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Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Rédactrice

Gérard Coulombe

Marie-Anne Gauvin

Rhea Côté Robbins

Timothy St. Pierre

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Authors

Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Rédactrice; Gérard Coulombe; Marie-Anne Gauvin; Rhea Côté Robbins; Timothy St. Pierre; James Myall; Juliana L'Heureux; Guy Dubay; Jake Lahut; Patrick Lacroix; Timothy Beaulieu; Suzanne Beebe; Jeff Higginbotham; Donalda LaGradeur; Michael Guignard; Margaret Langford; Meghan Murphy; and Virginie L. Sand

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“AFIN D’ÊTRE EN PLEINE POSSESSION DE SES MOYENS”

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Le Centre Franco-Américain
Université du Maine
Orono, Maine 04469-5719
LisaM@maine.edu
Téléphone: 207-581-FROG (3764)

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Don Levesque
Paul Laflamme
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Rédactrice/Editor

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

Mise en page/Layout

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

Composition/Typesetting

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

Aide Technique

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

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L'équipe de rédaction souhaite que *Le Forum* soit un mode d'expression pour vous tous les Franco-Américains et ceux qui s'intéressent à nous. The staff hopes that *Le Forum* can be a vehicle of expression for you Franco-Americans and those who are interested in us.

Le Forum et son staff — Universitaires, gens de la communauté, les étudiants — FAROG,

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Le FORUM

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Lettres/ Letters

MARK YOUR CALENDARS



JASON THERIOT

January 12, 2021 @ 4:00 pm - 6:00 pm

"In search of Acadian settlements in Beaubassin Life-long journey completed: Historian Jason Theriot walks among his Theriot and Bourgeois ancestors in their last known village in Acadia."

Jason P. Theriot, Ph.D. is an energy and environmental historian and consultant and author of *American Energy, Imperiled Coast: Oil and Gas Development in Louisiana's Wetlands* (LSU Press, 2014). He earned a doctorate in history from the University of Houston and a degree in journalism from Louisiana State University.

Register in advance for this meeting:

<https://maine.zoom.us/joining/register/tZ0vdu6qqjovHtUSv2HZN-WuhWOqkavwWgoVy>

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the meeting.

January 21, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Book Club: Hosted by Abby Paige. January's book: *Mill Town* by Kerry Arsenault.

January 27, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Poetry Reading: Cheryl Savageau, David Surette, Ellen LaFlèche and Steven Riel



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of upcoming events at:**

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**Check out our Franco
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**FRANCO-AMERICANS OF
MAINE, THEN AND NOW**

<https://franco-mainestories.net/2020/11/20/tying-in/>

<https://franco-mainestories.net/2020/12/01/everyones-invited/>



Bonne journée à tous!

This is Micah and Sophie. They are stuffed animals that are very lifelike. They are wonderful comfort companions. Micah is a very sweet tuxedo cat who purrs, meows, washes his paw and rolls over onto his back so you can rub his tummy.

Sophie on the other hand does not do any of those things. Her job is to stand guard and watch over Micah.

Sophie is a Papillon dog. Papillon means butterfly because of the beautiful stand up ears. They live here in harmony with us like members of our family. They do not require food, a veterinarian, walking outside or a litter box, that means they are perfect pets for homebound people and senior citizens.

**Trefle Lessard
Augusta, ME**

Part 2 of «The Novitiate»

By Gérard Coulombe
[Formerly of Biddeford, Maine]

So, I was in seventh grade, presumably, attending the Novitiate of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, located in Maine on the route to Augusta, on a farm on the hill above and leaving or entering Winthrop, depending on whether a driver were going North or South. Last time I looked for the school's location, it was not there. Everything had changed. I remember getting out of the car. I was on my way to my parents' home in Biddeford, when I had decided to move off the highway onto the local route through Winthrop, hoping to revisit the buildings, if not the Novitiate itself. I could not find any of it. Everything, the whole of the landscape, everything had so changed. There was nothing recognizable of a well-lived past, albeit, a small part, but an important part of it all and of my life. Much later, I learned the Brothers had moved their novitiate to Connecticut.

I entered the novitiate in Winthrop after discerning that becoming a Brother of the Sacred Heart, rather than becoming a priest, was to be my vocation. I fully understood that I was to leave home. After all, I was pretty young to « discern. » I was simply entering seventh grade. What did I know about life? There was something exceptional about being a Franco-American and Catholic. Had my parents found it possible to send me to Public Schools, none of this would have happened. Seriously, it was all part of my growing up in a Franco-American home, one in which French, only, was spoken, and one in which attending parochial schools was obligatory. That's what we did. Every parish had them, and so my parents sent us, my sisters and I. I was the eldest. I never imagined what sacrifice my mother was making, seeing me leave home, for good, I might add, or until I would profess my vows after I had finished my schooling and my training.

All of which was understood by my father who had seen one of his brothers leave home to become one, a Brother of the Sacred Heart. At the time, I think he, my uncle, Brother Theodore was in Victoriaville, P.Q. Canada. I met my uncle at the college, once; he was the doorman at the time, at his college residence, where the brothers were the primary teachers at the college.

Of course, after grammar school where I had been taught by the nuns of the Presentation of Mary in the elementary school part of the school building, we were now taught by the brothers, about whom I knew somethings because of my uncle. I learned more about the teachers that I had. It was a great deal to see them rough-handle misbehaving, recalcitrant students in my classes. Having attended fifth and sixth grade with the Brothers teaching, during which time, I observed the brothers teach and, also, discipline us, students, for this or that infraction, including but not the



least being that we were permitted by our mother to attend the cinemas at the City Hall in Biddeford and in Saco at the Mutual Theatre. The cost to attend the movies at the time was five cents, later, it was ten. We had to beg our mother for the nickel. We sat in the first rows. We often stayed for a second viewing of the main feature of what was always a double feature, plus, cartoons, coming attractions, the news of the day, a serial, a short short, and, of course, a second featured motion picture.

I recall there was an index of bad films, condemned [by the Catholic church], or films we were not to see. Banned films were always a tantalizing challenge, but one that hardly altered our routine of going to the cinema. Mother gave us the five cents or dime, and we went. In the early grades, movies were shown in the basement of our church. These films were, especially, only those approved by the Legion of Decency, about which I knew little, other than knowing it did not want Catholic children like us

attending cinemas where banned films were being shown.

The City Theatre in Biddeford's town hall was the movie house to attend, and the only one in town. There, Saturday afternoons proved fun, particularly if I had the change, not only to get into the movie theatre, but also for the price of a Needham candy «square» that cost, five cents. It was a marvelous square of chocolate covered, white coconut meat that was only available at the craft candy store adjacent to the Thatcher Hotel at City Square. This stop for candy took place before walking across to the City Building in which the movie theatre was located on the second floor. Once inside, I went up into the balcony to my seat, located right under the projectionist's window where I sat, saving a seat for the girl, not yet my girlfriend, who, I knew, would come up, soon, to take the seat next to mine, whereupon, when the movies started with the news of the world, she allowed me to place my arm around her shoulders, for the duration of the afternoon which included a double feature, a western, of course, followed by some other, usually a detective, and included all of the following, the « movie tone news, » a cartoon, a travelogue, coming attractions, the featured movie, a western, and a vaudeville intermission, followed by the second feature, all before the end of the afternoon. I got to love that girl who allowed me to hold her hand. I might add, here, she attended all movies that I attended for years, and in advance of anything further, as a late teen, I anticipated marrying her, but she was not Catholic, and, something that I did not know, her father disliked Catholics so that he would not have allowed her to marry me. In any case, we were too young; although, her mother was Catholic, she would not have had a say, but I do not know this because it wasn't until much later, when I would have proposed, it was on the dance floor, at the end of the Old Orchard Beach Pier, just as a dance had ended, that she said, she would not to marry me.

I hope that all of you will not have been distracted from the fact that, earlier on, I was talking about entering a novitiate, a place of training for boys interested in a religious vocation. My choice was to become a religious and not a priest. And, in the first part of my story, I had arrived at the novitiate in Winthrop and I was already pretty much inducted into the procedural of the school. I was not lonely for home; I was not miserable. I got along with my cohorts, (Continued on page 5)

**(Part 2 of «The Novitiate» continued
from page 4)**

I was neither threatened or troubled, nor did I know of any mischievous or evil things going on. All that I was about was doing my job, following whatever directives that flowed from above. I was well into the spiritual part, having been an altar boy at church, I knew what was expected, and I think I was doing my very best to cooperate; nothing «evil» happened. I rose, showered, dressed, prepared for early chapel, as well, did my chores as assigned. I marched and walked with the others, meditated when called upon, did my homework, participated, as in activities, when conducted or when called upon.

I would have wanted to be in the choir, but after a few choral exercises the director hearing by vocal capacities; he, the choral director, determined that I could not be part of the group. I was awful at signing, it appears. I took my dismissal very hard because I took it as particularly harsh, that the choral director, after closely listening to me sing in front of the others, had turned me out of the group in, what I thought, was a shameless disregard for my voice and character, maybe, at the very least, my abilities, my etceteras. I was and remained embarrassed. It had been a fun activity. I even liked to sing but, no more after that encounter.

There were things we did at the novitiate that no other child would have experienced unless he had lived on a farm. I had not. I was a city boy. Although small for its size, the City of Biddeford had a mayor. It seems to me that I only knew one. And that was not until later. While at the novitiate, it soon became altogether clear that the boss was the headmaster. No doubt. All the others were in charge, too. There was a priest assigned to the novitiate who had his residence in a small house on the property, alongside the road. All of the brothers assigned to the school, as I recall, from the count at the dining room table where the brothers sat, the master's table; there were no more than seven or eight brothers, counting brother cook, who was all things, in addition to being cook. He was master of the barn, as well as of the orchard, the fields, all there was around, I suppose

It was from Brother «Cook» that I learned what I never knew, and more, about animals than just about anything and everything else, including religion. He taught us, students, how to butcher a cow and a pig. Each was a distinct show of his expertise in the art, and I'll never forget the detail of his

demonstrations, as they were fine and thorough, I thought, then, and as I remembered, even as I say so today.

He lead us all into the barn, he told us he was going to walk the cow out. He did. He lead her to the other end of the barn. Yes, we had a barn and animals. The barn door there was open.

He stopped, bossy at his side. He patted her coat. Turned to a bench that held his tools. He picked up a ball peen hammer. He seemed to weigh it; he swung it in front of him. We watched, and of a sudden, he slammed the hammer into bossy's head, bringing her down, forelegs first, followed by her behind. He, somehow, quickly had her hoisted by her hind legs, up by a rope toward some big, barn beam overhead, a, maybe twelve by twelve cross beam, from which she now hung, and no sooner were

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we seeing this, he had a knife to her throat, slitting it, followed by a punch of the knife to her abdomen, slitting it open, and then, with his hands, he pulled the organs out that were not falling of their own weight to the barn floor; he dropped the knife, picked up a saw and cut her in half, skinned her, and, then, proceeded to clean up before he washed her and started cutting her up into quarters. We returned to class. There was only one. We were that small a group. All of us together, it seemed to me. Cook, butcher, master of all trades would finish the rest, I supposed, in good time, after lunch, maybe. Soon, in any case, that was the cow.

Butchering the pig was another learning experience for a city boy. That demonstration, if I may call it that, was held «en plein aire.» The location was in a lot adjacent to the pig pens. We novices gathered near where the pig was to be slaughtered. Slaughter» is a hugely deterring word, one that can't be battered about, simply because of its denotation which refers to «cruel and violent, » but in this context, it doesn't, paradoxically, as we are talking about the killing of a an animal, in this case, a farm

animal for its «food» or «meat.» I shouldn't have to explain this aspect of farm life, but, I do because of some innate guilt that I find, writing about this, my personal experience with it as a youngster at a novitiate.

It was Brother Cook, again, who was doing the butchering. And, as I have written, it was done «en plein air.» The set up was by the pig pens. A table was laid out, a bucket, ladle, knife.

Our «Jack of all trades,» brother cook was sharpening a knife when we got down to the pig pens.

He stropped to explain what he would be doing. As I have explained, we were not a large group of novices, students apprenticing to be brothers of the order, Brothers of the Sacred Heart.

Having said that he would tell us about the job of butchering an animal for its meat, and having explained just how he was to do it, «brother cook» proceeded with his task. He had the pig on its side on the table, with its head over a bucket. He slit the pig's throat, and pulled out at a vein from the head out over a bucket below the table this allowed for the blood to flow and drop into it, as he stirred the blood to prevent it from congealing all too soon. When the blood finished flowing, he slit the belly open, cleaned the organs out of the carcass, jacked the animal up by its hind legs, and skinned it, sawed it in half and dropped the two halves to the table to continue the cutting of parts, fore and aft, and with the body, left, he went on to finish the job, preparing its parts for the larder.

The blood, he saved for the making of a French Canadian delicacy, known to us as «boudin, » a well spiced, blood sausage. I recall being skeptical, when «boudin» first appeared on my plate, memere having cooked it.

There were many other learning experiences in our training. The regimen was not intolerable, as far as I was concerned, for I genuinely believed in the discipline that had brought me to the novitiate, and I was soon fully indoctrinated for whatever the future would be for me. In retrospect, I do not know, nor did I ever know what it was like for my mother to see me off on this «mission» of becoming a religious. From her experience, she was giving me up to God, as she had seen or known of her sisters, not only passing, but also of seeing two of her sisters joining the same religious order in Montreal, and of another of her sisters, (Continued on page 6)

(Part 2 of «The Novitiate» continued
from page 5)

having been left at the church door, for all I heard and know, and who was to reappear in my mother's life some years later, when we children, were in high school, as if nothing had ever happened; and my mother had never said anything about her; although the nuns, by that time, had already visited us and, we had visited them at their assigned workplaces in Quebec. In other words, and to summarize, for those who may wonder about why it was that a religious vocation was so important to us, Franco-Americans, the answer is quite simple, it was part of our heritage—being able to discern one's vocation was extremely important to us.

Back at the novitiate, the routine for me had so normalized, that nothing about it bothered me. The act of leaving home on a quest in response to a perceived calling, one from God, to become one of his disciples was not something to be ignored. The fact that I had chosen to become a religious and not a priest was more of a normal response to what I knew than anything else. My teachers in middle school were of the order of Brothers that I chose to join, my uncle being one of them, notwithstanding. My future brother-in-law, although younger than I, was called to become a priest. He went by train to Canada to become one, and returned the next day, having changed his mind, practically overnight.

Meanwhile, for me, it did not take long to adjust from the very day I got to the novitiate. It did not take long at all to get acquainted with the routine and to learn to function perfectly well within the regimens. None was very difficult. The regularity and sequence of the daily events that required our participation were sustainable, as far as I was concerned, and I was never aware or participated in or joined in a conversation about any problems that I or others might have encountered or felt so serious that any one of us needed to discuss them. I guess it was also because we had been trained and taught to follow directions and obey instructions or adhere to directives of any sort relative to schooling and community living that I never detected anything controversial while I was in training. It wasn't as if students came and went or, even, dropped out, for some reason. Nothing detrimentally noticeable to me ever happened.

At chapel, I recall being happy that I was to join the choir, small as it was, and that because our enrollment was small. We

were no more that twelve or so boys in the school at the time I was there, and that is what I recall; I could be corrected. I did not join the choir because I could not sing, so said the choir director. I do not recall which of the brothers that was, but he was conducting, when he stopped rehearsal, had me step forward, something like that, had me sing the part we had just finished, and, then, told me I didn't have the voice for it, singing, that is, and I departed, having been dismissed from the choir.

Chapel, per se, was a daily event, first thing we did after rising, getting dressed and ready to come downstairs as a group from the barn loft that was our dormitory. We had the luxury of having a priest who had a home



on the property, located on the hill above the road that took the traffic into Winthrop from Augusta. I never knew much about him. He was not our spiritual advisor, although, he heard confessions. That's as much as we knew about him. As far as I recall, he was not one of our teachers, either, as there was only one of those, too, after all, ours, mine at least, was only grade seven, but I must admit there was a variety of levels in the classroom that were taught by the same Brother of the Sacred Heart.

Our daily schedule was simple and routine. We rose, showered, made our beds, dressed, attended chapel, attended breakfast, took our formal morning walk, several times around the drive formed by the «L» of the house and barn, had morning class attendance, attended lunch, altogether; we sat at a table, the master and brothers had their own «head» table and heard readings from the gospels. There was a clean-up detail, some time to recoup, and we had our afternoon recreation before we returned to the building for afternoon class. This was followed by more recreation. There was a field to play on; there was winter hockey on our own ice rink. We had evening chapel,

followed by another walk around the yard before retiring for the night. All of this, prayerfully.

There were a few other activities along with the work we were assigned to do, and prayer, of course, and the sheer joy of exercising on the field or rink. There were two kinds of activities in the main. The first was hiking and the second was, simply, walking, round and round, in line, in the yard which comprised of the big drive to the side of the «L.» A third related to the waterfront in all seasons; There was ice hockey for winter months, or, simply, skating on our outdoor rink. I, also, recall a hike, once, our destination was Maranacook Lake. We walked to its furthest end; this was winter, and we were dressed and booted for the occasion. We stepped upon the ice once we got there, single file, and walked towards the town of Winthrop, proper. It was interesting to see the ice fishing and, in particular, the small, one engine, ski planes coming in for landings, and then, to see them taking off again. Having walked across the length of the lake, and, once in town, we walked up Main Street to our home, the novitiate, just off the near top of Main Street, the route headed North out of Winthrop where we had begun our walk, and where it, then, headed toward, Augusta. I remember the cold, being happy that I was comfortable in my clothing and walking boots, and of having been constantly amazed by the sheer size of Maranacook Lake, not the biggest in Maine, but to my eyes, it was a huge, frozen sheet of thick, park-like, ice, with spotty spots of encampments, of men and boys enjoying fishing, ski planes coming in for landings, flying or off on their small skis, while some others came in, still, near gliding in for their landings, even as others were seen taking off, later, from our vantage point on the hill.

Another type of enjoyment involved collecting the tap water from our maple trees in our forests. And this, in winter, we used to make «la tire.» The maple tap water was boiled to reduce it to its syrupy substance and poured onto a bed of snow. The «tire,» upon cooling, turned into a very sweet «maple» candy, and, thus, when eaten, before it had completely cooled, at which point it hardened, we called, «la tire;» the word means «pulled» in English. This is my postscript; of course, the fun of it was that as it cooled, it congealed, and as it congealed, it became elastic, and as a candy, it could be pulled like gum. The joy

(Continued on page 7)

(Part 2 of «The Novitiate» continued
from page 6)

of it all is that if one allowed this « taffy » to harden, we, boys, could have broken our teeth on it. Rock candy is near rock solid; one just can't take a bite and hope to still have teeth. Some friends broke teeth on it trying to crush it as one or another friend I had bit down. As youngsters, some of us tried it, biting down on rock candy, to the astonishment of our parents, and for the price it cost them to have a tooth repaired, it would have been astonishing to us had we been able to understand and appreciate the expense to our parents to have a tooth, repaired or replaced. Sucking on a hardened piece of rock candy is like sucking on a lollipop; it is one, tiresome process; biting on one in the hopes of breaking it apart to make it easier to enjoy, is like stealing money from one's parents and then burning it for the cost of having the shattered tooth repaired. All to say, this was a big problem that cost our parents who, really, could not afford much. So, maybe, having me at the novitiate, might have saved them a lot of money, as it did not cost them to send me there because, I guess, the order of Brothers carried the cost of our being their «novices.» I had never thought of this before.

The sideboards for the ice rink were assembled from our own trees, cut down, cleared, saw milled into planks, and then used for the rink. Water was tanked in. Winter ice was just great for what we all liked to do, play ice hockey. There was a point when, of course, I fell in a rush on ice toward an opponent with the puck, and skidded to hit the boards. In class, things went along well, until, one day in class, I felt a pain in my right hip that I had never felt before. It hurt so, that I yelled out, startling my classmates and teacher, and, I shot up out of my seat, reflexively. I was howling that it hurt. Of course, it did. It alarmed everyone so; my teacher did not know what to do, and neither did I. The pain slowly subsided. And I was able to relax enough to sit again.

That event put me in the upstairs room that was our «health ward.» There I stayed to recoup. And further occurrences resulted in my being transported to Lewiston, Maine, to see the doctors there at Saint Mary's Hospital. It was determined by a doctor who had heard of the complication that caused my pain, and he, finally, knew that I did not have tuberculosis of the bones, as my mother had thought, having been informed by her doctor back home in Biddeford, that it might

be such. I was hospitalized for months, but not immobilized in a cast or in traction, if I just stayed put, leg elevated and immobilized by weights. The disease, we learned, had a name, it is Legs-Celves-Perthes disease, not so complicated, but a deteriorating of the head of the hip bone rubbing inside the cup of the thigh bone, resulting in an awful pain because of the rubbing. It's that excruciating pain that caused my shouting out, that made me cry out, with more crying out that disturbed the class. That's my description of my ailment, the «disease,» from what I garnered, having heard it told.

I was in the hospital for so long that it seemed half a year to me, as I was, a seventh grader, in a big, adult ward, that had, maybe, seven or more beds on each side, fourteen,

Legg-Calve-Perthes disease had not only interrupted my course of study and my commitment to becoming a Brother of the Sacred Heart, it had, also, once again, changed the course of my life.

altogether, with nurses and doctors moving about, and I had my view and experiences with the patient to my left and with all of the others in the ward, anonymously, who had the first bed against the window wall, our side, and who had the most horrendous, awful malignancy that I had ever gotten to know something about.

I learned a lot, from my experiences, simply observing what transpired in the ward. I observed the rules, observed what transpired, I knew about day and night emergencies up and down the ward; I talked to the guy in the bed to my left, never to my right. That bed, the one to my right, seemed to me to have a different and quiet patient, nearly all of the time I was there in hospital. The mariner on my left was an «oiler» gent, aboard a tanker. His illness involved being covered with soars, cankers from the top of his head to the tip of his toes, some kind of poisoning, it was. His job, it appeared—it was—occupational, an oiler. This was given without explanation. We talked some, a lot, really; when he was awake; he was medicated. His sheets, I knew from what I saw when they changed his linen, his wet gown, the reddish, color of his skin, the scaling, bleeding of it, the bedding; he was

a mess of a fellow. No visitors, either. Sure they pulled the flowing, fabric partition, but not always. I saw what he looked like as the staff changed his gown, and kind of buttered him up with a substance, and had him in a new gown, getting rid of the bloodied one.

And, then, I was «cured,» and I returned to the novitiate to winter, skating on Upper Narrow Pond which our property bounded on one side, pretty much, I thought then, because when the ice froze, we could skate the whole of Upper Narrow Pond, with the exception of near eddies along the banks. We did enjoy some spirited skating and sprinting, too, if we chose, from one end of Upper Narrow Pond to the other. We did not approach the entrance to what, even I assumed, was Lower Narrow Pond. I just recall that skating the pond was a lot of fun because it allowed us to enjoy the freedom that being able to skate such a pond provided us, pleasure and exercise, well bundled as we were, moving along, motored by the simple act of picking up a foot up and placing it ahead of the other, all the while, being in motion, moving forward.

Meanwhile, on that part of the shore that belonged to our Novitiate, there was a shack, and by its side there was a fire, and a brazier, and a fire going that was boiling the maple water, reducing it to a syrup that we poured onto an embankment of clean, fresh snow to cool, which process caused the syrup to congeal, and it turned into hard maple candy. But before this last happened, we pulled at the strings of congealing, hardening maple syrup to put it on the tip of our tongues, where it melted, slowly, and penetratingly on the tongue, and as it did, it released a wonderful taste that we enjoyed, tremendously. I think, I, we shared this treat, as it was totally French Canadian, in a state of being that no-one could ever take away from me—even though, given our lucky circumstances, we Franco Americans are thoroughly American.

Leg-Calve-Perthes disease had not only interrupted my course of study and my commitment to becoming a Brother of the Sacred Heart, it had, also, once again, changed the course of my life. Following my stay at the hospital, having been supported by the brothers who were assigned to parishes in Lewiston where my hospital was located, I spent time as a patient observing the travails of my fellow bedridden in the ward. The gentleman in the bed next to mine, in this large, probably, sixteen bed

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LA PIE BAVARDE

À tous et à chacun:

J'aimerais vous raconter ma petite histoire de Noël. C'est la mienne, mon histoire à moi, une histoire vraie. Vous allez trouver cela bizarre mais je vais commencer en vous posant une question. Quel âge aviez-vous quand vous avez réalisé que le Père Noël, ce beau gros et merveilleux bonhomme qui pouvait descendre dans les cheminées avec une poshette de cadeaux, n'était qu'un mythe? Vous ne vous en souvenez pas? Dommage! Moi, je m'en souviens comme si c'était hier.

Il faut que je recule jusqu'aux années 1930. Nous étions en pleine crise économique et mon père trouvait du travail saisonnier jusqu'à ce qu'il trouve un job chez Fraser en 1935. Quelques mois plus tard il tomba malade et il n'a pu travailler pendant un an. À Noël, nos cadeaux étaient ce que le Père Noël pouvait mettre dans un de nos gros bas de laine tricoté à la main. Nous étions pauvre sans que nous les enfants (5) s'en rendent compte parce que nos parents voyaient à ce que nous ayons le nécessaire. Je me souviens d'aux moins deux fois où quelqu'un avait laissé un grand panier plein de bonne nourriture devant notre porte aux temps des fêtes. Mes parents en étaient surpris bien que content de recevoir cette manne.

En attendant la grande fête de Noël, ma mère nous donnait un des gros catalogues Montgomery Ward ou Sears & Roebuck, un crayon et moi, laînée, je remplissais nos commandes de Noël. Les beaux rêves que nous faisions en choisissant un jouet ou un jeu. Remplir les formulaires et copier les mots anglais prenait du temps parce qu'à 8 et 9 ans, je n'écrivais pas très vite. Nous devions accabler notre mère avec toutes sortes de questions. "Quand est-ce qu'il vient le Père Noël? Est-ce qu'il va recevoir notre lettre?", etc. Ses réponses n'étaient jamais des promesses. Et nous nous contentions de petites choses trouvées dans nos bas.

Pourquoi vous donner tant de détails? J'espère vous faire apprécier comment une fillette de famille pauvre pouvait s'accrocher à l'image du généreux Père Noël. L'hiver de mes huit ans j'ai vu pour la première fois des garçons qui descendaient nos côtes en glissant debout sur pieds. Fascinée, je me suis mise à courir d'une fenêtre à l'autre pour regarder les gars glisser debout sur des

planches attachées aux pieds. J'ai fini par apprendre que ça s'appelait des skis. J'aurais bien voulu pouvoir faire ces belles glissades moi aussi mais il ne m'était pas venu à l'idée de demander, pas même au Père Noël.

L'hiver suivant encore autour des fêtes, mon frère cadet d'un an, est arrivé à la maison en annonçant que "le Père Noël (maintenant devenu Santa Claus), ce n'est pas vrai!" Incrédule, j'ai pensé, "Voilà une idée folle!". Sans faire de remarque je me suis sentie déçue et désappointée. Maintenant, je dois vous expliquer que ma soeur, ma cadette de deux ans, et moi, nous faisions des anges dans la procession à la messe de minuit. Les bonnes soeurs (religieuses) nous habillaient (6 petites filles) avec de belles grandes robes, une couronne sur la tête puis elles nous attachaient des ailes dans le dos. Je reviens à l'année de mes neuf ans et c'était le deuxième fois que nous étions des "anges" pour la procession. Nous habitions tout près de l'église et ma mère nous réveillait vers les onzes heures. Nous allions à seules ou les soeurs nous attendaient. Pouvez-vous imaginer deux fillettes, une de sept ans et l'autre de neuf ans partir en pleine nuit sans être accompagnées d'un adulte aujourd'hui? En 1936-7-8 il n'y avait pas d'influences néfastes de la télévision qui n'était pas encore inventée. Nous étions en toute sécurité.

Après la messe nous sommes rentrées et tous semblaient dormir mais je parie que ma mère ne dormait pas. La curiosité a fait jeter un coup d'oeil vers l'arbre de Noël. Les quelques cadeaux étaient déjà arrivés. Un surtout m'a fait approcher. Une paire de skis! Ooh! L'étiquette disait, "À Yane", mon sobriquet de famille. Là j'ai bien reconnu l'écriture de ma mère. Mais, c'était donc vrai! Mon frère avait raison. Le Père Noël, c'est nos parents! J'étais tellement heureuse d'avoir des skis que j'ai oublié la déception du Père Noël. Au début, les garçons ont bien ri. "Une fille sur des skis!" J'ai pratiqué sans me soucier de leurs moqueries. Je vous assure que j'ai fait du ski alpin pendant toute ma vie. Voilà pourquoi le Noël de mes neuf ans est si mémorable.

*Votre pie bavarde,
Marie-Anne*



(Part 2 of «The Novitiate» continued
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ward, attended by nurses coming and going, with nights interrupted by the actions of someone dying in a bed someplace in the ward, the rush to help him, sometimes the removal of a corpse by attendants, much like the interruption that happened, just now, my wife coming to my side and pressing me to listen to her, as she held a clipping from a newspaper that I should read, and as I tried to take it, she pulled it away, turned and left, saying she was to put it somewhere, causing me to lose my place and the order of my thinking, and stopping my fingers from moving across the keys of my machine, she, saying, «Come, see the doe and three fawns outside our kitchen windows.»

My return to the novitiate, was like an uninterrupted seam of events. I was still a member of the order. My parents had not visited the time I was in hospital, as they had no transportation. So my visitors had been few, a couple of visits from members of the order stationed at a school in Lewiston, I recall, and that was it. My constant companion had been the guy in the bed next to mine.

Another season passed, my condition returned, and this time, I was sent home to recoup, and I never returned to the novitiate. Instead, I skipped eighth grade, and entered high school in my hometown, graduated, enlisted, met girls; the Korean War G.I. bill provided an education, and I married a girl, a Saint Mary's School of Nursing, of Lewiston, a nurse from my hometown, Biddeford. Our different parish priests from Biddeford said they would not marry us because they did not know us. So we were married at the Catholic chapel on the University of Maine campus in Orono where I was attending school. no problem for the priest. He married us. Never mind that «they» in Biddeford could not marry us. Each curate to whom we had spoken had to have known our parents were lifetime communicants of their, our, parishes. Our parents could not attend our wedding in Orono. We had a small wedding, a small wedding party and a small reception in Bangor. And then, we had our family, and they had theirs or not. It's been a long time. I am, now, eighty-nine years old. My wife, Juliette Salvas of Biddeford will also be eighty-nine years old, soon. We each wear a mask when we go out because of Covid-19. I no longer drive. She does.

Why I Wanted Camille Recognized For Her Suffragist Efforts

By Rhea Côté Robbins, M.A.

Camille Lessard Bissonnette, Liane, pen name, was a suffragist, and she wrote a bi-lingual, bicultural, bi-border conversation about suffrage, and many other issues, in *Le Messenger* from 1906-1938.

She was an immigrant from Quebec where she was a teacher, and then became a mill worker in Maine, then a columnist for *Le Messenger*, Lewiston. She wrote pro-the-vote for women in 1910-11...two years before the conversation even began in Canada. This is a picture where the *Le Messenger* moved to 223 Lisbon St., Lewiston and where Camille wrote her articles about suffrage as well as many other issues.

The Franco-American culture was closed off to the conversation of suffrage both in the Franco-American immigrant group and in the mainstream, and plus, for Camille, due to language barrier, she was not recognized in the Maine women's suffrage movement. Also, the church's influence on the community was against women attaining the vote. That is why I wanted to be sure that Camille be recognized as a suffragist in the suffrage exhibit at the Maine State Museum as well as being recognized in these other following sites and historical marker—for which I made application and made it possible for her to be among the many other women in the U.S. who fought for the vote.

Camille is listed along with 1,345 women in a project of The National Collaborative for Women's History Sites, (Do a search for Maine at the link below). The National Votes for Women Trail is a collecting site from all over our country that tells the untold story of suffrage for all women, of all ethnicities, that extends well past the passage of the 19th amendment. Link: <http://ncwhs.org/votes-for-women-trail/#trail>

Camille is also listed along with 2,140 others at the Online Biographical Dictionary of the Woman Suffrage Movement in the United States, (Do a search for "Camille"). —Tom Dublin, Editor.

Link: <https://documents.alexanderstreet.com/VOTESforWOMEN>

Application was made, accepted,

waiting for final approval of marker to be placed at 223 Lisbon St., Lewiston:

*The William G. Pomeroy
Foundation & Votes for Women
National Women's
Suffrage Centennial
Historic Marker Grant Program*

Camille did not get overlooked this time...using the Ida Roy approach, chanteuse/poet from No. Maine, the Valley...I would call Ida and ask...Ida can I put your... "Put my name everywhere," Ida would say—and so I put Camille's name everywhere!

Camille, as a woman of the French heritage, language, culture, ethnicity, struggled against the larger dominant group and also against many of her own, women and men, in the culture. Her struggle to voice her opinion of pro-the-vote for women existed in the cultural corridor, sound-proof vacuum of the deafness to cultural diversity.

That Camille was vocal and wrote about pro-the-vote for women is nothing short of bravery. Recognition of her efforts is important to understand that there was an immigrant woman of French heritage in Maine who was pro-the-vote for women and that she was vocal about those beliefs in an atmosphere that was hostile to such views. She carried on a bicultural, bi-border conversation in regard to her views.

August 26th, 2020 was the 100th Anniversary of women's suffrage...if you had not have the chance...you can view my talk I gave for the Franco-American Center, University of Maine on Camille Lessard Bissonnette, our suffragist...in celebration of her diligence and hard work...being pro-the-vote for women:

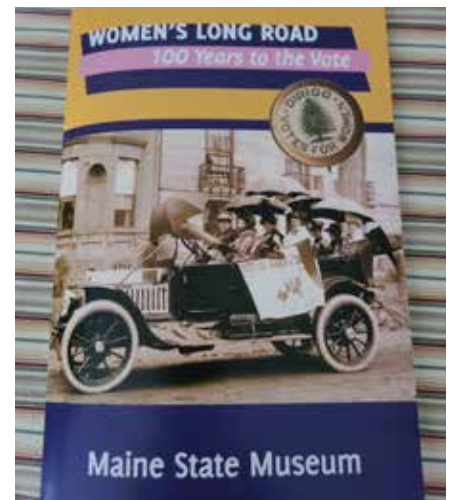
"Franco-American Women's Suffrage Movement and Legislators"

Scroll down for the video and click on that at this link:

https://digitalcommons.library.uma.edu/francoamericain_occ_papers/11/

Supporting Documents:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/1/folders/1acsXOV-Hq0IKSZjxTfcCgi_yp-C19IKkQ



Constructing and Legitimizing Québécois Identity: Why Charles de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec Libre" Speech Matters

By Timothy St. Pierre

Since Québec's Quiet Revolution of the 1960s and early '70s, many of the province's French-Canadians have explicitly identified themselves as neither French nor Canadian.¹ This relatively recent self-identification - Québécois - marks a distinct turning point in the social, political, and cultural self-understanding of the province's inhabitants - largely francophone, Catholic, and working-class. No longer simply *canadien* nor even *canadien-français*, this new Québécois identity denied these traditional transnational labels and anchored itself instead in the territorial bounds of Québec.² Inspired by global decolonization movements, French-Canadians within the province became increasingly conscious of their low socioeconomic status vis-à-vis Anglo-Canadians and organized accordingly. This led to a popular surge of social democratic reforms and widespread anti-imperialist sentiment against the Anglo-Protestant elites who dominated both Canada at large and provincial Québec society itself.³ However, considering the general agreement that self-identified Québécois constitute a culturally unique demographic, distinct from Anglo-Canadians and distinct from the metropolitan French, what remains curious is how much weight Québécois assign to one formative event in their national history: French President Charles de Gaulle's 1967 "Vive le Québec Libre" Speech.

Delivered from the balcony of Montréal's city hall and addressed to the Québécois people as a whole, De Gaulle extolled the recent societal progress being made by the Québécois and famously cried out "Long live free Québec," implicitly condoning

a sovereign Québec state separate from English Canada.⁴ However, if Québécois are not French - and they are not - then why is it so important that De Gaulle, a man who uniquely symbolized the French state, publicly recognized the Québécois as their own people? Why did Québec need the legitimizing validation of external - particularly French - actors? Why is De Gaulle's speech so singularly important in the history of constructing Québécois identity?⁵ The answers to all these questions are linked to constructivist notions of international relations, the concept of prestige, and theories of social identity building. Although many Québécois already recognized themselves as a distinct people by the time of De Gaulle's speech, the fact that a leader who officially represented France - an adjacent (and once shared) national group - deemed the Québécois a separate cultural identity formalized this distinction in the realm of international politics. Moreover, the fact that the Québécois perceived the metropolitan French as a high-prestige social group, but considered themselves an explicitly low-prestige social group,⁶ meant that De Gaulle's implicit recognition of the Québécois as relative equals to the metropolitan French represented a dramatic elevation in Québécois's perception of their own prestige. De Gaulle's speech not only allowed Québécois a normative independent international presence, it implied that the Québécois themselves were a people worthy of protecting their language, valorizing their culture, achieving material gains in their standard of living, and perhaps most importantly, constituting and governing their own separate state.

Political scientist Alexander Wendt's theory of international relations argues that the relationships and identities of political actors and systems are socially constructed; there are no innate, universal rules that actors must follow in their interactions with one another, nor are there any innate hierarchies dictating which actors must support or disregard which. Instead, the rules and relationships between different states, peoples, or leaders stem from socialized identity and practiced norms and behaviors. Identity is not inherent; rather, it is constructed through interactions between the self and others and the treatment one gives and receives. A people who receives priority over another will construct an identity based on perceived primacy or superiority, a people marginalized by others will build an identity based on perceived insignificance or inferiority. Identity, and its impact on relationships between international actors, is not an innate concept, it is socially constructed.⁷

Applied to Québécois identity, this means that there is no inherent "Québécois-ness" to the French-Canadian people of Québec; there is nothing innately good, bad, distinct, common, high-class, or low-class about being Québécois. Each of these values or perceptions that Québécois might hold towards themselves or that other cultural groups might hold towards Québécois, are constructed through social interactions. The metropolitan French are not inherently prestigious, nor are the Québécois inherently lacking prestige; Québécois do not inherently "deserve" to be part of the British Commonwealth, nor do they inherently

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1 René Lévesque, "Option Québec - Nous autres," Fondation René-Lévesque, 1968, <https://fondationrene-levesque.org/rene-levesque/ecrits-de-rene-levesque/option-quebec-nous-autres/>.

2 David Vermette, *A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans* (Montréal, Québec: Baraka Books, 2018), 18.

3 René Lévesque, "Option Québec - Nous autres," Fondation René-Lévesque, 1968, <https://fondationrene-levesque.org/rene-levesque/ecrits-de-rene-levesque/option-quebec-nous-autres/>.

4 Charles de Gaulle, "Vive le Québec Libre," Speech delivered July 24, 1967 in Montréal, Québec, Emerson Kent, http://www.emersonkent.com/speeches/vive_le_quebec_libre.htm.

5 CTV News Staff, "'Vive le Québec Libre,' 50 Years Later," CTV News, July 24, 2017, <https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/vive-le-quebec-libre-50-years-later-1.3516647>.

6 René Lévesque, "Option Québec - Nous autres," Fondation René-Lévesque, 1968, <https://fondationrene-levesque.org/rene-levesque/ecrits-de-rene-levesque/option-quebec-nous-autres/>.

7 Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics," *International Organization* 46, no. 2 (Spring 1992), 403-404.

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"deserve" to constitute a separate sovereign state. Concepts of prestige, distinctiveness, or deservedness of certain political status are all social constructions, ideas linked to cultural ties, conquest, international recognition, inequalities, and practiced behavior. Thus, if we are to properly understand the Québécois attachment to De Gaulle's speech and why it was and remains so important to Québécois national(ist) identity, we must first analyze how Québécois identity was socially constructed at the time of De Gaulle's speech - 1967 - especially vis-à-vis Anglo-Canadians or the metropolitan French.

To begin, French-Canadian identity is often premised on the idea of what it is not - namely, Anglo-Canadian. According to self-categorization theory, which describes how a collection of people may begin to view themselves as a distinct group, "individuals are more likely to think of themselves as members of social groups under conditions in which the use of a group label ... heightens one's differences with outsiders."⁸ For French-Canadians, this means our identity is most salient when the differences, whether linguistic, religious, or socioeconomic, between us and Anglo-Canadians are most distinguished. For the majority of Canadian history, these differences have been kept in relatively stark relief, owing largely to the cultural and material dominance of the English, both within and without Québec.

Since the British conquest of "New France" in the eighteenth century, Anglo-Canadians have tended to view French-Canadians as a conquered people, a view reciprocally held by French-Canadians towards themselves.^{9,10} This perception carries with it an

inherent sense of inferiority; it is an identity rooted in a sense of loss, powerlessness, and victimhood. This sense of inferiority defined not only French-Canadians' self-perception, but also Anglo-Canadians' perception of French-Canadians. This identity constructed through perceived inferiority was not innate, it was socialized into our thinking through conquest and centuries of political, cultural, and economic interactions with the English.

As a historically significant example, we can look to 1839, when the English Lord-Durham wrote a report to Queen Victoria in which he referred to French-Canadians as "a people with no history, and no culture,"¹¹ adding that "there can hardly be conceived a nationality more destitute of all that can invigorate and elevate a people, than [...] the descendants of the French in Lower Canada, owing to their retaining their peculiar language and manners."¹² Durham's solution to this French-Canadian "problem" was to join Upper Canada (populated mainly by anglophone Protestants) with Lower Canada (populated mainly by francophone Catholics) into the singular Canada that we know today. The goal of this merger was to strip French-Canadians of any semblance of self-governance by forcing them into minority status within a single polity.¹³ Seeing as they would be outnumbered by the English and unable to form a majority government by themselves, Durham argued that French-Canadians would be forced to assimilate to Anglo-Protestant norms if they wanted to wield political power.¹⁴

Ideally, French-Canadians would cease to exist as a distinct cultural identity, and ethnic struggles between the two Canadas would end. Although Lord Durham's suggested unification of Canada was actualized, his hypothesis on the cultural continuation of French-Canadian identity was not. This assessment, though predating De

Gaulle's speech by more than a century, captures the English perception of French-Canadians at the time of Canadian unification, laying the foundational parameters for their political status within Canada and the perception of French-Canadian identity as it relates to Anglo-Canadian identity. To be Anglo-Canadian and to speak English was to have power, wealth, culture, and prestige, to be French-Canadian and speak French was to have none of the four.

By the 1960s - the time of the Quiet Revolution and De Gaulle's infamous speech - Québécois had long been stuck within a semi-permanent laboring class, largely dependent on British, American, and Anglo-Canadian capital and working largely for its benefit. In 1960, for every dollar earned by an Anglo-Canadian in Québec, a French-Canadian earned fifty-two cents.¹⁵ Québec was the sole province in Canada without a public school system, without a public health or hospital system, without any sort of robust welfare system, yet was home to some of the country's poorest and most underserved communities.¹⁶ The vast majority of vital businesses were owned by Anglo-Canadians, but their workers were largely underpaid French-Canadians, who were routinely passed over for higher-paying and higher-status jobs.¹⁷ Although French-Canadians constituted the overwhelming majority of the province, the language of business was English, the language of profit was English, the language of success was English.¹⁸ French, on the other hand, was the language of the poor, the working-class, the rural, and the uneducated.¹⁹

In line with constructivist notions of international politics, we can see that the lack of prestige assigned to French-Canadians was not an innate characteristic.

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8 Leonie Huddy, "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory," *Political Psychology* 22, no. 1 (March 2001), 134.

9 René Lévesque, "Option Québec - Nous autres," Fondation René-Lévesque, 1968, <https://fondationrene-levesque.org/rene-levesque/ecrits-de-rene-levesque/option-quebec-nous-autres/>.

10 David Vermette, *A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans* (Montréal, Québec: Baraka Books, 2018), 30.

11 John Lambdon, 1st Earl of Durham, "Report of Lord Durham on the Affairs of British North America (1839)," Marianopolis College, <http://faculty.marianopolis.edu/c.belanger/quebechistory/docs/durham/index.htm>.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Pierre Fortin, "La Révolution tranquille et l'économie: où étions-nous, qu'avons-nous accompli, que nous reste-t-il à faire ?" Lecture delivered May 11, 2010 at l'Université du Québec à Montréal. <http://economistes.quebecois.com/files/documents/at/35/txt-membres-du-cpp-pierre-fortin-11-mai-2010.pdf>, 2.

16 Pierre Fortin, "La Révolution tranquille et l'économie: où étions-nous, qu'avons-nous accompli, que nous reste-t-il à faire ?" Lecture delivered May 11, 2010 at l'Université du Québec à Montréal. <http://economistes.quebecois.com/files/documents/at/35/txt-membres-du-cpp-pierre-fortin-11-mai-2010.pdf>, 4.

17 William Stockton, "René Lévesque and the Divided House of Canada," *The New York Times*, May 20, 1979.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

(Constructing and Legitimizing Québécois Identity: Why Charles de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec Libre" Speech Matters continued from page 11)

Rather, it was the result of British Canada's structural organization which privileged wealthy, Protestant anglophones at the social and material expense of poor, Catholic francophones. Symbolic interactions between either national group reinforced the prestige of one and the stigma of the other. Widely-practiced and widely-accepted symbolic behaviors ranging from language-shaming to job discrimination to underfunded francophone schools ensured that Anglo-Canadians in Québec maintained a high status while French-Canadians in Québec were kept in a low status.

Social identity theory argues that in order to change the perceived low-status of a respective social group, the low-status group must either adopt the attributes of a perceived high-status group or develop a new identity centered on "alternative, positively-valued group attributes."²⁰ Both are forms of social mobility, but at the time of De Gaulle's speech, French-Canadians within Québec were focused squarely on the latter. Calling themselves "Québécois" represented a distinct break from the past, it was something new, different, and separate from the label of French-Canadian that carried with it feelings of inferiority and Anglo domination. This new identity offered hope for a social and political parity that had been consistently denied to French-Canadians throughout Canadian history - a history implicitly tied to the label of *canadien-français* that "Québécois" promised to improve.

It was at this moment of renewal and cultural self-construction that De Gaulle made his speech, using his status as the symbol of a high-prestige, internationally-recognized social group to publicly acknowledge this new Québécois identity as both legitimate and distinct from the metropolitan French. As a normative symbol of France, De Gaulle was able to link the Québécois to the cultural and material success of France while also stipulating that

the Québécois constituted their own unique cultural group. Rather than outright denying any links between the two groups, De Gaulle's speech relied heavily (some would say patronizingly) on comparing a resurgent Québec to an established France, which he referred to as "the old country."²¹ These comparisons between France and Québec fostered a sense of fraternity and cultural similarity between the two nations, adding a benevolence and sincerity to De Gaulle's position that would not have been possible for a member of a different high-prestige group - e.g. Anglo-Canadians.

De Gaulle continued on to describe a sense of French pride in seeing the "progress, development, [...] and emancipation"²² of the Québécois, publicly voicing a French approval of all that "Québécois" identity aimed to achieve. This laudatory language suggested a relative equality between the French and the Québécois, a suggestion deepened by further claims that Québec's developments "will amaze the world" and "one day allow [the Québécois] ... to help France."²³ This suggested equality between either group implied that that which the metropolitan French enjoyed - e.g. prestige, wealth, and sovereignty - were benefits that the Québécois deserved to enjoy as well. De Gaulle not only recognized the constructivist distinctions between the metropolitan French and the Québécois, he used the Québécois's perception of the French as a high-status, prestigious social group to elevate Québécois's self-perception to match - legitimizing this new, explicitly "Québécois" identity and the progressive ideals it stood for.

The delivery of De Gaulle's speech itself is an example of a symbolic social interaction, just as Lord Durham's derogatory dismissal of French-Canadians a century earlier was a symbolic social interaction. However, instead of socializing French-Canadians into a perceived identity of helpless backwardness and inferiority, "Vive le Québec Libre" socialized Québécois into a perceived identity of progress, modernity, and advancement. The development of social identity in opposition to

that which it believes itself not to be - e.g. French-Canadian identity largely defining itself as being neither Anglo-Canadian nor French - means that "out-groups" have a determinative influence in building the identity of the "in-group." Individuals identified as French-Canadian had long been expressing the same thoughts as De Gaulle communicated in his 1967 speech; however, none of these French-Canadian actors galvanized the same sort of response from a single line of a single speech. The explanatory difference depends on De Gaulle's belonging to a culturally-adjacent, high-prestige out-group. If self-identification is partially based on your treatment from others and your understanding of how others perceive you, a high-profile and public change in how others treat you or assess your value changes your understanding of self. If someone belonging to a higher-prestige group designates you their equal, then your sense of self-prestige is elevated as well.

International relations theorist Jonathan Mercer argues that prestige, as a socially constructed concept, is only as relevant or important as we imagine it to be. Prestige's relevance and importance are not innate qualities, they are socialized, selective, and subjective.²⁴ International actors can deem one another to be more or less prestigious according to their own material drives and the concept is often insular and inconsistent. A sense of prestige felt by one group does not necessarily translate into respect from another group.

However, where prestige absolutely does matter is in legitimizing and solidifying national identity and pride.²⁵ We can assume that every social group wants to enjoy a high level of prestige, and every individual wants to belong to a positively-valued social group. This desire for social power and prestige will motivate low-status groups to seek social mobility, but as Mercer argues, elevated self-perception of a low-status group does not inherently alter others' perceptions of the low-status group.²⁶ If Québécois begin to see themselves as more prestigious than they previously did, this will not automat-

(Continued on page 13)

20 Leonie Huddy, "From Social to Political Identity: A Critical Examination of Social Identity Theory," *Political Psychology* 22, no. 1 (March 2001), 134.

21 Charles de Gaulle, "Vive le Québec Libre," Speech delivered July 24, 1967 in Montréal, Québec, Emerson Kent, http://www.emersonkent.com/speeches/vive_le_quebec_libre.htm.

22 Ibid.

23 Ibid.

24 Jonathan Mercer, "The Illusion of Prestige," *International Security* 41, no. 4 (Spring 2016), 168.

25 Jonathan Mercer, "The Illusion of Prestige," *International Security* 41, no. 4 (Spring 2016), 168.

26 Ibid.

(Constructing and Legitimizing Québécois Identity: Why Charles de Gaulle's "Vive le Québec Libre" Speech Matters continued from page 12)

ically incentivize Anglo-Canadians into treating Québécois any better. However, if Québécois begin to notice a deficit between their sense of national prestige and the treatment they receive from Anglo-Canadians, they will begin demanding the respect they believe they are due. An elevation of Québécois prestige does not innately alter others' views of Québécois, but it does motivate Québécois to collectively organize to seek higher status and react when their perceived treatment is not reflective of their perceived prestige.

By implicitly endorsing a sovereign Québec state and elevating Québécois's sense of social worth and prestige, De Gaulle legitimized the Québécois's struggle to take control of their own government, culture, and economy. With their efforts against Anglo-Canadian domination accordingly legitimized, Anglo-Canadians' position of superiority and control was, in turn, delegitimized, deepening the appetite for Québécois sovereignty. We can assume that Lester Pearson, Canada's anglophone Prime Minister at the time of De Gaulle's speech, was conscious of this. It was likely for this reason that the French President's tour through Canada was cut short, why he was never received in Ottawa, why he was promptly sent back to France,²⁷ and why Pearson curtly responded that De Gaulle's statements were "unacceptable to the Canadian people and to its government," stipulating that "every province of Canada is free; Canadians do not need to be liberated."²⁸ It was likely for this reason that Canadian outrage against De Gaulle's statements overwhelmingly came from Anglo-Canadians, not French-Canadians - not Québécois.²⁹

De Gaulle's speech and implied support for a sovereign Québec raised expectations of what Québécois deserved and were entitled to receive; his words were a challenge to Canada's sovereignty only as far as raising Québécois from their subordination to the English was a challenge to Canada's sovereignty.

De Gaulle's speech catalyzed drastic social identity adjustment among Québec's

French-Canadians in a time of large-scale societal upheaval. After two centuries of living as second-class citizens within their own country, of being socialized into a sense of constant cultural and ethnic inferiority, of serving as cheap labor for Anglo-Canadian capital, Québécois heard a respected international leader endorse their cause and reacted accordingly. De Gaulle's speech matters not because he is French and the Québécois view (or want to view) themselves as French - they do not. It matters because at a time of widespread repression and a prevailing sense of social subordination, De Gaulle used his status as the symbol of a powerful, high-prestige state to recognize the Québécois as equals to the French, deserving of the same legitimacy, prestige, standard of living, and sovereign status.

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28 "Prime Minister Pearson Stands Up to De Gaulle," CBC radio special hosted by Bruce Rogers, July 25, 1967, CBC, <https://www.cbc.ca/archives/entry/prime-minister-pearson-stands-up-to-de-gaulle>.

29 Ibid.

Moses in the Wilderness (of Waterville)

August 11, 2016 Augusta, Belfast, Maine, Quebec, Religion, Skowhegan, Waterville

By James Myall

They hardly dared believe their eyes – several had not seen [a priest] in seventeen years

Thus was Moïse Fortier, a youthful 27 year-old parish priest, received on a visit to Waterville in 1841. Fortier had been dispatched by the Society for the Propagation of the Faith and the Bishop of Quebec to minister to the spiritual needs of the growing number of French Canadians leaving Canada's Eastern Townships to work and live in Maine and he made annual "missions" to the Kennebec Valley between 1841 and 1844. Fortier was the first priest to be appointed to the new parish of Saint-Georges-d'Aubert Gallion in the Beauce region of Quebec, from which many of these early Franco-American immigrants to Maine originated. The decades following the British conquest of Quebec in 1760 had been tough on the economy, including periods of warfare (the American War of Independence and the War of 1812) as well as internal upheaval (the Patriote uprisings of 1836-7). Immigration had also begun to challenge the existing population and economic structure – first, loyalists from the United States and then Irish fleeing the enclosure movement. Fortier himself blamed the practices of landlords hoping that the British would abolish the traditional system of land-holding, allowing them to sell their lands, rather than parcel them out for rent:

This part of the United States contains a considerable number of French-Canadian farmers, often young men of the Beauce, who have found themselves in the difficult place of having to emigrate...by the refusal of the landlords of the place to give out their lands at the moment. The landlords speculate on their lands, in the hope that the "seigneurial sytem" will soon be abolished...this retards development!

Whatever the cause, the steady flow of French Canadians to the states, initially as migrant laborers and increasingly as settlers, was a cause for alarm among Canadian officials, especially the Catholic church. Without the guidance of a parish priest, these emigres, heading into the lions' den of Protestantism, were at risk of losing their

immortal souls, as well as any connection to their homeland (and likelihood of return).

The Bishop of Quebec and others were right to be concerned. The timing of Fortier's visit may be connected with the establishment, in the 1830s, of a baptist mission in Waterville aimed at converting French Canadians to baptism. These efforts, led by a Colby College student named Jonathan Furbush, eventually resulted in the creation of the Second Baptist Church of Waterville, sometimes known as the French Baptist Church. It may also be significant that the Diocese of Boston, which theoretically had jurisdiction in Maine, was occupied by an Irish-American bishop, and the Parish of St. Denis in North Whitefield, Maine, was similarly shepherded by Father Dennis Patrick Ryan, another Irish-American. The French-speaking clergy of Quebec were not only concerned about the faith of the Canadians in Maine, but also their language and identity.



Second Baptist Street, Water Street, Waterville. This building dates to 1887. Image: Toab/Panarimo

Fortier's two reports on his visits to Maine, which he sent back to the Society for the Propagation of the Faith in Quebec City, offer a glimpse into the world of Maine's early Franco-American communities in the places he visited – Skowhegan, Waterville, Augusta, Belfast and Hallowell (or "All-Well", as Fortier called it).

Setting out from his parish in early July, 1841, and accompanied by a parishoner whom he had chosen to help him serve mass, Fortier set out on a journey into what was still very much frontier country. Although the route had been much improved since Benedict Arnold's disastrous expedition along this way sixty-six years earlier, with the laying out of a true road in 1813 by act of the Maine Legislature, the Old Canada Road was still sparsely-inhabited at this time. "I traveled 80 miles without encountering another French-Canadian," the priest wrote of his first two days on the road.

When he did reach Skowhegan, however, he found his flock eagerly awaiting his arrival. "I found the French-Canadians well-disposed to benefit from my services," he wrote. These services included performing a mass, hearing confession, teaching catechism and performing several baptisms. The need for his work was immediately demonstrated, when children as old as five were presented for baptism.[1] Particularly in an era of high infant mortality, waiting that long to have a child baptized into the faith was a great spiritual risk. The warm reception the father received from his 36 countrymen, however, was contrasted with the hostility from the local Protestants, who "spread a rumor that I had received fourteen dollars to hear a confession."



The power of the Skowhegan Falls provided opportunities for early industry in the town. Image: Somerset History House/Maine Memory Network

After only a day in Skowhegan, Fortier went on to Waterville, where he spent four days – the longest of any of his stops in Maine. The "village," as he called it, had by that time a population of at least 125 French-Canadians. According to some of them, it had been seventeen years since they had seen a priest. The days were long. To accommodate the working men of the community, mass began at 5am, and a late
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(Moses in the Wilderness**(of Waterville)** *continued from page 14)*

sermon was said at 8pm, after the working day had finished for these laborers. Fortier's work continued until the final confessions were heard at midnight.

In Augusta, the scarcity of pastoral care was again highlighted by the case of an Irish woman "on the brink of death" who "had been asking for a priest for ten days" and had traveled a long way to find one. Fortier was pleased to have the opportunity to offer her extreme unction on the day he arrived in the city. She passed away the following day. Since Augusta had only a small number of French Canadian families (Fortier reported hearing confession from 12 adults), he went on to Belfast. The 23 adults and 15 living children in that town were most likely engaged in the shipbuilding industry, though Fortier does not record their occupations.

Nevertheless, relying on the assistance of an interpreter, and often of Heaven, I accepted the debate, which lasted four hours, and which turned, thank God, to be to the edification of the French-Canadians who were witnesses. My antagonist, satisfied with what I had said, asked me for time to reflect, and withdrew very humbly. This discussion took the place of the sermon which I had intended to deliver that evening.

The centrality of the priest to family life is again demonstrated by Fortier's tasks in 1842, which included "rehabilitating" the marriages of four couples in Waterville, who had been married in a civil service, but who lacked the authenticity of a church union. Likewise, in Hallowell, the priest was called upon to baptize the child of William Henderson. Henderson's wife, Charlotte Getchel, a Protestant, was so impressed by the ceremony, that she too converted, having



A French-Canadian priest and lady in winter dress, 1810. Print. Image: Libraries and Archives Canada

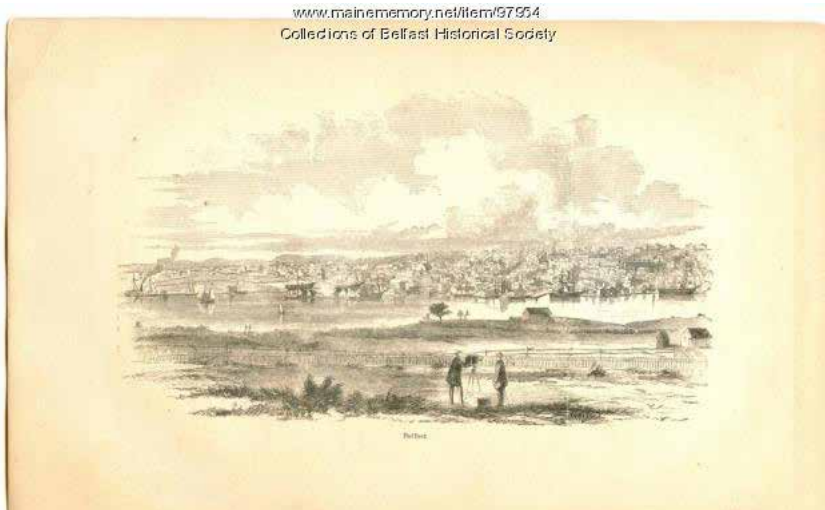
1840s. These communities would eventually grow to the size that they required their own resident priests, many of whom came from French Canada to minister to their compatriots. These pastors played a significant role in maintaining French language and culture among the Franco-Americans in Maine and elsewhere. But Moïse Fortier was not to be among them. Just a few years later, in June 1845, his life was cut short when he drowned in the Chaudière River, on his way to a neighboring parish. The work that he began in Maine, however, lived on.



James Myall

While I currently work for an Augusta-based non-profit, I spent four years as the Coordinator of the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine. In 2015, I co-authored "The Franco-Americans of Lewiston-Auburn," a general history of that population from 1850 to the present. I was also a consultant for the State Legislative Task Force on Franco-Americans in 2012. I live in Topsham with my wife and two young daughters.

<https://myall.bdnblogs.com/2020/01/>



Belfast Harbor, c1860. Image: Belfast Historical Society/Maine Memory Network

In concluding his 1841 report, the priest thanks God for the opportunity to minister to this flock, which, "deprived of all religious succor, and surrounded by fanatics who do not cease ridiculing the practices of the Catholic religion, had almost entirely forgotten their obligations." The following year, he was to encounter some of these "fanatics" himself. Perhaps having been alerted to his intentions by the prior year's visit, the Protestant minister of Waterville was ready to confront Fortier on his return in 1842:

One evening...at the moment when I was preparing to give my sermon, I received a visit from a young minister, who announced himself as having come to discuss religion with me. My lack of practice with the English language, the presence of more than 40 Americans who accompanied this minister, rendered my position awkward.

overcome her previous "disgust" at the ritual of confession.

Likewise, in Skowhegan, Fortier encountered a mother looking to baptize her dying son. But her husband, a local Protestant, was staunchly against the idea. At first Fortier was reluctant to overrule the wishes of the father, but he was moved by the woman's desperation, which brought her to tears. Even then, the baptism had to be conducted stealthily, and in private, lest the local Protestants punish the deed.

Of course, Fortier's hope that the trickle of French-Canadian farmers leaving Canada for Maine could be stemmed was to prove ill-founded. Over the next decades, more than a million Québécois would leave the province for opportunities elsewhere, many of them to the same communities visited by the young priest from the Beauce in the

Franco-Americans' Veins Run with Maple Syrup

March 29, 2016, Food, Home, Lewiston-Auburn, Maine, Natural World

By James Myall

Maple Syrup Flows Through Franco-Americans' Veins

A beverage very pleasing to drink, the color of Spanish wine, but not so good. It has a sweetness which renders it of very good taste...This is the drink of the Indians, and even of the French, who are fond of it.

In this manner, the virtues of maple sap were introduced to Europe, via Frenchman Nicolas Denys' *Histoire Naturelle*, published in Paris in 1672. From their first encounters with Native Americans, to the present day French Canadians and their descendants in the United States have had a long and special relationship with what was once called "Canada sugar."



"Traditional Maple Syrup Making", an illustration from "Moeurs des sauvages américains" (Paris, 1724). Libraries and Archives Canada, Public Domain

Native Americans had been drinking the liquid for unknown centuries before the practice was encountered by French settlers in Canada in the early 1600s, especially the fur traders and the Jesuit missionaries who interacted frequently with indigenous peoples.

One of the earliest written accounts is by Fr. Paul LeJeune, in 1634, who mentions

that the Indians "eat the shavings or bark... which they split in the spring to get from it a juice, sweet as honey or sugar" when "pressed by famine." Nearly a century later (1722), Father Sebastian Rale wrote from the Abenaki village of "Nanrantsouak" (Norridgewock) that his "only nourishment was pounded Indian corn, of which I make a special sort of broth...the only improvement is to mix with it a little sugar" which the Abenakis created by boiling maple sap. Two years later, Rale and the villagers were massacred in notorious a raid by New Englanders.

The popularity of maple syrup – as opposed to the sugar obtained by boiling syrup still further – is a fairly recent phenomenon. Native Americans, French Canadians and Yankees all typically favored sugar production – it was easier to store and carry, and it was less perishable than syrup. The popularity of syrup increased with the advent of canning and refrigeration technologies, and with the ever-declining cost of cane and beet sugar.

Today, Quebec is by far the largest maple syrup-producing region in North

America, producing something like four times as much syrup as the entire United States. But there are also plenty of Franco-Americans involved in the New England sugaring industry. I spoke recently to two individuals at either end of the production scale – Jean (John) Bergeron, who runs the Cabane à Sucre Bergeron from his Hebron home outside his regular day job, and Fabien Larivière, former co-owner of Maine Maple Products, which owns a grove of 80,000 trees in northern Somerset County (he sold his share of the business to his brothers)

Despite the difference in the size of their enterprises, both John and Fabien spoke of their family ties to sugaring. John, whose four grandparents all came to Maine from Canada as children or young adults, had his first encounter with syrup production as a child, when his father took Jean and his sister into their yard and tapped a tree to show them the process. Years later, John brought his own preschool-aged children outside to do the same – and what began as a friendly competition with his Franco-American neighbor has grown into an operation with his own sugar house, evaporator, and annual Maple Sunday events.

The region Bergeron's grandparents emigrated from, the Chaudière River Valley, is so synonymous with syrup production, that John believes its name comes from the bucket used to collect maple sap (others contend the origin is from the Chaudière Falls, and the cauldrons formed at their base). He calls maple sugar le sucre de pays, or



Tasting Maple Taffy, 1945. Libraries and Archives Canada. Creative Commons Liscence

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Franco-American WWII veteran wrote “The Crucifix”

October 30, 2020, Franco-American News and Culture Deacon Denis Mailhot, Find A Grave, Harvest Magazine

By Juliana L'Heureux

A source check, I researched the quote “There are no atheists in a foxhole”, because I wanted to blog about the poem entitled, “The Crucifix”. This inspirational poem was written by the late Private First Class Elisée Dutil (b. 1919, in Maine – d. 1945 in Germany), who was a Franco-American and Lewiston resident. Memories about the young life of this World War II veteran have been collected and preserved by the family of Maine Deacon Denis Mailhot. In fact, Deacon Denis has created a scrapbook with the artifacts that his mother’s side of the family meticulously kept from Mr. Dutil’s World War II veteran’s collection.



Deacon Denis Mailhot created a scrapbook to preserve his family’s veterans history. Photo courtesy of The Harvest.

Moreover, Deacon Mailhot acknowledged how the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College (FAC USM LAC) has included this important veteran’s biography in an oral history data collection project.

“There are no atheists in a foxhole”: The first use of this forceful quote was reported as circulated during World War I; and then spread during World War 2. The earliest close match located by **Quote Investigator** appeared in 1914, in “The Western Times” newspaper of Devon, England. A speaker at a memorial service for a fallen soldier held at St. Matthias’ Church, Ilsham read from

the letter of an unnamed chaplain serving at the front.

This quote is brought close to home in the poem “The Crucifix”.

Permission to reprint this article was provided by *Harvest Magazine*.

“Ms. L’Heureux, Thank you for your interest. Yes, you may reprint the article as indicated crediting Harvest magazine of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland. I’m sure that Deacon Denis will be pleased. He is so appreciative of the help he received from the university’s Franco-American Collection. Sincerely, Lois Czerniak, Editor.”

Title: A Gift of Faith: From a WWII Foxhole

My Crucifix | By PFC Elisée A. Dutil

A little metal crucifix,
As plain as it can be,
But only God in Heaven knows
How dear it is to me.

I have it always with me,
In every step I take,
In evening when I slumber,
In morning when I awake.

In bright or cloudy weather,
In sunshine or in rain,
In happiness or in sorrow,
In pleasure or in pain.

It helps me in my struggles.
It reproves me when I sin.
Its look of gentle patience
Rebukes the strife within.

In days of pain and anguish,
The greatest help I knew
Was to hold the little crucifix
Until I calmer grew.

And looking at the figure,
Which hung in patience there,
I saw the dreadful torture
Which He and love did bear.

His feet are nailed together.
His loving arms outspread,
And blood is dripping slowly down
From His thorn-crowned Head.

And how then could I murmur,
Or bitterly complain,
When love for me induced Him
To undergo such pain?

So when the time approaches
That I shall have to die,
I hope that little crucifix
Will close beside me lie;

That the Holy Name of Jesus
May be the last that I shall say,
And kissing that dear crucifix
My soul may pass away.

Poem “The Crucifix” written during World War II.

“A little metal crucifix as plain as it can be, but only God in heaven knows how dear it is to me.”

So begins a poem penned by a soldier more than 75 years ago, a sign of the faith he carried with him from the neighborhoods of Lewiston to the battlefields of World War II, in Europe.

Elisée served as a Private First Class, Company K, 7th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division, U.S. Army during World War II.

“I have it always with me, in every
(Continued on page 18)

(Franco-Americans’ Veins Run with Maple Syrup continued from page 16)

“country sugar,” a staple for hardscrabble families in Quebec in the 19th and early 20th centuries. John still uses a recipe for a maple-balsamic dressing that he inherited from his father, and he says his *tarte de sirope d’érable* (maple syrup pie) and *tire de neige* (maple snow taffy) are popular with visitors to his cabane. “In Quebec...they have these *cabanes à sucre* [days], which is really a continuation of the family gathering together to celebrate the harvest – it was a very labor-intensive time to collect and boil the sap, so they had a tradition of gathering to celebrate...which today has evolved into a business enterprise.” John says that every year, his Maine Maple Sunday events are well-attended by Franco-Americans, speaking French and recalling the maple traditions of their childhood.

Fabien Larivière belongs to six generations of a family which has tapped trees in Six Town Plantation in Somerset County for over a century. Throughout this time, though, the family have retained their roots just over the border in Quebec. Originally, the only access to the sugar house was along a private dirt road which straddled the international border. Napoléon Larivière opened a small sugar camp there in the early 1900s, some 3 ½ miles from his house in Canada, with just a small number of taps, making sugar block. The small profit from sugaring provided some income after the logging season came to an end each spring. Now the company produces something like 50,000 gallons of syrup each year – but despite advances in technology, it’s still a labor-intensive industry.

“It’s a way of life – you must love it – it has to be in your blood. When I was a kid, we were allowed to go to the sugar camp, and now my nephew comes to the sugar camp, he came this weekend at five years old. It’s in the blood of the family.”

And in the sense that Franco-Americans form one large family across the continent, it’s in their blood, too.

Thanks to John and Fabien for their interviews, and to the Wisconsin Historical Society, whose bibliography of primary sources relating to maple syrup formed the basis of my research.

(Franco-American WWII veteran wrote "The Crucifix" continued from page 17)

step I take, at evening when I slumber, at morning when I awake," the poem continues.

Entitled, "The Crucifix", the poem was written by Private First Class Elisée Dutil, on the beachhead of Anzio-Nettuno, in Italy, in 1944. It is one of many treasures preserved by his nephew, Deacon Denis Mailhot, who serves at Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, in Auburn.



Author of the poem "The Crucifix"

"I decided to take on this project because, for years, my mother and my aunts on the Mailhot side had meticulously kept all these pictures, and postcards, and photos and newspaper clippings, he says. "Once I saw all this, I said, 'I have to put it together. I have to do this right'."

Deacon Mailhot began organizing the collection in 2019, but when the coronavirus struck, it gave him the time he needed to immerse himself in the project. The result was two large binders full of memories and messages capturing his family's history of military service, from a great uncle who served in WWI, to uncles who served in WWII, to his own service in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War.

"I decided to put them in a logical order- WWI, WWII, Vietnam- and the biggest piece of it was Elisée," he says. "Almost that entire second book was Elisée."

The photos and postcards, many written in cursive French, paint a picture of service, sacrifice, and faith. In a postcard to his parents shortly before he shipped overseas in January 1943, Elisée writes, "God, he

had hardships, so why do we think we would not have a little hardship (too)?"

Elisée was sworn into the U.S. Army on June 9, 1942, at age 22. Born November 24, 1919, he attended St. Peter School in Lewiston and then Lewiston High School. He was active at Saints Peter & Paul Parish (now part of Prince of Peace Parish), singing in the choir and with a male choral society. He also belonged to two fraternal organizations: the Société pour les défenseurs du Saint Nom de Jésus (Society for the Defenders of the Holy Name of Jesus) and the Cadets of the Catholic Order of Foresters.

He was involved in his faith. He never missed Mass, ever. If there was a chaplain doing a Mass during the war, he was there. "I'm sure," says Deacon Mailhot.

Elisée, was a member of the 7th Infantry Regiment of the 3rd Infantry Division, one of the few divisions to fight in North Africa, Sicily, Italy, France and Germany during the war. During the invasion of Sicily, Elisée, was injured in the leg, for which he was awarded the Purple Heart. He then fought at Anzio-Nettuno, a battle critical in the liberation of Rome. It was there, in a foxhole, that he began writing, "The Crucifix". Elisée dedicated the poem to his brothers in arms, urging them to also keep Christ close to their hearts.

The poem's dedication reads, "Please soldiers, don't forget to say every day and night, 'My Good Lord, I offer Thee this day, or night, all I shall do or think or say, uniting it with what was done on earth by Jesus Christ, Thy Son'."

"Elisée writes, 'The Crucifix' gives it to his men, so they will keep their Catholic faith, their Christian faith strong in the worst situation that any human being could ever be put in," says Deacon Mailhot. "There is no selfishness in that. He's trying to evangelize his men, the men in the foxholes in 1944. He is writing this dedication hoping they'll remember their faith. He was concerned that if something happened to them, that they would go to heaven."

It was at Anzio-Nettuno that Elisée was wounded again, this time more seriously. He was evacuated to a hospital in North Africa where, his faith unshaken, he completed the poem. A faded, typed copy states, "I started in my my foxhole and I finished in the hospital."

"These pages are what he typed on a typewriter during the war," Deacon Mailhot says, pointing to pages in the binder. "It is my hope and prayer that copies of Elisée's prayer found their way into the hands of all the soldiers in the foxholes he served with, espec(ially those who passed away into the loving and eternal embrace of God."

Elisée rejoined the 3rd Infantry Division in France, as it began the push toward Germany's Siegfried Line. He would not, however, live to see the end of the war. He was killed in action near Zweibrücken, Germany, on March 18, 1945, less than two months before Germany surrendered.

"He paid a great price that we as a free people might continue to enjoy all those



things that make life worth living. By that, he showed his intense love for us. 'Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends'. Not only our nation, but our very civilization is deeply indebted to him," Lt. Col Ralph J. Smith, a division chaplain wrote to Elisée's father.

"These guys were the greatest generation. The only reason, I believe, that the United States of America is still here today is that generation," says Deacon Mailhot. "They sacrificed their lives."

Just weeks before his own death, Elisée received word that his mother passed away. Deacon Mailhot says the family often said she went to get her son to end his suffering.

Originally buried in a cemetery in France, Elisée's father paid to have his son's body returned home. He is now buried in the family plot at St. Peter's Cemetery in Lewiston. It is not known whether his crucifix lies with him. Although Elisée died before Deacon Mailhot was born, he says his uncle's faith and poem were inspirations to him as he discerned his vocation to the permanent diaconate.

"Elisée truly imitated Christ through-

(Continued on page 19)

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*(Franco-American WWII veteran wrote
"The Crucifix" continued from page 17)*

out much of his too brief life," he says.

Elisée's poem also inspired others beyond the battlefields. Father Mitchell Koprowski, a chaplain, who told Deacon Mailhot he was with Elisée at Anzio-Nettuno when he wrote the poem, later shared it with Carmelite Nuns in North Dakota.

"The sisters thought it was so wonderful that they took that prayer and made a prayer card. They distributed that in the religious order for decades," says Deacon Mailhot.

As we mark the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII, Deacon Mailhot says he hopes Elisée's story leads readers to reflect upon the sacrifices made by so many, who put others before themselves.

"It was my hope that PFC Elisée A. Dutil's prayer serves to inspire all of us that we are never alone, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, so that we may unite as one community, one state and one nation under God," he says.

Deacon Mailhot says the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College, in Lewiston, plans to digitize and preserve the materials he put together. He expressed gratitude to Doris Belisle Bonneau, a board member of the Collection, and to students in Seth Goodwin's French class at Edward Little High School, in Auburn, for helping to translate some of the articles and postcards from French into English.



About Juliana

Juliana L'Heureux is a free lance writer who publishes news, blogs and articles about Franco-Americans and the French culture. She has written about the culture in weekly and bi-weekly articles, for the past 27 years.

<https://francoamerican.bangordailynews.com/author/jlheureux/>

(N.D.L.R. Submitted to *Le Forum* by Guy Dubay, Madawaska, ME)

24 JUNE 15, 1972

ST. JOHN VALLEY TIMES



By Guy Dubay

MADAWASKA - A people's life style can be reflected in its marrying habits. In America, we hear so much of the June Bride, reflecting perhaps that a wedding is incident to the "rites of spring." This isn't new as even old Currier & Ives lithographs of the 1860s have recorded the traditional swooning of love in the May blossoms and weddings of early June.

Such, however, may not be true of the Valley today, or at least historically it hasn't been so.

In the 1930s, Horace Miner, published a sociological study of St. Denis de Kamouraska. In it he pointed out that in a French-agricultural society the June bride was in fact a rarity.

Madawaska Historical Society

He noted too that agricultural cycles affected the choice of marriage dates as well.

Putting the Miner theory to the test, I have endeavored to discover what the marrying habits of Pioneer Madawaska might reveal. Would the marrying habits of our ancestors conform to the religious traditions of the day?

An analysis of ten years of marriage records of St. Basile for all of the 1830s reveal the following: first, June brides were a rarity; second, Lent and advent virtually eliminated all March and December marriages; third, planting and harvesting provided the second reason for postponing marriages; and fourth, winter's boredom could be waylaid with the marrying off of one's daughters and sons.

Dates of St. Basile Marriages 1830's

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1830	1	3			1	1		3		2	6		17
1831	5	6		2	1			6	4	4	3		32
1832	1	3			1	1	3	2	1	8	3		26
1833	1	1			3					3	8		16
1834	2	1				1	3	4		2	4		17
1835	6	3			3	2		5	6	2	2		29
1836	3	3			2	2	3			2	2		17
1837	1	1			2	1		3	2	2	1		13
1838	1	7			1			1	2	5	3		20
1839	2	2			2	2		1	3	5	5		22
total	23	30			9	13	10	9	24	18	35	38	199

FOR SALE

June Brides A Rarity For Our Ancestors

The chart then reveals: In the years 1830 to 1839 there were 199 marriages recorded in St. Basile which then accounted for the marriages from one end of the Valley to the other.

None of these 199 marriages recorded in March and December. Lent and Advent were strictly observed. The post harvest months of October and November were favorite marrying months with 74 of the 199 marriages of the decade occurring then.

Spring proved to be the least likely time for our ancestors to get married. Only 22 or about 10 percent of their marriages were recorded in April and May.

Fall was the favorite time with 81 out of 100 marriages occurring in this season. Winter came out second best with 53 weddings, while summer with its break between planting and harvesting provided the remaining 43 marriages.

Winter 53 marriages
Spring 22 "
Summer 43 "
Fall 81 "

That the life of a community could be reflected in its marrying habits becomes clearer when we do the same kind of analysis with modern records.

Have our marrying habits changed since the day when we were a small, self-sufficient society?

If St. Agatha is representative of the valley today, our marrying habits have indeed changed. What comes out most strikingly when looking at present day marriage dates is the fact that part of the Valley is now American. July 4 (especially if it falls on a weekend) is a likely date for a wedding.

While St. Agatha might be thought of as primarily an agricultural area, many of its wedding dates reflect the industrialization of the day -- the long weekend, the July mill-slowdown, and of

course the better automobile conditions are reflected in the increased choice of summer for a wedding day.

While planting season still has its suppressing effect on marriage dates, the harvest season no longer postpones marriages indicating perhaps an increasing turn from an agricultural society to an industrial one.

Beginning with Vatican II, advent time weddings are no longer taboo, and so too does an occasional March wedding crop up but gone are the old February weddings of yesteryear which you can see on the flat chart.

I suppose it's possible to deduce from this that when a society is busy "revving up its ski-door" it can't be thinking of marriage.

Recent 15 Years of St. Agatha Marriages

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1956	1		1	1		2	2	2	3	1	12		18
1957	1		2	1	1	2	3	1	4	2			5
1958	1					1	1	1	1	1			6
1959			2	1	1	2	6		1	4			18
1960		1	1		1	1	2		1	2	1		8
1961					1	2		4	1	2	1		11
1962						3	2		2	1			8
1963		1	3			3	2	1	3	1			14
1964					1	1	3	5	1				12
1965						1	3	2		1	2		9
1966						1	1		1	1	2		6
1967					1	1	1	1	1	1	1		7
1968						1	5	4	3	2	2	2	19
1969							3	2		1	1	1	9
total	3	3	3	11	5	13	29	32	13	24	21	4	162

22 JUNE 22, 1972

ST. JOHN VALLEY TIMES



By Guy Dubay

MADAWASKA - The Ste. Luce regimen of Frenchville tend to confirm what we saw in our earlier study of Ste. Agatha -- that the marrying patterns of the present generation differ significantly from that of our ancestors.

Recalling to mind last week's statistics of the 1830's, the present chart confirms that summer has replaced fall and winter as our favorite wedding time.

The American June-bride concept, the fourth of July, and the favorable automobile travel conditions in summer can be noted at Ste. Luce in the 60's

Madawaska Historical Society

just as we found in Ste. Agatha in the preceding decade.

At Ste. Luce we find a post harvest boom in marriages (November) but then the frequency in marriages there may be too few to render the statistics significant. We'll have to study this summer, one of the larger parishes like Fort Kent or Madawaska to verify a post harvest boom.

Marriages Patterns of the 60's at Ste. Luce:

It is obvious, at first sight, that June, July, and August combined hold more than 50 percent of all marriages at Ste. Luce in modern times. Not so in the parish's early years. Less than a quarter of all weddings took place in summer then.

Today only one of the 93 weddings of the sixties took place during winter months, in sharp contrast with the 120 January and February weddings of Ste. Luce's first twenty years (1843-1862).

Could it be that skiing was unknown back then?

STE. LUCE
1843-1862

Winter 120 Weddings
Spring 68 "
Summer 116 "
Fall 178 "
482

STE. LUCE
1959-1970

Winter 8 Weddings
Spring 8 "
Summer 60 "
Fall 37 "
113

The Ste. Luce chart of 1853-1862 printed below does not yield quite the same data that we derived from last week's 1830 chart. Perhaps it's an American trend that tends to creep in, (not long after the Webster-Ashburton treaty) that wasn't there in the 1830's.

But this chart does not so affably deny the June Bride concept. The 1850's one reveal an increased role of June as a wedding month -- ah les chers americains!

First 20 years of Ste. Luce Marriages

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1859	1					2	2	2	2		1	10	12
1860						3	2	2	2		1	5	9
1861				1	1	2	2	2		1			9
1862				1	2	2	2	2		1			6
1863				1	1	3	1	3	2	1			8
1864					1	3	1	3	2	1			11
1865					2	2	4	3	1	1			14
1866									1				1
1867					1		2	2	1				5
1868					1	3	2			1	1	10	18
1869				1	1	2	1	3	2	1	7	13	23
1870						4	1	1		1	1	10	19
total	2			1	1	14	14	22	13	9	15	6	113

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
1843	4		2	2			3	2	1	4			16
1844	3	1					1	1	2	2			14
1845	7	1	1			1		3	4	2	3		26
1846	4	4				1		2	2	2	2		22
1847	3	3				1	3	3	3	10			33
1848	2	2	2		1	2	1	1	1	4	2		19
1849	3	3			1	1		4	1	3	1		17
1850	3	4			4	2	2	3	4	2	3		28
1851	2	2	1	2	1	3	4	2	2	3	2		22
1852	1					1	4	4	5	2	1		23
1853	4				3	2	3	5	5	6	1		29
1854	2	3			1	2	2	1	3	3	5		28
1855	2	1			3	4	1	3	1	4	4		33
1856	1	2	3	2	1	3	3	3	2	2	3		30
1857	3	4			4	1	1	1	5	7			34
1858	3	4			5	1	5	2	1	1	2		30
1859	2	2			4	1	1	1	2	1	4		21
1860	7				1	1	1	1	2	2	3		20
1861	7	3			1	3	3	1	4	7			30
1862	2	2	4			2	1	1	1	3	7		23
total	61	25	11	37	29	36	37	43	44	59	25		482

(N.D.L.R. Reprinted with permission from The Keene Sentinel)

A living legacy: The enduring influence of the Monadnock Region's French Canadians

By JAKE LAHUT *Sentinel Staff*

Mar 30, 2019 Updated May 6, 2019

The first signs are literally the signs — placards bearing “Bienvenue” to New Hampshire, like the one drivers pass as they cross the border from Brattleboro into Chesterfield.

Then come the names of neighbors, colleagues and elected officials: Bergeron, Bouchard, Filiault, Leblanc, Pregent, Renault or a more Anglicized variant like Reno.

Of the approximately 90 members of Monadnock Regional High School’s graduating class of 2018, at least 17 of the surnames appear to be traditional French noms de familles.

And the influence continues in the monikers of area businesses: Aumand’s, Belletete’s and the recently closed Frenchy’s Bait & Tackle.

At 24.5 percent, New Hampshire has the second highest proportion of French and French-Canadian descendants in the United States, trailing only Maine’s 25 percent, according to Census data.

French-Canadian immigrants helped build this region — literally, as many of the brick buildings around Keene and surrounding towns were constructed thanks to an influx of brickmasons from Quebec — and expanded the presence of the Catholic Church in the state, according to research from the Historical Society of Cheshire County.

But as manufacturing and rail declined in the Monadnock Region, so too did the cultural visibility of the communities those industries supported. And nowadays, despite the enduring prevalence of French names, the language has all but disappeared from local streets.

So, it’s up to descendants like 89-year-old Theresa Murdough of Keene to keep the tongue and traditions alive.

Crossing the border / Franchir la frontière

According to research from the Cheshire County historical society, out of the roughly 1 million Quebecois immigrants who came to the United States between 1850 and the turn of the 20th century, around half settled in New Hampshire.

In Keene, one of the most popular destinations for French-speaking immigrants looking for work was the Faulkner & Colony Woolen Mill around 1860.

After the Civil War, Harrisville’s textile mills drew even more Quebecois workers to the region.

In surrounding towns, the lumber industry was driven by French-Canadian immigrants, and Marlborough became such a hotbed for both logging and textile manufacturing that the town wound up with a “Little Canada” neighborhood off Main Street.

According to Alan Rumrill, executive director of the Cheshire County historical society, many of the men who came to the Monadnock Region seeking work did not

(Continued on page 22)



Among the many French-Canadian families to settle in Cheshire County were the Miville-Deschenes, who had lived in a village in present day Quebec since emigrating from France in the 1640s, according to the Historical Society of Cheshire County. In 1897, Cajetan Deschenes brought his wife and nine children to the U.S., and after two years, they settled in Jaffrey. His five sons became merchants, while the sixth ran a farm and dairy operation. Members of the the family helped in the building of St. Patrick Church, and in establishing French-Canadian religious societies. In 1918, Charles Deschenes was the last person to see Dr. William K. Dean alive before his slaying, and became a key witness in a grand jury hearing for the case, which remains unsolved to this day.

Courtesy of the Historical Society of Cheshire County



The Route 9 border sign greets motorists in English and French after they cross into Chesterfield from Brattleboro.

Michael Moore / Sentinel Staff



Theresa Murdough, 89, at home in Keene with treasures from Canada, plus her father’s World War I discharge certificate and her mother’s U.S. certificate of citizenship. Murdough’s parents, Philias and Ophelia Fontaine, settled in the Elm City in 1936. Murdough’s first language was French, which she speaks during weekly gatherings with friends.

Michael Moore / Sentinel Staff
The Saint Jean Baptiste Society
Courtesy of the Historical Society of Cheshire County

(A living legacy: The enduring influence of the Monadnock Region's French Canadians continued from page 21)

intent to stay for long.

"The French-Canadian immigration was much different than that coming from overseas," Rumrill said. Other major immigrant groups in the region, he noted — from Ireland, Italy, Greece and Finland — took a riskier leap of faith by leaving their lives behind to start anew across the Atlantic.

"... (French Canadians) thought they would come here, get better jobs and earn some more money and go back to their families or their farms in Canada," Rumrill said. "It was just a train ride away."

Growing up Franco-American

That was the case for Theresa Murdough's parents.

Murdough said her parents, Philias and Ophelia Fontaine, left Stanstead, Quebec, and eventually settled in the Elm City in 1936 after Philias found success building telephone lines in the North Country.

The aftermath of World War I had put stress on the Canadian economy as young men like her father returned from overseas, Murdough explained, and Philias crossed the border to take a job with the New England Telephone Co. in 1921.

The main economic forces driving workers across the U.S. border, according to Murdough and Rumrill, were a combination of the small farms and large family sizes in Quebec, which often rose well into the teens.

Aside from the mill towns, rural communities in New Hampshire offered much larger land plots that could better support big families.

Murdough was in first grade at Saint Joseph's school on Wilson Street when she began learning English for the first time, and always spoke French at home with her family, even attending a French-language mass every week at Saint Bernard's Church.

"It was always hard for me to believe — like I didn't realize my parents were immigrants, in the sense that we were going back and forth to Canada all the time," Murdough explained. The lack of border checkpoints made the transitions even more seamless.

When she would go to Manchester, she recalls hearing French being almost exclusively spoken on the city's west side, and that it was not uncommon to walk into a store or greet someone on the street en Français.

As she grew up, though, Murdough said she noticed that many French-Canadian families with children her age and younger began to either limit the amount of French spoken within the family or stop passing it down outright.

Those who remember / Ceux qui se souviennent

As the influence of railroads and mills in the region declined through the second half of the 20th century, the prevalence of the French language and Quebecois culture did as well, at least on the surface.

But even with this reduced visibility in the Granite State, by the late 1960s and early '70s, Margaret Langford was struck by the ubiquity of the French language after moving to Durham and then Keene following stints in Illinois, Missouri, Nebraska and Fresno, Calif.

As an independent scholar in Franco-American studies and former French professor at Keene State College, Langford, 84, has long been fascinated by the legacy of the French language in the Monadnock Region.

Both a francophile and francophone, she likes to bring people together through a love of the language and the diverse French-speaking diaspora that touches five continents.

Without a formal organization to unite francophones in the Monadnock Region, Langford is also a member of the Franco-American Centre in Manchester, and has been involved in issues such as fighting for the protection of the Bienvenue à New Hampshire signs along the state's borders.

She and Murdough ended up meeting, though neither of them can pinpoint exactly when because of how long they've been friends.



A meeting of the Société de St. Jean Baptiste in Jaffrey in 1910. Chapters of the society — which was started in Canada to safeguard French language, culture and Catholicism, along with promoting French-Canadian interests — were founded throughout New England by French-Canadian immigrants, according to the Historical Society of Cheshire County. The society also provided financial assistance to French-Canadian immigrants in need.

Courtesy of the Historical Society of Cheshire County



French Canadians, shown here in Marlborough in the late 1800s, drove the lumber industry in many local towns, according to the Historical Society of Cheshire County. Marlborough became such a hotbed for both logging and textile manufacturing that the town wound up with a "Little Canada" neighborhood off Main Street.

Courtesy of the Historical Society of Cheshire County

(Continued on page 23)

Query the Past
Patrick Lacroix, Historian

Those Other Franco-Americans: St. Albans, Part I

2020-11-12 PL Borderlands, Franco-Americans, French Canada, Immigration, Lake Champlain, Quebec Emigration, Quebec History, Rebellion of 1837, St. Albans, Vermont

One particular claim to fame dominates the history of St. Albans, Vermont: the Confederate raid on local banks that was staged from Canadian soil in 1864. Other events that truly made the city remain little known to outsiders, as is the history of the region as a whole.

The Confederate raid at least has the virtue of reminding us that St. Albans is a stone's throw from the international border and that Canada played no small role in the making of northern Vermont. That area welcomed Canadian political dissidents in the late 1830s; the Irish nationalists known as the Fenians had their turn and launched ill-fated attacks into Canada in 1866 and 1870. In the meantime, St. Albans grew as a rail hub thanks to its northern connections. Additionally, in the nineteenth century, the whole of Franklin County, which is adjacent to the border, bore the heavy imprint of permanent French-Canadian settlement and

community life.[1]

Vermont often stands in the shadows of Franco-American history — as though the



Franklin County, Vermont (Google Maps)

Franco history that matters happened elsewhere. And when discussions of French Vermont life do occur, they seldom stray from Burlington and Winooski.[2] French-Canadian migrants to the Green Mountain State did not form giant urban communities as we see in other parts of the Northeast. No less, though they do not fit that pattern, even in this remote corner of New England their historical significance is indisputable and perhaps larger than it was in the large manufacturing cities.

Let's consider this. By 1850, the Canadian-born amounted to 13.5 percent of all residents of Franklin County. Even while accounting for possible English Canadians, this was no small number. In Burlington, whose population now exceeded 7,500, the ratio was about the same. In 1860, Canadian-born individuals and children born in the United States to Canadian parents repre-

(Continued on page 24)

(A living legacy: The enduring influence of the Monadnock Region's French Canadians continued from page 22)

The urge to hide her first language still lingered with Murdough — rooted in memories of anti-immigrant sentiment — and at first, Langford had no idea she spoke French.

Then one day in her Keene State office, Langford made a wise crack in that language over the phone while Murdough was in the room, and the first generation Franco-American laughed. Suddenly, Langford and Murdough realized they both had someone to speak French with for life.

Keeping the culture alive

Once a week, Langford, Murdough and some other friends — from descendants of French Canadians to general francophiles — get together to have lunch or drink tea while speaking only French.

Murdough said she loves the ability to keep her mother tongue strong, and as an apprenticed francophone, Langford said she supplements the weekly chats by watching the French cable channel TV5, which is a PBS-type network with documentary features on the global French-speaking community.

Part of what has always stood out

to Langford about the Franco-American community in the Monadnock Region is the extent to which the spoken language has died. But she's also still struck by the caution many descendants of French Canadians have shown in speaking the language because of the early stigma they, like other immigrant populations, faced.

"It was sort of like an anthropologist going into Africa to study the natives," Langford said of her initial efforts to write about the Monadnock Region's French-speaking community for academic publications. "They felt like they were being studied rather than talked to."

When the historical society researched the history of immigration to the region for a 2009 exhibit, Rumrill said they found no evidence of blatant discrimination against French Canadians — as in a "no Irish need apply" type of sign in a storefront. But those interviewed for the project recalled being called names at school and facing resentment over taking working-class jobs.

That feeling, Murdough said, is probably what was behind many French-speaking families' refusal to pass the language down to the next generation.

On the micro level, Langford argues that even the mispronunciations of French names and terms in the region are a lingering result of French Canadians being relegated to a lower class.

"New England is about the only place that you'll find where people can't pronounce French names," she quipped.

Despite the heritage of French-Canadian immigrants not being as well known as Langford and Murdough would like, they find promising signs of the culture enduring beyond their weekly chats.

Whether it's a family recipe, harvesting maple syrup, or following an old Quebecois ritual of going out before Easter's first light to get spring water to bless guests with, Langford said it's still possible to see the legacy living on.

And for Murdough, looking back at her cultural upbringing gives her a greater appreciation of what it means to be an American.

"I think my most wonderful experiences were that I could compare my life being an American citizen to the lives of my cousins my same age in Canada ..." Murdough said. "And I'm so grateful that my parents had come to the United States."

(Those Other Franco-Americans: St. Albans, Part I continued from page 23)

sented a full quarter of the population of St. Albans; the same was then true of the city's more rural neighbor, Swanton. One out of every four locals that the Confederate raiders met in their eventful outing in St. Albans would likely have been a French-speaking Canadian.[3] But these migrants' visibility in census records is not mirrored in contemporary newspapers, such that this set of back-page Americans is often relegated to obscurity.

Historiographical obscurity of this kind has not led merely to a geographical problem in the telling of the Franco-American past. It is easy to forget—in light of existing literature—that emigration from the St. Lawrence River valley to the U.S. Northeast did not begin in the 1860s.

In August 1840, *La Canadienne* ran a report on the French Canadians of Burlington. These expatriates were not Patriote sympathizers who, after rising up against British power in 1837-1838, had fled south. The newspaper stated that there were 300 French-Canadian families then living in the city. A large proportion hailed from Yamaska, a parish on the lower part of the river of the same name. The corner of Burlington where they congregated became "New Maska." Proximity to la patrie and ease of travel counted for something in this migration: steamboats had been plying Lake Champlain and the Richelieu River for decades at that point.

St. Albans benefitted from those steamboat connections. In 1853, a newspaper advertised an excursion from Quebec City to St. Albans, likely utilizing the same alternating lines of rail and waterwheel that Henry David Thoreau had taken several years earlier. But the small city was then already well-known to French-Canadian families with one foot on each side of the border.



The steamboat Burlington, one of many commercial ships that plied Lake Champlain in the nineteenth century (Wikimedia Commons)

<http://querythepast.com/>

Opportunities for young men seeking to found a household of their own were then quite narrow, along the St. Lawrence. The lumber industry, which had offered seasonal wages for decades, was entering a decided slump. Due to rapid population growth, access to arable land was increasingly difficult—as was work for day laborers. As for those living from agriculture, increased competition from the Midwest and the integration of the North American market entailed structural changes. According to some historians—Bruno Ramirez, for instance—those changes cleaved Canada's farming class into "haves" and "have-nots." The latter would have to seek work abroad.

The irony is that Vermont was facing those same pressures, at mid-century. Farmers turned to dairying roughly at the same time as their counterparts north of the border. Young Vermonters, instead of trying to beat Midwesterners, decided to join them. But the situation was not nearly as dire as in Quebec, whose crisis owed to population perhaps more than anything else. Opportunities opened up in Vermont. People came and it is these migrants—predominantly Irish and French-Canadian—that prevented Vermont's population from declining in the second half of the nineteenth century. That they came to form a quarter of the population of communities like St. Albans and Swanton hints indeed at their economic and social significance.

The period of organized social and cultural life among French Canadians in Vermont began in Burlington in 1850, with the establishment of the first French national parish in the United States.[4] At this point, St. Albans and other communities tend to fall back into the shadows. But immigrants in these places were neither inactive nor, at the time, invisible. In 1866, the French Canadians of St. Albans formed a new *société nationale* and elected grocer Antoine Moussette as their president. Moussette served

as president of the convention held in Troy, New York, the following year; he would return to Canada at the end of the 1870s.



Fr. Pierre Mignault, memorialized in Chambly, Quebec, was among the first missionaries to the immigrants in this border region. (P. Lacroix)

Plans were quickly made to establish a French-language newspaper in the city. Those efforts came to fruition in the spring of 1868 with the publication of *Le Protecteur canadien*. The paper's co-owners and editors were Moussette and Zéphirin Druon. Druon was a French-born priest and a member of Bishop Louis DeGoesbriand's diocesan council; after a pastoral stint in Montpelier, he spent twenty-five years in St. Albans.

Until Winooski asserted itself as a major manufacturing city, powered in great part by French-Canadian labor, St. Albans could reasonably claim to be the Franco capital of Vermont—or at least a major center that rivaled Burlington in influence. That became particularly clear when, in the summer of 1870, it hosted a grand convention of Franco-Americans from other parts of the state and beyond. Long before these immigrants and their children gathered in Nashua and other, better-known cities, St. Albans had its day in the sun and welcomed delegates from all across the Northeast.[5]

[1] This post on St. Albans was brought to you by the good people of Twitter who voted in a poll I posted on April 4. Of potential "other" Franco communities I might write about, the St. Albans area received nine votes, with Malone, New York, the runner-up with six. Poor Rumford, Maine, and Newmarket, New Hampshire, received four and two votes respectively.

[2] In the small group of scholars who have studied French Vermonters outside of Burlington and Winooski are Mildred Huntley, Ralph Vicero, Peter Woolfson, and J.-André Sénécal.

[3] These figures come from my own systematic sampling of census returns from 1850 and 1860. In the case of the latter, I seize a full third of available data as part of that sampling.

[4] The need for distinct religious institutions for French-Canadians in St. Albans was clear as early as 1847, when an observer informed the bishop of Boston that a francophone Protestant minister was making converts in the area. According to Alexandre Belisle, the first French-Canadian "national" society in the United States was St. Albans's *société Jacques-Cartier*, founded in 1848.

[5] The previous convention of French Canadians in the United States had been held in Detroit in October 1869. Antoine Moussette had attended.

“This province is your country”: Understanding the Acadian Deportation

2020-10-22 PL Acadians, Borderlands, British Canada, Canada-U.S. Relations,
French Canada, Historical Memory, Historiography, Immigration, Nova Scotia

In all the said places and colonies to be yielded and restored by the most Christian King [Louis XIV], in pursuance of this treaty, the subjects of the said King may have liberty to remove themselves, within a year, to any other place. . . . But those who are willing to remain there, and to be subject to the kingdom of Great Britain, are to enjoy the free exercise of their religion, according to the usage of the Church of Rome, as far as the laws of Great Britain do allow the same.

TREATY OF UTRECHT, 1713

To take issue with the specifics of *Historica Heritage Minutes*—which are now so ingrained in Canadian culture—is truly a matter of shooting fish in a barrel, as they are short and by necessity incomplete. They may be seen as a way of interesting non-scholars and enjoining them to explore a given subject in greater depth. Of course, few do so, and because the *Minutes* cover iconic moments in Canadian history, their ultimate effect is simply to reinforce certain national myths.

So it is with the Acadian Deportation. This specific Minute is problematic in three particularly important ways, I would argue. The British intrude suddenly; that the Acadians had been living peaceably and well (by eighteenth-century standards) for decades under British rule goes unmentioned; and the primary concern in the Deportation appears to be interest in land. Those three points persist in our popular historical imagination and if they have some kernel of truth, they are, well, by necessity incomplete.

Whether the Acadians would remain in Nova Scotia as British subjects was not an issue born of the 1750s. In 1713, Britain took control of what today is mainland Nova Scotia; Cape Breton and l’Île Saint-Jean (Prince Edward Island) remained under French rule; and much of what we know as New Brunswick was disputed, if with little actual struggle, by these two European powers. By virtue of the treaty, as stated in the epigraph, the Acadians now under British rule were given a clear choice: either

removing themselves to French dominions or entering the condition of British subjects.

Query the Past
Patrick Lacroix, Historian

itself a little, and be at some extraordinary expense, for this has been hitherto no more



Areas claimed by European colonizing powers in the early eighteenth century
(Wikimedia Commons)

That a British subject had certain obligations was made clear recurrently in the decades to come with the issue of the oath of allegiance—an oath that was frequently put to the Acadians in one form or another. In nearly all of its incarnations it demanded that the Acadians bear arms when called upon by the Crown and British authorities. “Those who won’t conform themselves to the laws of any government don’t deserve its protection,” would later write Lawrence Armstrong, the colonial administrator. No matter: it is quite clear that most Acadians decided to stay put and to reject the oath.

And so it remained. Why? First, though this was nominally a British colony, there was little to suggest that beyond a lean administration and small garrison at Annapolis Royal. Seven years after the Treaty of Utrecht, Governor Richard Philipps complained,

I find this country in no likelihood of being settled under the King’s obedience upon the footing it is, and therefore it is necessary that the Government at home exert

than a mock government: its authority having never yet extended beyond cannon reach of this fort.

Second, leniency regarding the oath owes partly to the fact that the British authorities saw some benefit to Acadians remaining on their lands. For one thing, the “mock government” needed the foodstuffs grown and provided by the Acadians. There were also strategic reasons. As one administrator stated as early as 1714,

There being none but French, and Indians (excepting the garrison) settled in those parts; and as they have intermarried, with the Indians [Mi’kmaq], by which and their being of one religion, they have a mighty influence upon them. So it is not to be doubted, but they will carry along with them to [French-ruled] Cape Breton both the Indians and their trade, which is very considerable.

So their skill in the fishery, as well as the cultivating of the soil, must inevitably make that island . . . at once the most powerful
(Continued on page 26)

***“This province is your country”:
Understanding the Acadian Deportation***
continued from page 25)

erful colony, the French have in America, and of the greatest danger and damage to all the British colonies as well as the universal trade of Great Britain.

It will entirely strip that colony [British-ruled Nova Scotia], of the above cattle of all sorts, and reduce it to its primitive state; To replenish which at the same rate . . . at a moderate computation of freight, only for the transportation of such a number of black cattle, and a proportionable number of sheep and hogs, will cost above forty thousand pounds.

Other documents suggest that in the colonial authorities' view, the Acadian presence would help to deter Native attacks on future British settlements.



Monument commemorating both the very fictional Evangeline and the very real Acadian Deportation in Grand-Pré, N.S. (P. Lacroix)

The government's leniency extended to politics. Acadians were represented in Annapolis and later Halifax through deputies. Armstrong was even willing to let them nominate justices of the peace and lower magistrates; in time, he thought, the bond between rulers and ruled might be solidified and the Acadians might be offered formal representation and be taxed.

It is tempting to look at later (nineteenth-century) developments and attribute to Philipps, Armstrong, and others assimilatory motives. Certainly, we should not

discount the power of prejudice, present as it still is in 2020. But the Acadians could, by virtue of the treaty, still practice their Roman Catholic faith and the British welcomed priests so long as they did not engage in politics or become fomenters of discord. Whereas post-1685 France and much of Europe were still laboring under the principle of *cujus regio ejus religio*, Britain did make allowances at this time for minority faiths.

If this was a quiet, settled, and peaceful society between 1713 and 1744, we should not forget that the original inhabitants of this land were also actors in the drama playing out between Acadians and their overlords. From their correspondence, it seems the British believed the Acadians to be enjoying close and friendly relations with the Mi'kmaq—almost a single community by virtue of intermarriage, religious ties, and shared commercial interests. That perception is still very much with us today.

By violent and tragic North American standards, those relations were relatively positive. But the case is easily overstated. After 1713, many Mi'kmaq bands continued to transact with French colonial power based at Louisbourg, which had much more to offer them than the dispersed Acadian farming communities farther south. Historian William Wicken explains Acadians and Mi'kmaq had different economic interests;



Chief Membertou, memorialized in Membertou, N.S., helped seal an alliance between the Mi'kmaq and the French in the seventeenth century. (P. Lacroix)

that became apparent in conflicts over land and in allegations that Native bands were stealing and killing cattle. (After the 1680s, evidence of intermarriage becomes quite scarce.)

What's more, from the 1720s to the 1750s, the Acadians continually complained to the British that if they were to take the oath of allegiance, the "Indians" who were in the service of France would sweep in and massacre them.

Three decades of peace were broken in 1744. Known in the Anglo-American world as King George's War, this conflict tested Acadians' position of neutrality. When a French force ordered the Acadians of the Minas Basin to provide supplies and support its maneuvers, Acadian delegates responded that "[w]e live under a mild and tranquil government, and we have all good reason to be faithful to it. We hope therefore, that you will have the goodness not to separate us from it; and that you will grant us the favour not to plunge us into utter misery." Neutral they indeed were.

The community made it through King George's War largely unscathed, but its political position was increasingly untenable. It is fashionable (if inaccurate) to state that George Washington ignited a world war on the Virginia frontier in the 1750s; closer to the truth is the sheer absence of peace or security in Acadia between the treaty of 1748 and the beginning of the French and Indian War in 1754.

Louisbourg had fallen to the British in 1745; it reverted to French control by treaty in 1748. From briefly dominating the Maritime colonies and the Gulf of St. Lawrence, Britain was again threatened with French power. Both sides responded with renewed interest and investment in the broad area we now know as New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, and Prince Edward Island.

The British founded Halifax and landed thousands of emigrants over the course of several years. The French fortified the disputed region around the isthmus of Chignecto (the boundary of present-day New Brunswick and Nova Scotia). Pressed in this imperial vise, a number of Acadian families began to relocate to seemingly safer areas, l'Île Saint-Jean, for instance. Detecting hints of collaboration—through provisions—between the French at Chignecto and the Acadians, the British exerted increasing pressure on the latter. Nothing but the unconditional oath would do.

(Continued on page 27)

("This province is your country": Understanding the Acadian Deportation continued from page 26)



Edward Cornwallis (Wikimedia Commons)

And yet, Governor Edward Cornwallis was still, in 1750, five years before the beginning of the deportation, trying to keep the Acadians from leaving. To their deputies, he declared,

We are well aware of your industry and your temperance, and that you are not addicted to any vice or debauchery. This province is your country; you or your fathers have cultivated it; naturally you ought yourselves to enjoy the fruits of your labour. Such was the design of the king our master. You know that we have followed his orders. You know that we have done everything to secure to you not only the occupation of your lands, but the ownership of them forever. We have given you also every possible assurance of the enjoyment of your religion, and the free and public exercise of the Roman Catholic religion...

That sweet talk hid the fact that Cornwallis feared that Acadians would reinforce French colonial settlements and forts—taking up arms for the enemy and carrying their moveable property and commerce, as they might have done in 1713-1714, over to the French. Cornwallis set guidelines limiting Acadian movements.

This, of course, seems paradoxical in light of the infamous order issued by Charles Lawrence, one of Cornwallis's successors, in the summer of 1755:

After mature consideration, it was unanimously agreed that, to prevent as much

as possible their attempting to return and molest the [English] settlers that may be set down on their lands, it would be most proper to send them to be distributed amongst the several colonies on the continent, and that a sufficient number of vessels should be hired with all possible expedition for that purpose.

This order has been read and remembered—as suggests the Heritage Minute—as a land grab by the avaricious British. Of course, it is explicitly about the “molestation” of English settlers (a military threat at a time of escalating tensions), and historical precedents indicate that the British needed to keep Acadians from the French lines. In a time of war, when Nova Scotia was still a relatively weak colony, the apparent existential threat posed by an alliance of French, Acadians, and Mi'kmaq was more immediate than the costly work of settling Anglo-American colonists.



A section of the fortress of Louisbourg as reconstructed (P. Lacroix)

Or so it was among the leading figures in colonial Nova Scotia. The long-time governor of Massachusetts, William Shirley, had different ideas. In the 1740s, Shirley formulated his “Great Plan,” which projected the establishment of 6,000 settlers in Nova Scotia, which would no doubt entail the displacement of Acadian communities, after the war. Tellingly, a third of those settlers would be demobilized soldiers—so they would be compensated for their service. Shirley's designs are understandable in that Massachusetts bore a great deal of the burden (financially and otherwise) for the defense of British possessions and military operations during King George's War and the Seven Years' War. Shirley had disproportionate influence in Nova Scotia. Still, the fact that the now-vacated lands were only advertised in Boston after the fall of Louisbourg, three years after the beginning of the deportation,

says something of colonial preoccupations.

None of the above diminishes the horrors of the Acadian Deportation—the displacement and death of thousands, the trauma borne by survivors. Still, with additional context, we can think more critically about the events. For instance, it is plausible that without the reversion of Louisbourg to France in 1748 or signs of French aggression in the early 1750s, the Acadians would have been able to remain in mainland Nova Scotia—or gradually emigrated to other lands in accordance with Cornwallis's guidelines.

All of that is speculative, of course, but it helps to remind us that the Acadian Deportation was a last-ditch measure—following forty years of attempted accommodation—in a context of heightened imperial rivalries. The Acadians were agents of a political settlement and ultimately victims of these rivalries.

Sources

Aside from the Treaty of Utrecht, which is easily accessible online, the primary texts quoted above appear in Thomas B. Akens, ed., *Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia: Papers Relating to the Acadian French 1714-1755 and Papers Relating to the Forcible Removal of the Acadian French from Nova Scotia, 1755-1768* (Halifax, Charles Annand, 1869). That collection is reproduced on the Nova Scotia Archives website.

For a brief, scholarly overview of Acadian history, see Caroline-Isabelle Caron's Canadian Historical Association booklet. As always, the Dictionary of Canadian Biography is an excellent resource for further information on individual figures, including British officials, Catholic priests, and, exceptionally, some leading Acadians. The academic journal *Acadiensis* is a treasure trove of research, with too many excellent articles on Acadians to mention here. I have written about valuable historical resources on this blog.

<http://querythepast.com/>

(N.D.L.R. The following article originally appeared on the My French-Canadian Family blog.

Ce blogue est dédié aux familles canadiennes française de partout dans le monde. Nous ne sommes pas des académiciens ou historiens, simplement des gens simples qui explorent notre histoire. Nous aimons parler des choses que nous vivons actuellement, d'histoire et parfois un peu d'humour. En fait, nous savourons notre culture et notre héritage si riche.)

Will French-Canadian Celebrations return To Woonsocket? Gen Z says, OUI!

by Timothy Beaulieu

Most readers of this blog are very familiar with the New England mill towns, the Quebec diaspora, language loss, yada yada yada. It's one thing to talk about these things and mourn the loss of cultural identity, but it's a very different thing to do something about it.

A young Franco-American from the great state of Rhode Island is taking some action in his community. Calvin Fox is working on a project to bring a St. Jean Baptiste celebration back to Woonsocket, RI.

Last summer he spoke to a local newspaper about his project. In the article, Fox lays out some pretty interesting ideas for the celebration. It sounds like a fair or festival type atmosphere with a focus on the somewhat neglected French-Canadian roots of Woonsocket. Keep in mind, this would all occur post-COVID.

Can it work?

The article drops an interesting stat out there, "By some estimates, as many as 80 percent of the city's population could still trace their origins to Canada as recently as the 1980s." Is this true? We aren't 100% sure. However, there is a massive museum dedicated to French-Canadian immigration in Woonsocket. So, whether it's 80%, 50%, or 20%...there is an existing market for FCs in the state.

If we look around the region we see very similar successful events in Maine and New Hampshire. These are the kind of events that are economic drivers for a region.

La Kermesse - located in Biddeford, Maine, is going into its 38th year of operation. This Franco-American event is a weekend extravaganza that occurs right around the St-Jean (June 24th).

This event draws thousands of people to Biddeford. It has a parade, carnival rides,

and food vendors.

While the festival's roots are Franco it is very much a secular/event for all.

This is very much in line with Fox's thoughts from the article where he mentions this, "However anyone wants to celebrate it they could celebrate it. It could be food, family gatherings," says Fox. "It could be almost like a St. Patrick's Day in a way."



La Kermesse - located in Biddeford, Maine

NH PoutineFest - which occurs annually at the Anheuser-Busch Brewery in Merrimack, New Hampshire, brings thousands of poutinefiacs and fans of Franco culture from all over the US to southern NH. This festival focuses on a food that many many people love and also splashes in a lot of Franco-American music and culture. This event is also very much along the lines of Fox's vision.

That's just scratching the surface. Fox appears to be striking the iron while its hot. If groups in Maine and New Hampshire can do it, why not Rhodie? If you agree sign the petition to get the work on this event started - Create a Franco-American Holiday, Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day June 24th in Woonsocket, RI



NH PoutineFest - which occurs annually at the Anheuser-Busch Brewery in Merrimack, New Hampshire

To view the original post got to www.myfrenchcanadianfamily.com or visit the Facebook page: @myfcmfamily



GOOD OLE SCHOOL DAYS

The following articles are the result of interviews conducted in 1985 by Helen Melvin a teacher at Dr. Levesque School in Frenchville. The first article is taken from an interview of Anne Marie Ouellette a former teacher at the Reily School. The second comes from an interview of Cecile Ouellette who taught at the Blaine School and in other schools in St. Agatha for many years. The third article is the recollections of Cecilia Michaud of her early days as a teacher at the unorganized territory school located across the street from the Sporting /club in Sinclair. Although this schoolhouse was not located within the municipality of St. Agatha, Mrs. Michaud provides an excellent account of the "good old school days" of 50 years ago. Although schools statistics are fairly accessible, personal anecdotes giving the flavor of a regular school day in a one room rural schoolhouse is rather rare.

THE REILY SCHOOL

From an interview with Anne Marie Ouellette in 1985

Reily School was located on the Mountain Road next to Claude Ouellette's house (on the St. Agatha side). The school was a one-room schoolhouse equipped with desks that were attached to the floor. Smaller desks were placed in the front and the larger ones were in back. On the desks were ink wells which the students used during penmanship classes and spelling. Class size varied; some classes may have had as many as four, others only one.

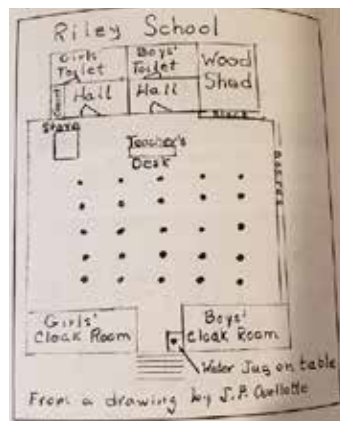
Students usually walked to school. In the wintertime, during storms, some students came to school on sleds drawn by a horse. These sleds had sideboards and were furnished with sheep or bearskin blankets.

This school had no running water, nor

electric lights. Heat was supplied by a wood stove. A student was put in charge every morning during the winter months to start a fire in the stove around 5:00 AM. By 8:00 AM the classroom would be warm. Normal pay for this job was \$15.00 per year.

One teacher had the job of teaching all grades, one through eight. She would usually start instructing the first graders first in the morning and work her way up to grade eight before 4:00 PM. The subjects that were taught included Reading, Penmanship, History, Geography, Science, Arithmetic, French and Religion. Two superintendents during those years were Lawrence Violette and Edward McMonagle.

Since Reily School had been built in standard 1927 form, it was chosen as one of the schools to be transported to form the new Montfort School which opened in the fall of 1948.

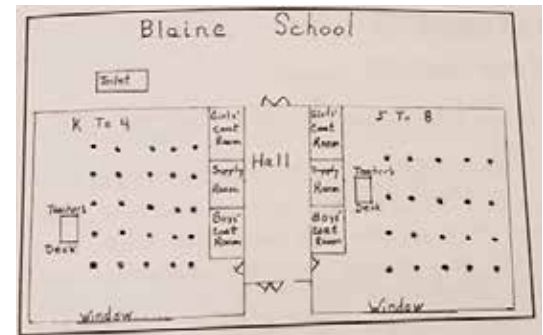


THE BLAINE SCHOOL

From an interview with Cecile Ouellette in 1985

Blaine School was the only two room schoolhouse in St. Agatha. It was situated next to Reno Pelletier's residence. This school was equipped with individual desks which had lift-up tops.

Blaine school had two classrooms. Grades 1 to 4 were taught in one room and grades 5 to 8 were taught in the other. Each classroom had approximately 22 to 33 students with approximately 5 to 6 pupils



per grade level. School started around 8:30 AM. The lower grades were dismissed at 3:00 PM while dismissal time for grades 4 to 8 occurred at 3:30.

Classes started in the fall in mid-August and the school year ended in mid-June. Students had a potato vacation in September-October. Most students walked to school.

Blaine classrooms had walk-in closets with hooks where students hung their coats and put their boots. The school was heated by a wood stove. It also had two outhouses.

Students were taught Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, History, and Geography. They loved recess. During Music classes they had group singing. Students were usually given homework. Religion was taught first thing in the morning.

In 1947, Blaine School closed. It was moved when the schools consolidated to form Montfort School. Linda Bouchard's and Helen Melvin's former classrooms at Montfort School were Blaine School.

THE UNORGANIZED TERRITORY SCHOOL

by Cecilia Michaud

This little schoolhouse can be described as follows: The teacher's room was once the living quarters of the school, as the teacher sometimes lived-in. The furnace was a huge round stove with a steel jacket around it. On the outside of this jacket was a wire strung on the outside from which wet mittens were hung to dry. The state provided wood for heating the school and an eighth grader was paid to come in and get the furnace going about one hour before school started each morning. He must have liked school because it never burned down! The teacher was paid about \$45 per every two weeks.

The stage at the back of the room was used for various activities such as teaching a group of one to four students. Many times

(Continued on page 30)

Cookbook season!

Vieux livres de cuisine

November 20, 2020 Franco-American News and Culture Baton Rouge Louisiana,
Biddeford Maine, Charleston, Thanksgiving, York County Genealogical Society
By Juliana L'Heureux

Let's enjoy reading cookbooks from the past and creating a few traditional recipes!

Pandemic cuisine includes rediscovering the recipes published in old cookbooks. My cookbook collection includes "vieux livres de cuisine". Yellowed pages in aging books, most of them with broken spiral spines, accumulate like hangers seem to mysteriously grow in my closets. I often forget where the cookbooks originally came from, yet the numbers of them continue to grow. Of course, with the Holidays upon us and while sheltering to protect the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, there are seasonal opportunities to revisit traditional recipes. Rather than prepare the recipes for a big meal, they can be served over a period of days. In fact, we have all winter long to try a different recipe a day or a week, from "vieux livres de cuisine".

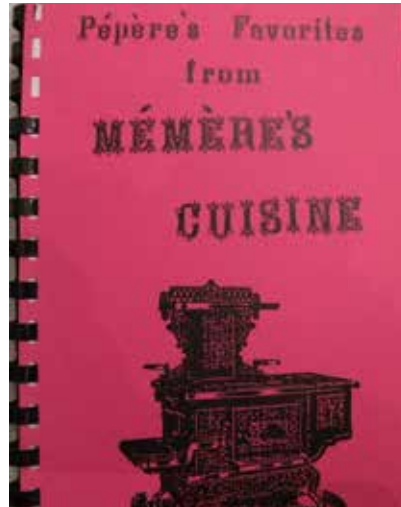
Recipes printed in these special books are usually submitted by family members who have contributed them from among their personal favorites. They include quaint titles, like Huguenot Torte, Pate Au Patate and Baptist Skillet Cookies. Of course, the Franco-American cookbooks include a sampling of familiar Tourtiere recipes, even though, a few of the titles have been Anglicized to either "Pork Pie" or "Beef Pie".

Check my Tourtiere recipe collection, those sent to me by readers, at a link published below.

In one "vieux" Joyeux Noel Acadian cookbook, I found the coconut candy recipe my mother in law made on special occasions. There was no written recipe for this candy, so my husband often made it from his memory. We now have a written version found in a Louisiana Acadian cookbook, edited by Mercedes Vidrine, published in 1967, in Baton Rouge by Clairor's Book Store.

Sharing recipes are excellent ways to help reach out to those who are self sheltering to prevent the community spread of infectious disease, especially, during the Holidays.

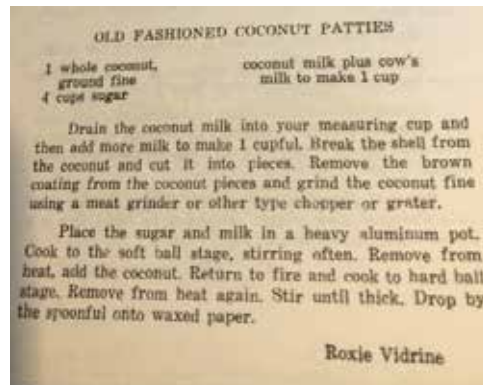
Therefore, I am giving credit to a few books in my collection with a sampling of some of the published homespun recipes.



Published in 1993, by the Franco-American Genealogical Society in Biddeford, Maine



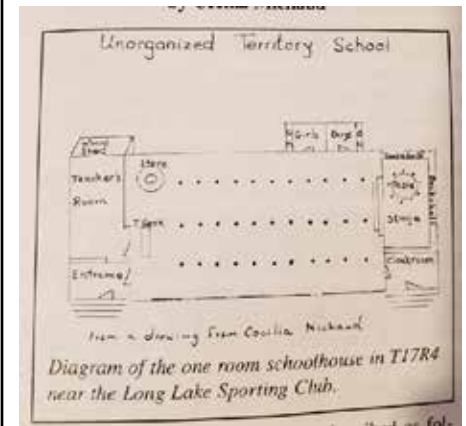
Published in 1967, in Baton Rouge, LA, edited by Mercedes Vidrine with illustrations by J.A. Allen



Rose Anna Morin L'Heureux, my mother in law, made these patties for her family during Christmas. I was thrilled to find a written recipe published Joyeux Noel!

(Continued on page 35)

(GOOD OLE SCHOOL DAYS continued
from page 29)



the small group was the entire grade. Some years some grades had no students at all. The stage was also used as a dining table as many students brought their lunches to school. We had plays for which the stage was convenient. The most exciting activity occurred around Christmas. In August, the Director of Unorganized Territory Schools in Augusta would request our class lists and a census. Around Thanksgiving, Coles' Express would deliver huge boxes. These were delivered to the school if the teacher lived at school or to the teacher's home. Around Christmas, the students would choose a tree from the woods behind the school and set it up on the stage. Everyone made decorations for the tree. On the last day of classes, before Christmas vacation, there would be a party, singing of Carols until, from somewhere, Santa Claus would come Ho! Hoing! into the school. He would have a truckload of gifts which he gave out. Surprisingly enough, the gifts were just what each wanted. Amidst the oh-ing and ah-ing, the teacher and Santa would wink at each other. The gifts were given by different schools and organizations in towns and cities of Maine.

Before 1945, the school housed grades K to 8. After 1945, the eighth graders went to Sinclair school. School started at 8 AM and dismissed at 3 PM with one hour for lunch. Children walked to school. The limits of the school's jurisdiction was one mile toward school from St. Agatha town line and one mile away from the school toward Sinclair. The school year ran from July 15 to Christmas. School then closed for the rest of the winter because of the cold and the lack of any conveyance for the children. School reopened on March 15 and closed for the summer on June 30. There were two weeks off until July 15 when school reopened for a new year.

Kerouac's St. Louis de France

*Minus any current preservation commitment from either the Archdiocese of Boston or the City of Lowell, MA, it's conceivable that some or all of the buildings that constitute the former St. Louis de France parish in Lowell could be demolished when the property is sold - an unfortunate prospect for Lowell's Franco community and the literary world alike, since the site as it now stands embodies a time, a place, a culture, and the genesis of a major American writer of the 20th century. Jack Kerouac's novel *Visions of Gerard* fictionalizes the year of his brother Gerard's death at age nine. And it recreates the 1925-1926 world of the Kerouac (the fictional Duluoz) family in the heavily French-Canadian neighborhood near the school and church that anchored their life. Shown here are photos of the St. Louis de France buildings as they now stand. The photos are accompanied by passages from the novel. All photos and text in italics by Suzanne Beebe.*



"At the end of Beaulieu Street ... Gerard turns right to go to St. Louis which is right there along three wooden fences of bungalows, first you see the nun's home, red-brick and bright in the morning sun, then the gloomy edifice of the schoolhouse itself with its longplank sorrow-halls and vast basement of urinals and echo calls...."

"To the other end is the Presbytere (Rectory) where Father Pere Lalumière the Curé lives, and other priests, a yellow brick house awesome to the children as it is a kind of chalice in itself and we imagine candle parades in there at night and snow white lace at breakfast..."

In the photo above, the former convent is to the left, the former school to the right. In the photo to the right, the former rectory is seen from the rear, as described in the quote above.



Construction of a more modest structure than originally planned was completed in the early 1950s of beige and brown brick." The photo to the left clearly shows the larger square footage of the original W.F. Fontaine design in the footprint and gray granite exterior of the remaining basement level space. The expanse of the later construction was more restricted. The building's cornerstone, shown below, displays the earlier and later dedication dates of the two levels.



A 2005 survey of the St. Louis site conducted by the Massachusetts Historical Commission describes St. Louis de France Church "as an unusual, if not unique structure, due to having been constructed in two distinct phases. The original construction, that of the basement level of a large church, took place in 1917. The principal material was gray granite ashlar faced stone block.

"Then the church, St. Louis de France, a basement affair...with concrete cross, and inside the ancient smooth pews and stained windows and stations of the cross and altar and special altars for Mary and Joseph and antique mahogany confessionals.... Where Gerard had been and kept on going many a time, he liked to go to church. It was where God had his due...."

"O, to be there on that morning, and actually see my Gerard waiting in line with all the other little black pants and the little girls in their own lines all in black dresses trimmed with white collars, the cuteness and sweetness and dearness of that oldfashion'd scene, the poor complaining nuns doing what they think is best, within the Church, all within her Folding Wing.... I'll never malign that church that gave Gerard a blessed baptism, nor the hand that waved over his grave and officially dedicated it—Dedicated it back to what it is, bright celestial snow, not mud—Proved him what he is, ethereal angel...."

(Continued on page 32)

Gerard's Vision Revisited

From Kerouac's *Visions of Gerard*

It's a bright cold morning in December 1925 just before Christmas, Gerard is setting out ... to the school, where the kids are, in the yard, and the nuns....

The kids bumble into their seats in the classroom.

"This morning," says the nun up front, "we're going to study the next chapter of the catechism—" and the kids turn the pages and stare at the illustrations done by old French engravers like Boucher.... It's Gerard's turn to read after Picou'll be done — He dozes in his seat from a bad night's rest during which his breathing was difficult, he doesn't know it but a new and serious attack on his heart is forming....

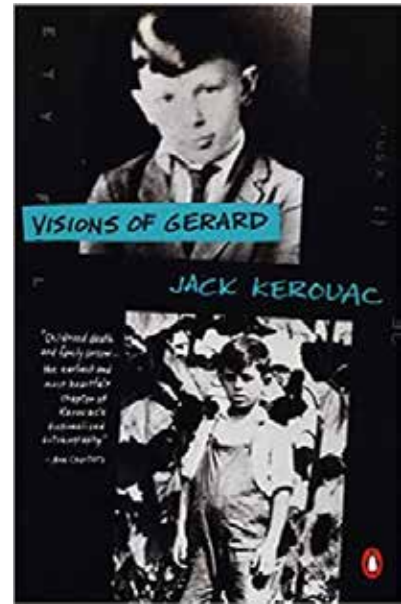
Gerard dreams that he is sitting in a yard, on some house steps with me, his little brother ... when suddenly he gets up and goes to another part of the yard, nearby, trees and bushes and something strange and gray and suddenly the ground ends and there's just air and supported there at the earth's gray edge of immateriality, is a great White Virgin Mary with a flowing robe ballooning partly in the wind and partly tucked in at the edges.... On her breast, a crucifix of gold, in her hand a rosary of gold, on her head a star of gold — Beauteous beyond bounds and belief, like snow, she speaks to Gerard:

"Well my goodness Ti Gerard, we've been looking for you all morning—where were you?"

He turns to explain that he was with ... that he was on ... that he was ... that ... — He can't remember what it is that it was....

... his arm is rudely jolted by Sister Marie...

Visions of Gerard by Jack Kerouac
Publisher: Penguin Books
Paperback: 144 pages
Cover Design: Daniel Rembert
Cover Photos: courtesy of John Sam-
 pas and Estate of Jack Kerouac



What Did You See, Gerard?

What did you see, Gerard, in that room
 Where the strict nun spoke of God
 As you, so tired — always tired —
 Nodded off to enter heaven
 In the little cart provided
 By the lovely lady dressed
 In white and gold — *la belle vierge*,
La sainte aimante et douce Marie?

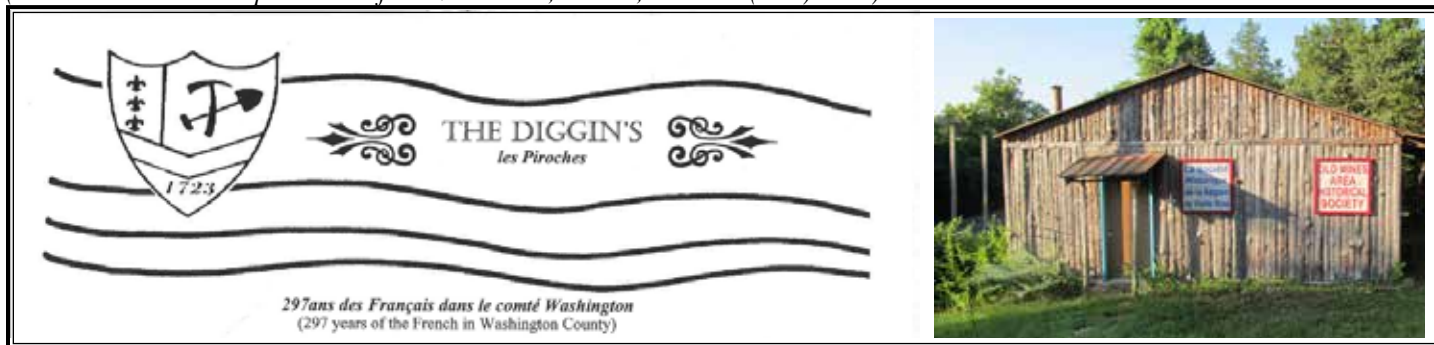
Did you really see the Virgin?
 Was it just a dream? Or was
 She really looking for you in
 Eternity to bring you home
 From this your brief and painful sojourn
 In a transitory world
 Filled with searing, piercing sorrow.
 (Tender mother that she is!)

She would know of your return,
 Wouldn't she who dwells forever
 In heaven with her son and all
 The holy ones who follow him
 In laying down their need for power
 And greedy triumph in this life.
 And she would bend, would she not,
 To comfort you and calm your fears.

'Ti Jean, your little brother, writes
 That you yourself believed that you
 Had seen her and were being led
 By her to heaven, but also this:
 That you had seen we all exist
 In heaven and we just don't know it —
 Like fish swimming in a boundless
 Ocean that they can't distinguish.

© 2020, Suzanne Beebe

(N.D.L.R. Printed with permission from Volume 25, Issue 3, Automne (Fall) 2020)



Down the Pandemic Road Again

By Jeff Higginbotham

While there are a lot of opinions, even heated debates, surrounding many aspects of Coronavirus, Covid-19 or whatever you prefer to call it, this article isn't about them. I'm going to do my best to stay away from those debates. Instead, the focus is on what happened a century ago when the world was gripped by another pandemic, the Spanish Flu, and I'll let the reader make their own comparisons to what's happening today. Personally, I think there are some striking similarities and possibly lessons to be learned from our grandparents and great grandparents handling of the situation.

A hundred years later its name is still in question. It really didn't originate in Spain, so why is it called the Spanish Flu? Most of the world was involved at the time in the Great War which we now know as World War One. Spain wasn't involved in the war however and when the Spanish King came down with the flu in the spring of 1918, the Spanish press had no war time restrictions on what they could publish. Without those restrictions, the King's illness was reported on extensively. Simply put, most of the world knew a few people around them were getting sick, but with no national or world reports to compare to, they didn't understand the extent of what was happening. The first they heard of the severe sickness was the King of Spain, so it came to be called Spanish Flu. The warring countries like Great Britain, France, Germany, and the United States already had experienced "the three-day fever" but being at war were limited on what could be published. They had no restrictions on passing along the Spanish reports about the King.

Having a hundred years to investigate and research, the general consensus now

is that the Spanish Flu originated in the United States and travelled to Europe with the American troops headed to join the war. Those troops gave it that "three-day fever" moniker. From there it was spread across the world. It lasted just 15 months but was the deadliest disease outbreak in human history, killing between 50 million and 100 million people worldwide. The real number never to be known due to poor or nonexistent record keeping of the day in many parts of the world. Backtracking through the spread of Spanish Flu, the earliest cases were reported among the troops at Camp Funston, in central Kansas, on March 4, 1918. Within two weeks 1,100 soldiers were in the hospital and several thousand more were sick in their barracks. Within weeks, major outbreaks had spread to 2/3 of the three-dozen large military camps in the US and into civilian life. But little was reported due to those war restrictions. Pinpointing the origin of Spanish Flu even further, there were public health reports of an unusually large number of people contracting a violent sickness in Haskell County, Kansas in January 1918. Haskell County doing her patriotic duty to support the Great War, sent a few of her men to be soldiers. Those men reported to Camp Funston in early March 1918 unknowingly setting off a World Wide pandemic. Other theories on Spanish Flu origins are linked to Britain, China, and France.

History tells us that there were really three waves of the Spanish Flu. The first, in the spring of 1918 subsided by summer and was thought to be over by late summer. By September though, it was back in a more lethal form. Wave three came in January 1919 and ended that spring. One notable case in the third wave occurred at the Versailles

Peace Conference. On April 3rd President Woodrow Wilson collapsed. Having the lens of 100 years, his symptoms fit perfectly with Spanish Flu symptoms. Influenza was widespread in Paris at the time and had already taken the life of one of his aides. Historians believe this may be why Wilson abandoned his principles and led to him signing a flawed peace treaty, eventually leading to World War Two.

One of the terrorizing aspects of Spanish Flu was the rapid onset and severity of symptoms. Like most influenzas you would start to show symptoms a couple days after being exposed. Those symptoms could be mild and cold like, and the person recovers. Or they may rapidly progress to the person dying from lack of oxygen in a matter of hours from the onset of symptoms.

Under the headline **SPANISH INFLUENZA --- WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT SHOULD BE TREATED** from the Weekly Independent (Half of what would become the Independent-Journal) of the fall of 1918 proclaim; *Go to Bed and Stay Quiet – Take a Laxative – Eat Plenty of Nourishing Food – Keep Up your Strength – Nature Is the Only "Cure"*. Under the heading **HOW TO AVOID THE DISEASE** Evidence seems to prove that this is a germ disease, spread principally by human contact, chiefly through coughing, sneezing or spitting. So avoid persons having colds – which means avoiding crowds – common drinking cups, roller towels, etc. Listed right along in the same article is how to prevent a cold by using Vick's VapoRub. Then the following week is the Headline **HOW TO USE VICK'S VAPORUB IN TREATING SPANISH INFLUENZA**. Followed the following week by the headline **DRUGGISTS!! PLEASE NOTE VICK'S VAPORUB OVERSOLD DUE TO PRESENT EPIDEMIC**. Another treatment recommended throughout the world was large doses of Aspirin. Today we realize large doses of Aspirin can be fatal, keep in mind the reason for those childproof (Continued on page 34)



French Holy Days And Customs

by **Donalda LaGradeur**

LE JOUR DE L'AN

New Year's Day is really the most important feast day in the French Canadian calendar and tops the list of family social events...The family always gathered at the patriarchal home. In the morning all the children knelt at their father's feet, as soon as they saw him, for his blessing. He placed a hand on each bowed head, making the sign of the cross while making a short prayer... No matter how old, or how long away from home, whether single or married the visiting children or visiting grandchildren knelt for the patriarchal blessing as soon as they entered the house.

Everyone kissed each other on New Year's Day. The young men when calling on their sweetheart started by kissing the grandmother, the mother, and all the other girls in the family so that no one could object when he finally kissed his sweetheart.

There was always much visiting on New Year's Day with neighbors and friends calling on each other. I also remember the

custom of "Courrir la Vigne Alle". One man began by calling on his neighbor and enjoying a glass — or more — of wine, after which the two of them called at the home of a third friend for another glass of wine, and so on until there were 20 or more stopping for the glass of wine. The last visit was made to the richest man in the neighborhood, as he alone would have enough glasses and wine to exercise the hospitality.

CADEAUX ET TOURTIERES

Gifts were always exchanged between adults on New Year's Day — and the children looked also for gifts, which were supposed to be brought during the night by "Croque-Mitaine"...

And of course there was always a big dinner to end off the day...the table for the family dinner was festive with the best dishes, glassware and silver...French Canadians were very fond of goose, stuffed and beautifully roasted, with the traditional "tourtiere a la viande" as a close second. The tourtieres,

or meat pies, made of ground pork with onions and spices with a rich crust, were baked just before the start of "les Fetes". Starting with Christmas Day on to New Year's Day and "Le jour des Rois" (Epiphany, January 6) — a holy day in Canada — with the Sundays in between, made a lot of holidays for feasting, visiting and celebrating.

Housewives would prepare for the round of entertaining by baking as many as 30 to 40 tourtieres, 25 dozen doughnuts, as well as many fruit pies of all kinds, which were frozen and then warmed up in the oven when needed. Every household had a special cupboard built on the porch just off the kitchen where the frozen food was kept.

MARDI GRAS

"Les Fetes" was the start of "Le Carnaval", each family receiving their relatives, friends and neighbors in their homes, the round of festivities ending with Mardi Gras, which is the day before Lent begins. On the evening of Mardi Gras people would dress in masquerade and go calling on neighbors before gathering at some home to celebrate until midnight.



*(Down the Pandemic Road Again
continued from page 33)*

Aspirin bottles. It is unknown how many of the Spanish Flu deaths were actually caused by Aspirin poisoning.

The Potosi Journal (the other half of what is now the Independent-Journal) gives brief glimpses into local happenings during the deadliest second wave.

Oct 16 County Supt. Of School Fox tells us that many of the rural schools are closing on account of the influenza epidemic. * It is reported that De Soto has over 1,300 cases of the influenza and nine deaths have resulted there from the epidemic. * A number of cases of the influenza are reported here, among the first to be stricken with it were County Clerk Smith, J. T. Terrell and

Mrs. Healy Boyer.

Oct 30 Potosi is a fine place to live when epidemics sweep the country. Although we have had and still have some cases of the Spanish influenza, no fatalities from it have occurred. * The De Soto Press of last week published twenty-one, notices of deaths occurring in that city from Oct 26th to 24th (dates as listed in paper), Among those who passed away was Adrian Steele, a well-known attorney of De Soto. The influenza epidemic is so bad there that the local Red Cross Relief Committee has found it necessary to render aid.

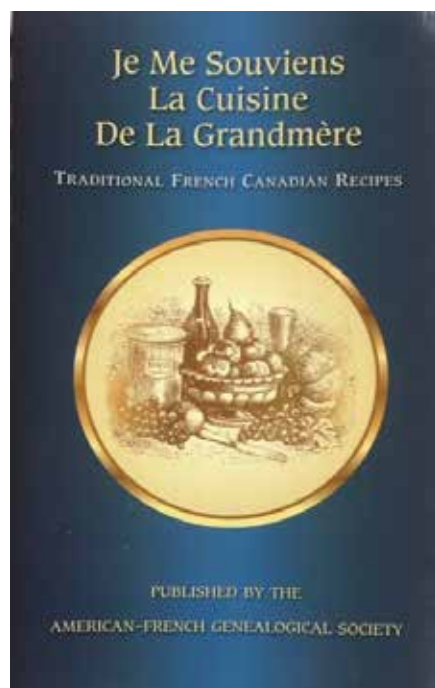
Nov 6 The influenza epidemic is abating * School will reopen Monday next after being closed for three weeks. * Miss Elizabeth Dearing of this place and Miss Valle Higginbotham of Fertile have come

home from Columbia on account of the influenza. Miss Dearing is just recuperating from an attack of it.

Nov 20 The "flu" still find an occasional victim. * A severe epidemic of the whooping cough is raging in the Old Mines neighborhood, often, it is reported, all the children in the family, as high six and seven, being down with the ailment at the same time.

Dec 11 The influenza is said to have caused some 360,000 deaths already in this country. * The "flu" is renewing its grip in many sections, but in Potosi there is not much of it.

Dec 25 The "flu" has taken a fresh grip here. Quite a number of cases in town and in the surrounding country also.



A PERFECT GIFT FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

Our French Canadian cookbook, *Je Me Souviens La Cuisine de La Grandmère*, features more than 700 traditional recipes printed in English. We are offering this cookbook for sale online only this year because the library remains closed. However, our volunteers are processing orders every day to get your purchases to you in a timely manner.

The cookbooks are \$15.00 each plus \$6.00 shipping and handling. Add \$2.00 shipping and handling for each additional cookbook. Rhode Island residents add 7% state sales tax.

This cookbook has nearly 200 main dishes and over 250 desserts. It makes a great stocking stuffer. Why not order one for yourself while you're at it!!!

Je Me Souviens La Cuisine de la Grandmère is available on our AFGS website in our Online Store at <https://afgs.org/site/shop/> under OTHER BOOKS & PUBLICATIONS

Bring back those happy days with old family favorites you can prepare for this joyous holiday season!

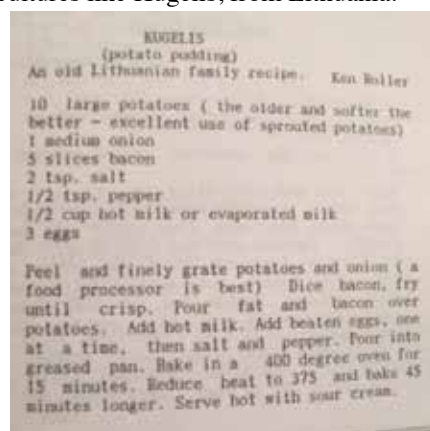


**American-French
Genealogical Society**
Woonsocket, Rhode Island USA

Questions? Email us today at info@afgs.org

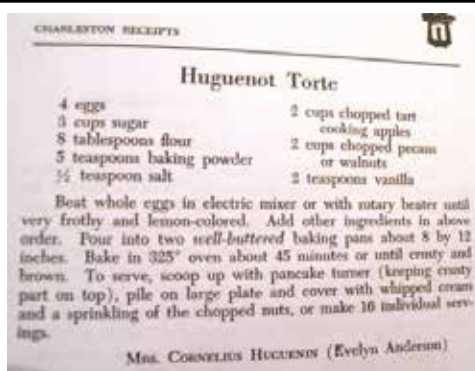
(Cookbook season! Vieux livres de cuisine continued from page 30)

Among the Franco-American favorites are also contributions from diverse cultures like Kugelis, from Lithuania:

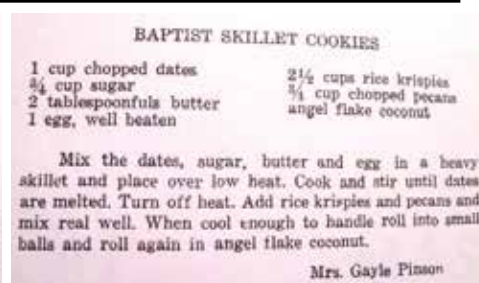


A recipe published in the *Franco-American Genealogical Society* cookbook.

Check out more information about Kugelis recipes at: <https://www.allrecipes.com/recipe/130651/lithuanian-kugelis/>



Published in the *Junior League of Charleston, South Carolina "Receipts" cookbook*, published in 1950.

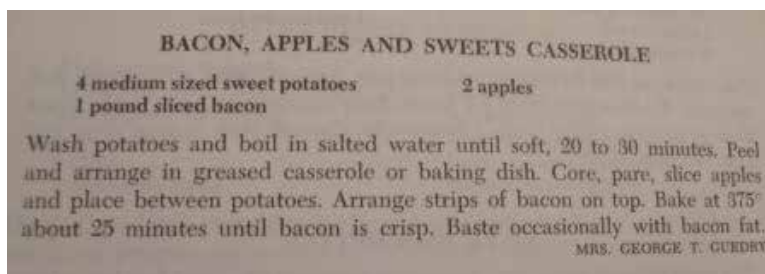


Published in the *Joyeux Noel Acadian* cookbook.

I appreciate reading and preparing old fashioned recipes and often modify them to my family's tastes..

We can thank our creative ancestors for protecting the recipes published in "vieux livres de cuisine".

Bon appetit! Enjoy your own family's recipes. My wish is for all of us to have a happy, safe and healthy holidays!



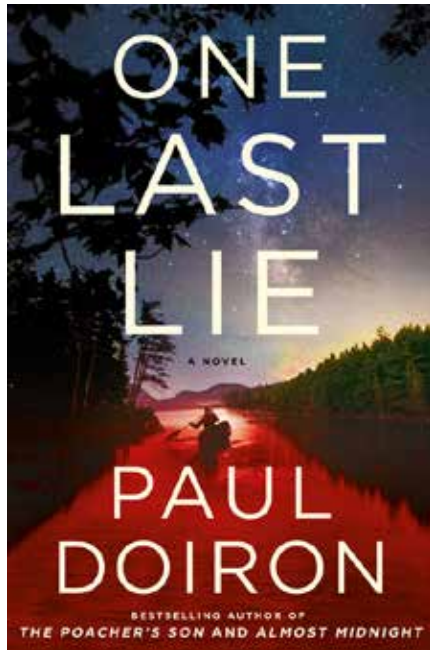
Another Acadian recipe



BOOKS/LIVRES

“ONE LAST LIE”

by Paul Doiron



A sudden disappearance reveals a startling connection to a fifteen-year-old cold case in *One Last Lie*, the eleventh Mike Bowditch novel from two-time Edgar Award finalist Paul Doiron.

“Never trust a man without secrets.”

These are the last words retired game warden Charley Stevens speaks to his surrogate son, Warden Investigator Mike Bowditch, before the old man vanishes without explanation into a thousand miles of forest along the Canadian border.

Mike suspects his friend’s sudden disappearance has to do with an antique badge found at a flea market—a badge that belonged to a warden who was presumed dead fifteen years ago but whose body was never recovered.

On a mission to find Charley before he meets a similarly dark fate, Mike must reopen a cold case that powerful people, including his fellow wardens—one of whom might be a killer—will do anything to keep closed.

“THE IMPOSTER”

In this original short story (available only as a digital download and audio) Mike Bowditch is confronted with a case of stolen identity.

When the body of a young man is pulled from a submerged car in Roque Harbor, rookie game warden Mike Bowditch is shocked when the man’s driver’s license identifies him as none other than...Mike Bowditch.

For weeks, Mike and his colleagues have been fielding reports of a man terrorizing the locals while posing as a game warden, wielding a plastic pin-on badge and claiming to be “Warden Bowditch.”

Who is the imposter, why was he targeting Mike Bowditch, and how did he end up dead in the bottom of a harbor?

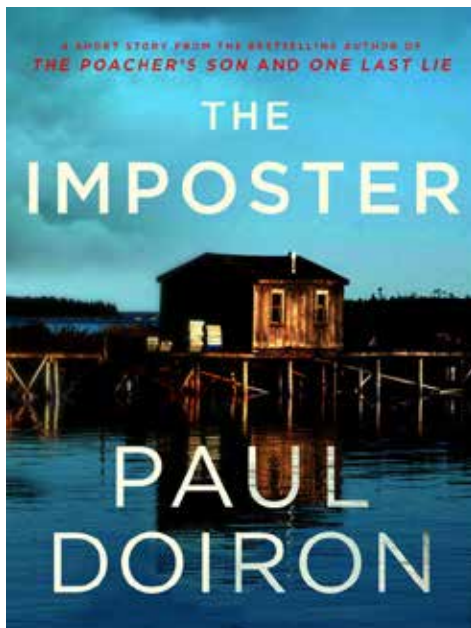
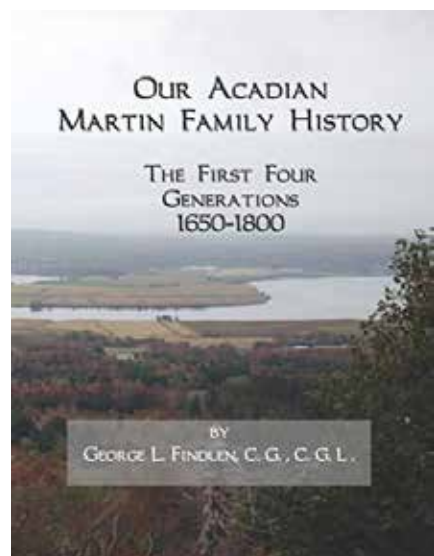


Photo Credit: Mark Fleming

PAUL DOIRON

Paul Doiron is the best-selling author of the Mike Bowditch series of crime novels set in the Maine woods. His first book, *The Poacher’s Son*, won the Barry Award and the Strand Critics Award and was nominated for an Edgar for Best First Novel. His story “Rabid” was a finalist for the 2019 Edgar in the Best Short Story category. Paul’s eleventh book, *One Last Lie*, will be published on June 30, 2020 by Minotaur Books. Paul is chair of the Maine Humanities Council, Editor Emeritus of *Down East: The Magazine of Maine*, and a Registered Maine Guide specializing in fly fishing.

<http://www.pauldoiron.com>



**Independently Published, Aug 8,
2019 - Acadia - 338 pages**

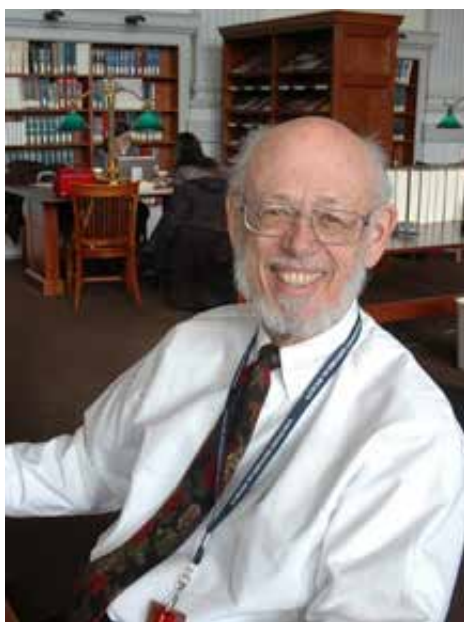
Our Acadian Martin Family History: The First Four Generations, 1650-1800

by George L. Findlen C.G., C.G.L.

From Barnabé Martin and Jeanne Pelletret of Port Royal, Acadia, to Simon Martin and Geneviève Bourgoïn of Saint Basile, New Brunswick.

The story of Barnabé Martin and Jeanne Pelletret, son René, grandson Jean-Baptiste, and great-grandson Simon is the story of an Acadian family who developed a productive farm they left to escape the 1755 deportation. The family sought shelter along the lower Saint Lawrence during the French and Indian War, resettled on the central Saint John River until the arrival of the Loyalists after the American Revolutionary War, and resettled along the upper Saint John River. The work of 20

years, Our Acadian Martin Family History describes details of their daily lives and historical events impacting the family directly. Findlen takes readers to a richer understanding of an Acadian family's perilous journey from Acadia (Nova Scotia) to Northern Maine and New Brunswick, Canada. The book's genealogy not only supplies the genealogy of the Martin family but also provides the names of Acadians who served as godparents of baptized Martins and as witnesses to Martin marriages. Family historians and genealogists tracking their own Acadian families will find invaluable resources and leads for discovering their stories.

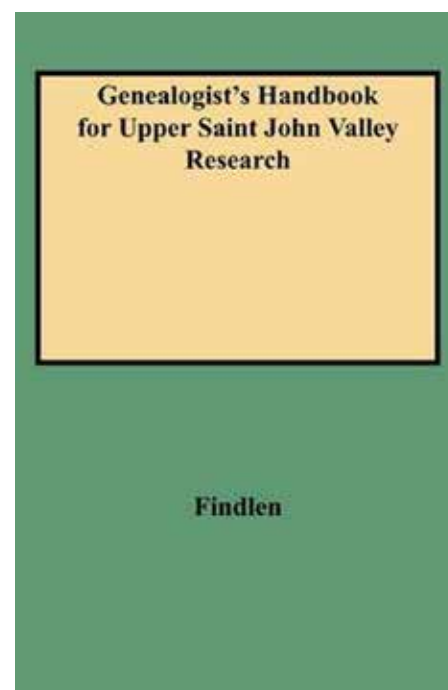


George Findlen

George Findlen is a retired academic administrator who has served as a faculty member or administrator at nine colleges and universities in seven states over thirty years. In retirement, he has re-invented himself as a genealogist, becoming certified in 2005 and recertified in 2009 and 2014. In 2014,

he became a certified genealogical lecturer. He researches Acadian and French-Canadian families in Eastern Québec, the Canadian Maritimes, and New England. In addition to researching his family, he writes articles for publication. His articles have appeared in the National Genealogical Society Quarterly and genealogical society journals in New England, Louisiana, New Brunswick, and Québec. A recent effort describes the results of a DNA study which documents that the two Acadian Martin immigrants are not related. The article he is proudest of is "The 1917 Code of Canon Law: A Resource for Understanding Catholic Church Registers," published in the June 2005 issue of the National Genealogical Society Quarterly. The article is the first ever in any language to explain how Roman Catholic canon law can explain unique parish register entries. He is currently writing a history of his Acadian lineage, a venture covering eight generations and 300 years of history. He likes to give talks to genealogists, and has addressed groups in four Upper Midwest states and has presented at regional and national conferences. He volunteers at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library where he helps visiting groups of genealogists, and he

currently serves on the editorial board of the National Genealogical Society Quarterly."



https://books.google.com/books/about/Our_Acadian_Martin_Family_History.html?id=CCGzyAEACAAJ



BOOKS/LIVRES

"STORIES OF AROOSTOOK - The Best of Echoes Magazine."



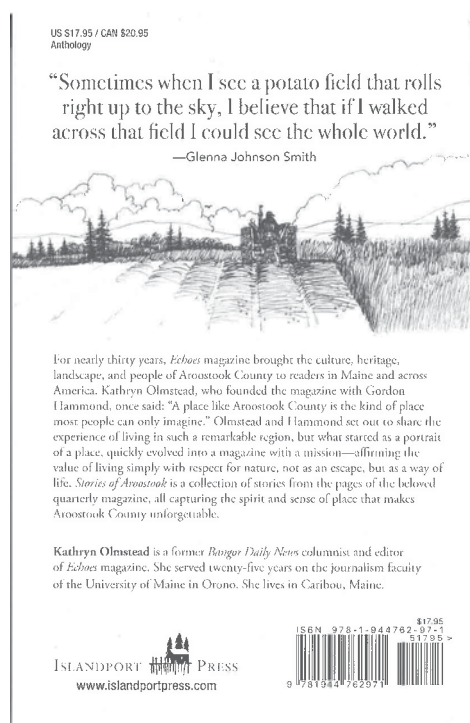
For nearly thirty years, Echoes magazine brought the culture, heritage, landscape, and people of Aroostook County to readers in Maine and across the United States. Publisher Kathryn Olmstead, who founded the magazine along with Gordon Hammond, once told a newspaper: "In our experience, a place like Aroostook County is the kind of place most people can only imagine." Olmstead and Hammond, both "from away" set out to share the experience of living in an area where people not only leave vehicles unattended and unlocked, but running in the winter to keep the engines warm. But what started as a portrait of a place, quickly evolved into a magazine with a mission—affirming the value of living simply with respect for nature, not as an escape, but as a way of life. *Stories of Aroostook* is a curated collection of articles and essays from the pages of the beloved quarterly magazine, all capturing the spirit and sense of place that makes Aroostook County unforgettable.

About Kathryn Olmstead



Kathryn Olmstead is a former Bangor Daily News columnist and editor/publisher of Echoes magazine, based in Caribou, Maine, which she co-founded in 1988. She served 25 years on the journalism faculty of the University of Maine in Orono, the last six as associate dean in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences. Her writing also has appeared in the Christian Science Monitor, USA Today, The World and I, American Journalism Review, Maine Townsman and Islandport Magazine. She also co-authored a WWII memoir *Flight to Freedom: World War II Through the Eyes of a Child* with Bangor portrait photographer Philomena Baker published in 2013. She was the founding director of the Maine Center for Student Journalism, based at UMaine, for high school journalists and their advisors

from 1993 to 2003. Before joining the University of Maine faculty, she was a correspondent for the Bangor Daily News, editor of the Aroostook Republican weekly newspaper in Caribou, an agricultural columnist for regional and national newspapers in Vermont and Kansas, and district representative for US Senator Bill Cohen. A native of Battle Creek, Michigan, she earned a bachelor of arts in English from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana, and a master of arts in English and education from the University of Wisconsin, Madison. She taught English and journalism in Wisconsin and New Hampshire before moving to Maine in 1974.



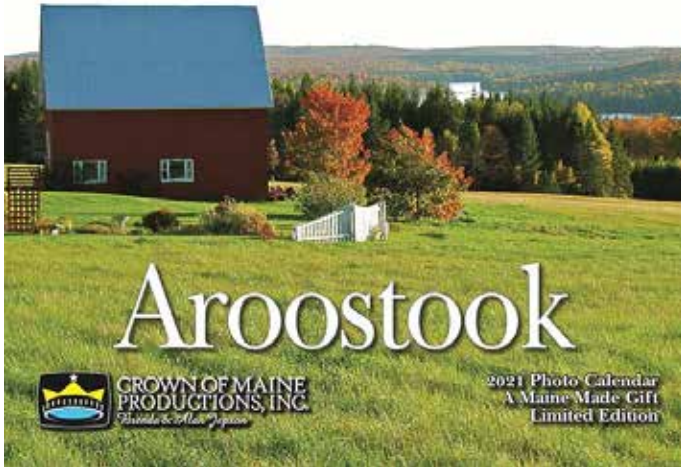
<https://www.booksamillion.com/p/Stories-Aroostook/Kathryn-Olmstead/9781944762971>

<https://www.walmart.com/ip/Stories-of-Aroostook-The-Best-of-Echoes-Magazine-Paperback-9781944762971/242023869>

<https://www.islandportpress.com/product-page/stories-of-arostook>

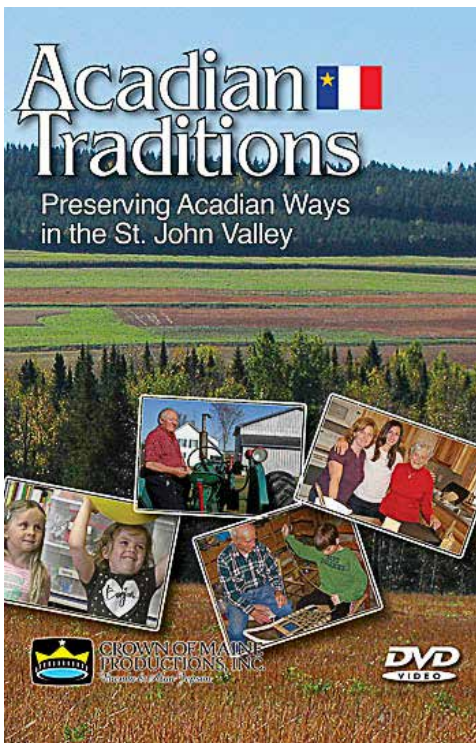


**CROWN OF MAINE
PRODUCTIONS, INC.**
Brenda & Alan Jepson



A beautiful Aroostook County Calendar

This year's calendar once more captures nostalgic and beautiful scenery that can still be seen in Aroostook County – from an ivy-covered, abandoned house in spring to an old mowing machine and wind mill in winter and from a summer boating scene at sunset to farm horses in a freshly mown field in the fall. Stunning scenery from southern Aroostook to The Valley reflects the unique geography and way of life in this special corner of Maine. Includes a map of Aroostook marked to show where these beautiful locations can be found. Makes a great gift to be enjoyed for only three-and-a-half cents per day, all year long!



Acadian Traditions: Preserving Acadian Ways in the St. John Valley, Our New Release!

Acadian Traditions is an hour-long film exploring how Acadian ways have survived in the St. John Valley of Northern Maine into the 21st Century. Brought to The Valley by their ancestors, who came here as refugees in 1785, these early Acadian practices have been remarkably preserved.

Some traditions were taught to the Acadians by the Native Americans in Nova Scotia, and some can be traced back to France. Other customs were born out of settling in a harsh, North American climate and having to rely on community connections to survive.

See how the Acadian descendants tap the trees to make maple syrup off the grid, watch them make snowshoes – the only mode of travel in winter years ago; view the way pre-school children are taught French through songs and games, and see how buckwheat is harvested and turned into ployes. These and many other Acadian customs are featured.

They are filmed in the beautiful St. John Valley with its forests, fields and slow flowing river.

Contact: Brenda N. Jepson

Crown of Maine Productions, Inc.

Email: abjepson@CrownOfMaineProductions.com

Web: <http://www.CrownOfMaineProductions.com>

YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/user/CrownofMEProductions>

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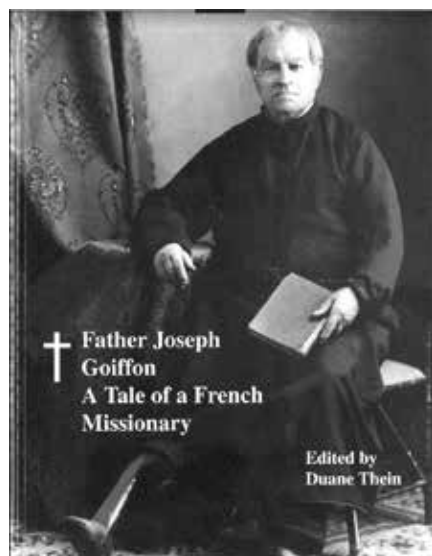
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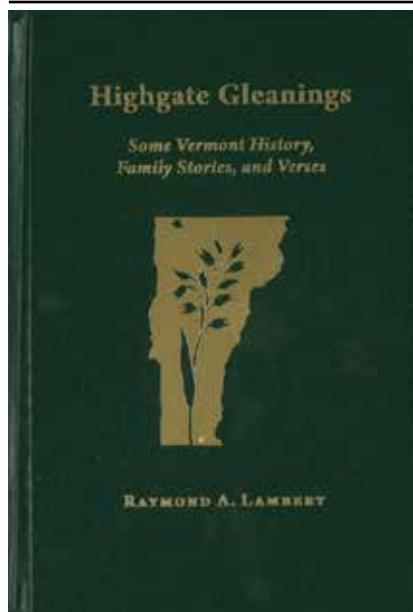
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Father Goiffon's tale of survival on the Dakota Territory during the winter of 1860 (in the original French and the English translation) as well as extensive map notes, letters, and the Goiffon family history.

*Edited by
Duane Thien*



Highgate Gleanings

Some Vermont History,
Family Stories, and Verses

by
Raymond A. Lambert
FOREWORD

This collection or gleaning of stories memories and some doggerel (bad poetry) is intended for my brothers and sisters, children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, friends, and neighbors and some folks in

my hometown, Highgate, Vermont. Read as and if you wish.

Legends and myths develop over time through storytelling. Memory of some details may be somewhat fuzzy. May the essence of the stories as told by me flow to any interested reader. My late minister friend, Dick Marceau, used to say, "I'm going to tell you a story. It may not have happened, but it's true." In that spirit, I ask the indulgence and, if necessary, the forgiveness of anyone I may have offended by faulty memory, omission, or bias in the telling. The privilege of being the oldest in family or community requires a certain level of requested indulgence. Kurt Vonnegut in

A Man Without a Country wrote,

Go into the arts. I'm not kidding. The arts are not a way to make a living. They are a very human way of making life more bearable. Practicing art, no matter how well or badly, is a way to make your soul grow, for heaven's sake. Sing in the shower. Dance to the radio. Tell stories. Write a poem to a friend, even a lousy poem. Do it as well as you possible can. You will get an enormous reward. You will have created something.

I've create something: Some stories, memories, and some bad poetry. Some may have the flavor of legends and myths. My mother's scrapbook prompted me to write some stories about family, Highgate, folks from the town, and some doggerel or bad poetry. The newspaper clippings saved by my mother were not in chronological order, nor are the attempts in this book. That just

may enhance the possibility of better storytelling and story-weaving.

*Ray Lambert
October 2019*



The last family picture taken with my parents, my siblings, and my paternal grandparents, Alfred D. Lambert and Delia Anastasie (Raymond/Raymo) Lambert. At our family homestead, which was the birthplace of Warren R. Austin, senator from Vermont and U.S. ambassador to the United Nations under President Truman. Highgate, Vermont (1961)

Back row, left to right: My brother Edward, me, and my siblings Ruth, Mary, Catherine, Anna, Dorothy, and Henry.

Middle row: My grandparents, Alfred and Delia Anastasie; my parents, Homer and Lucienne Lambert; and my brother Michael held in our mother's arms.

Front row: My siblings Louis, Rita, Barbara, and Steven.

St. Louis High School – A History

*by Michael Guignard
Alexandria, VA*

It has been almost 50 years since I first met Yvon Labbé in Brunswick, Maine in 1972. He told me at that meeting of a new group at UMO with the acronym FAROG (Franco-American Resource and Opportunity Group) and its publication then called the *FAROG Forum*. My high school in Biddeford, Maine had closed two years earlier and I promised to write an article for his publication. The school, École St. Louis de Gonzague, or St. Louis High School as it became better known, has been closed for 50 years now and it is time I make good on my promise.

A number of articles have been written about the closing of the school but most focus on its sports program (even though the school only had three sports -football, basketball and baseball - until a few years before it closed, when it added golf and had an intramural bowling league) See, for example, Mike Lowe's excellent article at <https://www.pressherald.com/2020/05/31/50-years-later-memo-ries-of-st-louis-high-remain-strong-in-biddeford/>

I would like to focus on St. Louis High School as a bilingual high school, which it definitely was, especially in its early years, and on its academics. As Ron Côté, a 1968 graduate of the school, mentions in Mr. Lowe's article, described the essence of the school and its raison d'être: "It was pride. It was a culture in the city, the way the parents raised their kids, with discipline and pride."

That culture was the Franco-American culture. "For the French-speaking population (the school's opening in 1930) was a day of triumph. Their sons now had the chance of their lifetimes." (Journal Tribune, May 24, 1990.)

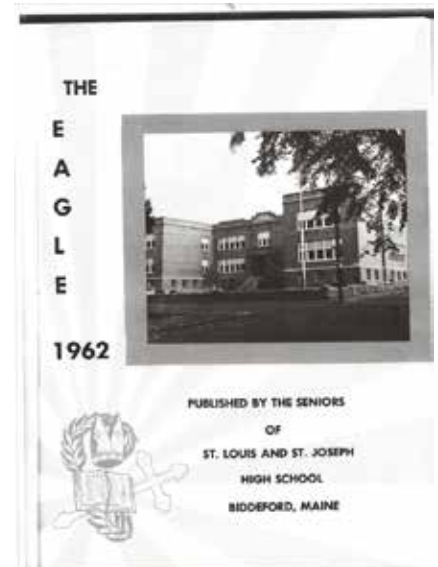
Gérard Coulombe, who graduated from l'École St. Louis de Gonzague in 1950 and writes frequently for *Le Forum*, says it was not uncommon for students to speak French among themselves at lunchtime, in the schoolyard or wherever when he was a student there. Maine's law against speaking French outside of French class did not extend to private schools. The graduations in those early years regularly featured addresses in French. The ubiquity of French at the school was aided by the fact that almost all of

our religious teachers, the Brothers of Christian Instruction (FIC), were Francophones, many of whom had been born in Canada. We still studied French in the early 1960s when I was a student at St. Louis reading *Sans Famille*, a tear-jerker novel by Hector Malot, rather than books by Albert Camus or Jean Paul Sartre. Frère Clément's efforts and prayers for the beatification of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne (FIC) founder Jean Marie Robert de la Mennais were invariably conducted in French. These efforts led to many subscriptions to *Le Courrier du Vénérable Jean Marie Robert de la Mennais* among the student body. We were trying to gain favor with our teacher.

St. Louis High published its first yearbook in 1951. The dedication page "dedicace" was in French, dedicated to "la famille Catholique." The next 16 yearbooks also sported its dedication in French. When one looks carefully at this first yearbook, it is replete with French surnames of graduates, French surnames of individual patrons, French surnames of sole proprietors of companies, stores, etc. One photo in the first yearbook of the debate team taken in a classroom has written on the blackboard "Dit-moi ce que tu lis, je te Dirai ce que tu es" One wonders if this was a religion classroom or, perhaps, a classroom where French was taught.

Almost all the graduates of the school, from 1934 to 1970 had French surnames. In my graduating class of 1965 - 66 graduates - three had non-French surnames but their mothers were Francophones. Individual patrons of the yearbooks were almost all Franco-American throughout the school's history.

École St. Louis de Gonzague shared its building with St. Joseph parish's girls high school, St. Joseph High School, after the building was enlarged in 1948. As a cost cutting measure, St. Louis High became a regional high school encompassing the parishes of St. Joseph's, St. Andre's and St. Mary's in Biddeford, Notre Dame and Most Holy Trinity in Saco, St. Martha's parish in Kennebunkport, and St. Margaret's parish in Old Orchard Beach. St. Andre's High School, the other Franco-American girls' Catholic High School in the city, ceased



independent operation in 1968 making the merger complete. (Biddeford-Saco Journal, June 13, 1968, page 1). I have never figured out why we had two girls' Catholic high schools in Biddeford. I am told that in the early years the Good Shepherd Sisters provided post elementary courses to the girls at St. Joseph parish and the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary did the same at St. Andre's. As course offerings grew, pride in "our" school and increased bureaucratic inertia set in and the two schools remained separate.

Making the school a regional one was aimed at avoiding duplication and encouraging economies of scale. St. Louis became the largest Catholic high school in the state of Maine after the merger. Tuition was set at \$175 for boys and \$150 for girls (presumably because there were more sports for boys - the girls had only cheerleading and basketball). The individual student would pay \$75 and his/her parish would pay the remainder. (see Biddeford-Saco Journal, Sept. 1, 1966, page 1). The plan did not work, primarily because St. Louis High School was a FRANCO-AMERICAN, Catholic high school. For Franco-Americans, the ethnic component and the faith component were interrelated. "Qui perd sa langue perd sa foi" and "Fermez vos écoles et vous fermerez vos églises" were maxims that guided the school's philosophy and goals.

As mentioned above, Biddeford had three Catholic parishes. Each had a grammar school. St. Mary's parish, however, was not an ethnic Franco American parish. As a general rule, graduates from St. Mary's elementary school went on to Biddeford

(Continued on page 42)

**(St. Louis High School – A History
continued from page 41)**

High School. In June 1961 there were 15 male graduates from St. Mary's. Only 4 matriculated to St. Louis High School. One of them left for the seminary after one year. The three remaining St. Mary's grads were taught French in a class by themselves with the director of arguably the best high school band in Maine, Marcel Drapeau. But they were 8 years behind their classmates who had studied in French half the school day in grammar school. Not every student looked forward to placing himself/herself in that situation. I have cited the male graduates of St. Mary's in 1961 since that is the class I know best. But that class is representative of all the graduates of St. Mary's elementary school in the 1950s and 1960s. Only four girls from that 1961 St. Mary's graduation class went to St. Joseph's High School. I still remember hearing criticism of St. Mary's pastor Cornelius Enright by some people in Biddeford because so few of his graduates were going to St. Louis or St. Joseph High School.

Given the high school preferences of St. Mary's grads, it is not surprising that few, if any, students matriculated to St. Louis Regional High School from Most Holy Trinity parish in Saco, St. Margaret's in Old Orchard Beach or St. Martha's in Kennebunkport. None of these parishes were ethnic ones. Moreover, a Catholic education was also available for boys at Jesuit-run Cheverus High School, only 15 miles from Biddeford and for girls at Catherine McAuley High School for girls, which opened in 1969, also in Portland.

Mike Lowe in his article on the closing of St. Louis High School quotes Roch Angers, who was a junior when the school closed, about the anger of the Franco-American community, much of it directed at the Bishop of Portland, Peter Gerety. Traditionally, there had been little love lost between the Irish-American Bishops in Portland. As a public servant in Biddeford, Mr. Angers chose his words carefully in describing Franco-American reaction to the closing. "There are still some tough words out there from some of my peers. They have a hard time with it." One acquaintance of mine says he became an atheist the day it was announced that the school would close. Another, a former star athlete at the school in the late 1940's, became a Jehovah's Witness.

Ironically, St. Louis Regional High School closed as the school was reaching

its peak scholastically and academically. In my class of 66 boys, only one had had a parent who had a Bachelor's degree. Yet, 26 of the 66 graduates went on to college and earned their Bachelor's degree. Others went on to different types of post-secondary school training and education.

The following is an incomplete list because memories have faded and sources are simply non-existent: in the fall of 1960, Paul Proulx became the school's first National Merit semi-finalist. He matriculated to Amherst, one of the country's most difficult schools to gain admission. The 1961 year-book shows Mr. Proulx shaking hands with Brother Albert, the principal. (page 74). In 1961, four more students scored high honors in the National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. (see Journal Tribune, May 24, 1990). In 1964 another senior, Maurice Dumas, became an NMSQT finalist and matriculated to Columbia. A year later, St. Louis High sported its first National Merit Scholar. He was the first St. Louis grad to go to Bowdoin. He was followed by 4 more St. Louis grads at the Brunswick college. Janice Lachance was a member to St. Louis Regional High School's last graduating class in 1970. She went to Manhattanville College, then to Tulane Law School. In the Clinton Administration she became the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, having been confirmed unanimously by a bipartisan Senate. Her father had been a very active member of the St. Louis Alumni Association which had labored so hard but unsuccessfully to keep the school open.

It is difficult to explain the success of so many of the school's graduates given the modest educational backgrounds and financial means of their families. Ron Côté's quote in Mike Lowe's article mentions "discipline." It is a constant theme in articles about St. Louis High. Brother Marcel Laroche, principal at St. Louis from 1937 to 1939 was a "good disciplinarian." "Frills and fads were abhorred" when he headed the school. Brother Albert who was principal longer than any other Brother at St. Louis, eight years from 1957 to 1965, was "exact-ing" and "steady school work, not frills was the order of the day." (Journal Tribune, May 24, 1990) Very good athletes who flunked their courses were asked to leave if they did not meet the school's academic standards.

The usual suspects are blamed for the school's closing – a decline in religious vocations, legislation that increased federal aid to public schools in 1965, and,



of course, the Bishop of Portland. Today many private schools in Maine continue to survive in part due to an increasing number of international students enrolled. Those students pay what it costs to educate them, a figure that appears to be an exorbitant amount by Maine standards. My wife's high school, Thornton Academy in Saco, which was in good financial footing even before admitting students from abroad, enrolls, according to its website, approximately 200 international students from 35 countries, most of whom live in dorms on campus, as a way to enrich campus offerings and multiculturalism. Had St. Louis Regional High School been able to survive until the flow of international students into U.S. secondary schools had begun in earnest, the school might have survived and still be in operation today. Increasing assimilation would have continued to change the school, no doubt, as has happened at still-Catholic St. Dominic's Academy, which enrolls international students, including hockey players from Canada. The Academy, originally called St. Dominic's High School when it was founded 79 years ago in Lewiston, was a school very similar to St. Louis in terms of student body, faculty and bilingualism. But St. Louis' basic character would have remained the same had it survived - with the same pride and discipline. I sometimes dream about St. Louis winning a state of Maine high school hockey championship (yes, the school would have all the sports with its international students) with one or two players from Quebec. The draw for those Québécois – a great education, a head start in getting a green card and eventual U.S. citizenship for themselves and their parents and *nous parlons français ici*.

(N.D.L.R. This is the third and final part of a series on St. Andre's Home for unwed mothers in Biddeford. The author has found four women who had their babies there or in the case of Rose had her baby under St. Andre's auspices. This is their story." Photos used with permission by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland)

Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History

*by Michael Guignard
Alexandria, VA*

St. Andre's Home – 1973 to the Present



Saint Andre's Home was unlike many homes for unwed mothers as it had a hospital and delivery room on the premises until 1963. From 1963 to 1969, the girls had their babies next door at Notre Dame Hospital. After Notre Dame merged with the Webber, babies were delivered at the latter facility about 3 miles from the Pool Street facility and less than a mile from the Prospect Street group home.

Thus, the kind of memories that Janet Ellerby recounts in her book of her traumatic experiences in getting to a hospital would not have haunted her to this day if she had had her baby at St. Andre's Home:

"Around seven o'clock the evening of March 19, 1965, I began noticing a tightening in my stomach - no pain but definite contractions. I got to sit in the special rocking chair, and other girls sat cheerfully around me, timing the irregular intervals. It was exciting until we all had to go to bed at eleven..... (I) assumed that that I would spend an uncomfortable night but that the next morning I would still be there..... We were very wrong, and a long, forsaken night of intolerable fear, loneliness and finally panic ensued.

Alone I my bed, I kept checking my watch with the flashlight my aunt had given me so I could read after the lights had to be out. At one in the morning, my pains were ten minutes apart, at two, eight minutes, at three I decided to stop counting the minutes and to will my body to put a halt to this process that was escalating all too rapidly. At four, in the middle of an intense contraction, my water broke, seeping into the mattress, warm, plentiful, and alarming. According to the rules of the house, given that development, I had to wake the housekeeper. I reluctantly knocked on her door, apologizing for getting her up. She was clearly tired and annoyed by the disturbance, this part of her job must have been one of the most

unpleasant. However, she called and awakened an on-call nurse, for our regular nurse, who lived in a garage apartment behind the home, was off duty that night. The housekeeper could not take me to the hospital because she could not leave the house unattended, and again rules forbade that she just call a cab and direct the driver to deliver me to the hospital. Instead, a nurse I was unfamiliar with had to come from across town to fetch me. As if to deepen the melodrama, it was snowing hard outside; the nurse called back to say that she had decided to all a cab and come for me that way rather than try to drive herself. I was to wait for her in the downstairs hall with my coat and overnight case ready. The housekeeper went back to bed.

I waited for her alone for almost an hour, wondering how I would live through this nightmare unaccompanied. The pains were shocking. I could not help but cry out every time one gripped me, so I kept stuffing my mittens in my mouth. The house was cold, dark, profoundly still. Above me on the second and third floors, everyone slept. My muffled cries and subsequent whimpering awakened no one. I kept looking at the phone. I imagined calling my parents. I needed them then more than any other time in my life; this was the hardest thing, and I was completely alone. Early on my aunt had told me that it was too upsetting to my parents to hear about the details of my pregnancy. I did not dare call them now in the middle of this Dickensian night and draw them into my panic and pain. I just sat there and imagined dialing the phone, and then I could hear their phone ringing next to their bed in San Marino and my mother's concerned "Hello," and then my inexcusable begging to please, please help me.

Finally, a little after five a.m., a woman I had never seen before but had to assume as an on-call nurse walked into the big front

door and hustled me out to the cab waiting in the snow. She seemed inexplicably angry with me and entirely unsympathetic. She was exasperated by my tears and moans. When the cab driver showed concern, she irately dismissed him, snapping that there was plenty of time and that I was just acting like a baby myself. My labor pains were by now coming one on top of the other, yet I was unable to convince her that they were valid, that I was in actual, desperate pain. Completely distraught, I frantically begged the cab driver to help me - which infuriated her; she should at me, "shut up!" and slapped me hard across the face. I was dumbfounded by her malice and utterly helpless. When we finally arrived, she shrilly cursed me when I told her I did not think I could walk and hauled me out of the cab. More afraid of her than of the pain, I bobbled across the entryway, through the doors, and into the brightly lit hall. After yanking off my snow-covered coat, she gripped my arm like a vise. Later I would watch her fingertips, four little purple bruises each with a small cut at the top from her fingernails, slowly disappear from the inside of my arm. But at that moment, with the white hall still ahead of me, that kind cab driver did help me; he had run ahead and found an orderly who now moved quickly to guide me into a wheelchair. I was admitted at 5:30 and take to a labor room here a nurse gently helped me undress. A young doctor, probably an intern, examined we quickly and asked "why did you wait so long? I had no idea how to answer his question" Janet calls it "a night from which I have never completely recovered."

Like many young unwed mothers in those decades, she was not allowed to hold her baby girl but she did manage to touch her face. Ms. Ellerby's book is 214 pages long and not until that last page does the (Continued on page 44)

(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 43) reader learn that her children helped her find her baby. "January 2001: Once again on a snowy morning, I met my daughter." (Ellerby, Intimate Reading, p. 214)

When I read Ellerby's account of the trauma she suffered before giving birth, I was reminded of the many accounts contained in *The Girls Who Went Away*. And I was struck by the fact that at the Florence Crittenden Home, where she had gone, there was only one staff member on the premises at the time she went into labor. At St. Andre, the staff who lived on site often outnumbered the number of resident unwed mothers. Sister Gertrude wrote me about the staffing at St. Andre's in 1951 when she joined St. Andre's full time after getting her nursing degree: "A couple of sisters were full-time teachers at St. Joseph School in Biddeford. The Sister-nurses covered the hospital floor around the clock: nursery, post-partum rooms, labor and delivery services. Weekly clinics, pre-natal classes and 4 pre-natal exercise classes. The personnel consisted of the Superior who acted as the Social Worker until a qualified Sister with an MSW came on board in 1953. The Treasurer who was also in charge of the farm and the garden. The R.N. who was on call (and on duty whenever necessary) 24 hours a day. Two Nurses-aids to cover 24 hours. The laundry sister No diaper service available. All labor and delivery linen as well as the hospital daily change of bed linen were done in our laundry. Two sisters in the kitchen preparing regular diets and special diets for the Sisters and residents. Also taking care of all fruits and vegetables from our huge garden. One House Mother, who was at the beck and call of the girls 24 hours a day. One or two school teachers at St. Joseph's who were part time house mothers." The House Mother for many years at St. Andre's was Mother Gert (Godbout) as the girls called her. Ironically, Florence Crittenden Homes charged \$70 a week to its patients in 1967. Patients from Maine paid \$28 a week and out-of-staters \$38 weekly at St. Andre's. (Loveitt, April 30, 1967). The sisters did not receive a salary, keeping costs down.

When Lynne had her baby in 1967, there were 17 religious sisters living at St. Andre's, all but one with a French surname. (After Vatican II, the sisters at least on this roster of religious staff at St. Andre's were identified by both their birth names and the religious name they took when they entered

the order) While a large staff did not guarantee that the girls would not feel alone or abandoned at times, as Lynne sometimes did, it would certainly prevent the kind of situations that happened at the home where Janet Ellerby had her baby. Ann Fessler mentions that most homes transported their residents to the hospital by taxi. George Rheault, the home's jack-of-all-trades handyman and caretaker, drove Lynne next door to the hospital. She was accompanied by not one, but two, religious sisters. (e-mail from Lynne, May 6, 2020) If a taxi had been needed, for one reason or another, in a small town like Biddeford, it would have been a maximum of 6 miles round trip from 1969

"the goal of the home is to provide an atmosphere of peace, piety and goodness that will help avoid discouragement and despair. This ministry requires compassion. The world is ready to blame these young girls when they are in effect its victims. It is a loving ministry catering to girls with physical, emotional, social and spiritual troubles."

to 1973 (after Notre Dame hospital closed and before the group home opened.)

Moreover, the staff at St. Andre's "were all given instructions on pregnancy, labor and even delivery." (Letter from Sister Gertrude, June 8, 2008). So if an emergency occurred before the doctor arrived at the home or before the patient made it to the hospital, they were prepared.

I have had the opportunity to interview Ann Marie Lemire who also worked at St. Andre's Home on Prospect St. when she was a Good Shepherd Sister (She subsequently left the order and is now a medical doctor). She remembered one of the girls who delivered unexpectedly in the bathroom when she was on duty. The sisters were ready and mother and baby did just fine. (Interview, June 5, 2009).

Mr. Rheault always made sure that the long driveway leading from the facility to Pool Street was plowed immediately after

snowstorms should an ambulance be needed to transport a patient to the hospital. (interview with Mr. Rheault's son, Andre, July 20, 2015. Andre also remembered feeding the horses and cows at St. Andre Home when he was a child living right next door to the home.)

Ann Fessler mentions in her book that girls at these homes were often treated callously because they were unmarried. She tells the story of one woman who got married solely to guarantee being treated with respect during her labor and delivery. After the birth she quickly got a divorce.

As noted earlier, nurse Doris Lambert remembers the nursing staff treated the girls with extra TLC because they knew most of the girls were going home empty handed.

In my research, I never found any derogatory statements inside the home or hospital about the unmarried patients there. A July 14, 1942 entry in the archives mentions one young patients who "gave us a lot of trouble" but "we do our work for God" wrote a Sister with resignation.

I did find in the 50th year anniversary bulletin of St. Andre's parish an unkind reference to St. Andre's Home residents in 1949 "who had enough honor to blush at their errors by wanting to hide themselves in the shade of the walls" of the Home. There were also hints of a conservative populace's apprehension in Biddeford about these girls in 1943 when the Ladies Auxiliary was founded; Lynne remembers hearing obscenities shouted by boaters on the river in 1967; and in 1973 when the Group Home was purchased on Prospect Street in the face of NIMBY complaints.

But I found no trace that these kinds of sentiments existed inside the home. The Good Shepherd Sisters published a magazine on the work of the order before the Home moved from the Pool Street to Prospect Street. The Nov-Dec. 1962 issue described the Home's goals this way: "the goal of the home is to provide an atmosphere of peace, piety and goodness that will help avoid discouragement and despair. This ministry requires compassion. The world is ready to blame these young girls when they are in effect its victims. It is a loving ministry catering to girls with physical, emotional, social and spiritual troubles." (Le Courier, November-December, 1962, Volume XLII, No 2, pp.70-79)

In another account written most probably in the late 1960's, the author (Continued on page 45)

(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 44)

writes "time spent at St. Andre's Home is time employed in rebuilding her life. She is exposed to the healing qualities of love, understanding and anonymity. The subtle influence of the environment here, the peace and orderly routine invariably bring the unfortunate girl to ask for help, counsel and guidance. Moreover, her physical condition receives the best that medical care can offer." (undated, unsigned two-page summary of the home's work entitled St. Andre's Home).

All the sisters with whom I have spoken enjoyed their ministry at St. Andre's. Sister Terry Gauvin, who grew up in the house that served as the group home in Biddeford, summarized her year working at the Prospect Street house after 1973 with the words "What a trip that was!" "it was a trip because I felt I was walking into my past yet the house and my life were so very different." Sister Terry herself was born at St. Andre's home on Pool Street (to married parents). Some of the residents were not much younger than Sister Terry; she was able to form strong bonds with them especially when she worked the 11:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. shift. (e-mails, September 6, 2007 and April 19, 2020)

Sister Joanne Roy, who has a younger sister born at St. Andre's, worked at the Lewiston Group Home for 11 years when it served at-risk young girls. In 2004, First Lady Laura Bush visited the Lewiston home and commended its work. Sister Joanne now runs a half-way house in Saco, Maine, for young woman who have been released from jail and are acclimating themselves to life on the "outside." This is her life's work and she loves it. I cannot conceive of any of these sisters with whom I have spoken treating the patients at St. Andre's with callousness or even casual indifference. The lay staff, such as the doctors who delivered babies there, according to Dr. Andre Fortier, had a great empathy for the girls. Sitting in Doctor Fortier's living room back in 2006 and hearing him speak in soft tones about his experiences at the home and the concern he had for 'his' girls gives me confidence that St. Andre's offered the best possible care available at the time among institutions of its kind. If its list of patients is any indication, St. Andre's Home and Hospital offered the best obstetric care in the city.

Unlike the home where Ms. Ellerby suffered so much trauma but closed decades

ago, St Andre's Home continued to offer shelter and care to unmarried mothers into the 21st century. After moving to Prospect Street in 1973 and opening two other Group Homes soon thereafter, St. Andre's continued to provide medical care to the unwed mothers-to-be. Its annual report for 1979-1980 showed that 73 expectant mothers were served through the Homes in Biddeford and Bangor. Their ages ranged from 14 to 32, 70% being 19 and under. 62% were referred by family and community agencies. 57% were from intact families and 54% were Catholic. 42% were from Southern Maine



and the remaining represented 15 of Maine's 16 counties. They were in residence for an average of 2.5 months and 51% of those who delivered surrendered their child for adoption.

St. Andre's Group Home in Biddeford is "like any typical family home with a kitchen, living room, sitting room and bedrooms. The home, though, also has classrooms, a bathing and dressing room for babies, three mother and baby rooms and a mother-to-be room that two pregnant women can share. There is also a laundry room and a bath, a big yard and vegetable and flower garden. Food and bedding are supplied at a small percentage of a client's income but no one is turned away because of lack of funds. The mothers-to-be and new mothers receive training in life skills, nutrition, child development, parenting, goal setting and individual counseling. St. Andre's also finds them opportunities for work or furthering their education". (annual report 1979-1980)

As with St. Andre's on Pool Street, residents continued to follow a certain routine – both the unwed mother-to-be and the parenting mothers at risk.

"The women are required to get up by 8 a.m. at the latest. They also must be showered, dressed and have themselves and (for those who have already delivered) their

babies fed by 10 a.m. and have their daily chore completed.

Each resident is given a particular section of the shared home to clean, rotating each week. The rest of the day is generally spent in counseling, attending classes, part-time work or free time.

Every resident is required to show up for dinner and residents take turns preparing and cooking the meal for everyone else. At 5:15 p.m. everyday staff and residents share the meal together around the dining room table." ("Helping Young Mothers to Help Themselves" Sun Chronicle, April 20, 2007)

When Hazel Loveitt visited St. Andre's Home in 1967 she was disappointed that there was no on-going counseling for the girls when they left the home. Given the absolute secrecy surrounding the girls' stay at St. Andre's, continued counseling would have been logistically difficult. But the girls who left the group homes, increasingly with their babies, continued to be advised and helped to become better parents. Kathy Wakefield, a former supervisor of the Biddeford group home, who was born at St.

Andre's and had a child there, said that the staff at St. Andre's had the best interests of the young mothers and their babies at heart saying that "we have a real empathy for them." (Sun Chronicle, April 20, 2007). Just like in the old days except that today society has deemed that the babies are better off with their mothers now that women have better educational and professional opportunities and can support children as single mothers. Decades ago, with the stigma attached to illegitimacy, the babies were deemed to be better off being adopted. Today the young mothers make the choice. Fifty years ago the choice was often, but not always, made for the unwed mother by her parents or by social workers.

Another important service performed by St. Andre's Home today is helping mothers and adopted children reunite. Between 1977 and 1994, the home was able to facilitate 133 reunions between mother and child. The *Courier du Bon Pasteur* published by the Good Shepherd Sisters often carried stories of reunions between birth mothers and surrendered child.

Priscilla Gonneville, who worked at the administrative offices of St. Andre's on Elm Street, wrote me about the process of reuniting birth mother and child:

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(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 45)

"When Sister Theresa retired due to poor health, the process of facilitating reunions eventually fell to me..... Sister Theresa had shown me how to handle these delicate situations. Once the State opened their adoption files, St. Andre was put in the precarious position of needing to tread very carefully, as confidentiality had always been promised to all parties involved at the time of adoption. At this point, we had many inquiries and each and every search (or reunion) was met with different reactions and/or emotions.; apprehension, tears, shock, worry, happiness and unfortunately, at times, sadness." (e-mail, April 1, 2020). Nevertheless facilitating reunions was one of Ms. Gonneville's favorite duties at St. Andre's when success was achieved when both parties sought a reunion.

The Sister Theresa mentioned in the paragraph above is Sister Theresa Therrien who was still working at St. Andre's when I began doing my research. She started her official duties at the Home in 1983 until transferred to Van Buren in 1986. She returned to the Home in 1990 and worked there as Adoption Supervisor until 2009. (e-mail from Sister Theresa, June 11, 2013). In the year 2000, she received the Angel of Adoption award from the Congressional Coalition on Adoption Institute, a well-deserved recognition.

But anonymity is still guaranteed. Being much more familiar with the issue of Homes for Unwed Mothers than I was at the start of my research, I can appreciate the importance of anonymity even today for many former residents of these homes, including my own birth mother and Claire, her roommate at Talitha Cumi. The pledge of anonymity was brought back to me when I told a cousin that I was researching the history of St. Andre's Home. He recounted how he had been hired to paint at St. Andre's Home in 1969. "We were under STRICT ORDERS. Absolutely NO CONTACT with any of the girls-under penalty of immediate firing!!" (e-mail, March 29, 2010) These kinds of edicts served their purpose though. Mary, from Portland, who had her baby in 1964, actually recognized one of the carpenters working on the Home's expansion as the friend of the father of her child. She was very relieved that she could be assured of not bumping into him inside the building by accident.

Gilbert Domingue had this to say about St. Andre's Home and the sisters. He was commenting on an article I had written in the Sun Chronicle in June 2007, as I was just starting my research on St. Andre's Home.

Re. your article in reply to the Sun Chronicle of 04/07.

..... I would view that the large number of residents would indeed have benefitted from the many programs, relationships, and experiences they underwent, and appreciated it more as they matured in life. The 16 years I spent at St. Andre's, from 1971 to 1987, during which time most of the major and dramatic changes took place at all levels...administration, location, programming, funding, etc.... would show it to have been historically and to this day a unique and class A organization, operated by



Photo courtesy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

a highly devoted community of sisters, the Good Shepherd Sisters, with a well-defined historical mission they fulfilled to the best of their ability, with great zeal, personal/professional sacrifices and limited financial resources. As you might pick up from this paragraph, I was highly privileged to have learned much about the origins of the sisters and the agency, the 'plusses and the minuses.' I will try to beef up on some of the details before our visit in June."

Mr. Domingue had been raised in Lewiston, Maine. He was very happy coming back to Maine after working in Newark, New Jersey during the riots of 1967. He had received his Masters of Social Work from Boston College, the same school where Sister Elizabeth Cyr got her degree. One of his challenges was that the sisters did not like to lay off (or to use a more modern term – "rif") staff) Over the years the lay professional staff had grown and after Mr. Domingue took over in 1971, early retirements were

encouraged. Given the more tolerant society, Mr. Domingue also, less than two months after his arrival, allowed the girls to go home on weekends and encouraged prospective residents to meet with the residents. A little over 3 months after taking the helm, Mr. Domingue and the sisters welcomed 9 girls to the home in one day. (Archives, January 3, 1972) It was after the holidays and presumably the girls spent Christmas and New Year's at home just as "Marie" had spent Christmas at home in 1946.

Michael Petit, a Saco native, also had kind words to say about the Good Shepherd Sisters. As Maine's Commissioner of Human Service, he spoke at the 40th anniversary of the foundation of the Home in 1980. In 1987, Mr. Petit assisted St. Andre's Home with lobbying strategies for appropriations for new programs at St. Andre's. He is still involved today with issues involving children. After leaving his Commissioner's job in Augusta, he came to Washington, D.C. to work with Marian Edelman of the Child Welfare League. Like the Sisters at St. Andre's, he has made children and family issues his life's work.

After her meeting with Lynne, Sister Gertrude wrote me saying "The visit with Lynne was a little intense but heart-rending..... As I look around, I realized that I am the only one left who lived the history of St. Andre's Home and Hospital. I also realize that I am somewhat on the defensive. I/we all worked so hard at making St. A's as perfect as possible. Of course, in retrospect, I realize that everything was not 100% but we really gave our whole body and soul for the cause..... At one point, Lynne wondered if we really loved our residents or was that a put on. However, she claims that she felt she was loved. I really can assure you – and her – that giving our all as we did had to come from love..... The material rewards were at a minimum. As Mother Theresa said: 'I would never do this for money'..... Lynne endured dreadful sufferings for the past 40 years. I hope and pray that as you work with her, she will more and more discover peace and serenity in her life. Wishing you well, Sister Gertrude Champoux, s.c.i.m" (letter, June 8, 2008, three days after our visit).

Today, Sister Viola Lausier serves as the institutional memory of St. Andre's Home. She arrived at the home on Octo- (Continued on page 47)

(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 46)

ber 30, 1967 from St. Ann's Orphanage in Massachusetts. She worked for St. Andre's Home as Finance Director for 33 years. Until the end of her tenure, she labored 7 days a week at the Central Office of the Home on Elm Street. Many of my inquiries to various sisters and lay workers (including Sister Gertrude who passed away several years ago, were met with "We will check with Sister Viola and get back to you." Or "Go ahead and ask Sister Viola. She will know that." In April, 2011, Sister Viola was recognized as one of Maine's "most influential and accomplished women." As one of 15 "Great Women of Maine,..... Sister Viola's devotion to St. Andre Home is purely a labor of love." (St. Andre Home Reflections, Winter, 2012, p. 3) Humble as she was, Sister does not mention this honor when she was interviewed by Nicole Morin Scribner in November 2018. Although she worked in the office, Sister Viola had extensive contact with the girls. Those girls who kept their babies often did not have many baby clothes when they were discharged. But Sister Viola had collected many baby items and dispensed them as needed by their mothers upon discharge. Sister Viola also mentioned to Ms. Morin Scribner that "When St. Andre's started in 1940, the only place for a young woman, pregnant and unmarried, would be the women's prison in Skowhegan." (Ms. Morin Scribner's 2018 interview with Sister Viola, transcript, page 23). Sister Viola added that when local police encountered a young girl alone on the street in the Biddeford area needing help they often called St. Andre's Home. Working seven days a week, Sister was often at the administrative offices of the Home to take the call. Sister Viola is 95 years old today and retired five years ago. "yet she still is involved somewhat helping me with the history of different aspects of St Andre's for the 80th (anniversary) power point (presentation) I am hoping to do." (e-mail from Sister Terry Gauvin, April 13, 2020)

St. Andre's Home no longer serves as a home for unwed mothers and no longer serves as a residence for young mothers with "at risk" infants and toddlers. Continued state funding for these programs simply did not materialize and the programs ended in 2016. Ironically, funding for St. Andre's, an institution founded by Franco-Americans for Franco Americans, lost its funding for these two programs during the administration of

Maine's first and only Franco-American governor.

Until very recently, the Sisters sponsored the Center for Parenting and Play. The center provided "therapy for parents and their children, case management" and a place where a divorced parent who did not have custody of his/her child could have supervised visitation allowed by the courts. (Journal Tribune, February 1, 2016 and e-mail, Sister Joanne Roy, February 13, 2019). Although administratively not a direct descendant of St. Andre's Home, the Sisters also run Esther Residence mentioned earlier in this essay.



Photo courtesy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland

St. Andre's Home also currently operates CourageLIVES, which began as Maine's first long-term residential treatment program for women who have experienced commercial sexual exploitation. It also provides outpatient services that support survivors of human trafficking, domestic violence and sexual assault. In a large print, front page above the fold article in the Journal Tribune entitled "St. André Home Welcomes New Director," Sister Terry Gauvin welcomed Carey Nason saying "We've been providing services to women and children for more than 75 years, and Carey brings renewed passion and energy to St. Andre's Home." (Journal Tribune, September 13, 2019.) Ms. Nason will head CourageLIVES.

What can be made of all of this? Janet Ellerby says that "it is a paradox that this thing my parents did because they wanted to safeguard me from the cruelty of people did just the opposite. Instead, despite good intentions, they sent me defensively into a night from which I have never completely recovered." (Ellerby, page 18) One reviewer of Ann Fessler's book writes that "The real tragedy here may be that people in positions of influence, from social workers, to priests to parents, seemed to try to do what they thought best." (Vikas Turakhia, The Plain Dealer, July 16, 2006) In her The New York Times review of Fessler's book, Kathryn Harrison writes that the book "demonstrates only too well how good intentions can produce disastrous results." (The New York Times, June 11, 2006)

The literature I have surveyed gives many examples of women who were never able to forget their experience as first-time mothers who relinquished their babies. It is impossible to know what percentage of the 1.5 million birth mothers who surrendered children for adoption in the three decades after World War II still suffering from having kept "their secret." Some of these women have passed away and many, many others still have kept their secret from the world to this day. But for those who have divulged their secret, the unburdening of a dark past seems to be therapeutic. I know that Lynne wants to return to Biddeford again and wants to write about her experiences. Hopefully, she can reestablish contact with her birth daughter Julie and repair her broken relationships with her siblings. They may be able to help her remember the good times that she enjoyed with her parents and entire family before that fateful summer of 1967 on the shores of the Saco River. Ann Fessler's book and the activities surrounding the book's launching where many of the interviewees gathered for a video and audio presentation has served as a path for healing for Lynne. So were her three trips to St. Andre's Home. Certainly, what she remembered while being interviewed by Ms. Fessler for the book was different than our conversations and e-mails. Her relationship to her birth daughter had taken a turn for the worse before the interview with Professor Fessler. And her parents were still alive. Her father had died before she started corresponding with me and had asked for forgiveness for exiling her to "Old Orchard Beach." Her mother died in (Continued on page 48)

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November 2007 before Lynne's second trip to St. Andre's home and also asked Lynne for forgiveness.

Today only about 1% of unmarried teenagers who bear children give them up for adoption. And from everything I have read those who choose adoption today are not being coerced by society, their church or their families. They do so willingly, as in the movie Juno. The stigma attached to unwed motherhood has largely disappeared as can be seen by the rising percentage of out-of-wedlock births, a little over 40% of the total today. As late as 1964, the figure was 7%. In the past 50 years the percentage of women giving up children for adoption at St. Andre's Home has been declining steadily. By the time St. Andre's programs for unwed mothers ended in 2016, it stood at about 1%, the national average. As recently as 1980, it was 51%. In 1966 it was over 95%. Until services to unwed mothers ended, whether the mothers-to-be chose to keep their babies or surrendered them for adoption, the Sisters of the Good Shepherd were still there to help and assist those in need, a ministry they had started 170 years ago.

At an exhibit at the Smithsonian Institution in 2010, sponsored by the Leadership Council of Woman Religious, I was struck by a quotation that referred to the work of various orders of sisters in fostering assimilation on Indian reservations: "While being true to their own values, sisters took part in a system now seen as cruel and insensitive."

I believe that the quotation may also express the sentiments of some people concerning certain homes for unwed mothers, but, not the two that I am familiar with, where the girls were treated with kindness and dignity. The sisters in Biddeford gave their all in an era when the kind of care they provided was seen, in the conventional

wisdom of the day, as the best outcome for the young mothers and for her baby who was surrendered. Given society's views on unwed motherhood at the time and parents' abandonment of their daughters in time of need, the alternatives could have been much worse.

For more information about St. Andre's Home today, please visit their website www.saintandrehome.org

Ms. Morin Scribner's interview with



Sister Terry Gauvin, SCIM, provincial & Sister Viola Lausier, SCIM

(Photo courtesy of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland)

Sister Viola can also be found on the internet. <https://biddefordculturalandheritagecenter.org/sister-viola-lausier/>

I would like to thank the following people who provided me with first-hand information about St. Andre's Home. First and foremost to Sister Viola and Sister Gertrude who agreed to meet with Lynne and for all the information they provided to me about the home; to Lynne, Pauline, Mary and Rose who lived the experience I can only write about second-hand; to Sisters Terry Gauvin, Theresa Therrien, Joanne Roy, Madeleine d'Anjou and Claire Pelletier;

<https://biddefordculturalandheritagecenter.org/dr-michael-guignard/>

to Gil Domingue; to Doctors Anne Marie Lemire and André Fortier; to nurse Doris Lambert; and to Priscilla Gonneville and André Rheault.

(The mission of Saint Andre Home is to: Serve women & children in need; Strengthen & restore child and family life; Promote the individual dignity of each person approaching the Agency with a need.)



Dr. Michael Guignard was born in Boston and adopted as an infant by a Biddeford couple.

He enjoyed the life of the typical Franco-American families of his time and went on to capture its roots through research for his doctoral dissertation.

He then converted this research to a book, published in 1984, called *La Foi-La Langue-La Culture The Franco-Americans of Biddeford, Maine*. The dedication reads "To my parents, Rella and Wilfrid Guignard, who toiled at the Pepperell to ensure that I would not become a millworker."

In his interview, Dr. Guignard shares his personal story of finding out, later in life, that his birth mother was actually his mother's younger sister.

Dr. Guignard is now retired from a career with the US State Department where he served in numerous locations around the world, focusing on immigration issues. He is married, has three children and currently resides in Virginia.

POETRY/POÉSIE...



Covid 19 Shopping Without My Own Car*

C areful cooperative planning
O ften with plans A to Z
V arying routines as needed
I nventing ways to move forward
D espite incredible hitches—
19 solutions if needed—I'm prepared!

—Margaret Langford

* Franco-American friend Rob bought it. We're both pleased with the deal.

*POETRY/POÉSIE...***Appris comme une étrangère**

Tu es Américaine? Tu parles très bien en Français
j'entends pas trop ton accent Américaine...
Les vrais francophone me demande cette question chaque fois que j'essaie de parler la langue de mes peuples
Tu es Américaine, non,
ta famille est Québécoise,
Non c'est quelque chose d'autre je pense,
Tu es Américaine?

Oui pour une Américaine je parle bien,
mes Grand-parents étaient nés ici mais le Français c'est leur langue maternelle
Je parle français avec la bonne accent mais sometimes i don't find my words
Je suis Américaine
devant les français ils sont perdue comme mes mots
Bah okay, we can speak English then this is ok
et finalement je suis encore a la place d'une petite qui peut comprendre sans les lèvres d'une vraie francophone
une fille avec les yeux de la famille mais sans la langue de ces ancêtres
On es Américaine

comme la première drague d'une cigarette l'odeur reste sans le smoke
comme une arbre gets its dernière feuille de leur vie longue and strong
la langue starts to disappear
and we are left wearing "pea-shoes"
calling our grandmothers "Memere"
And now we are really just American

Les couleurs de notre héritage sont bien mélangées!
C'était un beau drapeau,
fin quand tu mélange nos drapeaux on arrive a rouge, blanc et bleu quand meme
Quelle est la difference?
On est Américaine

Tu peux apprendre une langue étrangère, même si tu es Américaine
tu peux l'apprendre aux enfants ca va être cute
Pour une Américaine c'est bon, c'est cool, c'est intéressant
Tu parles anglais... ça sert a quoi d'apprendre une autre..
Mais j'apprends pas une langue étrangère

J'apprends ma langue
j'ai appris la langue de l'enfance de ma mere je parle la langue qui m'aide d'exprimer les sentiments au fond du coeur
On parle la langue qui était volé par les gens qui définissent l'identité d'une "vraie"américaine,
Here in 'murica we speak English they say
On peut garder la culture mais une culture sans la langue c'est juste une histoire triste pour nous les "Franco's"
Donc, finalement c'est que on est... Juste américain

— *par Meghan Murphy*

The History of 'APRONS'... I don't think most kids today know what an apron is. The principle use of Mom's or Mémère's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few. It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.



It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold, she wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove.

Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.



From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

REMEMBER: Mom's and Mémère's used to set hot baked apple pies on the window sill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the window sill to thaw.

They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron. I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron— but LOVE!

Edith Berube
d/o Damase &
Christine (Michaud)
(1895-1992)

Christmas Tree Harvest at Farmer Roy's

By Virginia L. Sand-Roy (© 2018)

This year Farmer Roy is blessed with a record number of mature Christmas trees that can be harvested and sold for the Christmas season: Balsam Fir, Norfolk Pine, etc. These trees have been growing in the fields from four to 15 years, so that Farmer Roy has a variety of tree sizes to sell at the Roy Farm and at the Roy Christmas Tree Stand in the village center. When folks come to the Roy Farm to purchase a Christmas tree, they can actually go into the farm's fields and cut their own tree. Farmer Roy is always on stand-by if they need assistance.

Each Christmas season, the Roy Farm and Christmas Tree Stand also sell many wreaths that are made from *tipping* the balsam fir trees all around the Roy Farm. During late Fall, Farmer Roy and his wife go into the fields and clip the ends or "tips" (12-20 inches in length) of their balsam fir trees for wreath-making. Farmer Roy's wife customizes many wreaths in the farm's heated barn by coming up with her own unique designs and creative ideas. Various sizes of wreaths are handcrafted and different price ranges available.

Every Christmas season, Farmer Roy and his wife invite the village children to their heated barn for a "Christmas Workshop." Last year, Mrs. Roy taught the children how to handcraft colorful, festive felt ornaments that they could take home and hang on their Christmas trees. This year, because of the record number of mature evergreens available at the farm, Farmer Roy and his wife want to share the abundance with

the community by hosting a Wreath-Making Workshop for the community children in the heated barn. Therefore, in the early part of November, Farmer Roy's wife went into the farm fields and woods foraging for nature's own decorations for the children's wreaths: wild berries, pine cones, different colored mosses, turkey feathers, dried field flowers & tall grasses, various twigs, etc., which she organized into separate boxes for the wreath workshop. In the last box, Mrs. Roy added strips of burlap that the children could fashion into bows for putting the finishing touch on their Nature Wreaths. The

skills along the way.

By the end of the Wreath-Making Workshop, Farmer Roy and his wife were tired, but felt so good about sharing their blessed harvest with the community in this way. They could now focus on preparing their farm and village Christmas Tree Stand for selling their Christmas trees and wreaths in the weeks that followed. Plus, in their heated farm barn and at their village Christmas Tree Stand, the Roy's were also preparing their two Christmas shops where they sell hot apple cider, hot chocolate, Christmas cookies, Christmas ornaments and decorations, and a variety of hand-crafted gift items, etc.. This also keeps them very busy during the Christmas season.

During the few weeks up until Christmas Eve, all of the village children visited the Roy farm and the Roy Christmas Tree Stand in the village center with BIG smiles on their faces. They came with their parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, dogs, etc., and they all bought everything that Farmer Roy and his wife had to sell. This was their way of showing their gratitude to Farmer Roy and his wife for the beautiful Nature Wreaths that the village children brought home from the annual Roy Farm Christmas Workshop. One blessing brings another. This small village community felt thankful and blessed during this Christmas Season, especially Farmer Roy and his wife.





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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

Le Bureau des Affaires franco-américaines de l'Université du Maine fut fondé en 1972 par des étudiants et des bénévoles de la communauté franco-américaine. Cela devint par conséquent le Centre Franco-Américain.

Dès le départ, son but fut d'introduire et d'intégrer le Fait 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:

- 1 – D'être l'avocat du Fait Franco-Américain à l'Université du Maine, dans l'État du Maine et dans la région.
- 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 value, 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