Le Forum, Vol. 44 #1

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Calendar Photos and Texts from 1985 to 2002
http://www.johnfishersr.net/french_in_america_calendar.html
Franco-American Women’s Institute: http://www.fawi.net
Franco-Americans of Maine, Then and Now:
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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, remercient les Franco-Américains et ceux qui s’intéressent à nous.

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The Cable Act
by Michael Guignard

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Cable Act, also called the married women’s independent nationality act, passed by Congress in 1922, which struck down sections of the Expatriation Act of 1907 that stripped women of their U.S. citizenship if they married non-citizen men. That 1907 law had been passed in response to European countries awarding their country’s citizenship to foreign national women who married Europeans. Dual citizenship was frowned upon in those days as President Theodore Roosevelt railed against 50/50 Americans who kept their original citizenship after immigrating to the U.S. No one thought it ironic that after 1855 foreign national women who married Americans gained U.S. citizenship automatically. Today, the laws of naturalization are the same for both men and women who marry U.S. citizens. You must wait three years to apply and the application process takes about a year. During that three-year waiting period, the couple must file forms and provide a wide assortment of documentation showing that they are still living together as man and wife. The naturalization application itself includes police and security checks, an American history quiz and with some exceptions an English speaking and writing exam. In recent years, approximately 750,000 foreign nationals become U.S. citizens, more than all the other countries of the world combined. The U.S. accepts over 1,000,000 LEGAL immigrants a year, again more than the rest of the world combined, although the figures dropped below that number when Trump was President while Canada in 2021 admitted half the number of immigrant that we did that year.

In doing research for this article, I could not find any first hand accounts of American women who lost their citizenship by marrying a Canadian between 1907 and 1922. But given the close relationship between Quebec and the Little Canadas of New England, there were undoubtedly marriages between Canadian men, many of whom were permanent residents living in the U.S. for decades, and American women. In a spring 2016 article in Le Forum, David Vermette reminded us that while our border with Canada may be undefended, there is a border and deportations did occur, including an 18-month-old adopted child born in Montreal adopted by a New Hampshire couple. In doing research on a home for unwed mothers in Biddeford, I found that one of its first residents was a married English women from Canada waiting to be deported. Better staying with the Sisters than awaiting deportation in jail. In another article, Vermette has a photo of both Canadian and U.S. border agents taken many years ago. They appear very stern and business-like. The Canadian agent looks like a Mountie. I surmise that few women with French Canadian husbands were deported but the 1907 law must have caused many neficitious moments at the U.S border.

In my career as a Foreign Service Officer, I had exactly one case of an applicant who had lost her U.S. citizenship under the 1907 law. She had been born in the U.S. around 1900 and taken to Japan by her parents as an infant. She married before 1922 and when she applied for a visa as an adult, we told her that she had lost her U.S. citizenship when she married but that it had been restored by the Cable Act. We could not give her a U.S. visa because policy prevents the issuance of a visa to someone who has a claim to U.S. citizenship. So she applied for a U.S. passport. The application was sent to the Department of State in Washington for imprimature and our U.S. born applicant received her passport about two months after (Continued on page 4)
One of the sweet memories of my childhood growing up in Berlin, NH in the 1950’s was the annual Spring pilgrimage to “la cabane a sucre” on Cates Hill. Mon oncle Armand and ma tante Juliette, who were my Mom’s uncle and aunt, always welcomed us with open arms. If it wasn’t too busy, ma tante Juliette would take us into the small knotty pine sitting room/kitchenette for a quick update on all of us.

We used to marvel at how beautiful and kind she was to us young ones. Mon oncle Armand also loved to show us the massive wood burning evaporator where the sap was boiled and our young minds found it hard to believe how much sap it took to make just one gallon of maple syrup. We would then purchase our treats and couldn’t wait to get home to partake of that delicious “tire” d’erable (taffy) or a piece of the maple sugar loaf or cake. Umm, umm good!

My maternal grandfather, Wilfrid Lessard, immigrated from Ste Marie, Quebec and married Berthe Bisson. She was the eldest of Joseph Bisson’s six children. Both her parents died when she was in her early teens. My grandfather often came with us on our visit to la cabane. He would say, “bon les enfants, on va s’sucre l’bec”. He would buy each of his children who lived nearby a whole gallon of maple syrup meant to last each family a whole year. Of course, it didn’t. We often had a piece of bread soaked in maple syrup for dessert. My favorite maple treat was la tire eaten with une palette, a mouth-size small, wooden spatula.

Last Spring 2021 Bisson’s Sugar House celebrated its hundredth anniversary of continuous production (except for 3 years when mon oncle Armand was overseas during WWII) of that wonderful maple confection. This has remained a family business all this time. The current third generation of sugarmakers are Lucien and Muriel Blais. Muriel was ma tante Juliette’s niece. They have written a history (with the help of their son, David, for his design work skills) of this endeavor entitled, “The Sugar House on the Hill”.

I’ll now turn over the storytelling to them and I’m sure you will find it very interesting. Enjoy!

Ann Marie Lemire

(See page 46)
Spring 2022 arrives in Maine

Copyright 2022 by Virginia L. Sand

Spring 2022 arrives in Maine. The snow is slowly melting away to reveal the potato fields of northern Maine. Soon, new crops of potatoes will be sewn throughout Aroostook County.

Meanwhile, maple syrup is on tap throughout the maple tree groves all over Maine. Maine Maple Sunday will invite folks to the maple sugar farms to sample a “taste of Maine.”

Then all over the lakes and rivers of Maine, open water is finally noticed as blankets of ice melt away from the waters’ surface. Anglers look forward to that first weekend of fishing in spring’s open waters. Docks slowly appear on the water’s edge all over Maine’s riverbanks, lake landings and coastal shores with boats attaching themselves one-by-one. Boats begin dotting the harbors once again and common loons return to sing their mystical songs in the open waters. Then all of a sudden, fiddleheads begin to grace the riverbanks and wetlands of Maine. These are the baby ferns that are seasonally gathered for their culinary delights.

The robins return and the crocuses bloom from the now softening grounds to give us a heads-up that springtime has sprung. Patches of green grass seem to appear everywhere. Insects begin to fill the air. HOPE is here. Another cycle of life begins in the beautiful Pine Tree State, Maine. Hurray!

Le Printemps 2022 arrive dans le Maine

Copyright 2022 par Virginie L. Sand

Le printemps 2022 arrive dans le Maine. La neige fond lentement pour révéler les champs de pommes de terre du nord du Maine. Bientôt, de nouvelles cultures de pommes de terre seront semées dans tout le compté d’Aroostook.

Pendant ce temps, le sirop d’érable est disponible dans toutes les érablières du Maine. Le Dimanche de L’Eurable du Maine invitera les gens dans les fermes à sucre d’érable pour goûter au <<goût du Maine>>.


“Where we love is home, home that our feet may leave, but not our hearts.”

- Oliver Wendell Holmes

Scenes from Spring/Easter 1954

by Linda Gerard DerSimonian

In 1954, I was five years old and lived on 47 Franklin Street in Van Buren, a small Franco American town along the St. John Valley in northernmost Aroostook County, Maine. It had an international bridge that crossed over to Saint-Leonard, New Brunswick, Canada.

It was Easter week. Windows in our living room were cracked open enough to let in sweet scented, gentle breezes that puffed up the sheer curtains. Even as a little girl, I looked for windows from where I could see the outdoor sky, squirrels racing up and down trees, and the goings on in my neighborhood. Our fluffy white cat, Snowball, was curled up and purring on a sunshiny square patch on the hardwood floor.

The spring air was warm and soothing, healing us from the long months of below zero, freezing cold weather biting at our cheeks. The outdoor winter scenes were behind us… the crunch and squeak of hard packed snow beneath our boots, steam encircling our mouths like wreaths as we spoke, blizzards and snowstorms where snow fell and swirled in the wind without interruption for days, snow avalanching off our roofs, and banks of snow piled up so high along the sides of the roads and telephone poles that it looked like cars were driving through dark tunnels.

While playing in our backyard, I watched from a distance, the railroad train rolling by on the winding, steel gray tracks. My father was a station agent and telegrapher at the friendly, bustling railroad station across the street. Trains and the railroad were part of the landscape of my youth. Freshly washed clothes from mom’s wringer washing machine hung from wooden clothespins on the clothesline. They flapped quietly, dangling side by side, smelling clean from the detergent Tide.

Mom came out to say that we were going shopping to buy me a new Easter outfit. I sat in the front seat of our brown Plymouth car with her as she drove us to Kiddie Korner, a specialty children’s clothing store in the nearby town of Caribou. We selected a beautiful navy blue coat with a white lace collar, a flary pastel printed dress and petticoat, black patent leather shoes, white ankle socks, white gloves, and a jaunty Easter bonnet. Through the corridors of time, I can feel Mom’s patience and enthusiasm to select the best of finery for me.

Aunt Joan dropped by to visit when we returned from mass on Easter Sunday. After she left, dad and mom drove my brother Danny, baby sister Gail, and I, dressed in our Easter attire, to Hamlin, a few miles away, to visit dad’s cousin who lived on an old fashioned farm. Dad often went there to shovel cow manure into boxes to bring back home to fertilize his vegetable garden. The rooms inside their farmhouse were dimly lit, and minimally decorated. I was so intriguied that they didn’t have faucets in their kitchen cast iron sink, but used a hand pump to wash dishes and get drinking water.

Eager to see the farm animals, I ventured outdoors and carefully walked along a long plank of wood that protected me from the mud. Chickens were on one side, and pigs on the other. I slipped off the plank and fell into the mud, thoroughly soiling my new Easter clothes.

Pressed tenderly in my mind and heart’s memories of that long ago, 1954 Easter Sunday visit to a farm, is that mom didn’t scold me for my mishap. I remember the lemon colored spring sun delicately touching my face and embracing me with its warmth, cows grazing, birds tweeting as they flew with ease from tree to tree, pigs grunting, and chickens clucking and scratching in the dirt. I smell the earth unthawing, and feel mom’s compassion.
Franco-Americans in Lewiston celebrate heritage
March 28, 2022Franco-American News and CultureCarl L. Sheline, Governor Janet Mills

By Juliana L’Heureux

LEWISTON, Maine—Merci to Mayor of Lewiston Carl L. Sheline, for the welcome statement he gave on March 25, to celebrate the International Month of the Francophones and open the exhibit “Notre Pain Quotidien” at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College.

A Fleurs de Lys friendship agreement was signed between Quebec and the University of Southern Maine Franco-American Collection, with Marie-Claude Francoeur, Quebec Delegate in Boston, during the exhibit’s opening. Maine Governor Janet Mills, Mayor of Auburn Jason Levesque, Honorary Consul to France from Maine Severin Beliveau, and USM Provost Dr. Jeannine Uzzi were among the dignitaries who attended the exhibit’s opening program and celebrations.

“Notre Pain Quotidien (Our Daily Bread): Franco-American Entrepreneurs Sustaining Community”, exhibit at USM LAC, acknowledges the long history of Franco-Americans in Lewiston. Sheline spoke during the musical program following the exhibit’s opening, featuring the popular local band “C’est si Bon”, where the memory of Lewiston natives, the late Franco-American advocates Aliette and Ron Couturier were honored.

“On behalf of the City of Lewiston, we are honored to be part of the International Francophones celebrations of countries to witness the signing of the Quebec Fleurs de Lys agreement, with Marie-Claude Francoeur, delegate from Quebec”, said Sheline.

Cecile Thornton and Lewiston Mayor Carl L. Sheline. (Photo by Juliana L’Heureux)

Cecile Thornton a member of the Franco-American Collection board at USM LAC with Mayor of Lewiston Carl L. Sheline at March 25, opening of Notre Pain exhibit.

“Notre Pain is free and open to the public at USM LAC on Westminster Street in Lewiston Maine. (Photo by Juliana L’Heureux)


“We are proud to celebrate Lewiston’s Franco-American history, language, and heritage with the signing of the Fleurs de Lys agreement and the opening of the Notre Pain exhibit. We are grateful for this special partnership with Quebec and for the opportunity to recognize the contributions the Franco-Americans made to our city.”

Moreover, he acknowledged how Franco-Americans, just like the City of Lewiston itself, are strong, industrious and entrepreneurial. “Many of the successful businesses and community institutions built by Franco-Americans are still part of our community, today. For example, FX Marcotte, Mailhot Sausage, Labadie Bakery, Saint Mary’s Hospital, beautiful churches, social clubs and humanitarian organizations. Some businesses, old and new, are the backbone of Lewiston’s economy. These business owners have believed in creating a sense of place. They wanted to enhance their community and they took pride in serving their neighbors. They rallied to respond to the times they lived in and responded to customer demands. As I enjoy the Notre Pain exhibit, and look at the photographs in the displays, I see these featured entrepreneurs – the LeBlanc family, the Bonneau family and the LePage family- were motivated by a meaningful purpose as they experienced the community connections they forged throughout Lewiston.

“I am proud to note that the doors of small businesses continue to open in Lewiston, much like the French-Canadians, whose businesses served their fellow neighbors. Lewiston’s present day local entrepreneurs continue to thrive and lead our community. Our local entrepreneurs and leaders include many of the African immigrants who began arriving in Lewiston in the early 2000’s, like the French-Canadian immigrants, that arrived over a century before them, many came to Lewiston speaking French as a primary language.”

“In fact, the Franco-American Collection is a truly magnificent way to reflect on the strength of the immigrants who have built- and continue to build – our community. It is a wonderful way to honor Lewiston’s history and to celebrate the contributions of the LeBlanc, LePage and Bonneau families and many others, like them. Thank you to Quebec Delegate Marie-Claude Francoeur and to our Governor Janet Mills, for visiting us in Lewiston, for this evening of celebration and thank you to all who made this exhibit and evening’s celebration possible. Merci beaucoup!”

(Continued on page 8)
Tante Blanche as Maine’s first public health nurse
March 21, 2022 Franco-American News and Culture

By Juliana L’Heureux

It was an honor to join three co-authors who published a centennial history about the state’s nursing profession in Maine Nursing: Interviews and History of Caring and Competency.

In book discussions conducted since the publication, I enjoy telling about some of the history of nursing before the 1914, centennial year, during the time before the Maine State Board of Nursing was created. Madawaska’s Tante Blanche is one of those stories.

In the 1790s, there were no formal “nurses” because most health care was provided in convents that served as hospitals. Public health nursing was unheard of at that time. Yet, Tante Blanche created a legacy for how to provide life saving interventions during a time of famine, in Madawaska, when the territory was not yet part of Maine. Her heroism is remembered and she is revered in local histories as a saint.

In February, I spoke to a group of University of Southern Maine students, at a class on the Gorham campus. Our hour flew by, so I was unable to tell them this particular story. Therefore, I’ll include the history of Tante Blanche in this blog.

Although I’ve read several accounts about the heroism of “Tante Blanche”, and her rescue of her people during a period of famine, this particular narrative, published in the centennial publication commemorating the founding of the city of Madawaska, is my favorite. There is no author attributed to this history; plus, there is no copyright. Julia D. Albert was the author of the Madawaska commemorative book. This archives is also available at the Madawaska Historical Society.

In the 1790’s, there were only about thirty families living in Madawaska. Besides farming, the industries at the time were maple sugar, fur trading and lumber needed to help build English ships. Grain production was profitable and the colony actually exported some of the harvest, but the production was challenged when two years of floods and September frosts destroyed nearly all the crops. As a result, in 1797, the year became known as the year of “la grande disette” or “miserable” (utter destruction). In other words, the year of the great famine.

When the winter of 1796 was reported

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Notre Pain Quotidien (Our Daily Bread): Franco-American Entrepreneurs Sustaining Community is featured in the front entrance atrium at the USM LAC campus on Westminster Street in Lewiston. The exhibit is free and open to the public. Call the Franco-American Collection (207) 753-6545 for more information.


Juliana L’Heureux with Delegate from Quebec in Boston Marie-Claude Francoeur. (Photo by Juliana L’Heureux)

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 30 years.

https://francoamericanbangordailynews.com/author/jlheureux/
to have been particularly harsh, many of the colonists left for Fredericton or traveled up the St. Lawrence River to wait out the winter. Those who stayed in Madawaska lived exclusively on stored wild meat and herbs.

At the end of a particularly long period of waiting and anguish, when the men were gone and snow had fallen for eight days without stopping, all the food was gone. The last of the boiled wheat was gone, the last cow was slaughtered and eaten. During those long days of hunger and anxiety, Marguerite Blanche Thibodeau, the wife of Joseph Cyr, accomplished her wonders of heroism and charity. She became the angel protector of the weak, the infirm and sick. Her skill proved to be the saving strength of the miserable colonists who were suffering, being without food. On her snow shows, with a load of clothing and provisions that she would do without or that she had collected, she went from door to door distributing a ray of hope. She also helped to ration the few provisions available in a way that helped provide a little to those most in need. Laying out the dead, snatching from the grave those who were surely doomed without her help, she gave her care and lifted the morale of those who had given in to their misfortune. At last, one night, the men returned with the body of one who had died of privation and cold and another was dying. But, also, they returned with a little food. The colony was saved.

Tante Blanche, as she was know, became the object of general veneration. She cured the sick, chased out evil spirits, found lost objects, reconciled enemies and brought good luck just by wishing for it. She softened the most hardened souls, reformed blaspheemies, and brought conniving cheaters to live exemplary lives. Even hopeless drunkards were more afraid of her word of admonition than they were of the bishop.

More than one mustache was wet with tears when Tante Blanche was lowered into her quasi-royal grave. She was the real aunt of a great number of young Madawaska families. A “Leblanc” on her mother’s side, she was the granddaughter of René Leblanc, the notary of Grand-Pre, mentioned in Evangeline, as told by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow. She died in 1810, and was exposed in the church of St. Basile, in Madawaska County, New Brunswick, a privilege never before accorded and to very few since.

In summary, to add to the many well deserved accolades in tribute to Tante Blanche, I consider her to also be Maine’s very first nurse.

I believe she is remembered and honored because she went above and beyond caring for her family and immediate neighbors but she cared for the entire community of La Grande Rivière, today known as Van Burens, Maine, and St-Leonard, New Brunswick.

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**Call and Response: A Franco-American Conversation**

*Introduced and Edited by Abby Paige*

In Franco families and communities, women have traditionally loomed large. It has been said, in fact, that the mother is “le seul archétype féminin dans la littérature canadienne-française” (the sole feminine archetype in French-Canadian literature). Québecois playwright Michel Tremblay has described how, as anglophones took over the means of production and public life in Québec, francophone men were commonly forced to live a culturally divided existence, obligated to speak English in order to find work and serve anglophone interests. With French thus pushed out of the public life, the domestic sphere became the place where culture took place, giving women a different form of symbolic power, charged not just with housekeeping and child-rearing, but with the transmission and preservation of the French language and other cultural knowledge. In Franco-American families, where both parents often labored outside the home, grandparents often wore on this symbolic mantle. In many families and communities in Franco-American New England, Mémère’s seniority made her the language expert, the transmitter of knowledge, the guardian of kinship ties, and the model of Frenchness, even as her family assimilated away from it.

It is due to this symbolic power that Franco-Americans often describe our matriarchs as having been the leaders of our families and communities and sometimes go so far as to assert that Franco-American culture is matriarchal. The truth is more complex. Claims that Franco women were tough, influential, or “ran everything” can obscure the greater complexities of our grandmothers’, mothers’, and aunts’ experiences, as well as our own. Many of us experienced our homes and families as deeply gendered spaces, where certain types of behavior were demanded of us and certain forms of self-expression and self-determination were forbidden. Until relatively recently women had no property rights; their reproductive choices were often surrendered to priests; their education, marriage, and...
career prospects were often determined by their fathers. Some of us observed or were subject to domestic or sexual violence in our own homes, families, or communities. The same women who, we are told, were “in charge” in our communities were often sent to the kitchen when the men were talking in the living room. We know this because we were in the kitchen with them.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I initiated a virtual conversation with three other Franco-American storytellers, to share the lessons in strength, will, and leadership we learned from our female ancestors, while also acknowledging the gendered violence, social controls, and lowered expectations to which they were subject. I wanted for us to think about how to make both of these truths visible at once: the Franco women who raised us were strong and resilient and the structures of the families and communities in which they lived were deeply patriarchal and heteronormative. When we fail to hold these two truths in balance, we leave vast portions of our family histories and cultural selves unarticulated and unexplored. Broadly, I hoped our conversation would trace the contours of patriarchy and gender as they have been practiced in a Franco-American context and lead us toward a more honest accounting of our grandmothers’ lives and legacies.

Laurie Mennier Graves writes essays and fiction from her home in Maine. With her husband, Clif Graves, she is the former Publisher and Editor of Wolf Moon Journal: A Maine Magazine of Art and Opinion. She is the author of the YA fantasy series, Library Lost, and her blog, Notes from the Hinterland, chronicles the life, nature, food, and the people of northern Maine.

Susan Poulin is a Maine humorist and the author of eleven plays, six of which feature her alter ego, Ida LeClair. As Ida, she has also authored two books and the popular weekly Maine humor blog and podcast, Just Ask Ida. In her TEDxPortland talk My Memories Need Subtitles, Susan asks, “Can you find your identity through your heritage language?”

Joan Vermette is a writer, design-thinking specialist, organic farmer, and activist in the Franco-American community. She splits her time between the stewardship of a 190 year-old house in Southern Maine and a 200 year-old Acadian house on Prince Edward Island once owned by a branch of her family.

Abby Paige is a writer, theater artist, and Book Review Editor for the Franco-American literary journal, Résonance. Her solo shows, Piecework: When We Were French and Les filles du quoi?, explore the influence of Franco-American and French-Canadian culture in her home state of Vermont and New England more broadly.

AP: Let’s start by thinking about Franco-American women who shaped us, a woman who embodies some of the characteristics and contradictions we’re thinking about.

LG: I think of my great-grandmother, Evelyn Bosse Jacques. In a way, I hardly knew her. She died when I was a child, and she only spoke French, which meant we couldn’t talk to each other. Nevertheless, she was a strong presence in my life, because she helped raise my mother, whose father died when she was nine. My mother told many stories about her grandmother, whose life was marked by struggle and perseverance.

At five, one of my great-grandmother’s chores was washing dishes, and because she was so little, she had to pull up a stool to the sink. She wanted to go to school but couldn’t, because she had to stay home and help take care of the many brothers and sisters that her stepmother had. Life improved when she married my great-grandfather, Joseph Jacques, who was a potato farmer with hundreds of acres in North Caribou, but things fell apart for them during the Great Depression. They lost their farm, moved to Skowhegan, and lived in a small apartment. Two things that my mother frequently commented on: that no matter how empty the cupboards seemed, my great-grandmother could always put something together for their supper, and when the death of someone in the family or a friend was imminent, my great-grandmother was there to hold the dying person.

My mother said, She held more dying people than anyone I know.

From my great-grandmother, I got the gift of perseverance, the will to keep going when things fall apart, as they inevitably do, even in our modern times. But, according to my mother, although my great-grandmother was strong, she often looked back in regret, and I have that trait, too.

SP: Laurie, your great-grandmother reminded me of something my mother used to say about her mother, that she could make the most of a chicken: roast chicken and gravy, then chicken pot pie with the leftovers. And how she’d scrape those chicken bones ‘til they shined, getting every bit of meat off them. Then she’d boil the bones for stock. Nothing was left to waste.

So, I guess that’s a good place to begin, with my maternal grandmother, Dora DeBlois née Gilbert. Dora inherited a general store and gas station in Jackman, Maine from her father. I don’t know why the store wasn’t left to her brother; one of the many details that have gotten lost over time.

Dora married her first husband, Eugene Levesque, when she was just fifteen years-old. I remember trying on her wedding ring from that time, and it didn’t even fit my little finger. Dora had ten children, only two of whom lived to adulthood. When she was in her early twenties, she was working in the store, looked out the window, and saw her three-year-old son get hit by a car and killed. That same year her mother died, and her husband, Eugene, was killed while working in a saw mill. I was told that Dora was so distraught, she couldn’t remember her prayers, in English or French. I think she traveled around a bit with her remaining child, Rita, while she pulled herself together. Eventually Dora returned to Jackman and married my grandfather, Adelard DeBlois. People in town anglicized his name and called him Blue. My grandmother became Dora Blue, and when my mother, Elizabeth, was born, she was called Betty Blue. And the store, my grandmother’s legacy, became known as Blue’s.

When I picture my grandmother, I think of a barrel-shaped woman with a great sense of style. She always wore a dress in the store with a bib-type apron over it, a simpler, morning dress, and after lunch and a nap, she changed into a nicer dress for the rest of the day and evening. She had a helmet of charcoal grey hair and her makeup was just so. Years later, after she retired and sold the store, I remember Dora visiting us this one time. Something was wrong with her leg, and she looked terrible. Eventually my parents decided to call the ambulance. When Dora found out they were coming, she did her entire hair and makeup with a hand mirror, put on her fur coat, and when they took her away on that stretcher, she looked like a queen. So yes, perseverance.

I inherited Dora’s work ethic and personal sense of style, a head for business, and the ability to multitask, as well as the need for a nap after lunch every day. On the flip side, I have no memory of my grandmother
sitting and relaxing. It was go, go, go. I carry the burden of that legacy. There is the put together public face you show to the world, a tendency to not ask for help, and a fierce desire to do it all. It can be exhausting.

LG: I know just what you mean. It’s like the devil is always on my tail. A Franco trait, do you think? This inability to relax?

AP: I’m proud and grateful to have inherited a work ethic, but it’s also something I struggle with. Most of my family struggles with our off-switch. I have to watch out for a kind of righteous exhaustion, the sense if you’re not worn out, you’re not working hard enough. It’s interesting that a lot of what we inherit is a double-edged sword this way — a positive trait that can be your downfall.

SP: I think most traits are like that. For example, perfectionism. Sometimes it’s an asset, and at other times it can get in the way.

JV: Ha! I’d never say I was busy or a perfectionist, even though I’ve just finished a week of working two full-time jobs as I transition into a new role at work, and I’m preparing to facilitate a panel discussion next week for a local design Meetup group, and I’m putting in a new 2 x 40ft raised bed and planting seven bushes, plus groundcovers and herbs. My therapist has been working with me recently on the fact that my accomplishments never seem to stick. I’m always centered on the things that are next, and the things I’ve never finished, and the things that could be, and the things I’ve botched, but what I do and what I’ve made and my successes don’t seem to adhere to me at all in terms of factoring into my self-image.

When I think of my namesake, great-great grandmother Jeanne-Françoise Leblanc, who was rarely seen not working on providing her husband and six sons with scratchy red woolen union suits against the bitter Eastern PEI winters (a thankless, unending task because the suits were hated, the boys grew, the moths got hungry, and the winters came every year) — I see a captain of industry. A busy, efficient person who had it all in hand — which I do not. Did Jeanne-Françoise feel the same anxiety I do? When and where she sat by herself, as I was told she did, on the top of the red clay cliffs overlooking Rollo Bay, singing to the sea, was she singing as form of solace? Asking for forgiveness for things not done? Or was it a celebration of things well done, and a gathering up of energy from the eternal tides, in order to start anew?

I think of my high-functioning anxiety as my epigenetic heritage from my Acadian ancestors, as a result of the Grand Dérange- ment, I guess because our childhoods were ruled by the vicissitudes of my mother’s anxious moods, and my direct maternal line is the Acadian line. There’s no science behind that thought at all, but I think it might bear some looking into, if someone else wants to do that study. I, of course, won’t do it because I’m lazy.

AP: But surely some of our ancestors were lazy or anxiety-ridden or domineering or cruel! Especially those who lived through large-scale traumas like the Grand Dérangement. I wonder how our cozy narratives about our ancestors blind us to the impacts of those kinds of experiences. Where do we draw the line between admiring their strength and romanticizing their trauma?

SP: For me, it’s a process of inquiry. I start with what I know and ask questions to get at the heart of the story. As a writer and actor, it’s all about story for me. For example, I know this bit about my paternal grandparents: My grandfather, George Poulin, was a lumberjack for most of his life. In the early 1900s, lumberjacks used to go into the woods for the entire winter. They’d come back out in the spring, just before the ground thawed. In the early years of their marriage, my grandmother, Georgianna, would go with my grandfather. They’d pack everything into a big, horse drawn sled, everything they’d need for the next three or four months, and go. And they had two young children at the time: Ralph, who was a toddler, and a baby, Lillian. My grandmother lived all winter long in a little cabin with a dirt floor. Her only luxury was the square of wood that my grandfather built for her to put her rocking chair on.

That’s the myth part. The bigger than life, heroic bit. Then I dig in. Can I imagine what life was like for Georgianna? All winter long in a drafty cabin with two kids playing on the dirt floor. No medical care. No books to read because there wasn’t room to bring them. Hardly any other women to talk to. Day after day, cooking on the wood stove, melting snow to do laundry. Did she miss having someone to talk to? Was she filled with fear when the children got sick? Lumbering was dangerous work. Did she spend the day worrying about George and what she’d do if something happened to him? Did she resent him for putting her and the children at risk? Or did she choose to be there? Other wives stayed home, and after the birth of her third child, she didn’t return to the woods with him. Did Georgianna put her children at risk out of her love for George? Did she get herself into this mess? Or was it a combination of those things? His gentle suggestion, blue eyes urging. Her desire to please or, let’s be honest, not wanting to spend the winter living in her mother-in-law’s house or with her mother. And with each question, Georgianna emerges from her two-dimensional, sepia-toned world until I’m no longer observing her. I am her, standing in the open door of the cabin, smelling the woodsmoke, a hint of spring in the air, overwhelmed by chores, filled with love and resentment as I watch my husband disappear into the woods.

LG: When we look at our ancestors, we have to be careful not to judge them by our standards. For Joan’s great-great-grandmother, making those union suits was the norm for her. For Susan’s grandmother, cooking on a wood stove was normal. Chores that to us seem overwhelming were routine for them. Was there complaining? No doubt. I come from a long line of complainers, and I think that tendency goes way, way back!

AP: I agree that we shouldn’t hurry to judgment based on contemporary values or expectations. But I also think that it’s a mistake to assume people who were accustomed to their lot didn’t also sometimes aspire to more. My grandmother seems to have resented many aspects of being a mother and a homemaker. There weren’t other avenues open to her, but I think she was able to see the smallness of her life. I don’t know what alternative she would have imagined, but I think she chafed under her circumstances.

LG: I would add that my ancestors, my relatives, were hard working, but what they weren’t good at was adapting to modern times, to making the change from an agrarian society or one based on factory work to one that was based on education and knowledge. And the arts? Forget about it. I know this in inability to look forward held both me and my brother back. But I don’t want to generalize about what is and isn’t Franco; this is just how it was for my family.

AP: It’s worthwhile to consider, though, some of the ideas we carry about what is and isn’t Franco. Whether they apply to our own families or not, they inform our sense of “Franco-ness,” our idea of how we define ourselves collectively, what we (Continued on page 12)
Consider “authentically” Franco.

JV: For me, the stereotype includes that they were able to make do with little — as African American women say, “to make a way out of no way.” Among my ancestors, I have the nine Boudreau sisters who populated all of Acadian Atlantic Canada. Seriously, if that’s your ancestry, you’ve got at least one of the Boudreau sisters in your family tree, and normally Acadians from PEI, Cape Breton, or the Magdalen Islands have several. I can trace my ancestry to three of them, and one of those, twice over. Jeanne Boudreau, the fifth sister, was my direct maternal ancestor. They were women at the time of the Deportation. The eldest, Marie-Josephte was 41, and Isabelle, the youngest, was 16, and she was the only one who wasn’t married at the time.

They escaped deportation and spent the next 15 years or so on the run, hiding out with their husbands. There’s a story of their not having shelter sometimes and turning their shallops — long wooden boats — upside down on the shore and huddling under them with their children, out of the wind. Susan, your accounting of Georgianna’s life of solitude in the cabin reminds me of them. It’s said that when their husbands were away walrus hunting (it was a thing) or fishing or otherwise foraging for food or getting work, the sisters would cook and work communally for all of their children. If only Georgianna had had some sisters nearby to lighten her load!

And then in post-exile days, when the rent collectors would come to take a percentage of their yearly harvest, in lean years they always made sure they had enough seeds set aside for the next year’s crop by sewing them into the hems of their skirts.

So, a way out of no way is part of the stereotype. The constantly busy, multitasking thing is part of the stereotype. Physical vanity is part of the stereotype. When my Nana immigrated to the States in 1920, she wanted to make sure that she wasn’t just seen as some country yahoo, so she’d saved $135 from her job as a housekeeper in Charlottetown to buy herself a fur coat so she’d arrive in style. If you trust online inflation calculators, that would be over $6,000 in today’s money! My mother remembers as a toddler her mother coming into her room at night to wrap her in that fur against the cold, in their tenement apartment on Mayo Street in Portland.

LG: That really resonates with me, Joan, especially your comment about physical vanity. I had never thought of it exactly in that way, but you hit the nail on the piton. My grandmother and my mother used to drive me up a freaking wall with their obsessions about clothes and hair and makeup. Vanity. My mother tried to “guide” me, but I resisted, and I think I am still resisting to this day.

JV: But, pride, too — that’s how they would frame it: Pride, rather than vanity. When I was entering school, my mother let it slip to her mother that among the supplies I needed was a smock for art class. Generally, an art class smock for a first grader was a ripped up one of your father’s old shirts — that’s what my classmates’ mothers were planning to use. But a week before school started, a package arrived in the mail containing a hand-made artist’s smock in a light sage green, with puffed sleeves and a hand-smocked yoke with dusty pink accents. The sage fabric was a strong, soft cotton with a herringbone-textured weave. It was one of the most beautiful garments I’d ever seen. My mother grabbed it out of my hands and went to the phone to call my grandmother. As my mother tells the story: Mumma, it’s gorgeous, she told my Nana, But she can’t possibly wear it! She’s only five and she’ll get paint all over it. My grandmother retorted, I know that! You let her wear it! So I went to my first grade art class in the beautiful smock.

So, vanity? Pride? I was scared to death to go to school for the first time, and the smock was like a protective shield — handmade, just for me, in colors that no one would pick for a five year old, but which suited me perfectly. I think I grew out of it by the end of the year, but I’d grown out of it into confidence. So I’m not so sure I’d sell that sense of pride short, Laurie. We might be “small breads,” but we’ve got our French pride, as well.

Plus, I think it’s a cultural trait regardless of gender. The oldest house on PEI is the Doucet House, built circa 1772, which makes it from the time of exile, when Acadians were essentially squatting on what had been their lands just 15 years before, but now belonged to the British. Uncertain of his status after the fall of Louisbourg and Québec, Jean Doucet built his house near the mouth of a shallow creek that ran into Rustico Bay on the Island’s north shore. It’s said that all of the first houses in that Acadian settlement were built facing the ocean, so they could see if the British deportation ships came for them again.

The Doucet House is now an exhibit in a museum, and restored to an educated guess of what a typical post-deportation Acadian house would be like, but before it was restored, I took photos of some of the original features, and I was struck by how the ceiling of the main room was structured. It was paneled with stripplings, all pieced carefully together, alternating their narrow ends with wider ones, and carved with decorative beading. Who builds a house facing the sea so he can be alerted to when ships were to take him and his family away, and yet also takes the time to hand-adze and piece together such details? For me, that’s a symbol of how my culture values beauty, grace, and craft — despite privation, uncertainty, oppression, and isolation. I live those values, and I love that aspect of my culture.

But then, there’s also the story of my grandmother’s visit back to Rollo Bay after she was married, with her first child, my Uncle Bill, then only three years old. One day during the visit, her half-sister Rita took Bill and his cousins down to the beach to play, and while they were wading, a wave washed over the toddler. He lost his balance and the tide started to take him. My grandmother heard Rita shrieking bloody murder and ran down the beach to rescue Bill, who coughed and sputtered, but otherwise was no worse for wear. Rita, she asked her sister with horror, Why didn’t you go in after him? Rita gestured at her feet with surprise, But Frances, these are brand new shoes!

LG: Yes, wonderfully put, Joan. Pride means you value yourself, your house, your belongings. You take care of what you have, including your body and your clothes. All good things. But for me, pride — or vanity — has also felt like a yoke, part of being trapped and bound by the male gaze, so limiting and confining. And here we come to the patriarchal side of things that started this conversation to begin with.

AP: Yes, that’s a shadow in all of this that I’d very much like for us to explore. We’ve been describing these women’s legendary toughness, inventiveness, and style, and the central place they held within their families. I think we agree that these things are true. But I would like for us to also contemplate the patriarchal structure in which these matriarchs operated. I’m interested in the paradox of these powerful women who, in some ways, had very little power.

SP: There’s a difference between (Continued on page 13)
being strong and having agency over your own life. Or more simply put, our Franco-American female ancestors may have been “the boss” in their own homes, but they didn’t have a say in where that home was located. My mom comes to mind. She had much to discuss as equal partners.

SP: My maternal grandmother also seemed to have more agency over her life. She ran her store, joined by her first husband and by her second, my grandfather. But my paternal grandmother, Georgianna, didn’t seem to be empowered in that way. During prohibition, my grandfather decided to open a bar up on the Canadian line with his brother Eugene. My grandmother protested, but to no avail. She had six children by then, and the border was fifteen miles outside of Jackman. Once again, she was isolated. She didn’t drive. I don’t even know if they owned a car. Eugene and George didn’t buy the land. They just claimed it as their own and built a bar on the Canadian side and their house on the US side. It was a tough, scary place for my grandmother and the female children, as you can imagine. My Aunt Lillian was a nun by then, so she didn’t experience it. But my Aunt Kelly and Aunt Celeste, who were 12 to 15 at the time, would never talk about that time, even to Lillian. Their shared secrets left a deep scar that they lived to struggle. The patriarchal society of our ancestors lives on.

AP: It seems to me that motherhood, or caregiving, is perhaps one of the aspects of these women’s lives that we’re taking for granted as we talk about them. It’s been said that the mother is the only female archetype in French-Canadian literature. I don’t think Francos, on the whole, would claim to have literature in a way.

LG.: And to many of us, the Virgin Mary was a bigger deal than God or Jesus. And especially Joseph, whom my father called the “odd man out.”

SP: Yes, the mother, the Virgin Mary, the nun, and the female saints, all of which highlight the theme of self-sacrifice. I remember when my mom had cancer, she did novena after novena to Saint Therese, the little flower. At the end of the novena, which consisted of saying a special prayer for a certain number of days, you either got roses or smelled roses. That’s how you knew Saint Therese heard your prayer. My dad would always buy roses for my mom on that last day.

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VERMONT

(Call and Response: A Franco-American Conversation continued from page 13)

Those images of women connect with other traits that I’ve found problematic in my own life: not wanting to “make a fuss” and the inability to see oneself big in the world. I find that last one really gets in my way as a creative artist, both in the scope of my projects and in promoting myself beyond a certain level.

AP: Yes, and “don’t make a fuss” trickles down to a kind of conformity that I think it’s easy to overlook. This reminds me of what Susan Pinette has written about how heteronormative our vision the Franco family is, and the dilemma that poses for queer Francos. Even for those of us who don’t identify as LGBTQ+, these gender roles are defined in a very narrow way. I think about this often when I see women who are more feminine than I am, who are better at caring for their outer appearance, better at meeting gender norms. I just can’t quite squeeze myself into that shape. How do you think French-Catholicism, with its notions about what a woman should be, have influenced you? Did it influence your choices about work or marriage or child-bearing or lipstick?

LG: I don’t think it’s an exaggeration to state that French Catholicism charted the course of my life. From an early age, it was clear to me that my family — and by extension, the church — expected me to get married and have children. Was this the wrong path for me? Not necessarily, but the expectations were so strong that I couldn’t picture myself striking out on my own and being independent. I had no idea how to have a life that didn’t involve being supported by a husband. So I married young and had children. I can’t blame it all on the family and the church. If I had had a stronger personality, no doubt I could have resisted those cultural and family expectations, but they were so strong.

However, a part of me did rebel, and it came in the form of outward appearances. I didn’t want to dress like my mother and grandmother. I didn’t want to share their obsession with appearance. Like Abby, I couldn’t squeeze myself into that shape. It just wasn’t me. The best thing my mother could have done would have been to back off and let me find my own way. But like my grandmother, my mother was obsessed with “keeping up appearances.” Now that I am older, I have some sympathy for my mother, who didn’t know what to do with a wordy, nerdy daughter. All my mother wanted, I think, was to have someone to go shopping with, who liked decorating and fashion and hair and nails. I actually explore this relationship, a bit, in my book Library Lost, even though it is a fantasy. I often wonder what I would have been like if I had been born into a different ethnic group, a different religion, a different family, one that valued education and independence. I’ll never know of course.

SP: I didn’t feel pressured to get married or to have children. I think my mother, Betty, felt that pressure, more about kids than marriage. She and my dad, Pat, wanted to get married before her last year of college. She was studying to be a teacher — a profession, by the way, that her father had chosen for her. He was determined that she get a college education, and back then it was teacher or nurse. He chose teacher. So, off she went to Farmington State Normal School. Although she was a wonderful teacher, she later told me it was a profession she wouldn’t have chosen for herself. She’d have loved to be a nutritionist. My grandparents gave their blessing to my parents’ wedding with the proviso that my mom finish her last year of college. So they were married on June 25, 1955, and off they both went to Farmington in September. My dad worked as a welder for $13 a week, and one week my mom spent all their money on a red, strapless dress with a sequined bodice and bolero jacket to wear to a party. They ate canned food the rest of the week, and talked over big purchases as a couple ever after. A lesson learned.

My parents planned their family, meaning they went against the Catholic Church and used birth control. I once saw a big box of condoms in the bottom drawer of the nightstand on my dad’s side of the bed. They waited three years to have me, and it was two more before my sister arrived, and that was it. Mom said she got a lot of questions and strange looks in those first three years of her marriage. People were wondering what was wrong.

I can say honestly that I never heard my parents say to me, When are you going to make us grandparents?, or a version of that. In fact, I didn’t get married until I was 36 and my sister, Jane, is gay, so she didn’t get married until it was legal. Neither one of us has children, which was an intentional choice for me, one I thought long and hard about, and it was absolutely the right choice for me. The outside pressure from others (not my family) was tougher when I was younger, the questions and women telling me, You’ll change your mind. Or when my friendships drifted as women I was close to had a child or two, and our paths diverged. I missed them. Now, in my early sixties, I’ve regained some of those friendships, and whether or not I have children isn’t a make-or-break at a party. I’m content with my choice. The only niggle of uncertainty is right now. My dad is 87. My sister and I facilitated selling his house, moving him to independent living, then into assisted living, researching the best places, making sure he has everything he needs. I wonder, who will do that for me?

As to the Catholic Church and lipstick, it’s an interesting question. I think maintaining the outward manifestation of “perfection,” looking put together, keeping a clean house, perhaps the men in charge see this as a reflection of being tidy in one’s spiritual life, too. That you’re being a “good girl.” Who knows? Unlike Laurie and Abby (I’m interested to hear how you feel about this Joan; I know you’re very fond of a certain red MAC lipstick), I don’t feel boxed in by fashion and makeup. I find it liberating. As a toddler, if my mother put me in pants, I’d take them off, hide them, and demand a dress. I watched my mother put on her makeup and do her hair in the morning at the breakfast table while my dad ate his cornflakes. My sister and me, too, when we were old enough. Every morning was like a Mary Kay party. It’s a great memory! My mom was a second grade teacher, and like her mom working in the store, she dressed up to go to school. It was a uniform they wore to work.

JV: I started wearing lipstick in the 80s, as part of the 80s fashion of harkening back to the 20s, and as part of my queer identity as a café culture queer woman. Hence the dark, brick red shades I wear. This also distinguishes me from the lipstick lesbian of the 90s, which was a mark of being bourgeois and more socially-acceptable — “straight-acting” — and where the shades of lipstick were less distinctive. And of course, I’m not a lesbian, though for a while in the 90s I identified as such. That was the era where being bi was seen as a transitional (Continued on page 15)

Scene Two, a year or so later: I am seven, and there is another birth in the family, this time ours. The new baby is a boy, my brother. A son! my father marvels over and over again, I can’t believe I have a son. My mother and grandmother laugh in approval and tell the story of my father’s delight many, many times, to friends and family. Nobody seems to realize how these things sound to a daughter who definitely understands that she is less valuable than her brother. How to explain my father’s open preference for a son, especially when he had a daughter who liked so many of the things he liked? The Franco culture? The culture at large? As a parent, I now know how easy it is to say the wrong things to your children. I have been forgiven my father, but still.

JV: It’s been problematic for me to think back to childhood experiences of sexism during this conversation. I’ve begun to be aware of something that I don’t know is cultural, but I suspect it is. Did any of you feel as though you were sexualized too early, as children? I’m not talking about being gendered — which of course I was, being tiresomely and outrageously told by my older brothers what I could and could not do, what I could like and not like, and what I would never be successful at, as a girl. But I mean being sexualized — like, old uncles leering at you, and your mother accusing you of flirting when you were still under the age of six. The word that comes to mind is a very Catholic one: concupiscence. I feel as though I was accused of concupiscence, of having sexual feelings far before I could understand what those were. Part and parcel with this was a sense that, as a woman, sex was my destiny (again, sex not gender), and therefore being a woman itself was an original sin, in that arrogant way that straight men frequently mistake their desire for ours. Did any of you feel that your gender condemned you to being the object of desire, and that this was your fault, in the eyes of the world and God?

Couple this with the fact that when I was about eight, I told my mother that I wanted to be a nun, and she laughed at me, scornfully. You don’t want to be THAT, Joan, she told me. I was utterly mystified by this response. Why, if religion was among her highest values, would she feel contemptuous of that as a life choice? Surely, my wanting to be a nun was me putting my money where her mouth was, values-wise; my feeling was that if you were an actual believer, a religious life was the perfect expression of that faith. This made me feel as though, again, sex with men was my destiny, because surely sex with women was not a choice I knew anything about. Sex and babies: my mother’s life, in short, which was riddled with anxiety and, I sensed, bone-deep boredom. And guilt about both of those undermining her entire sense of self and throwing her into seasonal depressions. I was determined that should not be me.

These are all reasons why I don’t lead with my queerness: a horror of people’s prurient interest, a deep resentment and impatience with the fact that yet again, what precedes me in the world is my sexuality, in a way that’s totally not in my control. That my most intimate moments become a sort of public property. I wonder how this is different for gay men raised in the French Catholic tradition.

AP: I, too, dread what you call “people’s prurient interest” in my body. I think femme people are so brave, because the attention that femininity attracts is really hard for me to bear. I have memories, too, Joan, of being teased about trying to attract attention or flirting. In retrospect, I wonder how much I was just seeking attention from my father and other male relatives who absentened themselves from childcare. I was seeking male attention because it was an unusual thing to receive! But it was clear there was a kind of danger to the very enterprise of interacting with men. Danger in terms of sin. Maybe this is how we keep our Catholicism alive, even though everyone in our family has left The Church.

There was more shame associated with sexual pleasure in my family than with sexual violence. My family is very comfortable with the human body in many ways. We talk very openly about bodily functions, people aren’t squeamish. In the house I grew up in, we didn’t close doors; there was no such thing as privacy. But as I’ve gotten older I’ve realized that, while we talked openly about reproduction and about sexual violence (which many of us experienced), there was never open discussion of sex as a positive experience. Altogether, I was left with a sense that sex was something done to women, either to make babies or to hurt them. This is something I’m only starting to sort out in middle age.

SP: I didn’t feel sexualized as a girl, even though I loved to dress up. Abby, in our family, too, the doors were open, and my husband’s closed bathroom doors still
irritate me. I’m not modest when it comes to getting undressed; I’m used to changing in front of people, because that’s what you do in the dressing room of a theatre. Yet, I have a sense of modesty as to how I dress in public. I’m conscious that the length of my skirt is not too short, that my top covers my but when I’m wearing leggings, and always ask my husband if the neckline of my shirt or dress is too low, and I slap a pin on there. I find myself shocked at how sexualized young girls look today, and that makes me feel old. Also, with middle-age comes a certain invisibility as a woman. I try to embrace the freedom of that. As my character Ida would say, It’s amazing what you can accomplish when they don’t see you coming.

LG: As for the male gaze (and the female gaze), always, because of my dark Québécois looks, I was aware that I didn’t fit the norm of what was considered attractive in the U.S. Now that I am older, it doesn’t matter. How freeing that is! Again, I’m going to generalize: In my family, women were not admired for their intellect, but rather for their looks. My shirt or dress is too low, and I slap a pin on there. I find myself shocked at how sexualized young girls look today, and that makes me feel old. Also, with middle-age comes a certain invisibility as a woman. I try to embrace the freedom of that. As my character Ida would say, It’s amazing what you can accomplish when they don’t see you coming.

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AP: That’s a recurring theme: Is this cultural? Sometimes I think that Franco culture is fundamentally just an engagement with this question. Joan has said this in another setting, that while many ethnic groups operate patriarchally — that’s not just Franco baggage — our particular Franco sexism is the one we have to heal from. But in some ways, each of us has our own version of Franco-American patriarchy to heal from. Mine is tied up with this Catholic guilt and shame, working class pride (and shame), and alcoholism, too.

SP: We had alcoholism on both sides of my family. My grandfather, George, drank in an alcoholic way before my dad was born. And my mother’s mother, Dora, was a binge drinker after she sold the store and retired. My mother’s sister, Rita, had been sober for ten or fifteen years when she died. So my parents didn’t grow up with an active alcoholic, but certainly must have experienced the “isms.” In my upbringing it manifested in an all-or-nothing attitude. Let’s learn to ski! meant we skied every weekend and took lessons and went from the bunny slope to the intermediate trails in one season. Don’t get me wrong, it was fun, but did it have to be every weekend?

I got sober when I was thirty, so I’ve been sober for more than half my life. Nature or nurture? Who the hell knows. It was an instant thing for me. I took my first drink at a party when I was sixteen. I didn’t like the taste, but I loved the feeling and drank until I blacked out. I didn’t have another drink until I was eighteen. Same thing. I stopped again, but started up “social drinking” in my twenties. It was always a struggle, though. Pacing my drinks, watching how others were drinking and trying to match their leisurely pace, and Where is that damn waitress? I need a drink! My drinking increased in my twenties until I was drinking seven days a week and would start early on my day off. I was always chasing that click in my head where my mind relaxed. I got a DWI on my thirtieth birthday in May of 1988, but still I proceeded to drink. That summer is completely lost to me, and I got sober on August 16 of that year. The hardest part in getting sober was owning it. I didn’t deserve it, you see, because I hadn’t been a good enough drunk. My bottom wasn’t low enough. I still had a good job and a nice apartment. I didn’t have to give up seeing my family and friends, because no one knew. If I went out with friends, I’d drink before I left the house, maintain while I was with them, then drink when I got home. I had many advantages, and I screwed it up. Sounds strange now, but those were my feelings at the time.

LG: I am going to generalize based solely on my experience, but I would say that, while practical, the Franco culture is a high-strung, nervous culture where relaxing is very, very difficult. With Francos, it’s always work, work, work, and go, go, go. Adrian, yes, but also, so tiring. I think a lot of us would recognize the feeling of “chasing that click in my head where my mind relaxed.”

JV: One of the things that is a hallmark of Franco culture, beyond our work ethic, is our joy, our humor, our joie de vivre. There’s been a whole bunch of historians who have gone into French Canada and written about it — Thoreau, de Toqueville, other people. There was famously one Englishman who went to PEI and had all of these horrible things to say about Acadians: Acadians love their children too much! and Acadian men actually consult their wives about their farms! But one of things that is just as much of a common thread in these accounts is that we’re incredibly industrious or that we’re incredibly lazy. And I have a theory about that, which is that we like to work really, really hard, and then, we like to stop. So, there were church feast days — tons and tons of them. We liked to play the fiddle, and we learned to dance with just our feet when we played the fiddle, because the priest told us that dancing was sinful, and we were like, We’re dancing anyway. And I wonder if you saw that with your grandmothers or in your families. I have a running hypothesis that, being our age and being in the States, we may have not seen that so much in our families, because I think industrial capitalism broke our off-switch. We weren’t allowed to work hard, and then stop, and it’s an indelible scar on our culture.

LG: As far as joie de vivre, there was, in my parents’ generation, a sort of dispersing of the family, where they didn’t all live clumped together, and so I never had that sense of getting together with the family, and the fiddle comes out, and everyone’s stamping their feet. That just wasn’t part of my experience. We snipped beans at night. We went sliding or skating or playing croquet, but that’s just kind of generic country stuff. I mean, my parents played a lot with us, and that might be kind of a Franco custom, that they did things with us, and it was always expected that they would. But that’s not quite what you’re talking about, is it Joan?

JV: I mean, is it usual that Anglo parents would play with their children in that way? I don’t know.

SP: It’s hard to know. This story just came to mind about my Aunt Rita, my mother’s sister. I remember my parents telling this story. When we lived in Jackman, they used to go to St. George, where our relatives were in Québec. One time, they went to a wedding of one of the relatives, and the wedding lasted for three days, three days of solid partying. The Twist had just come out, and I remember them laughing. Apparently, my Aunt Rita had gotten a new pair of loafers for the wedding, and she did The Twist so much that she wore a hole in the bottom of her brand new loafers. So I think of that, the huge extended family and that kind of partying.

JV: Yes! At those parties where the men and the women would separate out, around ten o’clock in the evening they’d start to converge again, and that’s when the singing started. It was very patriarchally led by my Pépère, and it would usually have antiphonal songs in French that he started. I sat under the kitchen table on people’s feet and sang syllabically with them. The music was very much led by men, but women led it, too, and there weren’t instruments, but
people sang. They sang until nine o’clock in the morning. And there was drinking. Pépère died in 1971 or something like that, so we were really little at that time, single-digit ages.

SP: We have no history of music in our family. No singing. Not appropriate singing, anyway. I remember a story about my grandfather Blue. On Christmas Eve, they’d go to midnight Mass, of course. They would start eating and drinking before, and he would always have a buzz on at Mass. So he would sing along with the songs — even though nobody was singing, it was just supposed to be the chorus — because he was so lit. My parents, they’d party until three or four in the morning, and then my sister and I would get them up at five so we could open Christmas presents. I don’t know how they managed it. It probably helped that they still had a buzz on from the night before. I mean, I remember that kind of partying, but that’s from when I was little, and when we still lived in Jackman, where there was more family.

AP: My grandmother, my mother’s mother, was first-generation, so she still had connections with family in Canada, and they would come down to Vermont any time there was a wedding or a funeral. Her cousins would come down, and they would bring music, so I experienced it, but it felt removed. None of us spoke French and most of them didn’t speak English, so they were really my grandmother’s people, when they were around. But she was the center of our family, so everyone made room, and it was always fun and exciting and friendly.

JV: It was a huge part of our childhood. Sunday morning, go to church, stop for a big box of donuts, we would all pour over the newspaper while Mom made some kind of Sunday dinner, and Dad would play the piano. Sunday was Dad’s time to stretch out at the piano, and you knew he was home because you could hear him singing. We all sang all the time, and we still do. My brother and I can easily trade songs till four in the morning. We start in, and yes, there might be some bourbon and wine involved, but it isn’t about the drinking. It’s really about: What are the songs that we can remember? What are the memories they can evoke? Then it gets a bit more technical: Can we remember this melody? Can we get this harmony right? I’ve always wanted to write about the whole performance model. It was always participatory. The proper response to a good song was not applause: it was a better song, in a different mood. I think it is definitely a Franco mode of performance. It’s not the same as a jam. If you jam with people, it’s usually with a lot of men, showing off how fast they can do things on guitars. This is a wholly different thing, in my experience. It’s a way of having a conversation through performance.

AP: That’s interesting to consider in terms of all of us being creators and storytellers — the idea of coming from a creative tradition that is conversational and collaborative. How might that model of performance or creation inform how we engage with our culture and bring conversations about gender or patriarchy into Franco spaces?

SP: I think conversation is the key word. We have to change our objective from proving our point of view is the right one to having a true conversation. This means being open and curious, when everything in you wants to do the opposite. In short, we have to get comfortable with being uncomfortable. I’ve learned that the thing we want to do most is to confront, but more successful techniques are questioning, or arousing dissonance, or just expressing your emotions. And there’s always the “yes…. and” technique from improv, such a simple tool, and it keeps a conversation going: Yes, my grandmother was the boss when it came to domestic decisions, and when it came to bigger life decisions (where to live, how the majority of the money was spent) she didn’t have a say.

The hardest part in addressing bias is accepting the fact that epiphanies are rare. Oh, and letting go of being right. I think my mother had super powers in that regard. Actually, one of the things that made my mom and dad good parents was their ability to let us learn in our own way. They would listen to our point of view, even if they knew better. It’s a valuable skill for dealing with folks who aren’t as “enlightened” as we think they should be.

**Lettres/ Letters**

Bonjour à tous! I am a collector (and researcher) of Franco-American sheet music and song books; any music printed or handwritten, in the French language, by people of French descent in the US. This includes sheet music by the Champagne Brothers of Lowell, MA, handwritten notebooks of song lyrics, religious music, and the like.

If anyone is looking to let go of old French music, I’m always interested in acquiring more! My goal is to both preserve these pieces of history and to perform them as well.

Also very interested in any French-Canadian/Franco-American player-piano rolls out there, like rolls of songs like "Évangéline" or "Amour brisé".

(For those with collections of La Bonne Chanson books, I must respectfully decline those as I already have a complete set.)

Attached are two photos: one is a popular tune, L’Amour c’est comme la salade, and the other is of a piano roll box.

**Contact:**
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A Woman Of Courage

By Marie S. Landry

MY MOTHER, YVONNE

My mother is the bravest woman that I have ever known. She made her way to a foreign country and managed to make a living for sixty-two years in her adopted country.

She married a man that she didn’t love, but thought she could make a living with, to get away from an oppressive society of hard work, outdated morals, rigged standards, harsh climate near the ocean who’s very dampness made her sick. She suffered from bronchites and the incense of the Catholic church choked her all the while being obliged to attend the services under penalty of mortal sin.

She did, however, have an ally. Her step-father, which she adored had traveled in his life and during their talks she had learned that across the mountains that separated her part of Canada from the United States, there was freedom and there was such a thing as divorce if the marriage did not work out. That women were not subject to living the lives of the women that she knew if they were unhappy, there was a means to change their lives if they had the courage. And she had courage. So, she dreamed of crossing those mountains some day.

She formulated a plan. Her step had several sons, all good looking, but one in particular, Andrew, not only had an American citizenship but he was an officer in the American Army. She stole a few eggs from the hen-house now and then for postage stamps with to write letters to him and her plan was successful. Soon they were married in the family church. Now, she could cross those mountains and lead the life she had dreamed of.

Within a few months after the wedding, she found herself with-child, of course, she wanted children, but so soon? When she told him about the baby, he was very happy. Too happy for her state of mind. Oh, no, she remembered the life of the women back home. A life of drudgery and another child every year and a half. This was not the life that she had bargained for. She asked her doctor how to space her children and yet not let her husband know that she was protecting herself. His answer was safe, reliable and easy to do.

For the birth of her son, she returned to her mother’s home. To be among her family was a comfort to her and the ladies there were competent in birthing babies. But to her heartfelt regret, the baby lived less than a day. “My baby had no bones, there was nothing we could do,”

Her second child was a girl (me), healthy, strong, and I was her doll. She dressed me well. Often, I remember, the sales clerk taking the clothes off the man-equins in the windows for me. We had fi.m.

About the time I was born, she started to dislike the man she married. For instance, when

she became pregnant for the second time, she took the train alone and went to Montreal, Canada. She had family there, a sister and a brother, Eugene. She passed herself off as an unwed mother so she could have help from the city to live. Her brother was a big help to her. He watched over her and became her life-line in her time of need. The child was born in a rooming house in January of a hard winter. The ice crawled up the door and the walls, and the mother was unattended by a doctor. He arrived after the fact. But the baby was healthy and the mother was strong, a product of generations of fecund farmer women. She had a feather coverlet that her mother had given her when she married. She said that it saved our lives many times over. Until the day she died she kept that feather coverlet safe in an cedar chest. Still good and ready for service if ever it was needed again.

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served for her suffering.

One day, when I was 8-years old, Mama, my sister, (age 3) and I had just come in the house from swimming at the river when my Dad met us in the dining room just off the foyer and he came right out and said “Yvonne, I want a divorce.” To which she said “Yes.” And that was that. Of course, I knew that things were not right with them. They had been living separate lives and it could not go on like that indefinitely.

After the divorce, she was on her own. The two girls stayed with their father. She told me that it was best for us to be with him because he had a home, and a means to take care of us, he had a pension from the Army and he would take good care of us. She, on the other hand, had to make a living, and had no way to take care of us and work at the same time. What would have been allotted to her for child-support was not enough to pay for rent, expenses and baby-sitting while she worked. She knew that we would be okay with our father. She promised never to be far away and she kept that promise. Again, her great courage took her to the next phase of her life.

Two years after the divorce, the time had come to make another change in her life. The man who had delivered her heating oil years ago was now heating her heart and instead of sticking up for herself, she took refuge in tears. Mama was determined that such would not be the case with her. She would not be made to cry. One night, after supper, while the dishes were being done, an argument arose among the women in the kitchen. Present were Mama, the mother-in-law and her daughter. I don’t recall what the argument was about but it resulted in Mama taking the mother-in-law by the hair and the nap of the neck and plunging her head in the dish-pan. The sister-in-law tried to help her mother, but unable, she ran to the dining room and sought the help of her brother to save her mother. Joe ran to the kitchen, and knowing the best way to handle his wife was to put his hand on her shoulder and ask her to release his mother. “For you, Joe, I will. But tomorrow, you will find us a house of our own” which he did.

By now, at eighty years old, and in the nursing home only a few days, she was conscious that her bladder was no longer functional and knowing what that meant, she asked for a sleeping pill, and continued to do so until she slept her way to heaven. She was not in pain, and she did it her way. Again, the courage that had guided her life saw her through to her reward.

I don’t know if you believe that the spirit leaves the body before the physical death occurs, but, I witnessed an unexplainable experience. While I was praying by her bedside, I felt an unmistakable warm hand that touched my right shoulder, moved to the center of my back and then touched my left shoulder. I am convinced that her spirit was telling me good-bye. Her body continued to breathe for an hour or so, but I knew that she was gone.

Mama had once told me of an experience that had unnerved her. Years after her mother died, she was cooking at her stove in the kitchen when she saw her mother come from the hall, pass behind her, and go into the dining room. She called and followed her mother into the dining room. She called and followed her mother into the dining room. But she had disappeared. I asked her what the word was, did she say anything? “No, she just walked on by.” Mama said. It so bothered Mama, that she talked to the priest about it. He wasn’t much help, he said that it was her imagination, that she must have been thinking about her mother. But no, Mama said that it wasn’t so.

Do we believe in spirits? I didn’t know then and I still don’t know. But some things are impossible to explain away.

Rebirth

By Dick Bernard

This may appear to be a ‘miscellaneous’ post. It is not. If you have any interest in heritage, in my case, French-Canadian, you will possibly find something of interest within…something which may jog your own memory.

On the other hand, you may not be interested. There’s plenty of very serious stuff to consider, but let’s divert for a week or two.

My sister, Flo, seems to have a family trait which I share: “reuse and recycle”. So when I got the below postcard from her a short while ago, it reminded me of the premiere event we attended at the rural Minnesota resort, Val Chatel, probably back in the 1970s. The postcard says this: “Vikings! A two hour live play on a magnificent outdoor stage surrounded by the beauty of the Northwoods. Fascinating family entertainment, colorful costumes, exciting music and spectacular dance. All new amphitheater located at Val Chatel on County Road 4, 16 miles north of Park Rapids, Minnesota.”

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It was a nice night; the mosquitoes were manageable, and the Vikings did cross the lake, and land! A nice evening.

Such spectacles are hard to maintain in rural areas. “Vikings” is in the category of ‘long ago’, now. Val Chatel, then a happening place, descended nearly into ruins, and when I googled it recently, I found it is being resurrected as part of a public land trust for a park by a private donor. That story is interesting in itself.

A popular Quebec song is “Dégénération” - Quebecois Traditionalist Song. (It’s satire, but within satire is truth…..see below)

The remainder of this post is primarily links about history and heritage. If you are interested, these are interesting pieces for your spare time. If not, have a good Easter and Spring.

A group from my French in America organization is preparing a book about over 70 French-Canadian families from Quebec who settled in rural Dayton MN, about 25 miles up the Mississippi River from downtown Minneapolis. Two of those families were mine, Blondeau and Collette. Here are some snippets of information I submitted about these families who came west to Minnesota territory in the mid-1850s, before Minnesota became a state: Dayton Blondeau Collette The document is three pages. Here is a tintype of my great grandparents, Clotilde Blondeau and Octave Collette, after their marriage at St. Anthony (later part of Minneapolis) July 12, 1868. They spent almost all of their long married life at Oakwood North Dakota.

Along similar lines, three years ago I and many others heard a fascinating two hour talk by historian John Vanek about the history of Benjamin Gervais, born at the end of the 17th century in Quebec, and his wife, Genevieve Laurence, born early in the 18th century, one of the very first families to settle what became St. Paul at the beginning of the 1840s. The two-hour YouTube video is here. It is very well worth your time if you have even a small interest in voyageur days, how people lived and moved, and the settlement from what became today’s Winnipeg to St. Paul. The presentation was filmed at the Little Canada Historical Society in September, 2019.

Finally, some years ago I was privileged to meet a gifted friend from French Canada. Over the years, Emilie, who now lives in Montreal, received a grant from the National Geographic Society to develop a significant exhibit on the matter of ancestry and diversity. This week she sent collaborators a brief video, about three minutes, describing her project as it is to date, and a photo (below) of one of the exhibits she is developing for NatGeo, a large quilt. In my opinion, hers is a very important project, and I look forward to seeing more about it. Her brief summary gives much food for thought. This is shared with her permission.

(Continued on page 21)
Spring/Printemps 2022

The Midnight Ride of Louis-Joseph Papineau: Vermont and the Patriote Rebellion of 1837/8
May 24, 2016 Home, New England, Vermont

By James Myall

It’s the early hours of a December morning in 1837, and a group of men are riding hard through the forests of northern Vermont. Many miles behind them, in hot pursuit, are agents of the British government in Canada. Those fleeing are Louis-Joseph Papineau, leader of the Canadian Patriote Party, and a group of his comrades. Just weeks earlier, the Patriotes, who had been lobbying the British authorities for reforms in the colony of Lower Canada (modern-day Quebec), had met in St. Charles, Quebec, and determined to take up arms. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Papineau and his friends, who, facing the hangman’s noose for treason, were fleeing for their lives, across the international boundary, to seek safe haven in the United States.

Aunt Edith’s untended voluntaries at the ND farm May 17, 2013.

Peace and Justice is a theme I’ve been passionate about my entire life, but particularly since September 2001. I began this blog in 2009. The intended focus of this site is Peace, Justice, Environment, Sustainability, Global Cooperation and related issues.

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Finally, the title of this post is “Rebirth”. Spring. Easter…. Your choice.

I thought it appropriate to share the flowers (below), planted by my Aunt Edith at her then-home in rural LaMoure ND. She had been in assisted living, then in Nursing Home for some months when the 2013 growing season came, and the flowers came to their own conclusion and grew of their own volition, with no outside help. Edith died in 2014 at the age of 93. She lives on in these flowers. Who do you remember, this day?

Louis-Joseph Papineau, portrait by Antoine Pamandon, 1836. Musée des Beaux Arts, Montréal

The Patriote cause, which began as a political movement calling for liberal reforms in Lower Canada, had become an armed insurrection in October 1837 after a series of attempts by Papineau to extract reforms from the British authorities. Their fight, which was short-lived and bloody, consisted of a series of battles in present-day Quebec and Ontario, many close to the US border. This episode, known as the “Lower Canada Rebellion” or the “Rebellions of 1837-8” is commemorated annually in Quebec with a public holiday, the Journée Nationale des Patriotes. The Patriote Insurrection has been a touchstone of French Canadian nationalist history for centuries. What’s less talked about, however, is the connection between the Patriotes and New England.

Papineau’s flight through the Vermont countryside was romantically described by the Burlington Free Press, but it was very much a passage through the state; by 1839, Papineau was in New York City, where he boarded a ship that took him to France, where he unsuccessfully petitioned the French government to intervene on behalf of his cause. Nonetheless, a number of Patriotes did settle in Vermont after the uprising, living in exile until 1842, when the British government offered a pardon to those who had participated (Papineau himself returned to Montreal in 1845, after he received additional assurances for his personal liberty).

In the meantime, the Patriotes found a generally warm reception in northern Vermont. Even on that snowy December evening (at least according to the Free Press), Vermonters were sympathetic to the fleeing French Canadians, and hostile to the pursuing British. The paper describes an incident which may well be straight from the editorial board’s imagination, but which likely reflected public sentiment:

It was in vain that the pursuing party expostulated and endeavored to prove the pacific character of their mission—nobody would listen to a word of it. and they [the British] were generally insulted, by those in whom they applied for Information. “You want to catch Mr Papineau, do you !” said an Amazon of a woman, flourishing her broom stick significantly at friend Lane ; “but let me tell you the sooner you get hack to Canada the better, you blond-thirsty monster! — If my husband was here, you’d catch it.”

That Vermonters were sympathetic to the Patriote cause is not hard to imagine. Not only did the Patriotes draw on American political thought for examples, but the American Revolution was still (just about) within (Continued on page 22)
Daniel Mitchell’s Decade Among the Abenaki
June 20, 2016French and Indian Wars, Home, Native Americans, New England, Quebec, Yarmouth

By James Myall

One Saturday evening, in the early spring of 1752, three boys were bringing home the cattle from the common pasture near the meetinghouse in North Yarmouth, Maine [1], back to Benjamin Mitchell’s farm. It should have been a relatively routine chore for the lads, aged seven, eleven and twelve. But at the intersection of Main Street and the North Road, a stone’s throw from what’s now the northernmost route one exit for Yarmouth [2], the trio stumbled across a party of Abenaki lying in ambush. Though they had been hoping to capture adults, the Indians, fearing discovery, had no option but to kidnap the children and flee northwards. Two of the youngesters, Solomon Mitchell and Joseph Chandler, would see home again relatively soon but the youngest, Solomon’s seven year-old brother Daniel, would not be reunited with his parents for another decade by which time, according to tradition, he was “an Indian in instinct and in speech.” Details about one of the longest so-called “Indian captivities” are not abundant, but what we do know of the story paints an interesting picture that should raise some questions about our assumptions of Indian captivities in the colonial era.

In 1752, France and Great Britain were technically at peace. But it was a fragile peace, and the truce signed between the two countries in 1748 would prove to be a brief respite before the formal resumption of hostilities in 1754 with the outbreak of what is traditionally known in the United States as the French and Indian War (among French Canadians, this conflict from 1754-63 is usually referred to as the Guerre de la Conquête or War of the Conquest, because it resulted in the conquest of New France by Britain). North Yarmouth, now a sleepy town just inland from the coast of Maine, was then a frontier between New England and New France. Conflict between Anglo-American colonists and Native Americans in the area was not uncommon.

Still, the capture of three young children must have come as a shock to the people of North Yarmouth. Joseph Chandler was ransomed back to his father within the year, having been sold by the Indians, who were members of the Saint François Abenaki, to a Dutch settler in upstate New York (Cornelius Cuyer). The two Mitchell boys, however, remained in Canada. Eleven year-old Solomon was sold by the Abenaki to a M. Despins of Montreal, while Daniel remained with the Indians along the Saint François River [3], about 75 miles to the north-east.

The boys’ father, Benjamin, was un-

(Continued on page 34)
“Little Rose”—A Mysterious and Remarkable Franco-American Woman

By Ron Héroux (frannie542@aol.com)

Born in 1902 at St. Germain de Grantham, Québec, Marie Rose Ferron, affectionately known as “Little Rose”, was the tenth child in a family of fifteen children. Her parents, Jean-Baptiste Ferron (a blacksmith) and Délima (Mathieu), moved to Fall River, MA in 1906, eventually settling in the mill city of Woonsocket, RI in 1925. Marie Rose died in 1936, as she said Jesus told her in 1929 in front of five witnesses.

Today, hundreds of people still pray to “Little Rose” and believe in her holiness. Moreover, a museum (a shrine some would say) has been established in Woonsocket by the Rose Ferron Foundation of Rhode Island (2) to honor and remember her life. Many of Rose’s devoted followers continue to pray for her canonization, even though two RI Bishops (Francis P. Keough and Russell J. McVinney) concluded that there was not sufficient evidence to promote her cause.

Rose is buried in Precious Blood Cemetery in Woonsocket where many of her followers continue to visit her unique gravestone.

For a good part of her life, “Little Rose” was crippled and confined to her bed often in excruciating pain which she accepted as the will of God. From an early age, she believed she could communicate with “little Jesus”, as she often called Him. In her later years, she became a stigmatic (1) and was often referred to as a mystic and a holy person.

Having a strong desire to become a nun in spite of her illness, Marie Rose took her vows in 1928 as the Foundress of the Sisters of Reparation of the Sacred Wounds (with the approval of the Bishop of Rhode Island, William Hickey, who had ed as the will of God. From an early age, she believed she could communicate with “little Jesus”, as she often called Him. In her later years, she became a stigmatic (1) and was often referred to as a mystic and a holy person.

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As word spread regarding her spiritual and mysterious life, Catholics (as well as some non-Catholics) from all over New England, the Province of Québec and as far as the Midwest, visited her day and night to pray with Marie Rose. Most of her devoted followers were French-speaking Franco Americans and French Canadians, many seeking Rose’s intercession to obtain cures or simply a better life. Many priests and theologians were among her visitors, including Brother André (Alfred Bessette) from Montréal who was canonized a saint in 2010.

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Rose is buried in Precious Blood Cemetery in Woonsocket where many of her followers continue to visit her unique gravestone.

For a good part of her life, “Little Rose” was crippled and confined to her bed often in excruciating pain which she accepted as the will of God. From an early age, she believed she could communicate with “little Jesus”, as she often called Him. In her later years, she became a stigmatic (1) and was often referred to as a mystic and a holy person.

Having a strong desire to become a nun in spite of her illness, Marie Rose took her vows in 1928 as the Foundress of the “Sisters of Reparation of the Sacred Wounds of Jesus” with the approval of the Bishop of Rhode Island, William Hickey, who had visited her.

As word spread regarding her spiritual and mysterious life, Catholics (as well as some non-Catholics) from all over New England, the Province of Québec and as far as the Midwest, visited her day and

Gravestone

Much has been written about Marie Rose Ferron including two major biographies (3); and the renown Franco-American historian, Claire Quintal, wrote in a book on a history of Woonsocket that “an account of (the 1930s) would be woefully incomplete if it did not include a reference to Marie-Rose Ferron.” (4). In his extensive history of the Franco Americans of New England (5), Armand Chartier describes briefly the attraction Marie Rose Ferron had on her ethnic and Catholic group along with a “reputation that remains controversial to this day”. Interestingly, Chartier also mentions that a musical drama, titled “The Life of Mystical Rose”, was composed based on the life of Rose Ferron, and that it was performed by the singer and opera star Yvonne Chaliante in many Franco-American centers as well as in the Province of Québec.

An interesting and well researched article (6) was written in 2007 about Marie Rose and the “construction of a Franco-American saint cult” by Hillary Kaell (currently an Associate Professor of Anthropology and Religion at McGill University). Kaell states that her paper “raises a number of questions for further study, urging more comprehensive analyses of Franco-American history and religion.” She also explores the relationship between Rose and her biographer, Rev. Onésime A. Boyer, along with his friendship with the French Canadian nationalist Lionel Groulx, particularly as it related to Boyer’s efforts to get Rose canonized.

In a homily dedicated to Marie Rose, Rev. Norman Meunier, a local priest, made an astounding prediction: “Maybe not today, maybe not tomorrow, but someday Woonsocket will have a saint.” Regarding a more temporal honor, Marie Rose Ferron was inducted into the Rhode Island Heritage Hall of Fame in 2017.

A HISTORIC NOVEL ABOUT THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MARIE ROSE FERRON

Understanding Rose (7) is an intriguing and captivating book written by the Franco-American author Richard L. Belair. Although Belair died in 2010, his novel, based on the life of Marie Rose Ferron, was only recently published by the Belair Estate. As Belair stated in his introduction, the book is told from Rose’s father’s point of view, and “the story addresses the dilemmas which believing people might have with extraordinary mystical phenomena.”

In June 1998, Belair made a presentation about his novel during a colloquium at the French Institute, Assumption College, in Worcester, MA. He said the life of Rose Ferron captivated him very much, especially the dramatic moments in her life. “As a writer”, he added, “I need to feel the contact (Continued on page 24)
with the character... I need to find dramatic moments to make something come alive.”

Belair went on to say that he found Rose’s father an interesting individual. “In fact,” he explained, “the more I read to understand Rose, the more I became like her father, who was also struggling to understand her and what she was about”, not to mention contending with the many visitors and religious people coming to his home to pray with and examine Rose. “The more I read about Jean-Baptiste Ferron”, Belair stated, “the more I could get into the struggle that might have been going on within the man”.

Richard Belair ended his presentation by saying:

“I wrote this novel with Jean-Baptiste Ferron as the main character because I could identify with him. I could connect with him as a man of faith, but also a man of a certain skepticism, as a man who respected the clergy but could sometimes have difficulty with their attitude, and as a father who would certainly love his children to be saints but might have problems if they manifested extraordinary or mysterious behavior. I suspect and hope that others might be intrigued enough to want to read Understanding Rose, a story inspired by a person who really existed.”

Jean-Baptiste Ferron
Little Rose’s Father

NOTES:

(1) A person with bodily marks or pains resembling the wounds of the crucified Christ. “Stigmatics often have a strong desire to suffer in union with Christ” wrote Rev. Onésime A. Boyer, who specialized in mystical theology. (See (3) below.)

(2) Rose Ferron Foundation of Rhode Island, 339 Arnold St. Woonsocket, RI 02895 (The Foundation mails out a free newsletter which can also be obtained via email. Website: roseferronfri.org; Email: roseferronfri@gmail.com)

(3) Onésime A. Boyer, She Wears a Crown of Thorns, 1939 (Rev. Boyer spent much time at Marie Rose’s bedside and was one of her spiritual directors. His book contains an extensive appendix including testimonials regarding cures attributed to Rose’s intercession as well as communications from Rose and some of her friends.)


(7) To obtain a copy of Richard Belair’s book, contact the publisher at: abelair88@gmail.com.

“La Palette”

Soon after opening his sugar house in 1921, Lazare Bisson began making and selling maple taffy (“la tire”), which was a French Canadian delicacy. At the time, taffy was sold in tin cups. Customers were given a hand whittled and sanded wooden spoon called “la palette” that was used to eat the product. Family members or hired hands would make these spoons, often sitting around the evaporator. When Armand Bisson took over the business, the tradition continued. Later, his father-in-law, Napoleon Fournier, began making them as well. Sitting at his workbench near his wood stove, he literally made thousands of them! The process involved chopping a poplar log into thin pieces, whittling, and then meticulously sanding each one. This craft ended with his passing in 1959. The remainder of these palettes have been tucked away ever since! Our 100th anniversary provides us with a great opportunity to share them with you. Napoleon would be proud!

(603) 752-1298
61 Cates Hill Road
Berlin, New Hampshire 03570
Email BissonsMaple@gmail.com
Denis Perreault –
du Québec à la Californie

Par Denis Carrier © 2013

Denis Perreault est né à Saint-Alban dans le comté de Portneuf, en juin 1858, fils de Bellarmin Perreault et Séraphine Perreault. Il a un grand frère Joseph né l’année précédente, suivront deux sœurs, Emma et Lumina et sept autres garçons dont Antoine comme son frère Joseph viendront enrichir la biographie de notre personnage. La famille Perreault était venue de Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade s’établir à Saint-Alban en 1856.

Denis Perreault a fréquenté l’école ce qui n’était pas toujours la norme à la campagne à cette époque. Son frère Antoine nous précisera plus tard qu’il aimait étudier. Il a été l’élève de madame Douville, institutrice pendant 45 ans à l’école située près de l’église de Saint-Alban. Voulant parfaire ses connaissances, Denis Perreault choisit même d’aller étudier l’anglais à Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade auprès d’un certain monsieur St-Cyr. Il revient à Saint-Alban et prend un emploi de commis au magasin général de Siffroy Leclerc.

Par goût de l’aventure et un peu par l’inconscience de son jeune âge, Denis Perreault prend alors la décision d’aller à pied (oui à pied!) de Saint-Alban à Los Angeles en Californie, ou du moins jusqu’à Omaha dans la Nébraska, une aventure incroyable et risquée dans laquelle il faillit y laisser la vie. Mais pas aussi irréfléchie que l’on pourrait croire à première vue. Nous sommes en pleine période de migration des Québécois vers les États-Unis et le sang des Coureurs des bois et des grands explorateurs français coule encore dans nos veines. L’Amérique du Nord est toujours notre terrain de jeu, du Klondike à la Nouvelle-Orléans. De plus, le père de Denis, Bellarmin Perreault avait pavé la voie à son fils. Parti de Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade quelques années auparavant, il avait fait le trajet, à pied, jusqu’en Californie. On le retrouve alors, accompagné de cinq amis amenant un convoi de bétail, une aventure de sept mois d’où tous revinrent sain et sauf et espérons-le, un peu plus riches.

Lorsque Denis prend la décision d’entreprendre cette aventure de plus de 5 000 km, c’est d’abord pour aller y retrouver son frère Joseph déjà sur place.

Écoutons son frère Antoine nous rappeler le contexte dans lequel se fit son départ.

« Le soir de la veille du départ de Denis, les voisins s’étaient rendus à la maison pour souhaiter un bon voyage à notre cher Denis qui était estimé et aimé dans la paroisse. Mon bon vieux père avait une affectation toute spéciale pour lui. À cette réunion d’adieu, il y eut bien des larmes de versées. Il me semble bien voir encore ma bonne et sainte mère, derrière le gros poêle, versant des flots de larmes. Mon père les garde pour le départ le lendemain... »

Denis ne fera d’ailleurs pas le trajet sans consignes précises. Son père a fait cette longue marche, Joseph n’est pas sans lui avoir écrit de Californie et comme le précise Antoine dans sa narration : « J’entends encore les conseils d’oncle Ludger, de Narcisse... »

Je n’ai pu retracer la date exacte de son départ, mais la coutume bien établie était de partir au printemps. Elle se situe fort probablement fin avril ou début mai.

Tout semble d’abord aller rondement. Une lettre est postée à Joseph lui indiquant (suite page 26)


2 « Vieux » pour l’époque, mais seulement dans la quarantaine
une date probable d’arrivée. Puis une autre de Denis arrive précisant qu’il est rendu à Omaha au Nebraska : « J’écris d’Omaha, encore un jour et demi [par train]) et je serai avec Joseph. Rien de fâcheux ne m’est arrivé. »

Puis une dizaine de jours après
3, nous arrive une lettre de Joseph, disant en résumé : « Denis n’est pas arrivé...Pourquoi a-t-il changé d’idée à la dernière minute, vite une réponse... »

La réponse de la famille ne se fait pas attendre. Denis n’a de toute évidence pas rebroussé chemin. Joseph répond qu’il est lui-même venu à Omaha, il n’a rien vue, rien su. Père, mère et enfants sont morts d’inquiétude.


Il couche à la belle étoile; sa petite provision de nourriture s’épuise rapidement. Il mange des racines, apprend à tuer des serpents à l’aide d’un long bâton au rythme de un à trois par jour. Il survit également en volant quelques Indiens et en remerciant le ciel de tout cœur et la conscience tranquille d’avoir quelque chose à se mettre sous la dent. L’aboiement des chiens qu’ont les Indiens lui indique où ils se trouvent. Il a également pris la précaution d’apporter une couverture pour les nuits fraîches. Il survit tant bien que mal. Il profite des nuits de clair de lune; puis après avoir demandé à la Sainte Vierge Marie, à la bonne Sainte Anne et à son ange gardien de le protéger, il se permet d’aller piller la réserve de quelques Indiens qui ont de toute évidence le sommeil lourd. Il se sauve ensuite à toutes jambes « hors de la vue de ses bienfaiteurs ».

Une aussi longue errance lui pose problème : « Les nuits étaient froides. Je savais que l’automne ne devait pas être loin. La marche devenait pénible...Mes chaussures n’avaient presque plus de semelles. Souvent, je passais une partie de la journée à sécher mes habits...Je réalisais que je perdais ma santé...je me tenais caché durant le jour...Je marchais la nuit; il se faisait clair de lune...ma mère était complète. »

Voyant qu’il tournait en rond, qu’il

Ces trois mois sans nouvelles amènent le curé Dionne à se présenter chez les Perreault. Il conseille alors à ces bonnes gens de faire « chanter le service » de leur fils. Le père a encore espoir de revoir son fils vivant et choisi d’attendre un mois de plus. Le mois additionnel s’étant écoulé, le service funéraire a lieu en l’Église de Saint-Alban, en l’absence du corps. Tous les paroissiens sont présents car ils se sentent solidaires de ce drame.

En fait, Denis Perreault s’était simplement égaré.
4 Voyant arriver un plein convoi de soldats à Omaha et ne voulant pas être enrôlé malgré lui, il s’était enfui et s’était complètement égaré. Comme le dira Antoine : « Il est écarté, il marche, il court jour après jour, semaine après semaine, mois après mois. Voici pourquoi : Denis, effrayé, s’éloigne d’Omaha et se tient caché pour une couple de jours, espérant voir tous ces soldats partir de la ville. Il s’était trop éloigné...Quand il voulut revenir, il s’aperçut qu’il était perdu. »

Voyant qu’il tournaient en rond, qu’il

3 La vitesse du courrier à cette époque était comparable à celle d’aujourd’hui.
4 Confirmé lors de l’entrevue faite avec Guy Perreault, le 3 avril 2013.
Il est charitablement accueilli. On le nourri, lui donne des vêtements et on lui permet de récupérer quelques jours avant de lui offrir du travail. On constate sûrement qu’il est jeune et qu’il fera éventuellement un bon employé. Il apprend qu’il est parti depuis cinq mois. On le charge de s’occuper de l’écurie. Venant d’une ferme, il sait donc bien s’acquitter de sa tâche. Il apprécie que les chevaux n’y passent que la nuit.

Un jour, il trouve en nettoyant l’écurie, une pièce d’or. Il la ramasse et au dîner, en bon chrétien qu’il est, la remet à son boss. C’était une pièce de vingt dollars. Le patron est tellement surpris par son honnêteté qu’il la lui remet. Après environ un mois à cet emploi, il prend congé arguant qu’il veut retrouver son frère Joseph et surtout donner de nouvelles à sa famille. Riche de son petit salaire et de sa pièce d’or, il a de quoi se vêtir convenablement et acheter un billet pour Los Angeles. Il remercie ces bonnes gens et dans son empressément, oublie de demander le nom de l’endroit où il était.

Deux jours et deux nuits plus tard, vers neuf heures du matin, il entend crier « Los Angeles Station ». Il sait bien que Joseph ne l’attendra pas sur le quai mais il connait par cœur son adresse. Il se paye un bon repas au restaurant, puis se fait conduire en voiture à la maison de pension de Joseph. Le trajet est de deux heures et demie au pas de cheval, ce qui est un bon indice sur l’endroit où Joseph réside. Le champ de Joseph est à un mille plus loin. On peut facilement imaginer l’intensité des retrouvailles des deux frères.

L’une des premières tâches que Denis Perreault se fait un devoir d’accomplir est d’écrire à sa famille au Québec. La lettre est faite par sa sœur Emma, à la lueur d’une chandelle, la lampe au kérosène n’étant pas encore arrivée à Saint-Alban. La lettre est brève : « Je me suis écarté. J’ai eu un peu de misère mais pas d’accident. Je suis en bonne santé. Je suis avec Joseph. J’espère vous envoyer mon portrait5. »

Quelques temps après son arrivée à Los Angeles, Denis Perreault acquiert un petit terrain pour la culture maraîchère. Il en fera l’activité principale de sa vie. Cette activité sera très rentable. Antoine indiquera plus tard que Denis envoie de temps en temps des sommes de trois ou quatre cents dollars à sa famille, sommes appréciables à cette époque.

Mes recherches sur Denis Perreault m’ont amenées à correspondre avec madame Hélène Demeestere6 de Los Angeles que je tiens ici à remercier pour sa recherche sur Denis Perreault et pour les pistes additionnelles qu’elle m’a fournies. Denis Perreault est officiellement arrivé en Californie en 1878, un léger décalage avec la narration de mémoire, beaucoup plus tard, par Antoine. Madame Demeestere m’a aussi appris qu’en 1887, une annonce parue dans le Daily Alta California daté du 5 septembre fait part d’une lettre lui étant adressée et disponible à la poste restante. Nous voyons par là que Denis Perreault a des activités à San Francisco. Dans mon entrevue avec Guy Perrault, celui-ci m’a fait part que Denis Perreault avait un point de vente à San Francisco sous le vocable de « Den Perrault ».

En 1893, Denis Perreault achète un petit terrain7. Peut-être s’agit-il du petit terrain mentionné ci-haut. Ce terrain a une superficie de 12 acres et faisait partie du Rancho Providencia.

Une certaine mise en contexte de la propriété foncière dans ce qui est aujourd’hui Burbank en banlieue de Los Angeles est, je crois, nécessaire. La Californie qui était espagnole ou plus précisément mexicaine depuis fort longtemps venait d’être envahie par les Américains. Elle n’était américaine que depuis 1850. Les lois civiles dont le droit de propriété individuel étaient restées mexicaines pendant un bon nombre d’années. Le Rancho La Providencia, propriété de Vicente de la Ossa lorsqu’il fut créé, était un grand domaine où un cheptel important de moutons était gardé. Mais voici que l’arrivée des éleveurs de bovins américains cause problème. S’en suit une longue bataille juridique à savoir s’il était le propriétaire d’un Rancho qui devait clôturer son domaine ou les nouveaux éleveurs qui devaient empêcher leur bétail de pénétrer sur le Rancho. Cette confrontation entre les partisans du Fence-in et du Fence-out se traduit finalement par l’obligation du propriétaire du Rancho de clôturer son domaine. Ajouter à cela l’apparition de nouvelles taxes et les anciens propriétaires mexicains durent vendre petit à petit des parcelles de leur domaine pour rencontrer (suite page 28)

5 Il s’agit de la photo mise en début d’article.
6 Au moment d’écrire cet article, madame Demeestere préparait sa thèse de doctorat sur l’immigration française en Californie durant la période concernée.
7 Demeestere, Hélène courriel du 8 avril 2013.
(Denis Perreault – du Québec à la Californie suite de page 27)

leurs obligations.

Vicente de la Ossa vendit finalement tout son domaine à David W. Alexander qui le revendit en 1867 à David Burbank. Ce dernier le revendit au groupe de spéculateur Providencia Land, Water & Development Co. dont Burbank était l’un des directeurs. Le Rancho La Providencia est alors subdivisé en fermettes dont Denis Perreault fera l’acquisition de l’une de celles-ci en 1893.

En 1892, nous pouvons retracer Denis Perreault. Le 3 décembre, il est recensé en prévision d’une élection8. Ce document nous apprend qu’il est âgé de 34 ans et qu’il habite au 1925, Figueroa Street, à Los Angeles. Une autre recherche sur la Toile10 nous fait découvrir qu’il a été naturalisé américain aussi en 1892. À noter que l’orthographe utilisée en Californie est Perrault (sans “e”). En 1900, année du recensement aux États-Unis, Denis Perreault est recensé à San Diego. Deux adresses sont ressorties de mes recherches. L’une au 2327 H (Market Street) et l’autre au ED 199, San Diego City, Word 8. Il a 41 ans et déclare « capitalist » (financier ou homme d’affaires) comme occupation. Il est toujours célibataire.

Peu après le recensement, soit vers 1901-1902, Denis Perreault est malade. Une douleur « au côté » (hernie?) l’oblige au repos. Son médecin lui suggère de passer ses étés au nord à San Francisco ou dans l’île Catalina située à 50-60- milles de la côte et ses hivers plus au sud à San Diego. Se croyant à l’article de la mort, il rédige (en 1901-1902) un testament dont il fait parvenir une copie à son frère Antoine (Frère Xavier dans la communauté du Sacré-Cœur et directeur de l’Académie du Lac Mégantic) lui disant : « Si après quatre mois tu n’as pas de nouvelle de moi, ouvre la lettre contenant le testament et accomplis mes volontés ». Trois mois passent et Denis ayant bien récupéré demande de retourner la lettre et le testament qui nous aurait tant appris. Une copie existe certainement dans un greffe oublié d’un notaire de la Californie.

Dix ans plus tard, ce n’est pas son état physique qui cause problème, mais son état mental. Une lettre de son banquier de Los Angeles adressée à Antoine fait part de l’incapacité de Denis Perreault de gérer ses importants avoirs. Il est demandé qu’une

8 L.A. Country Superior Court Records
9 California Great Register, 1866-1910, page 510, film no. 976929, dossier 005028152, image 0053 (familysearch.org).
10 http://www.fold3.com/s.php#query=Perrault+Denis&t=108
29 avril 1912. Joseph a ramené Denis mais certainement pas sa fortune. Il continue sa vie simple sur sa terre, le lot 57, rang 5, dans les Côtes-à-Perreault.

Le séjour de Denis Perreault à Saint-Alban est relativement bref. Il trouve la température bien froide au Québec. Un jour où Antoine, homme d’Église de son état, se rend assister à la messe, Denis en profite pour s’esquiver. Quand Antoine revient à la maison, il ne trouve qu’une note lui indiquant qu’il retourne seul en Californie. Suite à ce départ précipité, Antoine apprend que Denis était bien passé chez sa sœur Lumina à Montréal et chez son frère Telesphore à Marquette au Michigan. On suppose qu’il s’est bien rendu à Los Angeles mais Antoine dira plus tard dans sa narration : « Depuis lors [retour de Denis seul en Californie en 1912] on n’a jamais eu, ni su, un mot de notre cher Denis ».

En 1925, soit treize ans après le retour un peu à l’aveugle de Denis en Californie, Antoine décide d’aller à sa recherche. Il était bien temps... Il le recherche dans les hôpitaux (psychiatriques?) en commençant par Vancouver, Canada et Victoria puis plus au sud à Seattle, Tacoma, Portland et en bien d’autres villes pour terminer à Los Angeles. Partout la même réponse : Ils n’ont jamais reçu quelqu’un portant le nom de Denis ou Den Perrault. Antoine retourne alors chez ses fidèles indiens de la Saskatchewan jusqu’en 1931, date à laquelle il est transféré à Vancouver pour y exercer son ministère jusqu’à sa retraite qu’il prendra chez les Sœurs. Il décède à Vancouver en 1957 âgé de 90 ans.

Lot 57, rang 5, canton Guigues au lieu-dit Les Côtes-à-Perreault.

En addendum, on peut se poser la question à savoir si Denis Perreault a laissé une descendance en Californie. Étant resté célibataire, il y a peu de chance que ce soit le cas mais...il peut très bien y avoir laissé des collatéraux. Tout ne peut pas et ne devrait jamais finir si mal.

Un jour, après 1931, puisque la chose se passe à Vancouver, une dame se présente au Père Antoine Perreault disant qu’elle est la fille de Joseph Perreault, son frère! Elle porte le nom de Rosa Kahler et en guise de sa sincérité, offre un tableau de valeur à son hôte. Elle dit venir de Los Angeles. À première vue, sa visite impromptue et son affirmation semblent surprenantes. Mais pas du tout si l’on revient sur la jeunesse de Joseph.

Il n’avait pas habité la ville des anges uniquement avant l’arrivée de son frère Denis. Dans les années qui ont suivies, Joseph durant la saison morte à la ferme allait, l’hiver, travailler à Los Angeles en tant que conducteur de tramways. Il aurait, dans cette période de jeune homme, connu au sens biblique, une belle californienne. La chose est fort possible et la visite de Rosa Kahler chez Antoine se justifierait pleinement. À noter qu’il nomma son troisième enfant, une fille, Rose...

Et qu’est-il advenu de la fortune de Denis Perreault? Deux possibilités. N’ayant pas eu d’enfant et étant décédé dans l’anonymat le plus total, sa succession serait encore à finaliser. L’autre possibilité est que son pro curateur, son frère Antoine se soit trouvé bien nanti.

Afin de mettre la chose au clair, une nièce d’Antoine a essayé d’obtenir plus d’informations. Elle se rend donc chez les Sœurs de Vancouver où Antoine est retraité. Les Bonnes Sœurs refusent de la recevoir prétendant qu’Antoine a dit ne pas avoir de parenté (géographiquement proche). La nièce n’a pas fait ce long voyage pour abandonner aussi facilement. Se faisant amie avec la sœur cuisinière, elle s’introduit par l’arrière, la cuisine, et réussi à rencontrer Antoine.

Une chose est sure, elle n’est pas revenue sans son. Ce qui prouve que l’affirmation de Rosa Kahler semblait pertinente nous aide à s’imprégner des choses surprenantes, possédait une immense salle de bal. À quoi servait-elle si ce n’est à rappeler la grandeur déchue de ses résidents?

À cette époque, les conditions de vie sont telles que 10% des patients meurent à chaque année. N’ayant pas de famille immédiate à Los Angeles, on peut facilement imaginer la tristesse des dernières années de Denis Perreault.

Les patients de ces institutions n’avaient pas droit à des funérailles. On les enterrait dans un espace de terrain non entretenu près de l’institution, avec au mieux, un simple numéro sur un support de fortune, en guise de pierre tombale. Pas de nom, pas de date. Parfois, le corps du défunt était donné à une école de médecine. En tout état de cause, les registres, quand il existaient, étaient légalement détruits à la discrétion de la direction.


15 http://www.flickr.com/photos/teardownwalls
17 http://vitals.rootsweb.ancestry.com/ca/death
18 Peut-être Rosa Kahler (1886-1979) né le 5 décembre 1886, décédée en août 1979 à l’âge de 93 ans (www.ancientfaces.com/person/rosa-kahler/3085411)
Welcome to my column. Over the years Le Forum has published numerous families. Copies of these may still be available by writing to the Franco-American Center. Listings such as this one are never complete. However, it does provide you with my most recent and complete list of marriages tied to the original French ancestor. How to use the family listings: The left-hand column lists the rst name (and middle name or initial, if any) of the direct descendants of the ancestor identi ed as number 1 (or A, in some cases). The next column gives the date of marriage, then the spouse (maiden name if female) followed by the town in which the marriage took place. There are two columns of numbers. The one on the left side of the page, e.g., #2, is the child of #2 in the right column of numbers. His parents are thus #1 in the left column of numbers. Also, it should be noted that all the persons in the rst column of names under the same number are siblings (brothers & sisters). There may be other siblings, but only those who had descendants that married in Maine are listed in order to keep this listing limited in size. The listing can be used up or down - to nd parents or descendants. The best way to see if your ancestors are listed here is to look for your mother’s or grandmother’s maiden name. Once you are sure you have the right couple, take note of the number in the left column under which their names appear. Then, nd the same number in the right-most column above. For example, if it’s #57C, simply look for #57C on the right above. Repeat the process for each generation until you get back to the rst family in the list. The numbers with alpha suf xes (e.g. 57C) are used mainly for couple who married in Maine. Marriages that took place in Canada normally have no suf xes with the rare exception of small letters, e.g., “13a.” If there are gross errors or missing families, my sincere apologies. I have taken utmost care to be as accurate as possible. Please write to the FORUM staff with your corrections and/or additions with your supporting data. I provide this column freely with the purpose of encouraging Franco-Americans to research their personal genealogy and to take pride in their rich heritage.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>1612</th>
<th>Michel</th>
<th>1980</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Barthelemy</td>
<td>22 Sep 1665</td>
<td>1608</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>09 Feb 1740</td>
<td>1708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Prisque</td>
<td>09 Nov 1767</td>
<td>1710</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>02 Aug 1774</td>
<td>1711</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Francois</td>
<td>22 Jul 1779</td>
<td>1712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>10 Nov 1807</td>
<td>1713</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>15 Nov 1808</td>
<td>1714</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>01 Apr 1805</td>
<td>1715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Charles</td>
<td>05 Nov 1839</td>
<td>1716</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>26 Nov 1839</td>
<td>1717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Francois</td>
<td>24 Oct 1848</td>
<td>1718</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Felix-Edouard</td>
<td>24 Feb 1865</td>
<td>1719</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Richard</td>
<td>19 Feb 1867</td>
<td>1720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Louis</td>
<td>21 Oct 1873</td>
<td>1721</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Pierre</td>
<td>24 Jan 1865</td>
<td>1722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Jean-Baptiste</td>
<td>07 Jun 1886</td>
<td>1723</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Hubert</td>
<td>23 Aug 1875</td>
<td>1724</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Eugène</td>
<td>02 Aug 1897</td>
<td>1725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Paul</td>
<td>08 Aug 1899</td>
<td>1726</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Alphonse</td>
<td>02 Aug 1920</td>
<td>1727</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following are descendants of the above who married in Maine:

| 17ALouis-Hubert | 12 Jan 1880 | Léa Roberge |
| 17Clonie        | 01 May 1882 | David Perreault |
| 17Agnés         | 27 Aug 1883 | Napoléon Robitaille |
| 17BÉdouard      | 02 Jul 1883 | Henriette Ouellette |
| 17Placide       | 01 Feb 1886 | Georgine Ruelle |
| 17CPierre       | 10 Aug 1908 | Rosalie Gagnon |
| 17Jean-Baptiste | 06 Jun 1932 | Modeste Pelletier |
| 17DAlexina      | 25 May 1908 | Rodolphe Doucet |
| 17Rosalie-Clara | 22 Sep 1930 | Alfred Plourde |
| 17EEdouard      | 21 May 1936 | Hector-O. Beauregard |
| 17AM.-Flore      | 14 Jan 1939 | M.-Anne Beauregard |
| 17Léo           | 19 Apr 1945 | Anita Fontaine |
| 17FRobert-P.    | 11 May 1968 | Véronique J. Fortier |
| 21AM.-Flore      | 03 Jun 1895 | Napoléon Maheu |
| 21Léontine      | 08 Jan 1900 | Gédéon Vallée |
| 21Charles       | 26 Nov 1900 | Odile Breton |
| 21Emelia-Clara  | 09 Jul 1917 | Louis-J. Lessard |
| 21Agnes         | 23 Nov 1927 | Gaudias Beaudoin |
| 21Laura         | 22 Oct 1928 | Edmond Gaudette |
| 21Jos.-Wilfrid  | 21 Mar 1931 | Esther Ayotte |
| 21Gédéon-J.     | 23 Nov 1946 | Jeanne Lesvesque |
| 21Thomas-Gédéon | 28 May 1966 | Constance Bassett |
| 21ACHélonie     | 24 Sep 1883 | Napoléon Desfosses |
| 21Wilfrid       | 18 Nov 1901 | Eugénie Poirier |
| 30AYvonne       | 28 Jun 1928 | Léo Samson |
| 30Jeanette      | 31 May 1947 | Gérard Morin |
| 32Marcel        | 04 Jul 1944 | Jeannette Lagacé |
| 32Marguerite-L. | 04 Sep 1949 | Rosario-Ant Ledoux |
| 32Wilfrid-Rég.  | 02 Aug 1952 | Thérèse-F. Tremblay |
| 32Normand       | 11 Nov 1952 | Corinne Gardner |
| 32Richard       | 21 May 1955 | Cécile Lapointe |
| 32Denis-Eugène  | 27 Aug 1955 | Frances-May Ellis |
| 32Thérèse-J.    | 11 May 1957 | René-J. Lagacé |
| 32Paul          | 23 May 1959 | Claire Domingue |
| 32Roger         | 04 Aug 1962 | Sylvia Gaudreau |
| 32B3Suzan       | 28 Sep 1973 | Richard-R. Fournier |

| 17CLouis-Hubert | 12 Jan 1880 | Léa Roberge |
| 17DLéon         | 01 Feb 1886 | Napoléon Robitaille |
| 17EGédéon-J.    | 23 Nov 1899 | Napoléon Maheu |
| 17FEmilia-Clara | 09 Jul 1917 | Gédéon Vallée |
| 17G5ycline      | 26 Nov 1927 | Odile Breton |
| 17HAgnes        | 02 Aug 1928 | Edmond Gaudette |
| 17IAgnes        | 22 Oct 1931 | Esther Ayotte |
| 17JBédatte      | 21 May 1946 | Jeanne Lesvesque |
| 17KUrsuline     | 28 May 1966 | Constance Bassett |
| 17LMarguerite-L.| 04 Sep 1949 | Rosario-Ant Ledoux |
| 17MNicolas      | 02 Aug 1952 | Thérèse-F. Tremblay |
| 17ONormand      | 11 Nov 1952 | Corinne Gardner |
| 17PRichard      | 21 May 1955 | Cécile Lapointe |
| 17QDenis-Eugène | 27 Aug 1955 | Frances-May Ellis |
| 17RThérèse-J.   | 11 May 1957 | René-J. Lagacé |
| 17SPaul         | 23 May 1959 | Claire Domingue |
| 17TRoger        | 04 Aug 1962 | Sylvia Gaudreau |
| 17V3Suzan       | 28 Sep 1973 | Richard-R. Fournier |
Blondeau-Collette/ Dayton MN

by Dick Bernard

Minnesota Territory Est. 1849

Blondeau: Simon and Adelaide (LaCroix) Blondeau and their seven children, teenage and younger, arrived in St. Anthony (later Minneapolis) sometime in the year 1854. This was the year of the Grand Excursion, which intensified interest in what would soon become Minnesota (1858).

Blondeau’s last five children were born in the United States, the first baptized 12/21/1854 at St. Anthony Catholic Church (813 NE Main St, Minneapolis). Information is sketchy about them.

Simon Blondeau (b-1803) may have been a laborer in the construction of the Rideau Canal (1832). The couple married at St. Raphael West, Ontario, in 1836. They were 33 and 15 years of age.

In November, 1856, Simon Blondeau received a 120 acre land claim along the Mississippi river, two miles or so south of the village of Dayton. This became the family farm for many years. The 1998 address of that property was 15521 Dayton River Road, Dayton.

Likely, Simon came from a long line of voyageurs and trappers from the Montreal area. He was born in Pte. Claire, after the end of the voyageur era. Up and down the Mississippi Valley from St. Louis north, the name “Blondeau” was known, including the first white woman to come to what became St. Louis, ca 1764. A Blondeau was one of the founders of the Beaver Club in Montreal (founded 1785).

The Blondeau family originated in Saumur, France, and is first noted in the area of Quebec City in 1655, thence in stages moving west to Montreal and into the interior of the west.

Simon Blondeau died May 14, 1882; his spouse Adelaide died in Minneapolis in 1898 at Little Sisters of the Poor, a short distance from St. Anthony’s in Minneapolis. It is believed that both are buried in the St. Anthony Cemetery, but this is not known for certain.

Minneapolis became a state 1858
Dakota Territory established 1861,
(What is now eastern North and South Dakota was unorganized 1858-61)

Collette: The Collet family name, from Brittany, first appeared in Quebec in about 1757, shortly before the English defeated the French. The locus of the family was south of Quebec City, a primary place St. Henri Bellechasse. The St. Anthony branch was that of Denys Collet and Mathilde Vermette.

In about 1864, nearly the entire family, Collet, including parents and nine of their 10 children from about 17 to 17, moved west from St. Lambert QC to St. Anthony. Their last child was born at St. Anthony. In about 1875 (more below) the family began its movement, first to Dayton area, then Dakota Territory.

The oldest Collet child, Sophronie, stayed in QC and married Etienne Lessard. Lessards came west to Dakota Territory about 1876. Lessard’s had a large family. Little is known for certain where most of their children were born and where the children lived. There is data, but it is very unclear. But both parents lived for years, and likely are buried, at Oakwood. He died in 1924, she in 1926.

(Continued on page 33)
Two of Clotilde and Octave's young children, Adeline and Alex, are said to have died in Otsego in May, 1876, but also said to be buried at Oakwood, hundreds of miles away. (Oakwood Sacred Heart did not begin until 1881). The children were 4 and 2, their deaths probably from some disease, and while the story is unverified, the reported facts are plausible, even in context with nearly 150 years history.

**North Dakota became a state 1889**

Both Alfred and Celina are buried in the Dayton St. John's cemetery. She died Jan. 17, 1927; He died April, 1944.

The parents of the Collet family who came to St. Anthony in the 1860s, Mathilde (Vermette) Collette, and Denys Collette, died Jan 14, 1887 and Jan 29, 1893 respectively. Both are buried at Oakwood. They may have spent their few Dakota Territory years at or near Bathgate, about 40 miles north of Oakwood.

Clotilde Blondeau Collette died Sep 29, 1916 at Oakwood; Octave died Jan. 24, 1925, in Winnipeg. Both are buried at Oakwood. Octave remarried in Minneapolis Aug 28, 1917, at Ste Clotilde (now StAnn). Little is known of the second wife, Heminie Poisson Henault, a widow, who became ill and died after only a few years of their marriage, Sep 13, 1923.

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**Information from:**

The First 400 Years. Four of the families of Henry Louis Bernard  
By Dick Bernard, Sep 21, 2010

https://chez-nous.net Bernard-Collette  
https://outsidethewalls.org/blog/collets-of-st-anthony/  
(April 7, 2012)  
http://fahfminn.org

Dick Bernard, 6905 Romeo Rd, Woodbury MN 55125-2421, 651-334-5744, dick.bernard@icloud.com
(Daniel Mitchell’s Decade Among the Abenaki continued from page 22)

understandably set on his sons’ return. With the help of the Governor of Massachusetts, he even visited Montreal in 1753 to petition the French authorities in person. Although the French governor was initially receptive to Mitchell’s request to ransom back his children, the New Englander found that the task was not so simple. According to the established account, the governor had a change of heart and only one day after agreeing to let the New Englanders meet their children, he ordered them expelled from the city and the province.

Ostensibly, Mitchell and his companions were expelled because their translator was suspected of having been a spy. However, there are interesting hints that the children themselves may not have been particularly eager to return home. The sources we have only tell this story from the New England perspective, and our authors are overwhelmingly hostile to both the French Canadians and the Abenaki. There’s a consistent assumption that life in Montreal or among the St François Abenaki must have been a real hardship. But those French sources which do exist, in the form of letters from the Governors of Canada in 1752[4] and again in 1754, clearly state that both Solomon and Daniel were well-treated, and even claim that both were attached to their new families.

Interestingly, having been carried off in an Indian raid on New England, Daniel may well have been subjected to a raid by New Englanders on the Abenaki settlement at Saint-François. In October of 1759, Robert Rogers, led a company known as “Roger’s Rangers” in an attack on the Abenaki settlement, which killed around 30 Indians and resulted in the burning of the village and its church.

Solomon was ransomed back home to North Yarmouth in 1754, just before the outbreak of the final French and Indian War, but Daniel would remain among the Abenaki until the conquest of Canada by British and New England forces. He was ransomed home in March of 1762. By this time, he had spent the majority of his life living among the Native Americans, and he was apparently (and understandably) reluctant to return to Maine. Our history records the following account of his “homecoming.”

“He was very unwilling to leave the Indians, and even after he was on his way home he attempted to return to them but by the assistance of the savages was restored to his white friends. He had completely forgotten his parents and could not believe that he had any awaiting his return…So strong was the call of the wild that he was long closely watched and great care taken not to provoke him to anger lest he return to his old redskinned brothers in Canada”

William Rowe, Ancient North Yarmouth and Yarmouth, Maine, 1937

Daniel Mitchell would go on to be a relatively prominent man in North Yarmouth, marrying the daughter of a local judge, and becoming a ship’s captain. Sadly, however, it seems that Mitchell left no written account of his time among the Abenaki, and the narrative presented by William Rowe, gathered from official documents and apparently some oral history, is all we have:

The whole story of his life among the savages has never been told, as he seldom spoke of it in after years…a single anecdote has been recorded by a member of his family, Mrs. Eliza Mitchell, who died in 1921 at the age of one hundred and two years.

The anecdote in question was the use of rattlesnake venom by the Abenakis to cure young Daniel’s toothache. Elsewhere in Rowe’s account, Mitchell demonstrates his prowess at axe-throwing and a penchant for practical jokes.

There are two clear themes that emerge from both the official documents, and the semi-legendary accounts preserved by Rowe. One is that Daniel became attached to the Abenaki, and they to him. The other is that he retained some amount of number of Native American character and knowledge after his return. Together, those suggest that to call his stay among the Abenaki a “captivity” would be a disservice.

Without a first-hand account from either Mitchell or the Abenaki, it’s hard to be certain about a lot of this story. But, given that the Abenaki had, after all, initially kidnapped him with the aim of ransoming the child back to his parents, it seems fair to assume that their attachment to Daniel was genuine. For his part, Daniel seems to have at the very least been content with his new home. He certainly wouldn’t have been the first or last New Englander to have assimilated into Native or French life in Canada. We certainly shouldn’t ignore the trauma that a child is likely to have faced having been taken from his parents at a young age, but equally, Daniel Mitchell’s story should make us question our assumptions about “captivity” among Native Americans in the colonial era.

Notes
1. Maine was a part of Massachusetts until it achieved statehood in 1820. For simplicity, however, I will refer to places now in Maine as such throughout the piece.
2. Modern Yarmouth broke away from its parent town of North Yarmouth in 1849.
3. The Saint François Abenaki still maintain a reservation at Odanak, Quebec, which includes a museum of Abenaki culture.
4. The originals are available at the Massachusetts State Archives. I was unable to access these prior to writing this.

About 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
Preuves qu’il y avait intention des Britanniques d’exterminer le peuple acadien!
Avec de beaux documents en portefeuille, Lawrence avait carte blanche...

Et cela par l’entremise de deux amiraux britanniques ultimement en présen-tiel à Halifax! Ayant souci de légalité, Law-rence procède dans les formes. En présence de l’amiral Edward Boscawen et du contre-amiral Savage Mostyn aux délibérations du Conseil de la Nouvelle-Écosse aboutissant à la date fatidique au 28 juillet 1755, le lieutenant-gouverneur Lawrence 1) emboîte le pas quant à prendre les mesures telles que déterminées d’avance. Conformément à la suggestion émise par les lords de Commerce (« Board of Trade ») à Londres, le juge en chef de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Jonathan Belcher, rédige une consultation dont la conclusion est : « tant qu’il restera un Français dans la province, il n’y a pas à espérer que la paix y sera stable, et que le seul parti à prendre pour assurer la sécurité du pays est de disséminer ces Français parmi les colonies anglaises du continent ». 
Entre-temps, l’arpenteur Charles Morris préparait sur l’ordre du lieutenant-gouverneur, un rapport détaillé sur les divers groupements acadiens, leur nombre, leur force, leurs richesses, examinant sous toutes ses faces la question de savoir comment s’y prendre pour s’en débarrasser, et indiquant de façon précise et détaillée le moyen le plus sûr d’en finir à jamais avec cette engeance. En 1751 Morris suggéra de déraciner les Acadiens de la région de Chignectou dans son mémoire intitulé « Representation of the relative state of French and English in Nova Scotia » parce qu’ils rendaient impossible toute véritable colonisation britannique dans la province. Il recommanda leur déplace-
ment « par quelque stratagème… la manière la plus efficace étant de détruire tous leurs établissements en incendiand toutes les maisons, en faisant des brèches dans les digues et en détruisant tous les grains actuellement sur pied ». Au cours de ses délibérations concernant le sort des Acadiens, le Conseil à Halifax consulta Morris, alors le fonctionnaire le mieux renseigné sur eux. De son côté, le révérend Andrew Brown jugea que les avis de Morris à l’endroit du Conseil étaient « cruels et barbares ».

Et c’est ainsi que l’historien et essayiste Henri d’Arles (1870-1930) 2) pourra écrire : En Acadie, les Anglais ont fait pleurer la beauté du monde.

Charles Lawrence, le principal responsable du génocide acadien? Cela a de quoi étonner!

Charles Lawrence, simple lieutenant-gouverneur en Nouvelle-Écosse, avait été sous les ordres du deuxième fils survivant du roi George II, le duc Cumberland, à la bataille de Fontenoy (1745) de concert avec Robert Monckton, Edward Cornwallis et Jeffrey Amherst. Donc ceux-ci n’étaient pas inconnus du roi. Est-ce pour cela qu’on a considéré Lawrence le plus apte à remplir la tâche ingrate de bouc émissaire ou de bourreau pour le gouvernement britannique? Si Lawrence accepta le risque de porter sur ses épaulas l’odieux du génocide acadien c’était pour éventuellement accéder au poste de gouverneur de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Pour cela il fallait qu’il se conforme non seulement aux instructions écrites du roi mais également aux directives qui lui étaient transmises verbalement. Ce n’est qu’en 1756 qu’il fut enfin promu gouverneur une fois que la première année de la déportation (1755) eut lieu avec le siège de l’établissement français de Beauséjour. À la demande du colonel Monckton, le beau nom de Beauséjour fut remplacé par celui de Cumberland en hommage au fils du roi George II de la dynastie des Hanovre qui, l’histoire nous interpelle, changeront leur nom à deux reprises, d’abord à Saxe-Coburg-Gotha en 1901 et ensuite en 1917 qu’aujourd’hui à la Maison de Windsor. Comme le précisait l’historien Fidèle Thériault, la collusion avec les dépêches des lords du Commerce (« Lords of Trade »). En tout cas il y a une communication constante qui se fait entre Londres et l’escadre de Boscawen. Selon Roger Paradis, historien et professeur émérite de l’Université du Maine à Fort Kent, (suite page 36)

David Le Gallant *

* Diplômé en droit (1990) de l’Université de Moncton, David Le Gallant est rédacteur en chef de la revue Veritas Acadie, fondée en 2012 pour défendre la véracité historique sur l’histoire acadienne sous tous ses aspects en particulier mais non exclusivement sur la période de la Déportation acadienne. (chouetteacadienne.siva@gmail.com) / Traduction anglaise de Jean-François Cyr.
Lawrence se trahit dans sa lettre d’invitation à Boscawen et Mostyn afin que ceux-ci assistent à une séance de son conseil : « I am to acquaint you that it is both agreeable to the Instructions I have received from His Majesty, and at the earnest Request of his Council for thos Province, that I beg th honour of your company and assistance in our consultation. »

Quant à la date de la séance du lundi 28 juillet 1755, c’était une réunion du Conseil de la Nouvelle-Écosse à Halifax sous l’œil vigilant desdits amiraux pour mettre en garde de la Nouvelle-Écosse à Halifax sous les ordres des gouverneurs des provinces. L’amiral Boscawen était aux yeux du gouvernement britannique d’ultimement l’historien Roger Paradis nous informe que sa lettre datait du 18 juillet 1755. Or, il y eut de la correspondance par le moyen de Lawrence aux Lords of Trade dans sa dernière lettre datant du 18 juillet 1755. Or, il y eut de la correspondance par le moyen d’entrepreneurs privés. Preuve à l’appui, l’historien Roger Paradis nous informe que les Lords of Trade négligèrent de payer l’un de ces dits entrepreneurs, Thomas Ainslie, pour leur avoir apporté des dépêches de la Cour et que ces Messieurs ne Sont nullement sous les Ordres des gouverneurs des Provinces.

L’entièreté de ladite dépêche se trouve à la p. 9 de la revue Veritas Acadie 2 (2013) publiée par la Société Internationale Veritas Acadie.

L’amiaral Boscawen était aux yeux du gouvernement britannique, la référence officielle pour tout ce qui s’était passé en Nouvelle-Écosse en 1755. Au tribunal des historiens, il y en a plusieurs qui ont cru discerner l’affirmation mensongère de Lawrence aux Lords of Trade dans sa lettre du 18 octobre 1755 (Thomas Akins, Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia : Pub. Under a Resolution of the House of Assembly passed March 15th, 1865, p. 281) alléguant que sa dernière lettre datait du 18 juillet 1755. Or, il y eut de la correspondance par le moyen d’entrepreneurs privés. Preuve à l’appui, l’historien Roger Paradis nous informe que les Lords of Trade négligèrent de payer l’un de ces dits entrepreneurs, Thomas Ainslie, pour leur avoir apporté des dépêches de la Cour et que ces Messieurs ne Sont nullement sous les Ordres des gouverneurs des Provinces.

CONCLUSION

Preuves subsidiaires de l’intention de la Couronne britannique d’ultimement exterminer le peuple acadien :

A) correspondance incriminante

B) Illusion d’une entreprise coloniale américaine / Promotion des acteurs d’un génocide à l’esprit et à la lettre.

A) CORRESPONDANCE INCriminante :

Lettre du lieutenant-gouverneur Charles Lawrence aux Lords of Trade (1er août 1754) :

As they possess the best and largest Tracts of land in this Province, it cannot be settled with any effect while they remain She is not in this situation, and tho’ I would be very far from attempting such a step without your Lordships approbation, yet I cannot help being of opinion that it would be much better, if they refuse the Oaths, that they were away. (op. cit. Akins, p. 213)

Lettre des Lords of Trade, de Whitehall, à Charles Lawrence (29 oct. 1754)
(Preuves qu’il y avait intention des Britanniques d’exterminer le peuple acadien ! suite de page 36)

… we cannot form a proper Judgement or give a final Opinion of what Measures may be necessary to be taken with regard to those Inhabitants, until We have laid the whole State of the Case before His Majesty and received his Directions upon it, yet it may not be altogether useless to point at some Provisional Measures which it may be proper to enter upon until His Majesty’s Approval. (Akins, p. 235-236)

Lettre de Charles Lawrence à Sir Thomas Robinson, secrétaire d’État (30 nov.1755)

(Entre autres quant aux factures transmises (9 pages : Akins, p. 285-293) à Lawrence par Messrs. Aphthorpe & Hancock de Boston pour financer le transport des Acadiens à leur sort.)

I have already acquainted you, Sir, in my letter of the tenth of November, that I had received the Ten Thousand pounds, of which you inform me in your Letter of the 13th of August. I am highly sensible of the great Honor the Lords Justice have been pleased to do me, in reposing so much confidence in me; I shall endeavour to deserve it, by using every means of Economy, and applying it solely to those uses they have been pleased to direct. (Akins, p.284-285)

Lettre des Lords of Trade, de Whitehall, à Charles Lawrence (25 mars 1756)

We have laid that part of your letter which relates to the Removal of the French Inhabitants, and the Steps you took in the Execution of this Measure, before His Majesty’s Secretary of State (Robinson); and as you represent it to have been indispensably necessary for the Security and Protection of the Province in the present critical situation of our affairs. We doubt not that your Conduct herein will meet with His Majesty’s Approbation. (Akins, p.298)

B) Illusion d’une entreprise coloniale américaine / Promotion des acteurs d’un génocide à l’esprit et à la lettre.

La Grande-Bretagne s’est acharnée sur la Nouvelle-France pendant un siècle pour finalement avoir le dessus en 1713. La déportation des Acadiens n’était qu’un volet de la conquête d’une Amérique du Nord britannique. Les Canadiens auraient probablement subi le même sort, sauf qu’ils étaient trop nombreux et que le coût de la déportation acadienne avait dépassé de loin les prévisions de la Couronne britannique. Après la conquête, Londres a compté sur l’afflux de colons Yankees au Canada pour accomplir par le truchement de l’assimilation ce qui avait été accompli en Nouvelle-Écosse par celui de la déportation. Les deux politiques ont échoué, laissant de terribles cicatrices. Pour les Acadiens toutefois, la déportation a été dévastatrice. La notion que le projet de la Déportation, y compris le siège de Louisbourg, fut principalement une entreprise coloniale est du moins contestable. Le « grand et noble » projet fut appuyé à Whitehall pour une année entière avant qu’il soit mis en vigueur. Les armes et les munitions sont arrivées directement de la Grande-Bretagne. Des six commandants, seulement Winslow fut un officier colonial. Le commandant en chef était l’amiral Boscawen qui fit le voyage de l’Angleterre tôt en 1755. Environ 25 % des forces terrestres qui étaient impliquées dans la prise de Louisbourg furent des militaires de carrière britanniques (British Regulars) et le financement de l’opération fut cautionné par le Parlement britannique. Au minimum, le projet de la Déportation fut une opération militaire coloniale britannique combinée.«

Quant aux promotions de quelques-uns des principaux acteurs britanniques du génocide acadien, suite à 1755, le simple lieutenant-gouverneur Charles Lawrence obtint enfin en 1756, le poste gouverneur de la Nouvelle-Écosse tandis que Jeffrey Amherst devint commandant général en Amérique du Nord et gouverneur de Virginie avec des commissions militaires supplémentaires et 20 000 acres à New York et le poste de gouverneur sinécure de l’île de Guernesey. William Shirley, gouverneur du Massachusetts, devint gouverneur des Bahamas. Monckton fut fait gouverneur et commandant en chef de la province de New York, accepta une riche concession de terre sur l’île Saint-Vincent, dans les Antilles, et devint gouverneur de Berwick-upon-Tweed. Le juge en chef Jonathan Belcher devint grand maître des francs-maçons de la Nouvelle-Écosse. Après avoir orchestré le génocide des Acadiens de 1755 à 1762 dans des conditions abominables, lui qui avait imaginé la solution définitive au cas des Acadiens, le duc de Cumberland se retira à Windsor et Londres pour voir naître le 1er avril 1764 dans ses écuries, Eclipse, le plus célèbre cheval de course du xvme siècle, resté invaincu en compétition. John Winslow, le seul à n’être pas britannique, n’a rien obtenu. Pourtant il ne souhaitait qu’avoir ardemment que son propre régiment et une réputation de bon caractère pour la postérité. Il paraît que c’était pourquoi il aurait écrit dans son journal le 5 septembre 1755 : That part of duty I am now upon is what though necessary is very disagreeable to my natural make and temper. (Voir John Mack Faragher, A Great and Noble Scheme, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, p.337-338.)

Notes infrapaginales

1) Neil Boucher, l’ancien vice-recteur de l’Université de Moncton (Monckton) croit que Charles Lawrence était « victime des études nationalistes » dans un article publié en 1977 qui ne fait que louer Lawrence parce que « militaire presque parfait provenant (suite page 38)
Le Forum

(Preuves qu’il y avait intention des Britanniques d’exterminer le peuple acadien ! suite de page 37)

d’une famille aristocratique anglaise» (came of stock distinguished). Pourquoi avoir même mentionné ce personnage alors que ses compatriotes à Halifax le qualifiait de tyran et qu’il a tant méprisé nos ancêtres acadiens? Quelle impertinence! (Voir Veritas Acadie 8, p. 50-57.)

2) Pourtant ignoré, Henri d’Arles, l’une des plus belles plumes que le peuple issu de la Nouvelle-France ait produites, était également un historien rigoureux et compétent qui serait le premier à avoir démontré que le « nettoyage ethnique » (génocide), que fut la Déportation des Acadiens, ne fut pas seulement l’acte d’un simple lieutenant-gouverneur vexeux et zélé, mais fut bel et bien longuement planifié par la Couronne britannique.


5) « Oaths »: Quant aux serments à prêter, il s’agissait des serments d’allégeance et du Test (d’abjuration): Voir Veritas Acadie 4, p. 88 (Roger Paradis) et VA3 p. 62-63 (Thomas Albert).

6) Ibid., Akins, p. 267

7) Quant au rôle conséquent de l’amiral Boscawen et les va-et-vient de la correspondance officieuse pendant la période d’apparent silence du 18 juillet au 18 octobre 1755, il faudrait lire l’article très révélateur de Fidèle Thériault intitulé « L’honorable Edward Boscawen et la déportation des Acadiens » aux p.37 à 54 dans Veritas Acadie 1.


Nouvelle association depuis 2012 pour défendre et promouvoir la véracité historique en histoire acadienne

La revue Veritas Acadie est publiée par la Société internationale Veritas Acadie (SIVA). Elle se veut un cri du coeur parce que l’histoire officielle, qui donne trop souvent l’illusion de tout savoir, ne signale pas ce qu’elle veut ignorer ou lui donne une coloration légère.

Plus que toutes autres, c’est une question de vérité! Et pour la SIVA, la vérité dont il s’agit, c’est la « vérité historique » pour l’Acadie (Veritas Acadie) pour laquelle elle s’arroge le droit dont parlait Franklin Roosevelt : « Toutes les histoires devraient être récrites dans la vérité ».

Avec l’écrivain français Jean Amadou (Les Français mode d’emploi, 2008), la SIVA veut pouvoir vivre avec notre temps en sachant qu’on ne peut pas conduire sans rétroviseur; pour les Acadiens, ce rétroviseur constitue l’empreinte d’un passé souvent fatidique. Cette société à but non lucratif a adopté à titre de figure emblématique, la chouette acadienne (la Petite Nyctale (en anglais: Northern Saw-Whet Owl. (Son nom scientifique, (Gmelin, 1788) est Aegolius acadicus !

Truth, crushed to earth, shall rise again; The eternal years of God are hers; But Error, wounded, writhes in pain, And dies among his worshippers. (William Cullen Bryant, 1794-1878)

N.B. On peut devenir membre de la SIVA ou se procurer la revue annuelle Veritas Acadie en joignant chouetteacadienne. siva@gmail.com (1.902.854.3577).

(Source : La Société internationale Veritas Acadie)
Evidence that there was British intent to exterminate the Acadian people!

With fine documents on hand, Lawrence, mere Lieutenant Governor, had a free hand to do as he pleased...

And this through the intervention of two British admirals who ultimately met in person in Halifax! Concern about legality, Lawrence proceeded in due form. In the presence of Admiral Edward Boscawen and Rear Admiral Savage Mostyn at the deliberations of the Nova Scotia Council leading to the fateful date of July 28, 1755, mere Lieutenant Governor Lawrence followed suit in taking the measures as predetermined. In accordance with the suggestion made by the Board of Trade in London, the Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, Jonathan Belcher, drafted a consultation whose conclusion was: “so long as there is a Frenchman left in the Province, there is no hope of a stable peace, and that the only course to be pursued for the safety of the country is to disseminate these Frenchmen among the English colonies on the continent.”

In the meantime, the surveyor Charles Morris was preparing, following the orders of the Lieutenant Governor, a detailed report on the various Acadian groups, their number, their strength, their wealth, examining in every possible aspect the question of how to get rid of them, and indicating in a precise and detailed manner the most effective way to get rid of this rabble forever. In 1751, Morris suggested uprooting the Acadians from the Chignecto area in his memoir entitled “Representation of the relative state of the French and English in Nova Scotia” because they made any real British colonization in the province impossible. He recommended their removal “by some stratagem...the most effective way being to destroy all their settlements by burning all the houses, breaching the dykes and destroying all the grain now standing.” During its deliberations concerning the fate of the Acadians, the Council in Halifax consulted Morris, then the most knowledgeable official about them. For his part, Reverend Andrew Brown considered Morris’s advice to the Council to be “cruel and barbarous”.

And this is how the historian and essayist Henri d’Arles (1870-1930) came to write: In Acadie, the English made the beauty of the world weep.

Charles Lawrence, the main person responsible for the Acadian genocide? This is quite astonishing!

Charles Lawrence, a mere Lieutenant Governor in Nova Scotia, had been under the command of King George II’s second surviving son, the Duke of Cumberland, at the Battle of Fontenoy (1745) along with Robert Monckton, Edward Cornwallis and Jeffrey Amherst. So these people were not unknown to the king. Is this why Lawrence was considered the best suited to fulfill the unglamorous task of scapegoat or executioner for the British government? If Lawrence accepted the risk of carrying the odiousness of the Acadian genocide on his shoulders, it was to eventually become governor of Nova Scotia. To reach this goal, he had to comply not only with the written instructions of the king but also with the directives that were transmitted to him verbally. He had to wait until 1756 before being finally promoted to the governorship once the first year of the deportation (1755) was over with the siege of the French settlement of Beauséjour. At the request of Colonel Monckton, the beautiful name of Beauséjour was replaced by that of Cumberland in homage to the said second son of King George II of the Hanoverian dynasty which would change its name twice, first to Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, in 1901, and then, in 1917, to the House of Windsor. As historian Fidèle Thériault pointed out, the collusion with the king’s son, the Duke of Cumberland, was putting the royal seal on the events that would take place following this unjustified siege in peacetime.

At the very least, to demonstrate that Charles Lawrence was hardly the main person responsible for the Deportation, it must be remembered that after the fall of Fort Beauséjour on June 16, 1755, Admiral Boscawen left the Fortress of Louisbourg and went to Halifax where Rear Admiral Savage Mostyn joined him. Boscawen had previously sent Captain Richard Spry to secretly bring Lawrence the King’s written orders and instructions as well as the dispatches from the Lords of Trade. Anyhow, there was a constant communication between London and Boscawen’s squadron. According to Roger Paradis, historian and professor emeritus at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, Lawrence betrayed himself in his letter of invitation to Boscawen and Mostyn to attend a meeting of his council: “I am to acquaint You that it is both agreeable to the Instructions I have received from His Majesty, and at the earnest Request of his Council for this Province, that I beg the honour of your Company and Assistance at our Consultation.” Lawrence had indeed received instructions from the King in the summer of 1755. All of this is confirmed in the minutes of the Nova Scotia Council of July 14 and 15, 1755, and earlier in a letter from the Lords of Trade from Whitehall to Lieutenant Governor Lawrence on October 29, 1754. (See further below under “Incriminating Correspondence” for the relevant text of this collusion with George II.)

On Monday, July 28, 1755, a meeting of the Nova Scotia Council in Halifax was held under the watchful eye of the said ad-

* David Le Gallant, a law graduate (1990) from the Université de Moncton, is the editor-in-chief of the historical journal Veritas Acadie, founded in 2012 to defend the historical veracity of Acadian history in all its aspects, in particular but not exclusively on the period of the Acadian Deportation. (chouetteacadienne.siva@gmail.com) / English translation by Jean-François Cyr.
mirals to implement the “measures” of what had been previously instigated as specified in the minutes of the aforesaid fateful July 28: As it had been before determined to send all the French Inhabitants out of the Province if they refused to take the oaths \(^5\) nothing now remained to be considered but what measures should be taken to send them away, and where they should be sent to. \(^6\)

Boscawen and Mostyn were clearly in a position of authority before Lieutenant Governor Lawrence. Moreover, Lawrence himself explicitly recognized in a dispatch he had written on June 13, 1755, to Governor Drucourt of Louisbourg that the captains of ships, in this case the admirals, always receive their instructions from the Court and are by no means under the orders of the governors of the provinces, as evidenced by this handwritten dispatch in French, which is found in its entirety in the Fonds Placide-Gaudet (1.13-19: Réponse du lieutenant-gouverneur Lawrence à Drucourt, gouverneur de Louisbourg, le 13 juin 1755, Centre d’études acadiennes (CEA), Université de Moncton). Here verbatim is what this dispatch corroborates:

« Nos Capitaines de vaisseaux reçoivent toujours leurs Instructions de la Cour et que ces Messieurs ne Sont nullement sous les Ordres des gouverneurs des Provinces. »

(The entirety of the said dispatch above is found on p. 9 of the historical journal Veritas Acadie 2 (2013) published by the Société internationale Veritas Acadie.)

Admiral Boscawen was, in the eyes of the British government, the official reference for everything that had happened in Nova Scotia in 1755. In the tribunal of historians, many have uncritically believed Lawrence’s false assertion to the Lords of Trade in his letter of October 18, 1755 (Thomas Akins, Selections from the Public Documents of the Province of Nova Scotia: Pub. Under a Resolution of the House of Assembly passed March 15, 1865, p. 281,) claiming that his last letter was dated July 18, 1755. However, there was correspondence by means of private contractors. With supporting evidence, historian Roger Paradis informs us that the Lords of Trade neglected to pay one of these said contractors, Thomas Ainslie, for having brought them dispatches from Lawrence in August 1755. He therefore sent an invoice in good and due form on April 7, 1756, to Whitehall, the historic seat of government.

This is convincing evidence that the Lords of Trade and Charles Lawrence shamelessly lied in their official letters. It stands to reason that since these high-ranking officials and government agents on mission approved the “Deportation” before it took place, the legal responsibility for this genocide must fall on the shoulders of the British government and not on Charles Lawrence.

It should not be forgotten that it was during the Council meetings from July 15 to 28, in the presence of Admirals Boscawen and Mostyn, that Jonathan Belcher, Chief Justice of Nova Scotia, had himself submitted his “legal opinion” justifying, in his eyes and politically speaking, the Acadian deportation, as can be seen in the full text of his legal opinion on p. 28 to 34 in the historical journal entitled Veritas Acadie 1 (Fall 2012), published by the Société internationale Veritas Acadie.

CONCLUSION

Subsidiary evidence of the British Crown’s intention to ultimately exterminate the Acadian people:

A) Incriminating correspondence \(^5\)

B) Illusion of an American colonial enterprise / Promotion of the protagonists of a genocide in the spirit and in the letter.

A) INCriminating Correspondence:

Letter from Lieutenant Governor

Charles Lawrence to the Lords of Trade (August 1, 1754):

As they possess the best and largest Tracts of land in this Province, it cannot de settled with any effect while they remain in this situation, and tho’ I would be very far from attempting such a step without your Lordships approbation, yet I cannot help being of opinion that it would be much better, if they refuse the Oaths, that they were away.

(Continued on page 41)
Great Britain persisted on fighting New France for a century and finally got the upper hand in 1713. The deportation of the Acadians was only one part of the conquest of a British North America. The Canadiens would probably have suffered the same fate, except that they were too numerous and the cost of the Acadian deportation had far exceeded the British Crown’s forecasts. After the conquest, London relied on the influx of Yankee settlers into Canada to accomplish through assimilation what had been accomplished in Nova Scotia through deportations, euphemism for ethnic cleansing or genocide. Both policies failed, leaving terrible scars. For the Acadians, however, the Deportation was devastating. The notion that the Deportation project, including the siege of Louisbourg, was primarily a colonial enterprise is certainly questionable. The great and noble scheme was supported in Whitehall for a full year before it was implemented. Weapons and ammunition came directly from Britain. Of the six commanders, Winslow alone was a colonial officer. The commander-in-chief was Admiral Boscawen who sailed from England early in 1755. Approximately 25% of the land forces involved in the capture of Louisbourg were British Regulars and the British Parliament endorsed the financing of the operation. At a minimum, the Deportation project was a combined British colonial military operation.9

As for the promotions of some of the key British protagonists in the Acadian genocide, following 1755, the mere Lieutenant Governor Charles Lawrence finally obtained, in 1756, the position of Governor of Nova Scotia while Jeffrey Amherst became Commander General in North America and Governor of Virginia with additional military commissions and 20,000 acres in New York, and an appointed sinecure Governor of the island of Guernsey. William Shirley, Governor of Massachusetts, became Governor of the Bahamas. Monckton was made Governor and Commander-in- Chief of the Province of New York, accepted a substantial land grant on St. Vincent Island in the West Indies, and became Governor of Berwick-upon-Tweed. Chief Justice Jonathan Belcher became Grand Master of the Freemasons of Nova Scotia. After having orchestrated the genocide of the Acadians from 1755 to 1762 in abominable conditions, the Duke of Cumberland, who had imagined the definitive solution to the Acadians’ case, retired in Windsor and London to see the birth on April 1, 1764, in his stables, of Eclipse, the most famous racehorse of the 18th century, which remained undefeated in competition. John Winslow, the only non-British, did not get anything. Yet he had only ardently wished to have his own regiment and a reputation of good character for posterity. It is believed that this was the reason why he would have written in his diary on September 5, 1755: That part of duty I am now upon is what though necessary is very disagreeable to my natural make and temper. (On all this, see John Mack Faragher, A Great and Noble Scheme, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, pp. 337-338.)

Footnotes
1) Neil Boucher, the former vice-rec- tor of the Université de Moncton (Moncton) believes that Charles Lawrence was “a vic- tim of nationalist studies” in an article published in 1977 that only praises Lawrence as “an almost perfect military man from an English aristocratic family” (cane of stock distinguished). Why even mention this character when his compatriots in Halifax called him a tyrant and when he so despised our Acadian ancestors? Such impertinence! (See Veritas Acadie 8, pp. 50-57.)

2) Yet ignored, Henri d’Arles, one of the finest writers ever produced by the people of New France, was also a rigorous and competent historian who would have been the first to demonstrate that the “ethnic cleansing” (genocide) that was the Deportation of the Acadians was not only the act of a mere rogue and zealous Lieutenant Governor, but was well and truly planned for a long time by the British Crown.


5) “Oaths”: As for the oaths to be taken, these were the Oath of allegiance and the Test Act (of abjuration): See Veritas Acadie 4, p. 88 (Roger Paradis) and VA3 pp. 62-63 (Thomas Albert).

6) Ibid., Akins, p. 267

7) As for the consequent role of Admiral Boscawen and the back and forth unofficial correspondence during the period of apparent silence from July 18 to October 18, 1755, the reader is invited to read the very revealing article by Fidèle Thériault entitled “L’honorable Edward Boscawen et la déportation des Acadiens” (“The Honorable Edward Boscawen and the Deportation of the Acadians”) pp. 37 to 54 in Veritas Acadie 1.


9) The above text (Britain... combined British colonial military operation) is taken in whole from Professor Roger Paradis on pages 77-78 in Veritas Acadie 1. (Read about a “possible American colonial enterprise” in his excellent article “La déportation des Acadiens - illusion d’une entreprise coloniale américaine” (“The Deportation of the Acadians - Illusion of an American Colonial Enterprise”) in Veritas Acadie 9, pp. 23-24.
**POETRY/POÉSIE...**

**SO COMES THE STORM**

So comes the predicted storm:
Not yet arrived, but foretold
By map and chart and computer.
Markings seemingly like runes
To the old ones, men of a time
When prognostications of snow
Seemed more like intuition
Or maybe instinct coupled with
Divinings much simpler than now.

So comes the impeding storm
Hopefully the last desperate blast
Of a hard battle, snow retreating
Like beleaguered troops, stubbornly
Holding on refusing to cede an inch
Of territory so recently captured
In King Winter’s yearly advance,
Inexcerable, and in these latitudes
Serene, a scorched earth of fire, not ice.

So comes the awaited storm,
And behind it comes spring,
As eventually comes spring every year:
Sunshine conquers, warms, melts
And losses the frosty warrior’s grip
On the land. The warm rainfalls,
Wetness wakes the somnolent seed,
And together they, transforming, labor,
Making of snowfields a green, green garden

*Chip Bergeron*
*March 7, 2013*

**SPRING SONG**

Spring creeps in so uncertainly —
An April Fool’s kind of joke,
Rain and wind and clammy cold
Conspire to give the lie to the old saw
About April showers and May flowers.

Slowly ever so slowly, the city melts.
Tattletale gray snow banks like soiled bedding
Begin to shrink, leaving clots of defritus.
Winter, that cold old litterbug.
Has lost his grip to longer, warmer days.

Springtime comes to the city
As the sheets of ice in parking lots
Turn into small dirty lakes as the pavement
Slowly begins to appear. Who could guess
Spring would show up clothed in black asphalt?

Is this even worth celebrating? I ask myself.
Is spring all that different? It seems not,
I muse, turning off the furnace, and removing
One layer of clothing, grumbling that spring
Is not as I remember it those many years ago

Old men always muse to imperfect memory.
Spring is as it was, has always been,
Will ever be. Nothing ever changes, I think.
Winter grips harder and longer with the years
Too many springs have come, not enough are left.

*Chip Bergeron*
*April 6, 2011*

**AS I HOLD YOUR HAND**

As I hold your hand in mine
The wonderful memories flow...

This hand that I now hold
once held mine in hers
This hand guided me, kept me safe
Bathed me, brushed my hair,
Disciplined me, cheered for me.
Cradled me and held me near.

This hand did laundry, cooked and worked.
This hand holds a piece of me
One that will be forever etched
One that I will hold for the rest of mine
One that I will miss when it is gone.

I have been blessed
for this hand has been the best!
This hand has withstood many hardships, struggles
but has always persevered!

This hand may no longer have a memory,
But my hand remembers!
This hand is my Mom’s!

*Lisa Desjardins Michaud*
Director/Producer
Jessamine Irwin & Daniel Quintanilla

Cecile reconnects with the French of her childhood thanks to recently arrived Franco-African immigrants, like Trésor, seeking asylum in Cecile’s hometown of Lewiston, Maine. Cecile’s Franco roots tie her to the thousands of French-Canadians who came before her to power the local mills, and who suffered from decades of discrimination and oppression. As history repeats itself, Cecile and Trésor develop a close friendship that helps Cecile finally find her pride in being Franco-American.

Daniel Quintanilla
Daniel Quintanilla is a documentary filmmaker and virtual reality storyteller who grew up in a multicultural home in México. He has worked on NSF and NEH-supported projects documenting endangered languages in México and the U.S. Daniel’s animated short documentary, Not A Citizen, about the unprecedented detention of a Somali-American by ICE while meeting with his lawyer in a courthouse was featured in the U.S. national film tour Stories Beyond Borders. He edited the highly acclaimed VICE feature film, The Most Unknown (Netflix), a documentary that sends nine scientists to extraordinary parts of the world to uncover unexpected answers to some of humanity’s biggest questions. Daniel’s most recent virtual reality documentary, Returning to Dadaab, follows co-director Shuab Mahat as he returns to Dadaab Refugee Camp in Kenya to see his mother and siblings for the first time, 15 years after resettlement to the U.S.

Winner of the Audience Award for Best Short at the Camden International Film Festival, the 2021 documentary film, The Intersection (Le Carrefour), co-directed by Daniel Quintanilla and Jessamine Irwin, focuses on past and present Maine immigrant families, which provides more details about the events impacted the individuals.

Jessamine Irwin

A native of Maine, Jessamine Irwin’s dedication to the French language and Francophone heritage stems from her mother. After finishing her undergraduate studies with a major in French and a minor in Spanish from the University of Maine, she went on to complete a dual certificate Master’s program in TFFL/TESOL. Jessamine has been teaching at NYU since 2017. Her passion for storytelling, paired with her desire to pay tribute to the French speakers from her home, led her to filmmaking. First through documenting oral history in Maine with her students, and then in her personal research. She is currently finishing a pedagogical series inspired by her research titled, Living in French.

Awards
Premiered at the 2021 Camden International Film Festival where it won the Audience Award for Best Short Inaugural recipient of the Maine Heritage Film Grant by TV5 Monde and Points North Institute.
Recipient of a “Major Grant” from the Maine Humanities Council.

Website: lecarrefourfilm.com
Social Instagram @lecarrefourfilm
Facebook Le Carrefour

Rodney Bond

After college Rodney Bond served in the Air Force, then worked as an engineer, and then as a high school teacher. As a high school teacher, Rodney coached academic teams to Texas State Science Championships, and Academic Decathlon Regional Championships. In 2010 Rodney was named the MIT Inspirational Teacher of the Year. In 2011, Rodney was selected as a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by the National Society of High School Scholars. Rodney has been researching historical information on the early families of the United States, Canada, and multiple European countries for many years as part of his interest in genealogy.

https://www.amazon.com/Chronological-History-Early-French-Canadian-Families/dp/B08HGPY71B
Acadian Driftwood: One Family and the Great Expulsion

by Tyler LeBlanc

Growing up on the south shore of Nova Scotia, Tyler LeBlanc wasn't fully aware of his family's Acadian roots -- until a chance encounter with an Acadian historian prompted him to delve into his family history. LeBlanc's discovery that he could trace his family all the way to the time of the Acadian Expulsion and beyond forms the basis of this compelling account of Le Grand Dérangement.

Piecing together his family history through archival documents, Tyler LeBlanc tells the story of Joseph LeBlanc (his great-great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandfather), Joseph's ten siblings, and their families. With descendants scattered across modern-day Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the LeBlancs provide a window into the diverse fates that awaited the Acadians when they were expelled from their homeland. Some escaped the deportation and were able to retreat into the wilderness. Others found their way back to Acadie. But many were exiled to Britain, France, or the future United States, where they faced suspicion and prejudice and struggled to settle into new lives.

A unique biographical approach to the history of the Expulsion, Acadian Driftwood is a vivid insight into one family's experience of this traumatic event.

https://www.amazon.com/Acadian-Driftwood-Family-Great-Expulsion/dp/1773101188

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by Ronald M. Bernard


Just about 400 pages of great reading.

Cover of the Willie Soucy store in St. Anne, New Brunswick.

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Clean Margins
by Abby Paige

Clean Margins is deeply personal. Abby Paige writes, “We come-to with a knot tied above our nipple, / a little lock installed atop our breast.” The we in “Clean Margins” is both the speaker and her sister. This we is me and my dearest friend who I sat with week after week as chemotherapy pumped into the port in her chest. Even if you’ve never listened to a doctor’s voice say the words “your cells have breached the margins,” you are this we. You are implicated. You are invited.

In 1970, a woman’s lifetime risk of developing breast cancer was 1 in 10. Now the risk is 1 in 8. This we is every one of us singing out: “Please look at me while I am here.”

Paige focuses, in this collection, on the body. She has given us all a microscope and asked that we examine tissue, legs, flesh, hand, arm, scars. We are cartographers of “the smoky / terrain.” It is the intimacy between speaker and reader that propels this collection.

What excites me about a micro chapbook is the further condensation of narrative and language, and in Clean Margins, Paige has managed a full and beautiful journey in ten tightly woven poems. This collection is both the terror of “needles and blood / and gauze and waiting” and a gorgeous prayer where we “begin to believe / it is all possible again.”

ALLISON BLEVINS
JUNE 2020

Clean Margins won the 2020 Harbor Review Editor’s Prize. (Allison Blevins, Editor.)

Les filles du QUOI?
World Premiere

I am deeply gratified to announce that my new solo show, Les filles du QUOI?, will premiere this June at Lost Nation Theater in Montpelier, Vermont. This show is a wild, comedic, ghostly, impassioned ride, and for those of us who have spent the last two years in deep isolation, I think it’s going to be a beautiful way to ease ourselves back into the intimacy and fun of live theater. Buy your tickets now!

LES FILLES DU QUOI?
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About: ABBY PAIGE

Abby Paige’s writing has appeared in the U.S. and Canada, in publications including Arc Poetry Magazine, Room Magazine, The Montreal Review of Books, The Los Angeles Review of Books, and Résonance. Her previous chapbook, Other Brief Discourses, was published by above/ground press. She lives in northern Vermont, where she was born and raised.
After years of planning, it was 1921 when Lazarre Bisson realized his dream and began tapping his maple trees on the southern mid slopes of Cates Hill. He built his small and primitive sugar house a few hundred yards up the road from the existing sugar house. The sugaring business complimented his farm operation on the top of Cates Hill since the Springtime was normally a slower time of the year on the farm.

With the help of his nephew, Armand Bisson, Lazarre managed his sugaring business for 15 years. The work was hard and all done by hand and horses. Sugar parties were often held at the sugar cabin. The varied maple products were also sold on the premises and distributed in area neighborhood stores. The familiar maple "taffy" was sold in tin cups.

Lazarre past away in 1936 and the business began to be managed by Armand and his wife Juliette. The operation has grown and change over the years. In the late 1940's horses used to gather sap were replaced by a tractor. This made it possible to haul three 125 gallon tanks rather than just one. In 1953 the present sugar house was constructed making the entire operation more efficient. It has been considered by many in the business to be a model design.

In 1979, the conversion from buckets to tubing began and today all 3000 taps have tubing and vacuum as a means of collecting the sap. The old tractor, along with a 1954 Farmall Super H, are used to gather the 20 to so cords of wood consumed during the five week season. The wood burning arch in use since 1953 has been replaced by a more efficient wood burning forced draft arch. New stainless steel pans were installed in 1991. A "Steam Away" has been added on top of the 5 x 10 flue pan which utilizes the generated steam to begin the evaporation of the sap, which makes possible the evaporation of over 300 gallons of sap per hour. A smaller wood fired evaporator is used to make our popular maple taffy, butter and old fashioned candies. All of our products are pure with nothing added.

In the 1970's, Armand and Juliette's niece Muriel, and her husband Lucien Blais began to help out in the business. Just as Armand had learned the art of sugaring from his uncle, Muriel and Lucien in turn began to learn the process from Armand and Juliette. In 1988 management was passed on to Lucien and Muriel. Juliette passed away in 1990 and Armand in 2004.

In January of 1998 a devastating ice storm lasting three days ravaged the higher elevations of Maine, New Hampshire, New York and eastern Quebec. Bisson's sugar bush was hard hit killing or severely injuring many of our trees. We decided to continue by leasing sugar maple trees from two other locations. The sap is hauled by truck from two miles away.

Our story is one of tradition and survival. Every Spring the steam still bellows out from the sugarhouse cupola and maple products continue to be made as they were nearly a century ago. For many, the Springtime trek up the hill has become a family tradition. We enjoy continuing and sharing a part of Berlin's rich heritage.

The cost, including shipping: $20.00

The book can be purchased by calling:

603-752-1298

or emailing:

bissonsmaple@gmail.com

http://bissonssugarhouse.com
ABOUT ANDRE et al.

by Delcy Voisine

One man, two centuries, in America's last continental frontier. Adapting to a new language during the early years of the family featured in this novel proved to be more difficult for adults than for their children who had the benefit of formal in-class schooling. The similarity of two cultures, French Canadian and northern Maine Americans, made for a seamless transition as only a river separated the two for miles as it meandered through the region.

Members of large families migrating voluntarily from the peaceful surroundings of the St. Lawrence River during the 19th century settled on either side of the St. John River minimizing the significance of a border between nations. This was also true of the Acadians living in Canada's maritime province and Nova Scotia who were forcibly driven from their land and homes by the British. The land of fertile plains and virgin forests of the region was blessed with an abundance of rivers and lakes making travel easier thereby encouraging the growth of new settlements. (For thousands of years, the land had been home to the Malecites, a peaceful member of the North American Indian Tribes. They continue to live here but far fewer in number in isolated enclaves). Encroachment of the area by people from other European countries, many Jesuits among them, resulted in the conversion of the indigenous people to Catholicism promoting fragile harmony between the several ethnic groups.

Another calming effect was the movement of people moving north from southern Maine, mostly Protestants, who, seeing the pristine forests promising great rewards, brought their management abilities and wherewithal necessary for the orderly development of vibrant communities. Other smaller groups also made contributions to growth but on a smaller scale. Today, a century later, these same communities thrive slowly and beautifully. Nearly every household has a pickup truck attesting to the fact that the guys spend more time on yard and house projects than in their bedrooms. So much for smaller families.

About the Author

Delcy, born at a family farm in northern Maine in 1930, received his primary education in a one-room schoolhouse. He served in the Maine National Guard during and after his high school years. Working in a manufacturing plant in Connecticut followed. He completed a tour of duty as a U.S. Marine in the Far East during the war in Korea. Married, he is the father of a son and two daughters. Curiosity about his family history compelled him to do research which led him to craft a video of his findings. (A copy of it is on file at the UMFK Acadian Archives in Fort Kent & at the Franco-American Centre in Orono). This novel is based in part on that video and other events that occurred during his 90 years of life.

French all around us

Dr. Kathleen Stein-Smith, a dedicated foreign language educator and advocate, is a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques and serves as Chair of the AATF Commission on Advocacy. She is the author of 4 books on the US foreign language deficit and languages in the US, numerous articles, and the blog, "Language Matters." kathleensteinsmith.wordpress.com

She has delivered a TEDx talk on the US Foreign Language Deficit and has presented at numerous conferences.

She received her Ph.D in Interdisciplinary Studies from the Union Institute & University. She is Chevalier dans l’Ordre des Palmes académiques; and Adjunct Faculty at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Claire Ackroyd lives in central Maine. She is a landscape designer and an independent organic inspector. Murder in the Maple Woods is her debut novel.

https://www.claireackroyd.com

My book, Murder in the Maple Woods, has multiple origins: my affection for a good mystery combined with my love of language and writing and my desire to present a true picture of the way of life in the big, remote, largely francophone maple syrup operations along the northwest edge of Maine.

I was raised on classic English murder mysteries and have always considered them to be the basis for any good story. Working as an organic inspector in the big sugar above or bistro to family and place names across the country. These are the stories of French language and Francophone culture in the US, but, even more importantly, the stories of Franco-Americans – ranging from descendants of the earliest French explorers and French-Canadian immigrants to the newest arrivals in the US from throughout the Francophone world. This book is of interest to all of us, whatever our background, as the experience of French language and Francophone culture in the US has similarities to and intersects with the many languages and cultures that have contributed to the American experience.

About Kathleen Stein-Smith

Dr. Kathleen Stein-Smith, a dedicated foreign language educator and advocate, is a Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes académiques and serves as Chair of the AATF Commission on Advocacy.

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https://tbr-books.org/product/french-all-around-us?
Spring 2021 in Maine brought an abundance of wild fiddleheads for bears to harvest. The spring rains also brought the eagles to the Penobscot River to fish for salmon.

In fact, while Papa Bear and Baby Bear were picking baby ferns (fiddleheads) along the banks of the Penobscot River, they saw their neighbor, Brother Eagle, fishing for salmon in the Penobscot River. Eagle suddenly caught a glimpse of Papa Bear and Baby Bear along the riverbanks:

**Brother Eagle:** Hi there neighbors! What brings you to the riverbanks today?

**Baby Bear:** Fiddleheads! (Shouted out with excitement.)

**Papa Bear:** He’s right, Brother Eagle. Mama Bear is preparing a delicious supper tonight to celebrate fiddlehead season. The fiddleheads are just right for the picking here along the banks of the Penobscot River.

**Brother Eagle:** Yes, I can see that with my keen vision. Well, since the salmon are running abundantly up the Penobscot River with all of these spring rains, why don’t I contribute some salmon to your fiddlehead feast tonight?

**Brother Eagle:** By 6:00PM would be fine, Brother Eagle. Bring an appetite with you!

**Brother Eagle:** I surely will, Papa Bear.

Papa Bear and Baby Bear continued gathering lots of ripe fiddleheads in their special Penobscot baskets. Meanwhile, Mama Bear was out doing her own gathering as a surprise for her family. She was out in the meadow gathering honey and dried berries for a sweet dessert to serve after supper tonight. In the meadow, Mama Bear caught a glimpse of Brother Groundhog browsing in the meadow and then Brother Groundhog noticed Mama Bear there:

**Brother Groundhog:** Hello, Mama Bear. What brings you to the meadow after a long winter?

**Mama Bear:** I’m searching for something sweet to go with my special fiddlehead supper tonight.

**Brother Groundhog:** Well, please allow me to contribute to your special supper. I have a large stash of dried, sweet berries in my den that I will go get for you as a gift.

**Mama Bear:** That is so sweet of you, Brother Groundhog, but why don’t you just join us for supper tonight and bring the berries with you. I’ll gather plenty of honey to serve with the berries. Please come to our humble cave by 6:00PM!

**Brother Groundhog:** I joyfully accept your kind invitation, Mama Bear. Thanks so much. I’ll arrive at your cave with the berries by 6:00PM. God bless you!

As Brother Groundhog ducked into his den, Mama Bear walked towards the tree where she usually finds beehives filled with honey. When she arrived at the “bee tree,” Mama Bear climbed it and found plenty of honey for tonight’s dessert. She quickly filled her little wooden bowl to the brim with a happy smile on her face. Then she headed back to the cave in time to greet Papa Bear and Baby Bear arriving with their fiddlehead harvest:

**Mama Bear:** Wow, look at the huge harvest of fiddleheads! You have been two busy bears.

**Baby Bear:** We picked extra fiddleheads for Brother Eagle to eat.

**Papa Bear:** Yes, Dear, Brother Eagle is bringing over salmon for supper tonight and will dine with us.

**Mama Bear:** That sounds wonderful and delicious, Papa Bear; salmon to accompany the fiddleheads! There are even plenty of fiddleheads to share with Brother Groundhog who I invited to our fiddlehead feast. He offered to contribute dried, sweet berries to go with the honey I harvested for dessert tonight.

**Baby Bear:** Yum! Yum! I can’t wait until dessert.

(Mama Bear cracked a smile.)

**Mama Bear:** Papa Bear, what time will Brother Eagle arrive with the salmon?

**Papa Bear:** By 6:00PM.

**Mama Bear:** Good! I also told Brother Groundhog to arrive by 6:00PM. I’ll go set the table for supper right now. Baby Bear, please come help your Mama!

**Baby Bear:** Gladly, Mama. (Baby Bear wearing a cheery smile.)

By 6:00PM, Brother Eagle had arrived with several large salmon and Brother Groundhog had arrived with a large bowl of dried, sweet berries. Both neighbors were warmly welcomed at Chez Bear (home of the Bear family):

**Papa Bear:** Welcome neighbors! Thanks for coming to our little community supper. There’s a special place for each of you at our supper table this evening. Please be seated and we’ll pass around the salmon.
(Continued on page 50)
Mama Bear then placed serving platters of the fresh harvest at the center of the table. Everyone served themselves and then waited for Mama Bear to say grace:

**Mama Bear:** Dear Creator and Mother Earth, thank you so much for this bountiful harvest and the gift of sharing resources between neighbors. Thank you for this magical fiddlehead season. We also thank the salmon for sacrificing their lives to nourish us and we thank the bees for sharing their sweet, golden honey with us. There’s so much to be thankful for, including the dried berries from last summer’s harvest. Great Creator, we ask that these nourishing foods fill each of us with great wellness, happiness and great purpose in our lives. Bon appétit, everyone! God bless and enjoy your meal!

(Everyone started eating the fiddlehead feast, except Baby Bear who had an important question: )

**Baby Bear:** Mama, Papa, can I start with the dessert? I thank the berries and honey for sweetening my life.

(Everyone at the table laughed.)

**Mama Bear:** Good question, Sweet Heart. You can take a couple of nibbles of your dessert now and then save the rest for at the end of your meal. Deal?

**Baby Bear:** Deal, Mama! (Baby Bear wearing a big grin on his furry face.)

At the end of the meal, Brother Eagle and Brother Groundhog thanked the Bear family for their generous, neighborly invitation to a traditional Fiddlehead Feast. They left Chez Bear with full stomachs and happy hearts. As they walked away, Mama Bear yelled out with a joyful smile:

**Mama Bear:** Next year we’ll invite even more neighbors to our Fiddlehead Feast.

(Brother Eagle and Brother Groundhog yelled back: )

**Brother Eagle:** I’ll bring plenty of salmon.

**Brother Groundhog:** And I’ll bring plenty of dried berries.

**Baby Bear:** Yay!!!

**THE END**

(or is it only the beginning?)

(A Fiddlehead Feast continued from page 49)
Fiddlehead Feast Crossword Activity

By Virginia L. Sand

1. GOD
2. BEAR
3. BASKETS
4. BERRIES
5. PENOBSCOT
6. SUPPER
7. RIVER
8. FEAST
9. GROUNDHOG
10. FIDDLE HEADS
11. APPETITE
12. SPRING
13. EAGLE
14. FERNS
15. BROTHER
16. GIFT
17. NEIGHBORS
18. HONEY
19. SALMON
20. GENEROUS

21. MAINE
22. GRACE
23. THANKS
24. BLESS
25. CHEZ
26. MEADOW
27. HARVEST
28. WELCOME
29. FISH
30. GATHER
31. SHARE
32. JOY
THE FRANCO AMERICAN CENTRE
OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

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

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

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

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

MISSION

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

LE CENTRE FRANCO AMÉRICAIN DE L’UNIVERSITÉ DU MAINE


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

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.