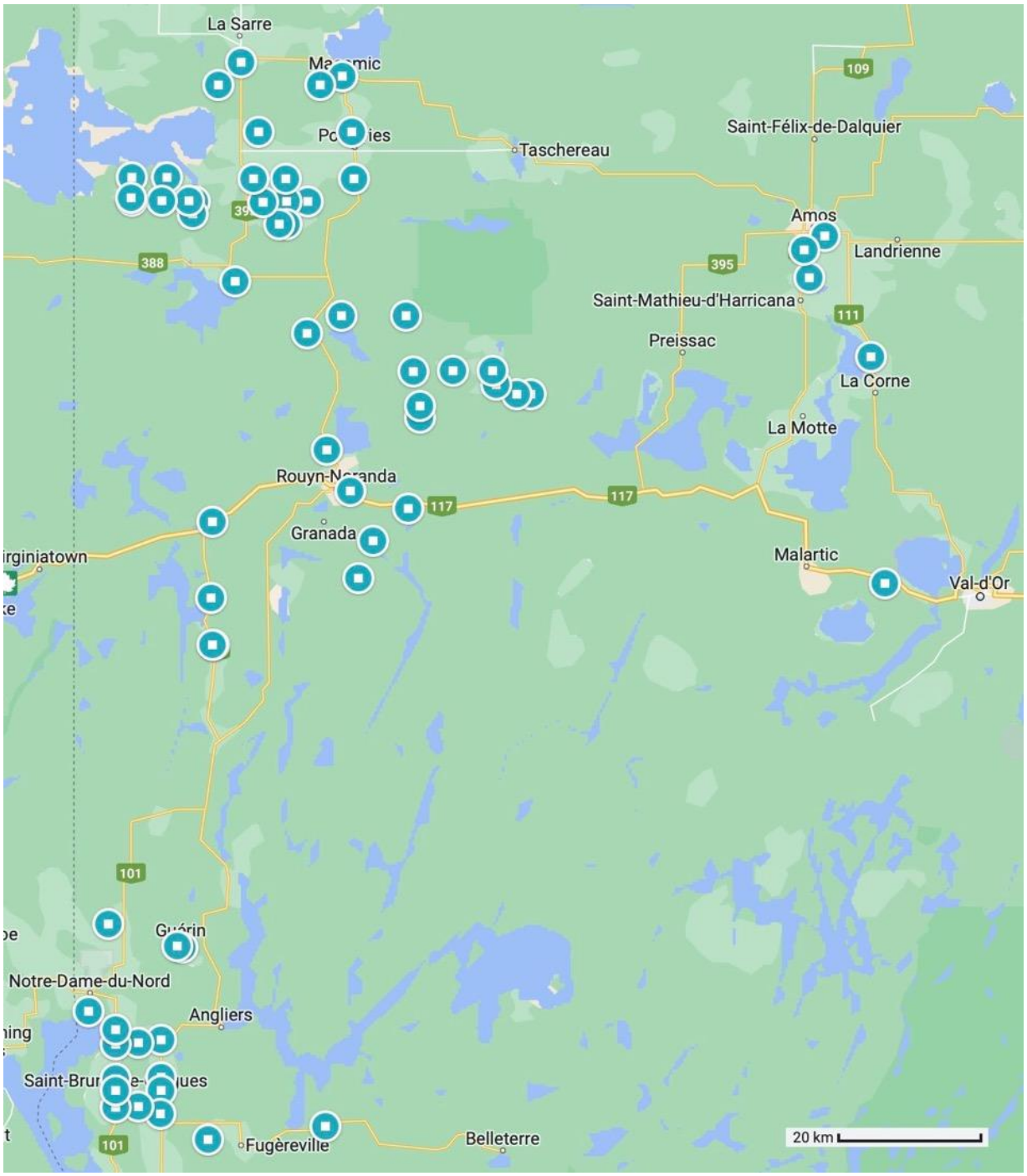


Table 3. Map, to scale, showing my documented crosses in the region of Abitibi-Témiscamingue.

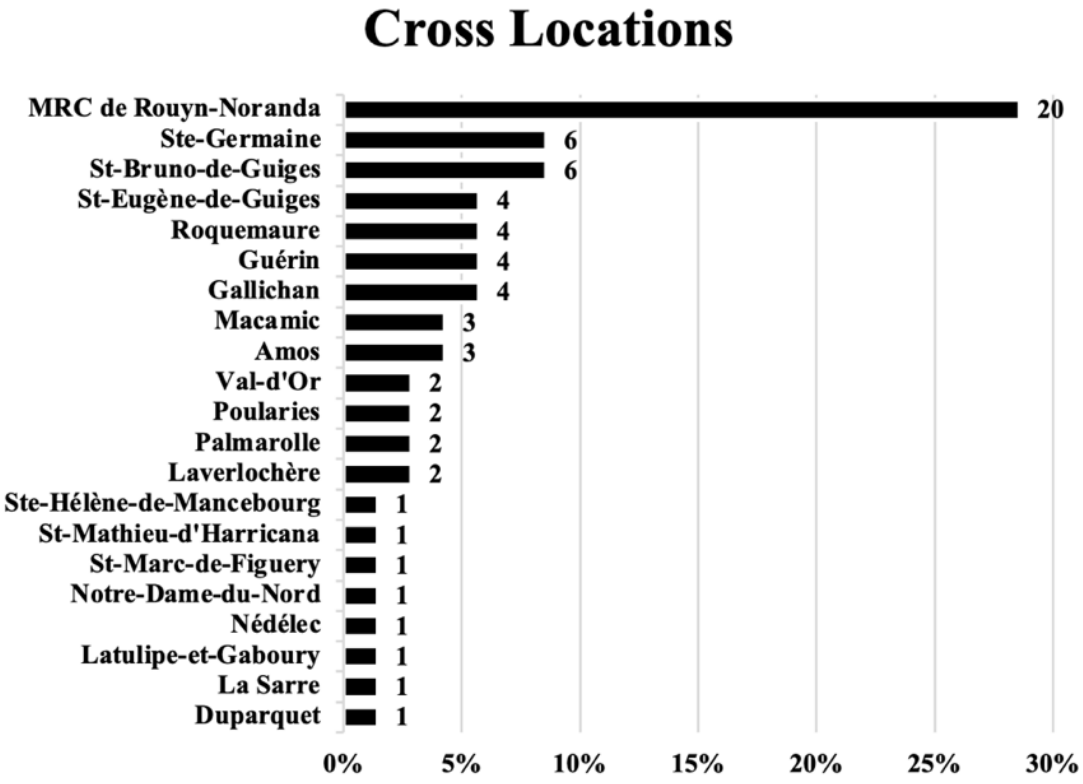


Table 4. Number of crosses visited per location.[220]

[220] The MRC de Rouyn-Noranda features disproportionately as the towns of Rouyn-Noranda, Destor, Mont-Brun, Montbeillard, and Cléricy have been agglomerated.

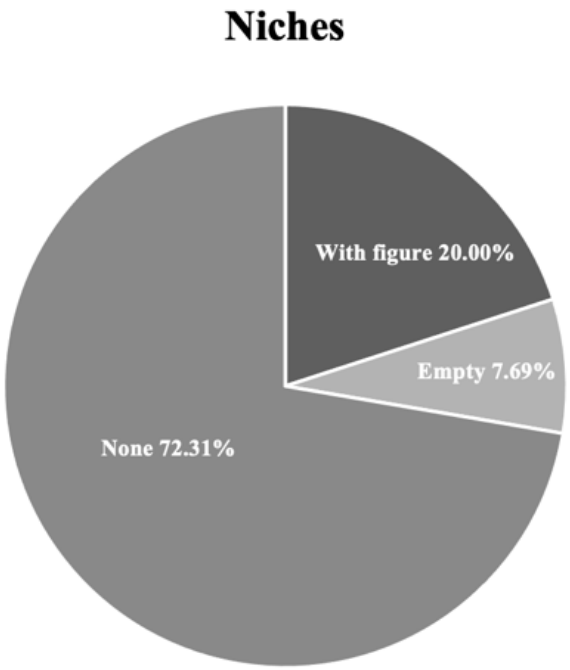


Table 5. Prevalence of niches amongst my documented crosses.

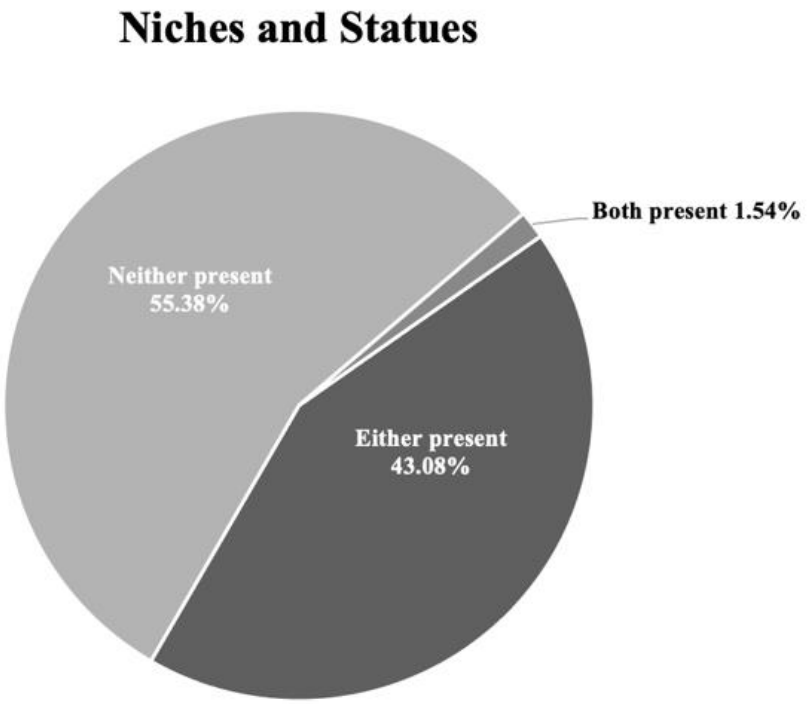


Table 6. Prevalence of niches and/or statues on my documented crosses.

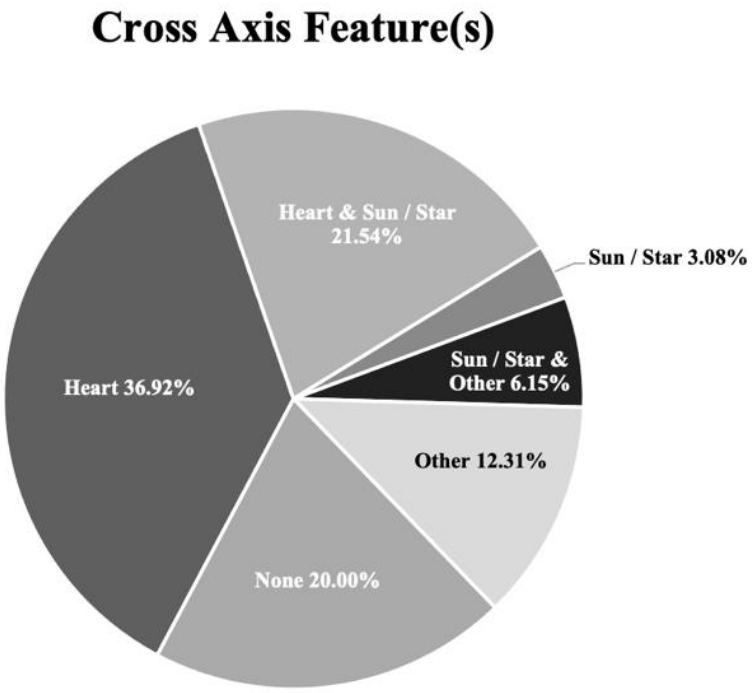


Table 7. Prevalence of axis features amongst my documented crosses.

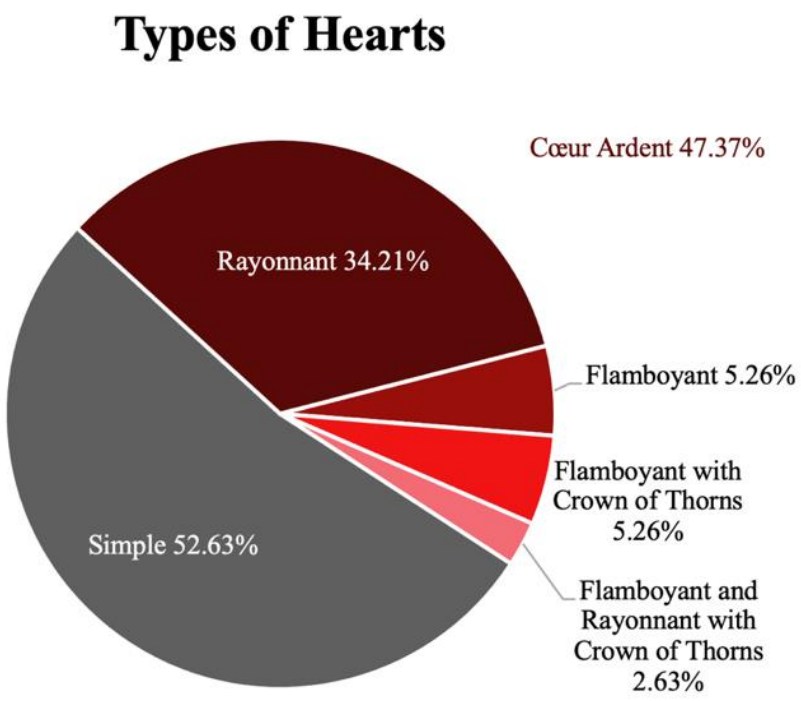


Table 8. The types of hearts found on my documented crosses.

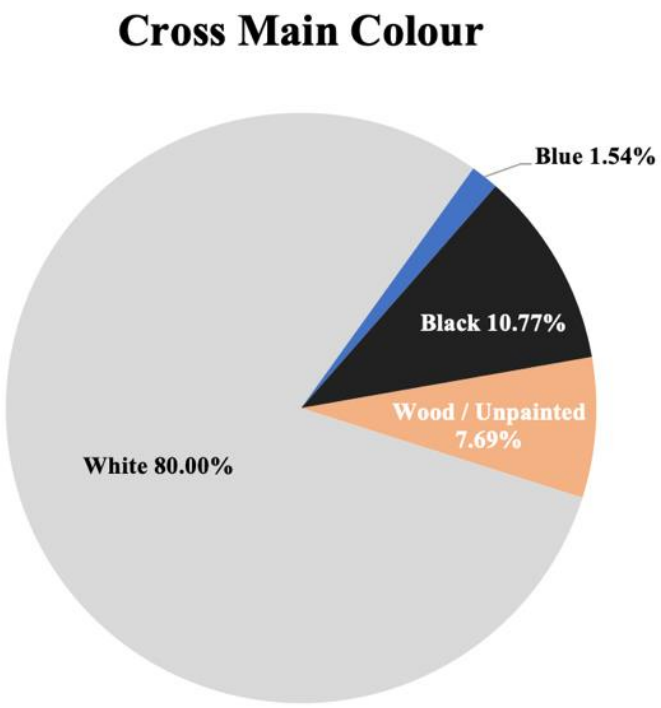


Table 9. Pie chart representing the main colour of each documented cross.

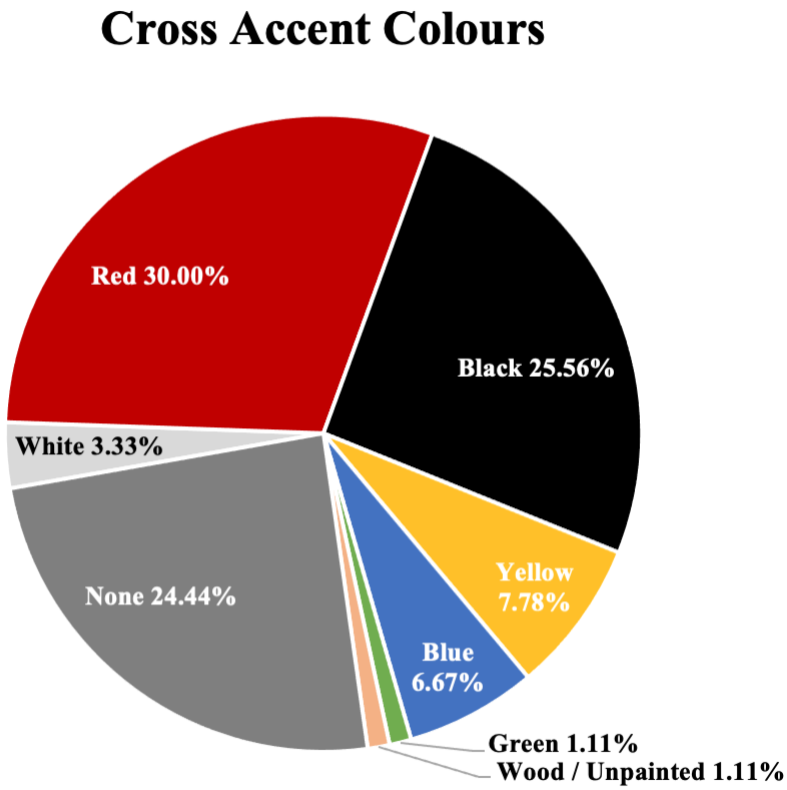


Table 10. Prevalence of accent colours among my documented crosses.

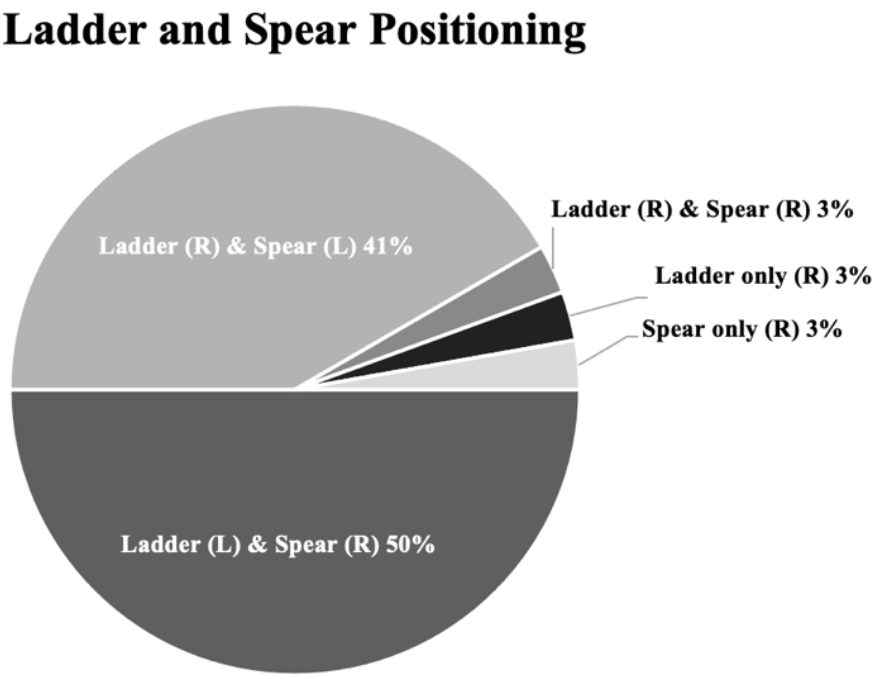


Table 11. Preferred positions for the spear and ladder among my documented crosses.

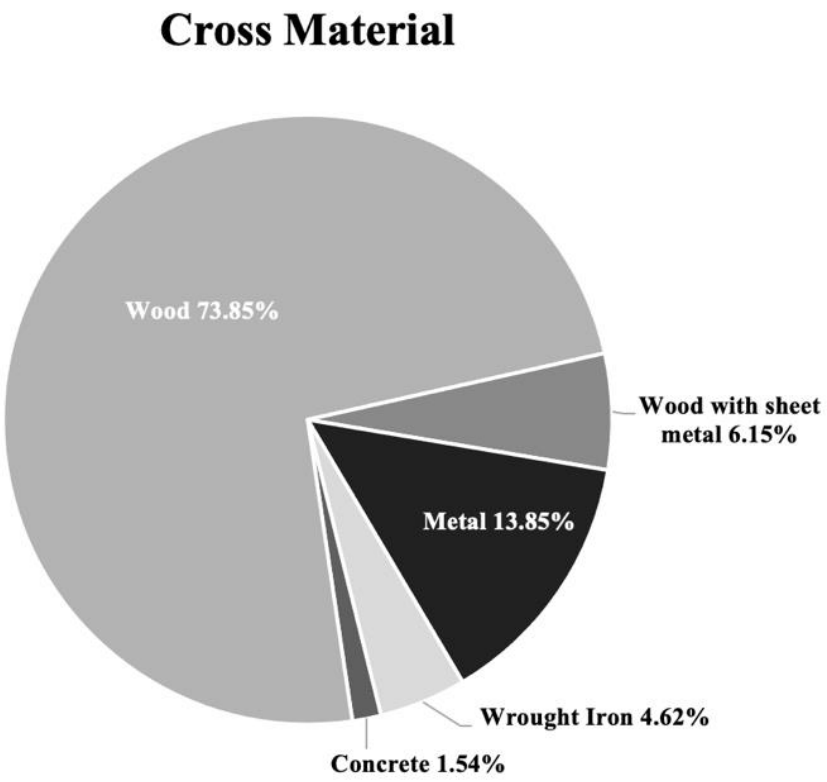


Table 12. Materials used in the construction of my documented crosses.

Figures

Figure 1. Paul Boucher, “Croix de chemin à La Sarre,” *Agriculture en Abitibi*, 1945. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). E6,S7,SS1,P18646. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3156792?docref=wH2Q9Yc5xwJ4HEohlO-mgA

Figure 2. Paul Boucher, *Une vieille maison et une croix de chemin à Noranda*, 1945. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). E6,S7,SS1,D18873-18874. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3156825?docsearchtext=croix%20de%20chemin%20noranda

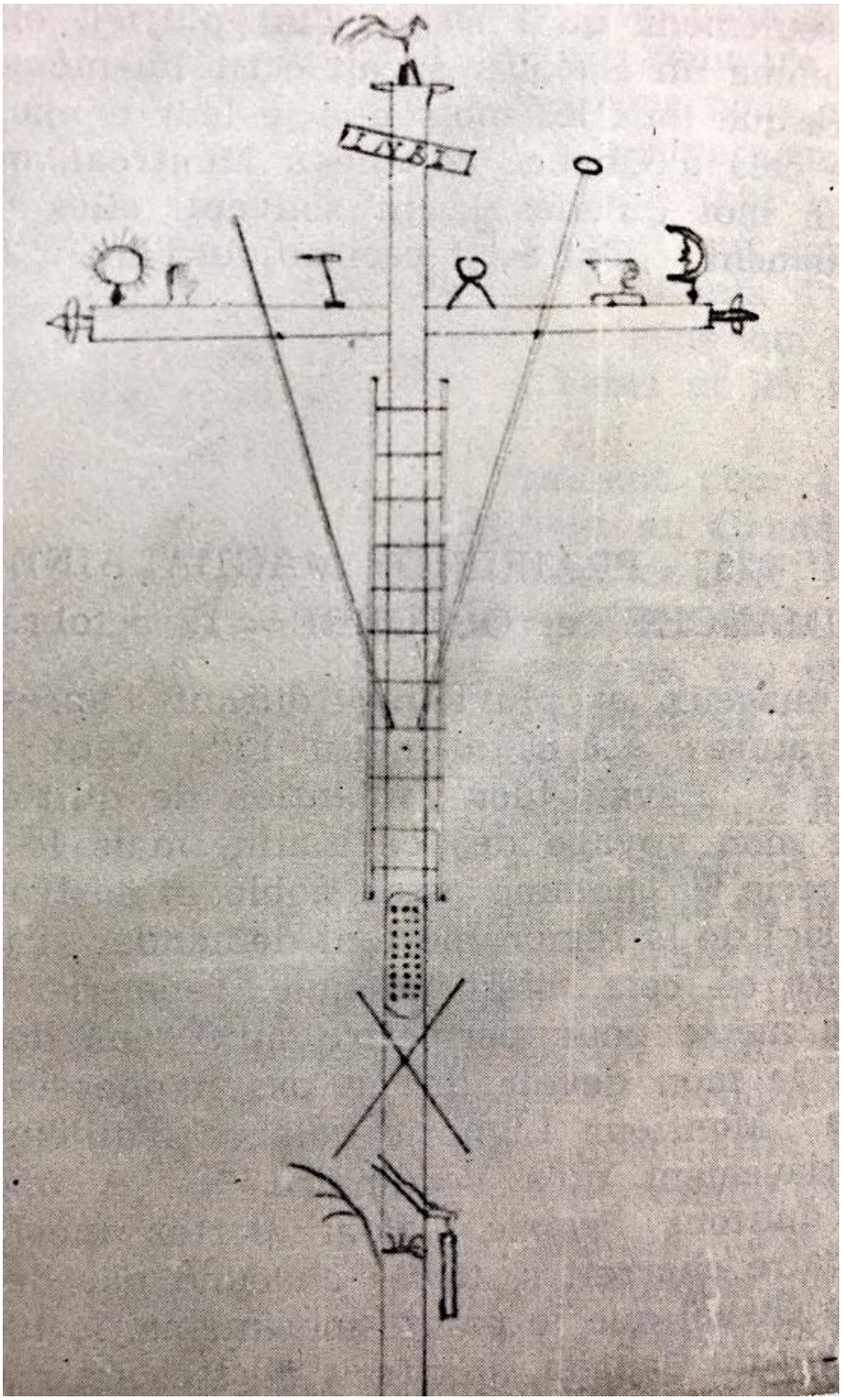


Figure 3. Pehr Kalm, sketch of a *croix de chemin*, 1749. Reproduced from Pehr Kalm, Jacques Rousseau, Béthune Guy, and Pierre Morisset, *Voyage de Pehr Kalm au Canada en 1749* (Montréal: P. Tisseyre, 1977), 541 (folio 925).

Figure 4. C.M. Barbeau (Collection d'Édouard-Zotique Massicotte), *Croix de chemin de l'Ancienne-Lorette, sur le chemin de la Jeune-Lorette*, 1919.[221] Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P181,P188.
https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3425801

[221] This cross, erected in 1902, shares many similarities with Pehr Kalm's sketch, namely the vast amount of *arma Christi* on the crossbeam.

Figure 5. Édouard-Zotique Massicotte, *Croix de chemin de Saint-Prosper (Champlain)*, 24 August 1922.[222] Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P181,P142. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3425751?docsearchtext=Édouard-Zotique%20Massicotte

[222] Description from the BaNQ: "Croix érigée en 1916 en face de chez Ernest Gagnon."

Figure 6. Édouard-Zotique Massicotte, *Croix de chemin, Sainte-Rose, Île Jésus, à l'ouest de l'église*, 24 September 1922.[223] Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P181,P3. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3425848

[223] Description from the BaNQ: "Croix érigée près de la maison de W. Locat."

Figure 7. Édouard-Zotique Massicotte, *Croix à Saint-Alphonse-d'Youville, à l'angle nord du boulevard Crémazie avec le chemin de la côte de Liesse, Montréal*, 16 July 1922.[224] Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P181,P21
https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3425826

[224] Description from the BaNQ: "Croix érigée en 1900 à l'angle nord du boulevard Crémazie (ancien chemin de la côte de Liesse) et de la rue Alice (ancienne montée Saint-Michel), sur le domaine des seigneurs de Montréal. Cette croix, aujourd'hui en mauvais état, aurait été faite par un nommé Laviolette en remplacement d'une autre. Elle aurait été bénite par le curé Beaubien du Sault-au-Récollet, la localité faisant partie de cette paroisse. La maison du fermier des seigneurs, près de la croix, daterait de 1767."

Figure 8. W. Fowle, “Croix de chemin à Laferté” (recto), *Abitibi, Québec*, dated 16 May 1935. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P833,S3,D4, Image 3_1. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/4049565?docref=AZI6mbYbwG3wSu8M5BY6UQ

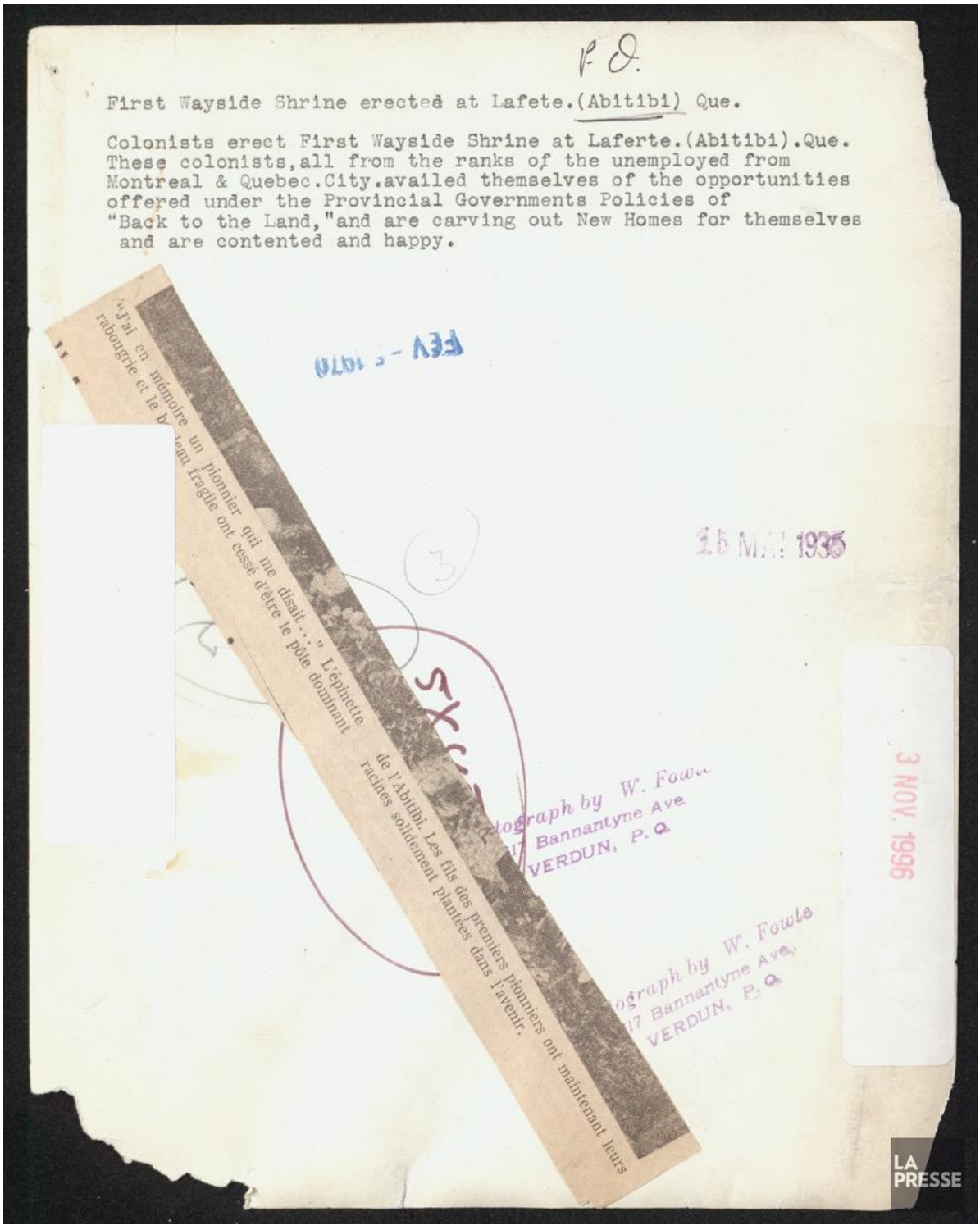


Figure 9. W. Fowle, "Croix de chemin à Laferté" (verso), *Abitibi, Québec*, dated 16 May 1935. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P833,S3,D4, Image 3_2. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/4049565?docref=9berBNy6oj-9zLwfvmyA3Q

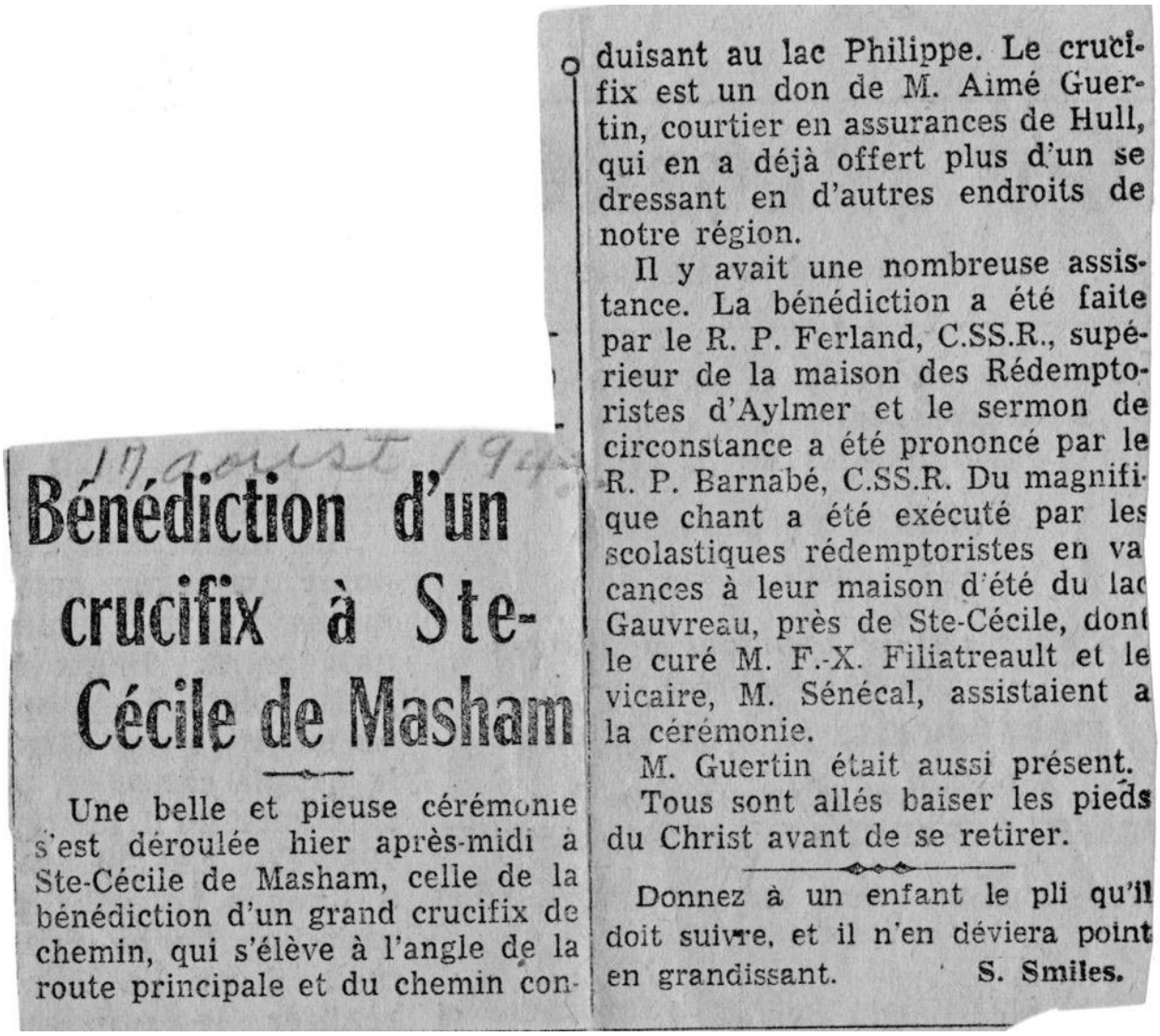
Figure 10. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin*, wood, intersection of rue Jean-Talon O and Lucerne Rd (on Hydro-Québec property), Montreal. 73° 38' 41.658" W 45° 30' 9.318" N. 30 May 2023, 7:35 PM. Listed as cross #1 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Mont-Royal: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/mont-royal/

Figure 11. Photograph by the author, the Montreal cross wedged between two cement blocks.

Figure 12. Photograph by the author, the moon looming behind the Montreal cross.

Figure 13. Photograph by the author, the setting sun as viewed from behind the Montreal cross.

Figure 14. Unknown photographer (fond Aimé Guertin), *Bénédiction d'une croix de chemin (crucifix ou calvaire) à Sainte-Cécile de Masham*, 17 August 1943. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P8,S1,D12P Image 01. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3261202



17 août 194

Bénédiction d'un crucifix à Ste-Cécile de Masham

Une belle et pieuse cérémonie s'est déroulée hier après-midi à Ste-Cécile de Masham, celle de la bénédiction d'un grand crucifix de chemin, qui s'élève à l'angle de la route principale et du chemin conduisant au lac Philippe. Le crucifix est un don de M. Aimé Guertin, courtier en assurances de Hull, qui en a déjà offert plus d'un se dressant en d'autres endroits de notre région.

Il y avait une nombreuse assistance. La bénédiction a été faite par le R. P. Ferland, C.SS.R., supérieur de la maison des Rédemptoristes d'Aylmer et le sermon de circonstance a été prononcé par le R. P. Barnabé, C.SS.R. Du magnifique chant a été exécuté par les scolastiques rédemptoristes en vacances à leur maison d'été du lac Gauvreau, près de Ste-Cécile, dont le curé M. F.-X. Filiatreault et le vicaire, M. Sénécal, assistaient à la cérémonie.

M. Guertin était aussi présent. Tous sont allés baiser les pieds du Christ avant de se retirer.

Donnez à un enfant le pli qu'il doit suivre, et il n'en déviera point en grandissant. S. Smiles.

Figure 15. Newspaper clipping commemorating benediction of crucifix, 17 August 1943. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P8,S1,D12P Image 03. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3261202?docref=AX24lE5-AhsWfejPSA91tg

Figure 16. Photograph by the author, the Montreal cross as seen from the back.

Figure 17. Édouard-Zotique Massicotte, *Croix de chemin de Saint-Laurent, près de Montréal, comté de Jacques-Cartier*, 10 September 1922.[225] Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). P181,P36. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3425855?docsearchtext=Édouard-Zotique%20Massicotte

[225] Description: "Croix ancienne en mauvais état au carrefour de la montée de Saint-Laurent et de la côte des Vertus."

Figure 18. Photograph by the author, the Montreal cross' niche at a reachable height.

Figure 19. Photograph by author, Paiement cross, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, intersection of av Larivière (QC117) and rue Paiement, Rouyn-Noranda (McWatters). 78° 52' 55.332" W 48° 12' 57.06" N. 4 July 2023, 5:17 PM. Listed as cross #17 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Rouyn-Noranda: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/rouyn-noranda/

Figure 20. Photograph by the author, Paiement cross with gleams of light and contrails from planes in the sky.

Figure 21. Photograph by the author, fireweed and aspen trees around the Paiement cross.

Figure 22. Photograph by the author, close up of the niche and instruments on the Paiement cross.

Figure 23. Photograph by the author, plaque on the unpainted heart located on the Paiement cross' central axis.

Figure 24. Photograph by the author, my reflection on the glass of the niche.

Figure 25. Photograph by the author, container filled with papers in a sliding box affixed to the back of the Paiement cross.

Figure 26. Photograph by my mother, bridge and stairs put up to cross the ditch at the Paiement cross. 9 August 2023, 3:26 PM.

Figure 27. Photograph by the author, the Paiement cross as seen in October. 23 October 2023, 5:17 PM. Kodak 200 on Canon Ae-1.

Figure 28. Photograph by the author, trail leading to the Paiement cross.

Figure 29. Photograph by the author, the light of the setting sun hitting the camera lens.

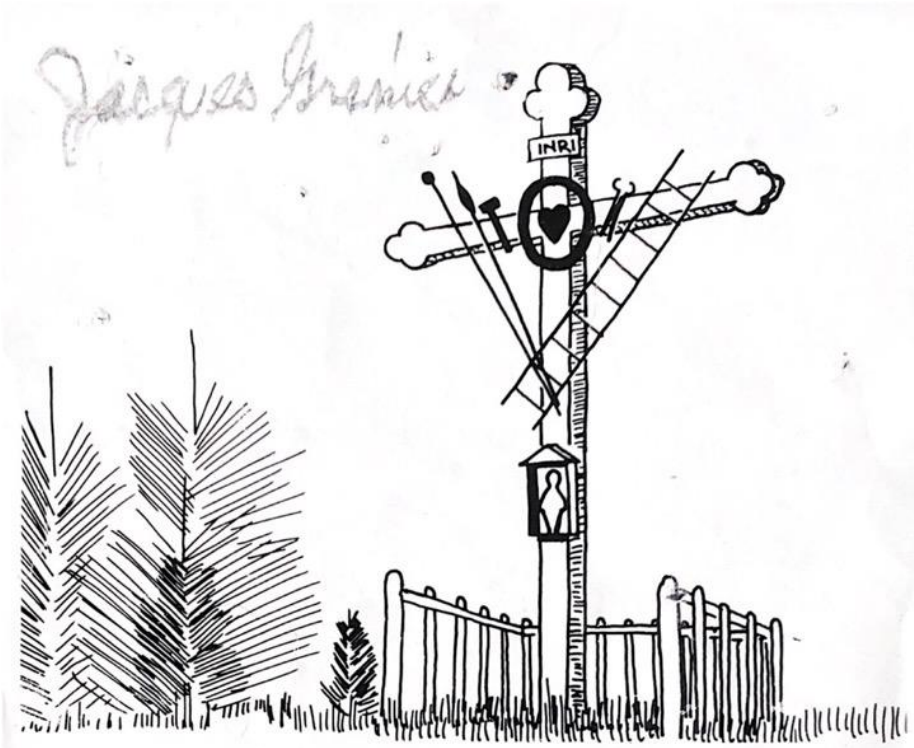
Figure 30. Photograph by the author, the Paiement cross as seen in December. 23 December 2023, 1:01 PM.

Figure 31. Photograph by the author, snowmobile tracks leading up to the Paiement cross.

Figure 32. Photograph by the author, Jacques Grenier's cross, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, intersection of route des Pionniers and rang Valmont, Rouyn-Noranda (Bellecombe). 78° 58' 36.972" W 48° 7' 40.55" N. 7 July 2023. 4:46 PM. Listed as cross #4 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Rouyn-Noranda: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/rouyn-noranda/

Figure 33. Photograph by the author, empty niche at Jacques Grenier's cross which used to house a statue of Joseph.

Figure 34. Photograph by the author, simple *croix de chemin*, wood and sheet metal, facing 8194 rang du Parc, Rouyn-Noranda (Destor). 78° 53' 13.008" W 48° 27' 32.88" N. 9 July 2023, 12:47 PM. Kodak 200 film on Canon Ae-1. Listed as cross #11 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Rouyn-Noranda: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/rouyn-noranda/



Les croix de chemin

La croix se situe à l'intersection de deux chemins, d'où l'appellation ''croix de chemin''. Plusieurs sont aujourd'hui abandonnées, mais par contre de nouvelles croix font parfois leur apparition. Lors d'un dernier recensement datant de 1979, nous dénombrions une quarantaine de croix de chemin. Soyez attentifs lorsque vous parcourerez nos routes, vous en verrez certainement plusieurs.

La croix de chemin typique a une ossature en bois et mesure 5 mètres de haut. Les bouts sont ornementés soit d'un motif géométrique (hexagone, triangle,...), soit d'un motif floral (lys,...). Peintes de couleurs vives, elles sont décorées avec des instruments de la Passion ou des objets variés. Il est fréquent qu'une niche, renfermant une statue de la Vierge, du Sacré-Coeur ou d'un autre saint, soit jointe à la croix.

En plus de témoigner de la piété des habitants du secteur où elle se trouve, le site de la croix de chemin devenait autrefois un lieu de rassemblement social. Le mois de mai venu, on se rendait à la croix, d'abord pour prier, mais aussi pour s'y rencontrer. Les jeunes s'y réunissaient pour se ''fréquenter'' et les travailleurs, pour parler de leurs projets d'été.

Figure 35. Scan of the snippet given to me by Jacques Grenier. Roughly 10 x 15 cm. Unknown origin.

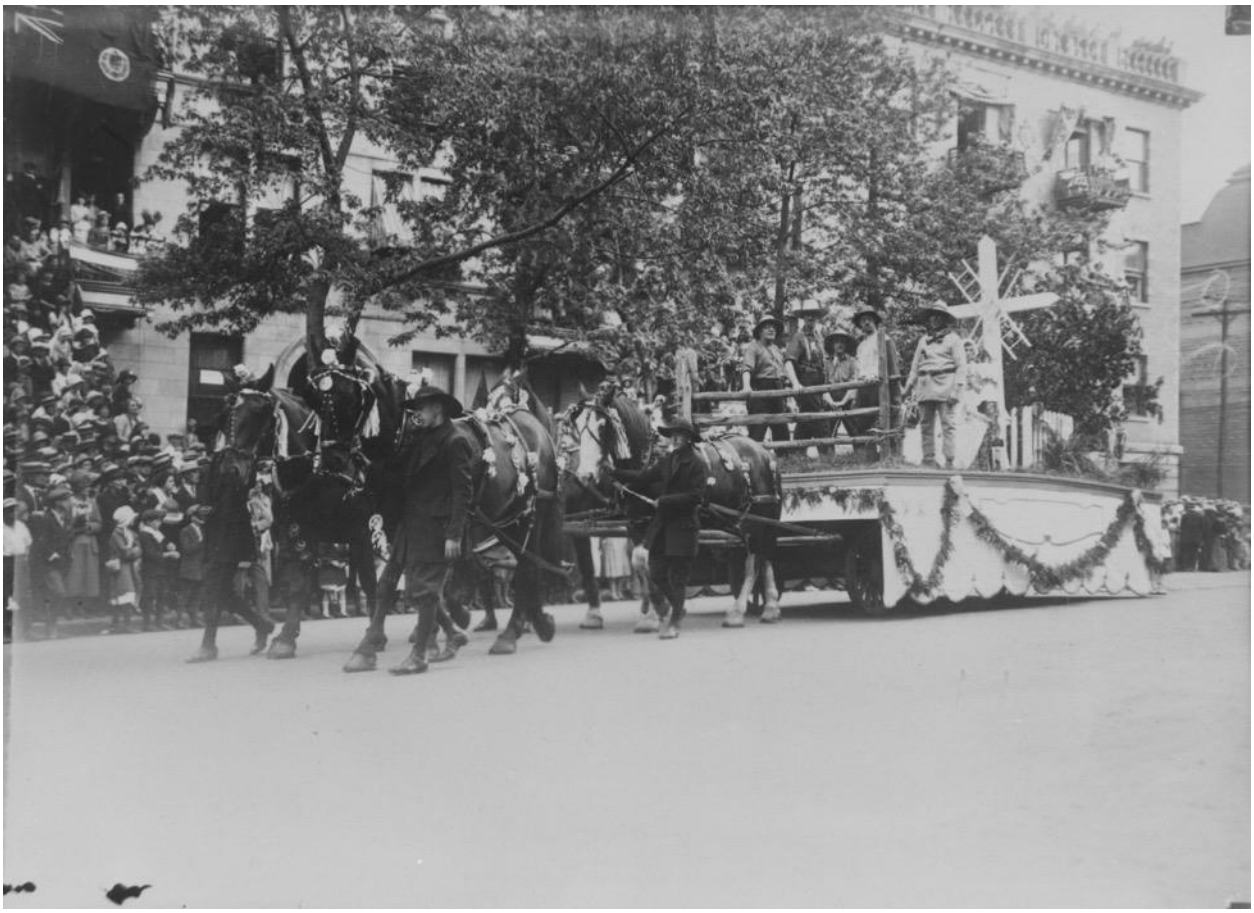


Figure 36. Unknown photographer from the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste, *Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste - Défilé 1925*. Montréal, 1925. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). E6,S8,SS1,SSS694,D4227.40. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/3067409?docsearchtext=montreal%20saint%20jean%20baptiste%201925

Figure 37. Example, set of two antique chromo-lithographs, Immaculate Heart of Mary and Sacred Heart of Jesus, 1880. https://www.1stdibs.com/furniture/more-furniture-collectibles/collectibles-curiosities/religious-items/set-of-two-chromo-lithographs-sacred-heart-jesus-immaculate-heart-mary-1880/id-f_21333942/

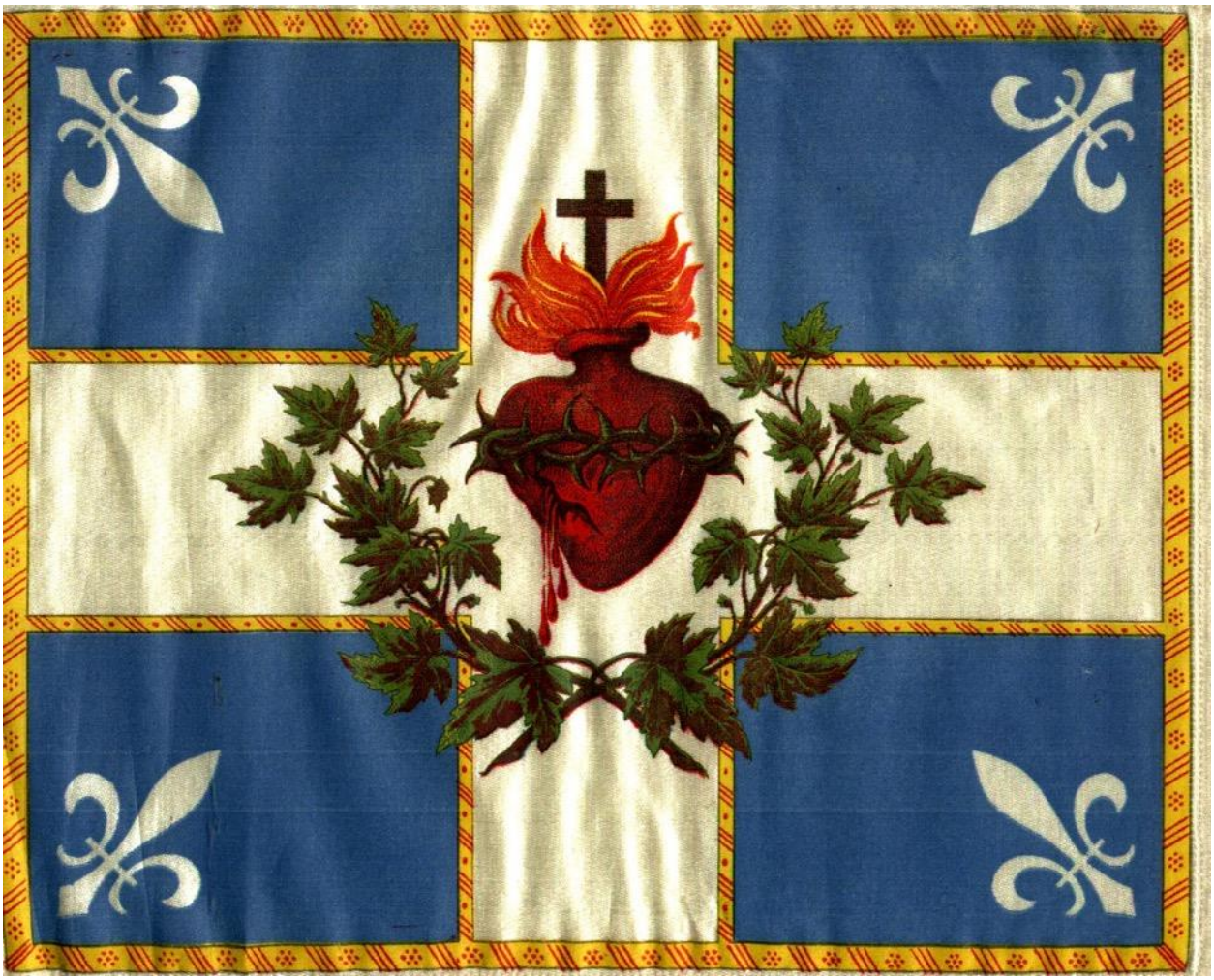


Figure 38. *Le Carillon Sacré-Coeur*. Oiginal design by Elphège Filiatrault in 1902. Sacred Heart added in 1903. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Drapeau-Carillon-Sacré-Coeur.jpg

Figure 39. Wooden sugar mold with inscription *cher dem/oielle je/vous em/boucou* (Chère demoiselle, je vous aime beaucoup), 1800-1976. 5.3 x 10.9 cm. Canadian Museum of History, Gatineau, QC, 77-1293.1-4. https://www.museedelhistoire.ca/collections/artifact/71107

Figure 40. Photograph by the author, simple *croix de chemin*, wood, 569 chemin de la Rivière Est, Gallichan. 79° 17' 31.752" W 48° 35' 15.39" N. 17 July 2023, 12:27 PM. Listed as cross #3 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Gallichan: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/gallichan/

Figure 41. Photograph by author, cross #5, simple *croix de chemin*, wood and sheet metal, intersection of chemin de Gallichan and route Gingras, Gallichan, 79° 17' 56.958" W 48° 36' 13.818" N. 17 July 2023, 12:57 PM. Kodak 200 film on Canon Ae-1. Listed as cross #1 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Gallichan: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/gallichan/

Figure 42. Photograph by the author, cross #8, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, metal, Gallichan Cemetery, 187 chemin Gallichan, Gallichan. 79° 17' 20.712" W 48° 36' 12.75" N. 17 July 2023, 12:39 PM. Kodak 200 film on Canon Ae-1.

Figure 43. Photograph by the author, the church of Gallichan. Kodak 200 film on Canon Ae-1

Figure 44. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 330 chemin de la Gap, Notre-Dame-du-Nord. 79° 29' 24.318" W 47° 34' 31.278" N. 15 July 2023, 12:00 PM. Listed as cross #1 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Notre-Dame-du-Nord: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/notre-dame-du-nord/

Figure 45. Photograph by the author, back of the cross showing its instruments at 330 chemin de la Gap.

Figure 46. Photograph by the author, cleared land behind the cross looking onto the Ottawa River flowing into Lake Timiskaming.

Figure 47. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 649 QC101, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues. 79° 26' 16.572" W 47° 27' 7.692" N. 15 July 2023, 12:49 PM. Listed as cross #2 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/saint-bruno-de-guigues/

Figure 48. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 1010 QC101, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues. 79° 26' 17.202" W 47° 29' 20.922" N. 15 July 2023, 12:40 PM. Listed as cross #9 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/saint-bruno-de-guigues/

Figure 49. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 830 QC101, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues. 79° 26' 18.102" W 47° 28' 24.762" N. 15 July 2023, 12:43 PM. Listed as cross #8 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/saint-bruno-de-guigues/

Figure 50. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 1389 montée Gauthier, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues. 79° 23' 42.588" W 47° 27' 11.652" N. 15 July 2023, 12:55 PM. Listed as cross #10 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Saint-Bruno-de-Guigues: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/saint-bruno-de-guigues/

Figure 51. Photograph by the author, simple *croix de chemin*, wood, intersection of 1ere Avenue and rue Principale, Roquemaure. 79° 24' 29.34" W 48° 36' 13.518" N. 17 July 2023, 1:08 PM. Listed as cross #1 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Roquemaure: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/roquemaure/

Figure 52. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 1331 Rang 2 et 3 Est, Roquemaure. 79° 21' 0.9" W 48° 36' 13.332" N. 17 July 2023, 1:03PM. Listed as cross #5 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Roquemaure: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/roquemaure/

Figure 53. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 647 Rang 4 et 5, Roquemaure. 79° 24' 29.448" W 48° 37' 58.662" N. 17 July 2023, 1:21 PM. Listed as cross #2 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Roquemaure: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/roquemaure/

Figure 54. Photograph by the author, simple *croix de chemin*, wood, intersection of rang des Ponts and rue du Souvenir, Rouyn-Noranda (Cléricy). 78° 52' 22.2" W 48° 23' 21.168" N 9 July 2023, 1:10 PM. Kodak 200 film on Canon Ae-1. Listed as cross #6 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Rouyn-Noranda: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/rouyn-noranda/

Figure 55. Photograph by the author, simple *croix de chemin*, wood, intersection montée du Lac et rang des Quinze, Rouyn-Noranda (Cléricy). 78° 51' 38.28" W 48° 20' 43.518" N. 9 July 2023, 1:24 PM. Kodak 200 film on Canon Ae-1. Listed as cross #7 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Rouyn-Noranda: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/rouyn-noranda/

Figure 56. Photograph by the author, simple *croix de chemin*, intersection of montée du Lac and rang des Bois, Rouyn-Noranda (Cléricy). 78° 51' 37.812" W 48° 19' 51.618" N. 9 July 2023, 1:28 PM. Kodak 200 film on Canon Ae-1. Listed as cross #8 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Rouyn-Noranda: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/rouyn-noranda/

Figure 57. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, intersection of QC101 and Rangs 4 et 5, Poularies. 78° 59' 7.128" W 48° 37' 55.278" N. 17 July 2023, 5:28 PM. Listed as cross #2 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Poularies: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/poularies/

Figure 58. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, intersection of 8e et 9e Rang and QC101, Poularies.[226] 78° 59' 26.928" W 48° 41' 26.808" N. 17 July 2023, 5:20 PM. Listed as cross #1 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Poularies: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/poularies/

[226] A note encased behind glass or plastic indicates that the cross was made by Roland Nadeau in commemoration of the parish's 75th anniversary in 1999. It also notes that the corpus affixed to the cross' axis was given by the parish priest, Marc Laroche.

Figure 59. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 310 Rang 2 et 3 Ouest, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé. 79° 9' 28.32" W 48° 36' 9.36" N. 17 July 2023, 1:52 PM. Listed as cross #1 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/sainte-germaine-boule/

Figure 60. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 989 Rang 2 et 3, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé. 79° 4' 22.44" W 48° 36' 9.702" N. 17 July 2023, 2:29 PM. Listed as cross #4 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/sainte-germaine-boule/

Figure 61. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 703 Rang 10 et 1 (intersection with Rang 1 et 2), Sainte-Germaine-Boulé. 79° 6' 52.43" W 48° 34' 29.118" N. 17 July 2023, 2:43 PM. Listed as cross #3 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/sainte-germaine-boule/

Figure 62. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 600 Rang 10 et 1 Est, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé. 79° 7' 39.86" W 48° 34' 29.328" N. 17 July 2023, 2:40 PM. Listed as cross #5 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/sainte-germaine-boule/

Figure 63. Photograph by the author, *croix de chemin aux instruments de la Passion*, wood, 700 Rang 4 et 5 Est (intersection with chemin J.-Alfred Roy), Sainte-Germaine-Boulé. 79° 6' 54.65" W 48° 37' 54.942" N. 17 July 2023, 2:50 PM. Listed as cross #2 in Monique Bellemare's repertoire, Sainte-Germaine-Boulé: https://www.patrimoineduquebec.com/ajouts/sainte-germaine-boule/

Figure 64. Photograph by the author, my homemade miniature cross at its final resting spot.

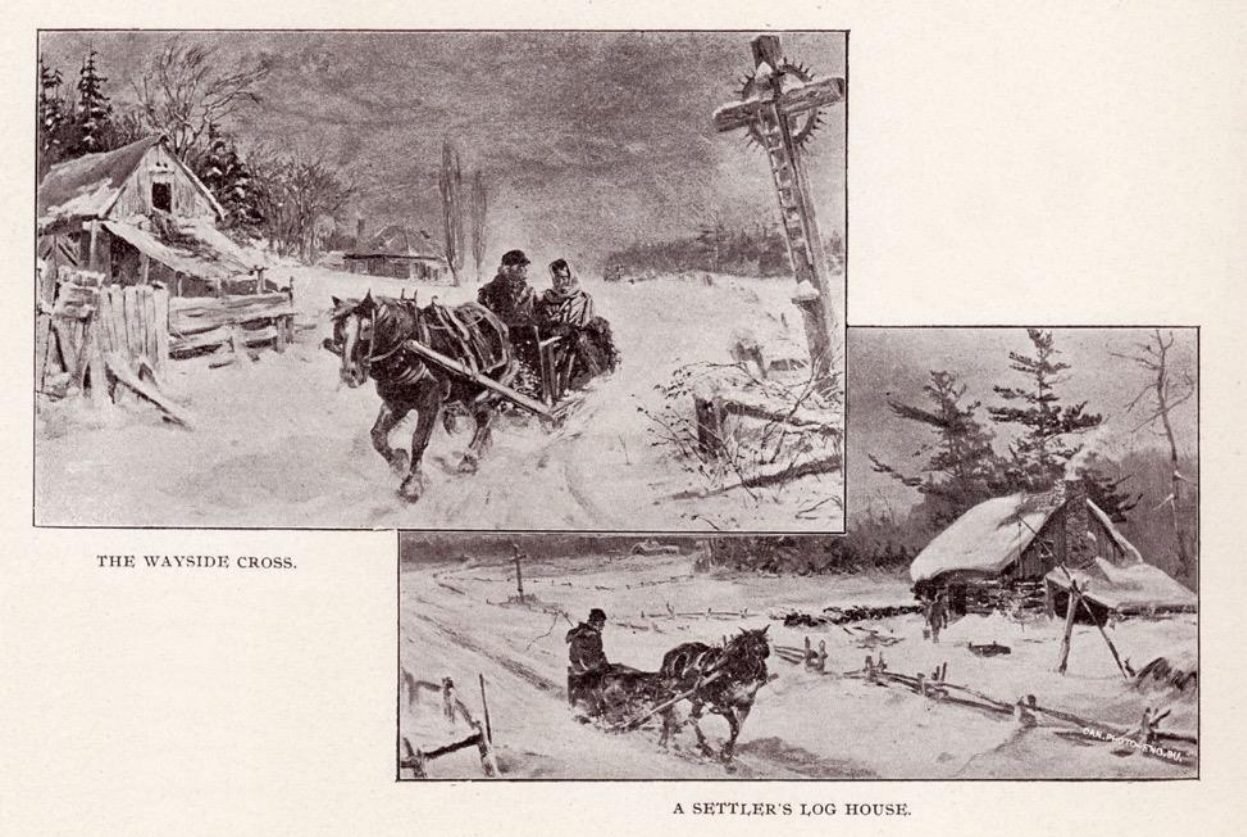


Figure 65. *The Wayside Cross / A Settler's Log House,* from G. M. Adam's *Illustrated Quebec* (Montreal: J. McConniff, 1891), 95. Engravings and printing by Desbarats & Co., Montreal. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). 0002726647. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/1956688?docsearchtext=wayside%20cross

Figure 66. William Notman Studio (unknown artist, unsigned), *Couple in a sleigh, oil painting photographed for Henry Sandham in 1875*, 1875, Wet Collodion Negative, 17.8 x 12.7 cm. McCord Museum, Montreal. II-18561. https://collections.musee-mccord-stewart.ca/en/objects/144920/peinture-a-lhuile-copie-realisee-pour-henry-sandham-montr

Figure 67. Postal card with drawing by Edmond-J. Massicotte, *Le mois de Marie à la croix du chemin / The Month of Mary at The Roadside Cross*, c. 1930s-40s. Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BaNQ). 0004640182. https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/patrimoine/details/52327/2433310?docsearchtext=croix%20du%20chemin

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Figure 68. L: Photograph by the author, *calvaire*, Duparquet cemetery, QC393, Duparquet. 79° 12' 38.658" W 48° 33' 34.14" N 17. July 2023, 11:04 AM. R: Unknown photographer, photograph of my maternal grandmother Jeannine Pruneau (L) and friend Louise Rioux (R) with the *calvaire*, c. 1983. From my aunt Chantal's collection.

Figure 69. Photographs by my parents, the author with several crosses across Abitibi.

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