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"AFIN D'ÊTRE EN PLEINE POSSESSION DE SES MOYENS"

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Le Forum



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

<u>Le Forum</u> et son staff — Universitaires, gens de la communauté, les étudiants -- FAROG,

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Franco-American Day honors Hall of Fame inductees

March 14, 2024Franco-American News and CultureAugusta Maine, Marie-Claude Francoeur, Mustafa Soykurt, Richard L'Heureux, Topsham

By Juliana L'Heureux

AUGUSTA, ME: Merci Maine legislators! Excellent day of recognition in the Augusta State House honoring Franco-American Hall of Fame inductees: Donald Bisson of Biddeford, Robert Chenard of Waterville, Dr. Fern Dejardins of St. Agatha, Denis Ledoux of Lewiston/Lisbon, Victor, Mary Michaud of Augusta, Cathie Pelletier of Allagash, Danielle Sylvester of Winslow, Cecile Thornton of Lewiston with Richard L'Heureux native of Sanford who lives in Topsham.





Franco-American Hall of Fame March 12, 2024 (left) Rep. Dr. Sam Zager, former inductee Juliana L'Heureux, Consul General of France in Boston Mustafa Soykurt, inductee Richard L'Heureux and Rep. Rebecca Jauch of Topsham. shaped our history and our culture for as long as we have been a state.

When Acadian French-speaking people were forced out of the Maritime provinces by the British Crown, they found refuge in Maine- particularly in the St. John Valley.

When the American textile industry was on the rise, French speaking people from Quebec came to places like Biddeford, Augusta, Waterville, Brunswick, Sanford and my home town of Lewiston, seeking better jobs and finding an industry that needed workers.

This is our shared history and evidence of how our state has become stronger together enriched by other cultures. It shows us how we benefit by embracing our diversity.

The individuals we are honoring today through induction into the Maine Franco-American Hall of Fame are an important part of this story.

We will celebrate these extraordinary Franco-American Mainers in the Hall of Flags later, as each of them, in their own way, has added to the vast fabric of the amazing quilt that is our state.

Madam Speaker, the story of Franco-American Mainers has much to teach us and I look forward to celebrating our shared history as we march into the future. Thank you.

International dignitaries were guests of the program: Consul General of Franco Mustafa Soykurt, Quebec Delegate in Boston Marie-Claude Francoeur and Head of Public Afairs, Political and Economic Relations for Consulate General of Canada in Boston, Meaghan Sunderland

Ceremonies were opened in the Maine House with a history statement from Assistant Majority Leader Kristen Cloutier of Lewiston and represents part of the city:

Madam Speaker and members of the Maine House. I rise today because the Franco-American story is an integral part of Maine's story and French-Speaking Mainers have



Franco-American Hall of Fame inductees in the Augusta Legislature March 12, 2024 with (left) Dr. Fran Desjardins of St. Agtha, Donald Bisson of Biddeford, Richard L'Heureux of Topsham, international Quebec Delegate in Boston Marie-Claude Francoeur and Cecile Thornton of Lewiston



Franco-American Hall of Fame inductees with Father Franck Morin of Waterville and inductees Dr. Fern Dejardins of St. Agatha, Cathie Pelletier of Allagash, Richard L'Heureux of Topsham, Cecile Thornton of Lewiston and Denis Ledoux of Lewiston/Lisbon





Gilbert Thibeault, son of Lorenzo & Rita Thibeault, was born in St. Agatha, Maine on April 26, 1949, and resided with his family on Flat Mountain practically across the road from the Paul Guerrette Store. Unfortunately, their family home was destroyed by fire on March 30, 1963, and consequently the family moved to Bristol, Ct. It was a big adjustment for Gilbert and his siblings, Cecil, Michael, Earl, Lester, Priscilla, and Brenda. Gilbert graduated from Patterson High School in 1964 and three years later joined the U.S. Marines. From June to November in 1967, Gilbert completed his basic training at Parris Island, South Carolina, and Camp Lejeune in North Carolina. On November 22, 1967, he was sent to DaNang with the First Reconnaissance Division. While Gilbert was in Thua Thien Province, his cousin, SGT E5 Percy Thibeault was stationed some 50 miles away in Chu Lai. The cousins never had a chance to meet because Gilbert was KIA on February 29, 1968. Percy found out about Gilbert's death a few days later while reading the newspaper, Military Stars and Stripes. Percy's tour of duty in Vietnam lasted from December 1966 to August 18, 1968. After his return home Percy always wanted to find out what had happened to his cousin, Gilbert. First Percy got the permission of Gilbert's parents, Lorenzo, and Rita Thibeault, and later was authorized to follow the channels received from then Senator George J. Mitchell to collect information on PFC Gilbert Thibeault. At one point Percy was able to speak to Gilbert's fellow Marines who survived the attack and began his long search to find out what had happened to Gilbert. PFC Gilbert served in Vietnam during the Tet Offensive which marked the peak of US involvement in the war. It was during this time the Battle of Operation Houston, which involved numerous USMC Battalions, had the objective "to secure Highway 1, particularly Hai Van Pass, and provide security for details working on the railroad between Hue and DaNang. During that time, the Allied Casualties were listed

An Interview with Percy Thibeault

by Terry Ouellette March 9, 2024

at 121 KIA and 848 WIA."

On July 28, 1993, Percy received a letter from a fellow Marine, Steven Cicalese, explaining what had happened to Gilbert – "Frenchy."

Steven wrote, "I served with 1st Force Recon but was detailed to 1st Battalion Recon for the petrol outside Hue City. Three teams were placed outside of Hue on hills to observe the enemy and to call in fire to impede their withdrawal from the battle of Hue during the Tet Offensive in 1968. I also believe that the other two teams pulled out early due to enemy probing and their precarious position. We stayed and I'm not sure why.

I'm not sure of the sequence of events on all activities. We dug in (holes) around the top edge of the hill, put out claymore mines and began observing. We saw some people in the valley and a water buffalo. On one night we were completely surrounded by lights, we either fired at them or called in fire and the lights went out.

We could hear and see the fighting in Hue from our position, we observed air strikes to our right. It was exciting to see those jets come in so low. When at night we heard probing at our parameter, we would throw hand grenades, theorizing that firing our weapons would draw fire to us.

The second day the enemy tried to set up a machine gun overlooking our position on a nearby hill, but we spotted them and Wikel raced across the parameter and with a 60-caliber machine forced them to abandon that attempt and killed at least one of the enemy gunners.

On the third day we watched the South Vietnamese push the NVA towards our position and readied ourselves to cut them down as they crossed the river that separated our hill from Hue. But the fighting stopped at about 4:30 PM probably for dinner. Just another missed opportunity among millions that occurred during the war.... I guess.

Anyway, that night it was dark, in fact all nights were so dark you couldn't see



PFC Gilbert Thibeault

your hand in front of your face. We heard the sound of incoming mortars. I had dived for my hole and the shell exploding stunned me for a second or more. I had been hit in the head and shoulder, very minor wounds. I seem to remember just before the blast (s), Sergeant Leed on the radio in the middle of the parameter, but after the blast I didn't see him again. Heard he had been hit by a sniper in the chest. Wikel told me Frenchy had been hit (Gilbert Thibeault had been hit). Apparently the mortar shell that had wounded me had landed where Frenchy's hole was, maybe in the same hole. I crawled out of my hole which was next to Frenchy's, wrapped some gauze around my head wound and went towards Frenchy's hole.

About that time another mortar came in, but it bounced off Wikel's back/flak jacket a dud. Wikel began to give Frenchy mouth to mouth resuscitation, but I took over when it became too difficult for John Wikel. John tossed grenades out into the black at every sound. Later on, he told me he burned out the barrel of his machine gun, but I don't remember that. I may have missed a lot because I was working on Frenchy. At some point during the evening, it was determined that Frenchy was dead. I distributed what we had left in ammunition, and we waited.

I remember quiet periods as the time passed that night, smoking a cigarette and being asked to pray. I also remember vividly red-hot metal searing through the black night only a few feet off the ground. I suppose the reason we got out alive was because our position was well known, and a wall of friendly fire was placed around us." (Continued on page 5)

MAINE

(An Interview with Percy Thibeault continued from page 4)

Over time Percy has been able to share his findings with Gilbert's parents and some his siblings who live in Bristol, CT. Thank you to Gilbert, who paid the ultimate price for our freedom, to Percy for keeping steadfast in researching his cousin's story and serving in the Marines during the Vietnam conflict.

Note: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. stands as a symbol of America's honor and recognition of the men and women who served and sacrificed their lives in the Vietnam War. Inscribed on the black granite walls are the names of more than 58,000 men and women who gave their lives or remain missing. Yet the Memorial itself is dedicated to honor the "courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty and country" of all who answered the call to serve during the longest war in U.S. history. **PFC Gilbert Thibeault's can be found on 42E Line 10**.

Remember March 29th is National Vietnam War Veteran's Day – Act of Congress 2017

Semper Fi

The Hartford Courant

Hartford, Connecticut · 05 Mar 1968, Thu · Page 15

Bristol Marine Dies in Vietnam

BRISTOL (Special) — Pfc. Gilbert Thibeault, 18, of the Marine Corps died Friday of wounds received from mortar fragments near Hue in South Vietnam.

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzo Thibeault of 76 Queen St., received word of his death from a Hartford Marine.

Pfc. Thibeault was born in St. Agatha, Maine and came to Bristol in 1963. He enlisted in the Marines in June of 1967 and was sent to Vietnam last November.

Besides his parents, he leaves four brothers, Cecil Thibeault, Michael Thibeault, Earl Thibeault and Lester Thibeault of Bristol; two sisters, Priscilla Thibeault and Brenda Thibeault, boh of Bristol; and his maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Felix Deprev of New_Britain.

SP5 Michael W St Mark



The Hartford Courant

Hartford, Connecticut + 07 Mar 1968, Thu + Page 4



PFC. G. THIBEAULT Funerals Planned ForVietnamDead

BRISTOL (Special) — The bodies of two young Bristol men killed recently in Vietnam fighting are to be returned here for burial.

Funeral services for Marine Pfc. Gilbert Thibeault, son of Mr. and Mrs. Lorenzo Thibeault of 76 Queen St., and Sgt. Roland Levesque, son of Mrs. Germaine Levesque of 50 Putnam St., will be arranged by the Duhaime Funeral Home, 250 West St.

Pvt. Thibeault was killed while fighting near Hue on Feb. 29. Sgt. Levesque was killed by a grenade on Feb. 24.

Both men were born in Maine and came to Bristol with their families at an early age.

SP5 Michael W St Nark

CILBERT THIBEAULT U.S. MARINE CORPS DIED FEB 29 1968 ACE 18



Le Forum



Maine PoutineFest comes to Portland

By Timothy Beaulieu

Announcement

I was thrilled to announce PoutineFest's expansion to Maine alongside my colleague Marcelle Murray at the Franco American Programs during this year's Rassemblement earlier this month. It's a project

long in the making, keeping the secret so long was not easy!

Expansion

I have been looking to expand PoutineFest outside of New Hampshire's borders for a few years. Based on who is buying tickets, 50% are sold in Massachusetts, I began to look at Boston as the second location.

I have been working on that for about a year. There are many roadblocks to holding an event with

propane fryers in the city. I have solutioned many of them, but it's still a work in progress. After this past October's New Hampshire PoutineFest I began working on Boston PoutineFest again.

Then the mass shooting in Lewiston happened.

My social media feed was full of Franco-American friends in Maine posting about the tragedy and its direct impact on their lives. This gave me pause.

I began to realize how close I had become with the Franco Maine community and how special of a community it truly is.

I say all the time, I completely ignore state lines when it comes to our Franco-American story, and I began to wonder if it was time to look East instead of South.

Franco Talent Collective

Every few months (we should hang out more) a small group of mostly Millennial and Gen Z Francos get together and discuss upcoming projects and how we can help each other. Our December 2023 get-together was supposed to be in Portland, but as a group we decided to move it to Lewiston to support that community.

It was a wonderful gathering. Camden Martin showed us around the Franco sites in Lewiston and we all had a really nice time. On this trip I was also trying to gauge if PoutineFest could work in the community and if it would it be accepted.

I came away knowing the event would be accepted, but was still unsure about a location.

Why Portland?

For those who don't know me, my background is in finance and small business. My first inclination is to look at the economic viability of an event like PoutineFest in a community. Can the community support



the needs of PoutineFest? Will the brand get enough of a push in the community? How many vendors and attendees are nearby?

I first looked into Franco enclaves like Lewiston and Biddeford, my concerns were the event would only be identified as being part of those communities and not the entire state.

Then my colleague Marcelle (PoutineFest webmaster) suggested Portland. I knew the argument against Portland, "it's not Franco." Our story is not really part of the city, but does it need to be?

As research went on, Marcelle's suggestion was proven completely accurate. It's a strength that Portland is not Franco and

it's also in the economic center of the state. Portland gives us maximum impact on the overall culture by taking us out of our enclaves.

Importance of Bringing Everyone Together

The members of the team bringing PoutineFest to Maine are extremely excited to bring everyone together. The goal of this event is to shine a bright light on all the Franco institutions in Maine. It's your day!

Poutine is simply a hook to bring folks from outside our little community, and maybe Francos looking to reconnect into the fold. If you're reading this and want to be part of the event, please reach out <u>tim@pou-</u> <u>tinefest.com</u> – we would love to have you.

We will also be giving back to causes in the Franco Community. If you're trying to plan a language contest, children's event, or

host a cabane à sucre - Let's Talk!

Shoutouts

Marcelle Murray – Marcelle stepped up in New Hampshire last year to revamp our web presence and really capitalize on email marketing. Her web redesign suggestion led to NH PoutineFest selling out in one hour, by far our fastest sell out. She has now

redesigned the primary Poutinefest website to help the brand scale into Maine and beyond.

Camden Martin – Camden is a rising star in Maine and has attended several NH PoutineFest's (NHPF) over the years. He has offered to step up to help Maine PoutineFest create a similar environment as NHPF. PoutineFest is a fun day with a very strong presence of francophone culture and the French language. Camden is going

to help us create that!

Ben Wentzell – Chef Ben has been a long time participant in NHPF. He and his family love the event and have really embraced the vibe of camaraderie we have been trying to create. Ben has stepped up to help our vendors in Maine understand how PoutineFest works, what they need to bring, and what to expect. Having someone with so much experience behind the scenes will really help our Maine vendors crush it.

Pitco Fryers – Pitco has been an amazing supporter of this expansion proj-(*Continued on page 6*)

MAINE Maine immigration updated April 18, 2024Franco-American News and CultureBernard Langlais,

Wabanaki

By Juliana L'Heureux

L'histoire de l'immigration ce qui est vieux est à nouveau.

Maine's immigration history is documented in the Maine Historical Society's Memory Network and re-told in every Franco-American family's genealogy, like those written in "Immigrants from the North". French-Canadians by the thousands immigrated to Maine from Quebec and the Maritime provinces during the 19th and 20th centuries, to take jobs in the once prosperous mills and factories. In fact, the history about Maine's French immigration is a timeline story, continuing with French speaking immigrants arriving from Francophone speaking African nations. Maine's immigration history continues to evolve.



Skowhegan Indian by sculpture Bernard Langlis (1921-1977). The iconic sculpture is being restored after experiencing damage of unkown causes. (L'Heureux photograph)

An on line exhibit on the Maine Memory Network website is titled, "If you aren't of Wabanaki heritage, you are an immigrant to Maine."

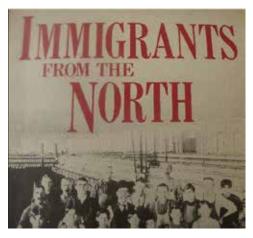
Indigenous people have been living in Maine for thousands of years, and some say, from time immemorial. Oral histories of the Maliseet, Micmac, Passamaquoddy and Penobscot people-known collectively as the Wabanaki-trace their origin from Glooscap, their culture hero. Glooscap shot arrows into ash trees, and when they hit, the trees opened, and the first Wabanaki people emerged.

Glaciers covered Maine 14,000 years ago. As the climate warmed a tundra landscape and large game evolved-including wooly mammoths, mastodons, and sabre-toothed cats. Archaeological evidence indicates that between 9,000 to perhaps as long as 13,000 years ago, Paleo-Indians followed the big game and began hunting and living in what is now Maine.

Rivers developed from melting glaciers and forests grew as the environment stabilized, from around 3,500-9,000 years ago. People adapted and flourished in the changing ecosystem, becoming expert stone and toolmakers that enabled successful hunting and fishing. As populations grew, so did technology. 500-3,000 years ago marks the introduction of pottery making in Wabanaki communities, and the ability to easily store and cook food.

Starting around 500 years ago, the Wabanaki began hosting visitors-mostly European fisherman and explorers, and later, permanent settlements. In 1893, Penobscot historian Joseph Nicolar printed ancient Wabanaki prophecies about foreigners coming to Wabanaki lands, saying it was not a surprise to see white people, and that the elders, "decided, that when the strange people came, to receive them as friends, and if possible make brothers of them."

Archaeological and oral histories both signify that the Wabanaki have consistently lived in the territory now known as Maine longer than any other people. If you are not of Wabanaki heritage, you are an immigrant to Maine!



Essays published by the Hyde School in **Bath Maine**

Immigrants from the North is a series of essays published in 1982, by the Hyde School, in Bath, Franco-American studies class. The dedication describes how the book is a recognition of all ethnic minorities for making America a great country and to all the Franco-Americans who worked to create the book.

A summary about the Franco-American experience describes how an untold number, probably hundreds of thousands of French Canadians, streamed into Maine and New England in the 19th and into the 20th centuries, to fill jobs created by expanding factories. These immigrants from French speaking Canada established footholds in their communities. Because their language barrier was challenged with English speaking company management, and their Catholic faith, these immigrants found themselves separated from other ethnic communities. Nevertheless, as the mills became corporations, the work of the French speaking im-

(Continued on page 8)

(Maine PoutineFest comes to Portland continued from page 6)



ect. Equipment to pull off events like this can be an obstacle. Being able to turn to a reliable business partner, who cares about your mission, is very rare.

Pineland Farms Dairy - Pineland Farms Dairy has supplied the cheese curds for NH PoutineFest for several years. They have been instrumental in helping NHPF accomplish its mission of supporting the Franco-American Centre in Manchester. We're thrilled to bring them a home game to support in the State of Maine

When/Where

Maine PoutineFest takes place on September 14th, 2024, at Thompson's Point in Portland, ME. For event updates, including how to get tickets, please visit www. poutinefest.com/maine.

NEW HAMPSHIRE

A Personal Recap of Le Rassemblement 2024 By Melody Desjardins

What a great weekend at Le Annual Rassemblement with the Franco-American Programs in Orono, Maine, on April 5 - 7. It was my first in-person Rassemblement, and the long drive was definitely worth it to connect with familiar faces and finally meet others whom I had only spoken to through our online groups.

Of course, this recap will be from my perspective and will go into a personal essay that I didn't intend to write for this article, but once I began typing, the words couldn't stop flowing.

Friday, April 5th: Arrival to Le Centre Franco-Américain d'Orono

On Friday, the first day, I intended to arrive just in time to catch the 4pm panel discussing the Franco-American Centre's over 50-year legacy in Orono. The panel featured Josée Vachon, Jim Bishop, and Paul Paré, with Jacob Albert of the Franco American Digital Archives/Portail franco-américain (FADA/PFA) moderating.

But I got caught in the rain during the drive up from New Hampshire, so I was held up by traffic in some spots (probably also due to the incoming solar eclipse). Eventually, I arrived at the Centre around 5:30pm, happy to greet people and await the exciting weekend ahead.

After the potluck dinner provided by the Franco-American Programs, a screening of the 1980 film Bien des mots ont changé took place. Featuring interviews with Yvon Labbé, Claire Bolduc, Paul Paré, and Robert Perreault, it sounded like everyone watching really soaked in a lot of great stories and perspectives. I missed the movie because I hadn't had dinner yet, but I was glad I caught up on some of the discussion afterward.

I felt the excitement among everyone in that packed room as they shared their thoughts on the film and made connections through their own experiences. As I tuned in, I thought about how this was my kind of weekend.

Even at 30 years old, acquaintances or complete strangers often tell me that I need to "have fun" in the conventional ways they expect: go out to bars, party, or get into some lighthearted drunk trouble. What they don't know is that my 20s were full of those activities and outings, and now I find my fun through writing, researching, and imagining new creative ways to tell the Franco-American story.

Alongside my regular writings, I have similar projects that have remained secret, and I'm not sure if I'll ever publish any of them. At the very least, once in a while, I get an idea that I have to share on my blog, Moderne Francos, and that gives me the thrill that some people claim I never experience. Whether I keep my writings to myself or share them with others, the Franco-American story inspires me to create.

That's a big reason why I feel like a part of this community: we have unconventional fun in that we're thrilled to drive hours away to connect with each other through creative work, personal stories, and research projects. Other people who love talking about ancestry, culture, and history? People who know the feeling of finding a specific piece of research you were on the hunt for? Other Franco-Americans with their own creative process and work, channeling their experiences into works of art from visuals to poetry to written stories to theatre? I'm in!

We're often told that there is no future for Franco-American culture due to the lack of interest among younger people, but I believe this year's Rassemblement attendance proved otherwise. The older generations are typically more represented at these kinds of events, but there is a growing number of younger people wanting to (re)discover their heritage, learn French, or connect with other people who also have stories of mémère and pépère, tourtière, gorton/cretons, and a family connection to Québec, Acadie, or French Canada as a whole.

But we'll get into that later, as there was more unconventional fun on the way!

On Friday and Saturday night, a group of us staying at the same hotel gathered in (Continued on page 9)



Susan Poulin presentation, Memories are Strange. Photo by Lisa Desjardins Michaud

(Maine immigration updated continued from page 7)

migrants was recognized for helping to make the manufactured goods world famous. In conclusion, the Hyde students wrote, "The experiences of the Franco-Americans are proof that America owes much of its growth to the determination of its immigrants."

Twenty-first century French speaking immigrants are arriving in Maine from Africa. An article published in The New York Times describes how immigrants in Maine are "...filling a labor gap. Although a wave of rapid immigration is taxing local resources around the country and drawing political ire. But it might leave America's economy better off." (https://www.nytimes.com/2024/04/12/business/economy/ immigrants-maine-lobster-aging-workforce. html.)

In Maine, companies are looking to immigrants to fill labor force gaps on factory floors and in skilled trades as native-born employees either leave the work force or look toward retirement. The article highlights Chadai Gatembo, an 18 year old, came to Maine two years ago from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who is thinking about one day becoming a full-fledged lobsterman. Chenda Chamreoun came to the United States from Cambodia in 2013, is now working as a quality assurance supervisor at a lobster processing plant in Saco, Maine.

Debate about immigration has accompanied every wave of immigrants who yearned to begin new lives with their hope to live the American dream. Regardless of often overwhelming challenges, the premise reported by the Maine Memory Network is the reality. Unless you happen to be a descendent of the Wabanaki nation, you and I are all immigrants.

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(A Personal Recap of Le Rassemblement 2024 continued from page 8)

one of the lounge rooms to hang out. I always love these moments where we connect on a more personal level and talk about our lives in general before something about Franco-Americans is somehow brought up again, but we don't mind diving into more discussion.



Couch-left: Daniel Moreau, Joan Vermette, David Vermette. Chair: Melody Keilig (Desjardins), Chair: Steven Riel, Standing: Mike Campbell, Abby Paige, Couch: Patrick Lacroix, Timothy Beaulieu and Marcelle Murray. Photo by Robert Sylvain.

Now, onto Saturday's activities! Saturday, April 6th: Presentations Galore!

Saturday was Le Rassemblement's full day of engaging presentations and exciting announcements. I regret that I can't recall the details of every presentation, but I enjoyed listening to other people's perspectives, written works, and research. However, I will briefly cover a few of them.

I was instantly drawn into "Coming Home," a presentation by author Paula Grandpre Wood about the ceinture fléchée passed down in her family for over 100 years. She detailed her research and Franco-American story in her book, The Long Walk Home with the Ceinture Fléchée: The Arrow Sash.



Paula Grandpré Wood presenting, "Coming Home". Photo by Jacob Albert.

As many of you may already know, I'm fascinated by the history of textiles. So, I was immersed in Paula's presentation about her ancestors and the significance of the ceinture fléchée not only to her family history but also as a symbol of Franco-American culture.

Another presenter, Tom Pinette, presented a talk titled "How can St. John Valley French Survive?" Tom shared his research and insights into the efforts to preserve and teach the unique French Acadian dialect in the St. John Valley of northern Maine.

Speaking of Maine, Tim Beaulieu and Marcelle Murray announced a massive project they've been working on: Maine PoutineFest! The fries, curds, and gravy will hit Thompson's Point in Portland on September 14, 2024.

Abigail Worthing spoke about her role in Franco-American festivities with her presentation, "La Kermesse Franco American Heritage Festival: History and Moving Forward." An annual festival in June with Franco-American roots, La Kermesse has transformed over the years into a celebration of all cultures in Biddeford, Maine.



Abigail Worthing presenting "La Kermesse Franco American Heritage Festival: History and Moving Forward." Photo by Jacob Albert

During her presentation, Abigail shared her personal experience with the festival, including heartwarming childhood memories of attending La Kermesse with her family. Today, it's come full circle for her as a member of the festival's Board of Directors and Marketing Coordinator. This year's La Kermesse is taking place from June 20-23.

Another presentation I enjoyed watching was "Cloth: Art, Lumber and Textiles in

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2024" by artist Tanja Kunz, where she utilized different textiles and textures to create unique pieces of art. It was interesting to see her creative interpretations of how these materials could be placed together and shaped into something one-of-a-kind that can also call back to the history of Franco-Americans working with textiles at home, in the mills, or both.



Artist Tanja Kunz presenting "Cloth: Art, Lumber and Textiles in 2024".

Of course, I wish I could recap everyone's presentations in a neat little package, but this article would have to be much longer than it already is! So, please check out the table below with the whole presentation list.

9 am	Susan Poulin	"Memories are Strange"		
9:15 am	Robert Sylvain	"UM Franco Centre Audio Archives" "The Tiny Box"		
9:30 am	Robert Perreault			
9:45 am	Tanja Kunz	"Cloth: Art, Lumber and Textiles in 2024"		
10 am	Kerri Arsenault	"Just Men"		
10:15 am	Leslie Choquette and Kate Bradley	The French Institute		
10:30 am	Abigail Worthing	"La Kermesse Franco American Heritage Festival: History and Moving Forward"		
10:45 am	Jake Michaud	"Excerpt: Le Bonhomme Sept Heures"		
11:00 am	David Vermette	"Clueless Old White Guy: A Memoir"		
11:15 am	Paula Grandpre Wood	"Coming Home"		
11:30 am	Jesse Martineau	Update		
11 :45 am	Mary Elizabeth Aubé	"Mémère comes to Lewiston"		
12 pm	Paul Paré	"The Obituary Girl"		
12:15 pm	Bella D'Ambrosio	Pen Pal Power		
12:30 pm	Tom Pinette	"How can St. John Valley French survive?"		
12:45 pm	Steven Riel	Poems		
1:00 pm	Jane Martin	Essay in Progress		

After presentations and lunch, everyone could join different groups to talk, explore the campus trails, play games, craft, or continue to mingle. Although not in the official presentation lineup, there was another presentation with the dedicated team behind the Franco-American Digital Archives.

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There's nothing cozier on a chilly, windy day than staying in and learning, so I was excited to watch the presentation about an announcement outlining updates on their site.

The Franco American Digital Archives/Portail franco-américain (FADA/ PFA) offers keyword search through archival collections from about two dozen repositories in the U.S. and Canada, in both English and French.

The portal provides access to these materials through the institutions that share them and through standard vocabularies like the Library of Congress Subject Headings, genre terms, dates, names of people who created the archival materials, and more.

It also provides access to these collections through lists of terms recognizable to the Franco-American community, such as family names, parishes and neighborhoods, occupations, and community-created topics and themes that are important to the culture.

UMaine has contracted with Daniel Berthereau, a France-based developer who has built similar web-based projects to display historical materials for the Louvre, Université PSL, and other organizations.

In the coming months, FADA/PFA will migrate to a new software, Omeka S, which will offer new features, such as a visual map that will enable them to display archival collections geographically. The migration will also allow the creation of linked websites for institutions that cannot display their own digital collections.

The new site is expected to launch this summer, so get ready to research. Merci, Jacob Albert of FADA/PFA, for the detailed explanation!

Among the other great activities and presentations, a few of us in our 20s to 40s had the opportunity to discuss topics and answer questions on our panel, "Franco America Today and Going Forward," with myself, Tom Pinette, Joey Leblanc, Camden Martin, Timothy Beaulieu, and Patrick Lacroix as the moderator.



Games included a Pitchnut/Pitouche board and cards for Charlemagne. Photos by Cecile Thornton

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Caption: Left to right: Marcelle Murray, Camden Martin, Timothy Beaulieu, Melody Keilig (Desjardins), Daniel Moreau, Joey Leblanc, Mike Campbell, Patrick Lacroix, & Tom Pinette. Photo by Cecile Thornton.

Prompted with questions from our moderator, Patrick Lacroix of the UMFK Acadian Archives, we each responded with our thoughts about taking Franco-American culture into the future with new generations. For instance, what exactly is a Millennial or Gen. Z Franco-American? What does it mean to be a Franco-American today?

Like every generation, we must realize that trends, values, and culture change over time. No particular time in our culture's history will ever be completely preserved; instead, it adapts and takes on new forms as it lives on. This shift is fantastic news for our heritage and culture!

Adapting is the way to survive, not clinging onto a decades-old checklist of requirements that become expectations that cause the younger generations to walk away. At this point, we've heard it all. If we weren't born and raised speaking French, the culture is already dead; if we try to learn French, we're not learning it correctly; if we're more interested in the culture itself without the language, we're not qualified enough to call ourselves Franco-American.

During this panel, I spoke about how my mémère and pépère found their Franco-American heritage in their family history and ancestry, being Catholic, and speaking French. Although I can only relate to the first point, I don't see this as a total defeat: the culture lived on in me through things that most people around me could never relate to.

I was raised like a true red, white, and blue American. I never had a traditional French-Canadian meal during the holidays or a French class at school to retreat into and find myself. I had so little to go on, but I knew I had some kind of French heritage from the time I was about six years old.

All of that led me to where I am now and where I was, at my first in-person Rassemblement, in that packed room of people who understood and related to me as I related to them. Throughout the weekend, I kept hearing that this year's crowd was the biggest yet and the most young people at any of these annual gatherings ever. I'd call that a victory: we're on the brink of younger people discovering or rediscovering their Franco-American heritage and culture!

Yes, we've been Americanized, but that was once the dream of the people who came before us. Most, if not all, of our families wanted to blend in the best they could, whether by anglicizing their surnames or shifting to speaking English over French. Now that we fortunately live in a much different time, we're able to bring back what was buried long ago and allow it to breathe again.

The concept of feeling like you're returning home, wherever that may be and in the most unlikely places, got brought up. During this discussion, I had a realization: could it be that the reason New Hampshire felt like my true home my whole life was that it was the one place I could go to find answers about my maternal side's Franco-American background? I didn't have that kind of community where I grew up, in a small town in the Midwest that was never home in my heart, where my cultural knowledge was never understood by others.

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During family road trips to New Hampshire, I heard jokes with punchlines in French and play-on-words that I didn't 'get' without an explanation, but that felt more at home to me than any number of times I tried to relate to my peers back in the place I had to call home. I wanted to know about every ancestor my relatives had information on; I had to learn about their stories and what that meant for me in carrying on the Franco-American culture.

Near the end of our long-winded panel discussion, which nobody wanted to end, author David Vermette of *A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans* asked us an interesting question.

"What is the Franco-American spirit?"

I had to think about that, and thinking on my feet is not my strong suit. But I thought back to all of those family gatherings in New Hampshire during my formative years and how they differed from the paternal side of my family, where get-togethers were more like walking on eggshells and being told not to bring up specific topics to avoid tension and potential conflict.

I remembered the room full of relatives with French surnames and how there was always a lightheartedness in the air. The jokes, the laughing, and the family stories were funny and a little self-deprecating, but all in good fun while expressing a love for everything that made us Franco-American.

So, to answer the question, I concluded that we're quiet and reserved with a good sense of humor about ourselves. When we get together, we become loud and can't stop talking to each other about our experiences, stories, and families. Our panel discussion went over time, and everyone in that room still had more to say. That kind of passion, dedication, and endurance among us is what will keep our culture alive.

It isn't about dwindling numbers or pitting our culture's "failures" against another culture's "successes." It's us competing against ourselves to celebrate our heritage and spread our culture in our own ways. I've been told before that because we're smaller in population compared to other cultural groups in the U.S., our heritage language is threatened by this alone. But it doesn't matter if we're the smallest group on earth; there are cultures much smaller in numbers than us who still live on today and work hard to preserve their language and culture.

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They're surviving, and so will we.

A part of that preservation is giving younger generations a space to discuss the role that Franco-American, French-Canadian, Acadian, Québécois, and Francophone heritage and culture play in our lives. We can do this through the Young Franco-American Summit (YFAS), founded at the Franco-American Programs with Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Susan Pinette, and Daniel Moreau.

As a group, we held the first YFAS in October 2021 at the Franco-American Centre in Orono, ME, and have since held it at the Millyard Museum in Manchester, NH, in October 2022 and at Rivier University in Nashua, NH, with Le Club Richelieu de Nashua in October 2023.

Daniel hosted the first two years before I had the honor of hosting the YFAS event in October 2023. I'm hosting YFAS again this year and decided to extend the original age limit to anyone aged 18 to 39 in an effort to get more young people to feel "young enough" to attend. It's funny how some of them think their 30s are "old." As I said at Le Rassemblement, 30 is the new 20, and 40 is the new 30!

Okay, and I've received several messages from those over 35 (the original age limit) but younger than 40 asking if they could attend YFAS. I told them I would be happy to make an exception, but I thought being more upfront with allowing those in that age range would garner more attention and interest among them.

YFAS gives younger generations a chance to give presentations, meet new people, and hold meaningful conversations about who we are as Franco-Americans today.

The event is primarily for Franco-Americans, which typically includes people of French-Canadian, Québécois, and Acadian heritage and culture. However, everyone is welcome to contribute to this discussion and present or attend, no matter their language, heritage, or culture.

The event is held in English, but French is obviously welcome! In fact, we had a presenter last year who gave a speech entirely in French. Further, YFAS records were broken with ten attendees fluent in French and only two (myself included) who didn't speak French.

So, if you're 18 to 39 years old and interested in attending or presenting at YFAS, please contact me at melody@modernefrancos.com.

After the panel, it was a great time to continue mingling before dinner. The excitement of Maine PoutineFest continued with the official belt making the rounds for photos. That's when the Desjardins' line got our group photo, consisting of Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Cecile (Desjardins) Thornton, and me, a Desjardins by the pen and maternal family line.



Left to right: Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Cecile (Desjardins) Thornton, and Melody Keilig (Desjardins). Photo by Lisa Michaud.

Sunday, April 7th: Coffee and the Weekend Wrap-Up

Sunday, the last day of Le Rassemblement, is a morning debrief and wrap-up of the weekend over coffee and breakfast. Everyone usually gets to the Centre sometime in the morning and stays until about noontime, chatting and saying their goodbyes.

We discussed what we liked about the weekend, what we thought of the extra break



Group photo by Robert Sylvain.

time, and more. This led to a lot of great discussion, and we were all able to voice our opinions and give helpful feedback to the Franco-American Programs.

Special thanks to Susan Pinette and Lisa Desjardins Michaud of the Franco-American Programs! They were running this entire weekend, literally and figuratively: scheduling the whole weekend in advance, setting things up, getting food out for lunch and dinner, staying up late into the night cooking, returning to the Centre bright and early, and accommodating everyone.

After my goodbyes, it was time for the long drive back home to New Hampshire amid the incoming solar eclipse traffic. Overall, I enjoyed my time at Le Rassemblement, and I look forward to attending it next year!



(See more photos on page 13)

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NEW HAMPSHIRE

A History of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day in the United States

By Melody Desjardins

What is Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day?

Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day is a national holiday that began in the province of Québec celebrated by French-Canadians, Québécois, and Franco-Americans. Celebrated on June 24th, this holiday honors the traditional feast day of St. John the Baptist. However, the religious background of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day has become less prevalent in favor of a more secular approach.

What we know as Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day today comes more from French-Canadian businessman Ludger Duvernay. In 1834, Duvernay attended a Saint Patrick's Day celebration in Montréal and became inspired by the display of cultural pride. So, he got the idea of French-Canadians having a similar holiday, and shortly after, Duvernay formed the Saint Jean-Baptiste Society. The first official Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day was celebrated on June 24, 1834.

Also called "La St-Jean" and "Fête nationale du Québec," the holiday is mainly known today as a celebration of Québec Francophone culture. Think of how we celebrate the Fourth of July in the U.S. with parades, family get-togethers, barbeques, picnics, bon-fires, and fireworks; that's how our Northern cousins kick off Fête nationale!

SJB Celebrations in the U.S.

Despite Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day not being an official American holiday (yet!), there's a long history of these celebrations in the U.S., particularly in New England. As mentioned, the first official Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebration occurred in Montréal in 1834. In the New England states, there are accounts of celebrations between 1873 and 1890 as recounted here on Franco-American history blog Query the Past.

Locations of these Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day events include Lowell, Massachusetts; Worcester, MA; Fall River, MA; Haverhill, MA; Woonsocket, Rhode Island; Pawtucket, RI; Nashua, New Hampshire; and Manchester, NH.

Activities between these celebrations included picnics, speeches, attending Catholic Mass, and parades. Although much of what we do today for Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day is still celebrated with modern additions, there are no longer Franco-American displays of parades that reach the lavishness of those in the past.

However, linked below this timeline of events is an account of a Minneapolis Saint-Jean-Baptiste celebration in 1883. Activities included Catholic Mass, music, and a parade with a procession of "a police platoon, A Canadian music body, Citizens of Minneapolis, Members of the French Canadian Association, the clergy in cars."

If you know of any other Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations outside of New England, please make your voice heard with a response!

In New England states like Maine, Saint-Jean-Baptiste parades were common in Lewiston, with floats representing Québec history and the Catholic faith. A young boy was chosen yearly to symbolize Saint John the Baptist, sometimes with a lamb by his side.

It's challenging to find Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations in the U.S. today, but we'll dive into some modern-day events soon!

But first, why is June 24th known more widely as La Fête nationale in Québec and not Sainte-Jean-Baptiste Day like it used to be? And why do we still call the holiday Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day in the U.S.?

Why Not La Fête Nationale in the U.S.?

On June 24, 1977, the government of René Lévesque renamed Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day to La Fête nationale du Québec to distance it from its religious connotation. Throughout the 1980s and 90s, celebrations became highly politicized in the wake of the first and second referendums on Québec sovereignty.



A Saint-Jean-Baptiste program from Lowell, MA.

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However, La Fête nationale became more about celebrating Québec art, culture, and society over time. Today, many communities within Québec come together to celebrate under the blue and white of their province's flag with decked-out parades to match!



Baptist, patron saint of Québec.

This week, the Québec Government Office in Boston had an exciting announcement. The Mayor of Boston declared June 21, 2023 as La Fête nationale du Québec! For the first time in its history, the Québec flag flew at Boston City Hall.



The Québec flag flew for the first time in its history in Boston, MA, on June 21, 2023. Photo credit: The Québec Government Office in Boston.

Boston City Hall. Search for Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations in your state, or organize one if none are happening! Some events and festivals have been discontinued over the years, so we must keep Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day and Franco-American Day alive going forward.

co-American Day festivals.

In the U.S., Franco-Americans continue to call the holiday Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day. Although, some states celebrate Franco-American Day or Franco-American Heritage Day on June 23rd or 24th. Since 2008, Connecticut has recognized June 24th as Franco-American Day. Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Massachusetts have also held Fran-

The Franco-American Day Com-

mittee in Lowell has organized a Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebration for de-

cades, starting with a mid-morning raising of the Québec flag at Lowell City Hall.

Following the flag-raising is an early

prayer service in honor of St. John the

The Impact of Visual Culture

La Fête nationale thrives in Québec, but Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day is unknown in the American mainstream. Franco-Americans are a blip on the cultural radar, even though we're still a significant part of the population in parts of the country. So, what changed in Franco-American visibility?

The decline of the French language is a factor, with Franco-Americans leaving Petit Canada neighborhoods for work and education. Along the way, French was dropped in favor of English due to the U.S. being a majority Anglophone country. Because the language wasn't passed down enough, the Franco-American identity connected to it became lost.

Another factor is the need for more cultural visibility in comparison to the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day celebrations of the past. Think about what we have today to display

our Franco-American culture alongside the fleur-de-lis. We have much to share in food, music, dancing, and folk-inspired clothing! I've previously written more about specific steps we should take for more Franco-American visibility in terms of Franco symbology and French-Canadian folklore.



Folk dance group Les Mutins de Longueuil in Québec costume for June 24th.

Leaving a Cultural Legacy

Recently, I noticed the "heritage nights" at the Red Sox with other common cultural groups in New England. In the photos of these events I've seen thus far, these groups use their visual culture to their advantage: some are in cultural clothing, some wearing clothing inspired by their culture's flag, and some dancing to their culture's music.

Why don't our Franco-American institutions fund a Franco-American or French-Canadian heritage night? I may not be a sports fan, but even I know how American the game of baseball is and its ability to unite people. In my early deep dives into Franco-American research, I remember coming across the Franco-American Heritage Day celebration at the NH FisherCats complete with custom jerseys.

Unfortunately, by the time I moved back to New Hampshire, the Franco-American Heritage Day already ended.

The good news is that festivals like New Hampshire PoutineFest are getting people interested in this classic comfort food of Québec. Still, you know Franco-American culture has lost the prominence it used to hold when most people have no idea what a "Franco-American" is, compared to the days when the term was regularly used in old media like newspapers and literature from Québec and the U.S.

We must keep holding festivals and events for our community, but we also need to enter the mainstream by making ourselves known to the outside world. Language is one thing we can attempt to gain back, but we're missing huge opportunities to show our presence in louder ways.

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MASSACHUSETTS

A Painting as Portal to People and Places of the Past Megan St. Marie

This post is the ninth 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.

Genealogy enthusiasts don't have to explain to each other why we find poring over primary documents and family trees so compelling. We love getting lost in rabbit holes of research, and we rejoice in breaking through brick walls, wielding documentation like sledgehammers against uncertainty about our roots. Sharing our findings with others who don't share our passion requires that we connect the dots between the names and dates and records we discover to present our ancestors in their full humanity, with storytelling and emotion fleshing out the bare bones of fact. Sometimes objects and heirlooms help in this process by tangibly bringing us closer to previous generations. My son and I snuggle under an afghan my grandmother made, and though he never met her, he can imagine her hands at work.

A print of a painting of a white horse that has been in my family for four generations inspires this piece of writing. It came to me from my father, Raymond Alfred Lambert, who

grew up in a small farming village on the border of Vermont and Québec. He said it originally belonged to his grandfather, Alfred "Fred" Damian Lambert (1882–1963). Though I never knew this great-grandfather because he died before I was born, my dad has shared many stories about him over the years. Some were about his team of white Percheron workhorses named Dick and Dan. As a child I thought my great-grandpa Lambert had actually hired someone to paint this picture as a tribute to them. I later realized the implausibility of such an act—commissioning a portrait of a workhorse would have been quite an indulgence for a Vermont oat farmer!

At one point my dad said it was likely his grandfather stumbled across the picture at a barn auction and bought it since it reminded him of his horses. I accepted that theory until I hung it in my office at Modern Memoirs and noticed that handwritten on the back are the words "Great-Grandpa Raymond's horse 'Alpha." In addition to being my dad's first name, Raymond was the maiden name of Fred Lambert's wife, my great-grandmother Anastasie "Tazzy" Raymond Lambert (1886–1971). Like Fred, she also died before my birth, and I never heard any stories about her family's horses. But, her father, Louis Homer Raymond (1863–1903), who would've been "Great-Grandpa Raymond" to my dad and his generation, listed his occupation as "Farmer" on his 1884 marriage license, and it's entirely possible that he owned a Percheron workhorse named Alpha.

I know very little about the life of this more distant ancestor, and the most compelling details I have are not about his farm animals or his work, but about his untimely, and rather gruesome death. Louis's obituary states that he was at the hospital recovering from an appendectomy when he awoke from a nightmare and leapt out of bed. Apparently, this sudden movement opened the incision from his operation, and he never recovered from the ensuing complications. He died, leaving behind his wife, Delia Pelkey/Pelletier (1864–1935) and their six children. Compounding the tragedy was the fact that Delia was pregnant with their last child, Dorothy Edna Raymond (1903–1977), who was born just a month after Louis's unexpected passing. He was only forty years old.

Tazzy, the eldest child in the family, was seventeen when her father died, so he wasn't there a year and a half later when she married Fred Lambert in 1905. The Franco-American community in their area was closeknit, and I wonder if Fred had known his late father-in-law before he died, if they'd talked about horses and farming, if the elder Louis had told young Fred that Percherons were the best workhorses around. I don't know the answers to these questions; but I do know



A print of this painting of a white horse once hung in the Vermont farmhouse of Megan St. Marie's great-grandparents Alfred "Fred" Damian Lambert and Anastasie "Tazzie" Lambert, and now now hangs in her Modern Memoirs office. Read on for more information



Fred Lambert standing in front of his farmhouse in Highgate, Vermont with his Percheron workhorses, Dick (left) and Dan (right), c. 1950



Fred and Tazzy Lambert at their farm in Highgate, Vermont, 1937

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MASSACHUSETTS

(A Painting as Portal to People and Places of the Past continued from page 16)

that Fred ended up with Dick and Dan, Percherons like the one in the painting that was apparently owned by Great-Grandpa Lambert—and, it turns out, like generations of Franco farmers before them.

My dad's genealogy research stretches back to mid-16th-century France as it traces the Lambert family name to his 10x-great-grandfather, Louis Lambert (not to be confused with the above-mentioned Louis Raymond), who is the earliest entry in the patrilineal line ancestry chart included here. We can't confirm exactly where Louis Lambert lived in the 1500s, but we do know that his son Jean had a son named Audax Odoard Lambert dit Champagne (my dad's 8x-great-grandfather), who was born in a small village called Tourouvre. It's likely that Audax hailed from there, as well. This community is in the region of Perche, from which Percheron horses get their name. Did Fred Lambert know he descended from Percheron families when he brought Percheron horses Dick and Dan to his farmhouse in Vermont? Perhaps. But even if he didn't, the small connection is thrilling to me as I think of him, knowingly or not, uniting with his ancestral homeland through the animals who helped him farm his land in Vermont to provide for next generations.

In 2023, my father and I travelled to France on a dream-come-true heritage trip, visiting many of the places where our ancestors lived. We spied several Percheron horses as we drove through Perche on our way to Tourouvre, and seeing them made us think of the horse painting that once hung in Fred and Tazzy Lambert's farmhouse in Vermont. We were on our way to visit L'Église St. Aubin, the church in Tourouvre where the first Lambert in our lineage to immigrate to French Canada was baptized in 1632. He is my dad's 7x great-grandfather and was the son of Audax, named Aubin Lambert dit Champagne in honor of the patron saint of the church.

Today L'Église St. Aubin is still a place of worship, but it also serves as something of a museum devoted to the Percheron migration to French Canada.[i] There we saw 19th-century stained-glass windows depicting the immigration and also the return of descendants who commissioned the windows.

We also saw a plaque with Aubin's name inscribed, and Dad and I both lit candles in his honor and in honor of his Parisian wife, Élisabeth Aubert, who immigrated to Canada as "une fille du roi" (king's daughter) in 1670. (A dramatization of their union was included in the 2017 CBC documentary "The Story of Us", starting at about minute 21 in this clip.) In the midst of a trip filled with moments that exceeded all of my hopes, it was the very best day for me because I knew it was the most meaningful day for my dad, and on some level we shared this special day not only with each other, but with Aubin and Élisabeth, and with Louis, Fred and Tazzy, too.

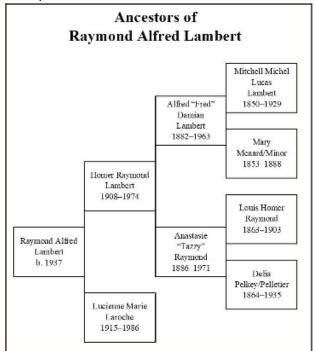
When we returned from France, Dad and I wanted to share our experiences with others, and we were delighted when the Franco American Centre at the University of Maine-Orono agreed to host our online presentation entitled Dans les Pas de Nos Ancêtres (In the Steps of Our Ancestors): A Father-Daughter Trip to France.

Since then, we have shared stories and photos at our family reunion, and I've written a few brief pieces for the Modern Memoirs newsletter, while wanting to write even more. When I finally found the time to draft this piece, my staff helped me solve the mystery around the origins of Fred and Tazzy's picture of the white horse. With thanks to Book Designer Nicole Miller, I now know that it is a magazine illustration from circa 1902 entitled Sunday Morning by Austrian artist Carl Kahler. Perhaps Louis Raymond saw this illustration in a magazine, just a year or so before he died, and it reminded him of his horse, so he kept it. Perhaps Tazzy then held onto the picture in memory of her father, displaying it in the home she shared with her husband, Fred, on a farm where they also kept Percheron horses.

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024



Louis Raymond's 1884 marriage license, listing his occupation as "Farmer"



An ancestry chart prepared by Modern Memoirs Genealogist Liz Sonnenberg for this piece, documenting some of Megan St. Marie's paternal ancestry, including her 2x-great-grandfather Louis Homer Raymond, who died in 1903

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Obituary for Louis Homer Raymond (here referred to as H.L. Raymo) describing his sudden death after a routine appendectomy in 1903 when he was forty years old

(Continued on page 18)

Le Forum

(A Painting as Portal to People and Places of the Past continued from page 17)

Though I can only speculate about this part of the story, it's immensely satisfying to know more about the picture itself, which acts like a portal to people and places of the past in my family history.

Postscript

I thought I had said all I wanted to about Kahler's Sunday Morning painting and how it connects me to my family history, but then I sent a draft of this blog post to my dad so he could review it before I shared it. In response he told me with sadness that the barn Fred Lambert once owned, where he kept the Percheron horses Dick and Dan, was recently destroyed by fire. I felt a bittersweet sense of synchronicity at hearing this news since I started writing this piece on the very day the barn burned, not knowing of the fire's occurrence. The following is a brief reflection my dad wrote about the loss, which I am honored to share below:

On April 2, 2024 at 4 a.m. the barn on route 78 between Highgate Center and East Highgate, Vermont, formerly part of the farm owned by my grandpa Fred Lambert and grandma Tazzy Lambert, was consumed by a fire of unknown origin.

The barn was a place of many fond memories for me. Grandpa stanchioned his herd of 21 dairy cows in it. A pen was the home of a prized bull available for breeding cows, mostly Jerseys, a few Brown Swiss, and some mixed breeds. Next to the bullpen was a pen for calves and heifers with their promise of much milk to come from them in the future. On the north end were two stalls for Grandpa's white-coated Percheron workhorses.

In front of the stanchioned cows was an alleyway. Hay stored above in the hayloft would be tossed down one forkful at a time and placed in front of each cow. Corn silage from the silo on the south end of the barn was shoveled before each cow, and grain from the feed store, delivered in burlap bags, added to the hope of an abundance of milk from each cow milked in the early morning and late afternoon. A necessary part of the barn was a long gutter behind the cows to collect waste the cows dropped into it. Shoveling the smelly stuff into a wheelbarrow and wheeling it outside to the manure pile was, to put it bluntly, a stinky job. A large watering trough for the horses and separate water bowls next to each cow provided water from a driven well near the barn.

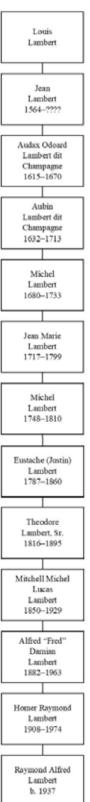
The old barn is gone, but memories of it remain burned in my mind. For me it was my grandpa's temple, where he paid homage to the bovines and equines that were such a big part of his life as a farmer steeped in the ways of agriculture he learned as a boy in the late-19th century in northern Vermont.

Dad's likening of the barn to a temple designates it as holy ground in his heart, on par with the holiness of the church we visited together in Perche. Reverence for places like these is integral to my passion for family history, making this work transcend bare facts or mere nostalgia to achieve a sense of the sacred. With his family history research, my father has given me, and everyone in our family, a tremendous gift. His genealogy website contains over 48,000 names of relatives he has documented, dating back centuries. In addition to gifting us this treasure trove of information about our roots, my dad has passed along many objects dear to him and his family, like the Sunday Morning picture in my office. When I look at it, I think of our ancestors, the places where they lived, and worshiped, and worked, and how their lives allowed me to come to the place I am today, grounded in my own family's history as I help others publish books about theirs.

[i] We were also delighted to discover that the official Musée de l'émigration française au canada is located just up the street from L'Église St. Aubin, and we paid it a visit after our time at the church.

Lambert Patrilineal Line

MASSACHUSETTS



A patrilineal line ancestry chart prepared by Genealogist Liz Sonnenberg showing Megan (Lambert) St. Marie's patrilineal line, going back thirteen generations to her 11x-great-grandfather.

(Continued on page 19)

MASSACHUSETTS

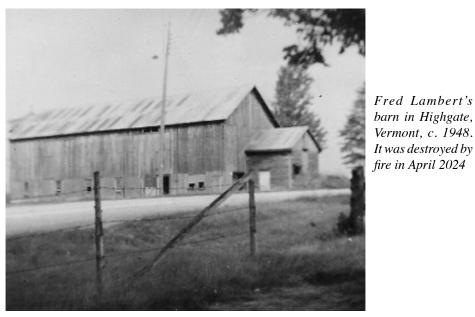
(A Painting as Portal to People and Places of the Past continued from page 18)

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A plaque in L'Église St. Aubin listing the names of people who imigrated from Tourourve au Perche, France to Canada, including Megan St. Marie's 8x great-grandfather Aubin Lambert dit Champagne



Ray Lambert standing with a local police officer outside of L'Église St. Aubin in Tourourve au Perche, France, April 2023





Megan St. Marie standing with her father, Raymond Alfred Lambert, in front of L'Église St. Aubin, April 2023. This is the church in Tourouvre au Perche, France where the first Lambert in their lineage to immigrate to French Canada was baptized in 1632



Megan St. Marie, photo by Jason Lamb Photography

Megan St. Marie is president of Modern Memoirs, Inc.



https://www.modernmemoirs.com/



Chère Le Forum;

Je reçois *Le Forum* depuis son début, et je garde la majorité des numéros, conservant ainsi des articles d'interêt.

Mais en vieillissant (je suis né en 1934) il me semble que le temps passe plus vite. Je vois que je n'ai pas renouveler ma souscription depuis longtemps. Malgré que j'ai fait des contributions entre temps. Alors je vous envoi \$ et un gros merci pour m'avoir fourni sans arrêt chaque numéro.

Le français m'a toujours bien servi. J'ai travallée au Bureau chef de L'Union St-Jean Bpte à Woonsocket dans les années 50 et 60 et fut membres (et officièr) de plusieurs organization F.A. Je suis couremment secrétaire Régionale pour tous les Club Richelieu de la Nouvelle Angleterre, et présidente de mon Club Richelieu de Woonsocket.

J'apprécie beaucoup la revue du *Forum.* J'ai composé plusieurs poèmes en français par demande pour le programme français de feu Roger Laliberté à Woonsocket, donc vous en avez publié quelqu'uns dans votre revue. Merci pour votre déligence pour notre culture.

> Trudy Lamoureaux Woonsocket, RI

Chère Trudy, Merci pour vos mots très gentils!

Veuillez consulter la page 34 pour votre soumission.

avec appréciation, La Rédactrice

Dear Le Forum Readers;

Please take the time to send us a note...we would like to hear from you. Is there anything you would like to see more of, less of? Consider sharing your work, we are always looking for material.

With rising printing and postage costs we need your help in continuing our mission....making our voices heard! Dear Le Forum;

Thank you for the latest copy of *Le Forum*! I especially like the article by Yvon Labbé.

Please update my subscription year! Keep up the good work! Keep on rising!

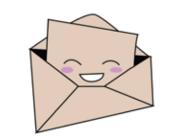
> Merci beaucoup! Pierre Girard Golden Valley, MN

Dear Le Forum;

Here is a modest contribution of support to *Le Forum*, a unique necessary voice and showcase of New England's Franco heritage.

Please continue to send me the paper. Happy Easter Season and Happy Spring!

> Merci beaucoup! Louise Peloquin Groton, MA



SEND LETTERS TO: LE FORUM LISA DESJARDINS MICHAUD 110 CROSSLAND HALL ORONO, ME 04469-5719

I ask that you take a look at your mailing label on the back of your copy. Check the date so that your subscription is current. (Month/Year). And consider making a financial donation.

I thank you all for your continued support through the years!

Merci mille fois!

La rédactrice, Lisa Desjardins Michaud

LETTRES/LETTERS/NEW HAMPSHIRE

(A History of Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day in the United States continued from page 14)



One of my interpretations of Franco-American cultural clothing inspired by Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day.

The possibilities for Franco-American visibility are endless: we just have to put the work into it and get more creative with our approach. It's not that we don't have the same customs held by other cultural groups, because we absolutely do, but we're notorious for gathering away from the mainstream eye.

We have traditional foods like tourtière, gorton, cretons, sugar pie, and poutine to proudly show off. Our traditional folk music is catchy as anyone else's, with the beat of Podorythmie adding excitement to every step.

We can make SJB Day the Franco-American Fourth of July while celebrating July 4th a few weeks later! How lucky are we to have two summer holidays so close to each other?! I love that we can celebrate the Québec flag colors and the Stars & Stripes; we can be proud of being in both worlds, whether Francophone, Anglophone, or bilingual.

Our roads may lead back to Québec, but we're home in the United States where we can leave our legacy behind. But only if we act now.

https://modernefrancos.com/a-historyof-saint-jean-baptiste-day-in-the-unitedstates/

MASSACHUSETTS

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024

(N.D.L.R./Editor's note: Reprinted with permission from the author. This piece first appeared on the richardhowe.com blog on December 7, 2020 and was later published in the 2021 edition of the yearly literary journal called "The Lowell Review" which is available by consulting richardhowe.com.)

BÉBÉ and Me

My mother lost her first child, a girl. Two years later, I showed up at Saint Joseph's Hospital, another girl. Both my parents were thrilled with their strong, healthy child and gender didn't weigh in on their love at first sight. The little girl I became was not as spectacularly striking as

my four elder cousins Michelle, Monique, Denyse and Renée. Nonetheless, I was said to be "as cute as a button", a label I never found particularly pleasing. I simply couldn't figure out how buttons could be cute. Kittens and puppies and chicks are cute, but buttons? Why couldn't people just use "cute" and drop the button part? Anyway, I knew this label wasn't up to par with "charming" and "stunning". I had to make do with button cuteness. Fortunately, Maman and Papa had no doubt that buttons could be very cute and their little girl was the proof.

Three and a half years after my arrival, to my parents was born a son, the first son of the first son who was my father. A son eclipsed the button to shine forevermore within the family galaxy.

We only had two grandparents at the time of my brother Antoine's birth: my father's parents, both immigrants from Québec who had made a good life for themselves in New England. Joseph my grandfather, a selfmade man with a primary school education, had begun his professional life at the age of eight working six days a week in the wool mills of Woonsocket, Rhode Island. He and his father had left their family in Canada to try to make good in the then booming textile industry.

Father and son worked, ate and slept in the mill and were allowed to meet on Sundays when they attended Mass together and spent the afternoon sharing stories as they walked around town. In the early evening. Joseph would get back to the warehouse where his "bed" – a bale of wool – was waiting for him. House rules stated that family members had to work and lodge in separate buildings. Joseph missed his father's company but he always kept a stiff upper lip, feeling lucky to be able to send the two dollars of weekly wages to his mother back in "le pays" – the old country. The foreman quickly noticed the youngster's quick reflexes and decided to take him under his wing to train him. Joseph climbed up the proverbial ladder and, a half century later, he ended his career managing Lowell's Tool and Dye Company founded on the success



of his inventions. He was very proud of his life's journey as a self-taught engineer.

My grandmother Marianne, after her own stint in the mills, married her seventeen-year-old beau at age sixteen and soon had her hands full raising two boys and seven girls on the top floor of a Merrimack Street tenement. Honest, hardworking and lovely people, they reflected the traditional values of the times in which they lived. They made it a point to keep their French-Canadian heritage alive by speaking French, living their Catholic Faith and continuing many traditions like the cuisine and the way to raise children. When their elder son presented them with his first son, it was as if their universe had welcomed a new planet.

I revered my little brother and prided myself in the new role of big sister and soonto-be playmate. Never was I disappointed that he turned out to be a boy rather than a girl. Playing was playing after all. As a girl, dolls were part of my entertainment for sure. But I often found them too pretty to roughhouse. Wrinkling their starched dresses, messing their hair and dirtying their little faces would have displeased them. So I usually proceeded to make my dolls perfectly content by displaying them on the dining room table in a miniature pageant for everyone to admire. I also gave them orders to behave daintily at all times, to practice their piano scales and to sketch and color very carefully. I had heard those instructions ceremoniously given to my cousins Denyse and Michelle. Their mother insisted on their using their time wisely. Playing with

me, a younger child, would waste precious time and couldn't possibly be beneficial.

Maybe my dolls mirrored my accomplished cousins too much and discouraged me from building a real playmate relationship with them. So naturally, I was drawn to other toys and games which fired up my imagination: plastic farm animals with accessories like tractors, silos, fences and barns; little figurines representing all kinds of trades from artists to scientists as well as doctors and nurses, firefighters, soldiers, whatever the toy shop stocked. My all time favorite were my hand-sized plastic horses.

With them, I was a girl centaur before even knowing what centaurs were. My collection of a half dozen horses all spoke just like "Mr. Ed", the TV show star horse. They were the very best of companions and I gladly shared them with my baby brother whom I affectionately called "Bébé Antoine" or just "Bébé". The big problem was that I couldn't always understand what Bébé was saying. It was all goo-goo and ga-ga to me. On the other hand, I always understood my horses.

The months slid by and my brother and I were both growing fast. When I was with him and my parents, I never once felt overlooked or underloved. I was my father's princess and my mother continued to find me as cute as a button even after I knocked one of my front teeth out falling off of the stool I was perched upon in an effort to reach for the forbidden fruit, AKA, the cookie jar. Life was good.

As we were growing in height and hopefully in wisdom, I became more and more aware of family members' attitudes and reactions towards us children. The (Continued on page 22)

MASSACHUSETTS

Le Forum

(**BÉBÉ and Me** continued from page 21) feeling became acute and pervasive. I was increasingly sensitive to this during our Sunday lunches at my grandparents' house, now on Stevens Street. Grand-mother Marianne, whom we called "Mémère", was an excellent cook, her cuisine largely inspired by the hearty rustic dishes of her native Québec. A favorite meal was the tenderest of pork roasts accompanied by potatoes sautéed in lard and generously buttered mashed turnips and carrots. During summer harvest time, green lettuce leaves handsomely cradled the slices of pumpkin- sized beefeater tomatoes that grandfather,"Pépère", grew in his garden. Warm dinner rolls, homemade relish, piccalilli and pickles also adorned the dinner table.

The lunches required our dressing in our "Sunday best" - carefully pressed trousers with a white shirt and tie for Bébé and a fluffy-skirted fancy dress for me. Maman knew that our appearance would be scrupulously evaluated and would lead to judgements on how successful and accomplished a mother she was. Mémère expected us at noon on the dot. The threshold barely crossed, rich, heady aromas of simmering food embraced us. I called this "the Food Fairy's hug". Our mouths watered and there was never any need to coax Bébé and me to sit straight, with elbows off the table and napkins tied around our necks. After saying "Bénissez-nous mon Dieu..." - "Bless us Lord...", steaming platters of food were passed around as the Food Fairy continued to flit about. Cheery conversations abounded as compliments to the cook resounded. Generally, Maman passed the fit mother test mainly because Bébé and I always cleaned our plates with minimal mess and without coercion. Enjoying, one could even say respecting good food, was in our French-Canadian genes.

Then came dessert, or rather multiple deserts. There were always a couple of pies: pecan, cranberry-raisin, apple, blueberry, banana or chocolate crème. Then all sorts of pastry squares. One couldn't call them simple brownies lest the Food Fairy be insulted. The flavors varied from chocolate to coconut to date, fig, caramel, toffee and yet others which had no specific names because they were Mémère's secret concoctions. Bébé and I had a favorite desert – home made butterscotch ice cream sundae topped with a generous dollop of freshly whipped, slightly sweetened double cream.

The ice cream came from Kimball's

farm and melted quickly causing the topping to slide down the sides of the bowl and dangerously threaten the white linen table cloth. As soon as the ice cream tower began to lean, Bébé and I were allowed to rescue the cream with our fingers. The procedure entailed licking, slurping and tongue-clicking, certainly not part of proper table manners. The sight of our little fingers oozing with sweet white liquid horrified Maman who thought she would lose her rank as a good mother. But no. Mémère allowed this violation of dining etiquette simply because she was thrilled to see that her creations were so very much appreciated by her grandchildren. Maman didn't dare contradict the lady of the house.

It was during one of these epic Sunday lunches that I began to observe that I was treated differently from my little brother. I have to say that from the earliest age, he was a precocious talker, singer, performer

...my father picked up his princess to give her the softest, most tender of kisses on both cheeks while whispering in her ear, "tu es toujours la plus belle", you're always the prettiest.

and storyteller who constantly put Mémère in awe. She showered compliments on him commenting how he was "un beau grand garçon très intelligent", a handsome, very intelligent big boy. It wasn't that she ignored me. I received my smile, hug and kiss upon arrival but not much else, not even the abhorred "cute as a button" comment. At first I just brushed it all off thinking that favoring the younger child was in the natural order of family displays of affection and never was I jealous. But when I saw that Bébé's sundae was systematically garnished with far more butterscotch and cream than mine was, perplexity set in and I started tuning into the adult conversations for confirmation of my suspicions.

Sure enough, Mémère talked incessantly about "Antoine, le fils", the son who would insure the family's future. She punctuated her tirades with loving glances towards Bébé, catching his eye and beaming. When I tried to make eye contact with her, she usually turned away, not out of hostility but rather like someone who glimpses towards a familiar inanimate object like a table or a chair. It's there. It's useful. But otherwise it's devoid of interest. More details of the sort cropped up – rather unpleasant words relating to my resemblance to "the other side of the family", observations about my uncontrollable, baby-fine brown hair and my missing front tooth which marred my smile. These times never once triggered animosity against my brother or even against my grandmother. They just made me feel sad inside. I felt like a multicolored birthday balloon which had once delighted but was now in a corner, ignored.

My yearning for recognition must have been born when I was about five. As early as three years of age Bébé was the life of the party. He was a hard act to follow, not that I had any intention to do so mind you. But I was tired of being invisible so I thought I'd do something to be noticed. I knew where Mémère kept all of her kitchen utensils since I had always enjoyed watching her meticulously prepare our Sunday feasts. As a good grandmother should, she warned us about the danger of handling knives and getting too close to the hot stove. Although very young, both Bébé and I obeyed because not doing so would lead to butterscotch sundae deprivation and we certainly didn't want that.

I had observed that Mémère kept all kinds of scissors in a special drawer, conveniently reachable by "une petite" like me. So one Sunday, while everyone was in the parlor listening to Bébé sing Gene Autry's "Back in the saddle again", I thought I'd come out of the wings and take center stage for myself. I removed the black patent leather shoes Maman forced me to wear on Sundays, although she knew they were uncomfortable and irritatingly noisy when I walked. I slinked into the kitchen, opened the scissor drawer, examined all of the pairs and chose the large bulky instrument Mémère used to cut chicken parts. It was larger than my hand could properly maneuver but I was sure it would work fine. Determined and strengthened at the thought of implementing my plan of action, I grabbed those scissors and quickly proceeded to do what I had set out to do. As Bébé's song was coming to its final crescendo, I entered the parlor where the family members were gathered for his performance. No one saw me at first because I hadn't put my shoes back on and the plush oriental rug muffled the sound of my stockinged feet. The applause following (Continued on page 23)

MASSACHUSETTS/LA KERMESSE

(**BÉBÉ and Me** continued from page 22) the singing recital resounded so I wouldn't have been heard anyway.

The performance ended and the Food Fairy returned to make all of our mouths water again. Everyone rose and turned their gaze from my brother to the welcoming dining table beyond. Smack dab in their line of vision, there I was, proud, smiling and liberated from most of the long, fine, brown hair that never managed to hold a banana curl for more than five minutes even after a whole night wearing those uncomfortable, pink plastic, spoolie curlers. The poultry scissors had worked quite well I thought. Tilting my head this way and that, I awaited the expected compliments. After all, my new "do" was quite similar to Bébé's close- cropped head.

My mother, dumbstruck, swooned. After a lightning bolt of shock in his green eyes, my father picked up his princess to give her the softest, most tender of kisses on both cheeks while whispering in her ear, "*tu es toujours la plus belle*", you're always the prettiest. Pépère laughed heartily, without malice or mockery. After all, no serious injury had occurred.

My Mémère, the person whom I sought to impress the most, turned beet red and shouted: "You fished through my kitchen drawers. You knew very well that this is forbidden. You used my scissors. You may have damaged them. You got into mischief rather than come listen to your little brother sing. You failed to be a good example for him. And now, you look even worse than you did before. You won't be able to go out in public without a kerchief on your silly little head." really couldn't figure out how my baby hair could have possibly hurt scissors which cut chicken parts. The worst came afterwards when my grandmother scolded Maman: "You've obviously failed with her. What can be done with such a girl? She must be disciplined more, punished more. I know very well that you've never spanked her, although I've told you that it's a necessary child-rearing procedure. Now you see the result of your laxness. She'll turn out bad. Mark my words." Maman had miserably failed the fit mother's test for the first time and it was all because of me.

Fortunately, Bébé was thrilled with my new do. "You can be a good cowboy with me now! Not a squaw!" With a mischievous giggle, he helped the whole family move forward from a distraction which could have ruined our appetites.

My hair grew back with its fine, flat, silky sameness. I never again sought out the limelight during Sunday lunches. Today, as I plow back through the years, I see the source of many things to come. Most of all, I remember those rich and plentiful French-Canadian meals at Stevens Street when the neighborhood homes were flanked by impressive vegetable gardens and nearby Chelmsford was still largely rural.

Mémère, Pépère and too many others have passed on. The house on Stevens St. was sold and my grand-father's extraordinary garden was turned into a buildable lot. Urban sprawl took over the surroundings. But family traditions have lived on and the Food Fairy never forgets to give us a hug as we gather anew.

About the Author: Louise Peloquin was born in 1952 at Lowell's Saint Joseph Hospital where her father Laval U. Peloquin pursued his medical career as a general practitioner in his nearby Pawtucket Street office, then as a surgeon and finally as a radiologist.

Her mother, Marthe Biron Peloquin, was the daughter of Louis-A. Biron, owner of Lowell's French language newspaper "L'Étoile" on Prince Street. In his novel "Maggie Cassidy", Jack Kerouac mentions his father working at the "L'Étoile's" print shop.

Louise attended Franco-American School and Notre Dame de Lourdes Parish School on Merrimack Street and spent her first eleven years living in a two-family home on Harvard Street in the Highlands.

Now retired, her career started in 1973 as a French teacher at Chelmsford High School and continued in France after obtaining degrees such as a Ph.D. with a thesis about New England's Franco-Americans.

Her professional experience abroad included English courses at the University of Paris, the Sorbonne and other institutions of higher learning before ending in 2018 as a language coach at the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs working with ministers, diplomats and high-level civil servants.

The French government recognized her work by naming her to the "Order des Palmes Académiques" and the "Order National du Mérite".

Her academic papers on Franco-Americans have been published in France, Canada, the United States and other countries.

After years living abroad, Louise is happy to be back in the Lowell area.

This reaction was bad enough and I was born in 1952 at Lowell's Saint Joseph

La Kermesse Franco-Americaine

Come and visit us at La Kermesse Festival. On Saturday, June 22nd we will offer our Cultural Cuisine. On Sunday, the 23rd, Chuck Cote and the Biddeford Cultural and Heritage Center will feature St. Louis Alumni memorabilia after the St. Louis Alumni Band plays!

It's a Family-Friendly Fun Festival!

Located at the St. Louis Field in Biddeford, Maine. The Main Gate is on the corner of Prospect Street and West Street.

Paid Parking will be at the JFK School across from the fields and on the streets as permitted and available. Monies collected will benefit Biddeford Youth Sport Groups/ Teams.

The La Kermesse Festival is not responsible for parking choices made and any results from those choices.



Thursday, June 20, 2024 Friday, June 21, 2024 Saturday, June 22, 2024 Sunday, June 23, 2024 (Sunday is Free Entry Day)



https://www.lakermessefestival.com/

French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota ARTICLE DU MOIS ARTICLE OF THE MONTH St. Germain dit Gauthier House -French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

French-Canadian Craftsmanship THE LOG HOUSE By Caroline Meilleur (May 2021)

Happy Spring, Everyone!

Warm days and sunshine makes us want to go on vacation, don't they? What can we do during a pandemic without booking a plane ticket or driving for days to visit and explore something different and historic? I have a great idea for you, three words: **Prairie du Chien!**

Next month, Wisconsin's Prairie du Chien Historical Society will be very pleased to welcome visitors for the Dedication and Grand Opening of the St. Germain dit Gauthier House on June 12-13, 2021. There will be French-Canadian music, dancing, food and activities. Admission is free and, of course, donations are much appreciated. Visit their website at: https://www.fortcrawfordmuseum.com/dedication-of-st-germainehouse.html

What is the St. Germain dit Gauthier House you might ask? First, let me tell you about its particular craftsmanship.

Wood, Wood and More Wood

One of the main characteristics of the territory that our ancestors encountered when they first set foot in the new world was the vast forests. What better material to build houses with than all this wood.

Therefore, between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, carpenters built habitations that would keep them warm throughout the long and harsh winters. At the very beginning they tried to build houses like they had on the old continent, but the rarity, high price of the materials (stone, mortar, etc.) and the difficulty to heat those buildings



Photo courtesy of Caroline Meilleur

forced the inhabitants to turn to the wood resource. On top of that, the old techniques were not well-adapted to the winters of New France.

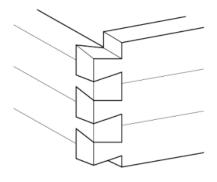
The quality of the wooden material back then was way better than what we have nowadays. We can still find some wooden doors and door frames that are between 150 and 200 years old in Quebec. Before, loggers worked during the winters, because that is when the trees have their lowest amount of sap. Then, the logs were transported on rivers. The fact that they were in the water helped clean the remaining sap (which exited the log at each end). It was a natural way to "dry" the log.

Pièce Sur Pièce Woodwork

There are many different architectural categories of houses. However, for the purpose of this article, I will only talk about the pièce sur pièce house type, which is the style of the St. Germain dit Gauthier House in Prairie du Chien.

The St. Germain dit Gauthier House was built with a particular method which is called pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde (see image to right). At the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the then Michigan Territory, the settlers did not have a lot of tools nor material available to them. They had wood and axes for sure. Thus the convenience and beauty of the pièce sur pièce à queue d'aronde or, in English, dovetail joint. The logs were hand-hewn squared by axe and assembled horizontally (on top of each other) together at the corners in a dovetail technique. This made the logs lock together. No nails were needed. This technique was very convenient because it prevented the building from opening at its angles.

On the next page is a picture provided by the Prairie du Chien Historical Society of a northeast house corner close-up. This is awesome because you can notice Roman numerals carved in the logs. These numbers helped with the original assembly of the house to make sure each log fit perfectly together.



Example of a Dovetail Joint Photo source: <u>actionpatrimoine.ca</u>

Then, they needed to make sure that the walls were sealed. They used a mix of clay, hay and other materials.1 The exteriors of the walls were usually covered with vertical or horizontal planks or even wooden shingles. Some problems could arise like: mold and premature decay of the wood, if the gaps were not filled properly or planks not covering the dovetail corners, exterior walls not "painted" with lime, roof too short or bottom of the walls too close to the soil, lack of maintenance of the joints, bugs and so much more. The foundation was usually made out of stones. To know more about the way this Prairie du Chien house was built, I strongly encourage you to visit the house and its exhibits starting on June 12, 2021. Information panels will be displayed throughout the house explaining its construction. (Continued on page 25)

MINNESOTA

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024

(THE LOG HOUSE continued from page 24)



Carved Roman Numerals on NE Corner of St. Germain dit Gauthier House Photo courtesy of Prairie du Chien Historical Society

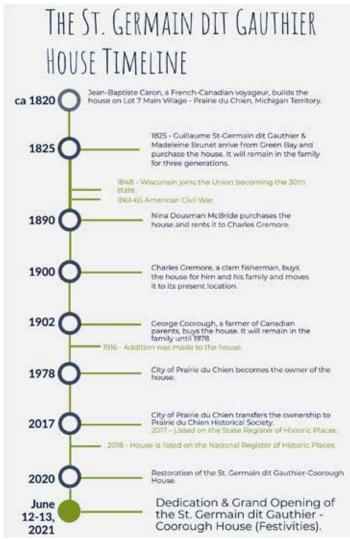


St. Germain dit Gauthier House - Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin Photo courtesy of Prairie du Chien Historical Society

St. Germain dit Gauthier House

So much has been written already about the St. Germain dit Gauthier House and from its original owner Jean-Baptiste Caron to today, especially by Mary Elise Antoine, President of the Prairie du Chien Historical Society. I invite you to visit this website's home page to watch the house restoration YouTube video: https://www.fortcrawfordmuseum.com/

Below, I made a little timeline of the life of the house.





Caron House (Structure to Far Left) from an 1870s Bird's-eye View of Prairie du Chien Image courtesy of Prairie du Chien Historical Society



French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota P.O. Box 13542 Saint Paul, MN 55113 Email: foundation@fahfminn.org

https://fahfminn.org/

¹ François Varin, Éditions Continuité et Action patrimoine. https://actionpatrimoine.ca/outils/fiches-techniques/ charpente-pieces-1 sur-pieces-2/: accessed on April 24, 2021.

MINNESOTA

French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota ARTICLE DU MOIS ARTICLE OF THE MONTH St. Germain dit Gauthier House -Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin

Trains of Hope By Bill Vossler Spring 2024

French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota

Minnesota's Merci Train car was filled with thirty-one crates containing thousands of different items weighing five tons, all donated by private French citizens, per Timothy J. Bill in "The History of the Minnesota Merci Boxcar," and Wikipedia's "Merci Train."

According to Timothy Bill, the items included paintings, engravings, prints, books, posters, china, glass, fine fabric, lace, dolls, toys, and lamps. Other references add statues, ornamental objects, furniture, even a Legion of Honor medal supposedly belonging to Napoleon.

As noted in Wikipedia's "Merci Train," André Picard, a French railroad worker and World War II veteran, came up with the idea to thank the United States for everything the U.S. had done for France.

"The Merci boxcar came from France in 1949," said Doug Thompson, curator at the Minnesota Military and Veterans Museum in Camp Ripley, where Minnesota's Merci boxcar resides. "Ours is one of forty-nine that were sent, one for each of the 48 United States, and one shared by the District of Columbia and the territory of Hawaii, which Hawaii ended up keeping. Each boxcar contained items donated by French people in different regions of France. Our boxcar, like all the others, has seals on the side of the car that indicate which regions sent items." More than 10,000 French people donated.

"All the cars were 40 and 8s," Doug said, "World War I train cars that were sonamed because one car could hold either forty men, or eight horses."

All 49 cars arrived in New York aboard the ship Magellan on February 3, 1949, with over 25,000 onlookers in attendance. On the side of the gift-laden French freighter was painted, "MERCI AMERICA."

Immediately the train cars were distributed among the states, where they were opened and turned into traveling exhibits



2024: The Minnesota Merci Train Boxcar's 75-Year Anniversary Photo Courtesy of Bill Vossler



before each state committee distributed the entire contents.

According to "The History...," "Minnesota's Merci Boxcar (also called "Gratitude" Boxcar) arrived in Minneapolis on February 13, 1949. The following day at 10:30 a.m., in what could only be described as miserable conditions, icy cold and windy, a brief ceremony was held on the front steps of the capitol," with speakers like Governor Luther Youngdahl and French consul generals, along with 15-year-old Gladys Peterson from Tyler, Minnesota, "in recognition of the work the state's school children performed when the Friendship Train came through

TRAIN DE LA RECONNAISSANCE FRANÇAISE

One of the 49 Merci Train boxcars being unloaded from the New York harbor in 1949. The gauges were not compatible to fit cars on the U.S. train tracks so the boxcars were loaded onto flatcars.

Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Military and Veterans' Museum

Minnesota."

The article added, "The boxcar was placed on display at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds, which would allow many Minnesotans to come and view it. Affixed to the side of the car was a plaque with the inscription: FRENCH "MERCI" BOXCAR. PRE-SENTED BY THE PEOPLE OF FRANCE TO THE STATE OF MINNESOTA IN GRATITUDE FOR THE FRIENDSHIP TRAIN OF 1948. ACCEPTED IN TRUST BY THE GRAND VOITURE DU MINNE-SOTA LA SOCIETE DES QUARANTE HOMMES ET HUIT CHEVAUX FOR THE (Continued on page 27)

MINNESOTA

(TRAINS OF HOPE continued from page 26) A Little History

STATE OF MINNESOTA ON FEBRUARY 14, 1949. THIS CAR IS ONE WHICH WAS USED DURING WORLD WAR ONE FOR MILITARY PURPOSES. 40 HOMMES ET 8 CHEVAUX INDICATES CAPACITY OF 40 MEN OR 8 HORSES.

After being on display until July of 1949, gifts from inside the car were given first to schools, public libraries, church groups, and finally the public. Doug said items were distributed to local historical societies that wanted them. "There was no master list and we have nothing from the train car in our museum. And we don't know where those items are located today. Maybe in other historical museums across the state. But we don't know what they were or where they went."

Merci Train boxcar was brought to St. Paul. Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Military and Vet- munities not on the original route

erans' Museum



On Feb. 2 the French freighter Magellan steamed into New York carrying 49 antique, narrow-gauge boxcars in her hold. These were the cars of the Gratitude Train, France's reply to the American Friend-ship Train which in 1947 toured the U.S. and collected \$40 million worth of food and clothing for the hard-pressed people of France. Each boxcar was packed with 5 tons of gifts, and each was addressed to a separate state. (The contents of the 49th car will be divided between the District of Columbia and Hawaii.) The gifts (next page) were of all varieties and value and they came, as the American gifts had come, from private citizens. Soon they will be distributed by governors' committees, largely to museums and other institutions, where they will remain as souvenirs of what New York's Mayor William O'Dwyer called "the most heart-warming event in recent international history."

1949 LIFE magazine article about the 49 Merci Train boxcars that France sent to the United States. Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Military and Veterans' Museum

The Merci Train was a direct result of the United States' Friendship Train, also called the "Friendship Food Train." In 1947 well-known national journalist Drew Pearson advertised that France and Italy could be helped by sending, "Life-giving food to France and Italy, every pound from the United States." On his radio program and in his daily "Washington Merry-Go-Round" column, he proposed the idea and asked people to donate food, fuel, and clothing onto the train cars as they came through their communities. He said, "As this Friendship Food Train passes through states on the way to New York, food will be waiting at each stop, food for those in Europe who need it to survive the winter. This train operates on heart power, the neighborliness of Ameri-

> cans, and will keep a lot of hearts beating in Europe."

On November 7, 1947, a train left Los Angeles, heading through eleven northern states to New York City. Pearson's appeal was incredibly successful. Immediately town, cities, and states formed plans to collect food and send it to the Friendship Train, such an exciting and popular idea that competition among the communities, counties, and states for having sent the largest contribution was part of the work and also part of the fun.

Newspapers, radio stations A couple of men on hand when Minnesota's and schools explained how Americans could participate. Many cominsisted on giving, thereby causing

> delays, so to get everything to New York on time for the ships to take the materials to Europe, three trains ended up hauling food, like macaroni, sugar, dried peas, beans, evaporated milk, fuel, and clothing. At the end of November 1947, much of the 700 train cars' worth was loaded onto two ships, the SS American Leader and SS Exiria, for France and Italy. Each ship carried eight million pounds of food. Two more ships took more food later. Everything was donated.

> In both France and Italy, the ten distribution trains were called Friendship Trains. French trains stopped in Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Brest, and Lorient. Local ceremonies cele

brated the train wherever it stopped.

Doug said the Merci boxcar was France's response to America for sending those trainloads of relief supplies, "So every region in France added gifts, all donated by common French civilians, champagne, pottery, food items from different regions that were emblematic of that region."

Initially in 1949 the Minnesota Merci Train car was displayed in St. Paul, Doug said. "Afterwards for many years it was outdoors at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds, but public interest in the car started to wane. People forgot what it was there for. Then the Minnesota State Fairgrounds were being redone, and officials were looking for a permanent place for the car where people could see it, at the same time that we were looking for a significant artifact. With the car's ties to World War II and to France, our oldest ally, and since highway 371 is one of the busiest highways in the summertime, and drives a lot of traffic to the museum, the director of this museum at the time figured our Military Museum was just the place, so he offered to take the train car. When it came the Army engineers painted it. So for the last 27 years it's been up here at the museum."

He adds that a new Minnesota Military and Veterans museum will be built just off the exit on Highway 371. "When our new facility is finished we expect visitorship will increase many times over. We're going to put the Merci boxcar inside the museum in the education room. I think that will make it a more interesting artifact that people can come and see."

Merci! Let's See the Boxcar!

Doug said many people see the Merci boxcar. "Many people read about the car and come from all over the country just to see ours. Some groups go on summer trips and try to see every Merci boxcar in the country. From them we find out that our Merci boxcar is one of the best-kept in the country. Tour groups always want to take a picture in front of the train car, a symbol of French and American friendship."

"The comments we get," Doug said, "are, 'It's fascinating,' or 'We've never heard of it before,' or 'I'm surprised that you have it here at the Military Museum.' They want to know the background of how we got the train, and the history of the train, and we are glad to tell them what we know."

Upkeep was fairly simple for a few years, Doug said. "Basically sweeping the

(Continued on page 28)

27



Le Forum

(TRAINS OF HOPE continued from page 27)

thing out. But a couple of years ago members of the 40 x 8 Club of the St. Cloud area repainted the whole thing for us. The pavilion over the top of it somewhat protected it from the elements. That was the first repaint in the past twenty years, so basically the metal framework was painted to make sure no rust was creeping in on it. It is in very good condition right now."

Doug said, "We are happy to have this car here. It's a great looking and powerful outdoor exhibit that tells a story, not so much of war, but of one country giving another country a helping hand and cementing the bonds of friendship we have with the French people. We're excited to have the Merci Train car inside in the education room of our new museum in 2025, where thousands will see it. We're excited to keep story alive of the Merci Train car."

Nobody seems to know what Minnesota put in the friendship train boxcars, except in generic terms: food, fuel, clothing. Whatever it was, it made a huge impact in France, and, in a return, so did the Merci cars in the United States.

Perhaps Drew Pearson said of it best that "The Friendship Train was a train of common boxcars filled with hope." The same could be said of the Merci Train boxcars.

> ~ Bill Vossler Freelance Writer



Gratitude Train boxcars on railroad tracks in Paris. Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Military and Veterans' Museum



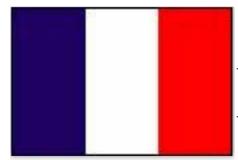
Crowd welcoming a Merci Train boxcar in United States.

Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Military and Veterans' Museum



Merci Train boxcar contents were donated from many different regions of France. The shields depicted on Minnesota's boxcar, in the above left photo, are representative of those areas. The shield in the close-up photo, above right, depicts Savoie, a French department located in the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region, in southeastern France. Photos Courtesy of Bill Vossler





The Flag of France Note that the colors of the flowers on the symbol, to the left, are the same as the colors of the French flag.

TRAIN DE LA RECONNAISSANCE FRANÇAISE AU PEUPLE AMERICAIN This is the official symbol of the French Merci Train Committee it and was affixed to each of the Merci boxcars. The committee had incorporated this symbol onto gift tags that were included with each of the more than 52,000 gifts that came in the boxcars. Photo Courtesy of Minnesota Military and Veterans' Museum



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Discover the CMA 2024

The Congrès mondial acadien 2024 will bring together the Acadian diaspora from across the world for nine days of celebrations, discovery and reunions in Southwest Nova Scotia.

Featuring big outdoor concerts, culinary experiences, thematic presentations and family gatherings, the CMA 2024's activities will allow you to experience Acadian culture in your own way and share it with relatives and new friends.

There will be countless opportunities to celebrate Acadian joie de vivre, be it a bonfire on the beach that turns into a jam, a community event that has the whole village abuzz with activity or a kitchen party where everyone is invited.

Come discover the warm and welcoming people of this rural corner of Nova Scotia, as well as the tastes and traditions of the region.

Major Events

A number of big outdoor concerts and events with big names from the Acadian music scene will be presented as part of the CMA 2024, including the Opening Day concert (August 10), Saturday Night Party (August 17) and Closing Day concert (August 18) and especially the National Acadian Day concert (August 15).

Family Reunions

An integral part of CMAs since the first Congrès mondial acadien in 1994, family reunions are an opportunity to meet cousins from all over the world and to celebrate your family's contributions.

Culinary Experiences

The CMA 2024 will provide you with opportunities to tickle your taste buds. Take part in culinary demonstrations, join a kitchen party or taste rappie pie, a traditional dish from the region, as well as the seafood for which it is renowned.

Conferences

The CMA 2024 will also be an opportunity to tackle topics that are important to the Acadian community, including an economic conference, a women's summit, thematic presentations and major discussions on the future of Acadie.

Youth Programming

Young participants will be able to take advantage of activities in the youth stream! Young francophones aged 18 to 35 will have the opportunity to take part in workshops help them hone skills in leadership, learn how to become engaged citizens, develop awareness of challenges in the Francophonie, and meet up and exchange ideas to foster long-lasting connections.

Community Activities

The different communities of the host region will put on events as part of the CMA 2024 that will highlight their traditions, talents and local know-how.

Contact: bonjour@cma2024.ca 902-648-2400

Clare : 7578 Highway 1, Meteghan, NS BOW 2J0 Argyle : 4111 Highway 308, Tusket, NS BOW 3M0

https://cma2024.ca/en/cma-2024/discover-the-cma-2024

Mark Daigneault is the Head Coach



Mark Daigneault is the Head Coach for the Oklahoma City Thunder. On November 11, 2020, Daigneault became the 4th Head Coach* in Thunder history.

The 2020-2021 NBA Season was Coach Daigneault's first year as an NBA Head Coach - he was an Assistant with the Thunder in the 2019-2020 season. Prior to the Thunder, Coach Daigneault was the Head Coach of the Oklahoma City Blue, the Thunder's G-League affiliate, for five seasons. During Coach Daigneault's time with the Blue, he had a regular season record of 143-107, while leading the Blue to three consecutive Division Championships. Coach Daigneault was also named NBA G League Coach of the Month three times in his tenure with the Blue. During the 2015-2016 season, Coach Daigneault joined the Thunder's coaching staff, helping the team reach the Western Conference Finals.

Mark Daigneault was born on August 12, 1985, in Leominster, Massachusetts and attended Leominster High School. After high school, Daigneault went to the University of Connecticut where he served as a student manager for UConn's Men's Basketball team (2003-2007). Coach Daigneault graduated with a degree in Education and is noted in crediting his studies with being able to connect with players. Coach Daigneault's wife, Ashley, is a gymnastics coach at the University of Oklahoma.



DEDICATION

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024

(N.D.L.R./Editor's Note: The poetry section in this issue is dedicated in loving memory of Adrienne (Pelletier) LePage)





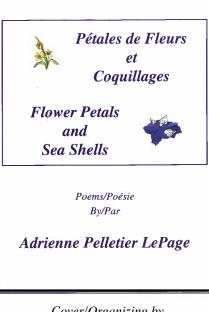
Adrienne M. LePage March 1, 1931-May 16, 2024 †

Adrienne M. LePage of Holliston, MA. passed away on Thursday, May 16th at Framingham Union/Metro West Hospital in Framingham, MA, with her loving family by her side.

Adrienne was born on March 1, 1931 to the late Joseph and Eva (Chasse) Pelletier, in Sainte-Anne-de-Madawaska, New Brunswick, Canada. She was the last surviving sibling of her 17 brothers and sisters.

Adrienne moved to Nashua, N.H. at the age of 20 where she met Marcel LePage, her loving husband of 67 years until his passing in 2019. Throughout her life she had many passions such as gardening, history, books, bird watching and playing board and card games. She was an avid reader and art enthusiast, taking a particular love and interest in French paintings and the beauty of all that is Paris. She enjoyed the art of knitting and crocheting, often times donating warm items to those in need. Later in life she moved to the coast of Maine where she found a passion of writing poetry, both in English and French, which she later published into a book. While Adrienne enjoyed so much in life, her greatest passion and dedication was to that of her family, as she was an amazing and loving caregiver until the end.

She leaves behind 2 sons and a daughter, 6 grandchildren, 4 great-grandchildren



Cover/Organizing by Lisa Desjardins Michaud Published and Printed by the Franco-American Centre University of Maine, Orono (1998)

and many loving nieces and nephews. Children: Alan and Margaret LePage of Holliston, MA, Kenneth LePage of Clayton, N.C., Linda and Steven Walker of Wareham, MA. Grandchildren: Kerri Goulet and her husband Michael, Michelle Totman, Meaghan Taft and her husband Joel, Kimberly Makowski and her husband James, and Wesley LePage. Great-Grandchildren: Alex and Madeline Goulet, Shane and Sylvie Taft. Niece: Gayle Ellsworth and her husband Peter and their son Michael.

As we reflect on her life we are filled with peace and joy, as the beautiful memories of her love, kindness and patience will always be remembered in those who knew and loved her.

Family and friends will honor and remember Adrienne's life by gathering for a time of visitation in the McCarthy, McKinney & Lawler Funeral Home, 11 Lincoln St. Framingham on Friday, May 24th from 10-12PM. A prayer service will be held during. Burial will be at the Saint Louis De Gonzagues Cemetery in Nashua, NH at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances may be made in Adrienne's name to the American Heart Association, www.heart.org.

Repose en paix belle Adrienne. (Rest in peace beautiful Adrienne)



MA VALLÉE (LA ST-JEAN)

Ma vallée, la St-Jean Quand je te revois, amène Des larmes à mes yeux Avec tes champs verdit Et ton ciel ensoleiller.

Je revois tes promesses Dans tes fermes et champs Remplis de fleurs sauvages Et ton ciel souvent nuageux.

Cherchant un arc-en-ciel Après une pluis chaude Voyageant sur ses chemins.

Après une rafale de pluie Un belle arc-en-ciel Encercle mon village Je fais un souhait, De toujours revenir Dans ma Belle Vallée!

La St-Jean, demeure de mon enfance.

MY VALLEY (THE ST. JOHN)

My VALLEY; THE St. John When I see you again It brings tears to my eyes With its green fields And its sunny skies.

> I still see promises In its farms and fields Full of wild flowers And its cloudy sky.

Looking for a rainbow After a gentle rain Traveling on the highway.

A cloud burst shows me A beautiful rainbow Encircling my village. I make a wish To always return To my beautiful Valley.

The St. John Valley, my childhood HOME!

Le Forum



Grenier Triptych Les trésors du grenier

I.

Behind the plastic tree In the attic An old jam box Dusty cobwebs crumbled insulation Cardboard-covered Near-century Emulsion One of only three Of Pépère Suited Combed Serene Asleep in his casket.

II.

Grenier Grain loft Attic to most Cache of Old toys The boys might still want School desks Outgrown Still good Puzzles missing A piece or two Or five Enough life for A future rainy day Maybe Scout books Merit sash Dad's war souvenirs (Book ends, not flags) Rag doll White, flipped to Black face Beloved friend A hundred Tomato holders

Toilet rolls Projects That might have been Might still be Lamp stand Broken caster Could be fixed Drawer crammed with The silver-fixed dead Inscribed "Napoléon" "Wilhémine" Cousins Nth removed Mom rearranged This place A thousand times Leaving all in place A dodge A living graveyard Close to home Treasures touched Fingers run over Tangible remnants The dead Never dead If she can smell Their musty memory Flick dust From A wedding's Picture glass.

III.

In olden days, they lived on farms That had their share of rustic charms. Like a hiding place for child or waif Where grain was stored to keep it safe

From rodents, fungus, pigs and such Who liked to munch a bit too much On food the farmers set aside For leaner days, plus more besides.

So when the farmers left the farms (Poor soil had drained them of their charms) And moved to house or city flat No grain was packed to keep them fat.

But poverty would not allow Disposal of what broke. Somehow Everything could be repaired— A wheel replaced, the good wood bared.

With time, the right tool would appear. Then, done, if just an hour clear Of chores—of dishes to be done Of rugs to beat, of prayers sung.

POETRY/POÉSIE

The loft where they kept busted stuff, Whose welcome wasn't worn enough, Well, not a loft, just name was left— A room of better use bereft.

Le grenier — can you hear the "grain" That plucked a neuron in your brain? Translated into "attic" misses Bits of grace the old term kisses.

Our *grenier*, tucked beneath a roof, Behind a bedroom, stood aloof; It was a well-known hideaway, But not where children went to play.

In summer, it baked; in winter, chilled. But to the rafters it was filled With odds and ends and bric-à-brac No thief would stuff into his sack.

It's where our plastic Christmas tree Was packed to spend th'eternity 'Tween Epiphany, when kings came calling, And Advent with the first snow falling.

The manger, too, in its own crate Was stowed there. It too had to wait It's season, not a moment less,

Before the parlor it could bless.

But tucked behind these paper cartons Were — please, list'ner, I beg your pardon— Memories have paled and thinned: I don't know where I should begin!

Old puzzles missing several pieces— To toss them, your Mémère displeases. And bookends bought in Panama Where Dad was stationed through the War.

A top hat worn by who knows who— Pépère? — the one I never knew. It sat in a decaying box Caught in its band uprooted locks? Old GI Joes, in butt-naked glory Each preserved many a martial story: Broken capsule, orange sub That once had floated in the tub. Their arms were missing but their smiles Recalled adventures, wooly, wild, Not dolls, remember, "action figures" Don't trip my gender panic triggers!

A Cub Scout book from ages past, Recorded badges won at last,

(Continued on page 33)

POETRY/POÉSIE

(Grenier Triptych, Les trésors du grenier continued from page 32) And meetings where on shirt were pinned Avoid the pinch—suck your stomach in!

A box of ancient pictures bound In cardboard sleeves made quite a mound Of mem'ries locked for forty years Of Christmases and a widow's tears.

Silver bromide had quick-frozen Families at a moment chosen For its children's veneration With hopes to last for generations

Here were folks I did not know And yet their faces were aglow With love, and lace, in gorgeous gowns Perhaps handmade, not bought in town. Pépère and Mémère stood along their parents as a wedding song Played in the background, I assume. The frightened wife, the cocky groom

Posed for the camera's lidless gaze, Tried not to twitch, express malaise, While contemplating, stomachs tensed, When late tonight, *new* rites commenced.

No wonder man like monkey grinned While wife bore up with some chagrin. The marriage bed, she'd heard, is fun. Today, she wished she'd been a nun.

A casket picture ten years on: A hearty man whose life was gone, Or maybe made up to appear Much haler laid out on his bier.

In days before the picture box, No one much cared if someone gawks At you. You'd flick the crumb away, Pull up your pants, be on your way.

Besides, your memory's all you had To know your features as a lad. And mem'ry being awfully fungible Bad days were, in minds, expungeable.

But now your face was, for all time, Etched as in stone. T'would be a crime If future generations saw Great-grandpa caught in mid-guffaw.

So folks made lengthy efforts to Look good when cameras, bright and new, Were mounted 'fore a landscape backing. Ten seconds long, so smiles were lacking. Twice in life you might get shot: Your wedding day, and when you got Deceased, with flowers all around, A cross above you tilted down. For dead men, while they tell no tales, Do not make photographs to fail. What for the quick's a long exposure, For dead men, film won't smudge or blur.

The best doll Mom had, as a child, Was pink-faced, red-dressed for a while. But pull her skirts above her head, Reveal a black face there instead!

The curious might lack the grace To see this odd U-turn of race As harmless in a town so white That darkened faces were a fright.

But Mother had a woman of color In her nursing school, a scholar. They both dressed for high tea together— Knock me over with a feather!

Could it be a plain cloth doll could Erase what taught the tribe? Would The love for a figure sewn in cotton Make racial lines extinct, forgotten?

In one box, faded row of books: The Hardy Boys, catchers of schnooks. And French-writ comic books wherein Young girls learned how to vanquish sin.

A catalog I have mislaid Describes the ways one could be paid To brew boot blacking, flooring wax, Sink cleaner and other gimcracks.

A bottle from this great endeavor, So utterly desp'rate and clever, It's label, printed, letters tallish: "Hallé's own furniture polish"!

This venture, sadly, did not soar; You can't buy "Hallé's" in the stores. But it meant my grandparents dreamed The Depression to beat by all means.

Stuffed in an end table, straight, Were records labelled '78 And 16! I gave them a spin: They a younger fanbase didn't win.

Now, tucked among these treasures old Were some my mother saw as gold: Tomato crates and toilet rolls By the boxful! Before you lose control,

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024

These humble items could be drafted into Scouting. Covered, crafted With some ribbon, wrapping, glue Into ornaments. Bet you never knew!

The tomato crates, I never figured What they're good for. Cut, rejiggered Glued in pairs and filled with suet So winter birds could get into it?

Le grenier was an awesome place: A time machine and healing space. And long ere Google sold us storage, We could, for free, through history forage.

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Funerals & Family

Life is but a blink of an eye we live our busy lives raising our children, sports, practices, games, recitals busy with work, earning and overtime Buying houses and bright shiny cars

We seem to forget as the years go by that our family, grandparents, parents are aging as you are We keep going till we get that call Our dear loved one has gone home

We cry and are hearbroken but did we take the time? During our busy lives of acquiring material things? Did we take the time to visit? Call to chat?

We attend the funeral We meet up with family we have not seen in years We hug and exchange memories some with laughter some with tears

> Then, we all go home And resume where we left off Back to our hamster wheel lives Till another loved one gets off And goes home

by Lisa De<u>s</u>jardins Michaud

A Charmed Life

Mom's pride A golden bracelet Festooned with charms At once amulet Memory box Trophy of Student Nurse Mother Each life phase But marriage With its linked token Mortar board from The old high school Now splintered By powered claws Paved over

Caduceus Her RN rank High water mark Of study And status

(N.D.L.R. In loving memory of Vera M. Gerard, September 20, 1927-October 23, 2023. Poem was written by Joan Snow Duncanson submitted by Vera's daughter, Linda Gerard Der Simonian)

Two Mothers Remembered

by Joan Snow Duncanson

"I had two mothers—two mothers I claim Two different people, yet with the same name. Two separate women, diverse by design, but I loved them both because they were mine.

The first was the Mother who carried me here, Gave birth and nurtured and launched my career. She was the one whose features I bear, Complete with the facial expressions I wear.

Dans la Lune

Au premier cours on vient apprendre Mais il y en a toujours une Qui semble perdu et rien comprendre Elle est toujours dans la lune.

On explique bien aux jeunes enfants Assises en classe, toutes en commune Mais il y a une fillette en avant Qui est toujours dans la lune. Each baby Now a golden relic Stork, Curly head Weight and length In myopic letters Three lived The two lost Weighed A thousandfold On her brittle heart The circlet Both celebration

And cilice belt

Metallic penance For life Her fault The babies died? Can't discount it Should have known Should have listened To a classmate's warning About the doctor

About the doctor Who delivered And disappeared To golf course Iced Tom Collins While she bled Because of me

POETRY/POÉSIE

She once laid it By the sink While she primped For a night out Nudged It slid past The heat pipe Vanished into Steamy stygia She was Cooly frantic Until I Magnet on yardstick Pulled it from The dusty depths I was an Afternoon hero A rare brush With her delight Partial payment For her blood

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She gave her love, which follows me yet, Along with the examples in life she set. As I got older, she somehow younger grew, And we'd laugh as just Mothers and daughters do.

But then came the time that her mind clouded so, And I sensed that the Mother I knew would soon go. So quickly she changed and turned into the other, A stranger who dressed in the clothes of my Mother.

Oh, she looked the same, at least at arm's length, But now she was the child and I was her strength. We'd come full circle, we women three, My Mother the first, the second, and me.

And if my own children should come to a day, When a new Mother comes and the old goes away, I'd ask of them nothing that I didn't do. Love both of your Mothers as both loved you."

On se prépare pour un examin Et passe des formes à toutes chacune Mais cette petite semble tres loin Encore perdu dans la lune.

La religieuse gentille et tendre Approche doucement la petite brune La fillette dit: "Je ne peux rien entendre Je ne suis pas dans la lune" Avec le temps et parents on rectifie Et place un appareille dans ses oreilles. La petite entend - tout s'éclaircit Non plus la lune mais le soleil!

> par Trudy Lamoureux



by Marie Thérèse Martin

In the Spring of the year 1980, we traveled to France.

Passionate about ancestral history and personal genealogy, we were on a mission.

Not much had been recorded or spoken of Acadian history as it was told in whispers and shared that way from one generation to the next. These same whispers were shared by elders gathering in sacred places and sitting on front porches. In the written text of our time, there was nary a mention of what happened to the entire population of Acadia in 1755. If you were curious and wanted to know more, it necessitated an archival search. It was also a time when dedicated research was difficult as it predated the Internet with its' powerful search engines.

Our own personal research began in the 1970's when we took a course on Acadian history. A retired nun, wanting to teach Conversational French, was disappointed when it didn't attract much attention. She switched the course to Acadian history, and it caught on. Our hometown was filled with Acadian names like Thibodeau, Arsenault, Martin, Poirier and more, so she was on solid ground. For most of us, it was a history unknown, mysterious and unimaginable. During an entire winter, we discovered and discussed and learned our own history as she nurtured in us an insatiable quest for more. Who was Charles de Menou d'Aulnay? How did he factor into my history? What role did Colonel Winslow play in the Deportation of our ancestors from their homeland? What happened at Grand Pre? And where could I get that information? It was the beginning of a lifelong journey into

a lost and buried part of our history.

We had been deprived of our own story! It wasn't taught in schools, and the senior members of the family were afraid to speak of it. The whispering of history had been effective. It you didn't say it, or acknowledge it, it never happened. Our ancestors were so afraid of the aftereffects of the catastrophic events of the Deportation of 1755, they would not speak of it, fearful that it might happen again. Silence gave it weight as it nurtured an impression that these early ancestors had done something wrong. In all, of the large population of Acadians living in the region at the time, approximately 18,000 were deported, of which at least 5,000 died of disease, starvation or in shipwrecks.

But this was the 1970's. Why were they still afraid of telling the truth?

We wanted answers to the intentional misinterpretation of our history, and it seemed that France would be a logical place to start. We planned a trip. As we neared departure, we spoke of giving one of our children the opportunity to learn history in the first person. Our son Jonathan was our choice as his age and interests were compatible with our plan. We left as three on this soulful journey together.

Right away, we engaged with a group called *Les Amitiees Acadiennes*.

In touch by letter before leaving the States we knew they held meetings regularly on Tuesday nights, so we came prepared to interact with others of Acadian ancestry in Paris, at a Café, on the banks of the river Seine. It was a nice backdrop, and they seemed genuinely excited to have us there. As the discussion started, they first announced that the English language would be entertained only until seven pm. After that, it was forbidden to speak anything but French. Doc was irritated because he wanted to be part of the conversation but didn't know or understand one word of the French language. Too bad, they said, but the French language rules! He was upset, when at exactly seven pm, the conversation switched entirely to French. He thought the French were rude, and they thought the same of him. Despite his attempts to manipulate the rule, it would have no effect. It was left for me to act as negotiator and interpreter for both sides. I quickly realized that my own French vocabulary was limited. If they spoke slowly, I could understand the complicated discussions filled with dates and opinions of our early history. I would get the gist of what they had to say, but as their conversations

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024 ry. heated up, so did their passion and in the typour own ical French way, sentences quickly became

heated up, so did their passion and in the typical French way, sentences quickly became paragraphs, and slowness meant nothing to them. I listened carefully picking up what I could as we sat, immersed in a history and a language that was historically ours.

It was in this setting that we met a gentleman writing a book on the history of a church that was an integral part of early Acadian history. He approached us wanting to tell the story of the church and of our ancestors who attended. They boarded the ship called the St. Jehan and left for the New World. Some of this story is recorded in historical fact while the rest has become an interpretation of related facts based on history recorded during those times.

Monsieur Callibeau, the author and researcher, approached us on that Tuesday evening making aware that his research and focus was on a small Catholic church in an area made up of La (Grande) Chaussee and Martaize in the region of Loudun. These villages were part of the Parish of Saint-Clement de la Grande Chaussee where they managed the records for the parishioners of these villages. Located on the banks of the Loire River, our history was recorded there.

Life during this early period was not pleasant. Commoners could not own land. Disease was rampant. There was a lack of basic sanitation and neglect by the ruling classes. Education was reserved for the nobility and royalty, so it was virtually impossible for a common farmer or tradesman to improve his standard of living. When these peasant farmers, and tradesmen were offered the opportunity to settle in a colony in the New World, some would go. Our ancestor, Pierre Martin, chose to go where he saw opportunity. His brother, Robert, would stay and continue the operation of the Martin family winery in Bourgeuil.

For many centuries, a small church in La Chaussee, a little stone structure that dates back to the 11th century, served the villages in this region. As was their tradition and their faith, they gathered at "l'Eglise de la Chaussee to hear Mass before they embarked on their journey. For this particular event that would take them to a New World experience, special prayers were offered.

As written by G. Massignon and M. Callibeau, "a number of carts gathered in front of the little church of La Chaussee. Farmers and craftsmen, their families, along with their few belongings, awaited Monsieur le Cure's blessing and fond (*Continued on page 36*)

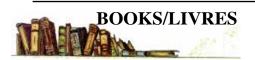
Le Forum

(**Our Travels to France** continued from page 35)

farewells from their friends. The Lord of the Village solemnly blessed them as they began their five-day trip to the coast to La Rochelle, where they boarded the St. Jehan for their final destination to the New World. Our ancestor, Pierre Martin, his wife and a young son, left France and the courtyard of the Church at La Chaussee on that day, May 23, and never returned.

Monsieur Callibeau's offered to bring us to visit the Church, and we gladly accepted his offer arriving in the courtyard on that grey and overcast day. It was May 23, 1980. As the direct descendants of Pierre Martin, Monsieur Callibeau was intrigued by our personal history. He told us "It was the last place our Acadian ancestors met before taking boats down the Loire River." We were excited to visit the Church as it met with our idea of teaching our children their history thru an authentic learning experience.

It was a cool day, but there was no wind. It was dark and promised rain. I was cold and found myself shivering both from excitement and from the cold as we



anticipated a lecture on the history of this church by Monsieur Callibeau. Jonathan was exploring the deserted churchyard kicking stones around in a playful way. We stood listening to Callibeau recite our history in half English and half French phrases. I was again left to translate the conversation. But the church was deserted, and the doors were locked. Everything was boarded up and had long ago been abandoned. No one was around and when the church bells in the bell tower began to ring, we were confused. Looking at each other for answers, we were left speechless, No one had an answer. The bells rang out in a slow and deliberate dirgelike sound as we continued to be stunned with the sound of bells that seemed to be ringing themselves. We stood, locked in place, watching Monsieur Callibeau who was visibly upset.

"*C'est pas possible*," he repeated several times." This cannot be possible", I translated.

He was obviously having a moment and we stood not knowing what to do. He was in a state of shock but continued reading from a book written in French. Bells are sounded for many reasons. They can be rung to signal that something of significance happening; for great liturgical feasts, and to signify the start or conclusion of a prayerful event. When Callibeau came to the realization that the bells in the tower were ringing on their own, he was visibly upset. The book he was referencing documented that on this very day our ancestor, Pierre Martin left France, with his wife and a small son. We had returned to the very spot, on the SAME day in history, and at the SAME hour that their departure was recorded and the bells in the church tower were ringing seeming to announce our return.

For what seemed like forever, we stood, unable to move, attempting to take it all in, recognizing that something extraordinary was happening in the moment. We stood there without explanation, without answers or understanding. It was our direct descendant, Pierre Martin and his wife who left this very spot with a young son and we had returned husband and wife and a young son on the very same day and hour that it was recorded at 11 am on May 23, 1980. We had completed the circle.



Mary of the Woods Charles Theriault

This historical novel is based on certain true facts. The author weaves a story set in 1757 on the east coast of Canada. It covers a turbulent and little-known era that takes place two years after the traumatic deportation of 12,000 Acadians of French descent torn from the communities they had built for more than 150 years. Some managed to escape into the woods and hide among the Mi'kmaq. An ancient indigenous tribe who are also undergoing a calculated genocide by the British authorities who pay 10 gold coins for every native scalp harvested.

The author, Charles Thériault, explores the primary beliefs of each group involved. Those that guides and justifies their actions, as beautiful or cruel they may be. We follow the precarious events that occur to Marie Arseneault, a ten-year-old Acadian orphan fleeing the renown bounty hunter McGreggor. Having drowned in a stream, Marie is revived by an old Mi'kmaq warrior-healer named Muin, who transforms her mind and soul in a profound way.

At the same time, the Dunn family made up of survivors of a quarantine island situated in Boston Bay is forcibly placed on the land once inhabited by Marie's family. They are there to serve as bait for McGreggor. A means to attract Mi'kmaq warriors who are known to attack new English settlers and whose scalps are worth a small fortune to the bounty hunter.

A little Acadian girl, a Mi'kmaq warrior and a pestilence family, must learn to trust each other to overcome their common aggressor. This story presents the power of Mother Earth, man's perversity engendered by greed, as well as the magnificence of the matriarchal spirit that protects and assures the continuity of all cultures.

A compelling page-turner that will have you question human nature.

GENEALOGY/GÉNÉALOGIE/BOOKS?LIVRES





About the author:

Filmmaker and story teller, Charles and his wife Betty, surrounded by a gaggle of children, grand and great grandchildren, live deep in the French speaking part of the Appalachian mountains. The mountains, the rivers, the people and the wildlife within inspire him to promote oneness with the planet that sustains us.

https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/210057474-mary-of-the-woods



Canvas of Secrets by Phillip Daigle

This twisty, methodically paced narrative is a satisfying mystery with intriguing characters. It is as much a character study of two men struggling to overcome their inner demons as an engaging mystery.

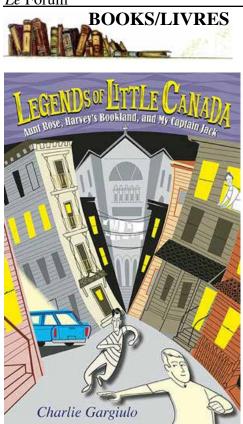
Ray Stone, formerly of the LAPD (until he blew his cover during a major sting operation), is biding his time in California's sleepy, artsy town of Laguna Beach. He misses the adrenaline-fueled, high-octane police work of Los Angeles and is waiting for a chance to redeem himself. Early in the morning on New Year's Day, 1969, a call comes in from dispatch: "Dead body at Shaw's Cove." The victim is Amelia Hart, a wealthy 50-something member of the artistic community and an anti-war activist. The officer on the scene says it is a suicide, but Ray suspects there is more to the story.

Meanwhile, Dennis Driver, a reporter with the local Daily Pilot and a Vietnam War veteran, is battling depression and PTSD-like symptoms. On New Year's Day, his editor hands him an opportunity for his big break—a report on the suspicious death of Amelia Hart. Ray and Dennis, working separately but occasionally sharing information, begin digging into the secrets hidden behind the glossy facade of Amelia's life. Daigle is a skill-ful wordsmith who mixes tight dialogue with long descriptive sentences, leading readers through the dark underbelly of the high-priced art world.



About the author:

Phillip Daigle is a mystery and historical fiction author best known for his novels "Canvas of Secrets, "Tides of Acadia" and "The Acadian." His storytelling, rich in historical detail, draws readers into the vivid past, offering immersive narratives that speak to the struggles and triumphs of its people. Phillip's commitment to historical fiction is a testament to his love for history and skill in crafting compelling, character-driven stories that reanimate the past for modern readers.



A reader's appreciation of Charlie Gargiulo's Legends of Little Canada - Louise Peloguin

Legends of Little Canada is a passionate love letter with a profound message on "human progress" and "the common good" and how these can be twisted to serve lowly purposes.

It's a blast-from-the-past time travel into childhood and pre-adolescence, a prequel to Ti-Jean's *Maggie Cassidy*.

It is a must-read for anyone who was born in Lowell, has lived in Lowell, has worked in Lowell or is curious about the mill town once dubbed "the Venice of America" which inspired visitor Charles Dickens.

The author shies away from labelling himself as a "professional writer." But what, precisely, is that? Someone who fills a blank page with words enthusiastic and fresh enough to morph a slim volume into a page-turner has to have some writing skills. The text has all of the ingredients - fun, action, drama, suspense, human interest, violence, tragedy but, most of all, love. You will not find any spoliers here. You readers have to discover the other secret ingredients on yourown.

For years, colorful anecdotes about Little Canada thrilled those who were lucky enough to hear Charlie Gargiulo recount them in person. Transferred to the printed page, they make him a permanent story-teller and thus, a writer.

Those who enter into *Legends of Little Canada* get to hang out with Charlie's gang where they will meet buddies and bullies, beloved family members and benevolent strang-

ers, givers and crooks, educators and profiteers. The reader will also hear about reformers full of dire intentions wrapped up in fake generosity and noble goals. These dealers of destruction end up being exposed as the real boogeymen in the tale. Like charlatans offering relief by pulling, one by one, teeth which could have been saved with a little care and repair, they choose to pull down homes, one by one, and turn a vibrant neighborhood into a painfully cavernous void.

On a lighter note, let's not forget that younger readers will discover the meaning of loyalty as well as fun street games with neighborhood pals. Older readers will bask in a past that has never really disappeared in the collective consciousness. Whether or not the readers have shared Charlie Gargiulo's experiences, they will find his prose refreshing, invigorating, rejuvenating, like a walk in a cold cloudburst on a dog day of summer.

A shout-out to Loom Press and its director Paul Marion for publishing this book. Its success will add to Lowell's clout by casting a light on another facet of the city's rich ethnic past.

Reading Legends of Little Canada is not a honey-coated walk down memory lane. It is a memorial to those who have fashioned us. It is a legacy.

Reading Legends of Little Canada is like re-discovering a favorite Beatles song.

Warmth wells up inside when you hear it. You can't help but smile. You can't help but cry either.

There are places I'll remember All my life, though some have changed Some forever, not for better Some have gone and some remain

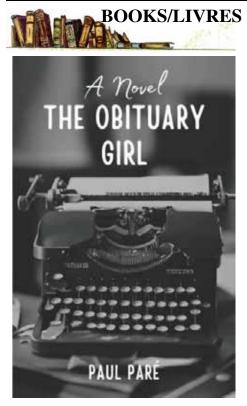
All these places had their moments With lovers and friends, I still can recall Some are dead and some are living In my life, I've loved them all.

John Lennon, Paul McCartney

https://www.loompress.com/store/legends-of-little-canada

BOOKS/LIVRES

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024

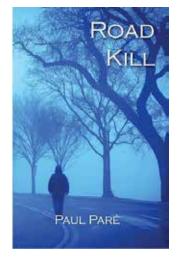


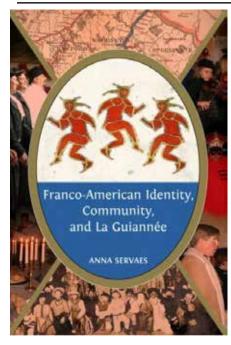
The Obituary Girl by Paul M Paré

In her early 20s, Anne Marie Dubois was hired as a reporter by the editor of the Great Falls Evening Tribune. Not only was she the youngest, she was the first female reporter and the first French speaker in the newsroom. The year was 1943 and one of her first assignments was to cover the deaths of two local boys in a major battle of World War II. She did very well and made quite a name for herself.

We first meet her many years later when she's 82 and has just moved into the Washburn Retirement Home, a few streets from the newspaper office. Anne Marie has nothing to do but share with us recollections of her newspaper career and her life in the tenement district of Great Falls. Suddenly, her nephew Ozzie drops in. A veteran of the Iraq War, Sergeant Dubois has managed the largest US Army recruiting station in South Florida. One day, he gets in his car and drives all the way to Maine. He tells his aunt that he's AWOL and tries to convince her to join him on his escape to Québec.

https://www.amazon.com/Obituary-Girl-Paul-M-Pare-ebook/dp/B0CY972DWB







Franco-American Identity, Community, and La Guiannée *by Anna Servaes*

The first book to explore the little known, but resilient French tradition within the Midwest French traditions in America do not live solely in Louisiana. Franco-American Identity, Community, and La Guiannée travels to Ste. Genevieve, Missouri, and Prairie du Rocher, Illinois, to mark the Franco-American traditions still practiced in both these Midwestern towns. This Franco-American cultural identity has continued for over 250 years, surviving language loss, extreme sociopolitical pressures, and the American Midwest's demands for conformity. Ethnic identity presents itself in many forms, including festivals and traditional celebrations, which take on an even more profound and visible role when language loss occurs. On New Year's Eve, the guionneurs, revelers who participate in the celebration, disguise themselves in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century costume and travel throughout their town, singing and wishing New Year's greetings to other members of the community. This celebration, like such others as Cajun Mardi Gras in Louisiana, Mumming in Ireland and Newfoundland, as well as the Carnaval de Binche, belongs to a category of begging quest festivals that have endured since the Medieval Age. These festivals may have also adapted or evolved from pre-Christian pagan rituals.

Anna Servaes produces a historical context for both the development of French American culture as well as La Guiannée in order to understand contemporary identity. She analyzes the celebration, which affirms ethnic community, drawing upon theories by influential anthropologist Victor Turner. In addition, Servaes discusses cultural continuity and its relationship to language, revealing contemporary expressions of Franco-American identity.

About the author:

Anna Servaes, Youngsville, Louisiana, teaches French and Spanish at Schools of the Sacred Heart in Grand Coteau, Louisiana. Her work has been published in the journals Études Francophones, Feux Follets, and Rabaska.

https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/franco-american-identity-community-and-la-guiann-e-anna-servaes/1120792578





The River is Everywhere by Emilie-Noelle Provost

Sixteen-year-old honors student Ernest Benoit has always followed the rules. But when his best friend drowns on Cape Cod, he begins to question his family's devout Catholicism, and he disrupts an Advent prayer service at his Catholic high school. Now his life will never be the same.

A blizzard leaves Ernest stranded in a depressed western Massachusetts mill town after he boards a bus to Manhattan to avoid being sent to a Jesuit boarding school. It's the beginning of a months-long journey that leads him to rescue a young girl from an icy river, into the bed of a lonely middle-aged widow, and to the woodland cabin of Roland Laliberté, a recluse who can shoot with the accuracy of a sniper.

When the widow falsely accuses Ernest of rape, Roland smuggles him over the Canadian border where they settle into life on the New Brunswick farm where Roland grew up. Ernest takes a job in the Lalibertés' sawmill, and falls in love with the girl next door. But it's not long before the local police start asking questions and his return home seems impossible.

The Blue Bottle by Emilie-Noelle Provost

Set in Rocky Harbor, a fictional fishing village on Massachusetts' Cape Ann, The Blue Bottle tells the story of 13-year-old Charlotte Hale, the granddaughter of an aging lobsterman, who has been sent to stay for the summer with her grandparents after a less-than-successful school year. On the bus ride there, Charlotte meets an eccentric retired teacher who tells her the story of the blue bottle, a local legend that leads her on a high-stakes quest for an ancient glass bottle, reputed to hold within it all the power of the oceans.

About the author: Emilie-Noelle Provost

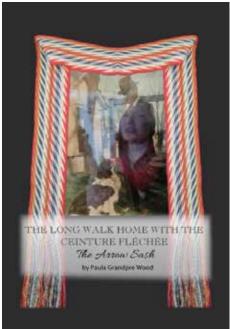
Emilie-Noelle Provost is an American author and writer. She lives in an old house in Massachusetts with her husband, daughter, and three crazy rescue cats. A former magazine editor, she is the author of The Blue Bottle (North Country Press, 2018), a middle grade adventure set on the New England coast. Her second novel, The River Is Everywhere, the coming-of-age story of a Franco-American teenager, was released in March 2023 by Vine Leaves Press and is a National Indie Excellence Award and American Fiction Award finalist. Her short stories and articles have appeared in several literary journals and magazines as well as in the anthology, Atlantic Currents: Connecting Cork and Lowell (Loom Press, 2020).

She is an avid hiker and a member of the AMC's 4000-Footer Club who can often be found on a trail in New Hampshire's White Mountains. When she's not writing or hiking, she enjoys cross stitch embroidery, visiting new places, and binge-watching European crime dramas. See what she's up to at emiliencelleprovost .com.



https://www.amazon.com/River-Everywhere-Emilie-Noelle-Provost/dp/0645436534









Lucille De Grandpre Cournoyer & Paula Grandpre Wood

The Long Walk Home with the Ceinture Fléchée: *The Arrow Sash*

by Paula Grandpre Wood

How can a Sash tie an extended family together? Join Paula Grandpre Wood as she tracks down ancestors, pieces together their stories, and finds herself wrapped in this Sash. This colorful Sash creates an unbreakable bond, linking together generations.

A genealogical adventure story/memoir, the story has elements of suspense, pathos, joy, and grief, a testament to the endurance of faith, family, and traditions.

Journey back in time to La Rochelle, France and learn of Paula's ancestors who lived through the siege of La Rochelle, migrated to New France, began a life in the New World, and endured some of life's biggest challenges. Their descendents survived the Acadian dispersal, later returned to their Quebec, and thrived. In discovering the story of her ancestors, Paula also found her way back home—home with the Arrow Sash—the Ceinture Fléchée.

About the author:

Paula Grandpre Wood is an author, physical therapist, wife, and a person who heard the call of her ancestors!

Paula was born in Pawtucket, RI close to the train station where her De Grandpre ancestors arrived from Quebec. One day these ancestors and her family's "Ceinture Fléchée (arrow sash) began speaking to her heart. Her ancestors were touching her through its wool fibers and calling her home. Like the threads woven to make this unique sash, their ancestral genetic threads are woven into her, making her a blend of many generations of her ancestors. Making her who God planned for her to be. North Central Massachusetts is where Paula now lives with her husband Michael and their three energetic dogs.





Rita Grandpre & Lucille De Grandpre Cournoyer

randpre Wood Medjugorje https://www.amazon.com/Long-Walk-Home-Ceinture-F1%C3%A9ch%C3%A9e/dp/B0C6WB4BH4



Acadian documentary film produced about Ron Turcotte

photo

published in

The Will To Win.

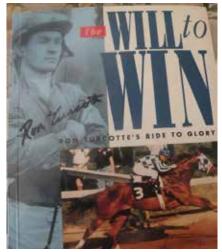
Turcotte with

Secretariat

Α

April 10, 2024Franco-American News and CultureBill Heller, Warrren A. PerrinBy Juliana L'Heureux

A feature-length documentary produced by the Acadian filmmaker Phil Comeau tells the story of jockey Ron Turcotte, who, along with his legendary horse Secretariat, in 1973, won the prestigious American Triple Crown, meaning the Kentucky Derby, the Preakness and the Belmont.



Information about the documentary film about the famous Canadian race jockey Ron Turcotte, was published in La Parole, the newsletter of the Acadian Museum in Louisiana, edited by Warren A. Perrin.

The documentary information reminded me about the time my husband and I met Mr. Turcotte, on August 16, 2011, when he stopped in Waterville, Maine, to participate in a local charity fund raiser. I published a blog about this fun experience at this link here.

Over ten years ago, a reader kindly sent me a copy of Bill Heller's biography "The Will To Win: Ron Turcotte's Ride to Glory".

A biography of Ron Turcotte was sent to me by a reader several years ago.

After writing several articles about meeting Mr. Turcotte, I received a letter from a young elementary school students who wrote a report for her class about having received a letter fromMr. Turcotte. She gave me permission to publish her story in an article available at this link here titled "Riding Over Adversity". (If readers are interested in reading this essay, I can send a discreet link in case the one highlighted does not work. Just email me a request at Juliana@mainewriter.com.)

In Heller's "The Will to Win", the book's summary on the back cover, describes Ron Turcotte's life as one of "occasional luck, immense talent and incredible determinations".



This touching photograph of Ron and Secretariat was taken after Ron learned le workship to ride Big Red in his final race, and reveals something of the temperature extraordinary horse. Lucien Laurin once claimed that he was "too goodlooking to be the track." Ron described him as "the kindest of animals," big and clumsy at two rearrants, "like a hig riding pony." *Courtesy New York Racing Association, Thent Subgroup*



Ron Turcotte in Waterville on August 16, 2011. L'Heureux photograph

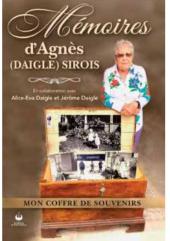
A scant three years after he first got on a thoroughbred, Turcotte was the leading apprentice rider in North America, and at the height of his career he was regarded by many as the best jockey on the continent. With his flawless riding style and his numerous wins, he was also one of the most successful jockeys in the history of horse racing.

In fact, Ron Turcote rode many of the finest horses of his time, including Canada's most famous champion, Northern Dancer. Although, he is best known for riding Secretariat, the phenomenal chestnut colt often called "The Horse of the Century". Turcotte and Secretariat became the first horse in 25 years, up until 1973, to win the prestigious triple Crown of racing taking the Belmont Stakes in a performance so powerful it defied logic. He won by 31 lengths in a world record time equivalent to 10 lengths faster than any other Belmont winner in 100 years.

Probably the most heroic part of Turcotte's life has been since his forced retirement caused by a debilitating injury when preparing for another ride at the Belmont. Five years after his amazing triumph riding Secretariat, a racing accident left Turcotte paralyzed from the waist down. Ever since his rehabilitation, he has demonstrated determination to be a role model for others through his travels and speeches. Today, Mr. turcotte is popular in his home town of Grand Falls, in New Brunswick, and admired for sharing his inspiring story with others in Heller's book and now in a documentary film.

BOOKS/LIVRES/ WHAT IS IT?

SPRING/PRINTEMPS/SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2024



AGNÈS DAIGLE SIROIS NOUS OUVRE SON COFFRE DE SOUVENIRS

Par Alice-Eva Daigle — Autobiographie d'Agnès Daigle Sirois, intitulée Mémoires d'Agnès Daigle Sirois — Mon coffre de souvenirs publié par les Éditions de la Francophonie. Dans ce récit, cette oc-

togénaire de Baker-Brook, attachée aux valeurs traditionnelles, nous raconte son enfance et sa jeunesse dans ce coin du Madawaska. Elle aborde des événements historiques ou marquants de la vie quotidienne, des fêtes religieuses ou des anecdotes de famille. Sa narration nous replonge jusqu'aux années 1930. C'est ainsi qu'elle nous parle de toutes ces femmes qui, durant la guerre, tricotaient des mitaines et des bas pour les soldats ou du tremblement de terre qui avait secoué la région lorsqu'elle était enfant.

« J'ai été élevée au son de la cloche de l'église de mon village » qui « influençait certains aspects de la vie sociale et spirituelle des familles de la paroisse », rappelle cette aînée d'une famille de cultivateurs de douze enfants. Ses ancêtres ont peuplé le Madawaska dès la fin du 18e siècle. Et six générations de sa famille se sont succédé depuis 1852 sur la ferme Oscar Daigle et Fils ltée, aujourd'hui reconnue « lieu patrimonial » par les gouvernements du Canada et du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Agnès part vivre dans le Maine en 1961 après son mariage avec Claude Sirois, de Frenchville, dont la famille possédait une ferme et une laiterie, du nom de «Sirois Dairy», bien connue dans la région. Elle aura trois enfants, des petits-enfants et arrière-petits-enfants.

Elle transmet ici à ses frères et sœurs ainsi qu'à sa descendance un bagage rempli de belles valeurs, un coffre de souvenirs inestimable. Voici donc le récit passionnant d'une femme qui fait honneur à sa langue française maternelle et à ses racines brayonnes et acadiennes.

AGNÈS DAIGLE SIROIS NOUS OUVRE SON COFFRE DE SOUVENIRS

By Alice-Eva Daigle — Autobiography, entitled Mémoires d'Agnès Daigle Sirois - Mon coffre de souvenirs, published by Les Éditions de la Francophonie

This octogenarian from Baker-Brook, who is attached to her traditional values, tells the story of her childhood and youth in Madawaska County. She recounts historical and everyday events, religious holidays, and family anecdotes, taking us all the way back to the 1930s. We learn about the women who knitted mittens and stockings for the soldiers during the war and about the earthquake that shook the region when she was a child.

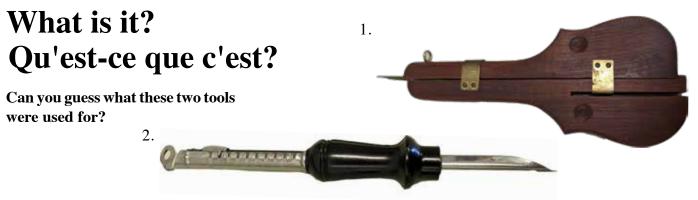
"I was brought up with the sound of the church bell in my village," recalls this eldest of twelve children from a farming family. "The church influenced some aspect of the social and spiritual life of the families in the parish." Her ancestors settled in Madawaska toward the end of the 18th century, and since 1852 six generations of her family have worked on the Oscar Daigle et Fils ltée farm, now recognized as a "historic place" by the governments of Canada and New Brunswick.

Agnès moved to Maine in 1961 after marrying Claude Sirois, of Frenchville. His family owned the Sirois Dairy, a farm well known in the region. She had three children, as well as grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Not only does her autobiography offer a priceless treasure chest of memories for her brothers, sisters, and descendants, but this fascinating story also honours both her mother tongue and her Brayon and Acadian roots.

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(See page 44 for the response!)

WHAT IS IT?

Le Forum (*What is it? continued from page 43*)

Rug hooking as we know it today developed along the Eastern Seaboard in New England in the United States, the Canadian Maritimes, and Newfoundland and Labrador in the 19th century. Initially perceived as the "craft of the poor", hooked rugs were made by those who could not afford machine-made



carpets imported from England. Because of the lack of more sophisticated materials the weavers often used any scraps of cloth that were available at the time – mainly burlap salvaged from sacks.



Martha Whitehouse demonstrating hooking.





Martha Whitehouse rug & photo



Martha Whitehouse rug & photo (More on page 45)



Martha Whitehouse rug & photo

WHAT IS IT?

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Martha Whitehouse rug & photo



Martha Whitehouse rug & photo



Martha Whitehouse rug & photo



Martha Whitehouse rug & photo



Martha Mitchell's rug, photo by Lin Larochelle



Martha Mitchell rug, photo by Martha Whitehouse

The Language of Inclusion Preface by Jim Bishop

I recently came across an undated piece in my scattered online files written by my old alter ego, Jean-Pierre Levesque, published in *Le Forum* some years back. It struck me that Jean-Pierre's emphatically expressed thoughts on the subject of French language fluency as a marker of cultural legitimacy for Franco-Americans



continues to reflect his doppelganger Jim Bishop's ardent feelings on the subject in 2024. And that it might be worth reprising Jean-Pierre's statement here in *Le Forum* and reflecting how relevant his words might be today. Jim has further thoughts on this subject and may share them in a future issue, but for now, I yield the floor to Jean-Pierre:

THE LANGUAGE OF INCLUSION

Jean-Pierre Lévesque

The reclamation and regeneration of our cultural legacy is worth our best efforts, not essentially because we need to preserve a record of our past (though I hope the value of recording a people's story is self-evident), but because the culture of a people is the expression of its collective soul. As we lose access to our native forms of expression (I mean here all the intonations, rhythms, and inflections of thought, language, and gesture that make us recognizable to one another and to ourselves), we lose a sense of our belonging, a sense that we are part of a rich and mysterious *histoire* which locates us and establishes the common ground of our being. In this sense I believe we Franco-Americans have come terribly close to losing touch with that *histoire* and in a profound sense with one another.

Instinctively, we have addressed that recognition in various ways. Many in fact believe that the main work remaining is to collect the story and preserve it before the cultural pulse flatlines and we are absorbed into the oblivion of mass culture. These "preservationists", let's call them, tend to treat culture as a commodity, some **thing**, which can be enshrined and placed in the safe keeping of certain delegated guardians who will ensure it against contamination or corrosion, and which can be put on display on certain high occasions and feast days. The guardians constitute a secular priesthood of sorts who double as keepers of the flame and keepers of the gate. The rule is fairly simple: to get through the gate, you've got to look like a guardian, speak like a guardian, and recite ten times *vite vite en français* The Guardians' Creed. *Excuse* là, I indulge myself a bit, but you get the idea: only Franco's in good standing (French language fluency, proper reverence for THE PAST) need apply. Again, preservation itself is not the problem; it is the concept of culture as artifact, a finished product, and the attendant cul de sacs of the imagination that make this a dead-end street.

In particular, I think we have for too long worked against ourselves and actively *discouraged* cultural and linguistic reclamation by insisting Franco-Americans speak French as a condition of membership in the cultural clubhouse (in academe, we often create a double bind by relegating the North American home tongue to "dialect" (or patois) status and demand "standard" French, long since internalized *par nous autre* as "the good French"). I focus here on linguistic issues of Franco's in the United States; the linguistic practices and policies of France or Québec emerge from quite separate socio-political contexts and need to be addressed on their own merits. While I understand the intention of French-only provisos, I observe that they are generally counter-productive in that they exclude the participation of large numbers of Franco's who do not have access to their ancestral tongue but who could enlarge the cultural dialogue with their presence and who themselves would be more empowered to reclaim their tongue were they not treated as second tier Franco's by their enfranchised compatriots.

We continue to hear from French teachers in public schools and at the university level in the northeast that enrollment in French classes is shrinking and that a number of French programs are threatened. Part of this can be attributed to the rapid growth of enrollments in Spanish classes, reflecting demographic changes. But I think we also need to ask ourselves if we are making best use of the cultural resources available to us. I think immediately in this regard of pioneer work done by people like Éloise Brière at SUNY Albany with the Franco community of Cohoes, New York. And of the model course designed and taught by Kathryn Slott and Yvon Labbé last spring at the University of Maine, which focused on plays written in North American French and which encouraged the Franco-American students in the group to converse and create in their home French as a legitimate and rich resource. The integration of Franco-American community resources into their classrooms by professors Anne McConnell at Saint Michael's College in Vermont and Margaret Langford at Keene State in New Hampshire also provides us with models of inclusion. All too often, though, French departments continue to teach and regard French as a "foreign" language and to either ignore surrounding Franco communities and Franco students in their own classes or to think of them as remedial problems to be upgraded.

I suggest that we begin to trust the power of culture and of language to renew themselves if given half a chance. When the people of French Island in Old Town, Maine, got together to create an oral history of their place ("Nos Histoires de L'Ile"), they did not stipulate that the organizational meetings must be held in French or that the interviewers must be fluent in French or that only those who had mastery of the language should be interviewed. Had this been the case, the project would automatically have excluded certain Franco's who have been instrumental to the success of the project. In point of fact, the project may not have happened at all. But because the organizing committee chose instead to accept each volunteer on his/her own linguistic terms, the project continues to generate energy in the community almost two years after its inception and has expanded way beyond its original goals. A recent spinoff of the project (Guardians, take note) is the spontaneous formation of a community French language table, the first meeting of which will be held next week (as I write) at that venerable neighborhood institution, The Shuffle Inn. The fate of the French Island language table remains to be seen (stay tuned). What (Continued on page 47)



The Rise of the Unmeltable Francos

"We were allowed to keep our faith and our language,"

one Franco-American says—"and our place"

BY EVE LAPLANTE

(This article first appeared in the New England Monthly, May 1987. Appeared in Le Forum, Vol. 35 #1, Summer of 2010.)

The raucous bilingual chatter drifting out of the dining room told me I'd found the fifth annual Rassemblement des Artistes Franco-Américains, and the tone of those voices indicated that the mood was still friendly. But that, I knew, could change. Last year, this meeting of New England's Franco-American artists, writers, filmmakers, and musicians had almost turned into a fiasco. Shouting matches had erupted, among people who had only just met, over how to organize the weekend. As the volume mounted, someone, fearing a brawl, had yelled, "Let's all leave!"

"Yeah! Let's all go!" came from another quarter.

"Let's take a walk!"

Chairs were scraping back when one voice rose above the others. "No!" shouted Bernard Ouimet. "Let's sing!" Ouimet grabbed his accordion and started singing "C'est l'aviron qui nous mène en haut" ("This is the paddle that carries us upstream"), a seventeenth-century folk tune sung by Canadian fur trappers and traders to keep the rhythm as they paddled. The scheme had worked; potential disaster dissolved in group song. But confusion persisted all weekend about who we were and what we should be doing at a Rassemblement.

The latest meeting was held in Enfield, New Hampshire, a lake side village in the foothills of the White Mountains. And as I made my way to the dinner table that first night, the mood was downright cordial.

"Bonjour! Ça va bien!" said Yvon Labbé, director of the Franco-American Resource Opportunity Group at the University of Maine at Orono. Labbé graciously rose and found me a chair. All around us, people were talking about their work, practicing their French, and trading experiences as members of one of New England's largest ethnic groups. The term Franco-American, in spite of its canned Italian flavor, describes immigrants from French Canada and their descendants. Of this country's thirteen million Francos, one in six lives in New England.

I myself, half Franco, am vaguely proud of something I don't half understand. Francos have none of the obvious cultural rituals or lore by which other ethnic groups are known. We have no St.. Patrick's Day parade, no chicken soup. Even our writers— Jack Kerouac, Paul Theroux, Grace (Marie-Antoinette Jean d'Arc DeRepentigny) Metalious—are rarely perceived as Franco-American. The culture is tenuous, hard to pin down, we still don't have Franco-American authors in our American literature classes. The university recently pot out a book about Maine authors, and there are no Franco writers in it."

The real issue, for Labbé isn't the French language: "Let our kids speak whatever they speak, but respect our culture." In fact, Francos have found their voice in English for years. And Franco English has a quality all its own. Chrysostome Cyr of Lille-sur-St.-Jean, Maine, captures it in a recent issue of Le Farog Forum: "I tink dat I should always have da rite to spoke my mudder tonge wen I wan to. Les Angalis be dam!"

But before Francos can assert themselves, they have to transcend feelings of insecurity and shame, said Robert B. Perreault, a journalist and the author of the 1983 novel, L'Héritage. "There's a fear of being laughed at. We've been told over and over, 'On est né pour petit pain'—We're born for a little bit of bread." Historically, he explained, Francos have worked long hours for low wages. The attitude was "Do your job; don't kick; be industrious and docile." In the 1880's, Francos were called "the Chinese of the East"; in the 1960's, they were "the white niggers of America."

Perreault has immersed himself in this past. Bearded,, in denim overalls and work boots, he looks like the woodsmen who were his forebears. As he read aloud an article he had written about his Franco neighborhood, it seemed that no time had passed between teaches at Quebec City's Laval University and who attended the Rassemblement with some of his students, New England's Franco community is strikingly similar to that of Quebec. "It may, in fact, resemble Quebec more than Québec does," he observed. "Religion is much stronger here. And what other ethnic group in the United States can say they live right next to their mother country? Italians can't. Pole can't. Mexicans can; maybe Chicanos and Franco-Americans have that in common." Not long ago, in The New York Times, Franco writer Clark Blaise described the Québecois as "Latin Americans from the north." For ME, too, the pendulum is swinging back. My father, whose mother tongue is French, has lived through English his entire adult life. After a stroke a few years ago, he couldn't speak at all. The first word to reemerge was tu. His (*Continued on page 51*)

(THE LANGUAGE OF

INCLUSION continued from page 46) is already clear beyond reasonable question is the power of community inclusion to

generate energy, to create new directions and purpose in people's lives, and to jumpstart the process of cultural and linguistic regeneration without resorting to the imposition of language requirements.

I want to end my little discourse with a few words about words. One word we see a lot in academic circles these days is "francophonie". I understand the word to have international political significance, which I don't want to get into here. But I also hear the word used, by French teachers and professional Franco's in particular, to designate the community of Franco's in this country and on this continent who appear to be worth our attention and who deserve to be included in serious academic dialogues. I have even seen the word used almost synonymously with "Franco-Américanie". It's enough to make me want to list my ethnicity as Canuck, which, whatever its original pejorative connotations and its unfortunate effect on Edmund Muskie's Presidential ambitions, has the advantage of organic origins and therefore retains some point of contact with the stuff of life. Maybe those of us, the great unwashed, who do not aspire to guardianship, but who know ourselves to be Franco to the marrow, should start a Canuck Alliance. Or maybe, without naming it, we already have. Seriously, we need as children de la meme histoire to stop inventing mechanisms that serve to set us apart and find ways to draw from the deep well we commonly inherit. This is no time to be checking passports. It's time to be reimagining our home.



Text of UM President Hutchinson and Ambassador of

France Andréani

during the Ambassador's visit to the University of Maine

September 8, 1992 at Wells Commons Lounge.

"I believe this University has the opportunity to build a Franco-American Center of unique and great strength presenting programs of national and international stature."

University of Maine President Winthrop Libby January 22, 1973

"Over the last 20 years, the University of Maine has become an internationally recognized center for Franco-American studies. Given the significance of the cultural heritage in Maine and the Northeast, and given the many contributions to Maine and the Northeast made by people of Franco-American ancestry, we have not done enough by any means. This is now a time for renewal, I say renewal of this University's commitment to Franco-American Studies. And I stand here and take the opportunity to announce that to you. That this University, even at these times of difficult budget situations, renews its commitment."

University of Maine President Frederick Hutchinson, September 8, 1992

•Yvon Labbé introduces President Hutchinson. •Remarks by UM President Hutchinson

I would like to start out today by reading from a letter that Winthrop Libby, who was the President of the University of Maine at that time, wrote on January 22, 1973. He wrote it to Yvon Labbé and this is what he said.

"Given the fact that about 1/3 of Maine's population is of French ancestry, the academic and social well being of this state is intimately related to a citizen of French descent. I suspect without any factual proof," this was in 1973, "that the number of Franco-Americans within Maine was greater than within any other state in the entire United States." I have no idea if that is true or not, neither did he, but it sounded like it might be true. At least it indicated that we should be committed and that is really the issue; not whether it is in fact the case. "The University of Maine of Orono is a major University within this main system and has, beyond any doubt whatsoever, a responsibility to the Franco-American population of this state. This responsibility incorporates not only the traditional aspects of any University, such

as educational opportunity, research studies, and off campus public service, but it also includes a need to understand and explain the cultural and economics contributions of Franco Americans in making us what we are today. I have a sincere and deep appreciation for the French heritage and French culture within Maine. My interest in this effort however, involves yet another aspect. I believe this University has the opportunity to build a Franco-American Center of unique and great strength presenting programs of national and international stature."

Now, that is what he said to Yvon Labbé among other things. I won't read the whole letter. That was as I said in January 22, 1973. On the occasion of the Ambassador being here with us, it seems fair to take stock as to what has happened in the interim. I do not have a complete chronology of things that have happened; of course the Franco-American Center was created. That was one of the mandates from that commitment. Over the last 20 years, the University of Maine has become an internationally recognized center for Franco-Americans studies. We really believe that is true. The UM Press has published several books on Franco-Americans, two by Professor Doty,

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President Winthrop Libby



President Frederick Hutchinson

Acadian Hard Times and The First Franco-American. Professor Doty is here in the audience today. The UM Franco-American Center has developed projects, programs and processes which model interactive learning with positive cultural programs.

Much more work and generations of new knowledge are needed and these need to be interdisciplinary in nature. There our Franco- American Center, with the help of University of Maine faculty and staff and community leaders, has developed ways and means of including the community in academia, and in institutional processes that we did not have before. We have worked closely with Maine Native American communities as well, and we feel we have only scratched the surface in that respect. The Franco-American Center has published multifaceted and inclusional periodicals about the Franco-American community and the Maine multi-cultural fact. Maine Franco history folk lore literature needs to be collected. Maine Franco-American contributions need to be studied and made known. Over the last several years, University wide committees and task forces have studied and recorded the need for Franco-Ameri-(Continued on page 32)

(Continued on page 49)



(Text of UM President Hutchinson and Ambassador of France Andréani continued from page 31)

can studies, and the potential to be realized for this University. Now, those are some of the things that have happened to date.

There is much more to be done, there is no doubt of that in my mind. Given the significance of the cultural heritage in Maine and the Northeast, and given the many contributions to Maine and the Northeast made by people of Franco-American ancestry, we have not done enough by any means. This is now a time for renewal, I say renewal of this University's commitment to Franco-American Studies, and I stand here and take the opportunity to announce that to you. That this University, even at these times of difficult budget situations, renews its commitment. It is important that we do that and that we be understood for being ready to accept our responsibility in that regard.

Over the next few months, the University will develop a specific program to realize this goal. I'm sorry we don't have the outline of it all laid out, and therefore, I cannot give you details at this point. But as it unfolds, you will be told. Programs and services will be identified to fulfill this goal. Private and public funding will be sought to support it, and individuals and institutions will be asked to contribute their time, their expertise, and other resources to make this endeavor a reality in Maine. This effort will involve a multitude of academic disciplines and institutions. It will be located in the geographic heart of 10 million North American French people.

I respectfully request that the Government of France consider collaboration with us as we go into this effort. Your support in any form will do much to encourage us as we go forward in accepting this commitment.

I conclude by pointing out that awareness of cultural diversity is much greater in this University and in this State than it was 20 years ago when the original commitment was made. We must grasp the opportunity to do it.

Thank you very much.

•President Hutchinson introduces the Ambassador (See insert on Ambassador Andréani.) • Remarks by Jacques Andréani Ambassador of France to the United States

Thank you President Hutchinson and

thank you all for this very nice welcome. I am really thrilled to be here in Orono with the University of Maine. It's a great pleasure to be in the State of Maine. It is my first trip to the spot of the north east since I was named Ambassador here. I must apologize. The United States is such a great country. I really would of like to have paid you a visit before, but I had to be in Washington and to go elsewhere. Its really something which I love to do, to take the past of this country and go to place to place where I find very different situations where are the diversities. Its a very diverse country and I'm very happy to discover the new part of the United States.

I am also extremely moved by the presence of France in this great country and moved very deeply by the fact that so many people are here. I hear various figures 1/3, 1/4 of French origin. That the people have remembered this gene, this France Canadian origin, and that the tradition is still very vivid; it is an important factor for the comprehension between the United States as a whole and France. I tell you why.

We have certainly been along the years probably the best friends of the United States. When we are at war as we have some times, but we were never in conflict and hold in pride for the freedom of France. We found it again in 1944 and this is something that will be absorbed will come American with the right help, with the right style. 2 years from now its the 50th anniversary of D day of the landing in Normandy and unfortunate the anniversary of the deaths of yours on our beaches of so many of your young men. So this is something that has endured all the time.

When we had the crisis in the Gulf we were another time side by side with you and in most confronted with most of the real problems of our time. We are very close. We seek with you comments and concerns in close consultation, comprehension and friendship. There is a conceptual basis for our relations but at the same times we do not really agree. We have our little problems, our little differences which is normal because we are two very different countries with different historical traditions. We are consistent in France in our own way and we like to do what we think is right and sometimes our ways are not yours. There is a difference here between the British and us because the British are more closer to you by the language, of course, by the culture, by legal traditions, by a lot of things. So given a new problem in the world there, you



Ambassador Jacques Andréani

will find that there is an easy way of understanding each other and working together with the British with us it will be more difficult because at the beginning we will not have the same way of acting we will have different minds set, you see, with the new problem. I must say that the strength of our friendship always allowed us to overcome these differences these misunderstandings.

There are now as I speak, although we agree on the vast majority of the international problems, there are a few areas with us and discrepancies, and this misunderstandings between the United States and the French Government. I will come back to that a little later. In such circumstances we have not a constituency in the United States. 1/2 millions of Americans of German or Italian or Irish ancestry, the total number of French is much more limited. That way it is extremely valuable for the understanding of the companion of the French and the Americans that there should be in a few areas of the country this heritage of the French past.

I would like to come up previously to higher education which plays such a great role in our understanding of international affairs. President Hutchinson has been speaking in a way which is of great interest to me, of the projects what your University has already achieved and of the project you have for a closer cooperation with France. It is very important. When I look, as the Ambassador of France, when I look at the scene of America in which the Universities play such capital roles and essential role in the public bylaw about public affairs, in the formation of a consensus in the Nation about social problems, about economics political problems on the international scene. It is absolutely essential that control which express as we do to complaints closely and to work in very good intelligence with you should (Continued on page 33)

A BLAST FROM THE PAST



(Text of UM President Hutchinson and Ambassador of France Andréani continued from page 32)

have an important presence on your Universities. And I must say that when I look at the situation around, it is something which is a bit lacking. They are exchanges and they are developing. There are growing exchanging of students exchanging of teachers. The agreements between Universities that is not very structured, very organized, progress between the French and the American University level. At least not enough. So we are indeed in demand of that sort of thing. We want to develop that, we think it is important.

What you said Mr. President couldn't be more appropriate. We would really welcome the development of your Franco-American Center and if I may, I would suggest that this such a center should be developed certainly to the conservation and to the study of Franco-American past so the Franco-American past of this areas but should also extend to the cities of France. As it is now, of the France of today, and of relations between France and the United States and of the whole of France and the world. Because I think this would be extremely fitting that the University which is based in an areas so involved with this remembrance of the French past, should be precisely a center for better understanding, not only of the past but also of the relationship between my country and yours.

Just a few words about our relations. As I told you, the bases is very solid. The basis is a very strong friendship and remembrance of so many times, so many crisis, that the French and the Americans had to sustain together and sometimes in their mixed blood. So the bases is very sound. Personal relations between our leaders are very good. The investment of the French companies in this country is growing at a very rapid rate. It is little known that in 1990 for example, the French investment coming from abroad if you take French as investment of foreign countries in the United States, the French came first. We bought more assets in the United States, we invested more money in assets than any other country. In 1991, we came second after Japan. It should not be that way. It is a new development and it is of course important. And it would be only normal that this increase economic presence which is felt also here, not in a massive way in Maine, but I was told by the way of seven significant subsidized French companies in Maine and a total investment

I was talking about was a significant presence in New England as a whole, which I suppose trickles down somehow in Maine. We have this satisfactory situation of the economic presence of the French and which is largely populated by the extremely important activities of your companies in France.

This is a basis which is very strong on which we can build and I would like also the French companies, I'm pressing them to do so, should also think of the Universities in America should be a goal to do something about contributing to these Universities and in particular to those places in which solid French American cooperation will be established. Our political coalitions, as I said, are good because the basis is sound because relations between our leaders are excellent personal relations.

I was telling you that there were some misunderstanding. I would just say we are not worried about them. There are several things I think. This is in which we have conflicting interest, but on a trade nature. And the most important item in this regard is the problem of the international trade, the rules on the international trade, and which I discussed in the format of original round negotiations in GAT and basically one of the problems. We don't think it is the only one, but one of the problems is that the problem of the subsidy to agriculture. In fact, this is not so much the Franco-American dispute as you American dispute because when we established the European community, the common market, we endowed the community with the factor to decide the policy concerning agriculture. So it is the community, the twelve members of the community which together define and manage the agriculture policy.

So this problem of subsidies is something between the European community and the United States. We defend

SUMMER/ÉTÉ

the European policy and I think, I'm sure not because we like subsidies, but we think that agriculture is a particular activity which one may wish to support for human social environmental/cultural reasons. So some support to agriculture is just I think. It is well founded, and indeed you people think the same way because it is not that the United States does not support its agriculture, the problem is how much and which way it's regulated negotiations. There were some problems made, the European community because, not entirely to displease you, but because also we thought the subsidies were too expensive and had taken a new course as we felt that your foreign policy cut down on subsidies so maybe an agreement will be easier. I am not sure frankly that our subsidies will be made more easily by the recent decision of your government to increase massive subsidies to export of cereals for reasons which we understand.

That's the first series of questions. The other ones concern in fact the organization of Europe after the deception of the communist system. There we have a lot of difficult days of crisis, Yugoslavia a lot of things that are not going well in the former Soviet Union, tendency to carry out to relations confrontations in eastern Europe with contains a lot of dangers and difficulties and potential for conflict. On the other hand, the western end of your project that goes in the other direction, which is not tendency to conflict but a tendency to mock aggression and more integration and that is the development of the European Community. Both in the sense of deepening the ties of the members of the community making it a total common market but achieving fully that common markets what we will be doing in the beginning of 1993 and then pushing the thing of it forward beyond the economic community.



⁽Circa. Bumper Sticker 1970's)



25ème Anniversiare 1996

par Joseph Yvon Albert Labbé

Bien chère Soeur, Bien cher frère:

25 ANS! Et la lutte continue toujours pour faire valoir l'indentité Franco du Maine et de la région, et bien sur, son expression libre.

L'aspect colonisatrice de nos institutions est toujours en bonne santé, mais je crois qu'elle faiblit. Et il y a toujours des lieux défendus pour nous, les propriétaires, les uppety-Frogs. Surtout là, ou l'institution risque de nous ressembler, les plafonds traditionnels réapparais-sent -25 ans!

Mais! Ça coute cher les précisions. Vous n'avez qu'à revoir le dernier **Yvongélisations** que vous allez trouver d'une brièveté inhabituelle. En effet, cette dernière colonne était devenue "territoire occupé." D'où est provenu mon absence. L'institution ayant décidé to let the author hang and twist in the wind for having declared in a prior column, "Render to FAROG, what is FAROG's" — its ownership of its history and collective voice.

A Native American once told me that his long term light at the end of the tunnel of colonization was, that "We will outlast you". It is difficult to understand how such words need to be uttered at a public institution of higher learning. Yet, after 25 years, it is also difficult not to lend credence to that year-in-year-out piece of strategy: WE WILL OUTLAST YOU!

So while pieces of our work can be controlled and requested to fit in assimilative institutional cogs, ideas and the need to be healthy and whole, seem like sand to those cogs. It is a supremely conflicted process to be the dubious beneficiary of "handouts" pendant qu'on se fait descendre et que notre travail est déraillé, notre identité et notre langue méprisées — directement ou indirectement.

25 ANS! C'est presqu'une génération. And we are still waiting for the commitments made to Francos by President Libby in 1972 and reiterated by President Hutchinson in 1992 to filter throughout the University's structure.

25 YEARS! For nearly a generation, hundreds of Franco men and women contributors and supporters in Maine and the US North East, et votre langue nord-américaine est toujours méprisée par certaines. Et ce mépris est récompensé. This is possible because the assimilative forces, the "Macdonaldlization" process is empowered. The attitude that Maine people should desire the generic identity offered by institutional tradition prevails — so far. Should I, should Francos, should we be thankful? Are we being done a favor? The measuring gauge for thanks which I use is how the Maine and regional Franco communities — schools, and other local agencies — have learned from recent graduates of the University about the contributions of past generations of Francos. I get phone calls every day from teachers who are looking for information and tools which are absent from the texts, as well as in their professional development.

Generic wood in our wheels, Frog sand in their generic cogs. So much for same old, same old. Am I impatient? You bet! Do I expect that our Franco wheels will hit solid ground somewhere? OUI, maudit! Am I tired of dealing with the same tired prejudice and biases encountered in the 70's? Justifying our presence each year? Very! Est-ce qu'on mérite une Université qui nous ressemble? À la longue, j'ose croire qu'elle ne pourra pas se passer de nousautres.

Do we have to trade culture, language, and identity in this state for an education? NON! Et je remercie ceux et celles à l'Université qui respectent cette présence which constitutes 30-40% of Maine's population, and which has produced to date, more than 100,000 francophones. I thank you who have helped us go 5 feet forward, and I reserve something else for those of you who have caused the effort to lose four of those feet. One foot is better than nothing, vous dites. Moé j'veux toute la varge.

Now for some good news.

Finalment, je n'veux pas vous quitter avant de rendre honneur au travail depuis dix ans, de Rhéa Côté Robbins. Rhea a quitté le Centre et *Le Forum* qu'elle a nourrit généreusement de son identité. Elle a laissé un grand vide que nous essayons de combler. Bonne chance Rhéa Jeannine Côté Robbins. Et, de la part des lecteurs et lectrices de ton *Forum*, santé et longue vie.

Mais étant donné que chacun de nous n'est indispensable, *Le Forum* voit, en ce moment même, apparaître la relève dans les personnes de Dawn Daigle Gagnon et Lisa Desjardins Michaud.

"The Rise of the Unmeltable Francos continued from page 47)

first phrase, faintly sung from his hospital bed, was "O Canada, terre de nos aieux" —"O Canada, land of our ancestors," the opening of the Canadian national anthem. Mémère died a year ago in January, but it was summer before her tombstone was engraved. We had left the wording to my father's sister, Rita. The problem was, Rita couldn't decide between French and English, much less what the stone should say. Then, one day, she called me and said, "I've finally decided about Mémère's stone. It'll be in English, since we talk English now." "What will it say?" I asked. "Olivia Caron LaPlante," she told me. "Eighteen ninety-seven to nineteen eightysix." What a relief to have a decision. But it would have been the same in French. Eve LaPlante wrote about the Irish language in the April 1984 issue Le Forum L a b b é : Wi t h o u t Fr e n c h, "my emotional tongue is cut off." "Le Petit Canada" in Salem, where my father grew up in the 1930's, and "Le Petit Canada" in Manchester, New Hampshire, where Perreault and his wife now live. Like my father, Perreault spoke French at home and attended a Franco parochial school in which half the day was conducted in English, half in French. Perreault's four-year-old son is completely bilingual. "That's rare these

days," he lamented. "And there aren't any Franco schools left to send him to." As a result, the boy may never learn to read or write French.

Others disagreed with Perreault, urging Franco artist to move away from their outsider status. Novelist Gérard Robichaud, author of Papa Martel, admonished Perreault, "Write for the world, not for you friends. Dip your pen in French-Canadian ink, but write about things that are universal." Over coffee Sunday morning, the seventy-eight-year-old Robichaud confided, "We've kissed too many asses over the years. When the pope farted, everybody ran for the toilet paper. We're not doing it anymore, but it's affected our character." Geography has also been an influence.

According to Dean Louder, who teaches at Quebec City's Laval University and who attended the Rassemblement with some of his students, New England's Franco community is strikingly similar to that of Quebec. "It may, in fact, resemble Quebec more than Québec does," he observed. "Religion is much stronger here. And what other ethnic group in the United States can say they live right next to their mother country? Italians can't. Pole can't. Mexicans can; maybe Chicanos and Franco-Americans have that in common." Not long ago, in The New York Times, Franco writer Clark Blaise described the Québecois as "Latin Americans from the north."

For ME, too, the pendulum is swinging back. My father, whose mother tongue is French, has lived through English his entire adult life. After a stroke a few years ago, he couldn't speak at all. The first word to reemerge was tu. His first phrase, faintly sung from his hospital bed, was "O Canada, terre de nos aieux" — "O Canada, land of our ancestors," the opening of the Canadian national anthem.

Mémère died a year ago in January, but it was summer before her tombstone was engraved. We had left the wording to my father's sister, Rita. The problem was, Rita couldn't decide between French and English, much less what the stone should say. Then, one day, she called me and said, "I've finally decided about Mémère's stone. It'll be in English, since we talk English now."

"What will it say?" I asked.

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THE FRANCO AMERICAN CENTRE OF THE

UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

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

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

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

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

MISSION

• To be an advocate of the Franco-American Fact at the University of Maine, in the State of Maine and in the region, and

• To provide vehicles for the effective and cognitive expression of a collective, authentic, diversified and effective voice for Franco-Americans, and

• To stimulate the development of academic and non-academic program offerings at the University of Maine and in the state relevant to the history and life experience of this ethnic group and

• To assist and support Franco-Americans in the actualization of their language and culture in the advancement of careers, personal growth and their creative contribution to society, and

• To assist and provide support in the creation and implementation of a concept of pluralism which values, validates and reflects affectively and cognitively the Multicultural Fact in Maine and elsewhere in North America, and

• To assist in the generation and dissemination of knowledge about a major Maine resource — the rich cultural and language diversity of its people.

LE CENTRE FRANCO AMÉRICAIN DE l'UNIVERSITÉ DU MAINE

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

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

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

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

contribution de ce groupe ethnique à la société.

OBJECTIFS:

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

2-D'offrir des véhicules d'expression affective et cognitive d'une voix franco-américaine effective, collective, authentique et diversifiée.

3 – De stimuler le développement des offres de programmes académiques et non-académiques à l'Université du Maine et dans l'État du Maine, relatant l'histoire et l'expérience de la vie de ce groupe ethnique.

4 – D'assister et de supporter les Franco-Américains dans l'actualisation de leur langue et de leur culture dans l'avancement de leurs carrières, de l'accomplissement de leur personne et de leur contribution créative à la société.

5-D'assister et d'offrir du support dans la création et l'implémentation d'un concept de pluralisme qui value, valide et reflète effectivement et cognitivement le fait dans le Maine et ailleurs en Amérique du Nord.

6-D'assister dans la création et la publication de la connaissance à propos d'une ressource importante du Maine — la riche diversité