



# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF                      JUIN - JUILLET, 1991                      VOL. 12                      NO. 6

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Co-Editor: Jerry Marie Forchette

Below and on  
the following page is the  
translation  
of the  
MARRIAGE CONTRACT  
between two natives  
of Quebec  
who migrated to Minneapolis  
in 1857 and in 1870.

At left is the original cover of  
the marriage contract.  
It translates as follows:

14 September 1870  
Marriage  
Between  
M. Louis Fisiau called Laramee  
and  
Delle Alphonsine Davis

Paid First Expedition

This issue of Chez Nous is devoted in  
large part to the Laramee's, of  
St. Lin, Quebec, of Montreal, of Minneapolis.

We are very thankful to Bill Horn, editor  
of Nouvelles Villes Jumelles, for sharing  
these stories of his great-grandparents  
with us.

Read on. . . and enjoy! And let us know  
your own personal story(ies). Send to  
Dick Bernard, 7632 157th Street West #301,  
Apple Valley MN 55124

*14 September 1870*  
*Marriage*  
*Entre*  
*M. Louis Fisiau*  
*dit Laramee*  
*et*  
*Delle Alphonsine*  
*Davis*  
*Payé*  
*1<sup>re</sup> Expédition*

The Laramee - Davis Marriage Agreement  
Quebec, 1870

The below is translated from a hand-written document by Bill Horn, a descendant of Louis Laramee and Alphonsine Davis. Mr. Horn says he also has an earlier contract of marriage of the Fisiau dit Laramee family dated, 1829. The arrangements for the distribution of simple property such as axes, carding machines, and beds reminds us of the humble conditions in which our ancestors lived. Also, many who were witnesses used an X (ne savoir signe).

Before Maitre P. Renaud, notary at St. Lin<sup>\*</sup> in and for the Province of Québec and in the actual presence of M. Gilbert Gauvreau, bailiff at St. Lin, witness for this requis, undersigned.

Appear M. Louis Fisiau called Laramée, of age, shoemaker, resident of Minneapolis in the State of Minnesota, one of the United States of America and presently in the parish of St. Lin, issue of the marriage between Joseph Fisiau called Laramée and Dame Aurelie Durand stipulating for him and in his name on one side.

And M. Theophile Davis, merchant and inn-keeper of the parish of St. Lin, stipulating for his minor damsel Alphonsine Davis issue of his marriage with Dame Hyrèle Ethier, said damsel Alphonsine Davis here present consenting on the other side.

Who in the presence of their parents and friends have completed the civil covenants of marriage as follows:

First Article:

Agreement of communal estate and half in that which the future spouses will make in the course of their future communal estate.

Second Article:

Debts which the future spouses will have created before their marriage will be paid

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\* St. Lin is north of Montreal. Sometime after 1870, it was renamed Laurentides in honor of Sir Wilfred Laurier who was born there.

CHEZ NOUS is your newsletter and  
LA SOCIETE is your Club. Ask your  
relative or friend who is interested in  
their heritage to join with us. 2

by and from the estate of the future spouse who created them.

Third Article:

Agreement of dower, this to which the future bride has renounced as much for herself as for the children who may be born of the projected marriage.

The preciput (which means fixed inheritance) will be 100 piastres to the benefit of the survivor, hors part and without increase in money or in chattels following the valuation of the inventory, moreover their bed such as will be then, with it's clothes linen and good clothes. If it is the future of the husband who survives he will take moreover his arms, hatchet, mattock and steel pick-axe and the future bride her rings, jewels, carding machine and spinning wheel.

At the dessolution of the said joint estate be it by death or otherwise, it will be free to the future wife and to the children who will be born from the projected marriage to renounce it. In that case she recovers absolutely and debt free all she proves to have brought into it along with her preciput such as above stipulated, for surety of which she will have the lien from today to enjoy possession in case of no children.

The future spouses maintain their rights and property and wish and intend that the future joint estate be regulated according to the law of the country, Province of Québec.

Prepared and accepted in St. Lin residence of the future bride, Province of Québec, Canada, under number 3,311 in the year 1870, the 14th of September before the marriage be celebrated and declared, attested as signed by those who cannot sign their names, of this, requis, except the undersigned, after reading did sign: L. Laramee, A. Davis, Theophile Davis, G. Gauvreau, Renaud, N.P. just as it appears at the present moment to the undersigned.

P. Renaud N.P.

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## Great Grandfather's Wedding Journey

by Charles Horn, Minneapolis, MN

The event here recounted which occurred during great grandfather Louis Laramee's wedding journey is a bit of family history which is usually told to his descendents in their childhood.

To a child the story is both thrilling and perhaps a little frightening so it is only when the child reaches maturity that the humor and pathos of the situation becomes apparent. Surprisingly, my tale can be proved to be a true story. I have in my possession a yellowed clipping from an 1870 Minneapolis newspaper which stated it in capsule form. However, it is indispensable to the story to know something about great grandfather Laramee because the story is the man in miniature.

Great grandfather Louis Laramee was a rather remarkable man who made a deep impression on his children and their families even to the present day. At this writing, there are living in the Minneapolis area Louis David Laramee (grandson), David Louis Laramee (great-grandson), and Julia Laramee Horn, and Louise Alicia Horn (great, great granddaughter) all of whose names are in some way derived from that of this very positive French Canadian.

Louis Laramee was born near St. Lin, Quebec (now Laurentides) in 1837. It turned out to be an historic year for Canada as before it ended the abortive Mackenzie-Papineau rebellion took place and from this evolved modern Canada. St. Lin is a modest but not a mean town. When I visited it several years ago, I found that it possessed a traffic light and an extremely large church built some years after Louis Laramee left but no doubt in part with some of his money.

Louis Laramee learned the trade of harness making and sometime during the 1850's left Quebec. He appears to have gone first to New England the traditional American entrepôt for French Canadians and from there in 1857, he went west. He chose Minnesota Territory as his destination, and debarked from a steamboat at Reed's Landing later that year with a knapsack, the tools of his trade, and his fair share of determination. The later carried him on foot to St. Anthony (not yet Minneapolis) where he found employment in his craft.

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He seems to have been a good worker and in light of what I will recount, a very dutiful employee. When the Sioux War broke out in Minnesota in 1862, his boss equipped him with a horse, saddle and gun and "volunteered" him to fight the Indians. (Let any young executive whose boss has "volunteered" him to work in the United Fund or other worthy projects count his blessings.) Great grandfather's Indian fighting career was both brief and mysterious. It is absolutely certain that he never fought the Indians. There are two family versions of how he left the volunteer service. It is enough to say that one is reverent and the other is irreverent.

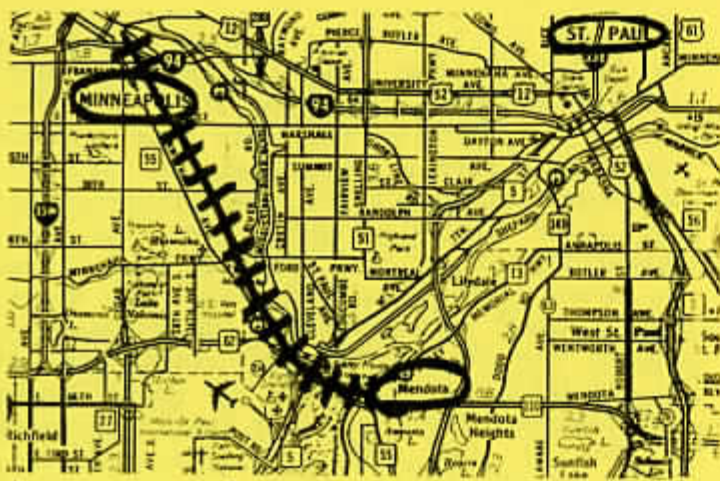
By 1870, he had prospered and like most single men of 33 had begun to think of marriage. However, be it remembered that he was Canadien and very practical. He bought a house. That done, all that remained was to find a bride. For that purpose he returned to Canada where he married Alphonsine Davis, who despite her surname, was throughly Canadienne.

She was 16 years old and had been educated in a convent school. Alphonsine was not exactly unknown to Louis Laramee as her father kept the inn at Terrebonne, Quebec where the groom had once lived as a young man. On that occasion he had rocked his future bride in her cradle. Their courtship was apparently also very Canadien (which is another name for practical) as the terms of this tattered dowry agreement disclose.

So it was, great grandfather Laramee's wedding journey back to Minneapolis began. By now it could be by railroad and all went well until the train reached Mendota, perhaps ten miles from what is now downtown Minneapolis. Mendota was a regular stop in those days and great grandfather saw an acquaintance on the station platform.

Leaving his bride on the train, he descended to the platform to exchange greetings. (One suspects the friend was also French-Canadian). The inevitable happened, the train left. The bride was on the train and the groom was at the station. What his thoughts were I can only guess, but the determination (and legs) of 1857 were still there so he started on foot down the tracks for Minneapolis.

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If Louis was outwardly calm and collected, his bride on the train was decidedly not as soon as her husband turned up missing. Consider the situation. She was only 16,



In very general terms, the area traversed in the story is highlighted above. The total distance was perhaps ten miles, mostly through, perhaps, wilderness and a few farms. How things have changed!

she spoke no English. She was in a strange land and headed for an unknown destination. Now she was separated from the one person she knew and that person was a much older husband who was still something of a stranger to her. There was too a danger more hideous than wild Indians, that was undoubtedly present in this strange land, the - MASONs. She had been warned of them in Quebec. What they might be expected to do to a defenseless young woman, Francaise et Catholique, was too awful to express. (What would she have thought if she had known that her great grandson would become the Master of a Masonic Lodge, I hesitate to imagine.) It is presumed that at this stage she started to have hysterics. Fortunately some one was found on the train who spoke French and who could tell her that everything would be alright.

Meanwhile back near Mendota great grandfather was stalking down the tracks toward Minneapolis. At that point deus ex machina appeared upon the scene in the guise of a solitary engine pulling only it's tender.

It was heading towards Minneapolis and it's engineer impatiently signaled Louis Laramee to clear the track. Louis, in turn, refused to budge and made a proposition. It's substance was that as long as the engine was heading for Minneapolis, why could he not ride in the cab as a passenger. The family is sure that money was also involved. Railroading was much less formal in those days and a bargain was struck. The engine had no load to pull and so made good time to Minneapolis. One suspects that the fireman got his cut too. So it was that the groom arrived at the station only a few minutes after the bride. We must presume that the railroad officials

were so thankful to get an hysterical Mme. Laramee off their hands that they overlooked a little matter of the unauthorized use of their engine. A

The couple lived happily ever after for many years. Louis Laramee bought land at 304 Nicollet Avenue and opened a successful harness shop. This property remained in his descendent's ownership until the 1950's when it was sold to the Minneapolis Library Board and is now part of the main Library. Louis did well. He was a fancier of horses and harness racing. (His unsuccessful attempt to collect a racing prize is recorded in the Minnesota Supreme Court's decision in Laramee V. Tanner, 69 Minn. 156, 71 N.W. 1028 (1897). He is believed to have contributed money to finance Louis Riel's second unsuccessful rebellion thus indirectly taking part in an event that was to influence Canadian politics to the present day and eventually make his fellow St. Linite, the great Wilfred Laurier, Prime Minister of Canada.

Great grandfather Laramee was widowed in 1901 but he lived his remaining thirteen years of his life with zest. He traveled and always went to the French-Canadian picnic on St. John Baptist's Day where he kissed the pretty girls. His family was never quite sure of what to think of papa. Their doubts can be illustrated by the story about his funeral.

An attractive middle aged lady, clad in black, appeared at the funeral. She was totally unknown to any of the members of the family. Louis's son-in-law (my grandfather, Brace) told me that as the service progressed he began to have an uncomfortable feeling that at its conclusion the mysterious lady would announce that she was the widow of the deceased. She didn't. Her identity was never learned by the family nor was her relationship to the deceased ever known. Louis may have been Francaise but he was sage. His descendants still speculate.

Now, let me give the coda to my tale. Several years ago as I waited for a plane in Chicago, a call came over the airport loudspeaker for someone who could speak French to a lost traveler. Although I knew I could not speak French very well, I felt I could read and write it and these skill might serve as substitutes. I volunteered my services but unfortunately a francophone Canadian stewardess was ahead of me. Anyhow I am sure great grandfather Laramee would have approved. Un beau sentiment - n'est pas?

## NECROLOGIE

(Jan 2, 1914)

M. Louis Laramée, un ancien Canadien bien connu de notre colonie et des hommes d'affaires de notre ville, est décédé la semaine dernière, à l'âge de 77. C'était une figure bien connue étant depuis de longues années dans le commerce de harnais et ayant employé dans le temps nombre de Canadiens. M. Laramée vint à Minneapolis en 1857 et se mit en commerce. Il vint du Montréal, où il se maria en 1870 avec Mlle Alphonsine Davis, qui l'avancé dans la tombe de près de 14 ans.

M. Laramée était un des membres de la Compagnie du Capitaine Anson qui marcha à la défense du Fort Ridgley en 1862 et assista aux travaux d'urgence pour la protection des Chutes de St Antoine, menacées de destruction.

Il a aussi pris une part active à la fondation de l'église Ste Clotilde de Minneapolis, —aujourd'hui de Ste Anne— où eurent lieu ses funérailles, samedi matin, le 21 écoulé, à 9 heures. Le service funèbre a été célébré par le Rév. P. Richard, curé de la paroisse.

Trois enfants lui survivent, un fils, L. A. Laramée, et deux filles, Mme H. C. Brace, de Minneapolis, et Mme D. E. Haynes, de Pasadena, Cal.

Nos condoléances à la famille,

M. Louis Laramée, a former Canadian well-known by our colony and by the businessmen of our city, died last week, at the age of 77. He was a well known figure, being for many years in the harness business and having employed many Canadians during that time.

M. Laramée came to Minneapolis in 1857 and entered business. He came from Montreal, where in 1870 he married Mademoiselle Alphonsine Davis, who preceded him to her grave by 14 years.

M. Laramée was a member of the company of Captain Anson<sup>1</sup> which rode to the defense of Fort Ridgley in 1862, and he assisted at the emergency work for the protection of St. Anthony Falls (Minneapolis), in danger of destruction.<sup>2</sup>

He also took an active part in the founding of the Church of St. Clotilde in Minneapolis —today known as St. Anne — where his funeral took place Saturday morning, the past 24th at 9:00 a.m. The funeral Mass was celebrated by the Reverend P. Richard, parish curate.

Three children survive him, a son L.A. Laramée, and two daughters, Mrs. H.C. Brace, of Minneapolis, and Mrs. D.E. Haynes of Pasadena, California.

Our condolences to the family.

<sup>1</sup>Capt. Anson Northrup, a steamboat captain who commanded a volunteer horse company. A tour boat named for him was the site of the July, 1990 outing of La Societe's Twin Cities Chapter.

<sup>2</sup>An incident in the 1870's in which the falls were being undermined by water which was diverted to operate mills.

## ABOUT FATHER GOIFFON'S TRANSLATOR:

In two previous issues we have recounted the exploits of Father Goiffon on the oxcarts and in the Pembina-St. Joseph-Red River area in about 1857. In a later issue we will reprint the priest's description of a buffalo hunt in those early days.

The manuscript we are using had a notation that it had been translated from French to English by Mrs. Henry Huot of St. Paul. So, when Henry Huot elected to join our club in April, we sent him a copy of the Goiffon history.

On June 1, we received a letter from Mr. Huot, in part as follows:

"I first met Madam Huot when I was a boy of 14 years. . . She was tutoring students in French and I was one of her students. I remember when I went into her home, she showed me a picture of her husband, and I thought that it could have been a photo of my grandfather, it looked so much like him. However, she and her husband had come directly from France, and my descendents were in Quebec

in the middle 1600's.

"I also remember her telling me that her son, I believe his name was Louis, who was a correspondent for two New York newspapers working out of Paris, wanted her to find him a young man who could read and write French as an assistant. She said if I would continue with my lessons she would recommend me. It sounded interesting but at that young age I had other interests, and did not follow up on it."

Mr. Huot and Madam Huot worked together in the early 1930's. Isn't it interesting how memories can come back. . . when they're "jogged" just a little!

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We bid adieu to CHARLEY BOULEY, who passed away at his home on May 31. Charley, the man who always came to our meetings wearing his beret, loved his heritage and was devoted to genealogy. (An article on his roots appeared in Chez Nous a few months ago).

Born in Worcester MA in 1918, Charley attended schools where French was the primary language. As he grew up he migrated west with his family. When he died he lived in Coon Rapids. His wife preceded him in her journey to the hereafter.

Charley was a man of many interests. For a time he edited Nouvelles Villes Jumelles. He loved weaving, and he owned many looms. A favorite activity was to listen in on radio broadcasts from France and Quebec on his short-wave. Justa Cardinal says she enjoyed her occasional chances to visit with Charley. "We listened to jokes in French on his radio, and they were hilarious" she said "but when we translated them to English they weren't quite as funny." Ah, the travails of jokes!

Adieu, Charley. You will be missed on earth. Your neighbors in heaven will be richer to have you with them. Dial us in, once in awhile.

This year is the Centennial of Itasca State Park (the Mississippi headwaters). On June 8, a wagon-train left Minnesota's State Capitol for the park, and will arrive at the park on June 23. Festivities are scheduled for the entire day (see below). Itasca is located about 20 miles north of Park Rapids MN.

10:00 a.m. Wagon train enters South Entrance Road and proceeds to the East Contact Station.

3:30 p.m. Finale program and presentations at the Itasca Sawmill Site (on the north edge of the park; entrance off Highway 200; proceed out North Park Entrance and follow signs or park in the Picnic Area Parking and walk north on the trail to the Itasca Sawmill).

5:00 p.m. Chuck Wagon dinner at Lake Itasca Pioneer Farmers Building on the north edge of the park.

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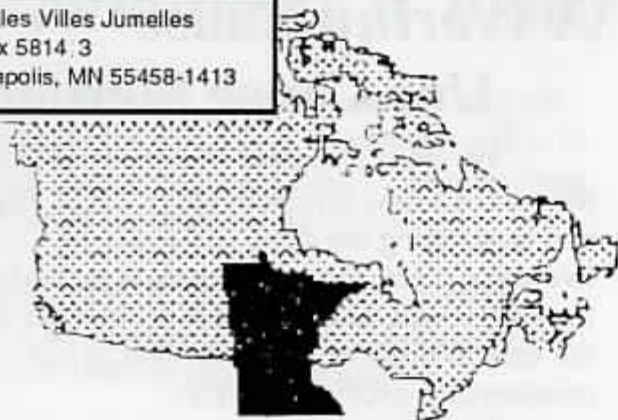
*The dandelion's name (dent de lion, or "lion's tooth," in French) comes from the notched shape of the leaves. When they are young, the leaves can be used in salads or cooked as greens.*

EVENTS TO NOTE:

- June 23 St. Jean Baptiste Day. La Societe picnic will be held at Stillwater Pioneer Park (on the hill overlooking downtown Stillwater). Noon on. Come in costume if possible. Potluck as usual. For those interested there will be a one-hour trolley ride (cost \$6) to tour historic Stillwater.
- June 28 FRANCINE ROCHE sings at the Loring Cafe in downtown Minneapolis.
- July 4 VIRGIL BENOIT will tell stories about the early days of Minneapolis at St. Anthony Days on Nicollet Island in Minneapolis. Virgil, our colleague from Red Lake Falls, is a superb storyteller.
- July 14 BASTILLE DAY events sponsored by Alliance Francaise. Info: 644-5769
- July 16 FRENCH DAY at Ironworld, Chisholm MN. Francine Roche & Company perform.
- August 6 REGULAR MEETING at St. Louis Church Hall in St. Paul. Slide images of Quebec is the program. 7:30 p.m.
- August 9-11 RENDEZVOUS at Ironworld, Chisholm MN. Demonstrations. Aug 10&11 the Bone Tones, an excellent Cajun-style band, will perform.
- August 23-25 CHAUTAUQUA at Old Crossing Park near Red Lake Falls. Guests at this annual event will be James J. Hill, talking about the railroad, a bonanza farmer from the Red River Valley, and other characters of antiquity. This is a wonderful program which begins at 7 p.m. on Friday evening and goes all weekend. Folk arts, songs, dancing, great food, are all a part of the weekend. Contact Virgil Benoit, Red Lake Falls MN for more info.
- October 22 TARTUFFE by Moliere performed by La Compagnie Claude Beauclair at College of St. Catherine. Tickets and information: call Helene Peters 377-4028 or 644-5769.

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## NOUVELLES VILLES JUMELLES



Julliet-Août 1991



NEWSLETTER OF  
La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota



## Bastille Day Celebration

The Alliance Française and French-American Chamber of Commerce are sponsors of a Bastille Day Cruise of the St. Croix River on the Andiamo Showboat.

Time: 3:30 to 6:00 pm, July 14

Cost: \$18.00 per person (includes light buffet).  
Children under 12 are \$9.00  
Cash Bar

Casual attire, accordion music, singer and sing-along.

Directions: Highway 36 to Stillwater; drive to boat visible to right as you enter town. 312 So. Main.

Mail your reservations payment before July 7th to:

Alliance Française  
821 Raymond Ave., Suite 150  
St. Paul, MN 55114

Telephone: 644-5769

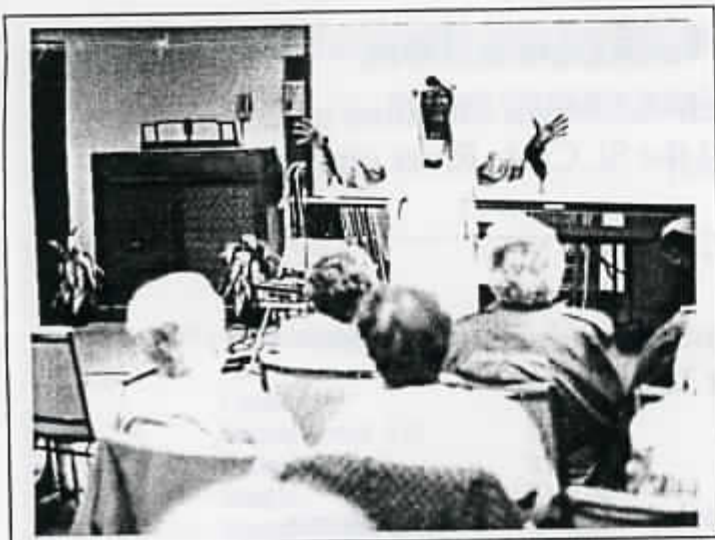
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# Reprise of 1990-91

Our chapter featured interesting and enjoyable programs this past year. Make plans to participate in 1991-92. All regular meetings are at the Parish Hall of St. Louis King of France Church in St. Paul. If you would like a ride or instructions on location, call a board member; we will try to help.

Here is the very impressive activity list from the past twelve months:

- June: Picnic at Boom Island Park
- October: Voyageur film
- November: Video on the Louvre Museum
- December: Christmas Party and Mass in French
- February: Indian Activist, Vernon Bellecourt, on events in Quebec
- March: John Rivard on the Middle East
- April: Genealogy Show and Tell  
Participation in the Festival of Nations
- May: Spencer Johnson of La Compagnie



*Our founder John Rivard, in appropriate attire, is seen delivering his lecture on the Middle East at St. Jerome's Church on April 15. LSCF enjoyed the same program in March.*

## ATTENTION! ATTENTION!

Note that we have a new PO Box number- 58143-and a new zip code- 55458-1413

## A Worthy Cause

### Une Cause Meritée

We are still in need of donations to cover the cost of a new brochure about LSCF. The art and typesetting are done and it will be a quality two-color piece. However, there is no budget for the \$300 it will take to have it printed. So, now's the time to think of a contribution to this worthy membership-promoting effort.

Send donations to any board member or mail them to:

LSCF  
PO Box 58143  
Minneapolis, MN 55458-1413

## La Compagnie des Hivernants de la Rivière

Those attending our May 3 general meeting enjoyed the presentation of Spence Johnson representing La Compagnie des Hivernants de la Rivière. Mr. Johnson, who is part of the reenactment scene at Fort Snelling, described and demonstrated the ways of Voyageurs and ox cart drivers in the early 19th century. Many thanks for this very informative and entertaining meeting.

## Merci

We forgot to give our thanks to Fern McLean in our last newsletter for her work at the Festival of Nations. She was responsible for coordinating the Sales booth for the whole weekend. Her efforts are to be commended.

## Alan Charbonneau

Alan Charbonneau passed away June 19. Alan and his wife, Magi, had been active in LSCF for many years. We have many fond memories of him. We wish our condolences to Magi and her family.

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# Evénements à Venir - Upcoming Events 9

July 4 Virgil Benoit, a superb conteur, will tell stories about the early days of Minneapolis at St. Anthony Days on Nicollet Island. See elsewhere in newsletter for more information.

July 12-14 Bastille Day celebration at Hotel Sofitel. Games, entertainment, and dancing. Phone 835-1900 for more information.

July 14 Les Canadiens Errant will perform at the Quail on the Hill Restaurant. Time is 2 p.m. Address is 371 Selby Ave., St.Paul.

July 14 Bastille Day events sponsored by Alliance Française aboard the Andiamo Showboat on the St.Croix River at Stillwater.

July 16 Minnesota French Ethnic Day at Ironworld, Chisholm, MN. Foods, crafts, entertainment. Phone (800)372-6437 for more information.

July 27-28 Fur Trade Rendezvous at Fort Snelling. La Compagnie des Hivernants et al will recreate an 1827 fur company rendezvous. Phone 726-1171 for more information.

Aug. 2-4 White Oak Rendezvous at Deer River, MN. Entertainment, food, music, dance, and blackpowder shoot. Phone (800)472-6366 for more information.

Aug. 3 Les Canadienes Errant will sing in Centerville for their annual town festival. All members are welcome to come in costume and mingle with the townspeople. Phone 426-6579 for more information.

Aug. 3 International Folk Festival in Duluth. Foods, dancing, crafts, and displays. Phone (218)722-8563 for more information.

Aug. 5 Membership meeting at St.Louis Church in St.Paul. Slide images of Quebec. 7:30 p.m.

Aug. 9-11 Rendezvous Days in Grand Portage, MN. Pow-wow, arts and crafts. Phone (218)475-2401 for more information.

Aug. 23-25 CHAUTAUQUA at Old Crossing Park near Red Lake Falls. "Characters of antiquity" will speak about their times. Arts, crafts, dancing, and food. Phone (218)253-2270 for more information.

## No Meeting in September

Sept. 21-22 Wild Rice Rendezvous at Northwest Fur Post in Pine City. Canoe events and voyageur competitions. Phone 629-6356 for more information.

Oct. 7 Membership meeting. "The American Indian Perspective on Christopher Columbus." Speaker: Priscilla Buffalohead, Anoka-Hennepin Schools.

Nov. 4 Membership meeting. "After Meech Lake: up to date developments on Canada's Constitutional Crisis." Speaker: Gilliane Lapointe of the Canadian Consulate.

Dec. 6 Tentative date for La Fete de Noel. Parish Hall, St.Louis Church, St.Paul. We also hope to repeat the French Christmas Mass.

*Nouvelles Villes Jumelles* is published monthly by LASOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE FRANÇAISE DU MINNESOTA. The next deadline is August 13.

Send your news, contributions, ideas, photos to (or call):

William Horn, editor  
2700 Foshay Tower  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Or phone: 612-341-2581 (days),  
612-922-9013 (evenings).

Staff for *Nouvelles Villes Jumelles*: Bill Horn, editor; George La Brosse, publishing; Al Girard, printing; Lee Collatz, folding and mailing.

Articles of statewide interest may also be sent to *Chez Nous*, which publishes on alternate months (editor Dick Bernard, 612-431-6515, days).

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# LSCF Picnic

Those of you who missed the annual picnic of the Twin Cities Chapter missed a beautiful day at a beautiful site overlooking the St. Croix River and downtown Stillwater. Attendance was not up to par, but those who were there showed plenty of enthusiasm and all had a good time.

Arrangements were made for a trolley to take our members and guests on an historic tour of Stillwater. We also had the potluck dinner and plenty of good food. The "Errants" sang for our entertainment and all-in-all it was a good picnic.

Thanks to Fern McLean and her helpers for making the necessary plans and arranging such a great day!

## July 4 Fête

On July 4, Virgil Benoit, a superb conteur, will tell stories about the early days of Minneapolis from noon on, at the Ard Godfrey house, corner of Central and University in Minneapolis. Michael Keplin, the Metis fidler, will alternate with Virgil. Charles Nelson of the Minnesota Historical Society will speak at the flag raising ceremony. The event is sponsored by the Old St. Anthony Association and the Mississippi Mile with a grant from the Humanities Board.

## President's Message

Following is the message from our new President, LeRoy DuBois, to members of LSCF: "For the Societe to remain active and meaningful in the 1990s, we will have to operate like any successful business. We must have:

- 1) Advertising to let people know who and what we are;
- 2) A product that is more fun and interesting than anyone else has to offer;
- 3) Trained and enthusiastic members to make newcomers feel that we are the best thing since strawberry ice cream."

# New Board and Officers

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## Nouveau Conseil d'administration

At the June 3 general meeting, Justa Cardinal was elected as a new member of the LSCF Board, joining reelected members George LaBrosse and John England.

The new board and officers are:

LeRoy DuBois	484-1622	President
Dick Bernard	431-6515	Vice President
Justa Cardinal	776-5087	Secretary
John England	699-5178	Treasurer

### Members at Large

Sr. Mary Henry Nachtsheim	690-6561
Bruce Bedore	487-0623
George LaBrosse	455-3128

We join together in thanking these loyal members for devoting their time and effort to serve La Société. Let's give them all the support we can.

## Gleanings from the Minutes Extrait du Proces-verbal

### May 22 Board Meeting

Strive for more advance scheduling of meeting programs and a program for every general meeting. There will be a budget of \$50 honorarium for up to six speakers annually. Eliminated are the January, September, and July meetings. Meetings will start promptly at 7:30 and should end by 9:30....At least once a year, a meeting with another ethnic group....Encourage costumes at two meetings a year....A fixed schedule of deadlines and publication dates for Chez Nous and Nouvelles Villes Jumelles, set according to events....A committee of Lee Lundin, Sr. Mary Henry and Dick Bernard will serve as liaison with area French teachers with the aim of creating interest and participation... Work on the new brochure progresses but donations will be needed to offset the \$300 cost.

### June 3 General Meeting

The passing of long-time member and past board member, Charles Bouley was noted. ...New guests introduced: Leo Gouette, Jim Rivord, and Kurt LeMieux....Suggestions on

Continued on next page

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...continued from previous page

more public visibility and a phone committee.

...Fern McLean presented the plans for the June 23 picnic (she masterminded the last Christmas party and coordinated the Sales booth at the Festival of Nations this year).

...Dick Bernard announced programs for the upcoming year (besides those listed elsewhere in this newsletter, there will be Cajun heritage, genealogy show-and-tell, and an archivist from the Archdiocese)...New board and officers were elected.

***Please save your Canadian Coins***  
**Mettez de la monnaie canadienne à côté**

Al Girard follows the example of John D. Rockefeller to help promote our interests he gives away Canadian coins to les enfants at public events involving LSCF. So please save up those hard to pass 1, 5, 10, and 25 cent pieces from north of the border and bring them to Al. He will make good use of them.

# New St. Jean Baptiste Statue 11

Our Lady of Lourdes will be taking donations for a new St. Jean Baptiste statue as part of their renovation. The original statue was lost about 1920, but old pictures are evidence to its existence. If you have an interest in contributing toward this effort or have any questions, please contact:

Joan or Fr. William Ward  
Our Lady of Lourdes  
One Lourdes Place  
Mpls., MN 55414  
(612) 379-2259

Donations may be direct or as a memorial. A scroll of contributors will be displayed in the church commons.



## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone \_\_\_\_\_ Profession \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State ZIP

**1991 Membership Dues:**

Family	\$15.00
Senior (over 62)	\$ 8.00
Senior Couple	\$10.00
Single	\$10.00
Minor (under 18)	\$ 1.00

**2 Year Membership Dues ('91 & '92):**

Family	\$30.00
Senior (over 62)	\$16.00
Senior Couple	\$20.00
Single	\$20.00
Minor (under 18)	\$ 2.00

**DONATIONS:** The Société is a non-profit organization and accepts tax-deductible donations from people interested in promoting the French-Canadian culture. Please make out any donation you may wish to contribute to: "La Société Canadienne-Française" and mail to:

P.O. Box 10913 .....  
Minneapolis, MN 55458 .....

Donations will go into the general fund to help support our programs and activities.  
Thanks!

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# chez nous <sup>12</sup>

NEWSLETTER OF Aout - Septembre 1991 VOL. 13 NO. 1

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Co-Editor: Jerry Marie Forchette

## THE SEARCH FOR MY IDENTITY - MY PATRONYMIC NAME

by John Cote  
311 Providence Rd  
Brooklyn CT 06234

[ED. NOTE: Jean Cote is listed as one of the very earliest settlers in French-Canada, arriving about 1634 at Quebec. His namesake and ancestor John Cote, has been researching actively the family history since the late 60's. Following lie John's findings, which may provide some insights that might help you in your own research. Thanks, John.]

Have you ever wondered about the origins of your family name? Where did it originate? In what country were the roots planted? To what other country might these roots have been transplanted and why? Does it designate or carry any particular distinction of the country of origin? What is its meaning?

For example:

Campagna	Latin	Field
Campagne	French	Field
Lee-Lees	Anglo Saxon	Meadow, Field

You are what you claim to be by the very virtue of the surname you bear and what your ancestors ever were. It identifies you and them as belonging to a special group, clan, family. It furthermore denotes the inter-relationship between you and others of the same name, either direct or collateral. Of greater importance, perhaps, it is the one and only possession that was left to you by your parents, paternal or maternal. All else that you might acquire, possess or control will perish or stop when you depart this world, but buried in archives, in city halls, state and church records, and most likely in government files, your name will be

collecting dust in perpetuity with many others. The only trace that you once existed will be on your tombstone. Engraved, it will state that you were once one with someone and you have left a non-perishable identity to future generations and descendants. This will serve to alert them that you and them have a consanguinity with a common heritage.

Many means are available today to establish kinship. Whether the relation is germane or collateral, you can identify with others outside of the surname you both bear. Some of these available resources are a "coat of arms", a heraldic emblem through which one may trace relationships by the similarity of the arms and emblem. Another is the genealogical search for your own family, running backwards into time to discover your ancestral origins. Other methods, also useful, are civil records in various repositories throughout the country. Yet another includes family bibles, diaries, along with recollections of an elder if you are lucky to have one in the family. The one I find most interesting as well as educational is the connotation of your surname and its origins. The above information is a prelude to my name of COTE and its derivation.

The name is Norman French in origin, from Normandie France and can be located in archives as far back as 1087 A.D. Specifically it is from the Mortagne area of the Pêrche district of l'Orne.

Mortagne in ancient times was the capital of the Province of Pêrche. Today it forms part of the departement of L'Orne and is the (Chef lieu d'arrondissement et de canton), the principal town of the district. with a population in 1949 of about 5000, Mortagne



from Reader's Digest  
Atlas of the World 1987  
p. 84

today forms a part of the department of Orne. It is situated on the summit or slope (d'un coteau) of the Chippe river that flows around the base of the town. The Church of St. Jean de Mortagne is preeminent in the town. It was built between 1494-1635 and enlarged in 1835. Its portal doors, dating back to the 15th century, depict St. Denis in engravement.

Normandie is in the northern part of France now known as Orne. A small district within was known as La Pêrche to name it properly. The name is from the Latin words "Percus Saltus", which denotes extensive forests once in existence.

Pêrche is bounded on the north by Normandie, on the south-east by La Beauce and on the south-west by the district of Maine. A mountain chain equally separates it in two parts. This area, running east to west, was the ancient homeland of our ancestor Jean Cote. Years ago La Pêrche, independent of and yet part of, was considered a district of Normandie. Although very picturesque and littoral, the surrounding countryside of Tourouve and Ventrouze are decidedly the most attractive parts of Pêrche. Here we find small villages renown for their leisure style country life and quaint customs dating back centuries. This idyllic corner of the gentle countryside is famous for its Percheron breed

of horses, cider and apples are amid her agricultural pursuits. It lies at an altitude of 1200 feet on a plateau, with a cool mountain breeze refreshing the weary traveler, or farmer after a hard long day laboring in the fields. In Tourouve, standing besides the ruins of an old chateau/fort, is a beautiful old church dating back to the 1500s and still in use today. The archival records of Tourouve, dating back to 1589 reveal numerous names of our Canadian ancestors who settled Canada. Over 100 natives of this land left their beautiful country and settled in Canada. They comprised the majority of the original Canadian settlers, coming from the northern part of France. Most of the very earliest colonists in Canada came from Normandie. We owe much to these hardy Normans who were our forebears. They gave us our Canadian-French Norman heritage for which we should be grateful and proud in recalling our bonds with "La Patrie de mon amour, ma Normandie".

Why affix so much importance to Mortagne, Pêrche, Normandie, France? Does its geographical location, topography and other features that one would normally find uninteresting, except perhaps to art lovers and architects? A fair question deserves a fair answer.

If you, the reader, will take a flight of imagination and fancy with me, we'll roll back the film of time to the spring of 1634. We're now at the waterfront in Dieppe. It is a clear night with a bright beckoning moon. The chill of winter has passed and the hopes of Spring invigorates every one. Look to your right and you will perceive four ships readying for a long voyage, awaiting the outgoing tide. In a few hours, the small four ship fleet will fade from view over the horizon. Sieur Duplessis, Royal Admiral, is sailing to New France on a voyage that will last some 60 days. His ship will finally make landfall June 4th at Fort St. Lous, Quebec. The other three ships will arrive later. Now in port at Fort St. Louis, a gentleman disembarks. He is Robert Giffard, Sieur de Mortagne and Beauport. He and several colonists will make their new home on his land grant from the King, about eight kilometers (about 5 miles) away on the St. Lawrence River. Quebec sees them but for a few days, as they must leave for Beauport to make ready for the coming winter. Among the seven colonists is a confident and assured Jean Cote/Coste from Mortagne, Pêrche, France. More about this man and the special relationship that existed between the Giffards and the Cotes, later.

In the French language, the noun "Cote" has a distinct pronunciation and meaning when applied in a precise and particular instant, depending on the inflexion or accents used. From the Larousse French-English dictionary 1970 edition, as authority, we derive the following:

- Côte feminine French Kôte slope, rib, hill, shore, coast, small hummock
- Côte feminine French Kôte share, quote, quota, quotation
- Côte feminine French Kôte district, side, aspect, direction

There is another accepted derivative usage of the word "Cote" from the English language but the meaning is very different from the French version. The following is from Webster's New Word Dictionary, 1965 edition:

- Cote-Kót noun M.E. Cot a small shed/coop for birds, chickens, sheep, doves
- Cot-Kót noun M.E. cottage A.S. a hut, a covered place akin to M.D. (Kote)

Another source "The Book of American Surnames" by Eldson C. Smith, 1986 edition of the Baltimore Publishers Co, gives the following which are of English origins with one exception:

- Cote-Cotter-Cottrel one who tilled only five acres or less
- Cote a dweller in a cottage or hut
- Cote-Coady A small wood or shaw, a cope, rove, hearst, wood(s)
- Coat Wearing a distinctive outer garment, a mantle, cloak
- Coates One who tilled 5 or 10 acres or less and lived in a small cottage or hut
- Cody (Irish) One who helps, assists

All of the above are the common manner of spelling the name Cote but have a different meaning and interpretation in the English speech pattern. The lack of the accent marks, which are peculiar to the French language, have no place in the English words so therefore the specific meaning or inflexion is not transmitted as easily as in French. The precision in phrasing a meaning is lost in the English pronunciation of the word "Cote". It is the same in whatever circumstances the word is used. From all that I have read and researched on my name, one fact stands clear: It was transmitted without changes or corruptions over the centuries and has not lost its meaning. Other beautiful French names have not fared so well. They have been so changed, corrupted and misused that one can hardly distinguish or find his true name. In my

\*LaSociete Member Kirk Lemieux (1984 Oakdale Ave W St Paul 55118) passes along information that the Lemieux family is planning two reunions in 1992 (in Lac St. Jean and Montreal, Quebec) and 1993 (Grand reunion in Quebec City). The events are to commemorate the 1643 departure from La Rochelle to Quebec, of Pierre and Gabriel Lemieux of Rouen, France. The Lemieux family is highly organized. If you know a Lemieux pass along the name and address to Kirk so he can see that they are contacted.

\*We bid farewell to Bernice "Bunny" Girard Ryder, of Eau Claire WI. Bunny passed away recently. Bunny was a nephew of Pierre Girard, and was a member for the past four years.

\*Let us know your news: to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th Street West #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.

case I have traced the name of "Cote" back to the 12th century and a variation of the name back to 1087 A.D.

In "The Origins Of Some Anglo-Norman Families" by Lewis C. Loyd, the 1975 edition published by the General Publishing Co of Baltimore Md, one will find the following: "Thomas des Costes (des Costes - from the side-slope) circa 1087, was granted a knighthood for services to the Crown, said knighthood being in the Shropshire District (Midlands). This can be found in the Red Book of the Ex-Chequer, extant today. Other notations are subsequent to the material. David Cote was of England in 1195. Roger Coste also of England in 1180-1195. Ralph Coste 1198. Robert de Coete/Coiete 1180-1195.

One may notice the similar spelling of Cote. The sound being almost the same while the pronunciation is the same. Notice also that the spelling has carried over to the present day with hardly any changes and is still in use today as such. Many "Cotes" carry a corrupted version of the original spelling of both the Norman and English versions. I am personally convinced that the original spelling was COIETE/COSTE and of Norman-French origin. The most probable roots of the name "Cote" would be the ancient archaic Norman spelling using the form of Coiete/Coete. The accepted form of this today would be as follows:

FRENCH	Côte	Côte	Côte
ENGLISH	Coty	Coates	Coat Cost

The Norman family of Coete/Coiete/Cote/des Costes originally descended from Viking forbears and settled in Norman-Land (Normandie). At the time of the conquest,

the group separated and dispersed into two existing branches, one in England and one in France. Their entity still exists today. The English Cote(s), dating back to 1066, are collaterally related to the one original source in Normandie.

Another interesting sidelight is the frequency with which the name "Cote" appears in Canada and the United States. Eldson Smith, in the 1969 edition of his book "American Surnames", devotes some pages to this issue and gives 2,000 family surnames in use today in the U.S. with the order of their appearance. "Cote" is listed as #1404 with an estimated 20,170 bearers in various forms.

Yet another book published in Canada in 1976 by the Laval University Press estimated that there were over 30,000 Cotes in Canada. Of that number 10,000 were enumerated in Montreal, the citadel of the Anglophiles. Thus in America there is estimated to be over 50,000 "Cotes" making them the second largest family group of Canadian descent. The Tremblays, who number almost 60,000, are considered to be the largest family of Canadian ancestry.

When compared to the American family name of "Smith" which ranks #1 with 2,238,000 in the U.S., the Canadian descent appears relatively pale. An explanatory fact in this comparison is that many more thousands of immigrants came to the U.S. than to Canada. The U.S. always had a larger population, even today.

A nice counterpoint to this story concerns the Giffards, given in a 1951 book by Loyd. It is entitled "The Origins of Some Norman Families". Loyd mentions and describes the Giffards, whose family place of origin was Longueville La Giffard (now Longueville sur Seine) in Normandie.

Two brothers, Walther and Osberne, were strong supporters of Duke William of Normandie. They supplied over 100 ships, food, men at arms and weapons to the Duke for the invasion of England in 1066. They were a potent, powerful, steel clad noble family who fully expected to be greatly rewarded with booty, spoils and land, after the battle and the defeat of Harold the Saxon.

The Giffards were so favored by the conqueror that 117 Lordships and Estates were granted and given to them as their reward for having materially and humanly supplied Duke William. Eventually this powerful Feudal family became the illustrious Earls of Buckingham. Their lineage died out in the

14th century as no male heir was issued. The title then passed down to a cousin. 19

The Giffard's seat of honor (Caput) was Longueville La Giffard. In an old Norman cartularity, one finds that the priory (religious house) was given as a foundation by the Giffards. The castle ruins are still visible today.

The family of Giffart/Giffard has been brought into the Cote/Coste history inasmuch as we find both a Giffard and a Cote arriving in Quebec in 1634 and I had to build a bridge spanning a time frame of 600 years.

Throughout my research and informative reading, the families of Giffard and Cote are intermingled, connected and involved in many affairs. I am led to believe, therefore, that this was the lord and servant type of relationship that destined both to be in each other's company. This was undoubtedly due to the Feudal relationship that existed at that time.

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THE WORD "mortgage"  
traces back into Norman  
French to something very  
nearly like "death pledge" —  
but you knew that without the  
definition, what?

L. M. Boyd in "The Grab Bag"  
San Francisco Chronicle July 7, 1991

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Starting with Thomas des Costes, knighted in 1087 for services to the Crown, in addition to being granted an estate in the mid-lands of England, there is every reason to believe that Thomas was a man at arms in the train of either Osberne or Walther Giffard. This then, knighthood and estate, was the reward for his service at the Battle of Hastings in 1066.

We now come to the spring of 1634. Leaving Dieppe harbor, after crossing the Atlantic, four ships finally arrive at Quebec in June 1634 with the following as passengers: Robert Giffard, Sieur de Mortagne and Beauport, with seven colonists. One such colonist was a certain Jean Cote/Coste, habitant for Robert, his Sieur. Both men came from Normandie in the Perche area.

Strange fates and destiny are at work. Both Cotes, Thomas and Jean, follow their Lord from the habitat in Normandie. After crossing a body of water they arrive in a strange land to seek their fortune. Does history repeat itself? Is there nothing new under the sun? This is yet another

interesting facet of genealogy when searching for your family name and the bearers of it.

For persons interested in the Canadian mobility there are books published about the subject that can be purchased or ordered in any book store. This should be helpful to seek out and determine if any of their ancestors were enabled for deeds rendered.

In conclusion, I salute and honor the memories of all my forbears. To Thomas des Costes, 1087, knight and hopefully also a collateral descendant of Jean Cote, 1634. They made it possible for me to bear an honored name well, for over 60 years. I have not discredited this one and true possession of mine, my Family name Côté/Costé.

[POSTSCRIPT from the editor: Occasionally I am kidded about my German surname "Bernard". It is indeed of German origin, Bernhard, meaning I believe "brave bear". In fact, Jean Bernard dit Hanse, who arrived at Ile d'Orleans in Quebec about 1655, is recorded as being from Tionville Germany! Those who know their geography know that Thionville is in France, but is located at the far northeast corner of the country in the Alsace region, near the tiny country of Luxembourg.

So in fact I have for some years run into midwestern Bernards of more recent immigrants to the U.S. who declare their Germanness and trace their roots back to the Alsace-Lorraine!

The Alsace was a source of constant interest/conflict between what was then France and Germany, and in fact had been German territory until about the time that my ancestor found his way, perhaps, to Dieppe and thence to Quebec. I have always been interested in the "dit" name of Hanse (one of many variations - never used in my own "line" to my knowledge). In the times around my ancestors migration there existed in Europe a Hanseatic League, a confederation of sorts. Is there a relationship to his name? Who knows.

As John Cote points out, depending on one's point of view a case can be made for us being French, English, or even . . . Norwegian! (My paternal great-grandmother was Julienne Cote, so John and I are somehow related. Maybe I'm even related to Oscar Olson! Who knows. And of course if you take it back far enough every one of us are directly related. The search is very enjoyable. Enjoy yours.]

Dick Bernard



THE EIFFEL CHURCH

If houses can be prefabricated in a factory and successfully erected on site, why can't churches? A. Gustav Eiffel, the creator of the Eiffel Tower, asked the same question more than 100 years ago.

And to satisfy his curiosity, he actually designed a prefab church in 1884 to accommodate the needs of the French colonists in Africa. In 1887 he instructed his foundry to cast the parts. Two years later, one of four prototypes was exhibited at the International Exposition of 1889 in Paris, along with his magnificent 984 foot tower.

Needless to say, everyone was so awed by the tower that the church was overlooked. But a few years later, Eiffel sent his little church off to Brussels, Belgium, where it soon attracted the attention of Catholic missionaries to the Belgian Congo. Three of the four original prototypes, as planned, were then shipped to Africa.

Then in 1894, a group of French mining executives from Baja Peninsula in Mexico, were in Brussels on business when they heard about the church. After a brief negotiation, they purchased the exhibit model, had it dismantled, crated, and shipped to Mexico. Upon arriving at it's new home in Santa Rosalia, Baja, California, in 1895, the structure sat in it's crates for over half a year before being unpacked and erected. Called Iglesia Santa Barbara, it has faithfully served residents ever since. In 1987, in fact, the structure was declared to be a historic building by the Mexican government.

A simple yet handsome building, Iglesia Santa Barbara is not large. It measures only 60 feet long from front to back,



approximately 42 feet from side to side, and 24 feet from ground to peak. The bell tower and a cross add an additional 18 feet.

Architecturally, Iglesia Santa Barbara is a masterpiece, both structurally and aesthetically. It's external appearance is that of straight vertical wall lines intersected by diagonal roof lines.

It's interior, too, is pleasing to the eye. The internal ceiling contains the graceful pointed arches so prevalent in Gothic religious architecture. Formed by Eiffel-designed, delicately latticed cast-iron beams, the arches are nevertheless incredibly strong.

Additional strength, moreover, is achieved by "double-skinning": both inside and outside walls of the church are covered with sheet metal "skins" measuring approximately three feet square. Interlocking crimped edges keep the vertical seams together, while the horizontal edges are overlapped top to bottom.

The stained glass windows over the altar contain a large multicolored scene of Jesus' life. On the front end of the church, three double windows with pointed arch frames provide a panoply of color, while along the lower side walls, yellow-white windows allow sunlight to illuminate the interior. But it has two rows of magnificent blue windows recessed into the arched ceiling that make the church appear to bring a

little bit of heaven down to earth. For the azure light streaming from them upon visitors below simulates the star-filled panorama of the sky.

from: Catholic Digest, May, 1991  
by: Jeff Siggins

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Saturday/June 29/1991/Star Tribune

## Advice

# Labeling family photos helps preserve history

**Dear Abby:** I have a suggestion for your readers. Tell them to urge their parents to identify the photos of their ancestors. When our parents died, my sister and I had no idea who was in the photos we were left. Fortunately, relatives were able to identify the people.  
— Marilyn Bird, Rose City, Mich.

**Abby says:** I couldn't agree more. A few years ago, I received this letter that dealt with the problem:

**Dear Abby:** You suggested that "older people" should mark the backs of family pictures while they can still remember who's who, when the pictures were taken and the approximate dates. Why only "older people?" That's something everybody should do as soon as a snapshot is developed.

For years, I was too busy to do it, and now that I'm retired and have

plenty of time, I can't remember who half the people are. My parents can't help me because my father has been dead for 25 years, and my mother is in a rest home, unable to remember much of anything. So here I sit, with a big box of unidentified family pictures!

Abby, please remind your readers often to label their pictures. Then their grandchildren won't have to go through what I'm going through now.

— Kicking myself in Asbury Park

**Abby says:** Not only should family pictures be labeled, but accounts of historical events and newspaper clippings of births, graduations, marriages and deaths in the family should be preserved in a sturdy scrapbook. Fascinating family histories could be preserved if younger members interviewed older relatives at family gatherings.

Sunday/June 23/1991/Star Tribune

# Life stories tell rich history for descendants

By Barbara Bradley

Memphis Commercial Appeal  
Frances Gilbert well remembers 1907, the year she first encountered a sputtering, red monster known as an automobile.

Her mother, who was hauling the children in a horse-drawn buggy, pulled "Old Black" as far to one side of the road as she could while Frances, then 4, and her brothers and sisters hopped out, leaped a ditch and scrambled into the bushes.

Although genealogy has traced many an ancestral tree, it's memories like this that often are lost.

Gilbert, 88, of Selma, Ala., the last of a generation of her family, decided not to let it happen. Three years ago she put the finishing touches on a 29-page book about her life in the small town of Scooba, Miss.

Last Christmas she presented it to her daughter, Carolyn Gates, a county commissioner in Memphis, Tenn. Gates, 56, was so moved that she decided to work on her own autobiography. So did her daughter, Kimbrough Gates, 31.

Dr. Robert Ray McGee, 66, of Clarksdale, Miss., devoted a year

"They can say this is where I came from and where I'm going."

— Carolyn Gates

and a half to writing his story, including interviewing his grandmother, collecting genealogical data gathered by his uncles and drawing on stories he wrote years ago about his life as an intern.

Oral Hunnicutt, 73, a retired teacher, farmer and businessman, who has lived 47 years in Dell, Ark., finished an autobiography last year.

His 151-page book is packed with detailed, historical pictures of life in the Ouachita Mountain area of Arkansas where he grew up during the Depression. Hunnicutt published the book and, with the help of a Blytheville, Ark., book store, sold about 150 copies.

"I really regret that most people pass on leaving almost no record," said Gary Taylor, dean of academic affairs at Mississippi County Community College in Blytheville.

Two years ago, Taylor taught a noncredit course called "Writing the Story of Your Life." He had seven students. One was Hunnicutt. A second, Rose Widner, 68, a

retired teacher, also completed and published a book.

Hunnicutt, who grew up on farms in villages named Young Gravely and Red Hill in Yell County, Ark., reported his yearly wardrobe as a boy: two pairs of overalls, two shirts, one pair of high-top shoes and two pairs of long johns with a flap that buttoned in the back. A jacket and a bill cap completed the ensemble.

Fear of contagious disease was commonplace when he began school, he wrote, and teachers forbid the use of a common dipper in the water bucket. However, it was OK for kids from the same family to share a cup.

"When the teacher was not looking, we would loan our cup to anybody," he said. Occasionally kids drank from the side of the pail — an infraction that Hunnicutt says earned him the only spanking he got in grade school, and a second one from his father when he got home.

Boys in the Hunnicutt family came and went freely, but their

older sister, Beulah, was carefully watched and was allowed to attend social functions only rarely. That highly restricted life probably encouraged her early marriage at 18, according to Hunnicutt.

Taylor says it's better to begin a story with a memorable event or a turning point than to write in chronological order. This makes it easier to create a picture, and it can stir associated memories that become the basis of more stories. The chronology will fall into place almost on its own, he said.

Tying a story to a historical event, such as a war or the Depression, gives it added significance, as well as a sharper sense of time and place, he said. Old photos can be helpful memory joggers and can help illustrate a finished book.

"How to Write the Story of Your Life," a book by Frank P. Thomas, offers writing tips.

Writers may put their work in a softcover, book-like form without going to the expense of having it published. For a reasonable price, many print shops can produce a

spiral-bound book with a printed cover.

Carolyn Gates said writing her life story has been a catharsis for her, but she believes a child who receives such memories from a parent, as she did from her mother, is equally blessed.

"People now have such a sense of rootlessness and non-belonging," she said. Works such as these "give children and grandchildren something to live up to and attach to. They can say this is where I came from and where I'm going."

You don't have to be a literary giant to write for your family, notes James Gray, 53, an award-winning short-story writer. Gray says the autobiography he received from his father, Hubert Gray, gives him insights he would otherwise never have.

When his father hunted rabbits with a slingshot or when he chopped cotton, he thought about things he's think of at all times, in all eras, Gray said. "You realize your father was a boy at one time, and you feel closer to him."

Stappes Howard News Service

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# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF OCTOBRE-NOVEMBRE, 1991 VOL. 13 NO. 2

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Co-Editor: Jerry Marie Forchette

## THE LOG CHAPEL OF ST. PAUL

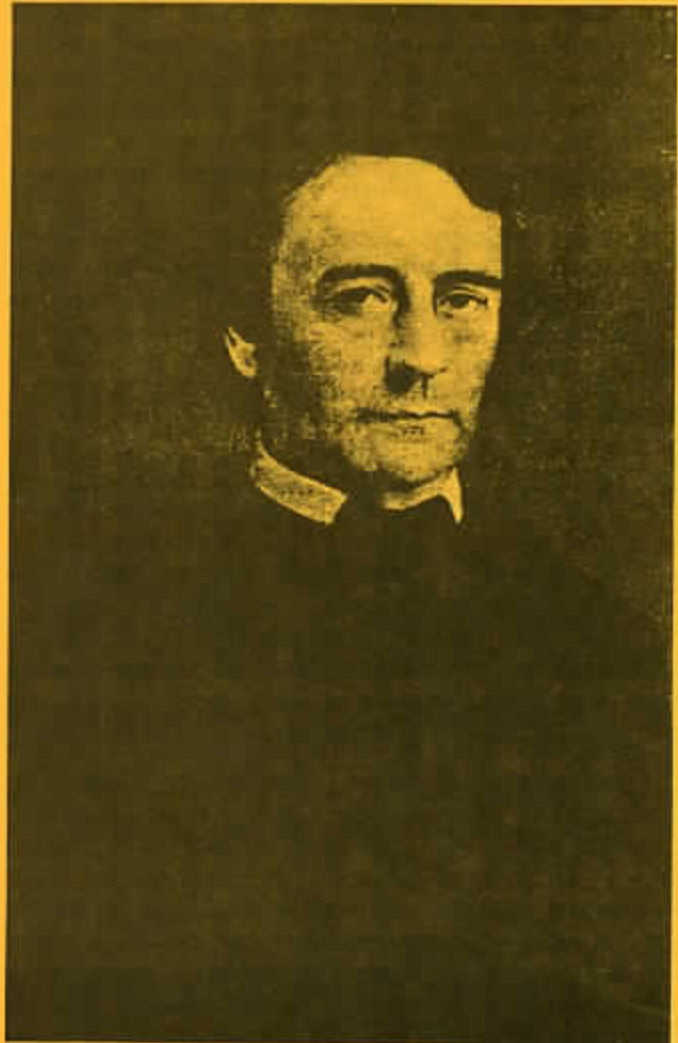
[Ed. note: November 1, 1991, marks the sesquicentenary of the naming of St. Paul MN. In relative terms, 150 years is youth when we consider that our French ancestors first came to Canada beginning over 350 years ago. Still, St. Paul in the context of the midwest and Minnesota is very much a pioneer place.

La Societe is involved in the festivities celebrating the anniversary of St. Paul. The following paragraphs come from pages 42-48 of the book "The Catholic Church in the Diocese of St. Paul" by James Michael Reardon, North Central Publishing Company, St. Paul, 1952.]

"[On January 14, 1864, Father Lucien Galtier] . . . gave an account of his coming to St. Peter's and the founding of the log chapel of St. Paul. . . . It tells of his arrival at St. Peter's, the reception accorded him, the difficulties under which he labored with the nearest priest three hundred miles away and . . . the circumstances which made it necessary for him to found a new parish at some distance from his headquarters. He writes:

"A painful circumstance commenced to better my state by procuring to me a change and a new station. Some families who had come from the Red River settlement in the British possessions, on account of the flood there and the loss of their crops the previous year, 1837-1838, had located themselves all along the right side of the Mississippi and opposite Fort Snelling, but, unfortunately, some soldiers, who now and then crossed the Mississippi and returned intoxicated, sometimes remaining out a day or two or more without reporting to their quarters and answering their call, procured much annoyance

to the commanding officer. In consequence a deputy marshall (A.B.) of Prairie du Chien was sent forth: he with the help of some few soldiers went on, and one after another unroofed the poor cottages extending about five miles in length, thus rendering the inmates homeless and forcing them to make up for new homes."



REV. LUCIEN GALTIER  
First Pastor in the Diocese  
1840-1844

Father Galtier felt it incumbent on him to follow these dispossessed parishioners with the ministrations of religion, and finally decided to build a chapel for their convenience in the new locality in which they had settled. Three sites were available - one several miles down the river at Point Leclair, in the vicinity of Pig's Eye sand bar, was liable to inundation and, therefore, unsuitable for the purpose; another on what is now Dayton's Bluff was inaccessible from the river because of its elevation and the absence of facilities for a boat landing; the third was a bluff overlooking the river and nearer Fort Snelling, where two farmers, Vital Guerin and Benjamin Gervais, occupying contiguous claims, offered to donate sufficient ground for a church, garden and graveyard. He accepted their offer. No finer site could have been chosen. It was one hundred feet above the river, forming landing-places for passengers and freight about a mile apart. Trees were cut down and logs roughly hewn on or near the site and willing hands helped to build the chapel, 18 by 20 feet in size, which was dedicated to St. Paul.

"On the first day of November 1841, I blessed the new basilica smaller, indeed, than that of St. Paul at Rome, extra muros, but in this as well as in the other good hearts could expand without limits. This church remained thus dedicated to St. Paul and I expressed the wish to call the place by no other name. . . . St. Paul as applied to a town or city was well appropriated, this monosyllable is short, sounds good, it is understood by all christian denominations. Hence when an attempt was made to change it, I opposed the vain project - even by writing from Prairie du Chien."

Soon steamboats began to stop at the new settlement on their way up and down the river and the place became known as St. Paul's Landing, which gradually supplanted the name, Pig's Eye, foisted on the locality, but never current among the French colonists.

More interesting details are given about the log chapel by Isaac Labissoniere, the survivor of the eight men who erected it, whose father, Joseph, superintended the building operations on Bench Street, for years the principal thoroughfare of the town.

Isaac was born in Pembina on July 7, 1823, and died in St. Paul on June 20, 1910. He was, therefore, eighteen years old when the log chapel was built. The ground selected

for the site of the chapel, he stated in an interview in 1907. 19

"was thinly covered with groves of red oak and white oak. Where the Cathedral star (Sixth and St. Peter Streets) was then tamarack swamp. The logs for the chapel were cut on the spot, and the tamarack swamp in the rear was made to contribute rafters and roofpieces. . . . the logs, rough and undressed, prepared merely by the axe, were made secure by wooden pins. The roof was made of steeply slanting bark-covered slabs, donated by a mill-owner in Stillwater... carried to St. Paul by a steamboat, the captain accepting in payment a few days' service of one of the men. These slabs were

Chapel of St. Paul  
1841



landed at Jackson Street, and drawn up the hill by hand with ropes. The slabs were likewise put to good use in the construction of the floor and the benches.

"The chapel, as I remember it, was about twenty-five feet long, eighteen feet wide, and ten feet high. It had a single window on each side and it faced the river. It was completed in a few days and could not have represented an expenditure in labor value of more than \$65."

Nowhere does Father Galtier or his successor, Father Ravoux, give the exact dimensions of the original log chapel. It is believed to have been about 18 by 20 feet in size with a ten foot ceiling, one window of a single sash in each side, and a wooden cross over the door in front. Archbishop Ireland who, as a boy coming to St. Paul in 1851, saw the original log chapel says it "was of rough, unhewn logs and the roof was covered with bark-sided slabs. It was 27 by 20 feet in size. . . . In 1847 Father Ravoux added eighteen feet to the log chapel, built it of square logs with large windows and shingled roof". W. G. Leduc, in "Minnesota Year Book for 1851" says it was 18 feet square.

The addition put to it by Father Ravoux in 1847 was about the same size as the original building as shown on a map subsequently published by him, though he may have been mistaken as the map was not prepared until 1902, and the details may have become dimmed by the interval of over sixty years. In his "Reminiscences and Memoirs" he says the enlarged church was "about 45 feet long and eighteen wide". Probably the addition was a little smaller than the original log chapel for it served as a sacristy after the arrival of Bishop Cretin and was used by him as a seminary for the instruction of the young levites who came with him from France after his consecration. At any rate it was the first house of worship within the limits of the present City of St. Paul and was destined to be the first Cathedral of the diocese erected on July 19, 1850. It was visited at regular intervals by Father Galtier as long as he remained at St. Peter's [Mendota]. On June 5, 1842, Bishop Loras confirmed a few persons within its hallowed sanctuary.

A portion of the land on the east of the block on which it stood was set apart as a cemetery in which two persons were buried before the chapel was dedicated - Cecile Labissoniere, on August 22, and Marie Pepin on September first. According to the records in the Cathedral archives made by Father Galtier up to 1843 and by Father Ravoux in the following years, ten persons were interred within its sacred enclosure between November 8, 1841, and February 6, 1846. Few, if any, were buried there after 1849 because another cemetery was opened that year.

Father Galtier's opposition to the "vain project" of changing the name of St. Paul, derived from the original log chapel, was uncompromising to the end of his life as shown by the following affidavit:

"I, the undersigned, Catholic priest of Prairie du Chien, Wisconsin, heretofore employed in the Catholic missions of St. Peter's of Mendota (now in Minnesota) and neighborhood, as far as St. Croix of Wisconsin, do certify to who it may belong, that in the year of our Lord 1841, a lot or parcel of ground being on the premises and forming the limits of the previous farm of Mr. Vital [Guerin] and Benjamin Gervais and on the south bank of the Mississippi river, was given me simply by Mr. Vital [Guerin] and Benjamin Gervais, for a Catholic church or chapel, and a small graveyard, without any reserve to all or condition whatever for the future.

"And moreover that conformably to the donors desire a log church was there constructed and blessed, in the year 1841 and on the first day of November, under the title of St. Paul: this being the very origin or nucleus of the present City of St. Paul Minnesota Territory.

"In faith whereof I have written this present affidavit in Prairie du Chien on the 19th of June A.D. 1856, and signed it

L. Galtier  
Pre."

Continuing at page 48, "What became of the primitive chapel [Galtier] erected in St. Paul? One account says it was dismantled in 1856, the logs and other pieces marked and numbered, and taken to the site of the present St. Joseph's Academy, then a cemetery, to be erected and preserved for future generations. But just at that time preparations were underway to transfer the bodies of the dead to Calvary cemetery on November 2 of that year, and it is said that the workmen engaged in disinterring them, knowing not what they did, used the logs to kindle a fire to warm themselves and thus the most precious relic of pioneer days went up in smoke. From the charred remains of one of the logs two gavels were fashioned but they, too, have disappeared with many another souvenir or a historic past. And yet the Northwestern Chronicle for August 9, 1889, says the logs "are still preserved in one of the buildings connected with St. Joseph's Academy.

Archbishop Ireland, preaching in the Cathedral on Sunday evening, November 1, 1891, the golden jubilee of the dedication of the log chapel, said, "Some time after the Bishop moved to Sixth Street, the original chapel was taken down to prevent its falling down, the addition was given a modern siding and was used as a convent chapel until 1864 when it was demolished". In his "Memoir of Rev. Lucien Galtier" published in the Minnesota Historical Society Collections, volume 111, part 2, St. Paul 1874, he says the log chapel "was taken down some years ago; the logs are secure and it is the intention to have them put together, as they formerly were and thus have the old church preserved". The truth of the matter seems to be that no one knows just when the chapel was dismantled or what became of the logs.

Returning to Father Galtier, in addition to his duties at St. Paul, he continued as pastor at St. Peter's in Mendota and covered a broad missionary territory to the east. On

page 46 of the book it is mentioned that "[i]n the summer of 1842 he made a missionary tour of his territory during which he visited a colony of forty men working in the saw mills on the Chippewa river in Wisconsin who were very pleased to see a priest who could instruct them in their christian duties and prepare them for the reception of the sacraments."

Father Galtier was a tireless frontier priest. But, on page 47, "The hardships of missionary life must have changed him from what he was in the early days of his ministry when he was described as "a man of remarkable personality and power; he had the face of a Caesar and the heart of a Madonna; in him strength and tenderness, culture and simplicity met and mingled in the making of a noble character".

He was further described on page 48 as a man "of great decision of character, with a rather strong cast of countenance, large mouth and overshadowing eyebrows. His head sat upon his shoulders like a military chieftain, and he was well chosen to mould and control a heterogeneous mass of men whose lives had been spent exclusively upon the frontier. He was a well proportioned man, with a fixed determination to accomplish what he undertook, and he succeeded. . . an honest, self-sacrificing priest."

Yet by 1845 the book reports that "[a]fter his transfer to Keokuk [in 1844] he criticized Bishop Loras and caused the latter anxiety, if not pain, by threatening to leave his post without permission unless his reiterated requests to join the diocese of Milwaukee were complied with at once. In one of his letters to the Bishop he refers to the continuous privations and sufferings he endured at St. Peter's . . . In 1845 Bishop Loras yielded to his persistent demands and gave him the necessary permission to enter the Diocese of Milwaukee.

In 1845 Father Galtier returned to France with the intention of spending the remainder of his days in the land of his forefathers. But he was not satisfied. The longing for the missionary life of a priest on the missions in America became irresistible and he returned to the Diocese of Milwaukee and in 1847 was appointed pastor of St. Gabriel's Church, Prairie du Chien, by Bishop Henni where he remained till his death on February 21, 1866."



Ben and Genevieve Gervais  
(courtesy of Minnesota Historical Society)

#### BEN AND GENEVIEVE GERVAIS: EARLY PIONEERS

As noted in the story of the Log Chapel of St. Paul, one of the contributors of land for the church and cemetery was Benjamin and Genevieve Gervais (in the context of the day, it was Benjamin who gave the land - but today we know better, or do we!?)

The Gervais' family was an intrepid one who grew with the budding territory. An excellent history of the family is found on the 1984 calendar of Little Canada, published by the Historical Society of Little Canada and authored by Gary J. Brueggemann. Some extracts of his article on the Gervais family follow:

Benjamin was "[t]he son of Baptiste and Francine Gervais, a poor french voyageur and his wife, [and] was born at Rivere du Loup, Canada, (a village on the south bank of the St. Lawrence River, around 100 miles northeast of Quebec) on July 15, 1786 - 23 years after the British takeover of New France (Canada) and three years after the signing of the treaty ending the American Revolution. In 1803, at the age of 17, Ben traveled west with his parents to the Red River of the North (around present Pembina, North Dakota), where he found a job as a voyageur with the Hudson Bay Fur Company... He later [1812] got a job at the new fort the company was building on the future site of Winnipeg..." [his years at this Fort included some near-wars].

... [N]ot all of Ben's time at Red River was unpleasant, for it was also during this period that fate brought him into the company of his future wife. Her name was Genevieve Larans and like Ben she was both french Catholic and a native of the historic St. Lawrence River Valley. Born at Berthier in the province of Quebec around 1804, Genevieve or "Jane" apparently moved to Red River with her parents, who must have been either colonists, or employees of the fur trade. On September 29, 1823, 37 year-old Ben and 20 year-old Genevieve stood before Joseph Provencher - the first bishop of Manitoba - and were married. . . . After their wedding, Ben retired from the Hudson Bay Company and started a farm in what is now Winnipeg's north side. There, the couple produced three children: Alphonse, born in 1825; Severe, born August 11, 1826; and one other, who's name time has forgotten. Farming along the Red River proved disastrous for the Gervaises. From beginning to end they had to struggle with one natural calamity after another. . . . On June 25, 1827, they joined more than 200 other disenchanting Canadian colonists and trekked south in slow moving oxcarts to the United States Northwestern-most post, Fort Snelling. After they arrived at the garrison, following 46 hard days on the trail, the Gervaises settled somewhere near the fort on the west bank of the Mississippi River (in present day Minneapolis) and tried their luck at farming on American soil. The Gervaises lived comfortably there for the next 11 years, during which time Genevieve gave birth to 5 more children. . . . Sometime during their stay in the Fort Snelling neighborhood, the Gervaises were joined by Ben's young brother Pierre and his family. Pierre, or "Pete" born at Pembina in 1803, had left Red River around the same time as his brother, but instead of farming near the fort, initially went to work for the American Fur Company at Mendota. Around 1836 he left the company, took a French-speaking wife named Sophie LeBlanc and began farming alongside his brother Ben. . . . The Gervais families prospered well on the west bank but unfortunately for them, probably a little too well. As their farms expanded, the land available for Fort Snelling's use, correspondingly contracted. Tensions arose between the military and the civilians inevitably arose and eventually came to a boil when Fort Snelling commander Joseph Plympton issued an order forbidding civilians from cutting any more wood. The Gervaises were apparently unable to follow the stringent decree for on July 13, 1838, Major Plympton ordered both families to leave the

Fort Snelling area. The Gervaises then simply moved two miles down river and resettled on the east bank just below Fountain Cave, near what is now Shepard Road and Randolph Avenue in St. Paul. There, inside the Ben Gervais' cabin at the bottom of the bluff, Genevieve gave birth on September 4, 1839, to Basil Gervais, "the first white child born in St. Paul". Eight months later, she packed her baby in a canoe and paddled 268 miles to Prairie du Chien in order to have him baptized by a Catholic priest. The Gervaises stay in the forest of Fountain Cave lasted only two years. In 1839 Commander Plympton received permission from the Secretary of War to enlarge the Fort Snelling Reservation so that it would engulf land on the east bank, where some undesirable saloons stood. Unfortunately for the Gervaises, the new military reserve stretched directly over their farms, and so Plympton asked them once again to move. This time, however, they refused to budge and had to be removed forceably on May 6, 1840, when soldiers came and burned them out of their cabins.

Homeless again, the Gervaises once more moved further down river and resettled at the emerging hamlet of Pigs Eye, located on the cliffs of what became downtown St. Paul. For \$10.00, Ben was able to buy from the hamlet's founder, Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant, a choice tract of 160 acres, centering around present Robert Street and including the grounds where most of St. Paul's tallest skyscrapers now stand. (In 1842, Ben sold 3 of these acres, around present Jackson and Kellogg Blvd, to the village's first American citizen, Henry Jackson, the namesake of both Jackson Street and Jackson County. Earlier he had sold to Pierre Bottineau the grounds of today's Mears Park.) Brother Pierre, for his part, was given a free plot of land around present Kellogg Blvd and St. Peter Street, as a gift from his voyageur friend Vital Guerin, the father of a future Little Canada blacksmith. (Later, Pierre moved over towards present 8th Street and Broadway.) The Gervais brothers were instrumental in the establishment of the first church on the east side of Minnesota's Mississippi River. In the fall of 1841 the Gervaises and a few other French Canadian families, convinced Father Lucien Galtier of Mendota, to build a church in their hamlet. Ben Gervais and Vital Guerin quickly donated the land for the church (around present Minnesota and Kellogg) and in October, Pierre, Ben and Vital assisted others in the erection what became the namesake of the town, the chapel of St. Paul. . . ."

SOME NOTES FROM THE EDITOR  
by Dick Bernard

"To Err is Human, to Forgive, Divine":

Ah, the folly of trying to do things perfectly - especially when you're in a rush as I usually am, doing Chez Nous!!!

In the last issue, I referred to my good friend (and distant cousin, and writer for Chez Nous) John Cote as the "ancestor" of our common relative Jean Cote, who arrived in Quebec in 1634.

In the same issue I referred to Bernice Ryder as the "nephew" of Pierre Girard.

Of course, I meant "descendant" and "niece". . . .

So, in this issue I was going to admit my "faux pas" - until I decided to look up "faux pas" (definitions below).

Francophones, when I made foolish errors like these, what is a good useable French term?

Send me your opinions, preferably with rationale: Dick Bernard, 7632 157th Street W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. Deadline for the next issue is Thanksgiving. And while we're on the topic of deadlines, remember this is your newaletter and your ideas, articles, photos, etc., are solicited.

from Collins Gem French Dictionary  
Wm Collins Sons & Co Ltd 1979

**faux, fausse** [fo, fos] a (inexact) wrong; (falsifié) fake; forged; (sournois, postiche) false // ad (MUS) out of tune // nm (copie) fake, forgery; (opposé au vrai); le ~ falsehood; le ~ numéro/la fausse clef the wrong number/key; faire ~ bond à qn to stand sb up; ~ col detachable collar, ~ frals *nmpl* extras, incidental expenses; ~ mouvement awkward movement; ~ nez funny nose; ~ pas tripping q; (fig) faux pas ~ témoignage (délit) perjury; fausse alerte false alarm; fausse couche miscarriage; ~-fillet *nm* sirloin; ~ fuyant *nm* equivocation; ~ monnayeur *nm* counterfeit, forger.

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DATES TO NOTE

\* Events marking the sesquicentenary of St. Paul will be Friday and Saturday, November 1 & 2 including a Skyway Fair both days (La Societe will participate): Dedication of the Chapel Sculpture Site Kellogg Mall Park 11 a.m. November 1; and a Cathedral Event at the St. Paul Cathedral 7:30 p.m. November 1. Les Canadiens Errant will sing in the Skyways on Saturday, November 2.

\* Regular meeting is Monday evening November 4 at St. Louis Church, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m. Gilliane Lapointe of the Canadian Consulate will be speaking on current developments in the Canadian Constitution talks ("Meech Lake" revisited). Invite your friends.

\* Christmas party (La Fete de Noel) is Friday, December 6, at St. Louis Church. Pot luck. See you there.

NOTE IN YOUR CALENDAR:  
Fevrier 7 - 16, 1992  
Winnipeg, Manitoba  
Le Festival du Voyageur  
More information in  
the next issue of Chez Nous  
or you can write the Festival at  
768 Tache Avenue  
Winnipeg R2H 2C4

from Webster's New Twentieth  
Century Dictionary 2d edition  
Simon & Schuster 1979

**faux pas** (fō pä'). [Fr. from *faux*, false, and *pas*, a step.] a social blunder; a tactless act or remark; a breach of good manners.

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## NOUVELLES VILLES JUELLES



Novembre-Décembre 1991



NEWSLETTER OF

La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota



### Evénements à Venir - Upcoming Events

#### November 17 •

Musique de Saint Louis-Waltham  
Abbey Singers at the Church of Saint  
Louis, King of France at 4:00 p.m.

#### December 13 •

Fête de Noël at St. Louis Catholic  
Church in St. Paul. See article  
inside. (Note change of date from  
December 6.)

#### December 14 •

Old fashioned Christmas at  
Murphy's Landing. Les  
Canadienne Errants will be  
singing throughout the day.

#### 1st Two Weekends in December •

Christmas at Forts Folle  
Avoine. Call 715-866-8890 for  
particulars.





## Vente Annuelle a Notre Dame de Lourde

### Bake & Gift Sale at Our Lady of Lourdes

The annual pre-Christmas sale at Our Lady of Lourdes will be held Dec. 7 and 8 (Sat. 9 to 6:30; Sun. 9 to 1).



You can try a hot wedge of their famous

Tourtière, before

buying a frozen one. There will be other baked goods and a variety of handcrafted items especially suitable as gifts. The sale will be in the Lower Church, 21 SE Prince St., Minneapolis. (379-2259).

## ATTENTION

It's dues time again!

Don't forget to send in your 1992 membership dues. The paid-up membership list is what our mailing list is derived from. If you don't pay your dues by January 1, it is possible your name could be dropped from the list and Chez Nous and Nouvelle would be history.

The membership fees help keep our Société functioning. So please keep current with your dues, attend meetings, and participate in the Société.

The Membership Committee

George LaBrosse

Al Girard

Ralph Germain

## Canadienne Errants <sup>25</sup>

The Errants are looking forward to a busy performance schedule in the next couple of months.

### Friday, December 13 •

La Fête de Noël—the annual Christmas party at Saint Louis Catholic Church parish hall. Pot luck dinner at 6:30 p.m. Everyone should come in costume, if available.

Venez tout le monde!

### Saturday, December 14 •

Murphy's Landing. The Errants will be singing throughout the village. We will be going from house to house singing French Christmas songs and other songs as well (some by request). Come on out and enjoy the restored homes of Minnesota's past and enjoy the fellowship of singing and the Christmas season.

## LSCF Fête de Noël

### Christmas Party • Dec.13

Père Noël will be disappointed if you do not join in the LSCF Christmas Party on December 13 at parish hall of St. Louis Church, 506 Cedar St., St. Paul. Come at 6



p.m. Bring children and, if you like, a favorite dish for the potluck supper. If you cannot bring a potluck item, there will be a charge of \$3

per person, \$5 per couple. No charge for children. Entertainment will be an amateur hour, including children and spouses.

Tant mieux if you come in French Canadian costume.

Venez tout le monde!

1-4 22

## Petites Annonces

---

John England is on sabbatical from his position as professeur en residence at NVJ, so we will give readers a holiday vacation from his examinations. We hope he will be concocting more of those questions, which are for we Minnesota CFs what Hirsch's Cultural Literacy Test is for the rest of Americans.

---

### French Canadian Greeting Cards

- ✓ Happy Easter,
- ✓ Happy Birthday,
- ✓ Joyeuses Pâques,
- ✓ Joyeux Anniversaire.

LSCF has come upon a stock.  
Interested? Contact Leroy DuBois.\$1 to \$1.50.

---

### Frogtown Revisité

Editor attributed the Frogtown article in our last issue to Dick Bernard. "Non" says Dick; he just copied it down for us. Sorry for the error, mon ami, Dick did take the picture. Also, editor apologizes for masculinizing "petite histoire" but we Laramee were talkers, not writers.

---

### Musique de Saint Louis

A special mailing to our Metro area members from the Church of Saint Louis, King of France in St. Paul informed us of their music presentations. We should all take in these musical performances and be enriched by them. Watch the Evénements à Venir for future performances.

## Pour Les Twins Nos Félicitations!

**WOW!!!**

They did it again!!! The Twins are again World Champions. What an entertaining and suspenseful series. It will be difficult to top this again next year.

Merci beaucoup  
for a wonderful  
baseball season.



*Nouvelles Villes Jumelles* is published monthly by LASOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE FRANÇAISE DU MINNESOTA. The next deadline is December 17.

Send your news, contributions, ideas, photos to (or call):

William Horn, editor  
2700 Foshay Tower  
Minneapolis, MN 55402

Or phone: 612-341-2581 (days),  
612-922-9013 (evenings).

Staff for *Nouvelles Villes Jumelles*: Bill Horn, editor; George La Brosse, publishing; Al Girard, printing; Lee Collatz, folding and mailing.

Articles of statewide interest may also be sent to *Chez Nous*, which publishes on alternate months (editor Dick Bernard, 612-431-6515, days).

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## Calendar for 1992... and Beyond

Virgil Benoit notifies us of the 1992 bilingual calendar with this note:

"Bonjour! Here it is again. It is a very special one, good (valid) any year, 1992, 1993, forever, because it mentions All Great Deeds of the French."

### The 1992 bilingual calendar "LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE/ FRENCH IN AMERICA"

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## The Church of St. Louis King of France

The Church of Saint Louis, King of France, was established in 1868 to serve French-speaking Catholics of Saint Paul. The pastors and parishioners of St. Louis cherish that tradition and strive towards its preservation. The French flag flies from the church portal, the annual concert program, *Musique de Saint Louis*, is dedicated to music of the French repertoire, the choir—Choeur de Saint Louis—often sings classical French music, and descendants of French-speaking Catholics living in Saint Paul and its environs are welcomed and eligible for membership.

This year, the Church of Saint Louis will pray one of its Christmas eve masses in French. Marist Father Pat Primeaux, Parochial Vicar, will celebrate the Mass, and a program of French carols and liturgical music will be led by Mr. Lawrence W. Lawyer, M.S.M., Director of Music.

The French Mass will be at 6:30 p.m., Christmas Eve, at The Church of Saint Louis, King of France. Located at the corner of Tenth and Cedar Streets—south of the State Capitol, north of the World Trade Center, and across the street from the Science Museum.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Please send me \_\_\_\_ French American Calendar(s)-1992.

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# chez nous <sup>28</sup>

NEWSLETTER OF Decembre-Janvier 1992 VOL. 13 NO. 3

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Co-Editor: Jerry Marie Forchette



IT IS NIGHT WHEN THE STORY STARTS,  
A PITCH DARK NIGHT.  
IN TOWN THE ROMAN CENSUS TAKERS  
WERE STILL BENDING OVER THEIR LEGERS  
AND BOOKS,  
FILLING IN THE DETAILS.  
SOLDIERS WERE PATROLLING  
THE STREETS,  
WHEN IN THE OPEN FIELD IN A STABLE,  
MARY GAVE BIRTH TO HER CHILD  
AND THEN THOSE ANGELS CAME  
FIRST ONE, THEN SOME,  
AND FINALLY A WHOLE THRONG.  
THEY DID NOT GO TO THE CENSUS TAKERS,  
THEY DID NOT GO TO HEROD  
OR THE HIGH PRIESTS,  
THEY DID NOT EVEN GO TO THE MONKS  
IN THE DESERT TO TELL THEIR NEWS.  
THEY WENT TO THE MOST MARGINAL ONES  
IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD,  
THEY WENT TO THE SHEPHERDS.

## Midnight Mass at the French Church

by: Treffle Daniels, St. Louis Park, MN

One highlight of Christmas at the French church, St. Jean the Baptiste in Duluth, was the pageant presented before the Mass by the school children. The French school at that time was a grade 1 to grade 12 school. When this pageant, which retold the birth of Christ, was started I don't know but I did participate in it during the late 30's and early 40's. The altar was the stage for the pageant before the Midnight Mass, a very solemn liturgy.

Girls were recruited as angels, boys as shepherds; as many boys were involved as altar boys in those days, there were fewer of them in the pageant. Practices were held during school days, which might account for the numbers in the cast. Songs, sometimes in French were memorized, movements planned by the sisters and priests were rehearsed until perfected. One year I remember one of my sisters telling my mother that she was "a big angel" not a "little angel". She concluded that because the gown she was fitted with was from the "big angel" wardrobe. All angels wore long gowns of various colors, had cardboard wings, and some form of headband. The shepherds also had long gowns, a cloth headband and carried wooden crooks or spears.

Back in those days the church charged "pew rent", giving each family it's own pew to sit in during Sunday Masses. Woe to the person who occupied the wrong pew...a few families jealously guarded their privileged pew! I think the rent per year was \$8., payable quarterly at the rate of \$2. Several times I had the job of going to the rectory to pay for the family's pew. In those days if your pew rent was up to date you could receive a ticket to the Midnight Mass and occupy your pew. Not all pews were rented so tickets were sold for 25¢ to sit in the open pews. As the French-Canadians were spread to many parts of the city and were proud of their church, a large number attended the Midnight Mass, so many in fact, that extra chairs were sometimes set up in the main aisle. It was also hinted that some only attended church on Christmas and Easter!!!

Of course the children were charged a quarter also ostensibly to pay for the costume, but it guaranteed you a seat

during the long services. Some of the angels were seated on risers near the front of the church, the shepherds usually sat in back pews. It wasn't unusual for some to fall asleep and even fall from the risers.

One altar on the right side, St. Joseph's was converted into a stable with figurines of shepherds, animals, etc. Evergreen trees added to the scene. Near the end of the pageant the infant Jesus was solemnly carried into the church, down the main aisle and placed in the manger. The girl chosen for the honor of being the Blessed Virgin, was probably one who had high grades and held in high esteem by the nuns. The stable scene was kept in the church for several weeks following Christmas and was not taken down until the parish had the "Blessing of the Children" on a Sunday afternoon, which usually was a very cold day. All children who attended this ceremony were blessed by the priests and given a medal.

Personally, I think that the pageant had it's roots in Medieval France and was brought to Canada and later the United States by early French settlers. One pastor referred to this as a "floor show" and gave the impression it was not his favorite event. The event continued until sometime in the 1950's. Why it was discontinued I don't know. Perhaps the interests of the children changed or people just didn't care for such events anymore. Of course the demise of ethnic parishes might have been a factor also. Today it seems like ethnicity is in vogue...perhaps the Christmas Eve pageant will be revived.

## FRENCH HOLY DAYS AND CUSTOMS

### Le Jour De L'An

Donalda LaGrandeur  
Somerset, Wisconsin (circa 1985)

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

the visiting children or visiting grandchildren knelt for the patriarchal blessing as soon as they entered the house.

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

There was always much visiting on New Year's Day with neighbors and friends calling on each other. I also remember the custom of "Courrir la Vigne Alle". One man began by calling on his neighbor and enjoying a glass or more of wine, after which the two of them called at the home of a third friend for another glass of wine, and so on until there were 20 or more stopping for a glass of wine. The last visit made was to the richest man in the neighborhood, as he alone would have enough glasses and wine to exercise hospitality.

(Editorial Note: Was the first man still walking by the time they reached the 20th house!?)

#### Cadeaux et Tourtieres

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

And of course there was always a big dinner to end off the day...the table for the family dinner was festive with the best dishes, glassware and silver. French Canadians were very fond of goose stuffed and beautifully roasted, with the traditional tourtiere a la viande as a close second. The tourtieres or meat pies, made of ground pork with onions, and spices with rich crust were baked just before the start of "les fetes". Starting with Christmas Day on to New Year's Day and "Le Jour des Rois (Epiphany, January 6) - a holiday in Canada - with the Sundays in between, made a lot of holidays for feasting, visiting and celebrating.

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

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

DO YOU HAVE MEMORIES OF MARDI GRAS?

Let us know for the next issue of  
Chez Nous. Deadline Janvier 20, 1992.  
Send to: Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St  
W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.

#### Christmas Festivities in France

From: Celebrating Christmas around the World  
by Herbert Wernecke

1999  
(Republic)  
Christmas customs originating in the Orient, were introduced into France by the Romans. Rheims, which had known Rome's triumphs, was the scene of the first French Christmas celebration when, in 496, Clovis and his three thousand warriors were baptized. Bishop Remi had purposely chosen the day of the Nativity for this ceremony. Then other important events took place on Christmas Day in the following years. Charlemagne "crowned by God, the Great and Pacific Emperor", received the crown from the hands of Pope Leo III on Christmas Day in 800. In 1100, Godefroy de Bouillon's successor, his brother Baudouin, was crowned in the Basilica of St. Marie of Bethlehem. Later King Jean le Bon founded the Order of the Star in honor of the "manger", it remained in existence until 1352. In 1389 the crowd shouted Noel! Noel! in welcoming Queen Isabeau of Bavaria to the capital.

Thus, gradually, Christmas became a religious and secular celebration which in fact, until the end of the Middle Ages was confused with the celebration of the coming of the year, now held on "New Year's Day".

Today, Christmas in France is a family holiday, a religious celebration and for the children an occasion for merrymaking. New Year's Day is a more strictly adult festival where gifts are exchanged and calls are made.

## An Englishman on French Christmas

In 1902 an Englishman, W.F. Dawson, wrote a book "Christmas: Its Origin and Associations".

Following are descriptions of Christmas in France in the 1800's written from the point of view of English correspondents of that time.

Merci to Kay Gutzman of the Hill Library, St. Paul.

### Christmas in France

The following account of Christmas in France in 1823, is given by an English writer of the period:

"The habits and customs of Parisians vary much from those of our own metropolis at all times, but at no time more than at this festive season. An Englishman in Paris who had been for some time without referring to his almanac, would not know Christmas Day from another day by the appearance of the capital. It is indeed set down as a jour de fête in the calendar, but all the ordinary business life is transacted; the streets are as usual, crowded with wagons and coaches; the shops, with few exceptions are open although on other fête days the order for closing them is rigorously enforced, and if not attended to, a fine levied; and at the churches nothing extraordinary is going forward. All this is surprising in a Catholic country which professes to pay much attention to the outward rites of religion.

"On Christmas Eve, indeed, there is some bustle for a midnight Mass, to which immense numbers flock, as the priests, on this occasion get up a showy spectacle which rivals the theatres. The alters are dressed with flowers, and the churches decorated profusely; but there is little in all of this to please men who have been accustomed to the John Bull mode of spending the evening. The good English habit of meeting together to forgive offences,

The French listen to the church music, and to the singing of their choirs which is generally excellent, but they know nothing of the origin of the day and of the duties which it imposes. The English residents in Paris, however, do not forget our mode of celebrating this day. Acts of charity from the rich to the needy,

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religious attendance at church, and a full observance of hospitable rites, are there witnessed. Paris furnishes all the requisites for a good pudding and the turkeys are excellent, though the beef is not to be displayed as a prize production.

On Christmas Day all the English cooks in Paris are in full business. The queen of cooks, however, is Harriet Dunn, of the Boulevard. As Sir Astley Cooper among the cutters of limbs and d'Egville among the cutters of capers, so is Harriet Dunn among the professors of one of the most necessary, and in its results most gratifying professions in existence; her services are secured beforehand by special retainers; and happy is the peer who can point to his pudding and declare that it is of the true Dunn composition. Her fame has been extended to the provinces. For sometime previous to Christmas Day, she forwards puddings in cases to all parts of the country, ready cooked and fit for the table, after the necessary warming. All this is of course, for the English. No prejudice can be stronger than that of the French against plum-pudding—a Frenchman will dress like an Englishman, swear like an Englishman, and get drunk like an Englishman; but if you would offend him for ever compel him to eat plum-pudding.

Everyone has heard the story of St. Louis-Henri Quatre, or whoever else it might be—who wishing to regale the English ambassador on Christmas Day with a plum-pudding, procured an excellent recipe for making one, which he gave to his cook, with strict injunctions that it should be prepared with due attention to all particulars. The weight of the ingredients, the size of the copper, the quantity of water, duration of time, everything was attended to except one trifle — the King forgot the cloth and the pudding was served up, like so much soup in immense tureens, to the surprise of the ambassador, who was, however, too well bred to express his astonishment. Louis XVIII. either to show his contempt of the prejudices of his countrymen, has always an enormous pudding on Christmas Day, the remains of which, when it leaves the table, he requires to be eaten by the servants, bon gré, mauvais gré; but in this instance even the commands of sovereignty are disregarded, except by the numerous English in his service, consisting of several valets, grooms, coachmen etc.

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In his Year Book, 1832, Hone says that at Rouen, after the Te Deum, in the nocturnal office or Vigil of Christmas, the ecclesiastics celebrated the "Office of the Shepherds", in the following manner:

The image of the Virgin Mary was placed in a stable prepared behind the altar. A boy from above, before the choir in the likeness of an angel, announced the nativity to certain canons or vicars, who entered as shepherds through the great door of the choir, clothed in tunicks and amesses. Many boys in the vaults of the church, like angels, then began the "gloria in excelsis". The shepherds hearing this, advanced to the stable, singing peace, goodwill etc. As soon as they entered it, two priests in dalmaticks, as if women (quasi obstetrices) who were stationed at the stable said, "whom seek ye"? The shepherds answered, according to the angelic annunciation, "Our Saviour Christ". The women then opening the curtain exhibited the boy, saying, "the little one is here as the prophet Isaiah said". They then showed the mother, saying "behold the Virgin". Upon these exhibitions they bowed and worshipped the boy, and saluted his mother. The office ended by their returning to the choir, and singing Alleluia tc.

#### Christmas in Normandy

In describing the old-custom-loving people of Lower Normandy, a writer on "Calvados," in 1884-5, thus refers to the season of Christmas and the Twelfth-tide; Now Christmas arrives, and young and old go up to greet the little child Jesus, lying on his bed of straw at the Virgin Mother's feet and smiling to all the world. Overhead the old cracked bell clangs exultant, answering to other bells faint and far on the midnight air; a hundred candles are burning and every church window shines through the darkness like the gates of that holy New Jerusalem whose light was a stone most precious—a jasper-stone clear as crystal. With Twelfth-tide this fair vision suffers a metamorphosis, blazoning out into the paganish saturnalia of bonfires which in Calvados is transferred from St. John's Eve le jour des Rois. Red flames leap skyward, fed by dry pine fagots and our erstwhile devout peasants, throwing moderation to the winds, join hands, dance and leap for good luck through the blinding smoke and embers their rude doggerel:

Adieu les Rois  
Jusqu'a douze mois,  
Douze mois passes  
Les bougelees.

On Christmas eve, at 6:30 p.m., the Church of St. Louis (10th and Cedar, St. Paul) will pray one of its Christmas eve masses in French. This is a beautiful Mass. Plan to attend. The church is directly across the street from the Science Museum complex, just a block off the freeway. Take the 10th avenue exit. 32

#### Christmas in Provence

Heinrich Heine delighted in the infantile childishness of a Provencal Christmas. He never saw anything prettier in his life, he said, than a Noël procession on the coast of the Mediterranean. A beautiful young woman and an equally lovely child sat on a donkey, which an old fisherman in a flowing brown gown was supposed to be leading into Egypt. Young girls robed in white muslin were supposed to be angels and hovered near the child and it's mother to supply to him sweetmeats and other refreshments. At a respectful distance there was a procession of nuns and village children, and then a band of vocalists and instrumentalists. Flowers and streaming banners were unsparingly used. Bright sunshine played upon them, and the deep blue sea formed a background. The seafaring people who looked on, not knowing whether to venerate or laugh, did both. Falling upon their knees they went through a short devotional exercise, and then rose to join the procession and give themselves up to unrestricted mirth. In the chateaux of the South of France, creches are still exhibited and creche suppers given to the poorer neighbors and to some of the rich, who are placed at a table "above the salt". There are also "Bethlehem Stable" puppet-shows, at which the Holy Family, their visitors and four-footed associates are brought forward as dramatis persona. St. Joseph, the wise men, and the shepherds are made to speak in patois. But the Virgin says what she has to say in classical French. In the refinement of her diction, her elevation above those with her is expressed. At Marseilles an annual fair of statuettes is held, the profits of which are spent in setting up Bethlehem creches in the churches and other places. Each statuette represents a contemporaneous celebrity, and is contained in the hollow part of the wax bust of some saint. Gambetta, Thiers, Cavour, Queen Victoria, Grevy, and the Pope. Paul Bert, Rouvier (who is a Marseillais), the late Czar and other celebrities have appeared among the figurines hidden within the saintly busts.



Below is a response to my plea (October-November Chez Nous) for help on the correct word to describe a mistake I had made. "Faux Pas" didn't seem to fill the bill. Pat Ciocchetto, Side Lake, Mn, "took the bait" and offers the following opinion:

"Now enlighten me as to what you were talking about on the last page of the most recent Chez Nous regarding faux pas". A faux pas is literally, a false step or a stumble, and figuratively, a mistake or an indiscretion. Your use of the term was perfectly in order according to definitions in both the French Larousse and the English/French Collins Robert dictionaries.

The only rationale I can see, is that you missed the little mark before temoignage which stands for faux, or in other words faux temoignage, which would indeed mean perjury. Don't forget you were looking at the definition of faux, which can be combined with a number of terms to result in different meanings.

"Il ne faut pas faire un faux pas! Ce n'est pas faux!"

May I respectfully suggest a good, useable French term which under the circumstances would be, âne, imbecile or souche, or perhaps only myope!

Look them up!

Pat Ciocchetto

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