

**I. — CHŒUR (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle) clés de voûte :**

1. Saint-Hilaire.
  2. L'aigle (Saint-Jean).
  3. La Vierge.
  4. Le bœuf (Saint-Luc).
  5. Clé non historiée (portait une date erronée jusqu'à la restauration de 1974).
  6. Le lion (Saint-Marc).
  7. L'homme (Saint-Mathieu).
  8. Un ange.
- Chapiteaux (à demi engagés) :*
20. Ours (l'un a eu la tête brisée accidentellement en 1974).
  21. Monstre à tête humaine, deux corps d'oiseaux et deux serres.
  23. Non historié et martelé.
  24. Non historié et martelé.
  25. Aigle aux ailes à demi déployées.
  26. Ange portant un phylactère sans inscription.

*divers :*

13. Ancienne porte gothique de sacristie (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle).
22. Ancien tabernacle de style gothique béarnais (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle).
27. Fragment de peinture murale restaurée par l'atelier Eczet (XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle).
29. Emplacement prévu pour le groupe en bois sculpté et doré : le mariage mystique de Sainte-Catherine (XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle).

**II. — ABSIDIOLES (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle).**

11. Chapelle Sainte-Catherine.
10. A la clé de voûte, statue mutilée de Sainte-Catherine.
12. Chapelle Sainte-Luce.

**III. — NEF ET BAS COTES (XVI<sup>e</sup> et XIX<sup>e</sup> siècles).**

15. Porte du porche occidental (1856-1859).
16. Porte latérale sud (1864).
18. Travée ajoutée (1856-1859).
19. Emplacement de l'ancien « parquet judiciaire ».
17. Clocher (1856-1859).
28. Vierge dorée (XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle ?).
30. Campanile (1858 ; en cours de réfection, en janvier 1977).
- 30 bis. Sacristie actuelle.
31. Ancienne sacristie (XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle).

L. Plan de l'église après travaux d'agrandissement : 1856-1859  
1426)

d'après un dessin de L. Peyrègne

### The enlarging of the church

Projected work was not undertaken in the immediately. The remarks of advisers on the enlarging of the church had made its way and 3 years later, on May 7, 1856, two joint operations were the subject of the same meeting :

*For a few years, the official report says to us, the considerable increase in population, which is of 1.400 souls<sup>36</sup> returns of a pressing need the enlarging of the communal church, because it often arrives, during the religious ceremonies that part of the population cannot find place in the interior of the church and that they are forced to remain outside. As the town council and the general information of the inhabitants, on several occasions, expressed the wish that this great communal need is most promptly possible, satisfied.*

Mr.Dumoulou, architect of the town of Pau, already made a first study as of the plans for the bell-tower which carried the expenditure to 16000 frs. On July 5, 1857 to him was regulated the sum of 250 frs. representing his fees.

*But adds the Mayor, a new more complete examination of the current state of the church adds, character of its construction which goes back to the 13th or 14th century, but which remains unfinished, (what was perfectly exact, fault, undoubtedly, average) recognized that the first expenditure and estimates will not satisfy all.*

It is recognized that the frame and the roof are in a great state of outdatedness, that the side of midday must be continuous, without maintenance of the current porch, to carry out sides where there is not tile to the ground.

Wishing to make the choice of an expert which already completed similar work, the mayor addresses himself (M.Dumoulou which cannot continue his work, which, in the future will prove extremely detrimental for the commune!) to sieur Loupot, architect at Bagnères de Luchon author of the church of Bénéjacq<sup>37</sup>?

He takes charge of the drafting of a new plan and a complete estimate which includes:

- the enlarging of the church
- the leveling of the ground;
- repair of the roof;
- the construction of the bell-tower
- the construction of the sides;
- the construction of the sacristy. (that which existed, placed at north was extremely wet and exiguous)

The total rises to more than 30.000 francs!

The schedule of charges is established and the submission of the contractor is chosen, on October 13, 1856 it is Jean Bordenave-Lagau, carpenter-mason of Bénéjacq.

Nevertheless modifications and complements are requested from the architect, bearing on the buttresses, the arches of the sides which were in briolle to be cut, the side door which was to be out of cut stone of Louvie, the arch of stone bell-tower of Nay as well as a small bell-tower which was to be built at the end of toit of the sacristy and surmounted of a gilded cross.

One thus asked for an additional estimate to which was added four great crossings of the bell-tower which were to be carried out not in briolle, but out of stone of Louvie and the windows of the church which were to be established not out of white glass, but with “colors and subjects”, which raises the initial estimate very appreciably.

Work began and lasted approximately two and a half years. The bad quality of execution was going to involve the commune in a series of contentious actions which would last more than three years!

A commission of three members was designated on March 8, 1859 for examination of work. They did not give their satisfaction and in November of the same year, the town council refused to accept the provisional acceptance made by the architect for an amount of 38.629 francs, in consequence of not carrying out work (the platform, doors and part of the stained glasses) or badly carried out (crossings of the sides, all unequal, of size and form, the confection of certain arches, deformity of interior paving), because of a not very active monitoring of the contractor and the architect (let us not forget that he resided at Bagnères de Luchon!).

On June 3, 1860 the town council composed of Brousset, Baron, Bernata, Aris-White, Luciat, Aris-Maysounabe, Siot, Jeanneton, Castet, Navarre and Blanquine, decide assignment in front of the council of Prefecture of Loupot and Bordenave-Lagau. The council referred about it to the Prefect who named Mr. Levy, as expert. This one gave a state fixing the real price of work at 31.602 frs.

We will not enter in detail the disputes, even of the dispute supplied with defects. M. Peyrègne largely gave an account of it. The whole was finished only in the neighbourhoods of 1862 for the part of the heavy work and 1868 for interior decoration.

### **The translation of the cemetery.**

Another question, quite important fed the debates of the council at that time, it was the translation of the cemetery.

But, let us retrogress a few centuries...

Once the construction of the church (initially dedicated to Saint Antoine, then to Saint Hilaire) was completed, it was the habit to bury deaths of the commune around or inside. Those which required to be buried in the enclosure of the church were to pay a “royalty” of 4 livres, as a handwritten document, found by chance in a house of Montaut testifies so and which could be the accounts book of the priest of the time, Jean Bequel. One finds there, from 1640 the receipts of these sums of 4 livres boxed by the pastor and against which he insured a burial in the church. He confirmed, in addition, the destination of these sums like having to provide for the acquisition of ornaments.

The parochial registers are on this subject, very explicit. Randomly mentions what they contain: holy chapel Catherine, chapel St. Luce, between the pillars, of the church saint Anthoine, close to the door of the cagots, in the church saint Anthoine, close to the pulpit, in the chapel of Abadie, in front of the altar of St. Luce etc..., we find the confirmation of this custom.

The things remained in this state during more than three centuries, very exactly to the royal decree of May 15, 1776, by measurement of hygiene, prohibiting the burials in the churches.

Another place thus had to be found.

In order to seek solutions to this serious question the council of the community meets on August 8, 1776 and decided to use the ground located around the church, thus delimited: *26 pans on the front of it, 26 pans on the side of Capéran, and on the side of Charon, 20 pans and 20 pans on the side of the presbytery.* The whole would be closed with a wall; a wrought iron gate would allow entry to it.

Two months later, on October 17, after much reflection, another meeting comes to reform this deliberation, because *the ground around the church is not solid say many inhabitants, waited until there are aqueducts... and that it is marshy. Moreover the southerly wind being especially felt in Montaut and the church being located in the enclosure of the village, it would be too dangerous to place a cemetery there*<sup>40</sup>.

Around the ruins of the old chapel of Lassun was some land, property of the commune, *of approximately half arpent, small pole, and a distance of approximately 450 toises from the village... to the place which the capacity of the church is only approximately 9 escats.* One then decided to close its walls of *12 pans top, replastered well with a main gate, closed with key, surrounded with a small slate wall.*

It was blessed besides on June 13, 1778 (as an official report<sup>41</sup> attests) *with the permission of Mgr de Noé, bishop of Lescar, we the undersigned, accompanied by Jean Belardy, jurat of this place and a number of other people pursuant to the declaration of the king bearing defense to bury in the churches those which are excluded by the aforementioned declaration, the parish of Montaut since the translation of the church Saint Hilaire de Lassun which dates back nearly six centuries, having in the use to bury the corpses in the current church of Saint Hilaire the community to obey the orders of the king having deliberated to close and repair the walls of the cemetery of the old church to bury there the bodies of late faithful and the aforesaid repairs being almost finished, we proceeded to the forms prescribed with the blessing of the aforesaid cemetery to henceforth bury there the corpses of faithful until it likes His Majesty to give the inhabitants in their former practice while derogating from his declaration of May 15, 1776. In faith of this, we signed the day and year above. Pommez, priest; Belardy, jurat; Araxi, Thomas Navarre, Massey, Casalaa, Bank, Lauyère.*

A few years later a deliberation of the assembly of the council general of the commune, fact allusion, by the voice of Etienne Bourrié, procurer, with the complaints of the inhabitants about the too great distance to the cemetery and request the return to the ancient usages *constantly practised for more than five centuries without accident, until the declaration of the king of May 1776, a time to which the community of the place raised the walls of the old parish church saint Hilaire de Lassun located at the bottom of the plain, moved away from the current church of more than one quarter of mile and in a place strongly isolated!*

It added that the families were worried because of the desecrations of graves *and of the examination of the corpses without one being able to discover the authors of such an irreligious act!* It thus asked

that authorization is given without reference to anybody (for the status quo handle) *to avoid a new insurrection of the inhabitants of the place!*

In spite of this risk, the place in question was useful during more than 80 years, of burial to the montaltois.

It was necessary nevertheless to leave this impasse. A request was addressed to the Prefect<sup>43</sup> on January 6, 1860 to point out the exiguity of the place to him which *oblige to renew the graves well before the time prescribed, which wounds the respect due to the ash of deaths.*

The diligence of an investigator in the person of the Justice of the Peace of the canton, which was to deliver his opinion on the translation of a ground pertaining to the spouse Signalas.

His report was accompanied by the plan of the new cemetery, the estimate of work, the commitment to buy from Signalas and even report of Doctor Cogoubles, doctor on the choice of the ground.

A prefectural decree of June 9, 1860 authorized the commune then to acquire 27 ares of ground pertaining to the sieur Signalas for the sum of 2.131frs57, to transfer the cemetery to it. A request for an estimate for the establishment of a fence, supplemented the decree.

The whole represented an expenditure of 3.594frs, 75. for which the Prefect gave his agreement and required the ratification by the municipal conseil, which will moderate and finance this investment by a voluntary soucription registered in the budget.

### **The inventory of the public school for boys.**

Randomly from our research, we fell on a document going back to 1860 and giving a progress report on the inventory of the school of boys installed in the new common house. At the same time, the school of girls was held by three "Girls of the Cross".

Chronologically former to the presence of Jules Ferry to the head of the ministry for the State education, it is a testimony of "the school environment"<sup>44</sup> under the Second Empire.

- 1 Christ
- 11 tables and benches
- 15 tables of moral maxims and religion
- 2 tables of usual measurements of the metric system
- 10 tables of method of Bahié reading
- 2 tables of multiplication tables
- 1 geographical chart of France
- 1 estrade for the Master
- 1 Virgin
- 1 map of the world 2 charts of Europe 3 charts Asia, Africa, America
- 1 Extract of the regulations of the schools
- 1 pendulum
- 1 chart of the department
- 70 porcelain inkpots (30 broken)
- 8 concepts of agriculture

- 8 holy stories
- 4 epistles and Gospels
- 1 psautier of the diocese
- 1 bust of the Emperor
- 1 bust of the Empress

The whole of this inventory was consigned in a register of inspection of the school sent by the Prefect and contresigned by the mayor "Pisson-Abadie and the teacher, P.Manescau.

It was supplemented by the inventory of the furniture of the teacher:

- 1 dresser (in bad condition)
- 1 long kitchen table (good enough state)
- 1 round table (bad condition)
- 1 large armoire (good state)
- 2 bedstead (out of use)
- 2 night tables (mediocre)
- 1 ferrette (bad condition)

Without comments...

### **The railroad**

The first train came to Montaut on August 20, 1867. The construction of the Bayonne-Toulouse line, originally, a single track, (the project of a double track dated between October 5, 1899 Saint Pée and Pau) gave place to multiple discussions in connection with its layout, many indeed were the communes of the plain of Nay which wished to see the line passing on their territory, it was the case of ours; others wished a layout passing by Pontacq. It was thus necessary to operate choices... which made at the same time those satisfied and... those dissatisfied!

Like any innovation, this construction comprised at the same time positive aspects, but also negative aspects.

It was incontestably one of the economic engines which allowed the local arts and crafts, developed well already, to reach the stage of industry and to create many jobs.

In the field of the "quality of the life" to employ an expression with the mode, one can consider that it was a true catastrophe of which we live every day the harmful sound effects and of which our ancestors once underwent, moreover, olfactive harmful effects; without especially counting the fact of the separation of the commune into two parts, making the communication of the one with the other, difficult.

On July 29, 1898, a wish of the town council of Montaut, transmitted by the Prefect to the Public Ministry of Labour, made state of the wish, the lime-burners to use the quay discovered of the station for the handling of lime<sup>46</sup>. The Company of the Railroads of the South answers *that it was not held to place quays at the disposal of the shippers; those must be satisfied to use the way of awaited overflow that the dust released by the lime handled on the quay discovered, seriously inconvenienced the travellers.*

It concludes that it is completely laid out, if the users make the request of it, to examine the possibility of building, with their expenses, a quay discovered on a ground which would be rented to them on the way of overflow.

The traffic of the station of Montaut was important (coal, wood, old rags and old paperboards and papers, waste of esparto manufacture, boxwood, chapelet etc...) which justified the presence of a station master and several employees.

### **A post office in Lestelle**

In August 1861, the administration decided<sup>46</sup> the creation of a post office in Lestelle, with an attachment at Montaut. The inhabitants of our village find this creation advantageous *of which considerable inhabitants deliver to the trade hydraulic lime and chapelet as with the manufacture of papers*.

The letters would be dispatched the very same day at the office of Lestelle, whereas currently the letters start from Montaut, remain 24 hours at Nay and arrive at Pau only the following evening at five hours; all the way being carried by horse.

A few years later<sup>47</sup>, at the beginning of March 1868, exactly, the town council montaltois meets in the ends to deliberate on the transfer of the office of Lestelle to Montaut and addresses a letter to the Prefect in this direction.

Live reaction of the lestellois to the arguments of our fellow-citizens: more important population, progressive abandonment of the pilgrimage of Bétharram, to the profit of Lourdes etc...

Lestelle retorts that its population is of 1100 inhabitants against 1300 in Montaut<sup>48</sup>, *that Bétharram was vivified by thousands of pilgrims come by special trains from the railroad, and not only of modest people, but last year, the princess Clotilde and, some time before, their Majesties, the Emperor and the Empress... in a word, Bétharram forever be more prosperous than today*.

*It is added that more than 350 francs of postage stamps are sold at the monastery which throws to the box, more than 700 letters per annum. We discover thus that Lestelle is a primary industrial and commercial commune, place of factories of chapelets and fabrics which are sold throughout France*.

*Montaut is far from having of such advantages: distance of the road, trades of lime only in one radius of 25 kilometers which must fight against serious competition, manufacture of paper and chapelets of few importance etc...*

This exchange of pleasant remarks, sullied on both sides with partisan spirit, often far away from daily reality, finally would lead to nothing if not to confirm a situation which was perennialized until our days.

Moreover, the Prefect of the time wrote to the mayor of Montaut on April 21, 1868: *the town council of your common asked that the post office, currently established in Lestelle be transferred to Montaut. It was recognized that this transferring could not be carried out as of present*<sup>48b</sup>.

### **The craft industry**

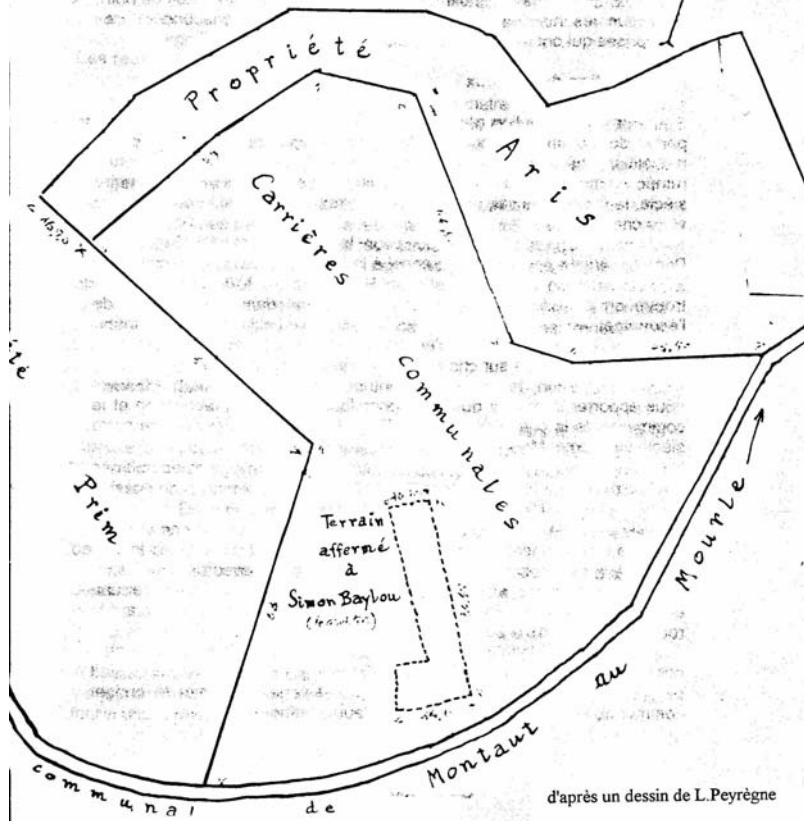
Certain activities, supported by the presence of the place or near raw materials, encouraged by a regional market of importance, and assumed by an abundant local labour, had been born in our commune since a very long time.

*Plan  
des carrières du Castéra*

**MONTAUT**

(D'après des plans figurant aux Archives municipales et contresignés :

- le 5 décembre 1863, par Bisson-Abbadie, maire, Arès et Brem, propriétaires, et Lagueux, géomètre-arpenteur ;
- le 1<sup>er</sup> juillet 1874, par Bisson-Abbadie, maire, Baylou, concessionnaire, et Bonnemazon.



d'après un dessin de L. Peyrègne