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Sagard-Theodat papers

Gabriel Sagard Theodat papers

Extent: 2 boxes (20 centimetres)

Typed transcript, with some holograph notes, of English translation by H.H. Langton of Gabriel Sagard Theodat's *Histoire du Canada et voyages que les Frères mineurs recollects y ont faits pour la conversion des infidèles depuis l'an 1615 : avec un dictionnaire de la langue huronne*, 1615-1630.

Gabriel Sagard-Theodat (1590-1640)

Recollect [lay brother](#), missionary, and historian, b. in [France](#) at the end of the sixteenth century; d. towards the close of the seventeenth. In 1623, with [Nicolas Viel](#), the future [martyr](#), he was sent to [Canada](#) on the [Huron](#) mission. Anne of Austria, the consort of Louis XIII, had provided them with a [portable altar](#) and vestments. On his way to the [Hurons](#), he acquired from [Joseph Le Caron](#), his superior, the first rudiments of their difficult tongue, so that on reaching his post he began to catechize and [baptize](#) the Indians. He shared in the incredible hardships of his companions. The provision of mass wine having been exhausted, they had recourse to the juice of the wild grape (*Vitis Canadensis*). In one year's residence he won the affection of his [neophytes](#) and acquired a certain ascendancy over them. When appointed, in the spring of 1624, to descend to Quebec for provisions, he was allowed by the Indians to depart on the express condition that he would return. A letter of his superior, ordering him back to [France](#), thwarted his most ardent desire. He presented a memoir concerning the state of religion to the [Duc de Montmorency](#), Viceroy of [New France](#), inveighing against the agents of the trading companies whose [evil](#) influence paralyzed the [zeal](#) of the missionaries. He convinced his superiors of the necessity of introducing a more powerful and influential [religious](#) order to cope with the difficult situation. The [Jesuits](#) having been suggested, the choice of them was ratified by [Cardinal Richelieu](#) in 1625. In 1686, Sagard published a history of [Canada](#) under the title: "Histoire du Canada et voyages que les Freres Mineurs Recollets ont faits pour la conversion des infideles". It is a clear and simple account of all he saw or heard mentioned in this new land. Charlevoix criticises his [Huron](#) vocabulary as inaccurate compared with later studies of the language, but gives him credit for his good judgment and [zeal](#) for the conversion of [souls](#) and the progress of the colony.

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13324c.htm>