Le Forum, Vol. 44 #3

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November 11th:

Ce numéro de *Le Forum* est dédié à nos vétérans/
This issue of *Le Forum* is Dedicated to our veterans.

(Voir/see pages 16-42)
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Le FORUM
Alumna Karen L. Boudreau and her husband Thomas S. Jensen, M.D. make naming gift to UMaine

July 7, 2022

A pledge from University of Maine alumna Karen Boudreau and her husband, Thomas Jensen, M.D. will rename North Stevens Hall on campus in honor of the former Brewer, Maine resident and now San Diego-based attorney.

Karen L. Boudreau, Esq. Hall will be dedicated on July 14. Expected to participate in the ceremony are UMaine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy; Susan Pinette, professor and director of Franco American Programs at UMaine; and Gigi Georges, author of the 2021 book “Downeast: Five Maine Girls and the Unseen Story of Rural America.”

Boudreau and Jensen say they hope that naming this building for a French-Canadian woman will provide the confidence to women and those of French-Canadian heritage to pursue their dreams.

“As a first-generation college student and a Franco-American woman, my path was not easy, particularly when I lived in Maine,” Boudreau says, “I want those who follow me to understand that regardless of the hurdles put in front of you, success is very achievable if you set clear goals, work hard and seek out great mentors.”

The two-story Boudreau Hall, one of the oldest buildings on campus, is part of the Stevens Hall complex. It houses the Cohen Institute for Leadership and Public Service, the Political Science Department and the School of Policy and International Affairs, and the offices of Equal Opportunity and International Affairs.

“Karen’s academic excellence at the state’s flagship university and her successful law career are an inspiration,” says Joan Ferrini-Mundy, president of the University of Maine. “For Karen to recognize her alma mater with such a gift also honors her Franco-American heritage and the value of public higher education in Maine. We appreciate the opportunity for generations of UMaine students to know her story.”

The gift will support some much-needed refurbishment of this existing campus space, says Jeffery Mills, president of the UMaine Foundation that facilitated the pledge. “We are very grateful to have donors like Karen and Tom who recognize the importance of our historic buildings.”

Boudreau graduated from John Bapst Memorial High School in Bangor, Maine. At UMaine, she worked to support herself and paid all her own expenses while pursuing a double major in political science and broadcasting. She graduated with high honors and highest distinction in three years in 1980. She was admitted to Phi Beta Kappa Society. After receiving her Juris Doctorate with Honors from George Washington University, Boudreau was a law clerk for the Maine Supreme Judicial Court.

In her 35-year legal career, Boudreau has represented numerous large international corporations, including IBM, Gap, Marshalls, UNUM, Sony and Accenture, both as in-house counsel and in her own practice, focusing on technology and employment matters. She holds bar admissions in six states, including Maine, New York and California, as well as admission to practice before the Supreme Court of the United States. Boudreau has been named an Attorney of Distinction and one of America’s Most Honored Lawyers.

Boudreau and Jensen live in San Diego and summer on Hopkins Pond in Mariaville, Maine. Boudreau is involved in a variety of community activities including serving on the boards of John Bapst, Angels Foster Family Network and the San Diego Chapters of the Lincoln Club, the Association of Corporate Counsel and the Federalist Society.
The Archives’ summer season kicked off in May with an open house and educational activities tailored to Jonna Bouré’s French honors students from Caribou High School. A tour of St. John Valley cultural sites guided by Lise Pelletier brought eager visitors during the Madawaska Acadian Festival and the Archives team led UMFK’s presence at the annual parade.

Governor Janet Mills came to the Acadian Archives on August 15, Acadian Heritage Day. We were also privileged to welcome John Martin, Danny Martin, Judy Paradis, Sr. Jackie Ayotte, and other guests on that occasion. Governor Mills announced new endeavors that will bring the heritage of the St. John Valley to a wider audience: funding to digitize French-language newspapers, including the Van Buren-based *Journal du Madawaska* (1903-1905), and the support of the Maine State Library. The Acadian Archives are particularly indebted to Adam Fisher, the State Library’s director of digital initiatives, who has provided a book scanner to enhance virtual access to our collections.

This banner summer brought visitors from Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Kansas, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, and many other places to the Archives; we also continue to support the local community with cultural events and research assistance. In August alone, we had more than 150 individual points of contact with the public. At the same time, we are engaging other groups more proactively. Director Patrick Lacroix addressed the Madawaska Historical Society and a group from the American Association of Teachers of French; archivist and cataloger Madeline Soucie attended the annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists in Boston.

In July and August, we had the pleasure of welcoming Joey LeBlanc, a student from FAS400: Internship in Franco-American Studies, who is developing a virtual exhibit on the built rural heritage of our region. His work will appear on the Maine acadian Memory Network. Thanks to the support of the Maine Humanities Council, the team continues to hold oral interviews to trace the impact of international travel restrictions in the region.

This fall, our calendar of events includes:

- **Homecoming weekend open house**, September 10 (1 to 5 p.m.)
- **Acadian-themed Maine Poetry Express**, September 22 (6 to 8 p.m.)
- **Acadian singer Robert Sylvain**, October 13, with meet-and-greet (11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.) and concert (6 to 8 p.m.)
- “**Voices of the Borderland**” community forum, October 29 (9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.)
- **Book launch for Dana Murch’s *Ancestors and Descendants of Daniel F. Thibodeau and Rebecca Jandreau***, November 10 (6:30 to 7:30 p.m.)
- **Lecture on Acadians and the Revolutionary War by Darcy Stevens**, November 21 (6:30 to 7:30 p.m.)

Finally, we want to acknowledge and extend our heartfelt gratitude to generous donors who have supported us in the last year: Jean Paul Michaud, George Dumond, Dana Murch, Rina Soucy, Dennis and Holly Violette, Allen Voisine, and Paradis Shop’n Save. Thanks to these donors, we continue to acquire the resources we need to preserve and celebrate the rich heritage of the Valley.

Regular updates from the Archives are available on Facebook and Twitter (Acadian Archives / Archives acadiennes – UMFK) and queries can be directed to acadian@maine.edu. Please note that with the launch of our new website, our URL has changed. You can find us at umfk.edu/offices/archives/.
Autumn in Maine usually brings snow by the latter part of the season. Usually by mid-October folks are putting their gardens to bed for the winter, raking fallen leaves, and battening down the hatches, sort of speak, in preparation for Old Man Winter. Sometimes here in the Pine Tree State we even see snow by Halloween, especially in northern Maine. By the end of September, people are already looking for pumpkins to decorate and carve for Halloween. County Fairs and Fall Festivals extend into autumn, including the Common Ground Fair in Unity, Maine, which takes place around September 23rd, right after autumn officially begins on September 22, 2022. The Common Ground Fair is a three-day agricultural fair which features farm animals, fiber arts, organic produce, herbalists and healing herbs, holistic healing approaches, Maine-made crafts and products, specialty foods, goat cheese, meals served from food trucks, and Maine’s new crop of ripe apples including those delicious Cortland and Macintosh varieties. The Fryeburg Agricultural Fair in Fryeburg, Maine runs from October 2-9, 2022. This is the last fair held in Maine each year.

September is the kick-off to apple season in Maine, the taste of autumn: apple pies, apple cider, apple butter, apple cake, apple turnovers, apple strudel, etc. As you can see, Agritourism is a big part of autumn in Maine. There are many apple orchards in Maine that give visitors the option of picking their own apples, including Lemieux’s Orchard on 210 Priest Hill Road in Vassalboro, Maine 04989; tel. #207-873-4354. You can google “Lemieux’s Orchard” on the Internet to discover more information about the farm, including their corn maze, hours, and shop that sells home-made baked goods and canned goods, fresh bagged apples, etc. You can also find Lemieux’s Orchard bagged apples at Hannaford supermarkets. Lemieux’s Orchard was started by French Canadians who immigrated to Maine and then passed the orchard down to the next generations. Although the orchard is not a place to pick your own apples, it is one of the few places you can practice speaking your French language while leaf peeping. Let’s keep learning and speaking French!

Enjoy the magical, colorful season of autumn in Maine where forest land covers about 89% of the state. Some of the earliest leaf peeping opportunities in the United States can be found in northern Maine along the Canadian border. Bienvenue/Welcome to autumn in magnificent Maine.
Il n’y a pas d’autre endroit où je préférerais être en automne que dans mon propre état coloré et magnifique du Maine, aux États-Unis. Les couleurs du feuillage d’automne contre le ciel bleu clair et net sont imbattables—oranges, rouges, or, jaunes, un festin pour les yeux. L’automne est ma saison préférée ici dans le Maine. Les habitants et les touristes apprécient la <<saison des feuilles/leaf peeping>> et l’agritourisme dans le Maine. Leaf peeping est l’activité où les gens voyagent pour voir les changements de couleur dans le feuillage d’automne. L’agritourisme combine l’agriculture et le tourisme, comme lorsque les gens et les familles se rendent dans les fermes pour la cueillette de citrouilles, la cueillette de pommes, les labyrinthes de maïs, les promenades en charrette et le magasinage dans les kiosques à la ferme. Se rendre dans une ferme d’arbres de Noël pour couper son propre arbre de Noël est un autre exemple d’agritourisme. En fait, l’agritourisme est bon pour l’économie du Maine et il aide à éduquer le public sur l’importance de nos-mêmes les fermes communautaires qui travaillent si dur pour nous nourrir.


L’automne dans le Maine apporte une saison éphémère de changements de couleur dans notre bel état. Il n’y a pas d’autre endroit où je préférerais être en automne que dans mon propre état coloré et magnifique du Maine, aux États-Unis. Les couleurs du feuillage d’automne contre le ciel bleu clair et net sont imbattables—oranges, rouges, or, jaunes, un festin pour les yeux. L’automne est ma saison préférée ici dans le Maine. Les habitants et les touristes apprécient la <<saison des feuilles/leaf peeping>> et l’agritourisme dans le Maine. Leaf peeping est l’activité où les gens voyagent pour voir les changements de couleur dans le feuillage d’automne. L’agritourisme combine l’agriculture et le tourisme, comme lorsque les gens et les familles se rendent dans les fermes pour la cueillette de citrouilles, la cueillette de pommes, les labyrinthes de maïs, les promenades en charrette et le magasinage dans les kiosques à la ferme. Se rendre dans une ferme d’arbres de Noël pour couper son propre arbre de Noël est un autre exemple d’agritourisme. En fait, l’agritourisme est bon pour l’économie du Maine et il aide à éduquer le public sur l’importance de nous-mêmes les fermes communautaires qui travaillent si dur pour nous nourrir.


L’automne dans le Maine apporte généralement de la neige vers la fin de la saison. Habituellement, à la mi-octobre, les gens mettent leurs jardins au lit pour l’hiver, ratissent les feuilles mortes et ferment les écoutilles, en quelque sorte, en préparation pour le Vieux Homme d’Hiver. Parfois, ici, dans l’État de l’Arbre à Pin, nous voyons même de la neige à Halloween, en particulier dans le nord du Maine. Fin septembre, les gens recherchent déjà des citrouilles à décorer et à sculpter pour Halloween. Les foires de compté et les festivals d’automne se prolongent jusqu’en automne, y compris la foire de Common Ground à Unity, dans le Maine, qui arrive vers le 23 septembre, juste après le début officiel de l’automne le 22 septembre 2022. La foire de Common Ground est une foire agricole de trois jours <<l’automne dans le comté d’Aroostook.>> d’Acadie, sur la côte du Maine. Les couleurs du feuillage /leaf peeping/ de l’automne, créé par la chambre de commerce aux Etats-Unis.
Late Fr. Zenon Decary’s life and work continue to inspire

A group formed in 2008 is carrying on its quest to advance knowledge of the priest who served in Biddeford and, people say, performed healing miracles.

BY TAMMY WELLS  COURIER / POST

Patricia Frechette of Saco looks through an album of information about the late Fr. Zenon Decary, who served in Biddeford, and, people say, performed healing miracles. Frechette is a member of the Friends of Fr. Zenon Decary group compiling and advancing knowledge about the priest. Tammy Wells Photo

SACO — It has been many years since Rev. Zenon Decary served in Biddeford, but the memories of the kindly, compassionate priest, who is said to have the ability to heal, continue on.

A local group, Friends of Father Zenon Decary is looking to ensure his name continues to resonate here — and beyond.

Patricia Frechette said Bishop Robert Deeley has given his approval for the friends group to continue to gather information about Fr. Zenon.

The Friends of Father Zenon Decary was first formed in 2008, after an effort in the 1990s to begin the process of beatification was unsuccessful. The membership of about a dozen people at its height has dwindled due to ill health and some members have passed away, but the desire to advance the knowledge of Fr. Zenon while continuing to collect information about his work, continues.

As a part of the drive to create awareness about the former Biddeford priest, displays featuring various aspects of his life and work will rotate through each church in the Good Shepherd parish, said Frechette.

Zenon Decary was born in St. Laurent, Quebec, Canada, in 1870. He died in Dorval, Quebec, in 1940.

He was ordained in 1894, and was called to Rome to study as a canon lawyer, Frechette said. Before he was able to complete those studies, he became ill and returned to Canada. He was assigned as an assistant pastor at St. Andre in Biddeford from 1902-1907, and later served in Priscue Isle, Fort Kent, Fairfield and Augusta, among other Maine locales. He became ill again, and at some point returned to Biddeford to stay and recuperate with his brother, Monsignor Arthur Decary, who was pastor at St. Andrew at the time. He stayed until the fall of 1939, when he went home to Quebec and died in July of the following year.

Fr. Zenon was known as a priest who helped those who needed it, as was Arthur. In 1935, Fr. Zenon approached the Good Shepherd Sisters of Quebec about opening a home for unwed mothers, pledging $5,000 as a gift from him and his brother, according to the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland — the first steps toward establishing St. Andre Home. The priests encouraged formation of a boys’ school in Biddeford Pool, which later became St. Francis College and later still, the University of New England.

In addition to the good works that affected large groups, there are also instances of Fr. Zenon helping individuals. For instance, in a 2013 Journal Tribune article by Dina Mendros, Rev. Renald Lebarre, who died a year ago, said his mother recounted that when Labarre was 16 months old, he accidentally ended up in a tub of scalding water. His mother rushed the boy to Webber Hospital and while a doctor was examining the infant, advised the family to call for a priest. Fr. Zenon Decary looked in on Labarre and told his mother not to be afraid, Labarre said.

“He told her I would be fine because God had a purpose for me,” Labarre said. “When my mother turned around, I was asleep and the healing process had begun.”

Labarre’s account is one of many that have come to the attention of the Friends of Father Zenon Decary group. Others are listed in a book about Decary’s life, published in 1948, entitled “The Good Father Zenon.”

Frechette has written four volumes about Fr. Zenon Decary, including his genealogy, his upbringing and how it influenced de la région du Grand Fort Kent.

Toujours dans le comté d’Aroostook, près de la frontière canadienne, la ville de Madawaska a lancé un festival d’automne annuel pour aider à célébrer la saison tour-nante au cours de la première semaine de l’automne. Madawaska est le centre de la culture acadienne dans le magnifique <écœur de la vallée de Saint-Jean> du nord du Maine. Explorez les collines colorées et le feuillage d’automne spectaculaire lors d’une visite dans le nord du Maine. Van Buren est un autre village du Maine à la frontière canadienne qui a lancé un festival annuel d’automne de deux jours en octobre avec de la musique, des marchands locaux, de l’artisanat et des objets de collection, des vendeurs, de la nourriture et du plaisir. Ces villages du nord du Maine près de la frontière canadienne sont des endroits où vous pouvez vous entraîner à parler votre français tout en lorgnant les feuilles. Continuons à apprendre et à parler français !

Maine mourns the loss of a brilliant Franco-American writer
(October 3, 2022 Franco-American News and Culture
Bates College, Denis Ledoux, Susann Pelletier, University of Southern Maine)

By Juliana L’Heureux

LEWISTON, Me– Community condolences extend to the grieving family and friends of our writing colleague Susann Pelletier. Reported in the Lewiston Sun Journal, Susann Pelletier died on September 15, 2022, in Lewiston. Her obituary can be read at this site here.

Among the poetry readings Ms. Pelletier provided to the community, was when she spoke during a program on November 25, 2019, hosted by the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College.

She was a Bates College alumna where her successful writing is described in the 2011, “translations” on-line feature: “Susann Pelletier, a Lewiston, Maine native, began writing poems when she was 11 years old. Her work gives voice to her deep connections to family and place in Franco-America, as well as her vision of social justice and dignity at home and beyond our borders. Her articles and poems have been published here and abroad in anthologies, literary journals, chapbooks, and political and environmental magazines. Susann has worked as a journalist, editorial consultant, market gardener, college instructor, and co-editor of a progressive monthly. She finds great pleasure sharing with young people her love of poetry and offering creative writing workshops. A pacifist, Susann participate in a Maine-products food cooperative, community-supported agriculture (CSA), and also grow and preserve their own organic vegetables, fruit and herbs.”

She served on the Board of Directors of the Maine People’s Alliance and of L/A Arts.

In the obituary, the tribute to her continues:

The family would also like to thank all the thoughtful healthcare professionals at Dana Farber in Boston, New England Cancer Center in Topsham and at St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center, for their service. They also wish to thank the Androscoggin Home Health and Hospice staff for supporting Susann’s return home, where she was able to pass with her family.

Susann’s celebration of life service was held on Saturday, Oct. 15 at 10:45 a.m. at Trinity Church in Lewiston. https://trinitylewiston.org/

Father Zenon Decary (1870-1940) Book (photo L’Heureux)

his life and character, and more. A fifth volume will encompass the miracles he performed that people have written about, she said.

The group hopes to further advance knowledge of Fr. Zenon through a website, and Frechette noted that word of the priest is making its way abroad — a Friends group member with family in the Philippines is spreading the word there.

The friends group continues its research and would like to create a museum about the priest.

Rev. Zenon Decary, who served in Biddeford, passed away in 1940. A group called Friends of Fr. Zenon Decary is working to advance knowledge of the priest.

As for Frechette, she first heard about Fr. Zenon several years ago, was interested in what was said about him, and wanted to know more.

“It’s like I bit the fish hook,” she said. Other members of the group, she said, feel similarly.

“We can’t let go until the job is done,” she said.
A Franco-American chance encounter with Queen Elizabeth in Montreal
(September 30, 2022 Franco-American News and CultureAuburn Maine, Games of the XXI Olympiad, Gerard Dennison, Girls of Great Britain & Ireland Tiara)

By Juliana L’Heureux

Gerard Dennison of Auburn, Maine, wrote a social media story about the chance encounter he experienced with the late Queen Elizabeth II, when she was in Montreal, Canada with her family to attend the 1976, Olympic games. After requesting permission to publish in this blog (below) about his rare chance experience, I was able to find information about the monarch’s 1976, visit to the Montreal Olympic games, hosted in the Province of Quebec, reported on the Royal Watch blog.

Montreal Gazette Queen Elizabeth II in Montreal at the 1976 Olympics.

Gerard Dennison enjoyed a brief chance encounter with Queen Elizabeth II when she attended the 1976, Montreal Olympic Games.

After the monarch Queen Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor, died at Balmoral Castle, in Scotland on September 8, 2022, Mr. Dennison wrote about his startling face to face experience with the Queen when he attended the 1976, Olympic games, in Montreal:

True story! My very brief encounter with Queen Elizabeth occurred on July 17, 1976, in Montreal outside Olympic Stadium after the opening day ceremonies, of the Summer Olympic games, during which she so elegantly presided. It was a beautiful perfect sunny afternoon with temperatures in the high 80’s. Our encounter was very dramatic! So much so, that I will never forget. It is still so vivid in my mind. Back then, Montreal was my second home as I had many maternal cousins who lived there. I was standing outside Olympic Stadium with my friend Brad during the opening day ceremony. We could hear all the fanfare with 75,000 people inside and thousands outside. As the ceremonies were about to end, we decided we would leave and drive back to my first cousin Paulette’s house. We were to stay for the week as she was vacationing in Mexico with her husband Roland Sauve. So, we walked to my car, and I started driving down Sherbrooke Street in my brand new 1976, red T-top Corvette. We got about one mile down the road and all of the sudden chaos broke loose. I heard very loud noises. Helicopters began flying over my car. I looked in my rear and side view mirrors and 30 motorcycle cops were coming at us, to my side and behind. The two lead ones drove in front of me urging me to pull over frantically waving and yelling. So, I did. And I looked to my left and there she was in her stretch limo with flags all around just 3 feet away. She was wearing a pink bonnet and outfit sitting in the right rear seat. We looked into each other’s eyes. And a split second later she was gone. They drove off to her royal yacht, which was docked in the St. Lawrence River. She had just turned 50 and I was about to turn 28. We stayed for the week and had tickets to many events like boxing, basketball, swimming, etc. but I never saw her again. RIP in heaven, you, most beloved Majesty, the Queen of England!

Queens Elizabeth II in Montreal wearing one of her famous tiaras.

The highlight of the spectacular Opening Ceremony was when the Queen proclaimed the opening of the Games of the XXI Olympiad, first in French, then in English. In fact, the entire British Royal Family gathered in Montreal to attend, open, and participate (when Princess Anne was an equestrian) in the 1976, Summer Olympics. The first Olympic games hosted on Canadian soil, the Queen, as “Queen and Head of State of Canada”, officially opened the Olympic Games, while her daughter, Princess Anne was a member of the British Equestrian Team.

Merci Gerard Dennison, for sharing this delightful story.
LIVES STITCHED TOGETHER BY CHOICES AND CHANCE: MAKING STRANGE AND WONDROUS CONNECTIONS THROUGH FAMILY HISTORY WORK

by Megan St. Marie

(Continued on page 11)
Law officials apprehended Henri just south of Winooski, Vermont on November 1, 1929. They confiscated the champagne from the trunk of his car, and later that month he was sentenced to a year and a day in the federal prison near Atlanta, Georgia, over a thousand miles away. The sentence must have been quite an ordeal for my great-grandfather. For one thing, French was his first language, and he spoke little English. I’m also sure he worried terribly about his family in Vermont, and it must’ve been a sadness to miss the birth of his new son, Clement, in 1930. On a lighter note, while the fiddle was a mainstay of the soirées or kitchen parties he and his Franco American community regularly enjoyed, Henri reportedly returned home from Georgia with a deep distaste for banjo music, which he had heard every day during his incarceration.

Henri and Maria’s children knew about their father’s prison term, but shame made them keep it a secret from their own offspring for many years. The French word for shame is “honte,” which to my anglophone ear sounds an awful lot like “haunt.” Indeed, shame can exert a spectral presence across generations, haunting people with a painful compulsion to maintain silence, and inhibiting healing. My father never learned of the story until one of his aunts blurted it out in an unrestrained moment at a family reunion, years after Henri had died.

I don’t see my great-grandfather’s imprisonment as a stain on the family, like ink spilled on the fabric of the baby quilt his daughter would go on to make for me. If there’s any shame in the story today, I think it belongs to the disprosition experiment, which ultimately came to an end in 1933 with the ratification of the 21st Amendment, just a few years after my great-grandfather completed his sentence. A review in the online journal Seven Days about a book from an oral history project in Vermont offers the following commentary, which might as well be about Henri Laroche:

John Rainville, in his account of his family’s French-Canadian agricultural heritage, manages to touch on this subject as well. As a bystander, his recollections of the rum-runners tend to be more objective. He mentions that some local men were caught and sent to federal prison in Atlanta. “These guys, you know, they were poor,” he says. “They were trying to make a dollar…it’s almost like drugs today.”[1]

I’d go a step further than Mr. Rainville to say it’s exactly “like drugs today” in terms of how the draconian War on Drugs has led to a crisis of mass incarceration in the United States, with some 2 million people jailed and imprisoned, a 500% increase in the past 40 years. (See The Sentencing Project’s data[2] for more information on this sad reality of our nation and its disproportionate impact on BIPOC populations.) The tragedy doesn’t stop with those who are imprisoned, but ripples out into families and communities.

That ripple effect was apparent in the 1920s in Henri Laroche’s family. I wonder, for example, how my grandmother’s life might have been enriched and changed for the better by continuing her schooling. Such speculation may seem fruitless in its inability to change the past, and if my great-grandfather hadn’t been arrested, and my grandmother had continued her schooling, I would not exist. History had to happen just as it did for my father, and then me, to come into being.

Put another way, everything is connected, with lives stitched together by choices and chance like the threads that bind the pieces of a quilt. Rediscovering this simple, profound truth time and again is one of the great rewards of family history work. I didn’t know I was going to write about her father’s imprisonment when I decided to write about the quilt my grandmother made for me when I was born. Reflecting on my writing process in real time brings to mind lines from Natalie Babbitt’s Tuck Everlasting,[3] a favorite book I read as a child (perhaps while sitting on that same ink-stained quilt): “No connection, you would agree. But things can come together in strange ways.”

I’ll add wondrous to that phrase—family history work can help us see connections between people and stories and themes in strange and wondrous ways. That seeing, in turn, can prompt empathy, healing, and maybe even the dissolution of the specter of shame. To paraphrase neuroscientist Daniela Scholler,[4] the stories we tell about the past aren’t about the past; they are about how we perceive the past in our present moment. It follows that if we can change our perception, we can change our lives, and maybe the lives of our ancestors, too.


About the Author:
Megan St. Marie is the president of Modern Memoirs, Inc., a private publishing company founded in Amherst, MA in 1994 that specializes in memoirs and family history books. She is also an award-winning children’s book author and scholar under her maiden name, Megan Dowd Lambert. Much of Megan’s work as a Lecturer at Simmons University was devoted to examining child reader response to illustration and book design through her original Whole Book Approach storytime model, which she created in association with The Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art. This background now translates into Megan’s work at Modern Memoirs where her core belief that everyone’s story is worth telling, and her faith in the transformative power of radical listening, allow her to guide clients as they turn their memories and research into beautiful, heirloom books. www.megandowlambert.com and www.modernmemoirs.com
GUIDING WRITERS IN REFLECTING ON GOOD TIMES AND BAD

By Megan St. Marie

This post is the sixth in a series-in-progress by company president Megan St. Marie about heirlooms and objects related to her family history that she keeps in her office to inform and inspire her work at Modern Memoirs.

I recently wrote an editorial letter to a client, encouraging him to say more about his wife in his memoir. The two met as teenagers and have been together for over 50 years. It seems clear from his narrative that he adores her and that she has played a big role in supporting him in his success as a businessman. Even though his memoir is mainly focused on his career, that sense of adoration made me very curious about the woman he married. I want to know more about her, and I’m guessing that she’d be moved by what her husband has to say about her. However, this client may choose not to add more detail about his wife’s life and their marriage, and that’s absolutely fine. We take our tagline, “Your Memoir, the Way You Want It,” seriously at Modern Memoirs, and I respect a person’s wish to protect others’ privacy even as they share much about their own lives through their writing. It’s a fine line to walk. But, oh, how I love a good love story!

A bit of online research by staff Genealogist Liz Sonnenberg revealed a companion image called “The Reconciliation,” by the same artist, which ran in The London News soon after this first picture was published. In it, the same cast of characters is present, and the scene looks relaxed and joyous. Whatever upset the elopement caused in the first painting seems resolved in this second scene. I ended up wondering: Why did my Lambert great-grandparents keep that first print in their home? What did they make of the domestic drama it depicts? Did this scene make them reflect on their own marriage? Or others’ marriages in their family? And, did they ever see the second picture of a happy reconciliation?

My Modern Memoirs office is filled with mementos from ancestors’ and relatives’ love stories, including one to which I can only tangentially lay claim as family history. My uncle Steve Lambert recently gave me a framed picture from an 1897 edition of The London News, which hung in the home of my great-grandparents Alfred “Fred” Damian Lambert (1882-1963) and Anastasie “Tazzy” Delia Raymond (1886-1971). Entitled “The Story of the Elopement,” this print of a painting by John A. Lennox has a great narrative quality, inviting the viewer to speculate about the story the painter was trying to tell. An older man in the painting looks upset, his posture rigid as he stares out a window with his back to the room, while a young woman sits with her head on the table in front of her, weeping. Is this an angry father and his daughter after her elopement? To me, that seems likely, but there is no accompanying text to offer the precise details of what transpired between these two characters and the others in the composition.

A copy of the 1905 marriage license of Anastasie “Tazzy” Delia Raymond and Alfred “Fred” Damian Lambert

(Continued on page 13)
I know that Fred and Tazzy did not elope, and in fact, I know of no stories of elopement in my family history (though I have to imagine there were some). One rather humorous family story that I did hear about the beginning of a marriage concerned my Lambert grandparents. Fred and Tazzy’s son, my grandfather Homer Raymond Lambert (1908-1974), married my grandmother Lucienne Marie Laroche (1915-1986) on October 7, 1936. They ended up having what might be considered the exact opposite of an elopement when her parents accompanied them on their honeymoon to the mountainous area north of the St. Lawrence River in Québec. After many months of supervised courtship in their rural, Catholic, Franco American community, this was not the romantic post-nuptial getaway my grandfather, in particular, had envisioned. As those events were recounted over the years, my grandmother would say that her parents just wanted to visit relatives along the way, while my grandfather reportedly countered that they could have done so some other time—any other time.

I first heard these family stories from my mother, who was married herself to my father, Homer Ray Lambert, Senior, Jr. (1934-2001). Having grown up hearing them so often, I knew by heart the styles and the scenes of the unhappy times in Fred and Tazzy’s marriage. I still do. However, as I worked in this piece, which started as a column about guiding writers in reflecting on good times and bad, I discovered that my initial task was harder than I had imagined. So much of our writing is meant to be comforting, to soothe, to bring the reader to a place of peace. But I was asked to help writers find a place of peace amidst the chaos and the pain. How do we do that? How do we lift the reader up from the depths of despair? How do we usher them to a place of hope?

The strength of Uncle Hank and Aunt Molly’s marriage has always been apparent to me, and family lore seems to confirm that Fred and Tazzy were devoted to each other, as were Homer and Lucy; but the longevity of a marriage is not necessarily an indication of its happiness. There are also stories of sad marriages and divorce in my family history, as well as those of estrangement between grown siblings, and other heartaches. It’s easy for me to encourage a client like the one I mention in the first paragraph of this piece to share more about an adored spouse; the work of guiding authors in writing about ex-spouses or estranged relatives is harder. When I’ve tried to help memoir and family-history writers decide how or if to write about strained, severed, or otherwise painful family relationships, I start from a place of empathy that arises from my own experiences of witnessing or hearing the hard family stories in addition to the happy ones.

No one gets married hoping to divorce, any more than a parent looks at their children and imagines a day when they won’t be on speaking terms. While cautioning clients against any risk of libel, my rule of thumb in guiding them editorially in writing about not just the good times, but the bad, is to consider the intentions behind the words they write, as well as their intended audience. If they are in the midst of a scene like the tumult depicted in “The Story of the Elopement,” do they hope their books will promote an eventual reconciliation? If not, what do they hope to achieve by not just writing about, but publishing, their reflections on painful family dynamics? If they imagine their children and grandchildren reading their books, what do they aim for those readers to gain from difficult family stories—beyond knowledge of the fact that virtually every family has challenges of one sort or another?

(Continued on page 15)
Family is so important. Without family you have no story, no roots, and you don’t feel grounded. You’re just blowing in the wind with no story to tell, like: How I came to be here, sacrifices and sometimes life-threatening challenges family members and ancestors survived so that you could be here, such as war, famine, drought, sexual assault, domestic violence, the Great Depression (1929-1939), poverty, pandemics, plagues, diseases and illnesses, colonization and cultural assimilation, prejudice and discrimination, etc. Hurdles your parents, grandparents and ancestors overcame and their victories in life are important to know and keep alive. For example, my mother almost died in childbirth while bringing my twin sister and I into the world. Her sister, my Aunt Mary, did die in childbirth. This was a second pregnancy for my mother’s nephew. While giving birth to my mother’s nephew, my twin sister and I into the world. Her sister, my Aunt Mary, did die in childbirth. Her sister, my Aunt Mary, did die in childbirth while giving birth to my twin sister, Beverly, and I, where she almost died in childbirth. This was a second marriage for both of my parents. Both of my parents certainly had their share of “close-calls,” but they ended up living long, content lives after bringing Beverly and I into this world. Their long lives and life stories fueled my life with direction, inspiration and purpose. I am the keeper and transmitter of our spoken history and experiences and affirms your sacred culture. It’s as if the KKK (Ku Klux Klan) and assimilation, my immigrant grandparents from Québec didn’t think their stories mattered. They didn’t have a voice. However, Le FORUM gives us a voice where we can now speak for our French Canadian grandparents and ancestors in a safe and non-intimidating place.

I have noticed that there are still many Franco Americans who keep their heritage hidden and just don’t want to tell their stories. They even shun those of us who are trying to keep our French language and culture alive and those of us who are brave and bold enough to voice our stories and express our sacred culture. It’s as if the KKK is still here, but invisible. Many Franco American people are afraid to be themselves, to be who they are. They are afraid to be labeled as “different” and they are still afraid of discrimination and prejudice. We all still have a lot of work to do to help the world embrace cultural diversity. Diversity makes the Mother Earth sing. Also, culture is to the human spirit what oxygen is to the human body.

I know Franco Americans who don’t (Continued on page 15)
Lettres/LeTTREs

(Great Gratitude to UMaine and Le FORUM continued from page 14)

want to hear me speak French because they have totally rejected their Franco American upbringing. Some share with me that they felt left out during their childhood because their parents spoke French but didn’t teach them the language. Therefore, they thought their parents were keeping secrets from them when they heard both parents speaking French in front of them. However, the truth is that Franco American parents were trying to make it easier for their children by not passing down the language to them. They thought it would be easier for their children in the English-speaking schools. Franco American parents also wanted to protect their children from prejudice and discrimination by not passing down the French language.

Me, I remember being pushed off the sidewalk in front of an oncoming school bus on my walk home from Waterville Junior High School because my family was French. The Smith family’s oldest son pushed me off the sidewalk because I was French and he wasn’t. I am still here to tell that story today because my guardian angels were with me that day. Yes, the world must learn to embrace diversity.

Being grounded in your cultural roots and language can even reveal to you your Soul’s purpose for being here, gifting you with a purposeful life. Our spiritual pathways can coincide with our cultural pathways. This is often the case.

THANK YOU, UMaine and Le FORUM, for giving me a VOICE!

John Mathew Pimperal receiving one of many award certificates for volunteering at the VA Medical Center in Togus, Maine. He volunteered there when he was in his 60’s and 70’s. He passed away in 2001 at 82 years old from complications of Alzheimers disease.

My Dad, John Mathew Pimperal, my twin sister Beverly, myself & my Mom, Albertine (Albert) Pimperal. circa. 1988
HONORING FRANCO-AMERICAN VETERANS

By Ron Héroux (frannie542@aol.com)

With Veterans Day celebrated in the Fall (November 11th), the editor of LE FORUM, Lisa Michaud, and I thought it would be apropos this Fall to commemorate the thousands of Franco Americans who served and continue to serve in the United States Armed Services from the Spanish-American War to the present. In honoring Franco-American veterans, I am referring to those veterans of French-Canadian descent (particularly from the Province of Québec) and those of Acadian descent from the Canadian Maritime Provinces, especially Nova Scotia and New Brunswick.

Although French Canadians and Acadians participated in America’s Revolutionary War and Civil War, I begin this article with the Spanish-American War of 1898 because it was during this period and the early nineteen hundreds that the French-speaking Canadians who immigrated to the United States began to be identified as Franco Americans, even though many had not yet become American citizens.

Franco Americans serve on active duty today in all parts of the world. Many were wounded and gave their lives in America’s wars, especially in World War I, World War II, the Vietnam War and the post 9/11 wars on terrorism.

Several Franco-American and Canadian historians (Robert Rumilly, Armand Chartier, Yves Roby, Claire Quintal and others) describe the loyal and honorable participation of Franco Americans in the US military, especially during war time. Also, numerous articles and essays, especially concerning WWI and WWII, have appeared on this subject in various Franco-American newspapers and other publications.

A significant review of Franco-American involvement in and support of US wars is featured in an article by Daniel Déry entitled “Les Franco-Américains dans la guerre: patriotisme et survivance.” (The Franco Americans during wartime: patriotism and survival). Déry states that for many Franco-Americans, to serve one’s country in wartime was a way of demonstrating that they were true Americans.

Most Franco-American veterans are from the six New England states, although one can find them in practically every state. There are groups from upstate New York, the Midwest, and the Far West. Also, Louisiana sent many Acadian Americans or Cajuns (as they are now called) to fight in our world wars.

Over the years, Franco-American veterans have been honored and awarded medals for their valor and heroism, and many used their French-speaking skills to work as translators and/or interpreters. Below I highlight some of these individuals. I believe there are readers who know more Franco-American veterans who should be listed for their exploits in wartime and peacetime. I encourage you to submit their stories to LE FORUM so they may be recognized. (Several articles on this subject appear in this issue of LE FORUM).

Let us begin with the three-month long Spanish-American War of 1898, in which there were some Franco Americans who participated. How many? I could not locate any precise number. One notable Franco-American hero of this war was George Charette of Lowell, MA. He started his career in the US Navy as a Gunner’s Mate First Class and eventually achieved the rank of Lieutenant.

Charette received the highest military recognition for his service, the Medal of Honor, “in connection with the sinking of the USS Merrimac (a cargo ship) at the entrance to the harbor of Santiago de Cuba on 2 June 1898. Despite heavy fire from Spanish batteries, Charette displayed extraordinary heroism throughout this operation.”

This perilous mission which Charette volunteered to undertake with six other sailors occurred in the early hours of the morning. It involved the rigging of 10 torpedoes outside the ship’s bulkhead, steaming into the narrow passage of the harbor, turning the ship 90 degrees, setting off the torpedoes and sinking the ship, thus blocking the channel and pinning down the Spanish Fleet in the harbor. At the end of this daring exploit, Charette was captured by the Spanish but was later freed in a prisoner exchange.

So popular in Lowell was Charette that a graphic design was created in his honor called CHARETTE’S MARCH.

The words (in French) from the Charette graphic design are translated below:

TO CHARETTE

Memory of June 3, 1898,

On June 3, under the orders of Lieutenant Hobson*, 7 American sailors sank the Merrimac in the opening of the Santiago Cuba harbor.

On this day of glorious immortal memory,

Brave and valiant soldier, you covered yourself in glory,

Yes, your name will go down in history

Yes, son of the Homeland, you really deserved it.

*(Hobson wrote a book on the sinking. See endnote 8)

(Continued on page 17)
During World War I (1914-1918), with more French Canadians and Acadians having immigrated to the US since the Spanish-American War, it is estimated that over 100,000 Franco Americans served in the American Armed Forces, the majority being from the New England states.

Franco Americans from Fall River, MA provided 1668 soldiers of whom 42 died, including 600 from the Fall River parish of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes of whom 21 were killed. So moved by the service and loss of their Franco-American parishioners and veterans that in 1920 the parish erected one of the largest Franco-American monuments (created by Manchester sculptor Lucien Gosselin) dedicated to those who served and died in WWI. The rear side of the monument contains the names of the dead. (See photos below by Ron Héroux.)

In New Bedford, MA there were 1017 Franco-American soldiers of whom 66 were killed; from Lowell, MA 892 soldiers of whom 26 were killed; from Manchester, NH 865 soldiers of whom 22 were killed; from Worcester, MA 711 of whom 10 were killed; from Holyoke, MA 767 from whom 22 were killed; from Lewiston, ME 664 of whom 4 were killed, and the list goes on. Moreover, the Franco-American clergy provided 34 chaplains during WWI. Reverend Osias Boucher, a Franco-American Army Captain-Chaplain, received the Croix de Guerre from the French government and was awarded many American medals for his outstanding service.11

Franco-American women also participated in WWI’s military effort as part of the US Army Signal Corps. They were America’s first women soldiers and were often referred to as the “Hello Girls”.12 Over 200 of them were sent to France in 1917 to become switchboard operators managing 50 phone “fighting lines” each, often under fire from the Germans. They were required to communicate seamlessly in both French and English. Many of them were bilingual descendants of French-Canadian and Acadian immigrants13.

A select number of “Hello Girls” were decorated for their distinguished service. Among them were two Franco Americans, Suzanne Prevost and Marie A. LeBlanc, pictured below with Prevost on the left14.

Army soldier Alfred LaGrandeur of Sommerset, WI distinguished himself in WWI by serving as a translator in France shortly after the Armistice.15

In World War II (1939-1945), it is estimated that over 100,000 Franco Americans served in the Armed Forces of the United States.16

In Manchester, NH, more than 150 young Franco Americans from this city alone were killed17. “Franco-American newspapers published lists of those who had been killed or who were reported missing, and they singled out families which had three or more children in the armed services. In this latter category, the record in New England seems to have been held by the ten Frédette brothers of East Braintree, Massachusetts, and, nationwide, by the sixteen Gauthier brothers of Fort Worth, Texas. Under these circumstances, people no longer scoffed at the Franco-American propensity for having large families.”18

An interesting two-volume set of World War II memories19 contains brief stories of nearly 400 American soldiers written by family members or friends. Ten percent of these individuals have Franco-American surnames. Below are five of these Franco Americans who are highlighted for their achievements, particularly the use of their French-speaking skills during the war.

1. Normand R. Malo of Norwich, CT, an Army sergeant, served as a French interpreter for the 83rd Infantry Division in France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. He earned two Bronze Stars and two Purple Hearts.

2. Lucien Gérard Robitaille of Woonsocket, RI was an Army pilot. Because he spoke fluent French, he responded to a desperate need for flight instructors to teach French and Tunisian Air Force soldiers to fly.

3. Elphège P.Bourget of Woonsocket, RI, one of three brothers to serve in the military, was assigned to the battle cruiser USS Alaska, and saw considerable action in the Pacific. When the war ended, the USS Alaska patrolled the East China and Yellow Seas where Bourget served as the French interpreter for the Fleet Admiral and was nicknamed “Frenchie”.

4. Léo Bruno Héroux (my uncle) of Central Falls, RI. A private in the Army, he was on the D-Day Landing at Omaha Beach

(Continued on page 18)
in Normandy, France June 6, 1944. Because of his ability to speak French, his commanding officer requested that he inform the farmers on the hill to move their cows since heavy machinery would be coming through the area in the next few days. One of the farmers invited Léo to supper where he met the farmer’s daughter, Anne-Marie Broeckx, whom he eventually married after the war.

5. Alphonse Auclair. An Army private, was from a dairy farm in northern New England close to the Canadian border. Since he was fluent in French, he became an interpreter for the US Government. After attending Signal School, he went on to France where he landed on the front line of Omaha Beach as a radio operator interpreting high speed Morse Code.

One of the most celebrated Franco-American during WWII was Jean Garand (1888-1974) from Springfield, MA. He was a mechanic who made improvements to the Springfield Rifle which had previously been used by the military. So substantial were his modifications that it was renamed the “Garand” rifle, better known later as the “M1” rifle. Garand, who later changed his name from Jean to John, also “invented other firearms along with the parts needed to manufacture them”

Rene Arthur Gagnon (1924-1979), a Marine Corps corporal from Manchester, NH, is also well known for his involvement with the flag raising on Mount Suribachi during the battle at Iwo Jima.

Gerry Bernier of New Bedford, MA served in the Navy’s Office of Strategic Services (the OSS, the forerunner of today’s CIA) because of his language skills. “He was flown to Algiers in North Africa where he was given parachute training prior to jumping behind enemy lines to work with the resistance in the French Alps, near Grenoble.”

Alfred J. LeBlanc, an Army veteran from Fitchburg, MA, was awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Europe. Fluent in French, he often served as a translator.

Although Franco-American women did not participate in combat missions during WWII, they served in the WAACs (Women’s Auxiliary Army Corps), in the WAVES (Women Appointed for Voluntary Emergency Services) and as nurses. Some distinguished themselves in their endeavors. One was Captain Mattie Pinette of Fort Kent, ME who was in the WAACs and became, due to her bilingualism and administrative skills, personal secretary to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, the Supreme Allied Commander of WWII in Europe.

It must be said that the Second World War and its aftermath (more so than the First World War), immensely transformed the customs of Franco-American veterans and their families. The mixing of the various ethnic groups in the armed services and at work stateside led, more than at any other time, to the assimilation of Franco-Americans into the American melting pot. “The war is always fatal to minorities”, stated historian Robert Rumilly.

Among the many tributes honoring Franco-American WWII veterans, the comments by Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr. of Massachusetts are noteworthy:

“I believe that I am safe in saying that in all parts of the world wherever battles were waged during the second global conflict…there were always a few young Franco-Americans among the combatants. And I daresay that they demonstrated heroism.”

Jason Theriault, an Acadian American historian, has produced numerous podcasts available on YouTube dealing with French speaking veterans of WWII from Louisiana who served as interpreters and translators. Theriault also has an upcoming book entitled "Frenchie, The Story of French Speaking Cajuns of WWII.

The Vietnam War (1955-1975)

An interesting story about the Vietnam War was recently written by Franco-American Army veteran Bill Comeau, a native of New Bedford, MA. His book entitled "Duel With the Dragon—At the Battle of Suoi Tre" is not only about his harrowing experience in Vietnam but he also discusses his life growing up in the mill city of New Bedford in the 1950’s and 60’s along with his wartime training. As a result of his 22 years researching the history of his unit’s time in Vietnam, Comeau was cited as a Distinctive Member of the 12th Infantry Regiment by the US Infantry Association and named “Franco-American Veteran of the Year” in 2017 for the Southeast Massachusetts region.

Michael Guignard, a native of Bedford, VT, informed me that, of the 343 military personnel who died in Vietnam from his old hometown, 61 had Franco-American surnames. Thus, it would not surprise me that thousands of Franco-American veterans participated in this war in which over 58,000 American soldiers were killed.

Since Vietnam was once part of France’s Indochina colony, French was one of the languages spoken in the area. Thus, again many bilingual Franco-American veterans were used as interpreters or translators. In 1967, Lance Corporal Andre LaPrade of Barre, VT volunteered to act as a translator for nuns (Sisters of St. Paul) who ran an orphanage in Vietnam. He even wrote a letter to his hometown newspaper, the “Times-Argus” in Vermont, requesting clothing donations for the orphans.

I (Ron Héroux) was a Navy journalist aboard the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal during the Vietnam era in 1968. Although not in a war zone, I was able to use my mother tongue, French, during the ship’s nine-month deployment to the Mediterranean, visiting ports from Barcelona, Spain to Istanbul, Turkey including the French ports of Marseille, Toulon and Cannes.

After anchoring outside our first port, Marseille, the ship’s Public Affairs Office (where I worked) received an urgent call from the captain’s aide requesting we find someone who spoke French and immediately send them to the bridge. I scurried to the captain’s area wondering what the urgency was. I was informed that the French Sécurité (police) and journalists were coming aboard as the ship had been informed that someone may have planted a bomb under the hull of the aircraft carrier. Since the visitors spoke broken English, I was able to successfully translate the information and concerns of both groups. Fortunately, no bomb was found by the ship’s scuba divers.

On our journey from the ship’s home port of Norfolk, VA to the Mediterranean, I taught some conversational French to many of the officers and enlisted personnel as they knew we would be going to many French ports. I also worked in the Combat Information Center during joint operations.
For more specialized information on Franco-Americans during the war, the following sources provide some beneficial information:


### Notes and References

5. Claire Quintal, in the “Conclusion” section (pp.545-6) of the Marie Louise Bonier book The Beginnings of the Franco-American Colony in Woonsocket, Rhode Island translated and edited by Claire Quintal.
7. Congressional Medal of Honor Society (CMOHs.org), in alphabetical listing with photo.
14. Photo from Wikipedia under the subject “Hello Girls”.
15. From information provided by Pierre LaGrandeur (plagrandeur@outlook.com), the grandson of Alfred (see page 41).
16. La Vie Franco-Américaine, 1944, p.81. (La Vie Franco-Américaine is a quasi-encyclopedic series of volumes researched and published by Msgr. Adrien Verrette from 1939 to 1952.)
20. A brief discussion of their meeting can be found in Cornelius Ryan’s book The Longest Day, 1959. Also, a small book was recently written by Léo Héroux’s daughter, Nancy Héroux, entitled JOURNAL des Familles Broecks-Héroux Durant la Deuxième Guerre Mondiale, 2022. See an article by Juliette Bruneau, on page 38.
22. Don Cuddy, Gerry Bernier of New Bedford; Navy, Office of Strategic Services, South Coast Today, 8 Nov 2007.
23. Information received from LeBlanc’s granddaughter, Kerrie Bennett (kaben3@verizon.net).
27. La Vie Franco-Américaine 1951, p.411.
28. Information received from Andre LaPrade.

**Franco-American War Veterans Memorial**

During a ceremony on July 16, 1950, the memorial was dedicated by the Franco-American War Veterans Inc. Post 5 and auxiliary to those who served and died in both World War I and II.  

The memorial is mounted on a base 5 feet by 3 feet, and has an overall height of 8 1/2 feet.  

Mayor William T. Grant accepted the gift on behalf of Fall River.

“Let us dedicate ourselves to the memory of these men who gave their lives by upholding and preserving the ideals for which they fought,” he said.
Onias Martin

Oct. 12, 1919-Aug. 10, 1944

Onias Martin served as a 2nd Lieutenant, 15th Armored Infantry Battalion, 5th Armored Division, U.S. Army during World War II.

He resided in Aroostook County, Maine prior to the war.

He enlisted in the Army on July 9, 1942 in Bangor, Maine.

Onias was "Killed In Action" near Bonnétable (Sarthe), France during the war. He was honored by the locals as a War Hero. They erected a statue in his honor in Bonnétable.

He was awarded the Purple Heart.

https://video.maine.edu/media/The%20Martin%20Family/1_3763wpkp/101838251
More Than One Way to Serve: The Story of Arthur Milot

By Claude Milot

My sons David and Marc both retired as Lieutenant Commanders after serving over 20 years in the U.S. Navy. And my brother Phil served two years on active duty in Vietnam in the late 60s. You might say that they more than made up for me for evading the draft with deferments.

These three are the only Milots who saw active military duty, going as far back as the family’s immigration from the Province of Québec back in the 1880s. Oh, I suppose you could count my uncle Émile who enlisted in the Army after America entered WW I in 1917. But he never made it through boot camp, sent home for medical reasons.

But there were other ways to serve our war efforts. Uncle Nap, my godfather, a male nurse during the day, worked at night in a munitions factory making cartridges and 75mm shells during WW II.

Uncle Vic, a Marist priest, did serve in WW II as a chaplain in the China-India-Burma theater but never in a combat zone. I remember the leopard skin he brought back from India. When I was a kid it was draped over the back of the sofa in my grandfather’s salon.

Now we come to Arthur Milot, my father. After graduating from St. Bonaventure in 1933, he tried selling Studebakers for a Lowell dealership, not the most lucrative job in the heart of the Great Depression. He then went to work as a writer for L’Étoile, Lowell’s French language newspaper. His essays were so good, he was recruited by Woonsocket’s L’Indépendent in 1937 to be its editor-in-chief. Unfortunately, the paper folded in 1942.

After a brief stint with L’Union St. Jean-Baptiste, he tried to obtain a commission in the Navy but was turned down for being too old (at 35) with too many kids (two and a third on the way).

Determined to make a contribution to the war effort, he found a bookkeeping position with Goodyear Rubber Company whose Woonsocket plant was making inflatable rubber decoys of tanks, Jeeps, and armored vehicles to fool the Germans into thinking the allies were getting ready to invade at Calais. Needless to say, rubber decoys were no longer needed after D-Day, and Dad soon found himself out of a job again.

Dad next worked in sales for a plumbing supply company in Providence. More importantly, he also went to night school to learn Accounting. This turned out to be the decisive factor in his future career.

Years later, an ad in the newspaper caught his eye: the U.S. government was looking for bi-lingual accountants to work in French-speaking missions for the Agency for International Development (USAID). Dad sent in an application but heard nothing for months—while the government was checking him out.

Dad finally got an offer that changed his life. Overcoming the trepidation at the thought of uprooting his family, he accepted. And in the spring of 1956, he found himself in Saigon, Vietnam. He had finally found a job perfectly suited to him. He would go on to serve his country for the next 16 years as a USAID mission controller for four-year tours in Vietnam, Morocco, Mali, and Morocco again.

All this was made possible because Dad was perfectly bilingual, having been raised speaking French in his Franco-American community in Lowell, Massachusetts, and later adding a complete mastery of English. *

In recognition of his unique combination of exceptional bilingualism and thorough knowledge of Accounting, the government asked him at one point to write the definitive guide reconciling French and English accounting systems.

Dad was also requested from time to time to serve as a simultaneous bilateral interpreter, a task that can only be done by someone with the utmost facility in both languages. One incident will illustrate my point. In the summer of 1957, I was in Saigon on a family visit from school, when Dad came home one day drenched in perspiration and totally wiped out. He had spent the afternoon serving as a bilateral interpreter at a meeting between Vietnamese ministers, including President Diem, and American generals who were in Saigon to discuss military aid. Imagine the pressure on Dad to come up with equivalent terms for various types of armaments—without hesitation. Only someone with Dad’s linguistic skills and enormous vocabulary could have pulled it off.

Dad was truly a gifted linguist. He not only spoke impeccable French and English, he also garnered enormous respect from the locals who worked for him by learning their language, tongues as dissimilar as Vietnamese and Arabic. For Dad, learning the languages of the people he served was simply an aspect of his job as a representative of the United States.

Arthur Milot had never worn a uniform but had found another way to serve—with honor and devotion to his country, and a tribute to his Franco-American heritage.

* Shortly before he died, my father agreed, at my urging, to pen his autobiography. It was to be in three parts, the first covering his years growing up in Lowell. He had barely completed this first part when he passed away suddenly in 1986 at the age of 79. Written appropriately in French, the language of his youth, Dad entitled the work CAHIERS DE SOUVENIRS D’ENFANCE. I self-published the work in 1992 along with my English translation under the title of CHILDHOOD MEMORIES. I was enormously pleased when Professor Armand Chartier became my biggest customer by choosing the book as required reading for his course on New England Studies at the University of Rhode Island. Also, an excerpt appeared in STEEPLES AND SMOKESTACKS – A Collection of Essays on the Franco-American Experience in New England, edited by Claire Quintal, 1996, pp. 629-637.

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(See book, Childhood Memories, on page 22)
A Tribute to Franco-American Veterans of War

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First of all, the term *Franco-American* implies folks of French Canadian descent. My husband, Robert (Bob) Edmund Roy, is one of those brave, heroic Franco-American men who served his country during the Vietnam War/Conflict, following the footsteps of his Franco-American father, Odilon Roy, who served during World War II, and his Franco-American grandfather, Dominic Plante, who served during World War I. These brave Franco-American WARRIORS of three generations have helped to protect our homelands and cultures. I am grateful to my husband and his ancestors for stepping up to the plate in order to help keep PEACE on our sacred planet, the Mother Earth. Whenever there is war with massive destruction, the Mother Earth suffers as we do.

My husband, Bob Roy, and I were born and raised in Waterville, Maine, U.S.A. Both of Bob’s parents were of French Canadian descent, where French was spoken at home during Bob’s childhood.

Bob served in the United States Marine Corps from 1967 to 1969, having been deployed to Vietnam during that time. Bob’s training for military service took place at Boot Camp in Paris Island, South Carolina. His infantry training took place at Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune in Jacksonville, North Carolina and at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton in Oceanside, California. His training included Infantry Weapons Repair and Maintenance.

Bob’s greatest challenge during his military service was being away from home and family. Fortunately, Bob was one of the lucky ones who did not return home in a body bag. It has been estimated that there were 58,220 U.S. military fatal casualties of the Vietnam War. There were about 416,800 U.S. military fatal casualties of World War II and around 116,708 U.S. military fatal casualties of World War I. Bob’s father and grandfather were also very fortunate to be able to return home from these wars to their families.

Bob Edmund Roy during the Vietnam War, 1968

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Arthur Milot was a product of the French-Canadian Experience, the great 19th century migration of a million people from the farms of Quebec to the mill towns of New England.

He was born in Lowell in 1907 and grew up in the Pawtucketville section of that city. In *Childhood Memories* he recalls the scenes of his youth: the corner grocer, and the street peddler; the fire house, the trolley car barn, and the ice house; the schools, the churches, and the tenements. But more importantly, he describes a people struggling to maintain their identity in a new land. Social, cultural, and religious institutions play a prominent role in this book, but so does family life. In the face of enormous changes brought on by the industrial revolution and modern technology, the importance of the moral principles the immigrants handed down to their children is paramount.

After graduating from St. Bonaventure, Arthur Milot spent several years as a journalist in Lowell and Woonsocket, and settled in Manville, Rhode Island, to raise a family. He later acquired a new profession as an accountant and in 1956 was recruited by the U.S. Department of State to work in French-speaking foreign aid missions. For the next 18 years he had a distinguished career as Controller for the Agency for International Development in Vietnam, Morocco, and Mali.

Among his many talents, Arthur Milot was expert linguist. He was perfectly bilingual in French and English and proficient in several other languages. He chose to write *Childhood Memories* in French, because French is the language he grew up with. His original text, along with the English translation, appears in this volume.

https://www.amazon.com/Childhood-Memories-Arthur-Milot/dp/B000FTUKQA
The Story of Private Albéric Fontaine, US Army

by Louis Fontaine

One source claims that 100,000 Franco-Americans served in the armed forces during World War II. You could find them in all of the war theaters performing all sorts of tasks. My father, Albéric Fontaine from Augusta, Maine, was one of them. He did not talk very much about his life in the Army, like most World War II veterans. It wasn’t until I read his diaries and the letters to his sister, Aurare, and looked at the photographs he took that I understood his life during that time. My book Reveille at 6:15, A Franco-American’s Journey Through World War II, available from Amazon.com, recounts my father’s story during the war. His ability to speak French gave him an advantage over most soldiers in French North Africa, Corsica and France. I have told his story through his personal writings and photographs. It is a story of a soldier a long way from home making relationships with local families. It is also the story of a soldier in the rear echelon, separated from the anxiety of the front line, a story that is seldom told.

After basic training, Al was assigned to Company H, of the 591st Engineer Boat Regiment. Its task was to unload the supplies needed to fight the war off of the Liberty Ships. After several weeks of working on the docks in Liverpool, England, Al’s company was placed on a convoy. They were part of the November, 1942, invasion fleet to French North Africa codenamed Operation Torch.

“Letter to Aurare Fontaine from Oran, Algeria, December 23, 1942

Dear sister:

...Of course the French language spoken here is not broken like home and there are times when people I speak to have to change the words so I can understand...you can imagine how well I get along because I speak French. I get all kinds of information, go wherever I please, while the rest of the boys have to make all kinds of motions...We met some people who invited us to their home. They were trying to speak to us in English, and I answered them in French and they were surprised...I tell them that I learnt French the same way they learnt Spanish, my grandparents from Canada...”

Al’s company was stationed in Algeria and Tunisia for 14 months. He occasionally acted as a translator when working on the docks and frequently translated for his Army buddies when they were on leave. During this time, he developed relationships with a number of local families.

“Letter to Aurare Fontaine from Bizerte, Tunisia, June 30, 1943:

I believe you know what it means to us boys, especially me, to get acquainted with families and eat with them. Really it’s just like being home again. It gets my mind off the things we have to go through day after day...I have been out twice up to now and had dinner and supper with four families. They were very nice and enjoyed my visit very much...Of course we have most everything to eat in camp but a good home cooked meal is quite a different thing, also to sit at a table with people and eat out of plates.”

Al made good use of his time in North Africa. Although he moaned in his diary about not knowing how to make small talk and not knowing how to dance, Al seems to have had an active social life. His diary lists more than thirty individuals and families he became acquainted with, and he talked about receiving multiple invitations for dining. Al spent the most of his spare time during his seven months in Tunisia with the family of Manuel and Françoise Campos of Ferryville.

The extended Campos family reminded Al of his family back home. Al spent many evenings visiting and sharing meals with the family, and Mrs. Campos regularly did his laundry. He was often accompanied by other soldiers from his company. Al made a special connection with their daughter, 22 year-old Georgette. He spent as much time as he could with her when he was off duty. When his company moved to the Kharrouba Air Base, Al hitchhiked and walked the twelve miles to Ferryville. Company H moved to the island of Corsica in January, 1944, for the next stage of the war. Al and Georgette were “mad about each other” and had a tearful goodbye. The two would never meet again.

After the liberation of Corsica, the US Army Air Force established seventeen air fields on the island to bring the war to occupied Italy and France, and to Germany. On Corsica, the 591st Engineer Boat Regiment was responsible for unloading the supplies and bombs required by the Air Force. Once again, Al searched out local connection that would remind him of home.

“Letter to Aurare Fontaine from Bastia, Corsica, January 20, 1944:

I have finally spoken to a man here in the country who will accompany me, also furnishing me with the equipment, poles, line and bait, as well as act as a guide. There are a few nice spring brooks nearby, and he has told me for sure that brook trout can be found.”

Fishing was one of Al’s favorite pasttimes. When Al met Mr. d’Anthony in Furiani, the man he described in the letter of January 20, he must have felt like he hit a jackpot. There were no opportunities for fishing in arid North Africa, but this situation changed in Corsica. It was a surprise to see winter snow in the mountains on an island in the Mediterranean. It was even more surprising to discover that the streams had native brown trout. The trout population was a holdover from the ice ages, and the cold water of the mountain streams has allowed it to survive.

As the war continued, the needs of the (Continued on page 24)
Army changed. The soldiers of Company H of the 591st were reorganized into the Company B, 2759th Engineer Combat Battalion and trained to build bridges. They would be part of the US Seventh Army as it drove the German Army out of Northern France and into Germany. Al and Company B arrived in Southern France just before Christmas, 1944. When the New Year arrived, they rode to the Alsace-Lorraine region of Northern France.

“Diary Entry, Nelling, France, Saturday, January 13, 1945:


In December, 1944, the German Army began the counter-offensive known as the Battle of the Bulge in Belgium. Al arrived in Alsace-Lorraine, south of Belgium, as the German offensive stalled and was being driven back. But the Germans launched a second counter-offensive called Operation Nordwind into Southern Alsace in January. When Al and Company B arrived in the region, their first task was to build defensive works such as foxholes, pillboxes, and machinegun emplacements. By the end of January, the German Army called off the counter-offensive. Al and his company were in a sweet spot, north of the German thrust into Alsace. The fighting never reached them.

In March, 1945, the Seventh Army and other allied troops pushed into Germany. Al and Company B followed the front line by a week to rebuild the bridges that the retreating German Army demolished.

“Letter to Aurare Fontaine from the Arles Staging Area, France, June 9, 1945

[Description of building a bridge, April 9-23, 1945, in Marktheidenfeld, Germany, two miles north of Lengfourt.]

The last air raids were while stationed at the cement plant at “Lengfourt” being at this town to construct a bridge across the Main River that had been partly demolished when the Germans retreated. For a whole week between the hours of darkness and dawn a lone German plane kept strafing the convoys on the highway close to camp and the men at the bridge site who were working with lights at night for it was imperative that the work be accomplished in the fastest time. During my stay there, my squad was called on to work one night. What would have been a detail of a few hours proved to last all night because of disturbance by that Jerry who had become nicknamed by the boys “Bed Check Jerry” and “Herman.” I must have run up the side of the close by hill a hundred times during a few hours that night.” [Note: “Jerry” and “Herman” were pejoratives for German soldiers.]

Germany finally surrendered on May 8, 1945. Even though hostility ceased, it was not “the end” for the three-million US service men and women in Europe and North Africa: Germany needed to be occupied and disarmed, civilians needed to be fed, and some troops needed to be redeployed to the continuing war in the Pacific. The troops that were to go back home and to the Pacific were sent to several redeployment centers in Europe. Al and his company were sent to the Delta Base Section outside of Marseille, France. Being an engineer unit, they were tasked with expanding the center for the millions of service men and women who would pass through it over the next twelve months.

Al was originally scheduled to return to the United States at the end of summer or the fall but he was given an early hardship discharge to see his ailing grandmother. It took Al five days to make it to the United States flying from France, to Morocco, the Azores, and Canada on a combination of military and commercial planes. Al was honorably discharged from the Army on July 28, 1945 and arrived in Augusta, Maine soon after.

My father was very fortunate in the war. Except for a few occasions, he was not in harm’s way and he never had to fire a shot against the enemy. The soldiers in his engineer units did not suffer the hardships and dangers that the front line combat troops were exposed to. Sixty percent of the personnel in the armed services did not experience combat. These sixty percent were still vital in the war effort. Without them equipment would not have made it to the front lines, roads and bridges would not have been built, pay and promotions would not have been processed.

I and my family are fortunate to have my father’s souvenirs from World War II. They allow us to see the young version of our father/grandfather that we otherwise would not have known. His story is more complicated than this brief summary that I have written. His experiences included several romances, the misfortune of a demotion, the anxiety of separation from loved ones and the pleasure of making friendships in a new land. These experiences and many of his photographs can be found in the biography Reveille at 6:15, available at Amazon.com.
The Jobin Family Archive- one of the French Institutes collections that was recently reprocessed.

Théodore Jobin served in the Massachusetts State Guard, c. WWI

Théodore “Theo” Barthélémy Jobin (23 April 1873 - 8 March 1955)

Theo, the eldest of the Jobin children, accompanied his father and brother Louis-Joseph to Boston in 1890 ahead of the rest of the family. He became a naturalized citizen in 1900, was an artist of note in Boston, and provided illustrations for the work of his siblings Joseph Gustave Antoine Jobin and Marie-Eugénie Jobin. Jobin worked in a variety of mediums, including woodblock prints, oils, pencil sketches, and watercolors. He was particularly known for his Christmas cards, bookplates, and pastoral scenes.

Although Théodore was a talented artist, he continued to work in department stores as a window dresser. His employment situation was still precarious 18 years after his immigration in 1908. Eventually, Théodore did find a permanent position at Emerson’s department store in Boston.

Around World War I, he was a member of the Massachusetts State Guard. He married Emily Dahl/Petersen (c. 1879-1910), who had been born out of wedlock in Denmark to Louisa Petersen and a Mr. Dahl – hence the confusion over her last name. Theodore and Emily had one child, Estelle Jobin, mother of Théodore (Teddy) Thibodeau and Rev. Philippe Thibodeau. Much of his correspondence is undated. The collection includes paintings, etchings, drawings and examples of his artwork, involvement in artistic organizations, and his time in the State Guard.

His youngest brother Antoine Jobin served in WWI as a regimental sergeant major in the Interpreter’s Corps from late 1917 through mid-1919. The collection includes items from Théodore’s role in the state guard, but of potentially greater use to your project is Antoine’s World War I correspondence written from USA army training (Interpreter’s Corps) in Europe. Immediately after the war Antoine served as an interpreter at Versailles to U.S. General Ford who was touring the French battlefields. His war experience marked Antoine for the rest of his life, and he became a pacifist.

Antoine earned a B.A. from Harvard, and later a masters and PhD from University of Michigan. In the early 1910s, Antoine worked as an interpreter for J.P. Morgan & Co. In World War I he served as a regimental sergeant major in the Interpreter’s Corps from late 1917 through mid-1919. His mother, Marie-Flore-Eugénie Lapointe, kept many of his letters. Of special interest is his World War I correspondence written from USA army training (Interpreter’s Corps) in Europe. Immediately after the war Antoine served as an interpreter at Versailles to U.S. General Ford who was touring the French battlefields. His war experience marked Antoine for the rest of his life, and he became a pacifist.

Antoine was a Professor of Foreign Languages and Literature at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, from 1920 to
1957. He married Ada Leonore McBride (1958-1962) in 1921, and they adopted Ada Leonore’s niece, Ada Mae Jobin. Ada Mae Jobin later married James Handy, and they had five children, Jimmy (born c. 1941), Maureen (born c. 1943), and triplets Becky Louise, Nancy Adele, and Mary Catherine (born 1951). Antoine was also Estelle Jobin’s godfather.

Royal School of Infantry including Théodore Jobin (top, far right), c. 1889-1890.
Honoring Our Franco American Relatives Who Helped Save the Union

By Raymond Alfred Lambert

In the 19th century, there was a Franco-American presence in the little village of Highgate Center, Vermont on the Vermont–Québec border where I was raised. A monument on the village green, erected in 1911, 26 years before I was born, lists the names of 199 Civil War veterans. Forty-five are Franco-American, and I am related to 23 of them.

One is my second-great-grandfather, Theodore Lambert Sr. Three others are his sons, Theodore Jr., Noel, and Joseph, my great-granduncles, or the brothers of my great-grandfather Mitchell Lambert. My brother Edward’s middle name is Mitchell after this great-grandfather of ours, who did not serve in the Civil War with his father and three brothers only because he was born in 1850 and had just turned 15 when the war ended in April 1865.

Theodore Sr. was 46 years old when he enlisted. He was mustered out because of rheumatism before his unit engaged in battle. Each of his three sons who served the Union was wounded in battle. Today, Theodore Sr. and sons Noel, (also known as Newell) and Joseph are interred in the Old Saint Louis Cemetery with their wives. Theodore Jr. is buried in the Southview Cemetery in North Adams, Massachusetts with his wife.

In the summer of 2021 at our annual family reunion, my daughter Megan Lambert St. Marie and I put together a presentation about these ancestors and relatives who served our country in the Civil War. I opened by saying:

The 4th of July commemorates the passage of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress in 1776. We mark this date as the birth of our country and honor those who risked and sacrificed their lives in the Revolutionary War, as well as those who then drafted the Constitution to establish “a more perfect union.” No matter where on the political spectrum you stand 245 years later, it’s easy to see that we are still in pursuit of the stated ideals of that “more perfect union.” Also painfully apparent are deep divisions among “we the people.”

And so, Megan and I had the idea of turning our attention to another time in American history when our nation was divided, and the very stability of the Union was imperiled. I’m speaking of the Civil War era, and I wish to highlight the contributions of an ancestor and other relatives who fought to preserve the Union. Their victorious service also led to the abolition of slavery, which moved our nation closer to its promise of freedom and equality under the law. There’s still much to be done to bring about “liberty and justice for all” in these United States. Perhaps by looking to the past we can find inspiration in the example of these men as we strive in our own ways to bring about healing and hope today.

Then, after telling our family about Theodore Sr. and his sons, Theodore Jr., Noel, and Joseph, dozens of us Lamberts walked together to the Civil War Memorial on the village green to find their names on the plaques of the statue. We passed out crayons and paper so that the children and grownups alike could do rubbings of the names as a memento of the day, and we gave thanks and honored the memory of these Franco American heroes.
SOME AMERICAN VETERANS GAVE ALL

By Ron Héroux (frannie542@aol.com)

More than 7,000 boots were on display at Fort Adams State Park in Newport, RI on Memorial Day during the annual BOOTS ON THE GROUND’s unique memorial exhibition.

Organized by Operation Stand Down Rhode Island since 2015, the boots are adorned with flags and include placards with photos representing U.S. service members killed in action during the post 9/11 war on terrorism.

All fallen service members are alphabetized by state allowing them to be easily located. As I walked among them, I noticed many with Franco-American surnames such as the one below of Marine Lance Cpl Holly Charette of Cranston, RI.

Indicated on each soldier’s placard is when, where and how these individuals died. Some visitors leave change to show that they visited the memorial and were related or knew the soldier.

FRANCO-AMERICAN TWINS ARE PILOTS IN VIETNAM WAR

Natives of Detroit, Michigan, Robert Floyd Potvin (1947-2019) and his twin brother Joseph M. (1947-2021) served as Army combat helicopter pilots in Vietnam (1967-68) as part of the First Calvary Division.

Between the two of them, they earned a Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, two Distinguished Flying Crosses, a Purple Heart and numerous Air Medals. They also served in the aviation division of the Michigan National Guard.
Leo B. Desjardins  
Sept. 20, 1924-May 14, 2000

Army Air Corps Veteran of World War II, serving most of his time in Panama.

Lionel J. Desjardins  
Oct. 3, 1933-May 9, 2007

On this upcoming Veterans Day, we honor Army Col Albert W. Hamel (1930-2015) a native of Lowell, MA and long time resident of NH.

A proud Franco-American veteran, Col. Hamel served 28 years in the US Army Intelligence field using his French-language skills as needed during deployments to such locations as Vietnam, Africa and Europe. He was a past President of the American-Canadian Genealogical Society of Manchester, NH, and a long-standing member of both the Franco-American Centre and l’Association des Familles Hamel.
MY STAR IN THE WINDOW

“An interesting and exciting 40 years”

By George Hall, Presque Isle, Maine

Published in ECHOES, No. 42*

When I was eight years old I wanted a star in the window. It was 1941, and my friends who had fathers or brothers in the service displayed blue stars in their windows honoring relatives in the military. I didn't understand the somber meaning of the gold stars, or why my parents looked so worried when they listened to news about Pearl Harbor. I knew only that my father was too old and my brother too young to be drafted. The fact that my mother was an airplane spotter didn't cut any ice with my friends.

It wasn't until later in the war that I could boast about my mother's sister, Captain Mattie Pinette, the personal and confidential secretary to General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander of the Allied Expeditionary Forces in Europe: the man who made the final decision to launch Operation Overlord, code name for the invasion at Normandy on D-Day, June 6, 1944.

Mattie Pinette was born in 1903 in New Canada Plantation, near Fort Kent, Maine, the fourth oldest in a family of 13 children born to Amelia and Joseph Pinette. Joseph, a potato farmer and lumberjack, later moved his family to the Guilford area where many of them worked in textile mills. However, from the age of seven, Mattie was raised by her Uncle Uldrick and Aunt Delia Dumond who ran a general store in Fort Kent. Mattie grew up with her peers, skating, swimming, and having lawn parties where they danced to Victrola music and talked about boys. When she was older she worked part time in her uncle's store. Mattie was educated at the St. Louis Convent school, the model school of Madawaska Training School. From there, Mattie attended Beals Business College and Gilman Commercial School in Bangor before what she calls "an interesting and exciting 40 years in government service."

Now 95, Mattie lives in her own apartment in Washington, D.C. Witness to nearly a century, she has always kept in close touch with her friends and relations in Maine and throughout the world. She has survived a shipwreck and the V-1 and V-2 rockets during World War II, and a Northeast Airlines plane crash at Washington's Friendship Airport in 1961 while returning from Maine. She has naturally slowed down somewhat and lives with assistance, but she would say that there are not many things in life she wanted to do that she has not done, except perhaps do more for her family, friends and country.

In 1923, Mattie's first job in Washington was secretary at the Bureau of Weights and Measures. While there she was asked to transcribe a speech by then Secretary of Commerce, Herbert Hoover. Although she was the secretary with the least experience, she was the fastest transcriber. She was flattered, but the job was difficult. She said, "When it came to Hoover's speech, he mumbled and was very difficult to understand." In 1929, after many promotions, she transferred to the Bureau of Aeronautics where she remained until joining the WAC (Women's Army Corps) in 1942.

The Bureau of Aeronautics was an exciting place for Mattie in a country crazy about flying. Lundberg had flown the Atlantic solo; Amelia Earhart was famous for extended flights. Lundberg, Earhart and Eddie Rickenbacker came to the bureau many times to discuss the state of aeronautics or renew their pilot licenses. The most memorable but unpleasant experience for Mattie while with the bureau was recording the testimony of the surviving witnesses of the Hindenburg Disaster at Lakehurst, New Jersey in 1937. "The German dirigible's tail section caught fire and fell to the ground tail first while mooring. Sixty-two of the 97 passengers escaped uninjured. Mattie couldn't forget for a long time the stench of the burned bodies which lingered in the hangars where the dead had initially been placed and where later much of the testimony was taken.

When Mattie first went to Washington at the end of the Harding presidency, times were difficult at the home of her natural family. Although Mattie's salary was very small, she sent home all she could to help her parents, and her brothers and sisters and their families, a practice she has continued to this day. I cannot remember a Christmas when my family did not receive presents from my aunt. In later years when I reminded her of how we all looked forward to her presents, she laughed and said that at one time it was becoming quite a burden as the families grew and grew. "I remember one time I had 52 packages to do up and take to the Post Office," Mattie recalled. "I didn't get my Christmas bill paid until April. In those

(Continued on page 31)
days they didn't charge you interest."

Mattie was eager to learn and to go on to new experiences. After Pearl Harbor, the Bureau of Aeronautics was largely taken over by the Army Air Force, and Mattie found herself with a diminished workload and "sitting heavy," as she called it. "I had always had a job where I had to work hard; that's why I liked it," she said. When she heard of a Women's Auxiliary Force for the Army she applied, was accepted, and went off to train at Fort Des Moines in Iowa where she graduated as officer third class. The corps had no ranks or benefits comparable to those for males in the military until 1943, when General George Marshall asked Congress to give military status to the WAC so the women would have prisoner-of-war protection, veterans' hospitalization, and burial benefits to their families. This bill was signed by President Roosevelt in 1943. Mattie graduated as a Second Lieutenant in what later became the Women's Army Corps.

She did not immediately work for Eisenhower's staff as he was not to be appointed SHAPE [Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe] Commander until after the War in North Africa. She was initially assigned to Army Air Services in Washington as liaison officer between WAC Headquarters and Air Services to survey which Air Force jobs could be filled by women. After six weeks, she and four other WAC officers were selected as the best to represent the corps to be sent overseas: first for a short orientation in London, then off to Algiers in North Africa where the five Wacs were assigned to various headquarters working to defeat German Field Marshal Rommel's forces in North Africa.

From Scotland, the five women began their transport to Algiers on the British troop ship, the Strathalan, the largest ship in a convoy of 40. About 70 miles from the Port of Oran, the Strathalan was hit by a German torpedo. The Wacs, British nurses and combat troops were eventually all picked up. Mattie and another of the women spent 10 hours in a lifeboat before being taken to the port of Oran where they were reunited with the other three Wacs and then flown by B-17 to their assignments in Algiers where Mattie was assigned to General McClure.

During this time Mattie and the four other officers were ordered to Casablanca to work at the ANFA or Casablanca Conference. They were told to report at a certain time prepared to be away from headquarters for approximately two weeks and to pack sufficient clothes. The last order struck the Wacs funny for they had lost all their kit at sea with the exception of what they were wearing at the time. As Mattie said, "An order is an order so we made no comment about our lack of clothes." In a later interview, Alene Drezmal, another of the five, told of the thoughtfulness of Chief of Staff George Marshall. He sent his aide to say that he knew the five had lost everything, and if they would give him a list of their needs, he'd send a cable. Thy needed everything: combs, uniforms, underwear, sanitary napkins. The order was sent and soon everything arrived, all the clothes in correct sizes.

At the Conference, Roosevelt, Churchill, General Marshall and their staffs thrashed out several political and military problems. The most important question to be decided by the Allies was the future conduct of war after the Germans were defeated in North Africa. Each day all the minutes of the meetings were dictated to the secretaries, typed up and printed, ready for the next day's meetings. Mattie said she often would work until 2 a.m. and still

(Continued on page 32)
(MY STAR IN THE WINDOW continued from page 31)

report for duty the next morning. "You know, you don't feel tired. You're so imbued with the importance of what you're doing and the necessity that it be done, it isn't until it's all over that you finally collapse." Although the Wacs sometimes worked 18 hours a day, Mattie remembers an evening when President Roosevelt invited the women to dinner. The President was interested that Mattie came from Maine because of his summer place in Campoboblo. Mattie remarked to me that after Winston Churchill arrived, he and Roosevelt were in friendly competition: "One would tell something interesting and funny and the other would feel he had to top it."

After the Casablanca Conference Eisenhower was made Supreme Commander of Allied Forces, and he asked Mattie to become his personal and confidential secretary. After some preliminary tests taking Eisenhower's dictation and testing her knowledge of other protocols, Mattie was flown to his new headquarters in Bushy Park, London. Mattie's fluency in French was one reason she was selected, in addition to her experience and efficiency as a secretary. General de Gaulle and many other allied officers and their aides were often at headquarters to confer with Eisenhower about Overlord. She worked for Eisenhower at London and at Field Headquarters in Portsmouth, England, and later on the continent. She transcribed many of the cables back and forth to Washington and sometimes accompanied the General on his visits to the troops throughout England who were training for the assault at Normandy. She was there when other American, English and British generals such as Patton, Bradley, Montgomery, and Alexander came to meet with Eisenhower.

In the summer of 1944, after the beachhead in Europe had been firmly established, General Eisenhower moved his headquarters to an apple orchard just outside Normandy. Because he would be in the field most of the time, he assigned Mattie to General John Lewis who General Marshall had appointed head of the SHAPE mission to France after the liberation of Paris on November 3, 1944. She was destined to be a great help to General Lewis because of her contacts with Eisenhower's headquarters and, again, her fluency in French. This general had come straight from Washington and had no established network. "I knew everybody," Mattie recalled. "Of course he (Lewis) came direct from the States so whenever he needed information I knew where to go."

Mattie served in Paris for 18 months and witnessed the surrender of the German forces to the Allies at Rheims the day before the announcement of V-E day. She and three other WAC officers who first went overseas together hosted a pre-signing party for the Allied representatives. She flew back to Paris for the celebrations on May 8, 1945, V-E Day.

Before leaving the service, Mattie worked with Ambassador Grady on a report to the United Nations regarding the proposed state of Israel. In January 1946, while still in uniform, she was assigned as Military Administrative Assistant to Ambassador Grady, head of the Allied mission to oversee the Greek elections.

After resigning from active duty in 1946, Mattie accepted a position as chief of the Employee Development Branch of the Atomic Energy Commission where she earned the Sustained Superior Performance Award presented by Arthur Tackman, director of personnel.

engineers and administrative specialists. She received her master's degree from George Washington University while pursuing her career and later became extremely active in the national and international Association of University Women. She raised money for several scholarships for women students from the U.S. and overseas. She retired from the A.E.C. in 1964, but remained active, traveling extensively for the AAUW as well as for her own pleasure.

Mattie has been the recipient of many awards: the Bronze Star, the Croix de Guerre and the Army commendation medal. She is both humble and proud of her roots and of having been chosen one of two Outstanding Alumnae by the University of Maine at Fort Kent in 1970.

She is one of two surviving children of Joseph and Amelia Pinette. A younger sister Aurore, is an Ursiline nun.

A reporter from the Bangor Daily News, who interviewed Mattie in 1946 while she was home on terminal leave, wrote: "She attributes her important assignments to luck. In reality, they were a recognition of efficiency in the Nth degree. She is the perfect business executive, keen, alert and highly intelligent, yet with it all a woman gracious, kindly and considerate."

That's ma tante Mattie: my star in the window.

The late George Hall was professor emeritus of English from the University of Maine at Presque Isle. Although his roots were from western Maine, he and his wife Carol-Ann resided in Aroostook County for 28 years.
The 333rd Machine Gun Battery

by Pierre LaGrandeur

My Grandfather Alfred LaGrandeur enlisted in the army on March 29th, 1918, at the age of 26. He became a member of the 333rd Machine Gun Battalion, was promoted to Sargent on May 7th and Corporal on August 17th. He was very eager to join the fight. They trained for trench warfare and drilled with rifles, handguns and bayonets. His battalion was moved from Wisconsin, Detroit, Canada, Niagara Falls (they were given a half hour to look at the falls) to a base near New York City. They spent a couple of weeks there enjoying leave in the city and displaying their skills to the local gentry.

They were finally shipped to Europe on 9/14/18 on the Olympic, the sister ship of the Titanic. They were quartered below the water line in “hot, ill smelling quarters, packed like sardines. The food is bad, treated like animals.” Alfred bribed a guard to get a state room where one “could live like a human being, but I spent most of my time on deck.” There was a submarine alert at 7:30 p.m. on the 16th and a German spy was arrested who had been signaling with a flashlight. They escaped safely. On the 18th he said, “Some trip, the quarters given are not fit for cattle, and the food is hardly touched by the boys.”

September 20th, “Sighted land this morning and arrived in port at 11:30 a.m. An epidemic of Spanish Flu broke out on board and 6 died. Over 400 were taken to the hospital at South Hampton G.B. “I stayed on board and spent the night tending the sick.”

9/21 “Disembarked and saw shiploads of prisoners and wounded coming back from the front. A lot of men were so weak they could not carry their packs, some died simply because of a lack of attention from the officers. This is some rest camp; we sleep on the wooden floors of the tents and the streets are all mud. This town is filled with wounded.” At the YMCA there he met a French lady. “It was good to talk French to someone. The camp is in quarantine on account of meningitis.”

On September 30th they left South Hampton for La Havre France. “Disembarked at 8:00 a.m. and marched 4 kilometers to camp without breakfast. Some hunger! This is a beautiful town.”

10/2 “Left camp today for some point in France. We marched to the depot and there we entered boxcars 7x14 marked Hommes 40 - Chevaux 8. Rotten conditions but the boys are in good spirits.”

10/4 “Arrived at Carbon – Blanc 12 kilometers from Bordeaux. All one sees around here are grape vines. We are billeted at the winery La Tour Gueyrand, the officers stay at the chateau. My French is certainly handy.”

10/10 “Went to Bordeaux with the C.O. and Capt. Today as an interpreter.”

10/14 “Driving motorcycle & interpreter for C.O. Put on detached service at HQ.”

11/7 “86th Div. leaves tonight for classification camp, then on to the front. OH BOY!”

11/10 “The Kaiser and the crown prince abdicated. 110,000 soldiers came to this camp today bound for the front. Comfortably settled for a good night’s sleep when orders came to move. Had to break camp in 15 minutes in the dark. Marched 9 miles to classification camp, rolled in at 1 a.m.”

11/11/1918 “Went through the mill this P.M. Ordered to 2nd division at the front. Expect to leave at any minute. Rotten place 30,000 troops in an ankle-deep muddy pen.

11/13 “There was some error and we missed going to the 2nd division.”

From here they are moved to several areas, and it is “Colder than hell! Nothing to eat.”

11/27 “Thanksgiving and no turkey. We had some stew, bread and half a cup of coffee. May God forgive the officers to blame for starving us, because I cannot. We had to eat our meals out of doors in pouring rain thinning out the stew. I’ll bet our dog back home had a better meal today, at least he had plenty to eat.”

12/11 “Picked for a company today, don’t know where we’re going or why.”

12/12 “Moved to Mayet today and billeted there. Turned in our gas masks. Rumor is bound for Paris on MP duty.”

12/16 “Disembarked at Juvisy-sur-Orge at 3:00 p.m. today, very nice town. Marched to camp 4 kilometers from town. We can see the Eiffel Tower in Paris from here, only 13 kilometers from camp. Good quarters.”

12/19 “Left camp at 2 p.m. on trucks for Paris. The king and queen of Italy arrived today. Billeted at Bois de Boulouge, 20 minutes from the heart of town. Good quarters in an old hospital. Real beds with mattresses. Great inside, showers, baths, OH JOY it is a great life!”

12/25/18 “On guard until 4 p.m. Christmas day. Marched to Auteuil and took the subway to Paris. Went to the YMCA at Palais de Glace, had dinner and a Christmas box. The Champs Elysees is just lined with captured German arms. Saw a German tank (Continued on page 34)
and an Egyptian obelisk. Given a permanent pass."

1/1/1919 “New Year’s Day, BROKE!”

From here he travels to Versailles and several places in Belgium. The next entry is on July 10th, 1919, when he leaves Paris and on July 11th, he boards the USS Martha Washington for the USA. “Rotten Boat and Trip”

7/27 “Arrive Hoboken 11:00 a.m. and go to Camp Merritt N.J.”

8/1 “Leave camp Merritt N.J.”

8/3 “Arrive camp Grant.”

8/5/1919 “FREE MAN!”

The letter below is from Alfred’s sister. It traveled across Europe and found him a year later in Somerset WI. The flowers were pressed in the pages of the diary.
Henry Prunier
Franco-American Veteran

by Michael Guignard
Alexandria, VA

This summer marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Henry Prunier, a Franco-American from Worcester, Massachusetts, was a veteran of that war and in 2011 was awarded the Bronze Star for his service.

Growing up in Worcester, Prunier attended a French-speaking Catholic grammar school, then the Assumption Preparatory School, where he was taught by French priests. Not wanting to get drafted because he would not be able to choose where he would be assigned, he enlisted in the army in 1942. The army allowed him to complete his junior year at Assumption College, an institution founded by and for Franco-Americans. His background, fluency in French and affinity with languages got him assigned to the Army Specialized Training Program at the University of California Berkeley to study Vietnamese. To better acclimate the soldiers with their intended assignments, in addition to the language study, the course of study also included Vietnamese history, geography, society and culture.

Completing school at Berkeley in 1944, Prunier was sent to cryptology school in Missouri, where he was initially assigned to join an infantry division prior to D-Day. Just before he was to ship out, however, Prunier was ordered to go to Washington instead—to join the Office of Strategic Services (the OSS), which was the precursor of the CIA.

After successfully completing a battery of psychological exams and rigorous OSS training, Prunier was sent to Catalina Island for survival training. His training complete, Prunier sailed in April 1945 with 3,000 other servicemen for Calcutta. From there, he flew over “the Hump”—the Himalayas—to the OSS regional headquarters in Kunming, China.

In Kunming, the team that Prunier would become a part of, called the Deer Team, took shape in May and June 1945. Their mission was to make contact with Vietnamese guerrillas to help disrupt Japanese communications and aid the U.S. war effort.

Before the Deer Team parachuted into Vietnam, no one knew the mission, other than that a ‘Mr. Hoo’ was at Tan Trau and that they were to give training to his forces. The Deer Team was to harass the Japanese and help “Mr. Hoo” in taking out railroads and communications. “Mr. Hoo” had agreed to help the Deer Team in exchange for U.S. assistance for his nationalist forces in Vietnam.

On the morning of July 16, 1945, Prunier and the five other members of the Deer Team parachuted into Tan Trau and made contact with “Mr. Hoo,” “Mr. Van” and their band of 80 guerrillas. Only later did the team find out “Mr. Hoo” was Ho Chi Minh and that “Mr. Van” was Vo Nguyen Giap.

When Prunier and the team first met Ho Chi Minh, he was “nothing but skin and bones,” suffering from tropical diseases such as dysentery and malaria. Though Ho spoke fluent French, he refused to speak it and instead conversed with Prunier alternatively in English and Vietnamese. Prunier remembered talking with “Mr. Hoo” about Boston where a cruise ship on which Ho was working had once docked. The Americans treated “Mr. Hoo” with their ample supply of medicines. He survived and regained his strength rapidly.

In contrast to Ho, Giap was far more involved with the combat training the Americans were giving, and was intent on learning the capability and effectiveness of the weaponry. When the Deer Team began training Ho’s nascent Viet Minh army, according to Prunier, the only weapons the insurgents had were muskets similar to shotguns and a few confiscated French guns. “They were not armed well or able to handle weapons,” said Prunier. The OSS dropped in canisters containing M-1 rifles, bazookas, 60mm mortars and light machine guns, just enough to equip the 80 men. “The Vietnamese were eager and learned how to take an M-1 apart in a couple of hours,” Prunier remembered.

Although the Deer Team was a military training unit and not a political training force, it became clear to Prunier through his conversations with Giap and the other Vietnamese that they had a purpose—to get Indochina back as an independent country. “We didn’t know until then that Ho’s primary aim was to get rid of the French,” he said. After World War II, the British left Burma and India, the Dutch left Indonesia, the Philippines gained its independence from us but, unfortunately for the U.S., the French stayed in Indochina.

The Deer Team celebrated with their Vietnamese allies when they learned of the U.S. atomic bomb attacks, knowing that the end of World War II was near. On August 15, Japanese Emperor Hirohito addressed his nation and announced that they would sur- (Continued on page 36)
render, essentially ending the OSS mission in Vietnam. The Deer Team made its way back to Hanoi on September 9, one week after the Japanese officially had surrendered on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri and Ho Chi Minh had declared Vietnam’s independence, citing the Declaration of Independence in his address to his countrymen.

Before leaving Hanoi on September 16, Prunier only saw Ho and Giap briefly. At this meeting, Ho presented a silk tapestry to Prunier in gratitude for his service.

Prunier then flew back to Kunming and was temporarily assigned to an intelligence unit there. A month later, he was back in Hanoi to help set up an OSS detachment headquarters, from where he was to work on cases of Japanese war crimes against the Vietnamese and the French. Because there was little organization to the effort, he found plenty of free time to explore the city and located some of the soldiers he had helped train, including Thai Buc, a fellow translator in Tan Trau. “He was like a brother,” Prunier recalled. The OSS was disbanded in October, 1945, and in November Prunier was given his orders to return home to be discharged. He was discharged from the army in January 1946 and joined the family business in Worcester.

Henry Prunier was never debriefed by the U.S. government about his mission or about the insurgents he had helped to train in Vietnam. It had been a secret mission. He did receive several invitations to join the Central Intelligence Agency, which was formed in 1947, but he did not accept the offer.

For the next 20 years, Prunier’s mission in Indochina was largely forgotten as the nation dealt with global tensions of the Cold War. In the early 1960s, as U.S. involvement in Vietnam escalated, the old OSS training grounds were rediscovered, and stories of the Deer Team re-emerged. Even then, with Ho and Giap on the world stage as America’s archenemies, Prunier’s experience with the leaders went untapped.

Then, in March 1968, two months after TET, with more than 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam and while the battle for Hue was still raging, some of the Deer Team’s photos were published in a Life magazine profile of Ho. “A couple of people recognized me, so they contacted the local news organizations,” Prunier said. In short order, he was interviewed by Worcester TV station WTAG and the Worcester Gazette. It was during those interviews 52 years ago that Prunier offered what few people, if any, in the U.S. government could provide—firsthand insights into the Vietnamese leaders when they were formulating their movement’s direction and goals.

“When Ho spoke, it was about bettering the lot of his people,” Prunier said. “He wanted independence for them” Prunier pointed out that Ho believed the United States “would help him in throwing out the French and in establishing an independent country.”

When it was suggested to Prunier that he contact Life about his story, true to his typical Franco-American humble nature, he preferred to stay out of the national spotlight.

As U.S. involvement in Vietnam went from quagmire to retreat, Prunier’s story—and that of the entire Deer Team—faded further in the American consciousness. But that was not the case in Vietnam, where the assistance given to Ho and Giap in 1945 by the American team is hailed as a turning point in the country’s history.

In 1995, the U.S. recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Pete Peterson, a former prisoner of war in Hanoi, became our Ambassador there. That same year, the U.S. Indochina Reconciliation Project, which had been established a decade earlier as a nonprofit group to help facilitate relations between the United States and countries in the former Indochina, offered an opportunity for the original Deer Team members to travel to Hanoi, visit the Tan Trao camp and meet the men they had trained half a century before. Prunier made the voyage. It was during his trip to Hanoi that Giap recognized Prunier by displaying the grenade lobbing technique (with an orange) that Prunier had taught him. “I taught Giap. I was floored that he remembered me,” Prunier recalled. Another Vietnamese soldier from 1945 grabbed him happily by the arm and cried, “Prunier! Prunier!” over and over. It was the first time that Prunier realized the Vietnamese held him and the Deer Team in such high esteem.

In 2009 Prunier offered all of his papers, photographs, sketches, reports and, perhaps most important, his U.S. Army uniform to the Museum of Military History in Hanoi. Upon receiving his contribution, the museum Director called Prunier’s donation “one of the most significant historical contributions that the museum had ever received.”

On February 23, 2011, when he received the Bronze Star Medal, Prunier recalled the camaraderie between the Vietnamese nationalists and the Deer Team.

“Perhaps six decades after Henry Prunier’s work with the OSS, the respect for the last living member of the Deer Team that is shared by the Vietnamese and Americans alike will symbolize a new understanding between two former enemies” wrote Claude Bérubé, a professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. Vietnam today is an important ally in our efforts of contain Chinese expansionism. The Vietnamese have been historical enemies of the Chinese. The border war they fought in 1979 basically ended in a draw but there have been no more Chinese incursions into Vietnamese territory. In 2016, after a 41 year hiatus, two U.S. warships visited Cam Rahn Bay on a courtesy call and good will visit. The Chinese were watching, I am sure. The ties between the two countries continue to increase. As a point of fact, my wife’s high school, Thornton Academy, boasts international students from Vietnam.

(Continued on page 37)
OUR VETERANS

(Henry Prunier Franco-American Veteran continued from page 36)

Henry Prunier died in March 2013 in Webster, Massachusetts at the age of 91 but not before completing his degree at Assumption College. He was survived by his wife of 62 years, Mariette Lague, 4 children, 12 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. His old comrade-in-arms, Vo Nguyen Giap, died 7 months later at the age of 102.

All the quotations for this article were taken from Claude G. Berube’s work. He teaches at the United States Naval Academy and has researched the role of the OSS Deer Team extensively. His work can be found on the internet. The internet also boasts many other articles on Mr. Prunier, including an obituary in The New York Times.

WEBSTER/WORCESTER - Henry A. Prunier, 91, died peacefully on Sunday, March 17, 2013, at Beverly Hospital, after a short illness. He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mariette “Marie” L. (Lague) Prunier of Webster; four children, Joanne M. Green and her husband John of Hampton, NH, Raymond H. Prunier and his wife Gloria of Merrimack, NH, Dianne M. Behnke and her husband Corey of Brillion, WI, and Donald A. Prunier of Coral Springs, FL; 12 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. He was predeceased by two daughters, Suzanne P. Leon-ard and Marianne E. Ciociolo; a sister, Lucille B. LeBlanc; and a granddaughter.

He was born in Worcester, the son of the late Henry E. and Winifred (Suprenault) Prunier, and lived most of his life in Webster. He graduated from Assumption Preparatory School in Worcester, Assumption College in Worcester, and the University of Massachusetts. He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II, and received the bronze star for his service with the O.S.S.

Mr. Prunier owned and operated his family’s business, J.S. Prunier and Sons in Worcester, for many years. He was a member of the Harmony Club in Worcester. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus in Worcester and was a 4th degree knight in the John Cardinal Wright Assembly.

HENRY CONRAD COUSINEAU:
AN UNUSUAL MILITARY CAREER

(1920-1968)

After beginning his military service in 1948 and participating in the Korean War, Franco-American Henry Cousineau re-enlisted at the age of 47 for duty in Vietnam. He was a Navy Petty Officer First Class when he was killed by enemy fire in a helicopter in Tam Ky Danang January 4, 1968. Cousineau was from Swansea, MA.

(Information and photo from honorstates.org, “Gold Star Heroes Gallery”)

More information from Find A Grave:

Equipment Operator 1st Class, U.S. Navy

On 4 January 1968, Equipment Operator First Class Henry Conrad Cousineau was serving with A Company, NMCB-6, 3rd NC BDE, U.S. Naval Forces Vietnam in Quang Nam Province, South Vietnam.

On that day, EO1 Cousineau was killed in action while riding in an Army helicopter. He was flying as a door gunner on a UH-1C with C Battery 2nd BN 20th Arty (ARA) of the 1st Cav Div. He was shot by enemy fire and died instantly. He was flying to get an Army Air Medal. Contributor: Russell L. Warriner (47050346)

Medals: Purple Heart; Air Medal; Navy Commendation Medal with Combat Valor Device; Combat Action Ribbon; Navy Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Vietnam Service Medal; Vietnam Campaign Medal.

Honors: The name Henry C Cousineau is located on Panel 33E Line 035 of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall.

PO1 Henry C. Cousineau has Honoree Record 8182 at MilitaryHallofHonor.com.

https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/96144405/henry-conrad-cousineau
Léo Héroux, un vétéran pas ordinaire de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale

par Juliette L. Bruneau, Ph. D (Science Politique)
Québec, Canada

2014 commémore le 70ième anniversaire du débarquement de Normandie. Chaque famille nord-américaine a ses héros de guerre. Parfois des frères, des cousins proches ou des voisins. Il y a aussi des cousins éloignés, comme le cousin Léo Héroux qui a participé précisément au débarquement de Normandie le 6 juin 1944.

Ascendance française, canadienne et américaine de Léo…

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<th>Nom</th>
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<td>Jean Héroux</td>
<td>Blonville-sur-Mer</td>
<td>Marie Royer</td>
<td>Normandie, France</td>
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<td>(parents de l’ancêtre Jean Héroux. Ne sont pas venus en Nouvelle-France)</td>
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<td>6 février 1674</td>
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<td>Françoise Benoist</td>
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<td>Anésie Rousseau</td>
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<td>Léo Héroux</td>
<td>25 janvier 1947</td>
<td>Anne-Marie Broecks</td>
<td>Central Falls RI.</td>
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Date et endroit du mariage

Léo avant la guerre

Carrière militaire de Léo : En début de guerre, Léo travaille dans une usine de textile à Central Falls. Il n’a que 19 ans lorsqu’il s’enrôle dans l’armée américaine. Il s’embarque vers l’Europe, là où un destin unique l’attend.

Débarquement : Léo participe au débarquement du 6 juin 1944 à Colleville-sur-Mer. À 10:30 (Omaha Beach), Léo est alors un jeune soldat affecté au 348e corps d’ingénieurs de combat. (348th Engineer Combat Battalion A stationed in South Wales, Great Britain) Son travail d’ingénieur l’amène à des activités dangereuses telles qu’enlever les mines et autres obstacles, faire des routes, bâtit des ponts, préparer l’arrivée des bateaux et enlever les corps.

Le lendemain du Jour J, son capitaine lui demande d’aviser le fermier français qu’il devrait retirer ses vaches du champ voisin. Léo a appris le français et l’anglais à l’Académie du Sacré Cœur de Central Falls et ses parents sont d’origine québécoise. Il tente de faciliter la situation avec le fermier en l’informant que forces américaines passeron dans ce champ et qu’il vaut mieux re-

(suite page 39)
Malgré la guerre, il s’est rapproché de la jolie fille du fermier Broeckx. L’échange de lettres se poursuit pendant les déplacements de Léo en France et en Allemagne. Ils continuent de se courtiser alors qu’ils sont des deux côtés de l’Atlantique. Les lettres se font de plus en plus sérieuses. Ce n’est que le début d’une longue histoire d’amour pour le jeune Léo comme nous le verront plus loin.

Dans ce film de PBS, le jeune militaire y paraît au début de sa carrière militaire puis à son mariage et lors d’un voyage souvenir en Normandie sur les lieux même du débarquement. On le voit sur les lieux de souvenirs. Il est sur la plage de OMAHA mais ce ne sont pas des souvenirs de vacances qu’il raconte…! Léo dit qu’il avait peur en attendant son tour pour débarquer. J’avais très peur ainsi que tous les autres soldats…! Peur de mourir ? Non, pas de mourir mais de me faire tuer. Il y a une différence entre mourir et se faire tuer. Tout le monde va mourir, mais se faire tuer et tuer c’est différent.

**Suite de sa vie militaire en Europe**

Léo courtise toujours Anne-Marie, cette jeune enseignante à Bayeux. Il va ensuite à Arromanches pour aider les Alliés. Puis à Cherbourg. Son travail est de décharger les tanks, les munitions, créer des ponts et approvisionner les soldats.

En décembre 1944, il traverse Paris libéré pour ensuite se diriger vers la Belgique, là où les allemands résistaient aux américains. Son travail consiste à construire des ponts pour que les soldats américains puissent passer. La bataille est très proche et il doit rester près du pont, prêt à le faire sauter si les allemands avancent. En avril 1945, il part pour l’Allemagne où il arrive au camp de Buchenwald. Ce qu’il voit est horrible. « Dans le camp de concentration, il y avait des juifs polonais et russes. Certains étaient allongés, ils attendaient d’être ramassés par la Croix Rouge. J’avais envie de vomir, l’odeur insoutenable. On n’avait pas le droit de leur donner à manger… pas même un petit morceau de chocolat…! »


**Son retour aux États-Unis après la guerre** : la correspondance se poursuit entre Anne-Marie et Léo. Un jour Léo lui demande de l’épouser, ce que la belle ac-

*Mariage à Léo et Anne-Marie (Broeckx) 1947*


**Son retour en France, sa famille, ses occupations professionnelles**


À l’occasion de son 90e anniversaire, septembre 2013, une fête est organisée chez sa fille Nancy avec ses enfants, ses proches et ses amis à Howick près de Montréal. Trois de ses 4 enfants habi-

*Léo, 10e anniversaire débarquement, June 1954*

tent en France dans les environs d’Avignon (Leslie, Norman et Béatrice Vial).

Lors d’un souper à Blonville en 2005, Mme Auzerais Henriette et son ami Marc nous parlent de cet homme. Pour eux, c’était tout un personnage. Un soldat d’origine franco-canadienne, parlant français qui fait la guerre avec les troupes américaines…!

Ils ne tarissaient pas d'éloges. Léo est celui qui a fait passer l’examen de conduite automobile à Marc. Moment marquant pour un jeune garçon que celui d’obtenir son permis de conduire une automobile à l’époque.

**Son retour aux É-U** :


Chaque année, pendant sa vie en France, Léo visite le cimetière américain en souvenir de ses camarades morts au combat. Cette année, il n’y sera pas. Anne Marie n’est plus là et les jambes de Léo sont moins fluides. C’est le moment de se dire que Léo est là…! Et Norman sera Colleville-sur-mer le 5 juin 2014…

C’est une histoire unique, n’est-ce pas…? Juliette.

**Tous n’ont pas eu la même chance que Léo…**

Mais Léo n’est pas le seul Héroux d’Amérique à avoir contribué à cette guerre. Deux autres Héroux, morts dans la fleur de l’âge, début de vingtaine, reposent au
Nancy, Léo et Norman Héroux, 2011

Norman, Béatrice, Nancy et Gilles

Léo et famille


En 2005, nous cherchions des indices de participation de Héroux à cette guerre en vue d’un voyage en Normandie. Après un arrêt au cimetière de Benny-sur-mer non loin de Courselleux, nous nous dirigeons vers Cintheaux/Bretteville-sur-Laize, où se trouve un autre cimetière militaire canadien. Ce village est près de Flers dans la région où habitent Madeleine Héroux et Marcel Fourez.

Cette fois, on se recueille sur la tombe de Hervé Héroux, du Régiment de Maisonneuve, fils de Eugène Héroux et Éva Picard de Montréal. Il était l’époux de Anita Héroux. Le nom de famille de l’épouse….?

On y retrouve également la tombe de J. Roland Héroux, des Fusiliers Mont-Royal, fils de Paul Héroux et de Myrza Cloutier de Montréal.

Tous deux sont tombés au champ d’honneur lors de la libération de la région. Une étude dans les archives militaires du Canada et de France nous permettrait peut-être d’en savoir davantage sur ces deux jeunes soldats.

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal débarquent avec les unités de la 2ème Division à partir du 7 juillet 1944. Ce régiment avait participé à la bataille de Dieppe le 19 août 1942.

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal font partie de la 6ème Brigade d’Infanterie alors que le Régiment de Maisonneuve fait partie de la 5ème Brigade. Comme le Régiment de Maisonneuve, ce régiment entreprend les combats à partir du 19 juillet 1944, dans un secteur au sud de Caen pour s’emparer de la crête de Bourguébus. Il s’attaque ensuite au secteur de Tilly la Campagne à partir du 25 juillet appuyé des Blindés de Sherbrooke. L’effort du harcèlement canadien contre les troupes allemandes au sud de Caen s’insérait dans un plan d’attaque allié. Ainsi, cette pression des Canadiens maintenait les blindés allemands et facilitait le déclenchement d’une percée américaine au sud-ouest du Cotentin (sud du département de la Manche).

Le 30 juillet, les Fusiliers Mont-Royal remplacent pendant deux jours le Régiment de Maisonneuve. A partir du 7 août, les Fusiliers Mont Royal entreprennent les opérations “TOTALIZE et “TRACTABLE” à destination de Falaise.

Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal pénétraient dans Falaise le 16 août et combattent des “jeunes hitlériennes”. Ils termi- nent les combats en Normandie le 18 août après le “nettoyage” complet des forces ennemies à Falaise.

Rappelons que c’est à la fin d’août (23–24)1944 que les canadiens libèrent Blonville à la faveur de la nuit. On se rappellera que Blonville est le pays d’origine de Jean Héroux l’ancêtre de tous les Héroux d’Amérique.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Regiment</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ROLLAND WILFRID HEROUX</td>
<td>Royal Canadian Artillery</td>
<td>Gunner</td>
<td>July 9, 1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAURICE HEROUX</td>
<td>Royal Canadian Infantry Corps</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>May 19, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSEPH ARTHUR ROSAIRE G HEROUX</td>
<td>Royal Canadian Air Force</td>
<td>Flying Officer</td>
<td>April 8, 1945</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HERVE HEROUX</td>
<td>Le Régiment de Maisonneuve, R.C.I.C.</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>August 13, 1944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JOSEPH ROLAND HEROUX</td>
<td>Les Fusiliers Mont-Royal, R.C.I.C.</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>August 14, 1944</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ensign Philip H. LaGrandeur

by Pierre LaGrandeur

My father Philip was born in Somerset WI in September of 1923. He attended grade school there and was common at the time his father Alfred did not teach him French. His mother Alice nee McKeon was also 100% Irish. He told me that he and his cousin Bud LaGrandeur were the only kids in first grade that did not speak French.

He was attending St. Thomas College in St. Paul MN when the attack on Pearl Harbor happened. He told me that he was in choir practice when someone burst into the room with the news. His first thought was “Where the hell is that?”

He decided that he would be better off if he enlisted, rather than wait for the draft, so he enlisted in the Navy with the hopes of becoming a pilot and was sent to Pensacola FL. There he managed to get into flight school by the skin of his teeth, as he put it.

He became a flight instructor and remained in Pensacola during his service. Over the years he explained various terms to me like On the Beam (a method of navigation that kept you going in the right direction.) and Dead Reckoning, (which was frankly beyond me then and now.)

He was also trained to identify aircraft by silhouette, so you knew who you were attacking.

He told me there was a problem with planes disappearing while on night submarine patrol over the Atlantic and they finally realized that the fatigued pilots would follow their own spotlight beam into the water. This was also the time that it was noticed that experienced pilots were crashing the new planes because they were so complicated to fly, and this gave rise to the checklist.

In 1944 I believe, my father crashed a twin engine plane that he was piloting, and it burst into flames. He barely managed to get out and had severe burns over most of his body.

He spent the next year in rehabilitation having skin graphed all over his body. At one point they were going to remove his ears, but one of his nurses strongly objected. He was always grateful to her for that. His mother was a trained nurse, (she had worked for her Father who was a physician in New Richmond WI) and she took the train down there to take care of him for 6 months.

They did a great job because I could not tell that he had been burned like that, his skin was sensitive, but that was just about it. He returned to service but with the war ending they had no need of so many pilots, so he was discharged and returned to Somerset. He attempted to get work as a commercial pilot, but they were flooded with applicants, so he eventually finished his studies and later graduated from St. Thomas College.

He was in the Naval reserves until 1953.

He never told me much about the accident, but he did show me a picture of the wreck when I was about 10.

However, when he was in his early 90s, he had an operation to remove cancer from his bladder (which was a success) and was of under anesthesia. I was sitting at his bedside paging through a magazine when he came to and told me in great detail what had happened during the crash. He said he was in a hurry and did not follow the checklist and that it was his fault. He said he kept ramming the hatch trying to get out while totally engulfed in flames. When the hatch finally opened, he had to roll in the stubble of the recently harvested crops that they grew between the airstrips, to put out the flames.

I don’t believe he had any memory of telling me this. I told my cousins this story and they said their father who had dementia toward the end of his life would wake up crying at night and when asked what the matter was, he talked of awful incidents he had seen in the Pacific theater during his service.

It was a lesson to us that PTSD is not a new problem, it is just now finally being discussed.

Winterport’s Oldest Korean War Veteran Visits National Monuments on an Honor Flight Trip

By: Anne Gabbianelli

With lots of energy, a great spirit and a good sense of humor, Reggie Rancourt, recalls his most recent trip to Washington D.C. “I’m tickled to death that I went, and it didn’t cost me a penny thanks to the American Legion,” shared the 1949 Winterport High School graduate. Reggie was selected by American Legion Post 138 Argonne to join the Honor Flight Program at the end of July. Honor Flight Network recognizes American veterans for their sacrifices and achievements by flying them to Washington, D.C. to see their memorial at no cost to the veteran.

Reggie is the oldest Korean War Veteran living in Winterport. Jim Foley of Post 138 said of the longtime Legion member, “Reggie has worked hard all his life as a dairy farmer, and everything about him- his morals and outlook - is good. He is just a wonderful, super human being.”

Reginald Aldano Rancourt was called to war in the 1950s, but the (Continued on page 43)
Coast Guardsman brought American POWs to NYC

by Richard J. Cormier

I enlisted into the United States Coast Guard at an office on 29 Indian St. in Boston, Mass. on Nov. 11, 1943.

Shortly thereafter I went off to Manhattan Beach for eight weeks of basic training, and then I was assigned to the USS Meigs AP-116, a troop transport. My rank was 1st Class Steward.

The 5th Army troops that the ship was carrying were mostly from New York City as well as Newport News, Va. Our first trip was to Naples, Italy, where we were transporting troops that were needed to help fight the Germans in the north.

During this time (which I remember taking a total of 14 days to cross the Atlantic), the ship had to maneuver a zigzag course to avoid enemy submarines. When the ships approached the Mediterranean, we found that they needed to be extra careful because of the wolf packs of German subs that were sinking ships all around us, but we were lucky enough to make it through safely. We experienced several close calls. Our mission was to help to transport what would end up being over 200,000 troops.

Another trip we made was to Rio de Janeiro, where we picked up Portuguese soldiers who were ready to help United States troops in the north, after which time we delivered them and then headed back to New York.

When the war ended, we found ourselves out in the Pacific.

Some time during 1945, we arrived in Plymouth, England, where the crew got liberty for a couple of days. The ship picked up supplies for our trip through the English Channel. We headed for Le Havre, France, where the German subs had sunk so many ships that we could not tie up at the pier in the harbor, but had to build ourselves a ramp so as to get the troops aboard.

We mostly picked up American prisoners of war who had been held in Germany for over three years in concentration camps. I experienced seeing men who had lost as much as 100 pounds and looked emaciated. Our orders were to take them back to New York, where they immediately went to hospitals for care.

Another port was in the Pacific, where we went to Japan. We toured the ruins of the atomic bomb [blast]. The destruction was terrible, and I believe it left some 250,000 dead or injured from this event.

My Father Albert Beliveau

by Severin M. Beliveau

My father Albert Beliveau of Rumford was one of the few Franco-American legal officers who served in WWI and spent 1917 in France negotiating on behalf of the Allies, the acquisition of land for the construction of hospitals, training and staging areas, and POW camps. He also served on several court martials. Since he was bilingual, he was able to relate to the French and described one transaction involving the lease of land for a prisoner of war camp and the role of wine during and after the terms had been agreed upon. He said:

In ninety-nine cases out of a hundred I was offered wine after getting through my work. Some of these old men insisted on my drinking wine and in all cases dug out of the cellars their rarest, oldest and best. Had to put a damper on it, otherwise someone would have to bring me home. When I insisted on drinking water without wine they usually offered to put sugar in it to kill the taste.

While he was not directly involved in combat, he played a major role in providing support and logistics for more than one million U.S. soldiers who served in France.
government knew his father was ill and he needed to stay home and work the farm. Then the call came again. “I served for a couple of years with training first at Fort Dix then on to Puerto Rico, Panama ending in Massachusetts where we trained the National Guardsmen,” he recalled with laughter because he and his fellow soldiers of the time acted as the enemy for guardsmen in their training, “it was quite fun.”

Foley’s daughter Erin Holyoke served as Reggie’s guardian on the three-day adventure to our nation’s capital to visit some 15 monuments. Affectionately calling Erin, ‘Irwin’, he shared with a chuckle, “I’ve known her since she was about 16 and she has never corrected me on mispronouncing her name.”

Erin’s volunteer role was to escort Reggie through the entire journey which required each veteran to have a wheelchair. “I even had to take that thing to my hotel room,” claimed Reggie. Those who know this strong 93 year old know he is in no need of a wheelchair. He quipped, “I kept offering a seat to Irwin because she’s pregnant with twins and needed to get off her feet for a while.”

Erin admitted she used the wheelchair mostly to carry their belongings. “Reg is a spring chicken! I could barely keep up,” She went on though, “The wheelchair is a requirement on Honor Flight, so I stubbornly made him use the wheelchair just so he could really take in the sights.”

And there were plenty of sights to see. As Reggie sifted through the photo album Erin made of the trip with the added pictures he took with a disposable camera, he offered me a history lesson. He was mostly taken by Arlington National Cemetery. “It was really sad looking at the thousands and thousands of stones.” He added, “And did you know, the cemetery started with the Civil War where the stones from the northern soldiers were rounded and the southern soldiers’ stones were flat; that’s how you could tell the two sides.”

Reggie said he was quite impressed with the Korean War Memorial with soldiers sporting trench coats. “All the monuments are made of steel and the US Air Force Memorial was 250 feet tall.” He added, “Imagine what that cost!”

Another thrilling moment of the trip actually began on the flight heading to D.C. The Honor Flight Network asked family and friends to write a note of thanks for their service to our country, so the veteran was presented with a large envelope on the flight. In sharing his cards he said, “I don’t even know who some of these people are thanking me. I got letters and pictures from kids and I even got a letter from Senator Collins. It was all such a big surprise.”

For Erin, the trip was, “A humble reminder that those who become a part of us are a part of an incredible special generation. It’s our duty to learn from them and Reggie has become one of my best pals because of the energy he exudes.” She went on, “He is optimistic, hard-working, hilarious, and a reminder to me how all humans should act- with kindness, with faith, and most of all- to live everyday like it’s your last. He is just a special soul to know.”

Reggie, who had the 2021 Annual Town Report dedicated to him, claimed, “I’ve got a pile of friends, and I’ve been extra fortunate as to my health. The good Lord is looking after me, I guess.”

You can learn more about Winterport’s American Legion Post 138 by calling Jim Foley at 745-6689. Meetings are held the second Thursday of each month at 7 p.m. Meetings are held at the Victoria Grant Community Center at 40 Park Drive in Winterport.
Reveille at 6:15 
A Franco-American’s Journey 
Through World War II

Albéric Fontaine was one of the many soldiers who were sent to Africa and Europe to fight in World War II. But Al’s story is one that is not commonly told. Reveille at 6:15 recounts the journey of this bilingual Franco-American through the African, Mediterranean and European war theaters. It provides a view into the lives and attitudes of the soldiers in the rear echelons, the soldiers who were detached from the threats and anxiety of the front lines but still caught in the whirlwind of war. Al’s ability to speak French opened doors into French-speaking homes where he established friendships and found romance. His story is told through his diary entries, his photographs and the letters to his sister. It is an intimate look into the experience of one soldier. Al’s story is unique in some ways but shared with all GIs in many others.

“[Reveille at 6:15] is a rare opportunity to see the life of an “ordinary soldier” through his personal writings and photos. I really liked the way you filled in the context, bringing to life so many themes: immigration and the French-Canadian and Acadian communities of New England, languages and variants of French, colonialism, and of course military strategies, operations, and technology. I am not much of a reader of military history; I find your writing very accessible since it is personalized through the multi-faceted character of your father and his impressions, his daily tasks, leisure activities, his schedule, and the friendships he develops, written in his words with your interpretation and discussion. It’s a great formula!” Julia Schulz, Co-Director of Speaking Place

Reveille at 6:15 may be ordered directly from Amazon.com. It comes in paperback and contains 78 photographs and illustrations.

About the Author

Louis Fontaine had a 38 year career as an Environmental Specialist for the Maine Department of Environmental Protection. He managed the air pollution compliance inspection program and represented the department in regional and national organizations. In 2015 he earned a Silver level Advanced Communicator Certificate from Toastmasters International. He retired in 2016.

Louis was raised in the Franco-American neighborhoods of Augusta, Maine where he grew up speaking both French and English. In his retirement, he has worked on reviving his French language skills and exploring his family’s history and heritage. He is a member of Le Club Calumet, a Franco-American organization in Augusta, and he occasionally hosts French language films for the club and for the University of Maine at Augusta Senior College. He currently lives in Sidney, Maine with his wife Cheryl. He is the son of Albéric and Julia Fontaine.

Louis can be reached at reveilleat615@gmail.com.

This recently published book by Franco American Bill Comeau of New Bedford, MA describes his harrowing experience during the Vietnam War, including his participation in the Battle of Sui Tre which produced the highest number of enemy deaths (638) during a one-day battle.

Comeau spent 22 years researching the history of his military unit (the 12th Infantry Regiment) in preparation for writing his book. He remains very active in veteran organizations, and has been honored with several tributes, including the Franco-American Veteran of the Year for SE Massachusetts in 2017.

Finding academic Acadian research on social media

September 8, 2022 Franco-American News and Culture John Winslow, Jonathan Fowler, Nova Scotia, St. Mary’s University

By Juliana L’Heureux

Acadian archeology research is now available outside of hard to find history books and research journals. Professor Jonathan Fowler is publishing research on a social media page titled “Archaeology in Acadie”. His entries will soon be published in a co-authored book be published by Gaspereau Press under the title: “Diaries of the Acadian Deportations Vol. 2: John Winslow at Grand-Pré.” The subsequent effort will more closely resemble these recent Facebook posts and my working title is presently “1755,” reflecting the day-by-day approach.”

Dr. Fowler gave permission to publish this particular entry:

Deportation of the Acadians began in September 1755.

Deportation Diary

6 September 1755

Yesterday at 3pm, over 400 Acadian men and boys came to Grand-Pré in response to John Winslow’s summons, only to be arrested and held as hostages for the eventual surrender of their families. Inhabitants continued to arrive in small numbers through the late afternoon, so that by the time Winslow sat down to update Murray, he would report that the number of prisoners “I Cant think Falls Much Shorte of 500 Men.”

Winslow “began to take the List” of prisoners, “but Night put me of.” This work continues today, aided by Acadian leaders like François Landry. The result will be Winslow’s List, an infamous document that is nevertheless an incredibly valuable resource for archaeologists, genealogists, historians, and descendants.

Censuses were common during the period of French governance. The first was in 1671, about a decade before the founding of the Minas Basin settlements. Others followed, intermittently, and idiosyncratically. There was no standard plan for these counts: some named women and children, while other did not; some listed livestock and acreage, while others did not. Most of them just lumped the inhabitants together by settlement area, for example, Port-Royal, giving little sense of the relationship between people and local geography (we must turn to old maps for that).

Still, for all their faults, the Acadien’s desultory census records have become foundational sources. I challenge you to find a history of any of these settlements that does not resort to them. But the last count was in 1714, just after the end of French rule. Nothing of the kind was attempted again in any of the major Acadian settlements in peninsular Nova Scotia until John Winslow ordered his list to be compiled.

Winslow’s List (it merits capitalization) not only names the men and boys he captured. It also shows family and village connections and enumerates livestock. In the absence of quality mapping, it is therefore the key to unlocking the Acadian cultural landscape at Les Mines. We will have much more to say about this fascinating document.

Although Murray and Winslow have captured nearly 700 Acadian men and boys, their power has become curiously inverted. They do not have sufficient ships with which to embark the prisoners and their families, nor do they have the food to feed them. It will be late October before the first convoy sails and the end of December before the last of the Acadians are removed.

So, everybody now waits, and Acadian leaders – and would-be leaders – will have opportunities to exercise some power of their own.

Winslow, now outnumbered within his protective palisade, issues a single order today: “The Men to take Care to Keep with their arms.”

Among the impressive list of publications listed in Dr. Fowler’s CV includes:


(And this particular research entry is significant to our family because my husband’s paternal memere was née Savoire, a name that links her to the Thibeudeau’s.)

(Continued on page 46)
French-American Heritage Foundation

Article Trimestriel - Quarterly Article - Part 2 of 2 - Summer 2022
The third quarter article from the French-American Heritage Foundation is now available on our website.

Go to the upper right hand corner of our website’s Home page: fahfminn.org and click on "2022 Summer Edition" to read this quarter’s article.

To read past articles, go to the bottom of the right hand column of our website's Home page and click on "See Past Articles by clicking here."

Madeleine's Inquisition
The Irrational and Inhumane Treatment of Women by the Church of Rome

by Paul R Dionne

As an avocation, for over twenty years, the author has researched the role of women in the Early Church and the scandal of their subordination in the rise of Christianity. This resulted in his first work entitled The Priestess and the Pope. Madeleine's Inquisition, a sequel, bolsters the already persuasive case of the leadership role of women and sets forth the injustice, superstition and inhumanity of the Church towards women. As a decorated combat veteran, the author felt compelled to deal with the horrors and the aftermath of war in an era plagued by constant wars. Poverty stricken and alone, Madeleine Moreau awaits the return of her husband, a sergeant in the Grande Armée, while struggling to provide for herself and her children — her future bleak, foreboding and empty. She draws strength in her darkest hour when the Monsignor of Paris charges her with witchcraft and threatens to tear her family apart. The novel follows the lives of Madeleine Moreau and her antagonist, the Monsignor of Paris... Marc Moreau and his retreat from Russia following Napoleon's defeat... Madame Leblanc and her disavowal of aristocracy for the cause of Liberty... Michel Bois, a popular French sculptor, who forsakes Madeleine for the salvation of France... and two young priests, whose lives are changed by the chronicles of witchcraft, the vestiges of the Inquisition and the inhumane treatment of women by the Church — bringing them to a moral crossroads where each must choose his or her own destiny. These characters find their lives inextricably entangled as they uncover the bigotry of the Church, face religious prosecution and experience the horrors of war — while affected by the enlightened philosophers of the times.

https://www.amazon.com/Madeleines-Inquisition-Irrational-Inhuman-Treatment/dp/1660608546

(Finding academic Acadian research on social media continued from page 45)


Many thanks extend to Professor Fowler. I look forward to publishing more information about his research as I read from his publications. Special thanks to Dr. Patrick Lacroix for his ongoing Acadian research at the University of Maine Fort Kent.

https://www.facebook.com/archaeologyacadie/

About Juliana

Juliana L’Heureux is a free lance writer who publishes news, blogs and articles about Franco-Americans and the French culture. She has written about the culture in weekly and bi-weekly articles, for the past 30 years.

https://tinyurl.com/4jb89mdn
No Ordinary Rooster

Copyright 2022 by Virginia Lee Sand

On one of northern Maine’s wonderful potato farms in Aroostook County lives a rooster named Coulson. Well, every morning Coulson wakes up everyone on the farm at first light with his songs of cock-a-doodle-doo. Coulson is no ordinary rooster, as you will see.

Winters in Aroostook County tend to be long, very cold, and with plenty of snow. The children in northern Maine often get through these long winter months by playing hockey outdoors on ponds, lakes, or on their own homemade outdoor hockey rinks. Some Aroostook County villages even have community outdoor ice-skating rinks on which local hockey lovers are welcomed to play. In fact, in the small village called French Town on the Canadian border, where everyone speaks French, there is a good size community outdoor ice-skating rink in the village center. There, a young boy named Robert Roy shows up every day after school and on weekends to play hockey. And guess what? Robert brings along his pet rooster, Coulson, who understands French words. As I mentioned before, Coulson is no ordinary rooster. Well, it didn’t take long for Robert and Coulson to become the talk of the town. In fact, Robert and Coulson always bring the entire village together, making everyone a lover of hockey. How does this happen?

Whenever Robert shows up at the French Town outdoor ice skating rink, there are always boy and girl hockey players there ready to play hockey with Robert, especially because they want to watch Coulson play too. Yes, Coulson always follows Robert onto the ice, which makes for an exciting game of hockey. As the children play hockey, parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, friends, neighbors, shopkeepers, public servants and others all come by to watch an extraordinary rooster play hockey with the children. Before long, the entire village of French Town is showing up at the village ice skating rink. At this point, you might be wondering how a rooster plays hockey.

Well, Coulson loves watching the movement of the hockey puck. He flaps his wings in trying to keep up with the puck and hovers above it, sometimes even landing on top of the hockey puck while singing his cock-a-doodle-doo. Coulson is fast. Sometimes Coulson perches himself on Robert’s shoulder, helmet, or on his hockey stick, especially when Robert takes a break. Coulson is Robert’s devoted pet and buddy. The community kids and adults always have so much fun watching Coulson’s antics and unpredictable movements on and above the ice. The young hockey players enjoy having Coulson in the rink with them and they are so mindful and careful in order to keep Coulson safe from harm or injury. They don’t want to lose their star player. Coulson is sort of the village mascot.

Oftentimes, folks bring hot tuck to these informal community hockey games and warm themselves up by sharing hot chowders and chili with ployes, hot chocolate and hot dogs, and Madame Roy’s traditional, tasty tourtière meat and potato pie, made with potatoes from her own family potato farm. Since late autumn and winter days are shorter, the ice skating rink night-lights get turned on early, sometimes by 4:00PM. Villagers often watch Coulson play hockey with the children until 6:00PM under the spotlights. Afterward, everyone goes home to share fun stories and laughter about Coulson’s amusing contributions to the hockey games, and the children diligently do their homework feeling refreshed and inspired. That’s how a hockey-playing rooster brings an entire village together in joy and laughter during the long winter months in northern Maine.

All of God’s creatures have great purpose, including an extraordinary, hockey-loving rooster named Coulson.

(See page 50 for Crossword Activity)
Melisse is now nine,
Her time to shine,
With a curl in her hair
And skin so fair.

She dances with the breeze
And hugs all the trees.
Her smile brings delight
To everyone in sight.

With the songbirds she sings
And such joy it brings
To all those who hear
From afar and near.

Melisse laughs with the flowers
And prays for summer showers
So that everything will grow
And the streams will flow.

Melisse knows that love is the key
To everything we see,
Seeds of love to sow
For our HEARTS to grow.

They find their way to the right recipients:
Gifts for boys, girls, men, women, teens, babies, seniors, pets, etc. The gifts include toys, games, music, books, notebooks, pens, pencils, coloring books with colored pencils & crayons, paint sets, winter clothing, canned soups and beans, Maine grown potatoes and apples, coffee, teas, hot chocolate, pancake or ployes mix with Maine maple syrup, gingerbread mixes, chocolates, dog food & cat food for pets, etc. Each year Captains Tennyson and Tobin come up with new ideas for creative Christmas gifts. Their annual Christmas gift deliveries with the Joyeux Noël have become a big part of their own Christmas traditions. They look so forward to bringing Christmas joy and hope to so many Maine seaports each Christmas.
Crossword Activity for:
"A Birthday Poem for Melisse" by Virginia Sand ©2022

Where do the words go from the list below?

1. HEARTS
2. SONGBIRDS
3. DELIGHT
4. BREEZE
5. SOW
6. NINE
7. LAUGHS
8. FLOW
9. MELISSE
10. TREES
11. SHOWERS
12. DANCES
13. LOVE
14. PRAYS
15. STREAMS
16. FLOWERS
17. SHINE
18. GROW
19. SINGS
20. JOY
21. SEEDS
22. KEY
23. SEE
24. SMILE
25. HUGS
26. HEAR
27. BRINGS
28. TIME
"No Ordinary Rooster" Crossword Activity
©2022 by Virginia Sand

1. COULSON 12. SKATING 25. FARMS
2. CONTRIBUTIONS 13. GOD 26. FUN
3. HOCKEY 14. TOURIERE 27. FRIENDS
4. PUCK 15. ROY 28. TOWN
5. ROOSTER 16. RINK 29. STAR
6. AROOSTOOK 17. MASCOT 30. STORIES
7. FRENCH 18. POTLUCK 31. LAUGHTER
8. ROBERT 19. WINTER 32. GAME
9. COUNTY 20. SNOW 33. PLAY
10. PLOYES 21. NEIGHBORS 34. MINDFUL
11. ICE 22. MAINE 35. STICK
23. COMMUNITY 36. FAST
24. POTATO 37. WINGS

Where do these 40 words go above?
"The Christmas Lobster Boat" Crossword Game

©2022 by Ginny Sand

Where do the words go from below?

1. Joy
2. Hope
3. Tree
4. Noel
5. Christmas
6. Tennyson
7. Brothers
8. Tobin
9. Dog
10. Jackson
11. Santa
12. Bienvenue
13. Welcome
14. Seaports
15. Maine
16. Coastal
17. Giving
18. Season
19. Joyeux
20. Merry
21. Uplifting
22. Spirit
23. Blessed
24. Gifts
25. Lobster
26. Boat
27. Captain
28. Docks
29. Caroling
30. Traditions
31. Island
32. Deliveries
33. Eastport
34. Harbors
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 puissent 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.