



MARIE MAINVILLE, ASSOCIATE: Unknown to many people is a woman who accompanied the four pioneer Sisters West in 1858.

That unsung heroine is a lay auxiliary, Marie Mainville, 24 years of age, who had a great desire to lead a life dedicated to charitable works modeled on the Sisters. When she returned to the Mother-House in 1883, she became the first Coadjutor-Sister of the institute, Soeur Marie-des-Sept-Douleurs. (Ref.: Jean de Pathmos, Soeur Marie, S.S.A. Les Soeurs de Sainte-Anne. Un siècle d'histoire, Lachine Qc. S.S.A. 1950)

This short commentary will sing her praises. (archives of the Sisters of St. Ann)

Associating herself to the mission of the Sisters makes of Marie the first “associate” of the Sisters of Saint Ann in Victoria. An early document about the 1858 era reads: “Being a lay woman, discreet, and having a certain amount of shrewdness, she could be trusted with many errands, which in those somewhat rough pioneer times would have been unbecoming to the religious garb.” For 29 years, she was in charge of the known as “Miss Mary”. Being known as “Miss”, qualified her as a marriage prospect in the minds of many. It is recorded that she received numerous “offers”. One day there were three!

But in 1887, Marie decided to return to Quebec. There she applied for acceptance as a Sister for Saint Ann. To accommodate Miss Mainville and others of similar ideals who wished to join the blossoming Institute, the Coadjutrix group of Sisters began. Miss Mainville was #1, the first of this new group. The coadjutrix Sisters helped in many ways to maintain the life of the community in its widespread institutions. In July 1927, the Coadjutrix distinction was abolished and all the Sisters of Saint Ann were fused into one united group.

In Marie Mainville, the Associates of today, although of a different time and commitment, have a model of faithful partnership with the Sisters of Saint Ann. Like Marie, they offer an often hidden, but important dimension to the ongoing life of the Congregation. (Ref: The 5th Dimension by Margaret Cantwell, S.S.A. Spring 2000).

At our Motherhouse in Lachine, February 27, 1917, the death of our dear Sister Marie-des-Sept-Douleurs, Marie Mainville, Coadjutrix _ No.1 _ at the age of 83 years, 3 months, 23 days, after 23 years, 4 days of religious profession.

This dear Sister was the first of five postulants who entered the Novitiate in Lachine in 1892, when this second order of religious was established. Though 58 years of age, the Novitiate exercises were not difficult for her, because she had, during twenty-three years, from the foundation days of our Victoria Convent, shared the rude labors of our missionary Sisters. The annals of the Convent state that the sacrifices she so generously offered there merited for her the happiness of entering religion – a happiness she had vainly sought years before when devoting herself for our dear Sisters at St. Jacques.

....She was ever distinguished by profound humility, gentle sweetness and benevolence, as also filial and respectful obedience. All loved her companionship; for being of an amiable character, her conversation was full of interest and gayety, while her politeness was gracious and serene. (February 27 p. 164)