Ce numéro de Le Forum est dédié à la douce mémoire de Prof. Dean Louder. This Issue of Le Forum is dedicated in loving memory to Prof. Dean Louder....(page 3)
Sommaire/Contents

Dedication, Dean Louder .................................. 3, 31-32
Grégoire Chabot
Josée Vachon
Joshua Barrière .............................................. 3
Fact Check
L’État du ME ............................................. 4-12, 23-27
From Maine to Thailand by
Roger Parent
Back Seats by
Paul Paré
Le Nex Dans les Archives by
Guy Dubay
Father Ciquard by
Guy Dubay
Another Voice in What to Call Ourselves by
Denise R. Larson
Stones by
Ray Luc Levasseur
Souvenirs d’une Tante by
Jacqueline Chamberland Blesso

Endowment

One way to support Le FORUM while at the same time reserving life income is the establishment of a charitable gift annuity with the Franco-American Centre Le FORUM Fund at the University of Maine Foundation. Call 1-800-982-8503.

Abonnement au Le FORUM Subscription
Si vous ne l’êtes pas abonnez-vous — s.v.p.
— Subscribe if you have not

Nom/Name: ________________________________
Adresse/Address: _____________________________
Métier/Occupation: ___________________________
Ce qui vous intéresse le plus dans Le FORUM section which interests you the most: ___________________________

Je voudrais contribuer un article au Le FORUM au sujet de: I would like to contribute an article to Le FORUM about: ___________________________

Tarif d’abonnement par la poste pour 4 numéros
Subscription rates by mail for 4 issues:
États-Unis/United States — Individus: $20
Ailleurs/Elsewhere — Individus: $25
Organisation/Organizations — Bibliothèque/Library: $40

Le FORUM
Centre Franco-Américain, Orono, ME 04469-5719
Chez Dean: An amazing gourmet kitchen, PLUS meals on wheels

Québec City has an impressive number of gourmet restaurants per square mile. But my favorite wasn’t listed in any guidebook, nor was it known to any concierge or taxi driver. Didn’t even have a name. I suppose you could have called it “Chez Dean,” after its owner, our great friend and Laval professor, Dean Louder. It was located near the end of a dead end street – Avenue du Cardinal Bégin – in a cellar apartment. No reservations needed. Nothing fancy. But the meals. Ohhhh, the meals. You came away totally satisfied, of course. But you were also somehow exalted.

That’s because for minority Francos from everywhere in the Americas, an evening at Chez Dean left us with a feeling of belonging that most of us had never experienced and a sense of pride that seemed so out of place in so many other locations and a vision of the future that always seemed to get gobbled up by a voracious past in those places where we came from … wherever that was.

My most memorable evening at Chez Dean happened in the summer of 2008 and involved a wonderful gumbo, a francophone sock puppet cable TV star, and a stinging critique of Cajun music. “It was,” stated the young man from Louisiana, “always the same damn thing with some guy whining about how the love of his life had run off to East Texas with another man.” Now, how could anyone forget that?

The kitchen attracted more famous visitors the next day with Cajun poet Barry Ancelet and chanteur/compositeur Zachary Richard stopping by to spend much of the afternoon. Menu didn’t change, though. Same gumbo – left over from the night before. Similar long conversations. All just as satisfying. And we all took turns getting interviewed by the francophone sock puppet for cable TV. Try doing all of that in a “normal” gourmet restaurant.

Lots of people found nourishment in that kitchen over the many years it was open. Yvon would wander up there with FAROG students in tow to get a taste of something unavailable anywhere else. New Brunswick, Iowa, Michigan, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Oregon all sent representatives.

Didn’t have a way of making it to “Chez Dean?” No problem. No worries. (Continued on page 27)

FACT CHECK

Joshua Barrière

Rassemblement d’artistes à Orono

At the end of April, The Franco-American Centre at the University of Maine hosted a rather unique event: their annual Franco-American gathering for artists and creators. These kinds of events are few and far between. Yet the University of Maine holds strong to the Franco community and their créativité foisonnante. The event welcomed a diverse crowd of novelists, poets, playwrights, historians, and even a singer. This year, unlike last, there was an overarching theme for the presentations: Why are Franco-Americans so invisible? And what are we doing to make ourselves more visible? The mere fact that Francos continue creating does more to make us visible than this lovely group of creators is aware. This event shows the unity of the Franco-American ethnic group, creators from multiple states and even across the border come together to share their work and their experiences. With the continued efforts of the participants to ameliorate the gathering, we have the potential to change inalterably the course of Franco-American culture and literature. I recently met with Gustave Labbé, a retired literature professor now almost 99 years old living in Montréal. We discussed a wide variety of topics, one being la concurrence. Camaraderie and competition are essential to a competent literary production: this event helps unite creators from across the Franco-Américaine and elevates the quality of Franco-American writing. With unity comes a great many advantages and at the Franco-American Centre this event is a step in the right direction.

Though most were from various regions of Maine, there were a few that came from from other states and across the border. Among those from Maine were Susan Poulin, Laurie Graves, Gregoire Chabot, Dani Beaupré as well as Raymond Pelletier, Yvon Labbé, and Paul Paré. Susan Poulin presented a piece about her aunt, a sister in northern Maine. Although it was different from her usual comedic writings, it was very touching and shows the breadth of Poulin’s talents. Laurie Graves, who keeps a blog (hinterlands.me), presented an excerpt from her recently published fantasy novel, (Continued on page 31)
I was in a helicopter with Sargent Shriver, Peace Corps director, to visit volunteers in Khorat, about a one-hour ride from Udorn. It was an American-made helicopter; maybe a precursor of the ubiquitous Hueys of the Vietnam War - I'm not sure of the make or model. I sat on a bench facing Sargent Shriver and a couple of his assistants. Next to me were Art and Jack volunteers at the Udorn Teacher Training College, and Dave, another volunteer whom Shriver had invited for the ride. We strapped ourselves into our seats and at Shriver's suggestion, the door was left wide open to let cool air rush in. I hadn't felt air this cool since I had left Maine eight months ago, in October 1961.

This was the rainy (monsoon) season - early June I think - and it was hot and humid, wet and green. It was around noon on a sunny day with only a few clouds, but that could change suddenly, since it's in the nature of monsoons to change that way. I wasn't thinking of possible storms as I watched the countryside passing by like a movie through the open door in front of me. I was in wonder of the miracle wrought by the rains that had colored the dusty brown landscape in every shade of green, had filled the rice paddies with water, had flooded homes and villages and had turned dirt roads into mud. I could almost see the frustration on the face of the bus driver trying to get his bus free, and I could almost see the satisfaction on the faces of the woman and her children tending the rice plants in the rice paddy.

Earlier that day, Shriver had visited my home and school and I had introduced him to my host families and colleagues. He had removed his shoes before entering my home, had worn the heavy blue cotton shirt (closed at the front with cotton ties) of the Thai farmer, given him by my students, and he had tried to play the khaen (north-east bamboo flute).

Shriver embodied the spirit of Peace Corps in his respect of the people's culture, language and feelings. That's why he had asked for a Thai pilot and helicopter to visit volunteers, unlike the American ambassador, who accompanied him in an American military helicopter.

Sargent Shriver's way of running Peace Corps was hands on — he visited us and talked without colleagues and principals. In Washington he got theory, I said, “I'm teaching English as a second language at two schools. I'm organizing the library and helping the carpentry teacher, but my carpentry teaching job is not highly needed. I think other volunteers should be assigned to Udorn and the northeast but not as teachers of carpentry.”

While we were talking, I noticed the sky clouding and the wind increasing; I thought we might be in for a storm. No sooner had that thought passed when the rain came. We quickly closed the door and our helicopter was almost engulfed by a monsoon storm of torrential rains and bluish-black clouds, which turned the bright midday sky into midnight darkness. Typhoon gusts threw us like a cork in rough seas. When our helicopter wasn't being pulled up and let down, like a yo-yo, it slid on air this way and that, like a sled on ice.

Lightning pierced the stormy darkness and thunder punctuated the noise of our groaning helicopter as it twisted in corkscrew winds and pelting rain.

I had seen military helicopters fly over Udorn, and I had often thought it would be fun to ride in one. Now I wasn't so sure. As long as Sargent Shriver sitting across from me remained calm and serene, I remained calm and serene. But when I saw our pilot struggling to keep the helicopter stable and upright, and the conversation ebbed, Shriver's face showed concern. I was concerned too. I didn’t want to die in a helicopter — not even with the President’s brother-in-law.

My concern grew and I became frightened when our helicopter dropped in what seemed a free fall. I couldn’t see anything and I through the pilot couldn't either. I resigned myself to a swift death in a Thai military helicopter in the middle of a rice paddy. But suddenly, maybe a 100 feet from the ground, the pilot yanked the helicopter to a hover, looked around and quickly brought it down in a flooded field, not far from a
water buffalo and an old shed whose faint outline had been seen.

The pilot opened the door, I rolled up the legs of my suit and jumped in knee-high water amidst rice shoots in my Sunday shoes. I didn’t know where we were and neither did the others. We had been blown off-course and even the pilot wasn’t sure where we were. As we stood in the water, rain pelting us and lightning and thunder scaring us, we noticed a farmer and his children whom we had surprised by dropping from the sky, walking slowly toward us. They had been lured out of the old shed in the rain to take a closer look at this extraordinary scene unfolding in their rice field. We met them halfway to the shed and Art (the best speaker of local Lao dialect; our pilot was from Bangkok and didn’t know that dialect) asked the farmer, “Where are we? What’s the name of the closest town?”

Meanwhile, Shriver was having a great time kibitzing in every man’s language with the children, playing the role of Peace Corps Volunteer as he imagined. The farmer invited us out of the wind-whipped rain to the shed. I told the farmer that Sargent Shriver was a Director of Peace Corps and the President Kennedy’s brother-in-law — an important U.S. government official. He found that hard to believe, “If he’s such a high official, why is he wearing a Thai farmer’s shirt?”

Almost as soon as we took cover in the shed, the storm left — almost as quickly as it had arrived — and the sun shone brightly. After some quick good-bye’s and deep wai’s (to bow and place the hands together as in prayer), we boarded our helicopter. In about 20 minutes we were in Khorat, where Tai dignitaries and volunteers were anxiously waiting for us. The American ambassador and his entourage were nowhere in sight. They had not arrived yet.

That evening, while having a meal of curries, steamed vegetables, rice spiked with fish sauce, Mekong whiskey and singha beer, we learned the Ambassador’s helicopter had run out of fuel while being tossed about by the storm and had been forced to land far from us. Our pilot had picked them up and flown them to Bangkok, leaving for the moment their helicopter and pilot in the rice fields where they had landed. Now that we knew they were safe, Shriver joked, “Our Thai pilot was more skilled than the ambassador’s.” He kidded about the stuffing of the ambassador and his assistants and bemoaned the tendency of American diplomats to live in “foreign enclaves” apart from the people.

Shriver discouraged the high falutin’ receptions host governments and embassies wanted to give him because he was President Kennedy’s brother-in-law. He set a good example for volunteers by his folksy approach, by the way he treated ordinary citizens of Thailand with dignity and respect, and by his trust in their intelligence and judgment. We were inspired by Shriver and I think he was inspired by us. President John Kennedy had signed the legislation establishing Peace Corps, but Sargent Shriver was its founder and inspiration.

Roger Parent lives in South Bend, Indiana, where he served as city councilor and mayor in the 1970’s and ‘80’s. He is trustee of the South Bend Community School Corporation and founder of World Dignity, a non-profit organization focused on educational programs in Thailand, India and South Bend. In 2005 he assisted victims of the Dec. 26, 2004 tsunami as deputy director of the Tsunami Volunteer Center in Khao Lak, Thailand. He and his wife, Rolande (Ouellette), have four children and six grandchildren.

Back seats

Short Fiction by Paul Paré

It was on a windy Sunday afternoon in late January and we were about to embark on our “Father Knows Best” moment: the starched table cloth, the boiled dinner set out on a metal tray; the blueberry pie waiting on the oak sideboard along with the dessert plates; the volume on the radio turned down; the four of us, our hands clasped in prayer while my father recited the traditional blessing.

There was no clue the moment was soon to turn into fury and chaos.

My sister Claire, who was a junior in High School, had coined the expression about “Father Knows Best”, since it was our moment — our only time of the week — when we shared a heavy meal and my father profited from the occasion to chat about family matters. Claire bestowed on our Sunday dinner a heavy dose of sarcasm — a feeling I didn’t share. I loved the television show. I was totally in awe of Robert Young and Jane Wyatt and their children. The perfect American family. Something we, the Jalbert family of Auburn, Maine, had yet to achieve.

I was in the fifth grade that January of 1956, a student at Saint-André School. I was a good student, among the top five of my class, never got into trouble, obeyed the nuns and earned their approval.

My parents had just me and my sister. My father worked at the Catholic Hospital in Lewiston across the river. He was in charge of the boiler room and made sure the large, noisy, coal-eating furnaces were kept in perfect working order. My mother stayed at home, worked in our garden, kept house, took the bus to the grocery store, and prayed a lot. Everyone was busy all week and our meals were simple, fast, and often skipped by both my sister who was out with her girlfriends and my father who worked late fixing problems at the hospital.

(Continued on page 6)
(Back seats continued from page 5)

But Sunday dinner was a ritual. We attended the 10:30 a.m. High Mass at Saint-André Church. The afternoon was spent in the kitchen, the largest room in the house and the fanciest with its sideboard my mother’s grand-father had brought over from Montmagny, Québec. A double window was covered with fancy lace curtains, and hanging on one wall was a painting of a rural roadway in Québec featuring an outdoor oven with a farmer’s wife removing loaves of bread.

Our Sunday meal was elaborate: nearly always a boiled dinner that had simmered in the oven while we were at church, with a large chunk of lamb and a smaller chunk of beef. “People should eat more lamb, it makes them more agreeable.” My mother used the French word agréable which to her meant “understanding” and “kind.” Stewed with the meat were carrots, onions, and cabbage. Mashed potatoes were served on the side.

I knew all this because I – mon p’tit Paul – was recruited every week to help prepare the meal. My sister, much taller than me and able to reach the highest shelves of the cupboard, was expected to set the table with the best dinnerware we possessed. My father would gaze out the window while listening to the radio which on Sundays broadcast entirely in French.

We spoke in French practically all the time. My mother knew very little English, my father understood it better than he spoke it, my sister would have preferred English, I didn’t even think about it. Of course, Saint-André School was a bilingual parochial school with half a day in each language. To me, it felt perfectly normal. But, French was the language of the home.

While we ate our dinner, my father would lead the discussion and, on cue, we would share bits of information about the past week. My sister donned her fake smile and whispered to me: “Father Knows Best.”

Turning to me, my father said, “So, Paulo, how was your week?” I reddened at the sound of my baby name. “Paul is my name, not Paulo,” I barely whispered.

“I went to school,” I said with as much sarcasm I could muster.

“I know that. What did you learn? Is there anything new going on?”

“Well, since the beginning of January, we have a new course called civics. It’s in English and it’s all about America – history and government and all that. Oh! And, we have a new bus driver. A woman, her name is Miss Bumpas.” I spelled the name. My sister repeated it, pronouncing it Bump-ass, and snickered.

“She always greets us with the same sentence when we get on. French kids to the back of the bus, in a very loud voice.”

“What?” both my sister and father exclaimed at the same time.

I repeated it, adding that the kids who attend Saint-André are the last to get off.

“La Maudite” he yelled out. “That’s just like that Negro woman who had to go to jail for not giving up her seat on a bus a few weeks ago, you know in the South somewhere.”

“Rosa Parks, in Alabama,” volunteered my sister.

“Yes, that’s the one. I can’t believe it. They’re treating my little boy like that nègresse. Oh, I got to put an end to that. I got to do something. This is Auburn, Maine, and we don’t treat people like that.”

“It’s okay. I don’t mind,” I offered.

“All my friends are in the back and we have lots of fun. I don’t mind.

“That is not the point. She should not speak to you like that. I got to stop this, I will...”

My mother interrupted him. “What will you do, oh?”

My sister pointed her finger like a gun and went “Bang, Bang.”

My mother tapped her hand on the shoulder. “Stop that, Claire, this is not funny. Besides, your father does not own a gun. Dieu merci!”

“Yes, he does,” I blurted out. “It’s in the bottom of the old tool chest in the cellar. I saw it there.”

“Oh? Pas possible. You still have that old gun?”

My father waved his hand. “It doesn’t work. I just keep it because it reminds me of MY father. It’s a World War I model, a German gun my father bought at a county fair years and years ago.”

Turning to me, “And you, young man, stay out of my stuff in the cellar. Besides, the only way to deal with your new bus driver is to tell her to stop saying that, let her know you can sit anywhere you want, you have the same rights as the kids who go to the public school.”

“Boycott, boycott, boycott; protest, protest...”

My father interrupted Claire. “We do not do that. French people do not protest or march in the streets. That is not our way.”

“Well it seems to work in Alabama...”

“But this is Maine, not Alabama...” His tone was final.

The remainder of our meal was consumed in total silence. My father, who was first to finish, turned off the radio, wrapped himself up in his winter coat and boots and gloves and stormed outside without a word where he started shoveling the piles of rotting snow on the side of the driveway to make room for what the winter would undoubtedly bring in the next set of storms.

“He is a shoveler. At work he shovels coal for a living, at home he shovels snow to deal with his anger,” said my mother.

The following Sunday, the ritual was repeated. Desert was a chocolate cake my mother had baked the night before and my father’s manner seemed a bit more buoyant which I attributed to the much milder temperatures. “January thaw” was an expression that had not yet entered my vocabulary, but it would have fit the mood.

Near the end of the meal, after everyone had talked about their week – all but me – my father looked my way and said “Your turn.”

I knew precisely what he wanted to hear. “Well, about Miss Bumpas. Something strange. Thursday morning, I think it was, she greeted us with the words ‘Good morning, children. You know the rules.’ Nothing else changed; we all went to our usual seats.”

(Continued on page 7)
I had just started my first year of college when my father died. “Massive heart failure, while working overtime tending the boilers at the hospital,” my sister told me.

He was only 66 years old. He had said he was very proud of me because I had entered college. He approved of my choices: business courses at Saint Francis College. He said I would be the first of my generation to graduate since none of those "good for nothing" cousins of mine would ever think of college.

My sister was already married and with child. My father was not so kind in his attitude, criticizing her for marrying too young and to a non-Franco.

At the Piché Funeral Home the night before the funeral mass, my mother was inconsolable. She said that with the children gone the two of them had grown closer, had regained some of that insouciance of the early years of marriage. I had no wish to deal with that new part of their life, so I turned to the past. Trivial recollection after another, we eventually focused on our “Father Knows Best” Sunday dinners. My sister overheard us and quickly joined the conversation.

“Do you remember Miss Bumpas, the bus driver?”

Both mother and sister nodded and smiled.

“Really,” my father replied. I noticed my mother and Claire had no reaction, like they had been prepped. Not even a wise-cracking smirk from my sister.

“And, Friday morning, the same thing. No more ‘French kids to the back of the bus’, just a smile and ‘you know the rules’.”

And that was it. When the meal was entirely over, my father moved to his rocker and turned up the volume and listened to his jigs and reels.

That Sunday night when I went to bed, I was so scared that my father would take out his gun and confront her. I couldn’t sleep, thinking that I was to blame for Miss Bumpas being shot,” I whispered to them.

Glancing at my sister I was slightly disappointed that my sister didn’t use her “Bang, bang” expression and, at that moment, I realized that time had passed and we would never be the same Jalbert family again.

But I needed to know. What had my father done to make Miss Bumpas change? I asked my mother, and she said in simple French terms: “He went and talked to her. He knew the bus number and he waited one day at the bus garage and introduced himself. He told me he was very polite, yet very firm. He told her to stop using that language which he said was racist or he would go to the school board, the city council and the newspaper.”

“That was it. That’s all it took?”

“Oui mon p’tit Paul.”

My mother added that Miss Bumpas was lucky that was all he did. “She didn’t know – nobody knew or remembered – that your father had been quite the fighter. When people in Augusta some time ago wanted to pass laws that would prevent cities from transporting parochial school children on taxpayer-funded buses, your father and his buddies from the Club Champlain went to Augusta and protested. Several times, they did that. And they called the newspapers. And they went to the city councils here and there and protested. And, they won. Everybody understood that children who live far from their schools should not have to walk. They should be allowed to ride the buses like everyone else.”

“I never knew that. Did you, Claire?”

“No,” she replied, “and he’s the one who told you that French people didn’t boycott or protest.”

My mother shook her head and said her husband was a very complicated man.

“He was proud about the victory with the school buses, but he never wanted to go through that again.”

“Father Knows Best,” my sister and I said in unison.

**About the Author:**

Paré was a reporter for the Lewiston Evening Journal in the late 1960s and into the 1970s. He later worked in radio and television, receiving an Emmy in 1980 for his work at NH Public TV for the children’s series The Franco File.

His first novel Singing the Vernacular was published in 2018. Set in Maine, Québec, and California, it was largely biographical.

Road Kill published in 2015 is pure fiction. A seriously noir account, the novel deals with the issue of homelessness. Its principal characters, both New Englanders, make their way to Florida where they encounter a group of squatters in a hurricane-devastated trailer park, plus an assortment of dumpster divers, street musicians, drag queens, and church ladies on a mission. It received the 2016 Finalist Award from the Independent Publishers of New England.

Paré is currently working on a new novel tentatively titled The Obituary Girl.

The piece submitted here, Back Seats, is an attempt to blend short fiction with an historical fact (some would call it fake news!)
Frédéricton, mais dont l’hyvernement et la principale résidence sera aux milieux d’eux". Ils s’occupèrent de réparer le presbytère, afin de le rendre habitable. Ce prêtre sera rendu à 1 rivièrde du Caps le 1 octobre. Ils enverront cinq ou six hommes au-devant de lui pour le guider dans le poratage et lui aider à transporter ses eﬀets. (Registre G, 139v) RAPQ 1932-33 p. 56

Mgr. J.O. Plessis. Pourvoeures extrao-
dinaire accordés à M. Jean-Baptiste Kelly pour la mission de la rivièrde Saint-Jean (Quebec 24 Septembre 1808)

Registre G, f 146 f.) RAPQ 1932-33 p. 57


Sir Howard Douglas. leutenant-gou-

And now what about Madawaska-Québec?

Mgr. J.O. Plessis. Lettre pastorale aux habitants de (Saint-Basile de) Madawaska (L’Islet, 30 juin 1806). Il a décidé de leur enlever leur missionnaire M. Hot. Avant de leur en envoyeur un autre, il veut qu’ils fussent les réparation nécessaires à leur église et à leur presbytère, comme Mgr. Denaut le leur avait demandé. De plus il exige que l’on trouve des moyens de faire subsister le missionnaire qu’il propose de leur envoyeur, et que l’on fasse preuve d’un plus grand zèle pour la religion (Registre des lettres v. 5, p. 229) RAPQ 1932-33 p. 27.

Mgr. J.O. Plessis. Pouvoeurs extraordi-
naire accordés à M. Michel-Auguste Amyot pour la mission de Saint-Basile de Madawaska (Québec 22 décembre 1806) (Registre G, f. 103v.) RAPQ 1932-33 p. 34.

Mgr. J.O. Plessis. Lettre pastoral aux habi-
itant de Saint-Basile-de-Madawaska. (Québec 8 octobre 1807). Il regrette qu’ils n’ainent pu garder parmi eux le prêtre qu’Mgr Hubert leur avait envoyé. Il ne peut leur en donner un dan le moment à cause de la disette de prêtres dans la diocèse, de la diffi-

The good Bishop does not mince his words and the words get even more harsh in the next pastoral letter of 9 October 1811.

Mgr. J.O. Plessis. Lettre pastorale aux habitants de Saint-Basile-de-Madawaska (Québec, 9 octobre 1811). Il déplore leur indiﬀérence et le peu de zèle qu’ils mon-
trent daqs la pratique dela religion. Les missionnaires qui se sont succédé au Mad-
awaska: MM Leclair, Ciquard, Hot, Amiot et Kelly, n’y ont éprouvé que des déboires. Il en est même pour M. Raby qui est parmi eux maintenant. Ils devront lui remettre les dîmes que lui son dues, soulder les billets qu’ils on endossés, comme constiution à la construction de leur église: de plus ils devront préparer dans le cours de l’hiver, les matériaux requis pour commencer, dès le printemps de 1812, la construction de cette église... Il à chargé M. Raby de le teni

Captions: “The Madawaska, Captions: “The Blacksmith’s Shop,”

Guy Dubay

Madawaska, Maine

Mgr. Jean-François Hubert à M. François Ciquard, missionnaire à Madawaska (Québec 6 décembre 1794). Il répond à ses lettres du 6 septembre. M. Ciquard se bornera à donner les missions aux sauvages à Madawaska et à la rivière Tobie; il s’em-

Father Ciquard

The French Sulpician, Priest, Fr. François Ciquard was the first resident pas-
tor of the Parish of St. Basile de Madawaska. You may find a biographical sketch on him on line in the Dictionary of Canadian Bi-
ography. what I submit below are the notes of Father Ivanhoe Caron in the Rapport de L’Archiviste -Province de Québec.

Guy Dubay

Madawaska, Maine

Mgr. Jean-François Hubert à M. (François) Ciquard, missionnaire à Madawaska (Québec 6 décembre 1794). Il répond à ses lettres du 6 septembre. M. Ciquard se bornera à donner les missions aux sauvages à Madawaska et à la rivière Tobie; il s’em-

et aux Sauvages... Il ne se montrera pas trop sévère pour les observations des jours maîtres. Il éloignera autant que possible, les fidèles des écoles qui ne conviennent pas aux catholiques.

Registres des lettres v. 2. p. 169) (RAPQ 1930-1931 p. 310)

Mgr. Jean-François Hubert à Son Excellence le général Thomas Carleton, lieutenant-gouverneur de la Province du Nouveau-Brunswick, à Frédéricton (Madawaska, 19 septembre 1795). Il vient de parcourir la Baie-des-Chaleurs. Il a ramené M. Bourg et laissé à sa place "deux jeunes prêtres qui desserviront le nord et le sud de la Baie. J’ai (le mot manque) à rivièrde Ristigouche dans le désir d’aller rendre mes devoirs. Je m’en flatta mais la saison était si avançée, et j’ai éprouvé tant de difficultés depuis Ristigouche jusqu’ici, par les basses eaux et par la multiplicité des portages occasionnées par les embarras des rivières, j’ai essuyé tant de fatigues, et les pluits abondantes, qui viennent tomber, rendent si mauvais le grand portage, que je me vois hors d’état de me rendre jusqu’a Fredericon" Il s’es arrêté trois jours chez M. Ciquard.

Registre des lettres v. 2 p. 220) (RAPQ 1930-31 p. 320)

Mgr. Pierre Denaut. Il continue à M. François Ciquard, missionnaire au Nouveau Bruno

Weber, les pouvoeurs extraordinaire qui lui ont accordés le 24 juin 1794 (Québec, 8 septembre 1797) (Continues des lettres v. 2, p353)

(Continued on page 9)
(Continued on page 10)
M. Pierre Denaut à M. J.O. Plessis, vicaire-général et curé de Québec (Longueuil 20 Mai 1798).... il rempêcria M. Ciquard des bons services qu'il a rendu au diocèse...

Registres des lettres v. 2, p. 359) (RAPQ 1931-1932 p. 146

(Registres des lettres v. 3 p. 5), (RAPQ 1927-28 p. 215.
M. J.O. Plessis à M. François Ciquard, missionnaire à....... (Québec 12 février 1798) Il approuve sa manière d'agir envers les habitants de Madawaska. Ces gens n'app'nt pas assez la présence du prêtre. Il l'encourage à se bâti une maison à ses frais. Il le félicite de son excessive bonté.

(Registres des lettres v. 3, p. 27) (ibid. p. 216
M. J.O. Plessis à M. François Ciquard, missionnaire à Madawaska ou Frédéricton (Québec 30 mai 1798). Il pourra accepter un poste plus avantageux dans la diocèse de Baltimore. Il se rappellerait toujours les exemples de vertus qu'il a donnés.

M. J.O. Plessis à M. Jean-Baptiste Fournier, premier marquillier à Madawaska (Québec 5 février 1799) Mgr. Denaut donnera un pr’tre aux habitants de Madawaska à condition qu'ils s'engagent à le nourrir et à le loger convenablement. La conduite qu'ils ont tenue à l'égard de M. Ciquard n'est pas de nature à leur mériter les bonnes grâces de leur évêque.

(Registres des Lettres v. 3, p. 66. (ibid. p. 220.
M. J.O. Plessis à M. François Ciquard, prêtre-au-Dépôt (Québec 10 mars 1799). C'est le désir de Mgr. L'étèque de Québec qu'il retourne à ses missions de la rivière Saint-Jean. Probablement que les habitant de Madawaska auront bientôt un curé; dans ce cas, il n'aura qu'a s'occuper du ministère auprès des Sauvages. Précautions à prendre auprès du gouvernement.

(Registres des lettres v. 3, p. 69) (ibid. p. 220.
M. J.O. Plessis à Jean-Baptiste Fournier, premier marquillier à Madawaska (Québec 19 mars 1799). En considération de la bonne volonté des habitants de Madawaska, Mr. l'étèque de Québec leur enverra un prêtre résident à l'automne. Un missionnaire ira les visiter au mois de juin.

M. J.O. Plessis à M. Jos-Amable Trutaut, curé de Kamouraska (Québec 4 juin 1799). Mr. Trutaut enverra son vicaire, M. Germain, remplir les fonctions du ministère à Saint-André pendant que le curé de l'endroit ira faire la mission de Madawaska.

(Registres des lettres v. 3, p. 76 (ibid. p. 221.

M. J.O. Plessis à M. François Ciquard, missionnaire à Frédéricton, Nouveau-Brunswick (Qu’t 2 mars 1803)
Mgr. L'étèque de Québec le nomme missionnaire à Caraquet. Il viendra s'entendre avec M. Joyer. Il s'occupera d'avoir un passeport pour qu'il puisse retourner dans l'intérieur du diocèse.


(Registres des lettres v. 3, p 227.
There are further entries regarding Fr. Ciquard but they apply to his missionary work elsewhere than in Madawaska or the St. John River... We see by the entries given that Fr. Ciquards mission to St. Bisle de Madawask and Indian villages here dates from 1794 to 1798.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska, Maine

Another Voice in
What to Call Ourselves

by Denise R. Larson

I read with great interest “Being & Not Being Franco-American” by Maegan Maheu and the letter from Pierre Girard of the French American Heritage Foundation Minnesota in the Spring issue of Le Forum. Both are about ethnic labeling of a group of people among whom I count myself—American citizens who were born in the United States but whose ancestors emigrated from French Canada, where several generations of their families had resided after the progen-
It upset me that French-Canadians sometimes joined in demeaning themselves, adopting the same Protestant tags to make us look like clowns and misfits that didn’t have the smarts God gave a pissant. It was all supposed to be in good fun, but the foundation swayed beneath me when I saw grown men slap each other on the head and refer to themselves as dumb frogs. If I couldn’t take pride in what I was and couldn’t cross over to the Protestants, who was I?

The priests and nuns presented a paradox. They held high the Québécois banner, insisting that French-Canadians were better than Protestant infidels who’d ultimately burn in hell. Yet they constantly criticized us for being too secular and beat us for small transgressions. They subjected us to painful and humiliating penance in the form of forced kneeling on the schoolyard’s blacktop, while nuns added a dose of knuckle therapy with a hard wood pointer. A cuss word got your mouth washed out with soap.

My father presented another paradox with his arrogance and sense of inferiority. Born in Quebec, he cherished the American dream that never fully consummated for him. He despised what he saw as ignorant, uncouth French-Canadians reduced to mill work drudgery. He was forced by economic hardship to quit school and work the mills, which he deeply resented. When he had a family of his own he saw us as little more than extra mouths to feed. Gradually he slipped into the numbing effects of alcohol. He thought the only way French-Canadians could make it was to cut their roots and find someplace else in this vast country to be a white man, I figure he did just that when he disappeared.

The ethnic whipping post made me feel like a poor excuse for a son of French Canada. To speak French pleased the church but across town it was considered the language of losers. My grades were never good, I was small for my age, and my obedience subject to the impulses of a ten year old with little guidance. I made the sign of the cross when I passed by the church, wore my Saint Christopher medal, and tried mightily to keep my hands out of my pants. Yet I still felt like a dummy in French clothing, a sad caricature of the happily American youngsters I saw on TV.

I found periodic solace above the dam, along the upper river that fed the mills. I wove my way through white pines and towering oaks, sat on embankments, scaled granite outcrops, and ventured out from the shoreline on tall trees felled by Northeasters. I moved from one favorite fishing spot to another with dropline, bamboo pole or the poorly made rod and reel I earned by selling vegetable and flower seeds door-to-door. It was a pleasure to be away from those who presented a ten year old with too

(Continued on page 11)

Visionary Adventurer who made a New World in Canada by David Hackett Fischer. Are we to call ourselves French-Canadian Americans? What about the Acadian side of our families? Originally, Acadia was not part of Canada. The two were distinct administrative territories and followed different paths to their economic and political destinies. They were united in that they were parts of New France until 1713, when Acadia fell under British rule. They were again united in the political entity of British North America in 1763.

So now we have French Canada (which is designated on U.S. census returns as “Canada-French”) plus Acadia. French-Canadian-Acadian would be correct but is quite a long moniker. If we extract parts from each, the FRAN from France, the CA from Canada, the DIAN from Acadian, we have FRANCADIAN.

Francadian American is what I like to call myself when I have to put a label to it, but in these times of political divisiveness, I like to “accentuate the positive,” as an old song says, and call myself an American of Francadian heritage. We make ourselves and our country richer and more vibrant by embracing all our background stories and heritage traditions. Let’s not discount any of them.

Tagline: Denise (Rajotte) Larson is a writer and editor who lives in the greater Bangor metropolitan area. She continues to study and research her family’s Canadian, Acadian, and American history and stories.
much conflict.

Below the dam, down river from the mills, was the stench of decay. Here the mills discharged raw, untreated waste into the river. Initially I was attracted by the colorful dyes that stained the water and the multi-hued foam clinging to the shoreline. Until I realized it was poison. There were few fish here and those that survived bore open flesh sores of disease. We were told never to eat these fish. Birds and animals avoided the area except for rats scurrying about the mill’s private dump along a section of embankment. Trees were sparse and withered. Weeds replaced ferns and flowers. Thorn bushes and cockleburrs punished trespassers.

The mills commanded attention. The loud clatter of their machines reverberated through nearby streets. It was the sound of hard work and low pay. Fabric and shoes. Paychecks and Christmas presents. Heartbreak. I was told it was the sound of my future.

My papere\(^1\) worked in a woolen mill that I passed every day. He was a weaver on the third floor. If he was on break as I passed by he’d wave to me. This didn’t happen often as the workers stayed busy at their machines.

The woolen mill stretched for a half block and rose six floors. It was an enormous structure and overshadowed all other buildings. Its lengthy sides bore hundreds of small glass windowpanes. With such an imposing presence I thought it odd we never saw the owners. They were said to be living the life of luxury in New York.

By nineteen fifty-six the mills in Maine slowed down, work was slack and one by one they began closing their doors. My papere lost his job along with hundreds of others in town. The neighborhood talk turned bitter with how the mills squeezed them of sweat for decades, until cheaper sweat could be squeezed elsewhere. The last of their poison passed into the river and the buildings stripped of machinery.

The woolen mill lay before us like a poached elephant run to ground, plundered of its ivory and left to rot. An unsettling stillness descended over it as those who once kept it alive began the arduous search for other jobs. It was another challenge to the French-Canadian tradition of “la survivance” – the Quebecois spirit of survival in a tough environment.

Near the east side of the mill, on an elevated piece of landfill, was a small sandlot where we played pickup baseball. It was several months after the mill closing, a wicked hot August evening, and we were in the middle of a tedious game played with cracked bats and shredded ball held together with friction tape. We usually played until darkness prevented us from seeing the ball. As the sun lost its blaze behind the mill an argument broke out between Peanut Frechette and Frenchy Marcotte. Peanut tried to steal second and Frenchy insisted he tagged him out. Peanut claimed he was safe by a hundred miles. He wouldn’t get off second base, a large chunk of rock. Both teams closed in on the bag and the name calling began. “Dumb as a frog …” “Stupid as a Canuck …” Suddenly, Davey Belanger, who’d remained on first, grabbed a fist size stone, ran a half dozen steps and hurled it with full force at the mill windows. Glass shattered. Choc LaRose followed suit with a walnut size stone from this slingshot. Smash! Maurice Levesque began hitting stones toward the windows with a bat. Home run! A fusillade followed as we threw, shot and batted stones with all the muscle our small arms could muster. Our hastily assembled army pressed the attack as if trying to slay the Godzilla of heartless capitalism. We rearmed and let fly until much of the mill’s east side was glass shards clinging to window frames.

But not one swear word was heard throughout the onslaught. We’d go to hell for using bad language.

The piercing wail of a siren stopped me in mid windup. Seconds later we scattered like gazelles with the scent of a predator in our nostrils. I had it wide open as I cut through the Rousseau’s backyard and ran into a sagging clothesline that snagged my neck and upended me like a flapjack. Momentarily stunned I rolled to my hands and knees, regained my bearings, hopped to my feet, waved to Mrs. Rousseau who’d just stepped out with a laundry basket, and dashed towards home.

My younger brother arrived at the apartment steps a half minute behind me, breathless. As we entered the kitchen Maman\(^2\) looked up from her sewing to our sweaty, dust streaked faces and told us to wash up before getting ready for bed.

My heart beat wildly as I lay in bed fingering the laces of a baseball I’d found over the outfield fence at Babe Ruth League Park. My brother asked if we were going to jail. I said, naw, nobody owns that mill anymore. Nobody cares.

Somebody cared. The police began making house calls the following morning. Every baseball-playing seven to twelve year old French boy was suspect. There’d been a night watchman in the mill at the time. How could we have forgotten that old man Glaude was in there! Mr. Glaude accompanied the police making their rounds. When they arrived at our place one of the officers asked Maman to see her sons. We dutifully emerged from our bedroom to the kitchen with our caps pulled tightly down over our heads. The officer asked where we were last night. My brother looked at me with terror in his eyes. I told the officer we’d gone fishing for horned pout on the upper river. He appeared skeptical.

He told Mr. Glaude to step up. The old man still didn’t speak English well so Maman helped with the translation. The officer asked him if he recognized us. He said, of course, we were the Michaud boys. No, responded the officer with a twitch of irritation, had he seen us near the mill last night. Mr. Glaude took a long, thoughtful look at us. It was a look he often gave children in church as he passed the collection basket and we dropped our nickels and dimes into it. “As-ton pepere trouve un travail encore?” he asked. Maman interjected that he hadn’t. Finally, Mr. Glaude said that he hadn’t seen us since last Sunday’s mass.

Maman only believed we hadn’t been involved because it’s what she wanted to believe. She’d still have to convince my father, whenever he showed up, to keep him from hammering us.

A protective silence enveloped families and the neighborhood. The investigation ended. Remnants of broken glass clung to the mill’s window frames until spring when several men were hired to board them up. The structure was going on the market.

A couple years later an investor purchased the building. The ground floor was converted into a tire retreading plant. The upper floors remained empty. I worked for

\(^1\) Grandpa

\(^2\) Mom

\(^3\) “Has your grandpa found a job yet?”

(Continued on page 12)
the tire company one summer, a dirty, shit paying, thankless job. The company didn’t have the economic strength of the mills that employed generations of workers. It went belly up in eight years.

A decade after the incident with the stones the boys became men by way of Viet Nam. We grew our first moustaches there. Peanut Frechette was killed when his chopper went down near Xuan Loc. He’s buried by the river, in the French-Canadian cemetery with a small American flag planted next to his headstone. Frenchy Marcotte was a Navy Seal and returned half-crazed from the killing. He now scares the older vets at the VFW bar. Davey picked up a dope habit, then redeemed himself with the evangelicals. He was persona non grata at the Knights of Columbus after that. Choc brought back a Vietnamese wife which the family thought was cool until they learned she was Buddhist. He works at a chemical plant. Maurice Levesque took advantage of the GI bill and parlayed it into a successful career as a lawyer. He’s helped Frenchy out of several scrapes with the law. My brother lost all his hair over there, and his innocence. War often produces mixed results.

I’m the only one who didn’t return home to stay. I come once or twice a year to see Maman and have a drink with the guys at the Lafayette Club, but otherwise I keep my distance.

The mills were central to our way of life. They provided Quebeccois immigrants and their children with jobs. The rent was paid and groceries purchased. The pride of “la survivance,” so interwoven with mill work, held the social fabric together.

The river too ran through our lives. Above the mills we gathered to fish, swim, picnic and replenish ourselves with nature’s gifts. Below the mills was the profit line, etched in moribund waste.

If I stayed in that town I’d have to live with decay. I can’t have that. I hated the mills, the way they wore people out prematurely. The low pay, clattering racket and foul odors. I hated the way they abandoned those who gave them so much sweat, and ultimately undermined our ethnic cohesion with the false idol of company fidelity.

Most of the brick mill structures and clapboard shoe factory were torn down. One was salvaged, converted to condos and lured yuppies working in a more prosperous town nearby. There’s more empty lots than businesses and social centers. The church hangs on for the old folks but the parochial school, long time guardian of the French language, closed its doors. The town’s character is deformed, and the community that refused to die is dying.

On a recent Labor Day weekend I came to visit and walked along the upper river. At a narrow bend where we once carried lanterns and set lines for hornpout, I sat for a spell. A pair of loons glided by. Frogs croaked among lily pads and a sun turtle basked on the branch of a fallen tree. A mile beyond the damage of the mills.

I stood, retrieved a handful of flatstones and began skipping them across the water. I was a little rusty but as memories returned, so did my youthful technique. The stones skipped and leaped across the water, each farther than the last, until I barely saw them disappear below the surface.

I didn’t reach the other shoreline that day. Couldn’t do it as a kid, nor twenty years later. I’m getting closer. As I follow what lies closest to my heart I know I’ll find my way, one stone at a time.

---

**JEREMY BRINKLEY**

*by Stuart Brinkley*

submitted by Tony Brinkley

[Stuart Brinkley is the brother of Tony Brinkley, the Senior Faculty Associate at the Franco-American Centre. Stuart’s son, Jeremy, died of an overdose in 2012. Since 2012, Stuart has often given talks to parents and to high school and college students about heroin. This is a talk he has given at Moon High School in Western Pennsylvania.]

My son, Jeremy, graduated from Moon High School in 2005 and died from a heroin overdose in 2012. Like many people living in suburban America, I thought that our community and my family were immune from the heroin epidemic. Heroin was an inner city problem effecting minorities and the impoverished. I was aware that our young people were using alcohol at parties and maybe even smoking pot but heroin – no way.

Jeremy was intelligent and gifted. Things came very easily for him so at times his work ethic was a little weak. He was popular and had a large group of friends. He was an exceptional athlete, an artist, a poet, a craftsman and an addict. In the end, his addiction eradicated everything else. So it’s natural for young people to experiment and take risks. I believe we all have at some point in our lives.

It’s critical that a risk taker have a survival plan. Jeremy got interested in rock climbing because he was afraid of heights. His survival plan was his rope, his climbing hardware and his fellow climbers. He conquered his fear of heights. Each time he tried something new and succeeded, his attitude of invincibility increased. In college, he was in a serious motorcycle accident. He liked the oxycotin the doctors prescribed. After a brief time he was able to walk away from it. This just reinforced his feeling of being bullet proof. He was strong. Others were weak. He could experiment and walk away whenever he wanted. When he was 22, he was introduced to heroin. Jeremy was a type 1 diabetic, so he was no stranger to needles. That day he opened a door that he could not close. There is no survival plan for heroin. Using heroin is like driving a car with no breaks at 100 miles per hour. You are going to crash and the crash will probably kill you. Jeremy was not only my son but also my business partner and best friend. We lived the two and a half years of his addiction together. During that time he destroyed himself, the business and very nearly destroyed our family. When I discovered that Jeremy was using heroin, I first thought it was a phase that he would (Continued on page 13)
outgrow like so many other things in life. I knew practically nothing about the drug. So, I did what everyone else does, I googled it and started to educate myself. By the time I got my hands around the seriousness of the problem, I was living with a full blown addict.

It’s natural for a parent to want to protect and help a child but in dealing with addiction, the worst thing one can do is to enable. I did plenty of enabling. The line between helping and enabling is so indistinct that I crossed it many times. Jeremy was charged several times with simple possession. I didn’t want him to serve jail time so each time I would hire an attorney who would get the charge reduce to a summary offense with a fine which I would pay. There were no consequences. In hindsight, I probably reinforced the behavior. Had I let him do jail time, would he be alive and sober today? I don’t know. My approach obviously didn’t work. Addiction counselors will tell you that for an addict to achieve sobriety, they must hit bottom. They get there when others practice tough love which requires others to detach themselves from the addict and the situation. Most of the family was able to practice tough love but not me. I thought I was his life line.

Since Jeremy’s death, I have had the privilege of speaking to a variety of groups. I do this for one simple reason. Burying a child is the most painful thing a parent can do. If my mistakes and experience can prevent one other family from going where we have been, then its victory for all. I frequently get asked, “How do I know if my son or daughter is using drugs, specifically heroin?” There are some common and obvious signs. The problem is that we tend to ignore, then rationalize, next deny and finally react. By the time we are at the last step, we are dealing with a full blown addict. Remember, heroin users become addicts almost immediately. There is no such thing as social heroin use. The warning signs are divided into two groups—appearance and behavior.

Appearance:

Weight Loss—Heroin is an extremely effective but not recommended way to lose weight. Heroin kills the appetite. Don’t ignore loss of weight and appetite. It is one of first and most obvious signs.

Hygiene—Heroin addicts lose interest in how he or she looks. They bathe less frequently. They stop fixing their hair or applying makeup. They wear the same dirty clothes for days at a time. They ignore dental care. Take notice. This may not be a phase.

Tracks—Heroin addicts have tell-tale signs on their bodies. Injections leave marks and bruising. Most addicts inject in the arm on the non-dominant side (i.e. if they are right handed, they inject in the left arm). They wear long sleeve shirts regardless of the weather. They are also cold most of the time so often their clothes are not seasonally appropriate.

Behavior:

Friends—The circle of friends tend to change — slowly at first then more rapidly. Non-users are not comfortable hanging out with addicts. Addicts can’t be trusted. Also addicts are drawn to other addicts to meet mutual needs such as drugs and needles. Be concerned when strangers replace long-time friends.

Time — Heroin addicts find it difficult to account for their time. They miss school, meetings and curfews. They lie about where they are going and who they are with. Be vigilant about repetitive unexplained illnesses. Addicts are sick most of the time when they are not high.

Activities—Watch out for sudden and dramatic changes in activities. Heroin is such a powerful demon that it preoccupies both time and mind. Heroin saps energy. The addict loses interest in anything that requires effort such as sports, school work or creativity. They do like to sleep a lot.

Things go missing—Heroin is expensive, very expensive. Most heroin use starts with the use of prescription drugs such as oxycotin or Vicodin. These drugs may have been acquired legally but are highly addictive. When the prescription is gone, the addiction isn’t. Oxycontin and other opiates are available on the street but they are expensive. One oxycontin sells for $50 to $80. A stamp bag (one dose) of heroin sells for about $10. Good economy? Not really. The oxycontin works on a time release basis meaning that one pill is effective for 6 to 8 hours. That’s why the instructions are to use 3 times a day. A stamp bag of heroin covers the addict for about an hour. When Jeremy was in active addiction, he needed up to 20 bags a day. If you do the math, that’s a $6000 a month habit. So where does the money come from? Addicts start selling possessions—first their own then the family’s. There is a market for everything. Once the family’s assets are gone, they move on to friends and neighbors. Then to retail establishments. Don’t overlook missing objects or money-no matter how insignificant. Jeremy’s obsession with finding heroin was not so much from his desire to be high but his desire not to be sick. Heroin withdrawal is painful and ugly. During withdrawal the addict has cramps and chills. He vomits and shakes. Think of the worst flu times 10. He will do anything to avoid the pain including lying, stealing and cheating.

The warning signs are there. Be vigilant and be bold. The earlier you take a stand, the better the prospect for altering a path to destruction. Your loved one will hate you. It will be a fight but if you don’t ignore, if you don’t rationalize and if you don’t deny, perhaps the path won’t end at the grave site.

So if you are a parent, what can you do to protect your family?

Don’t Be An Ostrich—Accept the fact that drugs and heroin specifically are in our community.

Education—Learn about the signs and risks of the drug culture. Most drug use does not begin with heroin. More frequently it starts with pills or with alcohol and marijuana. That is the time to have the conversation. The attitude that “I did it when I was young and I’m okay” is not helpful and probably dangerous.

Remember you are not the friend. You’re the parent. If you talk to your child about driving and sex, it’s time to have the conversation about drugs.

Don’t Be A Hoarder--Keep all prescription drugs and especially pain killers locked up and accounted for. If you have a partially used narcotic prescription, which is no longer needed, dispose of it in a safe place. Most police departments and many pharmacies will dispose of partially used prescriptions. Keeping them in your home is asking for trouble. Pain killers and opiates in particular have a tremendous street value. This is not the way to teach your teenager to be an entrepreneur. Examine your own drug use. Do you take a pill for everything? What are you modeling for your children?

Finally create a safe harbor—Let you (Continued on page 14)
The Late Train

Gérard Coulombe
memoire
Fairfield, CT

Mother frequently said, “Your father and I took the late train.” It was her way of explaining why it was that as a family we were not situated in life the way we might have been had they married sooner rather than later. It was another way of saying, “Look, children, please understand: You may have many ‘wants,’ but we don’t have any money.”

She said this whenever one of us three children questioned why it was that we didn’t have the advantages that some other family seemed to have. This is not because our neighbors had more because most of our neighbors were in the same boat as we were. Relatively speaking, we were all poor. But all this business of money was in light of the fact that, speaking for myself, I was only asking for a dime to go to the movies on Saturday afternoon. By the time I was fourteen, I was earning my way by working for wages, small though they were, but I gave my pay to “Maman.”

My father did not earn a decent wage as a warp tier in a textile mill until the war broke out. Then he started earning more, not so much because there was this big increase in hourly pay, because there wasn’t, but because there was more work available and fewer workers to do it, so the men worked double shifts throughout the war. In a manner of speaking, our standard of living improved at a time when the availability of goods due to rationing diminished because the country was on a wartime footing.

Mother, Clara-Fabiola Coutu, came from French-Canadian stock, as did my father’s parents. Her father was a teamster for one of the textile mills in town. Joseph-Arsicilaus Coutu came from Berlin, New Hampshire. His wife, Marie-Lucie Poirier, was from Biddeford. A cousin, Noé, was in the Spanish American War, but the regiment never got there. Men died of disease while in their encampment down South as the war ended. “Mon Oncle” Noé was known for his hunting prowess because every year from the time he was a youngster he managed to shoot and dress a bear. He shared bear steaks with all of his siblings and, later, their descendants. Because Noé lived to be a very old man, by the time of his demise, no one believed anymore that he seasonally shot a bear. He was too damn old, a consummate liar, and so frail that he wouldn’t have been able to hold up and shoot a bear-killing gun. For his last Armistice Day parade he had to be lifted out of his wheelchair and placed into the rumble seat of a roadster.

Our mother never ate bear much less cook it. She would not have prepared anything woods-y-wild for us to eat. While we are on the subject of wild things, Mom favored clams but never lobster. She called a lobster “une bébête,” for “an insect.” While people paid for a lobster roll, it would not have been a delicacy that she could have put in her mouth. Her preference when I took her out for lunch or dinner after dad died was for “chicken croquettes.” As for clams, she only had them fried.

When buying meat for dinner, which was our noon meal on weekends and holidays, her choice was beef and, when she could get it, blood sausage, “boudin” in French. There might be a contradiction in that, but she loved the sausage as a specialty, and so did we. The cut of beef she preferred was thin, cubed steak. It might have been because she wore dentures. One time, the butcher substituted horse for beef. She knew the difference the minute she put a piece in her mouth and started chewing. The butcher got a piece of her mind. She had gotten up, picked up the plate and unceremoniously dumped and wrapped the contents [déchets] in her waste paper wrap of choice, the Daily Journal, to take back to the corner street market. War or no war! Shame on him for trying to pull that shameful substitution trick; a horse, no less, a working farm animal (Continued on page 15)
always deserved tender, loving care—her dad had them in their barn.

Mom was born in her parents’ house on Cutts Street in Biddeford, Maine. It was a big, two apartment, downtown farmhouse and duplex. Their side of the duplex had the barn. Growing up, we kids thought that we had met all of grandpa’s and our blind grandma’s children; Mom’s oldest sister was married to a lumberjack. They lived in town. They had at least five children. Some others might have died. Two of my maman’s sisters were Grey nuns of Montreal. Another sister, Eva, the youngest, lived at home until her parents, our grandparents, died, and continued living in the house she inherited for taking care of them until she sold it before she went into a nursing home, The Marcotte Nursing Home in Lewiston. There were two boys. The oldest, Antonio had married but had lost his wife when both the baby and she died giving birth. The widower, Antonio, lived at home until he met a divorced woman who owned a beauty parlor. Then he moved out of the house and took an apartment across from the A&P supermarket where he worked as a butcher. My uncle never remarried because he could not marry a divorced woman. But the Church did not stop them from dating for many years before they decided it was time to live together. Because her brother lived in “sin,” she did not allow her brother and his girlfriend together into the house. So, he never visited.

Mom also had a younger brother, named Henri, who died in an automobile accident while touring with friends in the White Mountains. The coupé-cabriolé, which the driver had just parked on the edge of a mountain road, suddenly rolled back; the driver was unable to keep the car from rolling back over the edge into a precipice. They bounсed backward into a tree. The two young men in front survived. The two young men sitting in the back seat died of blunt force trauma.

It is curious to me, in retrospect, how my sisters and I only slowly discovered some but not all of the details regarding the extended family on both sides. Information about aunts, uncles, cousins, and friends of our parents only came to be known to us in dribs and drabs.

For example, when I was in my early teens, my sisters and I learned that our Aunt Eugenie and mother had a sister, an unknown to us, living in her home as a permanent guest. So it was that we learned that our mother actually had another sister. But did she? Where had this woman come from? The short answer is that she came from Canada. According to Aunt Eugenie, this sister, about whom we had never heard anything to suggest that our grandparents’ family had been any larger than we had known it to be, just materialized as if out of thin air. The explanation belatedly suggested that this unknown had had to be sent to Canada for some reason, that she had been in an orphanage which proved interesting because two other aunts who were nuns worked in their community’s largest orphanage as sisters, and, that later, at an appropriate age, this indefinite aunt had been sent to work for a family whose head-of-household, was a recent widower. We were told, eventually, that he had taken mom’s sister as his wife to help with the motherless children. When he died, the children bootied her out and shipped their stepmother back to her family in the States when our Aunt Eugenie had agreed to take the exiled [secret] sister in.

A little more research revealed not too long ago something that our mother never talked about, or, if she did, I was not at home when she spoke about her family. I know that my sisters in their later years never said anything to me about what they had learned about mom’s kin. What had happened to them had remained a mystery to me. All these years, our mother had had sisters who had never been acknowledged. Thinking back about our mother’s talks with us, she had never said anything much about her family, her youth or her siblings. I learned much later that there had been three other sisters who had died as children. I guessed it was something not discussed in some families.

Our mother was a hard working woman who started her weekly chores with the Monday morning wash. I remember those Mondays when upon getting up for school I saw that she had already been at work early, transferring the hot water from the double copper kettle on the stove to the washing machine near the kitchen sink to do the weekly Monday morning laundry, a task which occupied the entire Monday mornings of her married life.

As children, she had nursed us from one disease to the next when all three of us were infected and all three of us were kept in the same, dark room, shades drawn until the danger of further contamination passed. Dr. LA Rochelle did his home visits to attend to our medical needs. Mother did the nursing without ever complaining. Dad might have felt a need to stay home, but he also knew that he had to go to work if there was going to be money to pay the doctor and buy the medicine and all other things and services, including the iceman, the milkman, the insurance man, the paper boy, and the rent lady.

When at twelve, I decided that I would be a religious, she was reassured that it would be a good life for me. She gave me her permission to enter a novitiate. While attending the novitiate I became ill with a disease affecting the hipbone, she sought the best advice on the nature of my illness, even after our family physician suggested that it might be “tuberculosis of the bone.”

I was hospitalized at Saint Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston, Maine. Following a long, recuperative stay, I returned to the Novitiate in Winthrop, Maine, whereupon I fell again and again and was sent home for a year of immobilized bed rest, and I never returned. When I started walking again without limping, I continued my education, having skipped 8th grade. Catholic boys and girls who continued their education beyond Catholic Grammar Schools attended the Catholic High Schools. I attended Saint Louis in Biddeford.

Upon graduation with my class of some 50 students, I chose to enlist because I saw that I would never go to college. My parents could not afford to send me. The high school never suggested that I go. There was no guidance office. If I did not leave Biddeford, I would end up working in the mills if nothing else proved promising. My mother signed my enlistment papers because I was not of an age to enlist on my own. When I left home, my mom’s parting words were simply, “I know that you can take care of yourself.” That was reassuring.

Following my stint in the military, I used the GI Bill, went to college, married, and had children. We took our first job in Port Washington New York. Ten years and with four children altogether, we needed more money. So I took a job as a school administrator in Darien, Connecticut. We wanted a home of our own, something our parents never had, something we could afford in Fairfield CT. After my dad died, Mom paid us several visits if I picked her up. She enjoyed most sitting in the large backyard under a tree to watch the squirrels do some of their tricks.

When she became ill, she moved in with my sister who lived in town.
Part II of The Late Train
My Father

Gérard Coulombe 
memoire
Fairfield, CT

Felix, my father, had spent a good part of his early adult life as an actor. Acting was not his primary vocation. In another time and place, it might very well have been because he had had a reputation for having been adept and convincing in his roles of which there were many.

I think that he was born in Warwick in the County of Athabaska in the Province of Québec, Canada.

I do not know who came to the States ahead of the other, Felix or his father. The two ended up in Biddeford, Maine, which had two textile mills on the Saco River, the Bates and the Pepperell.

My grandfather and father might have come down at the same time. His father was a cobbler who took up residence in the house at the left, corner of Foss and Main Streets. The house itself was a three story flat fronting lower Main Street. Straight ahead from the middle of Foss Street one can’t miss seeing the fortress like wall of the Pepperell Mills with its lines of small-semi-circular-top windows imbedded in the red-brick façade which runs along the sidewalk toward the Saco before it turns the corner and snipes up alongside the near river branch toward the Falls making this part of the mill complex look like a fortified town.

I do not know what year my father came to the States. There was the Grand Trunk Railroad that ran between Montréal and Lewiston, Maine. Dad was born on January 6, 1889. My Mom was born on January 12, 1896. My grandparents died long before our parents married. Dad had three brothers who lived in Canada, Henry, Edouard, Théodore, and a sister, Malvina, who lived in the States.

It is remarkable how little I know about my father. For example, he had a relative living in town that I regarded as someone out of the past because I did not understand the relationship between Felix, my dad, and Conrad, the relative. I was to find out later that my father had many relatives who were quasi-related.

Conrad Coulombe was married with children; the oldest was a girl. Conrad, his wife and children lived with his mother and stepfather in the first floor apartment of an over and under two apartment flat. His stepfather, Monsieur Gré nier, was a nice man, generous and easy-going. His wife, Conrad’s mother was herself very nice and easy-going. Nothing upset either one of them the times we were there visiting. Socially, visiting was the thing we did as a family on a Sunday afternoon outing. We visited there occasionally and always stayed for dinner. Conrad’s wife was a nice lady, but even to me she appeared somewhat overwhelmed and subdued. Later, I was to learn that that particular feeling was not uncommon with someone who raised a family in the home of one’s in-laws. Even as a pre-teen I understood that not being in one’s own home could not ever be anything other than a tension driven atmosphere in which to raise one’s own family because there was little or no opportunity for distancing one’s self and family from an intermixing of household tensions, the kind that frequently drive one crazy.

The interesting thing is that Conrad, too, was not all that far removed from dad in age and experience, for he, too, had been an actor in the company my father belonged to. The irony is that I never learned the relationship between my father and his nephew, Conrad, for he was his nephew. And, therefore, Dad, had to have had another brother about whom nothing was ever said, either by my mother or father. In a sense, this disappearance of family members into the netherworld of mysterious deaths and disenfranchised relatives proved downright troublesome. I still don’t understand it. Perhaps it is because we didn’t ask, and, therefore, we were never told about numbers and names of those “born” and “died” with the exception, obviously, of those who survived the devastations of childhood diseases and epidemics.

Father was most happy when he could sit down in the kitchen or living room with his brothers to smoke and chew on the cigars that one of them had brought from Canada for the occasion. They would end the trip with dad accompanying them in a rented car for the drive to visit with their sister and her husband in Hartford, CT. They loved those cigars. My mother, because of her clean curtains, was unhappy to see them smoking. I think that, silently, she would have preferred they not smoke for the sake of her clean curtains. There was no stopping them from smoking because they abandoned the cigars, they switched to the pipe. Lighting up the pipe involved a show of well-practiced methods of cleaning, filling, tamping, holding the pipe between their lips and puffing in and exhaling out while holding a flaming Diamond Match brand match to the tobacco in the bowls until the tobacco lit and they had a good pull on the stem.

Our father was not a talker. That is why my mother would tell some acquaintances who did not know this that “Felix is not a talker. If you want him to say something, you have to press his belly button.” Even coming from my mother, it was not a statement that would make him laugh, for he laughed very little. He might smile on occasion, but he never guffawed. He never told an off color joke, either; as a matter of fact, I do not recall that he had ever been one to crack a joke. When he did address a topic in conversation, particularly a topic of substance, his speech was formal and very professorial, although he had never gotten out of elementary school. He did listen to the radio, mostly Radio Canada. My father (Continued on page 17)

(The Late Train continued from page 15) and her husband took charge of her care. Her quality of life had changed while she remained silent. My sister learned that mother had ignored and allowed her breast cancer to advance. When she saw the doctor, she had little time to live. She was hospitalized.

I went to see her in the hospital when I was told that she might die at any time, but she managed to push her life forward. The last time I was in her room, we would have brief conversations before she fell asleep, and after awhile she awakened with a start and asked even before opening her eyes, “Est-ce que je suis morte, encore?” “I Am dead, yet?” “Am I dead, yet?”

And I would answer, “Mom, you’re not dead.”

Later, with a start, now awake, she asked again, “Am I dead, yet?” She asked if Edmonds Funeral Parlor was still there. I told her it was. I knew she did not like Edmonds because she had spent so many hours of her life visiting with deceased friends. She knew it was too late to change where she would be received, embalmed and prepared for showing. Mom fully expected but regretted all the while that it would be from Edmond that the cortège would leave for Saint André’s where the funeral would be held. She would need to comb her hair.
(Part II of The Late Train
My Father continued from page 16)

sounded a lot like Charles De Gaulle when he spoke.

On the job, father was known for his hard work. He maintained the machines he worked on and even fabricated small metal parts needed as replacements for those worn out. Often, he invented tools and designed modifications that improved the operation of the machinery he worked on. The company owned the patents on the work that became add-ons and improved the operation.

He spent Saturday afternoons at the back of the shed where his workbench was located. He was not a habitual drinker, but he kept a brown glass “Father John’s Medicine Bottle” in the paint cabinet located on the left of the workbench. There, he kept small cans of paint and stain and wood alcohol and other chemicals necessary for his work. He told me the tonic bottle with flavored brandy was to be used for medicinal purposes. He was not averse to having a shot-glass full of Old Overholt Straight Rye Whiskey when offered by a relative.

My father was not a habitual drinker. He certainly was not an alcoholic. Mother belonged to an organization called Les Boutons Bleu, a Catholic mission founded by a Dominican priest from Providence, I think, to eradicate the drinking of alcohol throughout New England and to ameliorate the abuses of drunkenness and the impoverishment of households where the men were alcoholics. Father did not belong.

On those occasions when we spent the day with relatives for a holiday like New Year’s Day, Easter, Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Armistice Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day, we walked to where we were expected for dinner. We would stay for the whole day, and walked back home late at night. On one of those Christmas family gatherings where we kids helped Uncle Adelard Chabot choose the chickens for dinner, my sisters and I watched and helped with the butchering and plucking. The first time we were present for this show, neither one of us understood why the chickens were still running around after having had their heads chopped off. The women and the girls helped with the prep work like stuffing the birds and building a salad and the mashing of potatoes and served tourtière, a meat pie, spent time running around the neighborhood and bothering our lumberjack uncles by asking them to count their fingers because it was fun to discover the missing ones. By the time we said our goodbyes, Dad had had too much to drink.

The way home was a long slippery walk in the snow, and it took so long to get home. When we did, with my help and Mom’s, we climbed the stairs to the second floor apartment while Dad pretty much pulled himself hand over hand along the bannister. When he got inside the second floor apartment, he got trunculent. Mom wanted to help him get to the bedroom, undressed and to bed. Somehow, whatever I did, reaching for his arm, trying to hold him up, really upset him to the point where he reached out and grabbed my left elbow and swung me forward. I flew across the room and hit my head on the metal undercarriage of the Singer Sewing Machine.

I cried, my mother got very angry, the girls cried, and my father became even more aggressive, but surprised us all by calming down when he heard us kids shrieking. He headed unassisted to the bedroom. What I very much remember is flying across the room and striking the sewing machine. I don’t know or remember if I was hurt or stunned. But this unparalleled act of my father’s put distance between us.

My father had many skills; among them was his ability to make toys for us. He also taught us the special skills necessary to play neighborhood and schoolyard games. I believe that he was good at replicating what he saw. None of our games involved spending money, although we might lose whatever coins we had by playing some games. Dixie cups had photos of actors on the flip side of the lid. The circular lids were used in a game that we played. We either pitched lids or baseball cards, against the foundation of a building, and the card pitched closest to the building, that could have been the one standing against the foundation, was clearly always the winner. All cards landing behind the winner, were his. He collected all of them and put them in his pack after examining each one for its collectability.

My father made board games using the widest short ends of boards that he collected to hammer nails into which formed a pattern imitating that of a pinball machine pattern. Many game boards were unique and paid off with the marble ending in the slot that paid zero to five in marbles. The goal was to win as many marbles as possible to add to one’s pot. Otherwise, we had to buy bagsful of marbles of various colors and grades to enrich or replenish our collection of players, beauties, and keepers.

Dad was also able to make my clothes. Although I cannot say that I was all that proud of them. He made suits that I wore to school over several winters. He became a tailor when orders at the mill slowed down. They were a jacket and a pair of knickers -- suit, pants and jacket. Plaid woolen socks to the knees made by my Aunt Eugénie were held up by elastic banded knickers. The suit fabric was abrasive and the socks itched.

My father was a religious man. He attended church on all Holidays and went to Mass every Sunday. I’m sure he went to confession regularly. He was one of a group of parishioners who brought the Brothers of the Sacred Heart to his parish, Saint André’s. Were he not dead, he would be saddened today by the closing of his parish church due to a shortage of priests.

When he was older and retired, he actually did receive a pocket watch for his years of service along with all of the other men who retired around the time that he did.

My parents finally moved from Freeman Street into a smaller apartment on Bacon Street. Over the last years of his employment, he had suffered from two strokes. The first required that I go to work at a competing mill, the Bates, in Saco. I graduated, he returned to work. The third and last stroke killed him. I was there standing at the foot of his bed, but he was uncommunicative. I found that dissatisfying.

After the funeral, my brother-in-law, Raymond, said, “I’m going to have a drink.” He went to the shed to retrieve the Father John’s bottle, pépère’s secret and hidden stash of brandy. Raymond returned with a bottle, unscrewed the cap, tipped the bottle to his lips as he threw back his head for a swig. His mouth exploded in a volcano of spit and the smell of turpentine. It’s not Brandy, he choked. Evidently not!

That was my father.

By Albert J. Marceau
Newington, Conn.

On the evening of Tuesday, March 28, 2017, over 30 people testified before the Worcester City Council to save the building of Notre-Dame des Canadiens from demolition. Among the people who gave reasons to save the former church was a Catholic religious who argued that the former church could be saved and used as a non-sectarian peace center. The last three people to make a statement before the city council were Dr. Georges-André Lussier, Roger Lacerte and your reporter, Albert Marceau, each members of the Société Historique Franco-Américaine. Dr. Lussier remarked on how Notre-Dame des Canadiens was instrumental in his own life, the life of his family, and that he had his children baptized in the Church. Roger Lacerte gave a testimony based in French literature, in particular, Victor Hugo’s popular novel, Notre-Dame de Paris, which is better known in English as The Hunchback of Notre Dame. Hugo wrote the novel to save the building of Notre-Dame de Paris, for in the 1830s, the city leaders of Paris had the idea of Urban Renewal, to tear down the old, and put up the new, a point he made during his statement before the city council. Albert Marceau, your reporter, the only person from Connecticut to testify before the city council, gave a testimony rooted on how the Mark Twain House in Hartford was saved from demolition. In the 1920s, the Mark Twain House was almost demolished in order to build a gas station, but a group of preservationists purchased the property, and subdivided sections of the mansion and rented the sections as apartments. For the next decades, the preservationists continued to rent sections of the mansion as apartments until it was able to restore it as a museum. In the early 1970s, the Mark Twain House opened as a museum, and today, it is a cultural landmark in the City of Hartford. Likewise, Notre-Dame des Canadiens could be purchased by a group of preservationists in order to save it from demolition, who rent for one purpose for decades, and then restore at a future date for another purpose.

After the Worcester City Council closed its session of testimonies, which was supposed to last from 7 to 8 P.M., but lasted to about 9:15P.M., numerous supporters to save Notre-Dame des Canadiens walked which he gave to other people, among whom was Roger Lacerte. The sign was two-sided, and the first side posed a question: “A Church has Souls, A Hotel has Occupants. Which Would You Save?!” The second side had the answer: “Save Notre-Dame des Canadiens!!” The public demonstration did not attract a large audience, as it was at night, and in a drenching rain, as can be seen in the two photographs provided by Valerie Ostrander, the Office Manager at Preservation Worcester.

The group, Preservation Worcester continues the struggle to save Notre-Dame des Canadiens from the wrecking-ball and you can visit their website, www.preservationworcester.org, and sign their petition.

Valerie Ostrander, the Office Manager at Preservation Worcester, provided the two photographs of the public demonstration to save Notre-Dame des Canadiens on the night of Tues. March 28, 2017. The former church is not demolished, but it is still not safe from the wrecking ball. The latest information about the building can be found on the website, www.preservationworcester.org.
Lucie LeBlanc Consentino, Acadian Genealogist, Will Speak to the FCGSC at October Meeting

By Albert J. Marceau, Newington, Conn.

Lucie LeBlanc Consentino, a leading Acadian genealogist, will speak at the Fall General Membership Meeting of the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut that will be held on Sat. Oct. 14, 2017, in the hall of the United Congregational Church, 45 Tolland Green, Tolland, Conn. She is scheduled to speak at 1:30PM, and her presentation will last about two hours, and it will be followed by a question and answer period. Attendance to the talk will be free to members of the FCGSC, but non-members will be charged $5.00 for admission.

The Fall General Membership Meeting of the FCGSC is scheduled to begin at 12 noon, and it will last for about an hour. The meeting will include the election of officers, a treasurer’s report, and possibly a vote on a revision of the society’s bylaws. The current President, Maryanne LeGrow, cannot run for re-election, as she filled two terms of the office. The rest of the entire Executive Board, which serves two-year terms and elected in the odd year, is due for election. The five other offices of the Executive Board that can run for re-election are: Vice-President Ernest LaLiberte, Recording Secretary Susan L. Griffiths, Treasurer Mark Purdue, Library Director Germaine Hoffman, plus the vacancy of the office of Corresponding Secretary.

It should be noted that Maryanne LeGrow was re-elected as President in October 2015 without a Vice-President, which was not a problem until the health of her husband, Ralph LeGrow, began to decline in 2016 due to cancer. (He appeared in good health at the society’s 35th anniversary party that was held on Nov. 11, 2016, but he died of cancer on April 24, 2017.) Hence to fill the need for a chairperson at board meetings, Ernest LaLiberte, who was formerly the President of the FCGSC from 2010 to 2014, moved from being a director to the Vice-President, and he opened the Spring General Membership Meeting that was held on Sat. April 22, 2017, but the act of presiding over the said meeting was completed by Treasurer Mark Purdue. Mark Purdue, himself, became the Treasurer at the board meeting that was held on Tues. Jan. 3, 2017 after the former Treasurer, Leo Roy, resigned as of the board meeting on Dec. 5, 2016 due to reasons of his health. Lastly, Corresponding Secretary Jean Fredette resigned her office as of the board meeting of March 7, 2017, she and her husband, Richard Fredette, a director who was elected in an even-year, resigned both of their offices due to difficulty of driving at night.

Readers of Le Forum may recall that former President Sue Paquette was re-elect-ed on Oct. 17, 2009, but she resigned her office one year later, and so Ernest LaLiberte was elected from the floor as President at the Fall GMM on Oct. 16, 2010 to finish her term of office. One year later, the Board of the FCGSC forgot the special election, as well as the clause in the bylaws dated Oct. 16, 2010, Art. X, Sec. 4 that clearly states: “Executive officers shall hold office for a term of two years beginning in each odd-numbered year, and shall take office upon installation.” Ernest LaLiberte was re-elected at the Fall GMM in October 2012, and the practice of even-year elections for the President was corrected when Maryanne LeGrow was elected President of the FCGSC for one year, on Oct. 18, 2014. The following year, Maryanne was re-elected as President at the Fall GMM that was held on Oct. 17, 2015 because there was no other candidate for the office.

There will be further information about the Fall General Membership Meeting of the FCGSC that will be held on Sat. Oct. 14, 2017, as well as the guest speaker, Lucie LeBlanc Consentino, on the website: www.fcgsc.org.

The First Official French-Canadian-American Day in Hartford, Conn., June 24, 2014

By Albert J. Marceau, Newington, Conn.

The first legally recognized French-Canadian-American Day in the State of Connecticut was celebrated on Tuesday, June 24, 2014 at two events in Hartford. The first event began at 10AM at St. Joseph’s Cathedral on 140 Farmington Avenue for the Mass in French for the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist, the patron saint of the French-Canadian people. After the Mass, the second set of events was held at the State Capitol on 210 Capitol Avenue that consisted of speeches, a flag-raising ceremony, patriotic songs, as well as French-Canadian folk and country music, and light refreshments. The celebration at the State Capitol ended around 2:30PM.

Fr. Alvin LeBlanc, the Pastor of St. Ann Parish in Bristol, was the main celebrant of the Mass, assisted by Fr. Robert J. Rousseau, the Administrator of Holy Family Parish in Enfield. Although Deacon Gaspard D. LeBlanc of St. Anne Shrine in Waterbury was scheduled to serve at the Mass, he did not appear due to reasons of his health. Fr. LeBlanc did not attend the festivities at the Capitol as it was necessary for him to return to work at the Office of the Metropolitan Tribunal at St. Thomas Seminary in Bloomfield. Fr. Rousseau went to the Capitol and his invocation started the second set of activities.

(Continued on page 20)
Marie Turcotte of Bristol, Conn., reads one of the Scriptural passages from the podium during the Feast of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist at St. Joseph’s Cathedral on June 24, 2014. Notice on the extreme left is Fr. Robert J. Rousseau in the presider’s chair, and then the flags of Acadia and Quebec to the left of the podium. Photo by Marceau.

Fr. Alvin Leblanc gives a homily from the podium at St. Joseph’s Cathedral, June 24, 2014. Photo by Marceau.


Joseph Gadbois, formerly of Union-St-Jean-Baptiste in Woonsocket, R.I., and currently the Vice-President of Fraternal Outreach at Catholic Financial Life in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, in a crowd in the foyer of St. Joseph’s Cathedral, June 24, 2014. Photo by Marceau.

It should be noted that due to the three-year gap between the time of the published report, and the day of the event, St. Ann Parish in Bristol will be combined with St. Anthony Parish in Bristol, in June 2017. The two former parishes will form the new Parish of St. Frances de Sales, and the two churches will remain open. The current Pastor of St. Anthony’s Parish is Fr. Alphonso Fontana, and he will become the Pastor of St. Frances de Sales. Meanwhile, Fr. Alvin LeBlanc will become the Pastor of

(Continued on page 21)
Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, who signed the bill into law that recognized French-Canadian-American Day, was scheduled to speak at the Capitol, but he did not make an appearance, and he was represented by Lieu. Gov. Nancy Wyman. State Sen. Gary LeBeau and State Rep. Russ Morin both spoke to the crowd on the grounds of the Capitol because they sponsored the bill in their houses of the Connecticut General Assembly.

Josée Vachon sang the unofficial anthem of the Province of Quebec, “Gens du pays” composed by Gilles Vigneault and Gaston Rochon in 1975, as the Quebec flag was raised on the State Capitol. (For the sake of comparison, there are at least two unofficial anthems of the United States, “America the Beautiful” composed by Katherine Lee Bates and Samuel A. Ward in 1910, and “This Land is Your Land” composed by Woody Guthrie in 1940.) She also sang “Mon village” by Ferdinand Rochon in remembrance of the first anniversary of the train-derailment that caused an oil spill and massive fire that resulted in the deaths of 47 people in Lac Mégantic, Quebec on July 6, 2013.


Gov. Dannel P. Malloy, who signed the bill into law that recognized French-Canadian-American Day, was scheduled to speak at the Capitol, but he did not make an appearance, and he was represented by Lieu. Gov. Nancy Wyman. State Sen. Gary LeBeau and State Rep. Russ Morin both spoke to the crowd on the grounds of the Capitol because they sponsored the bill in their houses of the Connecticut General Assembly.

Josée Vachon sang the unofficial anthem of the Province of Quebec, “Gens du pays” composed by Gilles Vigneault and Gaston Rochon in 1975, as the Quebec flag was raised on the State Capitol. (For the sake of comparison, there are at least two unofficial anthems of the United States, “America the Beautiful” composed by Katherine Lee Bates and Samuel A. Ward in 1910, and “This Land is Your Land” composed by Woody Guthrie in 1940.) She also sang “Mon village” by Ferdinand Rochon in remembrance of the first anniversary of the train-derailment that caused an oil spill and massive fire that resulted in the deaths of 47 people in Lac Mégantic, Quebec on July 6, 2013.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.

Josée Vachon receives applause from her audience at the end of her performance. The woman on the extreme left and in front of the television camera wearing a blue dress and a white sweater and sunglasses is Odette Manning, the sister of Helene Labrecque. Helen Labrecque herself is waving a couple of Quebec flags. In the background in the blue shirt and yellow tie is Daniel Boucher, talking with Camille Richard, while Michel Grenier apparently is listening to their conversation, and looking at Josée Vachon. Then, on the right of the podium is State Rep. Russ Morin.
The light refreshments were served in the west atrium of the State Capitol by many of the same volunteers that one would see at Daniel Boucher’s Sugar House Parties.

Helene Labrecque was the lead coordinator for the preparation of the celebrations, and in the weeks before the event, she estimated that there would be a minimum of 400 people in attendance. Hence, in the publicity in the newsletters of the French-Canadian clubs in Connecticut, like the June 2014 issue of The Maple Leaflet of the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut, she asked people to register online through the website Survey Monkey, so she could report the number of attendees to the Refreshment Committee and the Capitol Police. Also through the website, she was able to answer individual questions quickly via e-mail. She also chartered buses with five stops across Connecticut, roughly along U.S. Route 6, and the list of the five stops and the women in charge of them were: Danielson and Willimantic (Susan A. Griffths), New Britain (Gilda Murray), Bristol (Diane Gregoire), and Waterbury (Françoise Ouellette and Jeanne LaPrade).

There were two curious ideas that were often spoken by undisclosed officers in various organizations during the preparations for the first French-Canadian-American Day in Connecticut. The first curious idea was that the then future celebration would be the only such celebration on a large scale, and not to happen again, despite the reality that the holiday was now legally recognized. The second curious idea was that all aspects of the celebration were supposed to be, quote-unquote, “Connecticut Only,” without reference to French-Canadian organizations outside of the State of Connecticut. The first curious idea gave the organizations greater impetus to work hard in order to organize people to go to the event. The second curious idea was and is intrinsically illogical, and one example would suffice, the performance by Josée Vachon, who was not, and is not, a resident of the State of Connecticut.

Daniel Boucher was the coordinator for the food, the music and musicians, accoutrements, and venues. On the last point, he organized one set of musicians to play in the near the East Atrium on the main floor, while another set of musicians were assigned a room on the second floor, so that the two sets of musicians could perform at the same time, but not interfere with each other’s performance. For the accoutrements, he was to request additional tables and chairs, hence he assigned two tables for an information exhibit, which aided your reporter, Albert Marceau, in the problem of the “Connecticut Only” table, and a second table for brochures for French-Canadian organizations, archives, et cetera, outside of Connecticut.

The two information tables about the French-Canadian-Americans were in the North Lobby of the State Capitol, where there were additional speeches given to an audience of over 200 people. One table was about the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut that had brochures about the FCGSC, flyers for introductory classes held by the FCGSC, as well as an assortment of past newsletters, The Maple Leaflet, all information that anyone could take for their own education. Although your reporter set-up the table before the French Mass at the Cathedral, because he resides the closest to Hartford of all the members of the board of the FCGSC, it was manned by Germaine Hoffman, the Library Director of the FCGSC, who cheerfully answered questions posed to her. Your reporter also set-up the second table before the French Mass at the Cathedral, and it had information about other Franco-American organizations aside from the FCGSC. One brochure was about Rev. Eusèbe Ménard, o.f.m. (1916-1987) of Montreal, who founded the religious order, the Missionaries of the Holy Apostles, and who founded Holy Apostles College and Seminary in Cromwell, Conn., little known facts about Franco-American history which are mentioned in Robert Rumilly’s Histoire des Franco-Américains. In the weeks before the celebration, your reporter contacted other Franco-American historical, cultural and genealogical societies, most of which sent brochures to him for distribution at the French-Canadian-American Day in Hartford. The second table had brochures for the American-Canadian Genealogical Society, based in Manchester, N.H., the American-French Genealogical Society, based in Woonsocket, R.I., the Société Historique Franco-Américaine, based in Manchester, N.H., and the Museum of Work and Culture in Woonsocket, R.I. (It should be noted that only the Museum of Work and Culture had professionally printed card-stock brochures in color and in English and in French.) There were photocopies of a brochure that was produced in the mid-1990s by the French Institute on the campus of Assumption College in Worcester, Mass., that listed its catalog of books and monographs. Also, there were copies of the newsletter of the French Institute, Institute Français Nouvelles, dated Fall 2012-Spring 2013. There were flyers for the ACA/Lambert Franco-American Collection, which is at the Geisel Library at St. Anselm College in Manchester, N.H. There were

(Continued on page 23)
SOUVENIRS D’UNE TANTE
Jacqueline Chamberland Blesso


Tante Maria, Papineau, Ida Roy, Ti-pou-ti-out, Roger Paradis, Eddy Wabby – these disparate names are woven into the fabric of the St. John Valley by a common thread.

Maria Rose Délime Bosse Chamberland (1903-1986) de Ste-Agathe et son époux, mon oncle Olivier Chamberland, ont élevé neuf enfants. Tante Maria a rempli ses 83 ans de maints entreprises ainsi que la composition de poésie. Ida Roy (la nièce de Jules Marquis, un des derniers propriétaires de la maison historique à Ste-Agathe) est bien connue dans la Vallée comme l’interprète célèbre à travers la Nouvelle Angletère de chansons et de complaintes. Ida raconte que Roger Paradis, folkloriste et historien à l’Université du Maine à Fort Kent, lui avait confié un des poèmes de Maria, et lui avait demandé de le mettre à la musique.

Maria Rose Délime Bosse Chamberland (1903-1986) from Ste-Agathe and her husband, uncle Olivier Chamberland,

raised nine children. Tante Maria filled her 83 years with a multitude of enterprises including the composition of poetry. Ida Roy (the niece of Jules Marquis, one of the last owners of the Historical House in Ste-Agathe) is well known in the Valley as the celebrated performer throughout New England of songs and complaintes. Ida tells us that Roger Paradis, professor at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, had given her one of Maria’s poems to set to music.

Ida et Maria, ces deux trésors de la Montagne Platte de Ste-Agathe, étaient déjà associées par le métier de grands nombres de femmes de la Vallée de la première moitié du siècle – le crochetage [que les français métropolitains appellent travail au crochet]. L’assiduité au travail des gens de la Vallée est bien connue; ils sont toujours occupés. Le soin des enfants, le travail à la ferme et le travail domestique terminé, ces dames, notées pour leur compétence dans le travail à la main, crochetaient pour augmenter les revenus de la famille. Elles confectionnaient, en tons pastels de bleu, rose, jaune, vert et blanc, garnis de rubans, des ensembles de bébés (capuche, chandail, chaussons) pour

New Brunswick and Quebec, and the State of Maine. Lastly, there was also a brochure of the 2012 Catalog of CDs by Josée Vachon.

In conclusion, the first celebration of French-Canadian-American Day in Hartford was a success in terms of participation, cultural events with the musical performances, and the dissemination of information about the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut in particular, as well as numerous other French-Canadian organizations, genealogical societies and archival libraries. In a telephone interview with Daniel Boucher on June 15, 2017, he remembered that Helene Labrecque and her group of volunteers organized seven or eight chartered busses for people to attend the events at the Cathedral of St. Joseph and at the Connecticut State Capitol. He told your reporter that 630 people attended the events, and he noted that the Capitol Police told him that it was the largest attendance of a special event of any ethnic group at the State Capitol in recent memory.

Ida and Maria, these two treasures from the concessions on Flat Mountain in Ste-Agathe, had already been associated in the craft shared by a number of women in the Valley during the first half of this century - crocheting. The industriousness of Valley folks is well known. Having finished taking care of the children, the farm chores and household work, these women, noted for their handiwork, would crochet to augment the family income. They created ribbon-trimmed baby ensembles (hat, sweater, booties) in pastel tones of blue, pink, yellow, green and white for New England companies to sell to dress the babies of America. Tante Maria, who named her enterprise Oliver’s, would pick up the work, send it to the company and

(Continued on (suite) page 24)
Le Forum

(SOUVENIRS D’UNE TANTE continued from (suite de) page 23)

pay the workers. On Maria’s retirement, Ida Roy, who also crocheted, replaced her as the agent. Ida sings the songs she learned from her father at the veillées (house parties) in the old days. Now, when not on the road to various folklore festivals, she lives in Van Buren where she collects and records French songs which, at last count, numbered more than 5,000.

Les voilà, encore une fois, réunies par le gentil air d’Ida joint au poème de Maria que celle-là a enregistré pour sa collection et que celle-ci, retirée à Wisdom House à Madawaska pendant ses dernières années, aimait chanter pour les autres retraités.

Here they are once again reunited in Ida’s air (taped for her collection) joined to Maria’s poem (which she liked to sing to other retirees in her later years after her own retirement at Wisdom House).

SOUVENIRS D’ENFANCE

1

Te souviens-tu de notre enfance
De ces beaux jours pleins d’espérances
Quand les pieds nus, le nez au vent
Marchant dans la poussière du chemin
On s’en allait tout en chantant
En se tenant main dans la main
On revenait en se chicanant
Et souvent fois même en pleurant

2

Te souviens-tu qu’au mois de mai
On aimait aller prier
Au pied de l’autel de Marie
Dans la petite école au mur gris
Les grands-mères disaient le chapelet
Et tout ensemble on chantait
Que la Sainte-Vierge était aimée
Dans ces beaux jours du temps passé

3

Te souviens-tu pendant l’hiver
A tous les soirs quand il faisait noir
On glissait dans la côte des pins
On agaçait tous les passants
C’était pas si drôle le lendemain
Quand on le disait à nos parents
Il fallait aller s’excuser
Et promettre de ne plus recommencer

4

Te souviens-tu du temps de Noël

Oh que les fêtes étaient donc belles
Allant à la messe de minuit
Dans un traineau de chevaux gris
Nos rires et nos chants enfantins
Se faisaient entendre de loin
Quant on regardait les étoiles
Tout en chantant le Jingle Bells

5

Te souviens-tu de Ti-pou-ti-out
Le Papineau des grandes routes
Qui parcourait tous les chemins
Toujours en demandant son pain
Il était la terreur des enfants
Pourant il n’était pas méchant
Quand on le voyait arriver
En pleurant on allait se cacher

6

Tous ces beaux jours sont bien lointains
Ce sont des souvenirs d’enfants
Mais, on aime bien les rappeler
Toutes ces bonnes choses du temps passé
Quand on le dit à nos petits-enfants
Ils nous regardent en souriant
Ils trouvaient ça drôle, mais ça ne fait rien
Quand ils seront grands, ils pourront pas n’en dire autant

Ce poème bien construit d’un vocabulaire directe et franc développe une idée centrale dans chaque huitain. Du point de vue culturel, la deuxième strophe, qui parle des prières à l’autel “Dans la petite école au murs gris” met en évidence la situation éducative de l’époque à Ste.-Agathe menée dans les petites écoles grises déjà en existence avant la construction de nouvelles petites écoles rouges en 1927. Les écoles grises n’existent plus, mais on peut voire la dernière des petites écoles rouges à l’ouest de la Route 162 arrivée presqu’à Frenchville. Les petites écoles avaient beaucoup d’importance pour Maria parce qu’elle y avait assisté comme étudiante dans les concessions de la Montagne Platte, et plus tard comme enseignante dans l’école près de chez Gilbert Martin. Ses enfants allaient à une autre petite école qu’on a remplacée par la résidence de Jerome Chamberland. On l’a déplacée dans la consolidation des écoles pour fonder la Montfort School.

This well-constructed poem with its direct and frank vocabulary develops a central idea in each octave. From a cultural point of view, the second stanza, which refers to “la petite école au mur gris,” highlights the educational situation of the era in Ste-Agathe in the little gray schoolhouses in existence before the construction of red schoolhouses in 1927. The gray schoolhouses are gone, but one of the little red schoolhouses still stands on the west side of Route 162 near Frenchville. The one-room schoolhouses were very much a part of Maria’s life as she had attended one in grammar school in the concessions, and had later taught in another close to the Gilbert Martin residence. Her children went to yet another which stood in place of the Jerome Chamberland residence, and which was removed during the consolidation of the schools to create Montfort School.

“Que la Sainte Vierge était aimée” témoigne de la grande dévotion ste-agathienne à la Vierge. Tous les soirs du mois de mai, les gens se rendaient à l’église; ou bien s’ils habitaient trop loin, ils se rassemblaient soit dans les petites écoles ou bien dans les maisons les plus grandes, pour célébrer les dévotions mariales. Dans la quatrième strophe, tante Maria marque l’importance des aspects religieux et sículiers de la fête principale de Noël célébrée à la messe de minuit et réunie au chant de Jingle Bells.

“Que la Sainte Vierge était aimée” speaks to the Ste-Agathan love of the Virgin as seen in the Marian devotions. Every evening during the month of May, the devout would make their way to church; or if they lived too far away, as in the concessions, they would assemble either in the schoolhouses or in one of the larger residences to take part in the devotions. In the fourth stanza, Tante Maria calls attention to both the religious and secular aspects of the principal holiday of Christmas celebrated at midnight mass together with the carol Jingle Bells.

Récemment, on se demande des questions sur l’authenticité des aspects du 17e siècle de la langue de la Vallée. La rime de Bells avec étoiles soulève l’évolution phonétique de la pronunciation de la diphtongue oi. Dans la Vallée on prononce étèul pour étoiles, ce qui correspond à la prononciation du début du 16e siècle en France. Deux autres prononciations se sont développées pendant ce siècle: ê et wa. Le ê survi dans la Vallée comme dans la pronon-
One could ask if bells and étoiles lend themselves to rhyming (the lines rhyme alternately or consecutively) since the final /s/ in French is not pronounced while it is in English. In the Valley, there was also a tendency to drop the final /s/ from English words; and thus Bells could be pronounced Bell. Given that the English /l/ was also often pronounced like the French /l/, Tante Maria’s rhyme of Bells (bel) and étoiles (étwèl) arrives at a rime suffisante (rhyming of two elements).

For those who are interested in geography, “la côte des pins” of the third stanza is situated on the south side of Mountain Road about half a mile from Route 162, a little further than the Lakeview Restaurant. Unfortunately, the stand of pines no longer exists. Also, the children, if they quarreled or teased and annoyed others, as children are wont to do, were responsible for their behavior and had to apologize.

Questions on the authenticity of the 17th-century aspects of the language of the Valley have arisen recently. The rhyming of Bells with étoiles shows the phonetic evolution of the pronunciation of the diphthong oi. In the Valley étoiles is pronounced étwèl which corresponds to its pronunciation in France at the beginning of the 16th century. Two other pronunciations of the diphthong developed during this century: è and wa. The è survives in the Valley as in the pronunciation for droite (drèt), while the wa, which developed later and which is the modern standard French pronunciation is not often heard on the American side of the Valley. The we, as in toi (twé), currently in use in the Valley, is a pronunciation from old French from before the 13th century. In France, even after the drastic efforts to standardize the language in the 17th century, the we persisted into the 18th century. Our immigrant ancestors, having already arrived in the New World at the beginning of the 17th century, continued the pronunciation of we, and wè as in toi (twé), droite (drèt) and étoile (étwèl) which they brought with them. The wa had not become a part of their experience. This illustrates only one small example of the many elements of Valley French which come from Old French and Middle French.

On pourrait se demander si bells et étoiles se prêtent à une bonne rime (les rimes se font alternativement ou consecutivement) parce qu’on ne prononce pas les /s/ finals en français, tandis qu’on les prononce en anglais. Dans la Vallée, on avait la tendance d’autant laisser tomber les /s/ finals en anglais, donc Jingle Bells était souvent prononcé Jingle Bell. Étant donné que les /l/ anglais étaient souvent prononcés comme les /l/ français, la rime de tante Maria de Bells (bel) et de étoiles (étwèl) arrive à une rime suffisante.

One could ask if bells and étoiles lend themselves to rhyming (the lines rhyme alternately or consecutively) since the final /s/ in French is not pronounced while it is in English. In the Valley, there was also a tendency to drop the final /s/ from English words; and thus Bells could be pronounced Bell. Given that the English /l/ was also often pronounced like the French /l/, Tante Maria’s rhyme of Bells (bel) and étoiles (étwèl) arrives at a rime suffisante (rhyming of two elements).

For those who are interested in geography, “la côte des pins” of the third stanza is situated on the south side of Mountain Road about half a mile from Route 162, a little further than the Lakeview Restaurant. Unfortunately, the stand of pines no longer exists. Also, the children, if they quarreled or teased and annoyed others, as children are wont to do, were responsible for their behavior and had to apologize.

De la cinquième strophe du poème de Tante Maria sort un personnage légendaire dans la Vallée au début du siècle. C’est Papineau. Ce surnom, qui signifie quelqu’un d’intelligence moyenne, on l’avait donné à un célibataire barbu, un Alexis Pelletier, qu’on pense originaire de Daigle et qui mendiait à travers la Vallée, même jusqu’à Caribou et même au-delà. Ce quêteur tremblait et boitait de l’infirmité d’une jambe croche qui rendait nécessaire l’utilisation d’une canne. Tante Maria mentionne aussi son autre sobriquet, Ti-pou-ti-out, une déformation de sa façon d’adresser les enfants de “ti-petiot” ou “ti-petioite” qui signifie un petit enfant.

A legendary character in the Valley at the beginning of the century emerges from the fifth stanza. He was Papineau, meaning someone of middling intelligence, a sobriquet given to a bearded bachelor who was a beggar throughout the Valley all the way to Caribou and beyond. Tante Maria also mentions his other nickname, Ti-pou-ti-out, a deformation of his way of addressing children as “ti-petiot,” or “ti-petioite” in the feminine, which means a small child.

Papineau portait la réputation de “gros mangeux” (mangeur en métropolitain). Il ne pouvait pas se rassasier. On dit qu’il pouvait manger quatre douzaine d’œufs puis une couple de tarte et des saucisses. On dit aussi qu’il quétrait de la viande pour vendre pour se faire de l’argent; qu’il était sauf [glouton]; qu’il mangeait à se rendre malade; et qu’après avoir mangé une char [grand quantité] chez un voisin, il se rendait chez un autre voisin et mangeait un autre repas chez le deuxième, le troisième et même le quatrième, d’où vient le dicton de la Vallée: “Tu manges comme un Papineau.” On l’avertissait: “Papineau, ne mange pas le bol ou l’assiette.”

Papineau had acquired the reputation of a hearty eater. He could not be sated. It is said that he could eat four dozen eggs and a couple of pies and sausages. It is also said that he would beg for meat to sell so he could have some money; that he was gluttonous; and that after having eaten huge quantities at someone’s house, he would go to the neighbor and eat another meal, and then a third meal at the next neighbor and even a fourth, from whence comes the saying in the Valley: “You eat like a Papineau”. People would warn him: “Papineau, don’t eat the bowl or the plate.”

Les gens de la Vallée sont reconnus pour leur générosité. La plupart l’invitait à table avec la famille et permettait qu’il se couche à bas [sur le plancher] ou dans la grange parce qu’il était pouilleux. Il couchait dans la batterie [le plancher de la grange] ou dans la tasserie [la partie de la grange ou l’on met le foin, la paille et les grains] et on le couvrait de robe [fourrure utilisée comme couverture] de cariole [traineau à lame tiré par un cheval]. On lui ordonnait de laisser sa pipe et ses allumettes à la maison, parce
Le Forum

(SOUVENIRS D’UNE TANTE continued from (suite de) page 25)
qu’on avait peur du feu dans le foin.

Known for their generosity, most Valley folks would invite him to the table with the family and would let him sleep on the floor or in the barn because he had picked up lice from his travels. He would sleep on the floor of the barn or in the part of the barn where grain and straw are kept. He would be covered with a fur utilized as a covering in a horse-drawn sleigh. He was instructed to leave his pipe and his matches in the house for fear of setting fire to the hay.

Excentrique, mais sans malice, Papineau lisait les feuilles de thé. Les enfants l’agoyaient [taquinaient], et en représailles et pour qu’ils le laissent tranquille, il leur faisait de mauvais souhait et leur racontait des histoires de géants pour les éperuer [efrayer]. On dit qu’il essayait de les poigner [attraper], qu’il était verrat [frapon] et qu’il faisait mourir les animaux avec ses souhaits. Il essayait de se défendre contre leurs injures en les appelant des petits pauvres [lourds], et il ouvrait son couteau et faisait semblant de “partir après les enfants,” aïn que ceux-ci lui fiche la paix. De là venait “la terreur” des enfants mentionnée dans la cinquième strophe. Mais, ceux qui le connaissaient bien, comme Tante Maria, savaient qu’il “n’était pas méchant.”

Excentrique but harmless, Papineau would read tealeaves. The children would tease him; and in order to get even and to get them to leave him alone, he would wish them bad luck and would tell them stories of giants in order to scare them. It is said that he would try to catch them, that he was mischievous, and that he could make the animals die from wishing them bad luck. He would try to ward off the children’s insults by calling them little oafs, and would open his pocketknife and pretend to run after them so that they would not bother him. From these incidents came “la terreur” of the children mentioned in the fifth stanza. But those who knew him well, like Tante Maria, understood that he was not a bad person.

Champion tireur de poignet, on racontait que personne ne pouvait casser Papineau sauf pour un nommé Eddy Wabby from Fort Kent. Sa vie, c’était marcher. Il avait de la misère; il ne pouvait pas gagner sa vie et les gens avaient pitié de lui. Il faisait du pource, et pendant un hiver il avait suivi les comis voyageurs en chemin de fer jusqu’à Bangor. Essayant de gagner son pain de la même façon dans cet environnement hostile auprès de gens qui ne le connaissaient pas, on l’a amené à l’asile ou il est resté jusqu’au printemps. Dès son retour dans la Vallée, il a recommencé sa quête, et de là il est passé dans la légende. Les gens les plus agés se souviennent tous de lui, et ils racontent des histoires de Papineau.

Champion arm wrestler, apparently Eddy Wabby from Fort Kent was the only one who could break him. His life was walking. He would hitchhike, and during one winter he had followed some salesmen on the train all the way to Bangor. Trying to earn his bread in the same manner in a hostile environment where people did not know him, he was brought to the asylum where he stayed until spring. Once again he returned to his quest. He has since passed into the legend of the Valley. The older residents remember him and all have stories to tell about him.

\[Image of Papineau\]

“PAPINEAU”

Photo courtesy of the Madawaska Historical Society

La première strophe montre la gamme d’émotions passagères et la fraternité des enfants en mouvement, voilée par la “poussière” du temps et vue en perspective par le mechanism du “chemin.” Le dernier vers se termine en commentaire humoristique sur les relations entre les générations. Les strophes sont séparées en deux par l’air d’Ida qui se répète après quatre vers. Comme le poème, l’air n’a pas de refrain. Cette versification abonde d’optimisme et, comme on a vu, de notations ethnographiques et linguistiques.

The first stanza shows the gamut of transient emotions and the fraternity of the children in motion, dimmed by the dust of time and seen in perspective by the mechanism of the road. The last line of the poem ends in a humorous comment on intergenerational relations. The stanzas are separated by Ida’s air repeated after four lines. Like the poem, the air does not have a refrain. These verses abound with optimism and, as we have seen, with ethnographic and linguistic notations.

TANTE MARIA

Maria, la fille de Joseph O. Bossé et Anne Dubé, et la soeur de Philippe [le First Selectman à Ste-Agathe, donc en charge du village, pendant les années ’30], pensionnait au couvent des Filles de la Sagesse pendant ses années de high school. Elle a suivi les cours d’école normale à Lewiston pour devenir institutrice diplômée. Le 7 juillet 1925, elle a épousé mon oncle Olivier Chamberland à l’église de Ste-Agathe. De leurs neuf enfants, Jean Paul est décédé en 1984. Les gens de la Vallée connaissent son épouse, Berthile (Bea). Trois autres sont restés à Ste. Agathe: Joel et son épouse, Marie-Mae, sont les parents de trois fils et grand-parents de six petits-fils; Robert (Bob) époux de Viola, Selectman et candidat récent pour représentant à la législature; et Bernadette, son portrait d’enfant immortalisé dans la publication de Stewart Doty, Acadian Hard Times, et épouse de Samuel Michaud, les deux maintenant retraités de leurs entreprises - Michaud Funeral Home et Michaud Furniture. Les cinq autres demeurent à Connecticut: Rock travaille à Plainville; Geralda, qui était infirmière, fait sa retraite auprès de ses enfants et petits-enfants; Jacqueline, mère de cinq filles, qui comprend des jumelles (les jumeaux se montrent à travers les générations de cette lignée); Rachel, retirée de sa carrière d’affaires, mère de quatre et grand-mère de cinq; et Marie-Claire, épouse de Roderick Cormier et mère de deux enfants.

Maria, la fille de Joseph O. Bossé and Anne Dubé, and the sister of Philippe (a First Selectman in Ste-Agathe, therefore the manager of the village, during the ’30s), was a boarder at the convent of the Daughters of Wisdom during her high school years. She went to Normal School in Lewiston to receive her teaching certificate. On July 7, 1925, she married my...
un number of années, elle était en charge des linges et des vêtements liturgiques. Sociale, elle aimait rendre visite à sa parenté et ses amis; elle aimait jouer aux cartes. Une de ses compositions, “C’est aujourd’hui la fête d’une maman bien aimée,” a été chantée par ma mère, Eva, pour célébrer l’anniversaire de leur belle-mère, Edith Chassé Chamberland. Après la mort d’Olivier, à sa retraite, elle organisait des veillées de cartes, de bavardages et de chants pour “faire grouiller les gens.” Tante Maria, elle, avait toujours organisé, et elle avait toujours “grouillé.” Pour cette raison, on connaît mieux l’époque et certaines gens qu’elle a tissés dans sa poésie pour nous montrer une tranche de la vie dans la tapisserie de la Vallée.

Maria was an entrepreneur. In addition to the crocheting, her family established a dairy farm. She undertook research into Chamberland genealogy in turn prompting my interest in genealogy. She taught night school, the depression-era literacy program. Intelligent, not at all shy, but very pious, she worked in the Daughters of Wisdom laundry. Bernadette tells us that she liked song to get people moving. Tante Maria had always organized and had always moved. Consequently, we know the era and some of the people who were part of it because she wove them into the tapestry of her poem to create a picture of life in the Valley.

(Souvenirs d’une tante continued from (suite de) page 26)

 uncle Olivier at the Ste-Agathe Church. Of their nine children, Jean-Paul died in 1984. Valley folks know his wife, Berthile (Bea). Three others stayed in Ste-Agathe: Joel and his wife, Marie-Mae, are the parents of three sons and grand-parents of six; Robert (Bob) married to Viola, Selectman and recent candidate for representative to the legislature; and Bernadette, her childhood photo immortalized in Stewart Doty’s publication, Acadian Hard Times, and married to Samuel Michaud, both now retired from their enterprises - Michaud Funeral Home and Michaud Furniture. Five others live in Connecticut: Rock works in Plainville; Ger alda, who was a nurse, is retired near her children and grand-children; Jacqueline, the mother of five girls including twins (twins are very much a part of this line through the generations); Rachel, retired from her business career, is the mother of four and grand-mother of five; and Marie-Claire, married to Roderick Cormier and mother of two.

Maria Chamberland Family Photo (Circa 1950’s),
(Courtesy of the Ste. Agathe Historical Society).

Maria aimed les entreprises. En plus du crochethage, sa famille a établi une ferme laitière. Pendant sa vie, Tante Maria a entamé des recherches généalogiques, dont sa recherche sur les Chamberland a provoqué mon intérêt généalogique. Elle a enseigné à l’école du sud, le programme d’alphabétisation pendant la dépression. Intelligente, sans gêne et très pieuse, elle a travaillé à la buanderie des Filles de la Sagesse. Bernadette raconte qu’elle aimait tout ce qui touchait à la vie religieuse. Pour
Le Forum

Save The Date...

Josée Vachon

August 13, 2017
Franco-American Centre Franco-Américain
Crossland Hall
University of ME, Orono, ME

2pm
Info: (207) 581-3789
Email: Lisam@maine.edu
FREE
(Donations are accepted)
http://joseevachon.com

Susan Poulin
Monday, September 18

6:00 p.m.
Franco-American Centre Franco-Américain
Crossland Hall
University of ME, Orono, ME
Info: (207) 581-3789
Email: Lisam@maine.edu
FREE
(Donations are accepted)
http://www.poolyle.com
A Castle in the Clouds: Tom Plant and the American Dream

Written by Barry H. Rodrigue

The story of Tom Plant (1859-1941) gives us a gritty, real-life view of the American dream. Born into a poor French-Canadian family in Bath, Maine on the eve of the Civil War, he began his career as a boy laborer, cutting ice on the Kennebec River. Tom then became a union shoe-maker in the “shoe capital of the world”, in Massachusetts, financing his first workshop with a baseball wager. He went on to pioneer new trends in American business and to build the world’s largest shoe factory. An inventor, his name became front-page news in the *New York Times* during a fight with the most notorious monopoly in the United States. A celebrated outdoorsman, he laid out a vast estate on the shores of Lake Winnipesaukee, as well as a retirement home for workers in his hometown. An advocate of the progressive movement, Tom Plant spoke for a new, pragmatic America, one based on fairness in the workplace, conservation of nature, plural heritage, and global harmony. His d’énouement was as surprising as his triumph.

Biography
Paperback, 6” x 9”, 288 pages
ISBN: 978-0-9915427-0-3

Barry Rodrigue is a geographer, archeologist and historian, whose fieldwork focuses on the Canadian-American borderlands. He seeks to better understand humanity’s place in the world by positioning local and regional studies in global frameworks. An active scholar in the fields of Big History, he serves as International Coordinator for the International Big History Association and is a research professor at the Eurasian Center for Macrohistory & System Forecasting (Russian Academy of Sciences).

Marie-Line Morin

CD, It’s All About Love, 15$
Please send a check and pre-addressed mailing envelope to: 99 East Broadway, Salem, NH, 03079.
Independence Day

June 19th causes me to sit in wonder
Why it’s not the most recognized day for blacks in summer
Sadly more recognized the Hummer
Than notice the silence of the cannons-
That changed the circumstances blacks were living under
On that hot humid day in Texas
We consider it a blessing
The day that blacks found out they were free - to keep you from guessing
At work the boss wasn’t expecting
School is out - so there is no testing
As children, we took great joy in the celebration
However, when the slaves found out imagine their elation
Smiles and congratulations
The Almighty receiving heaps of praises in tearful adulation
On that day, we drank red soda pop-
For some reason we treated it as the only flavor they got
Barbecue grills smoking for blocks
Girls playing hopscotch
 Everywhere the sound of firecracker pops
Juneteenth I had my first taste of hops
My first taste of cannabis tops
When I couldn’t stop laughing my mom became furious
She told my Uncle if it wasn’t for him, I wouldn’t be curious
It had been a long time since he seen her so serious
June 19th, is the date of the appointment of the first black Supreme Court Judge
Brown vs. the board of education gave him the nudge
While some say that June 19th wasn’t the actual day blacks were set free
Unceremoniously the significance of the actual date has faded into obscurity
It should be a date known and celebrated down to the very last American
As an adult, I strive to tell all I see
That Juneteenth is Independence Day to me.

—Joseph Jackson

(Joseph Jackson is the Coordinator of the Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition and Program Facilitator for Maine Inside Out.)

Coffee at Dusk*

Siege of Petersburg—July, 1864
No rebel rifle fire yet
No calls from parapet to trench.
Just dusty, tired men
drinking the day’s last coffee
by flickering flames.
Soon boot-kicked sand
will suff the tell-tale embers.
What orders for the night - -
haul powder to the magazine - -
munitions through the trenches - -
Day’s duty’s done; night’s not begun- -
no rest for weary soldiers
in their waiting tents.
An eerie whistle overhead:
the bomb bursts; fragments kill one,
cover three with sand,
scatter fire, kettle, fuel.
The magazine explodes,
showers dirt on fleeing men.
Day’s last coffee for three friends.
For the fourth—last coffee - - ever.

*Here Eugène, the young hero of Tremblay’s Un Revenant (English title:
One Came Back,) reacts as Tremblay himself did when he served in the 14th
Regular United States Infantry. Twenty
years later, when he pens One Came
Back, Tremblay reports this incident as
a journalist would. Without emotion, he
relates the events as they unfold.

—Margaret Langford

LES FLEURS D ACADIE
de Michel LACAUX

Il existe en Acadie, une fleur de paradis
Fièrre et belle et si jolie, qu’elle est entrée dans ma vie
Et c’est de sa beauté, qu’à vous parler j’ai envie.

Son parfum de miel et lait, me sourit quand elle paraît
Et c’est dans la chemisée, de ses pétales étalés
Que j’aime à lui sourire, aux aurores empourprées.

Ces fleurs portent en elles, l’espoir de l’Acadie,
Elles nos sœurs, nos mères, nos compagnes et nos amies,
Ces belles fleurs là, sont les femmes d’Acadie.

Elles ont souvent porté, le poids des solitudes
Mai n’ont jamais avoué, aucune turpitude
Courage, Amour, bonté, donner c’est l’habitude ;

Celui qui en veut une, devra s’il la désire,
Porter respect, justice, et ces mots les lui dire
Enveloppée d’amour, et toujours les reluire

Va donc belle fleur en tes jardins secrets
Illumine de tes joies, le monde que t’a créé
L’Acadie sera sauvee, viens t’en vite procrérer.

Novembre 2007
Lastly, from North of the border there were a few participants including myself, Marie-Line Morin and Dean Louder. I was able to follow up on the research that I presented at last years gathering. While this event focuses on the present state of Franco-American literature and culture, I like to present some of my findings from our collective past and the writings of our Franco ancestors. Marie-Line Morin, a pastoral counsellor currently working at Université Laval, came to present her work with singing therapy. She sang a wonderful rendition of Ave Maria.

**Dean Louder et le rêve de la Franco-Amérique**

Dean Louder gave quite a riveting presentation, a great follow-up to last year. At Walpole in 2016, Louder started his presentation with a quote from Zachary Richard that has haunted me ever since: “L’isolement est plus fort que la fraternité.” The solution to this isolation is unity among our ranks. However, unity is a limited resource among Franco-Americans, with so many borders (interstate and international) and so many differences of opinion; Francos of have trouble getting together. Louder’s presentation in 2017, like those of years past, spoke of Franco-American unity and what can be accomplished when we work together. Louder told a story about the Franco-American Centre and the F.A.R.O.G. Forum. Though I am not the storyteller that he was, I feel it is important to give an outline of this anecdote that shows just how Dean Louder, in his way, was able to unite Franco-Americans from across the map. In the 80’s upon receiving a copy of the Forum, Dean Louder noticed a letter to the editor from Kent Bone (Beaune) from the Ozarks in Missouri. Louder searched tirelessly for this francophile in midwest to find out his story. Dean Louder and Kent Beaune (who contributed to the last edition of the Forum) became good friends. Beaune even visited the Capitale-Nationale where Louder has resided since becoming a professor in the Geography department at Université Laval. This story and the nostalgia shared with the participants of the event touched the hearts and minds of all those present Franco-American or not.

Though I only met Dean Louder on two occasions, I know he was truly an extraordinary man. He travelled the continent from sea to shining sea exploring a plethora of little pockets of Franco-Américains, as he called them. May 9th, 2017, Dean Louder passed away suddenly at 74 years old. He will be sorely missed by all the French-Canadian descendants across the US and Canada that had the chance to meet him. If we can learn anything from the life and work of Dean Louder, I think unity is an overarching theme. The task is daunting, but if we were able to work closer together, the Franco-American community might just be a little less invisible in the US and in Canada.

**Samuel Samson et sa culture “francémicaine”**

In 2012, Samuel Samson, native of Québec City, wrote *Quelle Amérique française?* a sociopolitical essay and a great vision into the thoughts of a young Québécois on French America. Samson, in order to explain the current state of French America, gives regional portraits of the 13 provinces (Continued on page 32)
Le Forum

(FACT CHECK continued from page 31)

and territories followed by sketches of the First Nations peoples and Franco-Americans. In his mention of Franco-Americans, Samson expresses his preference for the term “Franco-Étatsunien”. French America is already littered with so many cacophonous labels, why add another? The brief summary of sorts, dedicates one page to the Francos of New England. Samson has what we could call a “traditional” view of the Francos d’en bas. He states that the Franco-Americans of New England “sealed their fate and threw themselves to the wolves wanting to progressively integrate themselves into the rest of American (étatuennien) society. So, they chose to assimilate, yet even today, despite the choices of their ancestors, a quarter of New-England identifies as French Canadian, though but a small fraction still speaks French.” I am not sure that the Francos of today or of yeysteryear would much like that comment. The great defenders of Franco-American culture like Adolphe Robert and Wilfrid Beaulieu did “not go gentle into that good night”, if the night has come at all!

At the time samson published this essay he was but 18 years old. So when he writes that “aucun politicien étatunien n’était issue de leur rang (no politicians were among their ranks)”, we can chalk that up to an error de jeunesse. I am sure that Félix Gatineau of Southbridge, Josaphat Benoit of Manchester, and Aram Pothier of Rhode Island would take no offense. Samson writes his essay with two major concerns: language and religion. Two parts of Franco-American culture whose place of priority has eroded with time. He repeats the same talking points of so many other Québécois: the assimilation of the Franco-Americans and the great loss to Quebec and French America. Can a culture be reduced to its language and its religion? Nevertheless, Samson feels the same sense of loneliness as me, Dean Louder, Zachary Richard and so many other Franco-Américains. Samson finds that Franco-America “no longer has any project or direction and its unity ended at the same time that the Catholic church lost its power in French America and the reorientation of the General state of French Canada in 1967.” This is a fact. His solution: the Movement Francaméricain (yet another cacophony to add to our collection), a noble effort, unfortunately DOA. If there is to be unity among Francos it must first start with our institutions. We don’t often realize all of the organizations that are at our disposal. These organizations have all sorts of purposes, whether it be social/communauté (Clubs Richelieu, Franco-American centers in Manchester and Lewiston), academic (Franco-American Centre at UMaine), archival (French Institute in Worcester and Franco-American Collection in Lewiston), or genealogical (American-French Genealogical Society in Woonsocket and The American-Canadian Genealogical Society in Manchester). Despite the diversity of these groups, sitting at the same table and moving in a common direction would propel our ethnic group into the future and preserve our sacred past.

Notre-Dame-des-Canadiens

Worcester, the second largest city in New England, is home to one of the most beautiful Franco-American churches, Notre-Dame-des-Canadiens, (to name but a few: Ste-Anne in Fall-River, MA, Ste-Marie in Manchester, NH, and St-Pierre and St-Paul in Lewiston) Unfortunately, developers in the city of Worcester would like to see this towering testament to the height of the Franco-American ethnic group torn down, destroyed, demolished! This representation of Franco-American accomplishment in their pays d’accueil (new country) could be used for a variety of new purposes. A great number of churches in Quebec City have been transformed into libraries and cultural centers, uses noble of these magnificent structures. If we band together to save this church as Franco-Americans from all over, we have a real chance in winning this battle. In our present state, Franco-Americans are ants scurrying around trying to save bits and pieces of our culture, easily squashed into oblivion. Together, we could be a big ferocious bear defending, continuing our cultural heritage. Who doesn’t notice a bear!

1. Did you know Mary Travers otherwise known as La Bolduc spent a year (1921) in Springfield, MA with her sister-in-law working in the mills as so many other French Canadians.

2. Did you know New England was home to over 300 french language newspapers, among those papers are Le Travailleur (Worcester), L’Étoile (Lowell), L’Indépendant (Fall River), Le Messager (Lewiston) and L’Avenir National (Manchester).

3. Did you know la Saint-Jean-Baptiste, or St. John the Baptist day, was a holiday celebrated by ALL French Canadians and their diaspora (excluding Acadians). It was only in 1977 that la St-Jean became the national holiday of the province Quebec (including their anglophone populations).

4. Did you know that Josaphat Benoit, a Franco-American, served more terms as Manchester’s mayor than any other in the city’s history.

Questions, comments, facts or current events?

Contact me at joshua.barriere.1@gmail.com
Franco-American Families of Maine
par Bob Chenard, Waterville, Maine

Les Familles Daigle

Welcome to my column. Over the years Le Forum has published numerous families. Copies of these may still be available by writing to the Franco-American Center. Listings such as this one are never complete. However, it does provide you with my most recent and complete file of marriages tied to the original French ancestor. 

How to use the family listings: The left-hand column lists the name (and middle name or initial, if any) of the direct descendants of the ancestor identified as number 1 (or A, in some cases). The next column gives the date of marriage, then the spouse (maiden name if female) followed by the town in which the marriage took place. There are two columns of numbers. The one on the left side of the page, e.g., #2, is the child of #2 in the right column of numbers. His parents are thus #1 in the left column of numbers. Also, it should be noted that all the persons in the first column of names under the same number are siblings (brothers & sisters). There may be other siblings, but only those who had descendants that married in Maine are listed in order to keep this listing limited in size. The listing can be used up or down - to find parents or descendants. The best way to see if your ancestors are listed here is to look for your mother’s or grandmother’s maiden name. Once you are sure you have the right couple, take note of the number in the left column under which their names appear. Then, find the same number in the right-most column above. For example, if it’s #57C, simply look for #57C on the right above. Repeat the process for each generation until you get back to the first family in the list. The numbers with alpha suffixes (e.g. 57C) are used mainly for couple who married in Maine. Marriages that took place in Canada normally have no suffixes with the rare exception of small letters, e.g., “13a.” If there are gross errors or missing families, my sincere apologies. I have taken utmost care to be as accurate as possible. Please write to the FORUM staff with your corrections and/or additions with your supporting data. I provide this column freely with the purpose of encouraging Franco-Americans to research their personal genealogy and to take pride in their rich heritage.

DAIGLE
(Dea*)

FAMILY #1

Olivier Daigle (and Daigle), born in 1643 in France, died in Acadia, married circa 1666 at Port Royal (today, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia) to Marie Gaudet, daughter of Denis Gaudet and Martine Gauthier of France and Port Royal. Olivier arrived in Acadia around 1663. His ancestors are believed to have originated from d'Aigrie in the ancient province of Saintonge, France.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Date of Birth</th>
<th>Date of Marriage</th>
<th>Place of Marriage</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Octave</td>
<td></td>
<td>02 Jul 1894</td>
<td>Elizabeth Violette</td>
<td>Ft. Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dominique</td>
<td></td>
<td>16 May 1886</td>
<td>Philomène Daigle</td>
<td>Frenchville</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcime</td>
<td>08 Aug 1887</td>
<td>Eugénie Ouellette</td>
<td>Frenchville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antoine</td>
<td>03 Sep 1890</td>
<td>Malvina Guy</td>
<td>Frenchville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hilaire</td>
<td>07 Oct 1896</td>
<td>Philomène Martin</td>
<td>Frenchville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David, 26</td>
<td>20 Nov 1898</td>
<td>Anne Soucie, 19</td>
<td>Ft.Fairfield</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Béluson</td>
<td>28 Apr 1903</td>
<td>Aurélie Daigle (#48D)</td>
<td>Ft.Kent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denis</td>
<td>30 Apr 1903</td>
<td>Eugénie Ouellette</td>
<td>Frenchville</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hector</td>
<td>02 Apr 1894</td>
<td>Agnès Nadeau</td>
<td>St.Hilaire, NB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onésime</td>
<td>04 Feb 1901</td>
<td>Alice Cyr, 20</td>
<td>Madawaska, ME</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Continued on page 34)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Daughter</th>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32B</td>
<td>Sadie-M</td>
<td>1m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.17-1-1899 Foxcroft)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32C</td>
<td>Jos.-Alfred</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.13-8-1905 Waterville)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48A</td>
<td>Jean-Baptiste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48B</td>
<td>Prudent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1852)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1854)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flavie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1857)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Eglise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dydime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rémi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1858)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delina</td>
<td>1m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1859)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Julie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1861)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxime</td>
<td>1m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1862)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Désiré</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1866)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modeste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48C</td>
<td>David</td>
<td>1m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>46 2m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1854 - Fort Kent - d.&gt;1922)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(son of Lindor Daigle &amp; Lucy Cyr)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>François-Régis</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1865 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Euphémie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1862 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jean-Baptiste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1867 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Flavie</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1873 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Honoré</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.Thomas ?1871 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Firmin</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1869 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Alcime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Denis</td>
<td>1m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2m.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1877 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Modeste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trefflé</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Maxime</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(b.1875 Fort Kent)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(See next issue for more on the Daigle Family)
Jacques Hertel et Nicolas Marsolet: 
Coureurs de bois.

JUNE 22, 2017

Jacques Hertel (1603-1651)

Jacques Hertel de la Fresnière est le fils de Nicolas Hertel et de Jeanne Miriot. Il est né à Fécamp, en Normandie. Nous ne connaissons pas sa date de naissance mais certains prétendent qu’il serait né en 1603. Recruté par Samuel de Champlain, il arrive à Québec en 1626, en tant que soldat. Nous n’avons aucune preuve de ce fait, ce qui pousse certains à avancer qu’il était peut-être au pays dès 1615.


Jacques Hertel fut un des premiers habitants et colon de Trois-Rivières. Le 5 avril 1644, Jacques de la Ferté, abbé de Sainte Madeleine, lui concède une terre connue sous le nom de fief Hertel. De 1647 à 1648, Jacques Hertel est syndic des « Habitants ».

Le 23 août 1641, il épousa Marie Marguerite fille de François Marguerie, père et de Marthe Romain de la paroisse Saint-Vincent de Rouen en Normandie. Elle était la sœur de son camarade qui était aussi interprète, François Marguerie, époux de Louise Cloutier.

Jacques et Marie eurent les enfants suivants:
Françus baptisé le 3 juillet 1642
Madeleine née le 2 septembre 1645
Marguerite née le 26 août 1649

Il habite à Trois-Rivières avant même la fondation de cette communauté, et ce jusqu’à sa mort. Il décède accidentellement le 10 (ou le 14) août 1651.

Dans l’histoire du Québec, on connaît aussi son nom par l’un des premiers inventaires de biens qui fut dressé après son décès et qui témoignent des usages des habitants de la Nouvelle-France dans les premières années d’existence de la colonie.

Son fils Joseph François Hertel est reconnu comme un héros de la colonie.

En 1652, sa veuve Marie Marguerite épousa Quentin Moral de Saint-Quentin, Marie décède et est inhumée le 26 novembre 1700.

Nous descendons deux fois de Jacques Hertel à cause de sa fille, Madeleine.

Jacques Hertel (1603-1651)
Madeleine Hertel (1645-1677)
Françoise Pinard (1664-1743)
Catherine Giguère (Despins) (1693-1757)

Pierre Auger (Lemaître) (1728-1794)
Joseph Auger (Lemaître) (1777-1858)
Benjamin Auger (Lemaître) (1819-1806)

Louise Auger (Lemaître) (1850-1911)
Joseph 2 Hermidas Fréchette (1874-1942)

Lucinda Fréchette (1899-1969)
Eugène Bérubé (1926-1992)
Robert Bérubé
Jacques Hertel (1603-1651)
Madeleine Hertel (1645-1677)
Françoise Pinard (1664-1743)
Catherine Giguère (Despins) (1693-1757)
Madeleine Auger (Lemaître) (1726-1767)

Charles Choret (1753-1824)
Félicité Choret (1786-1865)
Zéphirin Fréchette (1813-1911)
Joseph 1 Fréchette (1846-1916)
Joseph 2 Hermidas Fréchette (1874-1942)

Lucinda Fréchette (1899-1969)
Eugène Bérubé (1926-1992)
Robert Bérubé
Nicolas Marsolet (1601-1677)

Nicolas Marsolet dit Saint-Agnan, fils de Nicolas Marsolet et de Marguerite de Planes, est né et a été baptisé à Saint-Pierre-le-Potier de Rouen en Normandie, le 7 février 1601.
Il épousa Marie Le Barbier, fille d’Henri Barbier et de Marie Le Vilain, à
(Suite page 36)
Reproduction de la cabane au poste de traite de Tadoussac. Nicolas Marsolet a vécu ici pendant de nombreuses années.

Saint-Sauveur de Rouen, le 26 mars 1637.


Lors de ses premières années au pays, Nicolas apprend deux langues autochtones, l’algonquin et le montagnais. Étant jeune, il semble avoir maitrisé ces langues autochtones assez rapidement et il devient truchement, ce que nous appelons aujourd’hui un interprète.

Nicolas Marsolet pratique la traite des fourrures à Tadoussac, à Québec, à Trois-Rivières et dans les villages des Algonquins de l’Outaouais. Il adopte le mode de vie des Autochtones et il demeure méfiant envers les autorités. Seul, le jésuite Charles Lalemant a su gagner sa confiance.

Dès 1623, Champlain lui confie une position de plus grandes responsabilités. Nicolas Marsolet voyage au cœur de plusieurs nations amérindiennes de la Nouvelle-France et il fut exposé à d’autres langues indigènes. Sa mission première demeurait toujours les Montagnais et le poste de traite de Tadoussac.

Il se pourrait, selon certains historiens que Nicolas soit le truchement qui, durant l’hiver de 1625 et 1626, retenu par une pleureuse, est demeuré chez les Jésuites du Québec. Ce serait à ce moment où il aurait partagé ses connaissances des langues amérindiennes avec le père Charles Lalemant.

En 1626, il traverse l’Atlantique et repasse en France, car il était à Paris en mars 1627. Il revient en Nouvelle France durant l’été de la même année.

À la fin de l’été 1629, lorsque les frères Kirke prennent possession de Québec, une grande partie des Français, y compris Champlain, s’embarquent pour la France. Quelques familles et presque tous les truchements, y compris Nicolas Marsolet restent et ils continuent d’exercer leur métier de truchements au bénéfice des Anglais et des Amérindiens jusqu’au retour des Français, en 1632.

Certains accusateurs affirment que Marsolet et les autres truchements qui sont restés et habitent avec les Amérindiens, dans la plus grande liberté, étaient constamment à la recherche de gros profits. En 1629, Champlain, accuse Nicolas Marsolet et Étienne Brûlé de: “demeurer sans religion, mangeant chair Vendredy & Samedy, de se licencier en des desbauches & libertinages désordonnées et surtout d’avoir, par amour du lucre, trahy leur Roy & vendu leur patrie en se mettant au service des Anglais”.

À un autre moment, Champlain ajoute: “(Olivier) Le Baillif n’est pas le seul traître. Il a comme complice deux interprètes, Étienne Brûlé et Nicolas Marsolet. Je les avais envoyé il y a 15 ans vivre chez les Hurons et chez les Montagnais pour apprendre leur langue. À cette époque, je considérais Étienne Brûlé comme mon propre fils.”

Monument dédié à Étienne Brûlé et les Coureurs de bois à Penetanguishene, Ontario.

Lors des préparations concernant son exil, Champlain voulait amener avec lui en France, deux filles adoptives, d’origine amérindienne nommée, Charité et Espérance. Une troisième fille, du nom de Foi avait décidé de demeurer en Amérique du Nord. Les Anglais ne savaient pas trop s’ils devaient laisser les jeunes Amérindiennes quitter le pays. Nicolas Marsolet a tenté d’empêcher ces filles, de quitter la Nouvelle-France sous prétexte que les Amérindiens ne désiraient pas les voir partir. Champlain et les filles l’ont accusé de mentir et l’ont considéré comme paria! David Kirke ordonna que les deux filles restent, malgré leurs supplications et leurs larmes.

Les Français revinrent en 1632. Certains historiens affirment que Marsolet changea de nouveau d’allégeance. À cette époque, les traitres étaient pendus. Aucun des truchements, y compris Nicolas a été puni. Si Champlain ne le considère pas comme un traître à être pendu, pourquoi certains historiens persistent-ils à le traiter d’infâme et de traître? De plus, quelques années plus tard Nicolas a été récompensé par (suite page 37)
Nicolas Marsolet fait un séjour de trois ans et demi en France, de 1633 à 1637, durant lequel il règle des questions de succession et il épouse Marie Barbier. Ensuite, Nicolas Marsolet décide de s’établir de façon définitive en Nouvelle-France et de fonder une famille. Il semble avoir accepté de participer à la colonisation.

Nicolas Marsolet et Marie Barbier sont parents de 10 enfants.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nom</th>
<th>Naissance</th>
<th>Mariage</th>
<th>Décès</th>
<th>Conjoint</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>22 fév. 1638</td>
<td>30 avril 1652</td>
<td>24 nov. 1711</td>
<td>Montréal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mathieu d’Amours</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louise</td>
<td>17 mai 1640</td>
<td>20 oct. 1653</td>
<td>18 jan. 1712</td>
<td>Jean Lemire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>31 mai 1642</td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geneviève</td>
<td>10 août 1644</td>
<td>4 sept. 1662</td>
<td>17 déc. 1702</td>
<td>Michel Guyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Du Rouvray</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madeleine</td>
<td>27 sept. 1646</td>
<td>4 sept. 1662</td>
<td>5 mai 1734</td>
<td>François Guyon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Despres Dion)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Louis</td>
<td>30 sept. 1648</td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jean</td>
<td>20 avril 1651</td>
<td>19 fév. 1680</td>
<td>6 mars 1715</td>
<td>Marguerite Couture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
<td>10 juin 1653</td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Élisabeth</td>
<td>29 sept. 1655</td>
<td>Québec</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marie</td>
<td>20 juillet 1661</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>27 fév. 1677</td>
<td>Québec</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Marsolet avait reçu de l’abbé de La Ferté, le 5 avril 1644, les prairies Marsolet, un arrière-fief d’une demi-lieue de front par deux de profondeur, dans la seigneurie du Cap-de-la-Madeleine. En janvier 1646, Nicolas participe avec René Robineau à la rébellion des “petits habitants” qui étaient des paysans propriétaires contre ceux qui avaient “les charges et les offices” à la Communauté des Habitants.

Il était en mauvais termes avec les dirigeants de la Communauté des Habitants, et il déshabouillait le luxe! Il fit partie d’un mouvement de protestation et de soulèvement qui a été vite réprimé par le gouverneur, Marsolet dut se fier à ses propres ressources pour mener à bien ses entreprises commerciales. Nicolas s’était rendu compte que les riches profits de la traite des pelletteries allaient gonfler les coffres de France, sans aider les résidents de la colonie.

Nicolas Marsolet comme plusieurs coureurs de bois, se méfiait des missionnaires et des administrateurs et il redoutait leur influence. Ce qui explique pourquoi il n’a jamais voulu enseigner aux autres ce qu’il savait de la langue algounquine, malgré les demandes insistantes des missionnaires. En 1633 le jésuite Paul Le Jeune écrit: “En tant d’années qu’on a esté en ces pays, on n’a jamais rien pu tirer de l’interprète ou truchement nommé Marsolet, qui pour excuse disoit qu’il avoit juré qu’il ne donnoynt rien du langage des Sauvages à qui que ce fût. Seul, le « Père Charles Lallement le gagna ».

En 1647 il est propriétaire d’une barque qu’il utilisait dans ses voyages de traite à Tadoussac. Il reçoit de la Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France, le 16 avril 1647, une étendue de terre, dans une partie de la future seigneurie de Gentilly, qu’il vend en 1671. Il possède également 71 arpents, au coteau Sainte-Geneviève, accordé par la Compagnie des Cent Associés le 29 mars 1649.


Peu de temps avant 1660, Nicolas Marsolet met fin à ses courses vers Tadoussac et ses activités de traite pour se consacrer à ses affaires à Québec. À l’occasion il sert encore d’interprète. Au début des années 1660, il tient boutique à Québec. En 1664, dans la même boutique il aurait vendu du vin, à 25s. le pot malgré les arrêts du conseil. Entièrement dévoué à son commerce Nicolas n’exploite pas les nombreuses concessions dont il est bénéficiaire.

Le 21 avril 1664, Nicolas est toujours à l’œuvre comme truchement, car le 27 août 1664, le Conseil du roi ordonnait qu’une somme de cinquante livres soit remise au sieur Nicolas Marsolet pour ses services d’interprète du mois d’avril. Il traduisait lors du procès du viol de Marthe Hubert, épouse de Lafontaine, de l’île d’Orléans, par Robert Haché, un Amérindien.

Seule la terre du coteau Sainte-Geneviève fut mise en culture et cette terre est surtout exploitée par des fermiers. Notre coureur des bois n’est pas fermier, mais plutôt commerçant de nature. Ses goûts le portèrent sur l’eau; il fut pilote du Saint-Laur rent et surtout trafiquant de pelletteries, qu’il allait chercher à Tadoussac où il était très connu et estimé.

(suite page 38)
Bucksport’s first Franco Americans Were Patriots, Rebels and, Above All, Persistent. (May 2, 2017)

By James Myall

In several histories of the Catholic church in Bucksport, Maine, the tradition is maintained that the earliest members of that faith to settle in the town came from Quebec around 1835 – a distance of 200 miles – on foot. Remarkable as this is, the backstories of some of these families may be even more interesting.

About a dozen French Canadian families, primarily from the Beauce region of Quebec, came to the town between 1830 and 1850. Why they chose to come to Bucksport, which even then was a fairly small settlement on the coast of Maine, is unclear. The town did experience something of a population boom in this period, growing from 1700 inhabitants in 1820 to 3400 by 1850, but making such a long journey along a barely maintained road through the uplands of western Maine could not have been easy. On their arrival, the Canadiens would have found themselves virtually the only foreigners in Bucksport, and the only Catholics in a town that, as a condition of its founding in the 1790s, had been peopled strictly by protestants.

But like other early French-Canadian communities in Maine, they persevered. According to the historical tradition, the women of the community taught catechism to the children, and families made trips back to their hometowns for baptisms and weddings. Eventually, visiting priests from Bangor, Ellsworth and Winterport would serve the growing number of parishioners in the town, until they got their own parish in 1890. Nearly all of the early Fransko-American families spoke only French, and church records in Quebec confirm the tradition that almost none could read or write in any language. One member of the community, recorded in the histories as “Judge Bushnow” for his literacy, acted as translator for the others. The first masses were said in his house.

Bucksport in this era was a shipbuilding town, and the construction of Fort Knox in 1844 provided some other employment opportunities. The Franco Americans in town appear solely as laborers on the early censuses, although some of their children became fisherman, ship’s carpenters, and mariners. Nearly all had been farmers in Canada, and are examples of the wave of emigration that flowed from Eastern Quebec into Maine and other places as desperate men looked for work – any work – elsewhere.


But a few of the founding families’ back stories offer other compelling reasons to leave Canada in the late 1830s. In 1837 and 1838, two uprisings challenged British authority in its colonies of Upper and Lower Canada (Ontario and Quebec). In Lower Canada, this rebellion was largely comprised on French Canadians and is known as the Patriote Uprising. At least one of the Bucksport families is strongly associated with...
Boissonault was not the only one of the emigrés with an interesting past, though he was the most closely associated with the Patriote cause. Zacharie Bolduc, another early member of the community, was also a veteran of 1812 [7]. In fact, Bolduc was one of the veterans who received a land grant in Quebec’s Eastern Townships in 1830 [8].

Just a few years later, however, Bolduc and his wife and children had left Canada for Bucksport. Although they would certainly not be the only family to have received land that turned out to be unfarmable, the timing of their departure may be significant. The Bolducs were one family that came back to their home parish (Saint-Joseph-de-Beauce) to have their children baptized. The records of that parish show that the family left after the burial of their daughter Sophie on the 21st of February 1838 [9], but before their son Thomas was born on the 24th of March the same year. [10] Patriote Robert Nelson had attempted to launch an invasion of Lower Canada from Vermont on the 28th of February, 1838. Their first return trip, which saw 3 of their children, including Thomas, baptized was not until 1843, after the first amnesty for participants in the uprising.

Like Boissonault, the Bolducs chose to stay in Bucksport, as did other families. Those who did had their names anglicized and, encouraged by the lack of literacy among the population, the new names and spellings stuck. Bolduc became Bulduc, the Poulians became Poolers, and the Doyons, Dyers. Some took translations of their French names – like the Boisvins, who became Drinkwines. The French Canadian heritage of these early settlers faded to the extent that in the program for Bucksport’s 250th anniversary, the authors are uncertain even about the term “French Canadian,” which appears in quotation marks. On the other hand, when the community finally did gain a parish, it was named for the French Saint Vincent de Paul, and the cornerstone of the church building was laid on July 14, 1890 – Bastille Day.

At least some of the second generation of Bucksport’s Franco Americans embraced their identity as Americans. Naturalization petitions for some, survive [11], and a number served their new country in war. Joseph Dyer (Doyon); Frank Pooler (François Poulin) and Charles Prue (Proulx) all served in the Maine infantry in the US Civil war, [12] while Joseph “Depray” (Dupuis) became a member of the US navy in 1857 [13]. The complicated nature of identity in this community is perhaps summed up best by the legacy of the elder Bolduc. While Zacharie Bolduc’s headstone in the cemetery of St Vincent de Paul in Bucksport notes that he was “a soldier of 1812,” a Star-Spangled banner is dutifully placed beside it on me...

---

Notes:

[1] Quebec parish records for Saint-François-de-la-Rivière-du-Sud, April 5, 1806. Online via ancestry.com

[2] Notarial records between Hubert Boissonault and a number of other parties survive – quittance with Michel Guilmet, notarized by Augustin Larue, Oct 17, 1827; obligation with Messieurs Patterson et Compagnie, 16 July, 1832, notarized by Augustin Larue; obligation with Jérôme Paré. 19 May, 1832, notarized by Fabien Oueller; 26 Nov 1833, obligation with “N Boissonnault,” notarized by Édouard Gluckmayer. Indexes may be viewed online at the Bibliothèques et Archives Nationale de Québec.

THE FRANCO AMERICAN CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

The University of Maine Office of Franco American Affairs was founded in 1972 by Franco American students and community volunteers. It subsequently became the Franco American Centre.

From the onset, its purpose has been to introduce and integrate the Maine and Regional Franco American Fact in post-secondary academe and in particular the University of Maine.

Given the quasi total absence of a base of knowledge within the University about this nearly one-half of the population of the State of Maine, this effort has sought to develop ways and means of making this population, its identity, its contributions and its history visible on and off campus through seminars, workshops, conferences and media efforts — print and electronic.

The results sought have been the redressing of historical neglect and ignorance by returning to Franco Americans their history, their language and access to full and healthy self realizations. Further, changes within the University’s working, in its structure and curriculum are sought in order that those who follow may experience cultural equity, have access to a culturally authentic base of knowledge dealing with French American identity and the contribution of this ethnic group to this society.

MISSION

- To be an advocate of the Franco-American Fact at the University of Maine, in the State of Maine and in the region, and
- To provide vehicles for the effective and cognitive expression of a collective, authentic, diversified and effective voice for Franco-Americans, and
- To stimulate the development of academic and non-academic program offerings at the University of Maine and in the state relevant to the history and life experience of this ethnic group and
- To assist and support Franco-Americans in the actualization of their language and culture in the advancement of careers, personal growth and their creative contribution to society, and
- To assist and provide support in the creation and implementation of a concept of pluralism which values, validates and reflects affectively and cognitively the Multicultural Fact in Maine and elsewhere in North America, and
- To assist in the generation and dissemination of knowledge about a major Maine resource — the rich cultural and language diversity of its people.

LE CENTRE FRANCO AMÉRICAIN DE L’UNIVERSITÉ DU MAINE


Dès le départ, son but fut d’introduire et d’intégrer le Faite Franco-Américain du Maine et de la Région dans la formation académique post-secondaire et en particulier à l’Université du Maine.

Étant donné l’absence presque totale d’une base de connaissance à l’intérieur même de l’Université, le Centre Franco-Américain s’efforce d’essayer de développer des moyens pour rendre cette population, son identité, ses contributions et son histoire visible sur et en-dehors du campus à travers des séminaires, des ateliers, des conférences et des efforts médiatiques — imprimé et électronique.

Le résultat espéré est le redressement de la négligence et de l’ignorance historique en retournant aux Franco-Américains leur histoire, leur langue et l’accès à un accomplissement personnel sain et complet. De plus, des changements à l’intérieur de l’académie, dans sa structure et son curriculum sont nécessaires afin que ceux qui nous suivent puisse vivre l’expérience d’une justice culturelle, avoir accès à une base de connaissances culturellement authentique qui miroite l’identité et la contribution de ce groupe ethnique à la société.

OBJECTIFS:

2 – D’offrir des véhicules d’expression affective et cognitive d’une voix franco-américaine effective, collective, authentique et diversifiée.
3 – De stimuler le développement des offres de programmes académiques et non-académiques à l’Université du Maine et dans l’État du Maine, relatant l’histoire et l’expérience de la vie de ce groupe ethnique.
4 – D’assister et de supporter les Franco-Américains dans l’actualisation de leur langue et de leur culture dans l’avancement de leurs carrières, de l’accomplissement de leur personne et de leur contribution créative à la société.
5 – D’assister et d’offrir du support dans la création et l’implémentation d’un concept de pluralisme qui valorise, valide et reflète effectivement et cognitivement le fait dans le Maine et ailleurs en Amérique du Nord.
6 – D’assister dans la création et la publication de la connaissance à propos d’une ressource importante du Maine — la riche diversité.