



# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Janvier-Fevrier, 1995 VOL. 16 NO. 4

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

## MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS AND MIDNIGHT MASS

by Marvin Campbell  
Brainerd MN

(Editors Note: Campbell may sound like a Scotch name, and it is, but Marvin Campbell is definitely a French-Canadian through and through. Marvin's earliest ancestor was a Scottish soldier who came to Canada during the French and Indian Wars, and who later

It's that time of year again: If you have a one-year membership, your 1995 dues are now due. Not sure of your status? Look at your mailing label. It will show when your membership expires.

### Annual Dues are as follows:

Family	\$15
Senior Couple (over 62)	10
Single	10
Senior Single (over 62)	8
Under 18	1

**Chez Nous** can continue only if you and others provide dues money to pay for it.

**Mail your dues to George LaBrosse, 4895 Brent Ave, Inver Grove Heights MN 55076.** Make checks to "LSCF". Thank you.

A final note: let us know if you have a friend who might want to "check us out" - we'll send them a copy of *Chez Nous*. Encourage them to join us. Merci.

married a French-Canadian woman. Thereafter, all his ancestry was French-Canadian. Marvin's cousin wrote about the family history in the *Juillet-Aout, 1994, Chez Nous.*)

My Mother was born in the village of Oakwood ND in 1895. Oakwood, a French-speaking farming community, is located about five miles east of Grafton. The "town" was made up of a livery stable, a "general" store, Sacred Heart Church, a Catholic elementary and high school, and a convent. Mother was always proud of having graduated from St. Aloysius Academy in both French and English.

Albert Campbell, a "foreigner" from northern Minnesota, and earlier Somerset WI, met Blanche Collette on the humble Collette farmstead located just one half mile from the church only two years after Blanche graduated from school. They were married at Sacred Heart when Mother was 18 years of age.

Contact with the Oakwood church was lost for a time as Mother and Dad rented farm land away from the thriving Oakwood area. But with time, we found ourselves near enough to call Sacred Heart of Oakwood our parish church. It was 7 miles to Oakwood from our farm and the country roads were such that often it was impossible for our Willys-Overland to overcome the black mud of the Red River Valley. This necessitated bringing into service our horse-drawn buggy, transportation which assured reaching our destination, but which "tried men's souls". Of course, we knew that when winter really "set in" that good old Bill and Ben



would be called into service to pull the farm sleigh for our winter trips.

The highlight of these excursions was our annual nocturnal sleigh-ride to Oakwood to attend midnight Mass.

Father Bastien, a French-Canadian, was the Parish Priest for many years. He was a large burly man, not good looking, but very kind and loving. His entire existence was devoted to his Parish and the good people he served. His summer visits to the farm of each parishioner in his old touring car were sources of joy to him and the people whom he visited. He would bless the crops, the animals and anything else which needed sanctification. We all looked forward to his friendly visits. Another call was made in the dead of winter with members of the parish chaffering him from place to place in a farm sleigh. He usually spent the night with our family, and his presence was always a special occasion for us.

We were accustomed to complying with Church rules outlining our need to fast and abstain from eating meat on certain days during the weeks of Advent. Naturally, this religious compliance only whetted our appetites for the many "treats" and special dishes which would be ours on Christmas Day and the weeks following.

Preparation for Christmas actually began in October and November of each year. We had no refrigeration, so the icy cold days of early winter heralded the butchering of beef, hogs, chickens and turkeys. Vegetables had already been canned and stored in the "cellar" along with an abundant supply of sauerkraut, potatoes and processed eggs. Fresh cuts of meat were wrapped and stored outdoors in barrels. Sausage, head cheese and bacon were salted and smoked. Salt pork, especially prepared for Dad's famous baked beans, was designated its special space, all in preparation for the long winter and Christmas Day!

A specific amount of ground and seasoned pork was put aside for French meat pies known as "Tourtiere" by all of the housewives in the Oakwood area. This "cholesterol" delicacy is unique. [Note recipes in following section of this newsletter - Editor].

Mother would often make a dozen pies which were frozen for later meals. The baked pies were served piping hot. I loved them with plain old-fashioned mustard.

Dad's forte was baked beans. He would soak the beans overnight after which he added cubed salt pork, molasses, brown syrup, onions, salt and pepper, some dry mustard and catsup. There was a cooking shelf on the back of the living room hard-coal heater where Dad placed the crock of beans early in the morning of Christmas eve. Invariably, they were perfect to eat when we returned home from Midnight Mass. We still use Dad's recipe to this day!

The intestines of the hogs were cleaned and used as casings for blood sausage, known as "boudin" in French, a very special delicacy which Dad took great pride in preparing for the Christmas season. Other "festive" French foods were prepared for the "Holidays". Creton which was made from cracklings from rendered lard was used as a substitute for butter. One can easily ascertain that little of the hog was wasted!

In preparation for the Christmas Eve sleigh ride, a grain box which afforded maximum protection from the wind with a degree of safety was placed on one of the farm sleighs. Yard benches were located on each side of the box and an abundant amount of clean straw was spread on the floor. Horse blankets, which could be used later to keep the animals comfortable during the two hour service were placed "on board" for use by all of us en route to the church. We boys wore four buckle overshoes, sheep skin coats and warm caps with ear laps - ugly but warm. Bricks which had been heated in the kitchen oven were placed under the benches where Mother and "the girls" would sit so their feet could be kept warm. A ten gallon cream can of fresh water was also made a part of the equipment. That which was not used as drinking water was given to the horses when we arrived at the church. Despite the bitter cold, the horses were covered with "sweat" at the end of their journey.

Many of our friends and relatives added sleigh bells to the horses' harness, wove the tails and mains and generally "showed us up" as far as appearances were concerned, but we still enjoyed a very special pride in the dependability of good old Bill and Ben.

The seven mile ride was always a pleasure and joy. It seemed as though the stars were much brighter on this special night, and we always managed to find a "special star" which we agreed must have been the Star of Bethlehem! Jingle Bells



was sung with gusto and we reverently practiced singing Silent Night and Adeste Fideles. We knew that the choir would be singing several Latin hymns. We also recognized that many of the more popular and modern Christmas songs would be considered too "secular" to be sung at a Mass commemorating the birth of Christ!

Clouds of vapor preceded our entry into the decorated little church as we climbed the steps which ultimately led to our regular pew. The pungent smell of fresh incense filled the air and the evergreens surrounding the altar made us all wonder where such beautiful trees actually grew. Electric lights cast new shadows in every direction accenting the stained glass windows which seemed much brighter this very special evening. After removing our scarfs and heavy coats, we strained to get a glimpse of the Christmas creche which the "good sisters" had built and located where all could see. It was a ritual for the parents to guide their children to the foot of the Nativity scene where all could witness the "Baby Jesus" with his outstretched arms as we imagined him pleading with us to love him and each other.

Despite the happy nature of this yearly celebration, we were accustomed to being quiet and very reverent. Holiday greetings could wait until we exited the Church.

The Mass was celebrated only in Latin and Father Bastien insisted on sermons delivered in both French and English, so we children knew that we would be "victims" of Father's Christmas celebration for at least two hours. Heads would bob, but we had been warned, "You had better stay awake if you don't want Santa Claus to forget you." We really didn't expect much, but we surely wanted to receive the gifts which Mother and Dad had hidden for all of us for when we got home.

It was after two a.m. by the time we started back in our straw filled sleigh. The stars shown brighter than ever and the moon which had moved to another part of the winter sky seemed to be prepared to guide us safely home.

Dad took care of the horses as we all scampered after Mother into the front room, where a brightly trimmed Christmas tree greeted us. "Boughten" decorations were sparse, but the garlands of popcorn and cranberries thrilled all of us. Maybe we didn't realize it at the time, but we

probably appreciated our parent's sacrifices more than we recognized.

While we reveled in the surprises of the day, Mother moved to the kitchen where we could all join with Dad in devouring the wonderful and tasty Christmas surprises. When bed time came, we tripped upstairs to our comfortable beds, happy that Christmas was such a special day and aware that we were blessed with the most wonderful Mother and Dad in all the world!

## A QUEBEC DINNER

Many of the recipes printed below come from a 1981 section of the Los Angeles Times which was kept by Karen and Marshall West, then of Los Angeles. Marshall has close ties to the Twin Cities, though he never lived here. His grandmother was Laura Bernard Dumas, who for years was organist at Our Lady of Lourdes in Minneapolis. His great aunt was Rachel Bernard Gaudette, also of Our Lady of Lourdes, whose recipe for Tourtiere appears below. (Rachel and Laura regrettably are not relatives to the Editor of this publication!)

### Three Recipes for Tourtiere:

#### 1. from Rachel Bernard Gaudette

1 # lean ground pork shoulder or leg  
 1/2 c dry bread crumbs  
 1 T salt  
 1/4 t pepper  
 1 clove garlic  
 1/4 t nutmeg  
 1/8 t savory  
 a few grains cayenne  
 1/2 T cornstarch  
 1 c water (or enough to keep from sticking)  
 Pastry for 2 crust pie

Add seasoning, cornstarch and water to pork. Simmer covered in saucepan for 30 minutes and uncovered 10 minutes more. Remove garlic. Pour into crust (use smallest pie pan). Put on top crust. Bake at 425 for 10 minutes, reduce to 350 and bake 30 minutes more. Serve with homemade tomato catsup.

#### 2. from Jerry Forchette

3 # of seasoned ground pork  
 1 large chopped onion  
 1 # ground veal  
 4 large cooked potatoes  
 Small amount of garlic



1/4 t cloves

Salt and Pepper to taste.

Simmer all together for about 35 minutes.

Cool and put into a double crust and bake at 400 degrees for 35-40 minutes. Slit crust before baking.

Ingredients should make two large pies.

### 3. from the LA Times

1 # coarsely ground pork

1 # coarsely ground beef

2 med onions, minced

2 large cloves garlic, minced

1 t mace or nutmeg

1 t salt

1/2 t thyme

1/2 t sage, crumbled

1/2 t dry mustard

1/4 t cloves

1 c reserved potato water

2 med. potatoes, cooked and mashed

2 eggs

Pastry for 2 double crust 11-inch pies

Marinade de Tomates Rouges (recipe below)

In large saucepan cook pork and beef until they crumble and begin to brown. Add onions, garlic, mace, salt, thyme, sage, mustard and cloves. Saute 3 to 4 minutes to combine flavors. Add reserved potato water. Bring to boil and reduce to simmer. Cook, uncovered, for 45 minutes to one hour or until water is absorbed, stirring occasionally. Remove from heat and gently fold in potatoes. Add eggs and mix well to combine. Chill mixture thoroughly.

Line an 11x7 inch baking dish [or large pie pan] with 2/3 of the prepared dough, allowing 1/2" to extend over rim. Fill pastry with chilled meat mixture. Roll out remaining dough and place top crust on filling. Wet edges with water and seal and crimp pastry together. Cut several slashes in top crust to allow steam to escape. For a golden-shiny crust, brush top with whipping cream. Bake at 450 in lower 1/2 of oven for 10 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 for another 30 minutes. Cool 15-20 minutes before serving. Serve with Tomato Catsup.

### Marinade de Tomates Rouges (Tomato Catsup)

5# tomatoes

1/2 c sugar

1 c white vinegar

3 med onions, diced

1 c celery, finely diced

1/4 t pepper

1/4 t cloves

1/4 t cinnamon

1/2 t nutmeg

1 t whole mustard seeds

1 t celery seeds

Pour boiling water over tomatoes. Peel and cut in large chunks. Dissolve sugar in vinegar. Combine vinegar mixture with tomatoes, onions, celery, pepper, cloves, cinnamon, nutmeg, mustard and celery seeds. Simmer 1 1/2 to 2 hours, stirring often. Ladle into hot sterilized jars and seal. Allow to cool. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Makes 4 to 5 cups of sauce. (Note: prepare the sauce in an enameled, glass or stainless steel pan. Do not use aluminum or cast iron).

### Cretons Grand-Mere (Grandmother's Rillettes)

1 # pork shoulder, diced

1 # salt pork, blanched and diced  
water

1 med. onion

3 whole cloves

1 bouquet garni

dash cinnamon

dash nutmeg

Salt, pepper

In a large saucepan cover pork shoulder and salt pork with water. Stud the onion with the cloves. Add onion, bouquet garni, cinnamon and nutmeg to the meat. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Bring to boil and simmer 1 1/2 hours or until meat falls into pieces. Allow meat to cool in liquid 1 or 2 hours. Remove warm meat from liquid and put through food grinder or process in food processor until coarsely flaked or shredded. Remove bouquet garni. Strain reserved liquid and incorporate some back into meat mixture until Cretons are the consistency of thick oatmeal. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Simmer mixture 2 or 3 minutes longer. Pack into small crocks. Seal and refrigerate overnight before serving. Serve with French bread. Makes 8 appetizer servings.

### French Peas (from Carmen West)

2 slices bacon

2 green onions, finely sliced

1 c finely shredded lettuce (wilted)

1 t flour



1/3 c chicken broth  
1 - 5 oz can water chestnuts  
seasoned salt

Cut bacon crosswise in 1/2" pieces and cook until crisp. Add green onion and cook till tender. Add lettuce. Cover and simmer five min. Stir in flour. Add chicken broth and cook until thickened, stirring constantly. Add drained peas (or cooked frozen) and sliced water chestnuts. Mix lightly and heat. Season to taste with seasoned salt. Makes four servings.

#### **Carottes Glacees (Glazed carrots)**

10-12 med. carrots, peeled and cut in 2" cylinders or olive shapes

1 1/2 c beef or chicken stock, fresh or canned  
4 T butter  
2 T sugar  
1/2 t salt  
Freshly ground black pepper  
2 T finely chopped, fresh parsley

In a heavy 8-10" skillet, bring carrots, stock, butter, sugar, salt & a few grindings of pepper to boil over mod. heat. Then cover and simmer over low heat, shaking occasionally. Check to see that the liquid is not cooking away too fast; if so, add more stock. In 20-30 min. when carrots are tender and braising liquid brown and syrupy, roll carrots around in glaze and transfer to a heated dish and sprinkle with parsley.

#### **Orange Salad**

6 oranges  
Powdered sugar  
3-4 T rum or brandy  
Watercress

Peel oranges and remove all the white membrane. Slice evenly and discard the seeds. Cut away as much of the pith as possible without breaking the slices. Place these in a glass bowl and sprinkle each layer liberally with powdered sugar - they should be very sweet. Dribble over all the rum or brandy. Chill several hours before serving. Garnish with watercress. Serves 6-8.

#### **French Biscuits**

3 c sifted flour  
1 1/2 t baking powder  
1/2 t sugar  
1 t salt

1/2 c butter  
1/4 c shortening  
2 eggs  
1/2 c milk

Combine flour with baking powder, sugar, and salt and sift together into a mixing bowl. Add butter and lard, softened at room temp., and blend. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs with the milk. Stir this mixture into the flour mixture. Blend until just mixed. Roll or pat the dough out on a lightly floured board to between 1/2 to 3/4" thickness. Cut out with a 2" biscuit cutter. Place on a baking sheet and bake at 450 for about 15 min or until light golden brown. Makes about 18.

#### **Tarte au Sirop D'Erable (Maple Syrup Pie)**

2 T butter or margarine  
1/4 c flour  
1 c pure maple syrup  
1/2 c water  
3/4 c chopped walnuts  
1/2 c walnut halves

Pastry for one 8 or 9" pie shell

Melt butter in small saucepan. Add flour all at once. Cook, whisking constantly, until mixture is golden brown. Add syrup and water and cook, stirring constantly, until thickened. Allow to cool 5 to 10 min. Add chopped nuts. Roll out pastry to fit an 8 or 9" tart pan or shallow pie plate. Crimp edges. Pour in filling. Top with walnuts. Bake at 350 for 30-40 min. Top with whipped cream.

#### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

##### **LA SOCIETE MEETINGS:**

##### **No January Meeting**

**Feb 6 - 7:30** at St. Louis Church, St. Paul. Dick Bernard will share experiences in the Philippines from August, 1994.

**Mar 6 and Apr 3** - Programs to be announced. 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Church, St. Paul.

**Apr 21-22** - See program article next page

**Apr 27-30** - Festival of Nations. Your Assistance is needed.

##### **OTHER EVENTS:**

Jan 26 through Feb 5 - St. Paul Winter Carnival

Feb 2 through Feb 12 - Quebec City Winter Festival

Feb 3 through Feb 9 - Fete des Neiges, Montreal

Feb 10 through Feb 19 - Festival du Voyageur, Winnipeg, Manitoba



**HUNGRY FOR A TOURTIERE...AND NOT IN THE MOOD TO BAKE FROM SCRATCH?**  
Stop by Our Lady of Lourdes Church Rectory, just across the river from downtown Minneapolis, from Monday through Saturday 9-5, and Sunday 9 to noon. Each pie costs \$10 and serves six.



# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

## SET ASIDE THE EVENINGS OF APRIL 21 AND 22 FOR VERY SPECIAL PROGRAMS!

Plans are proceeding well for wonderful programs on Friday and Saturday evenings, April 21 and 22, 1995. Hold these dates open on your calendar. Ticket information will be in the Mars-Avril Chez Nous.

**Friday, April 21**, at the Ukrainian Hall in northeast Minneapolis, we will be entertained by **Metis musicians and dancers from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Belcourt, North Dakota.**

Performed will be traditional dances and music, which weave together in a very unique way, the traditions of the Voyageur and the Native American.

Featured will be dancer **Sandra Poir** and premier fiddler **"King" Johnson and family**. Sandra and the Johnson's are well known nationally, both having performed at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival in Washington DC, and at various folk festivals around the country.

Sandra learned traditional dances, such as the Red River Jig, from her mother.

"King" Johnson, and his children Linda and Eddie Jr., feature the fiddle, guitar and vocals. King is a member of the Turtle Mountain Metis Hall of Fame. He has recorded six albums, all available on cassette.

Joining the Metis will be dancers from Minneapolis' **Dance Revels Company**, who will be

tracing for us the evolution of French-Canadian dance music from 17th century Brittany, France, to 20th century Turtle Mountain.

On **Saturday evening, April 22**, at Minneapolis' French Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, we will be treated to an evening of music performed by a company of singers from the Laurentian region of Quebec.

Featured will be **Jean-Louis Sanscartier**, a tenor with a marvelous voice. Jean-Louis sang in St. Paul last May, and was very well received by those who heard him sing.

In addition, a company of more than 20 Quebecois singers will sing from the old French repertory of the medieval and renaissance periods. The group, **Le Choeur de Chambre Ars Nova Des Laurentides, QC**, will be conducted and accompanied by **Michel Brousseau**, a young pianist who this year won the first prize of the Quebec conservatory.

**Tickets will be available in mid-March and it is anticipated that both performances will be sold out. Tickets will likely be in the \$10 range. You are encouraged to order early.**

The presentations are being put together by a group called Le Réseau de l'Etoile du Nord, which includes 14 members, among whom are members of La Société, Les Errants, Alliance Française, and other groups. The activity is being actively supported by the Canadian Consulate, local governments of the Laurentian region of Quebec, the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and others.

## The 1995 bilingual calendar **LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE/ FRENCH IN AMERICA**

The 11th edition of this very interesting calendar depicting historical events and prominent French Americans is now available for **\$6.00** (add \$1.50 for postage & handling). The 1995 calendar contains a surprise-photograph from Little Rock, Arkansas!  
*Make your check payable to: French-American Calendar-1995 and send it to:*  
*Virgil Benoit, RR2 Box 253, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.*





# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mars-Avril, 1995 VOL. 16 NO. 5

*La société canadienne-française*

*Editor: Dick Bernard*

**A GRAND AND DELIGHTFUL**

## **FRENCH IN AMERICA HERITAGE FESTIVAL**

**Minneapolis and St. Paul, April 20-22, 1995**

### **CROSSING BOUNDARIES/ EN TRAVERSANT LES FRONTIÈRES - Thursday and Friday, April 20-21, 1995**

This fascinating concert of dance and music will trace the roots of French and Metis heritage back to France of the 1600s. The Thursday program will be at the Minnesota History Center 3M Auditorium; the Friday program at the Ukrainian Community Center at 301 Main Street NE (near Riverplace) in Minneapolis. Both shows begin at 7:30 p.m.

**Detailed information about both programs, can be found on the last two pages of this issue of *Chez Nous*.**

The April 20-21 shows will open with demonstration of the dances and music of the Brittany region of France, performed by folk musicians and dancers of the Twin Cities group DANCE REVELS, directed by Jane Peck. Jane has performed for La Societe C-F.

The program will then show the transition of French music and dance to the Voyageurs and finally to the Metis of Turtle Mountain, North Dakota.

This program is made possible in significant part by funding received through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and the Minnesota Legislature as well as the Minnesota Dance Alliance with Jerome Foundation funds.

There will be a reception to meet the international stars after the shows.

### **MELODIES FRANCAISES Saturday, April 22, 1995**

The third evening of French Heritage Festival will feature the beautiful melodies and lyric French poetry as performed by Quebec tenor Jean-Louis Sanscartier. This performance will be at 7:30 p.m. at Minneapolis' beautiful "French Church", Our Lady of Lourdes, at Riverplace.

**Ticket Information for all performances is on the last page of this issue of *Chez Nous*.**

Jean-Louis Sanscartier brings a rich and delicious repertory of French and Québécois *saïon* songs from the early part of this century. This was a time when art song flourished, and these songs are most beautiful when sung in French by a native Francophone.

Jean-Louis performs frequently in the province of Quebec. His credits include the Opera Choir of Montreal, the Evening Opera of Montreal, and Jeunesse Musicales of Canada. He is artistic director for the Laurentian city of Prevost, Quebec.

A number of LaSociete members have heard him sing and describe his music as beautiful, and his personality as warm and outgoing. While a true Francophone, he is fluent in English.

A Quebec review describes well his talent for entertaining an audience: "It's too short", was the unanimous commentary after his concert. Truly, the virtuosity of Mr. Sanscartier, his choice of pieces, and the ambiance he created made us lose track of time."

Jean-Louis comes to the Twin Cities thanks to the Canadian Government and the work of Le Réseau de l'Etoile du Nord.



## ON COMING TO THE 'STATES:

Below we present the story of Georgianna Guimont's migration from Cap St. Ignace Quebec to Dayton MN in 1877, as well as the story of her family in Dayton, MN. Dayton village is still a small rural community on the Mississippi River about 30 miles northwest of downtown Minneapolis, but in all respects the former township is now a suburb of Minneapolis. It was founded in July, 1852 by Paul Godine and Isaiah Cowet.

With variations, Georgianna's story matches that of most of our immigrant families. Most of our ancestors moved to the United States from Canada beginning about the 1850s. Popular folklore to the contrary, most of our ancestors were not Voyageurs, nor directly descended from Voyageurs. Our ancestors came, by and large, from rural Quebec communities, sometimes with a few generation way-stop in a New England milling town.

**(In the next issue we will write about the general migration of French-Canadians to the northeastern United States. Your recollections are solicited if your family came from this part of the country. Deadline April 15 to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St. W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.)**

Why did our ancestors migrate? There were many reasons, but a primary one was the pressure of space in their home province. For example, on January 23, 1995, Evangeline Clement of Maple Ridge, British Columbia, wrote about her family, Collette, who moved, about 1862, from St. Lambert de Levis Quebec to then St. Anthony (later Minneapolis) to North Dakota. Later her grandfather, Philippe, moved from North Dakota to southern Manitoba, and one of his brothers, Alfred Collette, moved back to Dayton MN where he raised his family and lived the rest of his life. (He perhaps knew Georgianna Bouley well).

Evangeline says this: "the Collette family left St. Lambert de Levis, PQ. because there was no place to establish the boys (there were seven), and as there were homesteads available that is why they came west. Later, when homesteads came available in Canada, Grandpa came to Ste Elizabeth Manitoba because he had a second family [his first wife had died] and he could not expand his farm in Oakwood, ND. as the land was all taken."

So, a simple and reasonable explanation for the migration was that there was too little land for "the boys" (in these transactions, the girls did not generally count!) in the usually very large French-Canadian families, and to establish themselves they had to relocate.

There is another generalization which can be safely made in many cases: Migrants tended to move to places where they knew someone. Thus, like today's migrants to the Twin Cities from southeast Asia, whole families and members of communities would move to the same general area in this country.

## THE STORY OF MY LIFE

by **Georgianna Guimont Bouley, Dayton MN**  
written December, 1965

A few years ago, Charley Bouley gave to us the memories written by his grandmother, Georgianna. She came to the United States at the age of five, when her family settled in the French-Canadian community of Dayton, MN - a town on the Mississippi River about 30 miles northwest of Minneapolis.

These memories were written thirty years ago, and it is interesting to think about the many changes that have occurred since then, not only in Georgianna's family, but in our own lives. History is indeed in constant change.

Enjoy Georgianna's memories and let them be an encouragement to you to pen your own during this winter season! Our thoughts are with Charley, who passed on in 1992.

"I am about to embark on a long journey and recall my past. I was born November 25, 1872, at Cap-St.-Ignace, Quebec, Canada, so it is a long journey in more ways than one. I arrived in this country with my parents, Celestine and Delina Guimont at the age of five on May 10, 1877, in Minneapolis. One of my uncles took me in his arms as I got off the train. The family lived with the old Paul Goodins [Godine ?](the Bonne home) for a while, and then my father bought a place from Mr. Urban Boutin, which is the place where Robert Guimont lives now, that is the third generation. I had three brothers and four sisters.



The area was all woods. It took many a day of hard work to clear the land, but as the years rolled on, more acreage was cultivated. Corn, wheat and marsh hay were the principle crops. I did a lot of corn husking. My sister, Mary, and I walked way to the end of the farm, bringing our lunch to save steps, for those fall days were pretty frosty and cold sometimes, but we were assigned to the job, so we did it. Other outdoor work was raking hay with a little hand wooden rake. We had to make little stacks or mounds and also make bundles during grain-cutting time. The grain binders with knotters were not in existence yet, so we had to take a little handful of the grain itself and make a certain knot to keep the bundle secure. Milking cows was a regular night and morning chore. We made our own butter. There had to be at least five or six days accumulation of milk to have enough cream to churn a batch. The cream was kept in covered tin cans and lowered in the well to keep cool. That was the only cooling system anyone had at the time. I and my sister, Mary, walked many times to deliver butter and eggs to the village grocer in Dayton. Some of those hot summer days the butter got mighty soft by the time we reached our destination, but my mother put it in tin pails, so nothing was really lost.

The only storekeepers name I recall was Louis Peters. The store changed hands frequently.

One of the tasks every spring was setting hens which usually took place in May when the weather was warmer, and caring for the little chickens after hatching (they were al the heavy breeds). We let them roam around the yard all summer, then we housed them in the fall when the cold fall days set in.

In those days the women went out to help the men folk with their work besides doing their own housework that had to be done. It was real togetherness, not just a saying, but that was the way of life, so everybody pitched in. Job opportunities were not too plentiful, but one means of earning was doing housework if one was interested. This I did for six months when I was seventeen. I worked for lawyer George Fortin, who by the way was married to Victoria LaCroix. They were living next to the little schoolhouse.

I attended school three months out of the year when I first started, but later it was voted to have six months. It was a one room schoolhouse. The same one all my children attended. It is still standing today but is not in operation. The District (No. 387) was dissolved in 1964) now belongs to Anoka-Hennepin District 11. My first teacher was Miss Victoria LaCroix. Her sister, Harriet, also taught in the same school. I went to religious instruction also and had to walk to Dayton everyday for three or four weeks to prepare for my First Communion. I was ten years old then.. Father Leonard was the resident Priest.

The winter following I was married to a neighbor boy, farmer Louis Bouley, on January 26, 1891. We were married by Father Andre in the old Church in Dayton. (The church that is now standing was built in 1903). My husband-to-be had purchased a brand new buggy a few weeks previous so on the morning of the wedding we drove to the church for the ceremony in the new vehicle. The weather was not too warm and we had very little snow. I wore a brown dress; white was not thought of too much then. So life started out without knowing all the work and sacrifices that were in store. Like in everyone's life, there are sorrows and happiness and many anxious moments.

Fifteen children were born to us, eight girls and seven boys. We lost two boys, one at the age of ten months, the other at birth.

Two of my husbands brothers made their home with us when they were not working in the woods in winter time and driving logs down the Mississippi in the summer. Their mother had passed away in July, 1888, so my father-in-law lived with us also for almost 13 years. He was a big help to me, taking care of the children, churning the butter, helping to turn the washing machine what had to be done by hand and bringing in the stove wood - until that fatal morning, December 7, 1903, when I opened the back door to sweep the steps. I saw him lying face down in the snow. He had succumbed to a heart attack. That was a great loss to me as well as the family.

I could not get to town very often. Usually the groceries were bought on Sunday when we attended Mass.

In the winter time a team of horses was hitched to the sleigh and some of the neighbors would hook on for a ride. Social activities were few, but once in awhile we were asked out to supper at a friends or relatives house, and I in return would do the same thing. I didn't have much time for sewing, but I did some of it, especially for the girls. Mending was done mostly in evening by the light of a kerosene lamp. It was somewhat relaxing after the days work.



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Every spring, soap making was in the offing. I'd make my own lye by putting wooden ashes in a big barrel three or four days before making a batch. Water was put in the ash barrel to seep through a cloth in a container below. This was very strong and I'd make it in a large black kettle on an open fire outdoors. I used it for the washing and for scrubbing floors.

Our present barn was built in 1898. Since then, an addition was built in 1917.

1910 was a year to remember. We had a very hot, dry summer. My husband became ill in late August with a stomach ailment. His brother, Pete, and the older children did the farm work. In 1911 we decided to build a new house. The old one was too small and so cold, so a two-story frame house was erected with twelve rooms. We moved in it in late fall. It sure was a relief to have room and comfort with the family I had and the two brothers-in-law still with us.

In July, 1912, my mother passed away and in late August of the same year a brother-in-law, Pete, also passed away. My oldest daughter was married in November. The other brother-in-law, Charley, met with an accident about the same time. He fell down the stairs in the Lincoln Mill in Anoka and suffered a fractured skull from which he never fully recovered mentally. He came back from the hospital and stayed with us nine years until his death in February, 1921.

In October, 1913, the second oldest daughter was married. Their life together was short as her husband passed away in April, 1919. She came to live with us for a while, then found employment in Minneapolis and was married in July, 1921. In 1916, the next daughter was married.

In 1917 World War I broke out. We were heavily rationed on flour and sugar. Five pounds of sugar was all we were allowed per week and with the size family left at home, that didn't go very far. I made a lot of rye bread and bran muffins. The children enjoyed this type of bakery so as far as flour was concerned, I got along quite well. The two older boys were on the verge of leaving for service then the Armistice was signed in November, 1918. This was the same year of the flu epidemic when thousands of lives were lost. We all had a spell of it, but luckily pulled out of it. That same year the family enjoyed a big thrill. Web Smith and James Ward sold us our first new car, a Dodge. I think we were one of the first ones in the neighborhood to make such a purchase, but it wasn't long after when all the neighbors weakened to the same idea.

In 1918 we built a washroom onto the house, which in these modern times they call a utility room. Quite a change took place. A shaft was put in by a good friend of ours, Mr. Charles Gemlo. We purchased a gasoline engine so now the washing machine, cream separator and pumping water could be done all at the same time if necessary.

In 1920 we started to ship whole milk, so we dispensed with the separator. By the middle twenties, the three older boys were married. In 1924, my husband and I, two of our nephews and their wives drove to Duluth for an overnight visit with another nephew who was living there. On Sunday we drove to the docks to watch the boats come in. These particular ones were loaded with coal, but it happened that they stopped at the bridge. Therefore, we didn't have the opportunity to see the bridge open up.

My father died in February, 1928, at almost 92 years of age.

In 1929 the nation experienced one of the worst depressions anyone ever knew and it lasted well up into the middle 1930s. The New York stock market went down and a lot of the small banks closed. The government put up different projects such as CCC camps for boys, WPA and other to give employment. Many people were on relief.

Another one of the boys married in 1930. A tragedy occurred in November that year. My husband's sister (Mrs. Martin) suffocated due to an explosion from a gas stove in their house. Because of being an invalid she was unable to be saved before the fireman pulled her out of her bedroom window. She died three hours later.

During this period, two of the girls sought employment in the city. One of them was married in 1932 and the other in 1936. 1934 was a very dry year. There was almost a complete crop failure and no price for crops made it very hard going. Many farms were lost. 1936 was also somewhat of a dry year, not as bad as 1934, but as far as prices were concerned, nothing had moved up. Also in 1936 we were hard hit with sickness. Our youngest daughter took sick with typhoid fever in September. She spent three months in bed. With all those worried hours and extra work because of having to have a day and night nurse for several weeks, it was



lucky I had another daughter at home to help me. It took her almost a year and a half to recover fully from that long illness.

In August, 1938, my husband passed away after a short illness.

Our youngest son and two daughters were still with me. Now a decision had to be made: either leave the farm or make improvements. As this was the home place where my father-in-law had homesteaded in 1851, it made it very hard for me to leave after living here all these years. After much thought and consideration, my son decided to take over. With much help from some members of the family, three old buildings were taken down, some of better lumber was salvaged, a new henhouse was built and improvements were made on the barn. We increased the number of milk cows and raised more chickens. Due to all of this we hired help for the farm work. From here on improvements were made on the place from time to time. Milking machines were installed, a milk house and two silos built, and we started hauling our milk to Superior Dairies in Minneapolis for there or four years.

My youngest daughter was married in April, 1939.

World War II broke out and prices soared. Here again we were rationed on sugar, meats and other foods. Gasoline was another big item. One of my sons and a son-in law decided to put up a creamery in Anoka. It wasn't long after that we hauled our milk there. This we did for four or five years. Then they dissolved partnership and quit the business, so we went back to shipping to T.C.M.P.A (Twin Cities Milk Producers Association?).

During the early forties, either the second or third year, I took a weeks trip to Sault Saint Marie, Michigan, with a daughter, her husband, their son and another daughter. We went to visit cousins who had visited us in 1929. We took a boat ride up the St. Mary River. One of the men we were visiting was a Customs Officer, so he loaded his car on the boat as he was going to drive us up into Canada a ways to where there wasn't any trouble crossing the border. We came back the same day. In the evening, sitting on the porch of their cottage, I watched the boats come in to dock and that beautiful June sunset. The trees casting their shadows on the waters was a sight that still lingers on my mind. It was the most enjoyable week I ever spent. In 1945 World War II ended. I had a son-in-law and six grandson who served our country in this conflict. One of the grandsons received shrapnel wounds, but luckily all came back safely..

A hard blow struck the family in October, 1947. One of my son's wife passed away a few hours after giving birth to twin girls. There were four other children. The oldest, a girl of 13, was not capable of taking over this big responsibility. So, as God taketh away, he also plans for the survivors to be taken care of. My daughter, who was single and was working in Minneapolis at the time, decided to quit her employment to care for the family, and is still there today (1966). From this family, the oldest boy studied for the priesthood and was ordained in September, 1962.

It wasn't long again we were engaged in another war. This time in Korea, June, 1951, and lasted till July, 1953. Only one grandson was in service this time. He had been living with us for a few years. My son, who was left alone with all the farm work, didn't think he would be able to take care of it and decided to sell all his cows and go into the poultry business. He did this for over two years, so when this grandson came back from service we bought cattle again and started shipping milk once more. We cut down on the amount of chickens because a new hen house was built in 1950 and we could only house about 400 chickens.

Both these boys were married in the fall of 1955. We decided that living apart would be better for all concerned so immediately a little four room house, all modern and full basement, was built next to the big frame house. The daughter who had been with me all the time and taken over the run of the house is still with me. I didn't think I was able to do the work and furthermore I do not care to live alone, but I had a hobby of making quilts and braiding rugs. I gave most of them away. I am somewhat handicapped now. My eyesight is not very good, but I still mend and patch clothes for the grandchildren next door, and still do some knitting, so these last few years have been pretty easy living.

Looking back to the days when I started housekeeping, and what the people have to work with today, progress that has been made in improvements for the daily housekeeper, for instance, in household appliances, the refrigerators and freezers are the big food savers. Make ice in your very own kitchen instead of having it melt away in the old fashion iceboxes we used to have. We wired all our buildings in 1944 with NSP so a big



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change took place: just at the press of a button we had lights and today practically everything is automatically controlled. It was not long thereafter all electric appliances were used.

We put up a new garage in 1957 which was badly needed. They did most of the work themselves to cut down expenses. In 1962 my third oldest sons wife passed away in August. She had been sick with leukemia for about a year and a half. She willingly and peacefully resigned to the Holy Will, to which we will all one day answer the call. Also in 1962 my oldest daughter and husband celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary. It seldom happens that any of the parents are still around to attend such an occasion, but I was able to, so I enjoyed meeting relatives and friends who I had not seen in many years.

North Central Gas put in a pipeline coming from Dayton past our way in the fall of 1964. We hooked on immediately and are now heating with natural gas in both houses. More economical than tank gas, remembering the old buck stoves of years ago that burnt only wood for heating purposes and also the big heavy range for cooking is something seldom seen today. When the big frame house was built in 1911, a hot water system was installed to heat upstairs as well as downstairs, a furnace that would burn wood or coal. At the time a system of this kind was thought of as being the most efficient and comfortable heat a home could have. The family wash is a cinch today. Many of the homes have clothes dryers, no worry about the bad weather. Ironing is still somewhat of a job but at least the kitchen range doesn't have to be kept going to heat the irons. We have the steam irons now where the clothes do not have to be sprinkled if one wants to do the job right away, and many other items I won't list as it would make the list too long.

But, there is one I must mention and that is TV. Having entertainment in the home from a thousand miles away the instant the set is turned on. Our first telephone was installed in 1919: a box type with a crank we had to turn to get our party and the operator. Today we had the push button dial with chimes if one cares to have it. I have very few words to say about traveling or transportation because it is incomparable from horse and buggy days to jet flying, but I think the automobile is the means of traveling people enjoy most. Our roads and super highways are either concrete or black top which makes it easy for driving. It is not too often roads are impassable in the winter time with the equipment they have to keep them open, although it has happened with a three and four day blizzard. Our ways of farming now have taken a big change from years past. There is not a piece of machinery that is horse-drawn anymore. All is done with the use of tractors where most farmers have two or three on the place. Much of the heavy work and time involved has been alleviated for the farmer through the use of this modern equipment. I must say expenses are higher too, but one wouldn't make much headway if we didn't keep up with the times.

My son who is working the farm decided to rent some of the land in 1965. Therefore, he sold all the cattle again and kept fifty acres for himself for corn and hay. These crops are always in demand so they are not hard to dispose of. He is now working at Mercy Hospital in Anoka which opened in February, 1965, doing janitor work.

This concludes my journey to date. As I look back through these 93 years, even though there were hardships and grief, there were also many pleasant and happy days. All the changes that have been made and the way we are living now I'm glad I am still here for. I am happy in my little home and well taken care of. The family has grown to a large number. Besides my own 13, there are 57 grandchildren, 167 great-grandchildren and 7 great-great-grandchildren. They have all been very good to me. May God bless them all and keep them in His care.





# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### LA SOCIETE MEETINGS:

**March 6** - LaSociete member John Edel will present a most interesting program on the Voyageurs. 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Church, St. Paul.

**April 6** - There will be an informal Potluck at St. Louis Church hall. Bring some food and have some fun. This program will begin at 6:30 p.m.

**April 21-22** - See program article next pages

**April 27-30** - Festival of Nations. Your assist-ance at our booth is desperately needed. Call Leo Gouette at 489-8306. This years theme is Children of the World. If you have something that evokes memories of a Canadian childhood, Leo would love to hear from you.

**May 1** - Regular meeting/program at St. Louis Church 7:30 p.m.

### A note from Justa Cardinal:

At our February 6th meeting at St. Louis Church, Dick Bernard gave us a great slide presentation of his trip to the Philippine Islands in August. He went with a cousin who had grown up there to re-visit the life of his grandmother's brother, who returned to the Islands after his tour of duty there in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

The relative, Alfred Collette, spent the last half of his life in the Philippines, married there, was imprisoned by the Japanese during WWII in the Santo Tomas POW camp, and saw one of his children killed during the month of February, 1945, when the allies liberated Manila.

Dick and Alfred's daughter, Julie Schiller, and two of her children, traveled about the islands for two weeks. Dick brought back many photos of scenes from lush tropical vegetation to busy central Manila, which looked similar to any American city.

If you are into genealogy research, this is a good example in discovering backgrounds of families. What a challenge - search - to expand backgrounds! It's a great avocation!

### An Invitation to the Past. . . .

It is a mosquito filled day, late in the spring of the year 1634. A weather beaten ship, many months at sea, has just dropped anchor in the St. Lawrence, near the small stockaded trading post at Quebec. A small group of French Catholics, full of hope, disembark for what will be an adventurous yet danger filled life in what will become French Canada. This is only a beginning to the story of French Canada. It contains many colorful people who traveled to an unknown wilderness in the quest for a better life. Who were these settlers, what were their daily lives like, and how did they contribute to their northern country?

There is a layer of freshly fallen snow on the ground. Smoke rises from a crude wooden chimney set in a rough hewn cedar cabin. The cabin could belong to a group of winterers for the Northwest Company, or it could be on the outskirts of Montreal. There are a variety of smells emitting from the cabin, the burning wood, bread baking in the oven, fresh deer meat drying for future use, and an old favorite cooking, pea soup. The history of Canada and our families is not only made up of significant events and dates, but as described above, everyday life.

There are many methods to the preservation and presentation of our colorful heritage. The tracing of family history, singing the songs of old, historical research, recreating dress and material goods, educational programs, and other methods. We would like to get the historical committee working in these areas. There are many ways to contribute" being on the committee, sharing personal research, or donating any of your valuable talents. If you are interested in helping, please call John Edel at 227-9810.

PS: The historical committee will be holding a short presentation and group discussion at the March 6 meeting.



# Le Reseau de l'Etoile du Nord

**MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS OF THE  
FRENCH HERITAGE FESTIVAL/ FESTIVAL DU PATRIMOINE  
APRIL 20-21-22, 1995**

**Information on purchasing tickets is at the end of this article. Seating is limited. It is suggested that you order early.**

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From the wind-swept coasts of Brittany, France, through the forests and waterways of French-Canada and Minnesota, to the Metis (French-Indian) people of Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota...it's all French heritage in the Upper Midwest. This is the broad sweep of a fascinating FRENCH HERITAGE FESTIVAL of three concerts being presented by LE RESEAU DE L'ETOILE DU NORD on April 20, 21 and 22. The three-day festival of French, French-Canadian, and Metis folk and classical art is a brave new venture to bring awareness to the Upper Midwest of the importance of its French heritage.

**CROSSING BOUNDARIES/EN TRAVERSANT LES FRONTIERES**, a concert of dance and music tracing the roots of French and Metis heritage in the Upper Midwest, will be presented Thursday and Friday, April 20 and 21. The concert is created and directed by local dance historian JANE PECK. The show opens in 17th century Brittany, France, with the ancient dance music and song of Breton musicians JEAN BARON and CHRISTIAN ANNEIX, popular guest folk artists from France. Jean and Christian are key figures in the native celtic folk revival in Brittany, France. The audience will experience ancient Breton dances by DANCE REVELS, a local dance history ensemble under the direction of Jane Peck. Jane researched these dances in France last summer. Dance Revels will be assisted by narrator RHONDA LUND as they portray the immigration of the French to Quebec, Canada, and their subsequent role in the fur trade as it passed up the waterways to Minnesota. Local French-Canadian style fiddlers LINDA BREITAG and JAMIE GANS will inspire the lively and humorous dances of the "voyageurs" performed by Dance Revels.

Many of the French-Canadian "voyageurs" married native women and remained in this area, forming a new blended culture, the Metis (or Michif). Many Metis still live in this area - a well hidden bit of heritage. Metis dancers SANDY POITRA and son JAY GOURNEAU with musicians ED and LINDA JOHNSON, all from Turtle Mountain Metis/Ojibwe Reservation, will complete our French cultural journey across international and national boundaries with their lively French/Indian dance and music. These talented Metis artists have performed for the Smithsonian Institute Folklife Festival. The audience will be welcomed to join the cast in Breton and Metis Dancing at the close of the show. A reception follows for all to meet the international cast.



This event is partially funded through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council with Minnesota Legislature funds, and also through the Minnesota Dance Alliance with Jerome Foundation funds. The event is sponsored by Danve Revels, the Minnesota History Center, and Le Reseau de l'Etoile du Nord.

**ABOUT DANCE REVELS.** Dance Revels is a local dance history company which performed under the name CAPRIOL. The new name reflects a new mission for the group. Although they still perform beautiful period dances from the courts of Europe, they are committed to portraying the connections and contrasts between court and folk dance, and between European and North American period dance, in order to help us all better understand our roots. The director is Jane Peck. Dancers include Jeffrey D. Annis, Robert Cleary, Anne Schaefer, Diana Kenney, and Jane Peck.

**MELODIES FRANCAISES**, the third evening of the French Heritage Festival, features the beautiful melodies and lyric French poetry of tenor JEAN-LOUIS SANSCARTIER. Jean-Louis, a guest artist from Quebec, Canada, brings a rich and delicious repertory of French and Quebecois salon songs from the early part of this century. This was a time when art song flourished, and these songs are most beautiful when sung in French by a native Francophone. Savor such favorites as "Le Mariage des Roses" by Cesar Franck, or "Offrande", with poetry by Verlaine.

Mr. Sanscartier performs frequently in the Province of Quebec. His credits include many performances with the Opera Choir of Montreal, the Evening Opera of Montreal, and Jeunesse Musicales of Canada. He studied voice with Albert LaFontaine, Albert Corneiller, and Louis Andre. He is Artistic Director for the city of Prevost, Quebec.

Among many comments about Mr. Sanscartier's singing is this:

"C'est beaucoup trop court!, fut le commentaire unanime. En effet, la virtuosite de Mr. Sanscartier, le choix des pieces, et l'ambiance creee nos ont fait oublier le temps qui passait." Ville de Verdun, Quebec.

("It's too short!", was the unanimous commentary after his concert. Truly, the virtuosity of Mr. Sanscartier, his choice of pieces, and the ambiance he created made us lose track of time." City of Verdun, Quebec.)

This event is sponsored by Le Reseau de l'Etoile du Nord with the support of the Government of Canada.

**TICKET INFORMATION:**

**CROSSING BOUNDARIES'** Thursday, April 20 show will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Minnesota History Center 3M Auditorium, 345 Kellogg, St. Paul MN. The Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m. show will be at the Ukrainian Community Center, 301 Main Street NE, Minneapolis MN (near Riverplace. Tickets are \$8. Ticket cost is \$6 for seniors 60 and over, children under 13, groups of 10 or more (including members of La Societe), and History Center members (4/20 show only).

**MELODIES FRANCAISES** will take place Saturday, April 22, 7:30 p.m. at the beautiful AND historic French Catholic church, Our Lady of Lourdes, at Riverplace, One Lourdes Place, Minneapolis MN. Tickets are \$12, \$10 for seniors, children under 13 and groups of 10 or more (including all members of La Societe).

**FOR RESERVATIONS SEND A CHECK (to LE RESEAU) FOR THE NUMBER OF TICKETS REQUESTED TO DICK BERNARD AT 7632 157TH ST W #301 APPLE VALLEY MN 55124. SPECIFY THE SHOWS YOU PLAN TO ATTEND. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER SHOULD WE NEED TO CONTACT YOU. OTHER QUESTIONS? LEAVE A MESSAGE AT 612-891-5791, OR ASK ANY MEMBER OF LE RESEAU.**

**ABOUT LE RESEAU DE L'ETOILE DU NORD.** Le Reseau came into existence in the spring of 1994, and consists of individuals from a number of different organizations including La Societe Canadienne Francaise du Minnesota, Les Errants, Alliance Francaise, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French, L'Association des Francais du Nord (AFRAN), Dance Revels, as well as other individuals whose sole interest is the preservation of the French and French-Canadian and Metis heritage and culture.





# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mai-Juin, 1995 VOL. 16 NO. 6

*La société canadienne-française*

*Editor: Dick Bernard*

## "FROM OVERALLS TO OVER-ALLS"

### A brief snapshot of the French-Canadians in New England.

by Dick Bernard

Lower Canada (Quebec) has for much of its history shared a common boundary with the states of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. Indeed, the fledgling United States made an attempt during the Revolutionary War to make what is now Quebec part of its new nation. Troops led by none other than Benedict Arnold came up the Chaudiere River with designs on Quebec City. The attempt failed and the rest is history.

Today, much of New England, from the border states through Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island in particular, have an enduring French-Canadian identity in many communities. It may come as a surprise to readers to learn that many of the French-Canadians in the northeastern US come from families which began migrating south at about the same time as other French-Canadians were moving west to the central states of the United States.

A major early "cork" on the immigration "bottle" was lack of good ground transportation.

As occurred in the US. at about the same time, the development of Canadian railroads, facilitated migration south and west. By the end of the 1840s a railroad had been completed from Montreal to the ice-free port of Portland, Maine. By 1860, the Grand Trunk railroad was completed. Its route was from Sarnia, Ontario, (north of Detroit, Michigan) through Montreal and the eastern

townships of lower Canada to Portland, ME. The railroad was on only one side of the mighty St. Lawrence River, which disadvantaged cities on the opposite shore. But ferry boats at places like Levis (across the St. Lawrence from Quebec City) did allow people access to rail transportation.

Easier access to the States and western Canada arguably came none too soon. For over 200 years, large Quebec families had been filling the available habitable space, and by the time of the migration, movement elsewhere was becoming essential. Thus, it was not uncommon that entire family units picked up their belongings and moved to a new location with hopefully better opportunities. Many of them elected to move to the mill towns of New England. These mill towns, built primarily around the textile industry, developed during the industrial revolution of the 1830s along New England rivers. The rivers provided the power for the machines of the day. A mill was built where a stream could be dammed and thus provide water power.

It is impossible in a short article to fully describe the rich and enduring French-Canadian presence in New England. John Cote, my IA+ friend and relative (we have common ancestry - Jean Cote - in the 1630s in Quebec), showed me his towns in northeastern Connecticut in 1992, and he has since provided me with a wealth of information about life in the mill towns of New England.

Through John I learned of a recent (1991) and excellent book, still available through bookstores, which gives a vivid and comprehensive description of life in New England mill towns. It is well worth reading. I am willing to loan it to



interested readers. The following excerpts are from this book, **"Towers of Brick, Walls of Stone"** by **Donald McGee**. (Also included in this issue of *Chez Nous* is a chapter of a novel written in the 1930s by Alberic Archambault of Woonsocket, RI. Alberic is the father of La Societe member Justa Cardinal, and a man of great prominence in his city and state.)

#### **Excerpts from "Towers of Brick..."**

"The early years of the nineteenth century saw enterprising Europeans such as the Scots, Irish, English, Germans, and Scandinavians, pour into the ports of the east, such as New York, Philadelphia and Boston. A flood of unskilled, but vigorous Irish came to America's shores not without effects on the health and ways of life of the earlier colonists. Men and women born and bred on the countryside in both the new world and the old world came to live crowded together, earning their bread and butter. New immigrants also came from Canada, many from the French-speaking Province of Quebec. They trekked down in wagons and trains whenever rail communication was favored to form new skills and develop old ones lost. A new unit in the labor force of factories was produced by these newly arrived groups. New families and neighborhoods came into being, sometimes crowded together....

The corporations controlled not only the growth and development of the factory, but also of the community, sometimes as much as three-quarters of the city property. The mill agents could dictate to the employees the running of the mills as well as to the community...Each mill in the cities or towns paid the same wages, set the same hours of work and operative regulations. Most corporations housed their workers in company houses and tenements, and even had company food stores and medical doctors to care for the mill employees....

#### **SOCIAL CLASSES**

The factory population of each town or city was divided into four classes. The first consisted of the agents of the Corporations - they were to be autocrats when decisions affecting the office and responsibilities of the mill affected the industrial interests of their employees or concerned the town or city as well. They lived in large houses built by the company and company employees, usually country homes away from the nearby company houses (boardinghouses in some cases).

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The second class were the overseers. They were ambitious mill hands who had worked their way up from the lowest grade of factory labor. As time progressed, this class also consisted of college-trained men in business and administration, as well as technical-school graduates....They also lived separate from the factory workers, most of the time in individual houses built in the villages and towns for them and their station.

#### **READING CHEZ NOUS AND NOT A MEMBER OF LA SOCIETE C-F?**

You are certainly invited to join us. Annual dues are as follows: Family \$15 (Senior \$10); Single \$10 (Senior \$8). **Mail dues to George LaBrosse, 4895 Brent Avenue, Inver Grove Heights MN 55076. Make check payable to "LSCF"**

The third class were the operatives. These were either girls or men, employed by the company, who usually lived in tenement blocks owned by the mill. Many, however, in time purchased their own homes or rented from private owner landlords in town. The tenement blocks in many New England cities and towns became known by their distinctive architecture and style. Today there are still hundreds, if not thousands, of three-deckers of this type found in every section, depending on the area of each city....

The fourth class were also employed by the factories. Many worked as laborers and outside gangs, as they were called, in maintenance and construction or repair work. Many of the laborers lived in small shanties with their wives and numerous children....

#### **WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE**

As we have seen through the ages, women's work had been confined almost entirely to the home. The years 1820 through 1869 saw a crucial change. The nineteenth century, which gave rise in New England to the textile industry, enabled women, mostly young and single, to leave home for employment as workers in the early years of industrialization. In turn, they enjoyed a new social and economic independence. This newfound independence, in turn, created new pressures, both economic and cultural, to which the women responded. The women came to the mills as individuals. They brought with them whatever social position and cultural outlook they had from their hometowns. The vast percentage of the





The "center" of the typical New England industrial town was the Mill, which often dominated the economy and even the politics of the town. The above ruin, photographed in far northeastern Connecticut in 1992, is just one example of what once was an extremely important part of the economy of New England.

women came from rural farms within an area of one hundred miles. Many women who came to ... mill towns of New England in the period between 1830-50 came because of economic needs; some had worked as domestic servants and had lived with relatives a short distance from their home. Many girls left home to earn wages to provide for a dowry. Mill employment appealed to them because wages were higher than they were for farm laborers or domestic servants. Many young girls...were attracted by the circulating libraries from which the boardinghouses could get books and periodicals not attainable at home. Most women did not consider mill work a long-term prospect, but an alternative until they could marry and leave the mill to raise a family.

Almost two-thirds of the women in the period 1830-50 who worked at the mills in Massachusetts had cousins, sisters, or other relatives who boarded in the boardinghouses and were employed at the mills. Kinship networks helped the operatives adjust to urban life; it also contributed to their success in the mills.

Company boardinghouses in the early mill towns of this period were well-supervised by competent matrons, and these boardinghouses were built where the girls lived under regulations strict enough to satisfy their Puritan Yankee fathers. The physical conditions of the boardinghouses were not always good. For a standard rate of one dollar and twenty-five cents a week, the girls could choose which company houses they would occupy. Many boardinghouse keepers could not furnish decent

living conditions for the girls. There were crowded bedrooms, little fresh air or heat in the winter, and a lack of privacy. The girls came to stay and work in the factory towns a year or two; some came for adventure as well as money. Those who chose a more adventurous avenue were the girls who wanted a freer type of environment from that which the working girls had received living at home. The boardinghouses gave them shelter, although its accommodations were not always like those of home. It was a place to sleep and eat, perhaps one of convenience for the time, and a place to meet and make new friends. The city could provide shops, churches, entertainment, and perhaps a better prospect to acquire another job or position, or even find a husband....Once in the mills, newcomers were assigned work as spare hands...New employees were assigned a more experienced partner for the four months usually needed to master the skills of spinning, weaving, drawing in, and whatever their jobs would entail. Of the female work force who worked and resided in the Merrimack Company boardinghouses between 1830 and 1840, over 80 percent were of the age group fifteen to thirty years old...about 74 percent were single and lived in company-owned housing. These women were treated with consideration by their employers.

**SOCIAL LIFE**

In this early period of industrialization, rules were stringent, especially between male and female employees. Also, most of the male overseers were married men with daughters and had very different

(continued on page 6)



**MILL VILLAGE**

At right is a brief chapter from a fascinating 1943 book, *Mill Village*, written by Alberic Archambault of Woonsocket, RI.

Mr. Archambault has many claims to fame, all secondary in importance to being the father of *Justa Cardinal*, dedicated long-time member of *La Societe Canadienne-Francaise*.

The dust jacket of *Mill Village* says this: "Alberic A. Archambault, Associate Justice of the Superior Court of Rhode Island, twice candidate for Governor of his state, and nine years a member of the Rhode Island Senate, is well known throughout New England as a lawyer and a judge.

He was born and brought up in a mill village where his father's grocery store was the meeting place for Canadian-Frenchmen of the community. As a small boy, he used to wedge himself in between the cracker barrels and listen avidly to the old-timers reminiscences and "*lougarou*" tales that frightened him so that he would have to beg an older brother to walk home with him. Recently, when passing through a Connecticut mill town, Judge Archambault noticed that the mill houses were being sold at auction. Fascinated, he stopped to watch, and as the auctioneer's red flag traveled from house to house and bids were made, he remembered the stories that had been told over the cracker barrels of his father's store. The happy result is *Mill Village*, a novel in a rich vein that has been virtually untouched - the story of the Canadian Frenchman in the United States...."

While the book was written as fiction, its connection with the then-reality is strong. A recent reader of the book, John Cote of Brooklyn CT, a lifelong resident of a Mill Village, said he couldn't put it down, and it brought back a flood of memories.

Enjoy this single morsel of Judge Archambault's book...and remember your own memories.

Better yet, offer your memories for publication in a future *Chez Nous*! Send to Dick Bernard, editor, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. We publish every two months, with deadline on the 15th of every alternate month (next deadline June 15, 1995)

SATURDAY night was usually reserved by the villagers for their festivities. If a couple married, the reception was held on the next Saturday night; if a birthday was celebrated, it was celebrated on Saturday night nearest to the birthday. And every Saturday night found two or three houses brightly lighted. On Saturday afternoon the men of the house, where the party was to be held, took down the beds in the downstairs rooms, and cleared spaces for square dancing. The boys would get hair cuts and clean shaves, and the girls would curl their hair. Right after supper the girls would squeeze themselves into tight corsets and put on their prettiest dresses, and by eight o'clock the party was in full swing. The village fiddler stood in the doorway between two cleared rooms, and played jigs, usually the same tune and the same tempo, varied only by gestures. In a corner of one room stood the dance caller who started each quadrille with a loud, "Eight hands around." Young and old, fat and thin, danced around and pounded their feet on creaking floors till the rafters of the house shook. Slim waists felt the touch of warm hands and encircling arms, gestures which would have been repulsed at any other time. A boy who would not have dared to touch a girl's hand at any other time pressed her tight to his breast while he swung her off her feet in a dizzy whirl. Doughnuts and oranges were passed around, and if the host liked his beer, he had a quarter keg hidden in the cellar, and while the women pretended not to see, he took the men of the party down cellar in groups of threes and fours and served them beer in mustard glasses. Thus all made merry till midnight, when the guests departed.

One Saturday night there happened to be parties in adjoining houses, one at Mulligan's house and the other at Thibodeau's house. The Gareau house stood on the hill overlooking the common yard between the two houses, and from their front windows the Gareaus looked on. It was a warm summer night, and between dances, the men went out into the yard. Early in the evening each party seemed to respect the other, no Irishman going beyond the imaginary line which equally divided the yard between the houses, and no Frenchman venturing within ten feet of that line. As the beer in the kegs got lower, the spirits of the men rose higher, and the louder was the noise which emanated from each house. Soon each group was annoyed by the noise made by the other group, and retaliated by making more noise. Meantime, while half a dozen French fellows were conferring on the means of silencing the Irish, the Irish fellows were holding a conference of their own with reciprocal thoughts in mind. After a few more beers, each Frenchman convinced himself and his companions that he could lick any three Irishmen, and each Irishman was sure that he could lick an army of Frenchmen. And while they thought such thoughts, they went out into the yard for air. It happened that both groups went out for air at the same time. Each group sensed that the other was out for



trouble, and each group was right. No one ever knew who struck the first blow, but in a flash six Frenchmen and six Irishmen were rolling on the ground, pounding and scratching each other. The swearing and howling of the combatants brought reinforcements from both houses. Soon there was a riot, twenty men engaged in mortal combat, and fifteen women shrieking, throwing cold water on the fighters, and pulling aside a recognized sweetheart or friend. There was fervency in that fight. It took a lot of cold water on both sides to stop it.

Eventually the camps were separated. In the inky darkness sounds of tired voices were heard — "I could lick any dozen Irishmen, if I could see them."

"— I'll lick any fifteen Frenchmen, any time, under any circumstances," came from the other group, "barring, of course, uncontrollable circumstances."

"If that Patenaude girl hadn't butted in, I would have pulverized that Irishman who was on top of me when the bucket of water struck me full in the face," said one of the combatants.

"It would take six of those Irishmen to hold me down, if ever they got me down, and they wouldn't get me down if I didn't stumble. But since that horse stepped on my foot when I was a little boy, I stumble over everything. I even stumble over my own shoelaces when I wear low shoes."

The next day, only three of the celebrants went to Mass: John Kelley, who had a black eye; Peter Laramme, who limped; and Joe Bonvouloir, with a plaster on his chin. The other boys had been completely invalidated the night before and needed Sunday's rest to recuperate for Monday's six-o'clock whistle.

Matante Lizette was very busy the next week, dressing open wounds and bandaging damaged muscles. Matante Lizette was nobody's aunt, so far as anybody in the village could ascertain, but she was known as Matante by Yankee, Irish, and French alike. She could set a broken arm as neatly as any surgeon, and she could brew tea with a dozen kinds of herbs. And she knew what kind of tea each patient required. She had been present at the arrival of the last fifty children born in the village. She knew how to instill courage into every expectant mother, and she could bundle a new born child so quickly and so neatly that each mother thought her child was the most beautiful ever born. She charged nothing for her services, but was content to receive whatever small sum was given her by her patients. She was often in arrears in the payment of the rent of the small three-room basement tenement she occupied, but Mr. Lockwood never pressed her for payment and never threatened to eject her. He felt she was useful to the village as a nurse and was satisfied to contribute the value of her unpaid rent to the cause of health. Whenever someone was injured in the mill, Aunt Lizette was sent for, and she gave first aid, and all subsequent aid until her patient recovered or died.

For weeks after the Saturday night parties, Frenchmen ventured out only in twos and threes, and no Irish boy went out alone unless he knew of two or three friends within hearing distance. When both groups met on the sidewalk, each group politely gave way to the other. These men respected each other, although they mistrusted each other as only pious Christians can.

CORRECTION:  
JUSTA GREW UP IN  
WILWARWICK & WENT  
TO SCHOOL WITH  
GEORGETTE'S GRANDMA



At La Societe C-F's holiday get-together on December 10, participants introduced themselves. The name "Woonsocket RI" caught Justa Cardinal's ear when a newcomer briefly described her background. There was, they discovered, more than just a town name in their background. Above is pictured (at left) Justa (Archambault) Cardinal and (at right) Georgette (Mailloux) Genovese, both of St. Paul. They discovered that not only had they both grown up in Woonsocket, RI, but both had attended and graduated from the Convent of Jesus and Mary's Ste. Claire High School there.





If the walls of this duplex in northeastern Connecticut could talk, what tales they could probably tell. Homes like this, and larger "tenements", and small and large single family dwellings abounded in northeastern mill towns. This photo, from 1992, shows a home that is still occupied.

(continued from page 3)

rules about fraternizing as compared to the same rules later on. Women were segregated from male workers by divisions of labor and had very little interaction with men in their daily lives. Each mill had its own clubs. These circles were fostered and encouraged by the mill owners as a source of culture as well as a place to remedy issues concerning conditions at the mills. As a class, the factory's young women operatives were spoken of as persons who earned their living, whose conditions were fixed, and had to continue to work for their existence until they married and left the factory or retired. The early factory girls were not all country girls. Some had worked as teachers, as librarians and as chambermaids in public places like hotels and for the upper class in cities whose status demanded such. Most young women were energetic and intelligent, and soon associated themselves with their new life and became part of a community, both socially and at their work. Many went to the same churches. Most were welcomed

by the best families of the community; perhaps this was for their new ideas, or new fashions, even new books. Many came to the mills with past histories and looked for a new outlet to hide their grief and identity. As a rule, it was said that factory girls were neatly dressed, uniformly good, and well-behaved. They became interested in public events of the times such as the anti-slavery movement and the Mexican War. Also, many attended lectures and parlor meetings, which were held in the boardinghouses, to discuss critical issues of the time.

#### THE FRENCH-CANADIAN

The French-Canadians who came to New England over a century ago resembled other ethnic immigrants. Their story was also one of hardship, discrimination, and a lasting struggle to rise to a higher social and economic position. In the short span of about sixty years, which marked the massive migration, about half of the immigrants who immigrated to the northeastern New England



states had a very strong attachment to their past. The rest, who came for a short while<sup>1</sup>, returned to their homes in southern Quebec, after getting the necessary money they needed. The census of 1980 gave us a general idea that today they are the fifth largest ethnic group to have evolved in the United States....

The tradition and culture of the French-Canadians, and also the Irish, who immigrated after the turn of the twentieth century from Canada, was pretty basic and similar. First, each culture came from the same region, and second they were both Catholics....

The Canadian, Irish, or French-descent families were a society closely oriented. Kinship was practiced and developed even up to the third of fourth cousins. As these young people left the homestead to set out on their own, regardless of whether they stayed nearby or immigrated to the United States, this kinship continued to a high degree. Sons who did not become priests or eventually inherit the farm or settle on their own farms nearby...became craftsmen in the nearby community or went into a profession.

The same existed with the French or Irish Canadians who came to work in the mills of New England. They continued the ritual handed down from father to son for generations. Authority was clearly the father, who made all of the important decisions as to the governing of a business or farm or the children's vocational careers or future plans. The other ran the house, but also, more often, decided the children's careers and held the family in a close unit as long as each spouse lived. The eldest son, after the father's death, usually stepped into the father's shoes and became the head of the family. Each child usually, or eventually, had his or her future determined at an early age. Each family strove to give its siblings, though at times resources did not permit it, a better start in life, of a better vocation, than the parents had had<sup>2</sup>. Each child

worked, and large families prevailed and supported the household. The greater part of any one's working wage was given to the mother, who, in turn, determined its priorities. The youngest child usually was the lucky one who received the greater education, such as going to college, at least after the turn of the century or after World War I. Most of the children married, with the oldest being first, and if not, he stayed to take over the farm. If a younger child was left at home and was single, while the older child married, he would take over the farm when the father became too old, and would take care of his parents, even if he later married but remained in the household. Sometimes the family living in one household consisted of grandparents, parents, and their siblings.

This custom continued up to the late 1950s among descendants who came to America and continued the family tradition set down from the past. The women had very few choices. They could either become wives and mothers or enter a religious life. However, the single non-married sisters often stayed in the household with the parents, taking care of the house and the elderly, and afterwards taking care and helping the brothers' or married sisters' children. They contributed to everyone's welfare on the farm and even in business, often with their own money....

Once these immigrants were settled in the many communities, various Franco-American organizations sprang up overnight. Organizations like the Societe Saint Jean-Baptiste sprang up throughout New England in the 1860s to the 1870s....These organizations became fraternal societies and merged into a mutual organization in 1900 called the Union Saint Jean-Baptiste d'Amerique in Woonsocket, Rhode Island....Franco-American newspapers have existed in most French-speaking communities in the United States since 1869...there have been over three hundred thirty Franco-American newspapers....In cities and towns...many second or third-generation Franco-Americans speak French. Some Franco-Americans prefer to use their mother tongue instead of English, yet they will never hesitate to use it to address non bilinguals.."

<sup>1</sup> Among this group of immigrants was Blessed Brother Andre, the founder of the world-famed Oratory of St. Joseph in Montreal. As a young man, Brother Andre worked for a time in a mill in northeastern Connecticut.

<sup>2</sup> Which is where the title of this article, "From Overalls to Over-alls", comes from. Justa Cardinal remembers her Dad describing the evolution of a French-Canadian family in this way - the first generation worked at the mill for a living, the second did as well, but by the third generation the family

could afford to send some of its children off to college and thus to what was perceived to be a better life.





# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

**QUERY:** A correspondent is seeking information about the family Des Jarlait. Anyone able or willing to assist is asked to contact Dick Bernard at 891-5791. We will pass on your offer to the lady who is seeking the information.

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Monday, May 1 and June 5: Regular meetings of La Societe, 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Church in St. Paul.**

**May 26-27 RENDEZVOUS at new Fort Bon Secour (East of Chippewa Falls WI at Pike Lake between Cadott and Cornell. Information: Rt 1 Box 117 Cornell WI 54732 (715)667-5362)**

**Sunday, June 18. PEA SOUP DAYS Parade in Somerset. MEMBERS NEEDED FOR THE FLOAT. CONTACT RALPH GERMAIN AT 439-7087.**

**Sunday, July 16 TENTATIVE date for summer picnic. Details in next Chez Nous.**

**DO YOU HAVE SOME MEMORIES OF SOMERSET, WISCONSIN, OR OTHER FRENCH-CANADIAN SETTLEMENTS IN THAT AREA? In the next Chez Nous we will print any recollections that you wish to provide. Send to Dick Bernard, at 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.**

**About Fort Bon Secour.** (Note comment in calendar) above. About 1685 Nicholas Perrot built the original Fort Bon Secour on the southwest shore of Lake Pepin across from the mouth of the Chippewa River (near present day Read's Landing, MN). Over time a succession of forts, occupied for various lengths of time, were built by the French in this same general area. At the time the forts were

## Do not forget to listen to BONJOUR MINNESOTA

This fine program airs every Wednesday from 8:30 - 9:30 p.m. on "Fresh Air Radio", KFAI-FM, Minneapolis at 90.3 FM or 106.7 FM

Bonjour Minnesota is a bilingual program (French-English)

Francophone events occurring in the Twin Cities are announced every session around 9:00 PM.

Your Host is Georgette Pfannkuch, with co-host Caryl Minnetti.

The program expresses the culture from France and francophone countries through music, songs and interviews. Georgette possesses an enormous and diverse collection with music dating from 1905 (with Polin) to the present. Requests from listeners are honored by calling the studio during air-time (341-0980)

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built, the area was a center for people now known as Sautee Sioux, or as they are now more properly known, Dakota.

In 1993 a group known as "The Habitants of New France, Inc.", decided to build a fort for the purpose of historical preservation and re-enactments. The first major event at the new fort is planned for Memorial Day weekend, 1995. The present fort stands on the south shore of Pike Lake, which is about ten miles north of Cadott WI. The name "Bon Secour" ("of good aid and assistance" was selected since it fit in well with the group's goals and purposes.

Visitors are welcome.







porch. She asked, "Qu'est-ce qui vous amene ici?" "What brings you here?" I told her who I was and why I stopped. Adele and I were invited to come in. What a friendly reception we had! Rene, Murielle's husband, asked if we would like to meet his 94 old uncle who lived with his sister a few blocks away. This elderly man had blue eyes like my Dad and his name was John! As we talked about yesteryears, he said that years ago there were several Germains who had left Deschambault for a village, far away, in Somerset, Wisconsin. He named Onesime, Isidore, David and Zephir. They were Dad's uncles! Their father was Zephirin.

The first recorded Germain to leave France for Quebec was Robert. In 1639, he was baptized in the diocese of Mans, France. As a young man, he sailed to Canada. In 1669 he married Marie Goinart who had also come from France to settle in Quebec.

The Germains lived in the area around Deschambault beginning in the 1660s. In 1855, Zephirin and his wife Josephine Morin and their eight children left the loved and familiar region of Deschambault for the small unknown village of Somerset, Wisconsin. The long 1000 mile journey with a family of eight was indeed a challenge. The children ranged in ages from fifteen to less than one year old. The youngest was named Damase, Dad's father. The family journey partly by boat, on rivers, lakes and trails, down the Apple River (Pomme de Terre) and on to Somerset.

Arriving in another country, not knowing the language, no house to call their own, and with little money was a test of courage. By clearing the land and farming it, Zephirin could claim it as a homestead. Relatives and friends gave a hand, and a house was built.

Damase, born in 1854, was the youngest of Zephirin Germain family. He grew up to be a dignified and handsome young man. In 1880, he married a beautiful 20 year old French Canadian named Cordelina Roi, originally from Lanoraie, north of Montreal.

On their 120 acre farm, Damase built a brick house located north of Somerset. The winter months were lonely and hard for Cordelina because she was left to care for the family while her husband went to work at the lumber camps to earn a little money. John, my father, and the others in the family made the long winter easier for their mother

75  
by helping with the work - chopping wood for fire, feeding the animals, gathering the eggs and milking. In the evening John's singing cheered the family. With the coming of spring, there was rejoicing. The long awaited time was over. Papa was back!

There is much to learn from the courage, determination and the "joie de vivre" of our ancestors who braved countless difficulties for a better life. Their faith in God led them on.

### **Some excerpts from the History of St. Mary's Catholic Church, Apple River, Range, Wisconsin (prepared in about 1988):**

The French settled in the southeast part of Apple River township as early as the 1880s. Many of the Apple River settlers had come from France to Acadia (Nova Scotia), Quebec and other areas of Canada, into Maine, Michigan, Superior WI, Osseo and Anoka, MN. Some came from Somerset WI. They were primarily fur traders and lumber men. Some of the early French families in the area were Pearson, Lemire (LaMere), Gamache, Carpentier, Gallant, Durand, Chouinard, Landry, Penard, Cardinal, Gaudette, Belisle, Breault, Lemoine, and Gonier.

Three public buildings were erected in this area. The log schoolhouse operated as Apple River School District #2 from 1879-1895. Across the road a Catholic Church (St. Ann's and later called St. Mary's) was built in the 1880s. Mass was held in the school before the church was built. This church served the Apple River Settlement and also served settlers in Georgetown and Amery before they built their own churches. The church closed in 1969 and is now a part of the Turtle Lake parish. Rose Ann Carpentier taught in the school and on March 10, 1885, she married Fred Pearson in the new church. The Lemoine store was located south of the church. Later young folks gathered there for dances.

#### **St. Mary's as remembered by:**

**Bernard Belisle** from the time period about 1918-25: I first remember it as being a mission church in rural Amery. Father Kenberley would say a Mass at Amery then hurry to Apple River, or Georgetown, or Clear Lake, to say his second Mass. He had a Jewett car that went very fast for its day and raised lots of dust on the clay roads. We could see him coming a long way off. A few of the people had cars but most people came by buggy or



# LA SOCIETE CANADIENNE FRANCAISE ANNUAL

EVERYBODY



WELCOME

# PICNIC

*Noon*  
SUNDAY, JULY 16, 1995

SPOONER PARK

LITTLE CANADA

# POTLUCK



TO: ALL LSCF MEMBERS

WE ARE CONDUCTING A SURVEY AMONG OUR PAID MEMBERS IN THE TYPE OF PROGRAMS YOU WOULD LIKE THE SOCIETE TO PROVIDE. BELOW IS A LIST OF SOME SUGGESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL SPACE FOR YOUR OWN IDEAS. PLEASE CHECK ALL THE SUGGESTIONS IN WHICH YOU WOULD BE INTERESTED.

- BARBECUE
- BOAT TRIP (JONATHAN PADDLEFORD)
- CORN ROAST
- HOT DOG ROAST
- GENEALOGY NIGHT
- HISTORICAL VIDEOS
- WINE AND CHEESE TASTING
- PIG ROAST
- CARD NIGHT
- BOARD GAMES NIGHT
- SING-A-LONG NIGHT
- STILLWATER TRAIN TRIP
- FOLK DANCE NIGHT (COUNTRY LINE)
- ONE DAY BUS EXCURSIONS
- HAY RIDE
- SLEIGH RIDE

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THE ABOVE SUGGESTIONS ARE IN ADDITION TO THE ANNUAL PICNIC AND CHRISTMAS PARTY!

PLEASE SEND YOUR RESPONSE BY JULY 17, 1995 TO: RENE JUAIRE  
 (OR BRING ALONG TO PICNIC 7/16) 1885 WILSON AVE #104  
 ST PAUL MN 55119

*boat*



wagons and some walked. Some people took several hours to get there. We lived a mile and one half away and we figured an hours time to get there and take care of the horses. We lingered long after service to catch up on any news. Party line

lephones were just getting started so only a few people had phones. It previously had been a Mission out of Long Lake Parish (near Balsam Lake) and the last years it had been cared for by the Turtle Lake Parish.

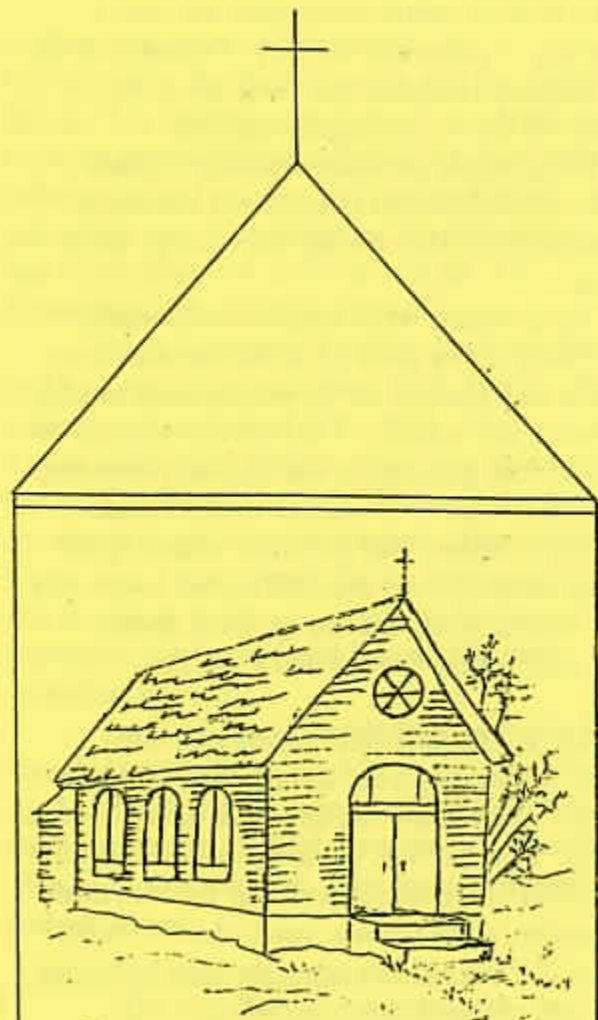
The Gaudette family did most of the care for the church, from mowing of the grass and firing the big barrel stove long before services to try to warm up the church. I can remember it being very cold inside. It was much better when a large wood burning furnace was dug in and installed under the building.

**from Gene (Eugene) LaMere:** I was rather young at the time that masses were held at St. Mary's. I can remember one time when it was cold and I stood on the heat register in the middle of the church to keep warm. I also remember working with my Grandmother (Marion) several summers cutting grass. She was very meticulous with this project.

**from Edith (Leonard) Gamache:** My collection was attending a funeral of a relative there. Several of us were Lutherans who were very ignorant about the Catholic service - some of us would stand when the congregation did and when they kneeled we didn't know what to do. Finally a priest told us to just remain seated, which made us feel more at ease.

**from Norma (Turner) Peterson:** My memory of St. Mary's is of my Mother, Father, Brother and I going to church on a summer Sunday morning. As I remember it was in 1947 and 1948 when I was 9 and 10 years old. St. Mary's was only open during the summer months and only one mass at 10 o'clock was said. In winter, church was at St. Ann's, Turtle Lake.

**from Gertrude (Russell) Gamache:** I remember attending St. Mary's Church in Range on two occasions when I was unable to attend Mass at St. Ann's in Turtle Lake. It was in the summer on two beautiful sunny Sunday mornings. The interior of the church was clean and beautiful. The seats squeaked when I sat down. I knew some of the people who came in, the Bernard Belisle family was



St. Marys  
Catholic Church  
Apple River  
French Settlement  
Founded (appx) 1883

LaMere  
Durand  
Landry  
Pinard  
Turner  
LaBrier  
Parent  
Pearson  
Gallant

Carpentier  
Belisle  
Lemoine  
Gamache  
Robarge  
Breault  
Cardinal  
Gaudette  
Chouinard



one. The interior surroundings gave me such a good feeling of peace and security. I thought of the French Acadian churches that I read about in literature and had so thoroughly enjoyed.

**from Marie (Breault) Ploszay:** I didn't think too much about the little church because it was always there. But one day we went by and it was gone.

There were a lot of memories connected with St. Mary's. We grew up across the road from the church and watched all the people come to visit the graves in the summer. They usually stopped in to visit with our grandfather and parents (Gaudette and Donald Breaults). It seemed in this French community everyone was somehow related, good friends or old neighbors who had moved away. My younger sisters, Betty and Marge, were always asked to care for the flowers and keep them watered.

My grandfather was the self appointed caretaker of the church and always had the church warm for Sunday Mass and any other devotions that were held. First fire was in the big pot-bellied stove in the middle of the church and later fire was made in the modern wood furnace installed in the small basement. Lynus LaMere can remember he helped dig that part of the basement by hand.

Everyone can remember the kerosene lamps that were on the side walls, with a round reflector mirror on one side, that reflected a beautiful light for night devotions. Much socializing went on before and after Mass. One always stopped to visit and I can remember people at church long after Mass was over with.

My mother played the organ and sang at all masses and funerals. There was a choir loft in back of the church and we were usually up there with the overflow of people.

Marion LaMere and her younger sons took care of the cemetery for many years. She was instrumental in getting a perpetual care program to insure the graveyard would always be taken care of. She worked hard making quilts and selling tickets to raffle them off. Turtle Lake has done a beautiful job of taking care of the cemetery.

Our biggest excitement was the veterans coming to the cemetery on Memorial Day to honor all the veterans buried there. We were always there to watch the ceremony, the blowing of taps, the 21

gun salute and then the little flag placed on each grave.

Another big day was the annual cleaning of the church. All of the women and their families were there. It was a fun day for all the children. There was a picnic lunch.

**from Tillie (Mathilda Kuntz) Anderson:** I grew up on a farm just south of St. Ann's Catholic Church in Turtle Lake. In the 1920s I belonged to the church choir. Father Schwab was our pastor. In the late fall we would practice a new mass to be sung in Latin at Christmas. I remember our choir going to St. Mary's at Range to sing for their Christmas Mass. The organ around which we gathered was in the back of the church. This added to my Christmas celebration in my youth.

In 1979 Marcella Backes Gross of Turtle Lake and I compiled information from the markers in St. Mary's cemetery for the St. Croix County Genealogy Society. This information was then sent to the Historical Society at Madison.

**from Fern (Gasper) Parent:** The only time that I remember being in this church was for the funeral for Joe Penard in about 1944. The church was going downhill at this time. Evidence was seen of leakage around the windows, as I remember. Joe kept it in his heart and mind that he wanted to be buried from this little Catholic Church.

**from Edmund Landry:** Bernard Belisle and I were Altar Boys for ten years at St. Mary's. I sang in the choir along with Florence (Gaudette) Breault and Ann Gaudette played the organ.

**from Ruby (Cardinal) Roberts:** I remember one Sunday, my father, John Cardinal and I, rode to church with Grandpa Eli and Grandma Jenny Cardinal in this BIG Overland car. Boy, that was a treat! We, John and Maye Cardinal and family, Ruby Alberta, Gladys, Eli and Arthur rode to St. Mary's in Dad's Model T Ford, the rest of the time. Lots of people still walked and some came by horse and buggy. When we finally moved to our home place, Charles and later Donna went to St. Mary's also. Maye (Belisle) and John Cardinal were married at St. Mary's. We older children were baptized there. We had most of our Catechism classes there. John Cardinal was treasurer of St. Mary's for as long as I could remember. My mother and other ladies I remember as a child, did scrubbing and housecleaning at St. Mary's in the Spring. When Grandpa Eli died, Grandma Jenny



Cardinal rode to church with us every Sunday. Our grandparents, the Eli Cardinals, and our parents, the John Cardinals, were very proud of that church. We, the Cardinal offspring, have fond memories of that little church. There were four generations of Cardinals that attended Mass there. The first three generations were more permanent members, until some married and left the community later. St. Mary's is truly worthy of being recognized for the years of service and comfort it gave its members.

**from Shirley (Gaudette) Jones:** I attended Catechism classes at St. Mary's when my family (the Roy Gaudettes) lived at Joel (about eight miles from the church) and also I remember my Grandpa Gaudette who was very elderly (in his 70s) would always serve Mass at St. Mary's when there was no one else there to do it.

**from Barbara (Mrs. LeRoy) Gaudette:** I never attended any services at St. Mary's as we always went to St. Ann's in Turtle Lake which is where I was married in 1946. I do recall accompanying my husband, LeRoy Gaudette, to the cemetery a day or so before each Memorial Day where he would place flowers on his father's (Roy) grave and spend a few moments in prayer.

**from Ethel and Tillis Belisle:** We moved to Range in the fall of 1940 and attended Mass at St. Mary's until 1943. We moved away and then in 1945 moved back to Range. We again attended Mass every other Sunday with our family until it closed. (Tellis was Arthur Belisle's son and had been in the congregation at the Georgetown Catholic Church.)

**from Ione (LaMere-Leisz) Kantke:** I believe both my grandparents, Philip and Sara (Morreault) LeMere and Fred and Roseanne (Carpentier) Pearson were married at St. Mary's. They all came from Quebec, Canada. My parents, Napoleon and Marion (Pierson) LaMere were married at St. Mary's on August 20, 1912. Also, my wedding was at St. Mary's on December 26th, 1931, to Michael Leisz. The last one married at St. Mary's were Lorraine and Irene LaMere on November 2, 1939. There used to be a schoolhouse across the road from St. Mary's (south side) where Roseanne Carpentier taught school. I also made my first communion in 1922 and was confirmed in 1926 at St. Mary's.

**from Victor Gallant:** Why, Yes, I remember St. Mary's church in Apple River. My

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Mother was raised in this church. My Grandparents, the Paul Turner's, and my parents, Joe and Liz Gallant, went there. I was baptized and took my first communion there. We lived eight miles away and traveled by horse and buggy, and yes, cutter too. I loved horses, the racing kind. I had a palomino and could he ever go. On September 26th I'll be 94 years old.

**from Lawrence Landry:** I was baptized and took my first communion at St. Mary's. We walked to church most of the time. We lived 3/4 of a mile south of St. Mary's. Mass was held here the second Sunday each month. I helped put up wood for the stove and later the furnace. They were long sticks, too. I also helped dig the basement by hand and shovel, to make a room for the furnace. I remember Joe Durand and Johnny Cardinal collecting money.

**from Alvina (Lauritsen) Bonsness:** I attended burial rites at St. Mary's cemetery for Mrs. Joe (Agnes) Landry. Here I met Marie Belisle (Victor's daughter). She was a grade school friend of mine at Blake school. Mrs. Landry was her aunt and our friend.

### **Do not forget to listen to BONJOUR MINNESOTA**

This fine program airs every Wednesday from 8:30 - 9:30 p.m. on "Fresh Air Radio", KFAI-FM, Minneapolis at 90.3 FM or 106.7 FM

Bonjour Minnesota is a bilingual program (French-English)

Francophone events occurring in the Twin Cities are announced every session around 9:00 PM.

Your Host is Georgette Pfannkuch, with co-host Caryl Minnetti.

The program expresses the culture from France and francophone countries through music, songs and interviews. Georgette possesses an enormous and diverse collection with music dating from 1905 (with Polin) to the present. Requests from listeners are honored by calling the studio during air-time (341-0980)





# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

## NEWS FROM LA SOCIÉTÉ C-F

Ralph Germain will be featured speaker at our next regular meeting on Monday, August 7, 7:30 at St. Louis Catholic Church, St. Paul. He will talk about the French Canadian presence in this area, as well as about his own family.

The annual potluck picnic of LaSociete will be at Spooner Park in Little Canada beginning at noon on Sunday, July 16. Spooner Park is just to the northeast of the intersection of I-35E and Little Canada Road. Look for the signs. See you there.

JOIN US with the LA SOCIÉTÉ FLOAT in the Wednesday eve, July 26 Rice Street Parade (St. Paul) and the Sunday afternoon August 13 Little Canada Days Parade. Call Rene Juaire (739-3491) for information on where to gather these days. Wear your costume!!!

At the annual LSCF Board election on June 5, the following persons were elected to the Board: Louis Ritchot, Ralph Germain, John England, George LaBrosse and John Edel. All were elected for two year terms except Edel. He was elected for one year to complete the unexpired term of Treffe Daniels. The terms of Board members Leo Gouette and LeRoy DuBois will not expire until June of next year.

Also on June 5 the newly constituted Board

### READING CHEZ NOUS AND NOT A MEMBER OF LA SOCIÉTÉ C-F?

You are certainly invited to join us. Annual dues are as follows: Family \$15 (Senior \$10); Single \$10 (Senior \$8). Mail dues to John England, 2002 Palace Ave, St. Paul MN 55105. Make check payable to "LSCF"

chose the following listed Board members to serve as LSCF officers for 1995-96:

President - Louis Ritchot

Vice-President - Ralph Germain

Treasurer - John England

Secretary - LeRoy DuBois

A special and sincere MERCI

BEAUCOUP to LEO GOUETTE to recognize his several years of dedicated service as President of LaSociete. Our best wishes to the new officers.

## GENEALOGISTS TAKE NOTE:

In our mail, recently, came a wonderful new book, *French-Canadian Genealogical Research*, by John P. DuLong, PhD, published by Lisi Press, Box 1063, Palm Harbor, FL 34682-1063. We sent it to distinguished genealogist Jean-Marc Charron, Deux Montagnes, PQ, for his review/comment. He says "This little book is a gem. The "hanging hole" in the upper left hand corner gave me a first hint of its uniqueness. And it should hang handy so that the young ones will first be attracted to the many illustrations by Normand Massicotte (the first one on page 11). He, more than any other artists, has given us a believable glimpse of our cherished past. I remember well gazing at his works illustrating a folklore song book, when I was very young at home. From the illustrations it is only a small step to the concise and complete guide to the various "nothing to it" steps involved in French-Canadian genealogical research. In a few minutes, any descendants of a French-Canadian family can be led down the passionate path of getting to know new-found "ancetres", or more details about known ones, and this in a way more intimate than can be found anywhere in the world.



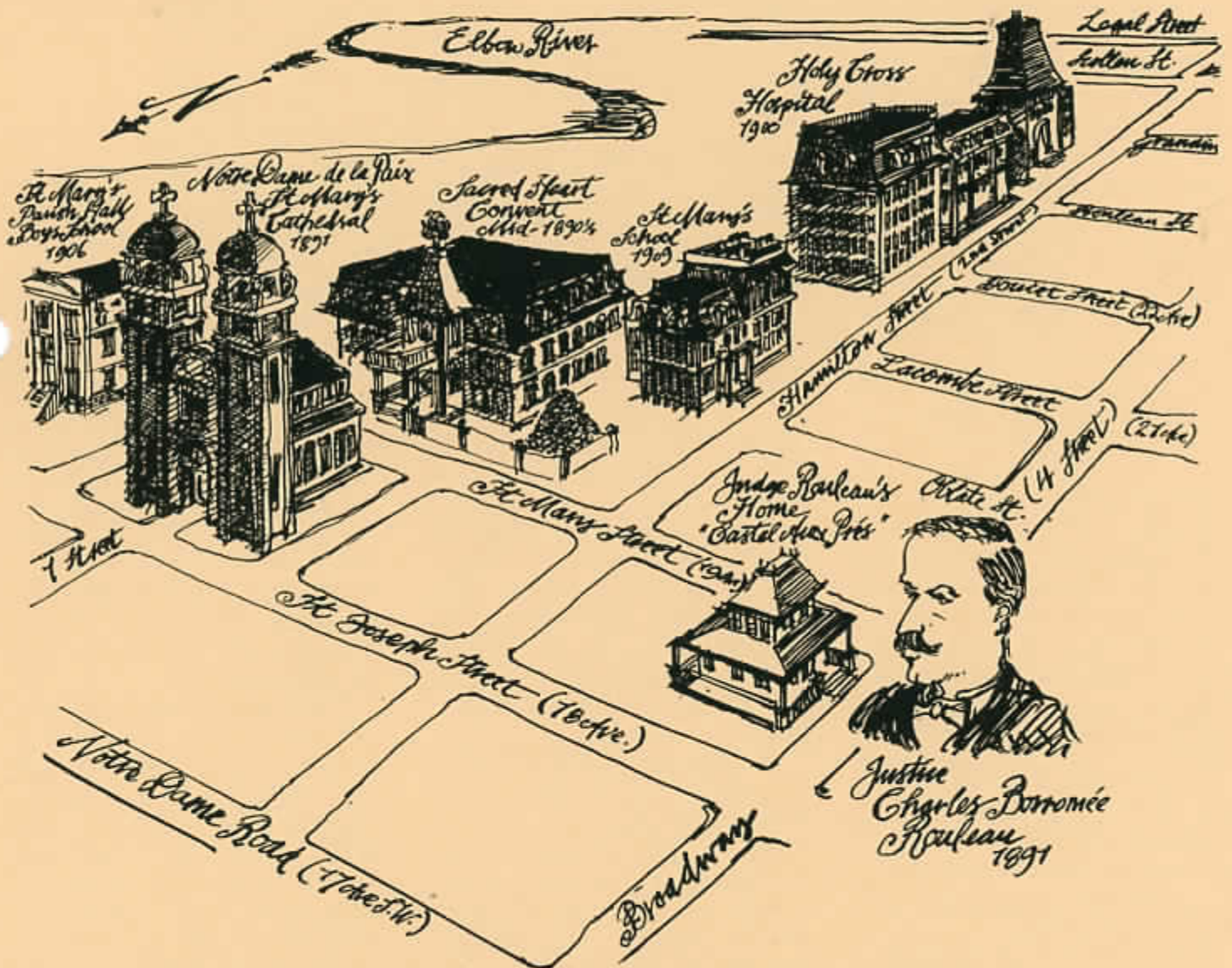


# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Septembre-Octobre, 1995 VOL. 17 NO. 2

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard



Rouleauville, which flourished in the late 1800s, was home to 500 of Calgary's original French families, led by Justice Charles Rouleau.

(MICHAEL McPARLANK)

Rouleauville, Alberta. See article on pages 2 and 3. From the Quebec edition of the Toronto Globe and Mail, July 28, 1995. Thanks to Kathy Garvey.



# Why Calgary is a French settlement

**ROULEAUVILLE, ALTA.** / *Albertans who voice strong views about francophone culture should watch what they say: Quebeckers colonized the Calgary area and French speakers helped shape the city's growth.*



Notre Dame de la Paix, in the distance, was the church of Calgary's francophones. (Glenbow Archives)

BY LAURA FENNIK  
AND PATRICK RENGGER  
Special to The Globe and Mail  
Calgary

**T**HE official start of work on a park in downtown Calgary may not seem an especially momentous occasion, but Rouleauville Square is something special: It is designed to commemorate the city's French heritage.

Calgary has a French heritage?

In the minds of most Canadians, this is the home of the Stampede, the Flames and the oil patch. When they think of its past, they think of cowboys, Indians and Mounties.

Few realize that southern Alberta was settled by people from Quebec in the 1860s. Even fewer realize that the Americans were responsible, at least indirectly, for the initial French presence,

which eventually blossomed into a community known as Rouleauville.

Today's Calgary is hardly a francophone hotbed, but French culture played a formative role in the city's development. In fact, before the turn of the century, it wasn't at all clear that Alberta would become anglophone.

The first Europeans to reach the region, said Estelle Danse-reau, a third-generation Franco-Albertan who teaches at the University of Calgary, were French and Scottish trappers and fur traders, who arrived through the late 18th and early 19th centuries. "It was they who originally opened up the North-west," she said, "and began such communities as St. Albert, Morinville and Peace River."

**T**O the south, where the beaver gave way to the buffalo, the story was a little different, writes historian Hugh Dempsey in his book *Calgary: Spirit of the West*. The arrival of the French was prompted by some unruly Americans:

"Contrary to what most people think, the North-West Mounted Police were not the first white people to settle at what is now Calgary. First, there were the American whisky traders and then the missionaries." The Americans were drawn into the jurisdictional vacuum created by the transfer of the vast Hudson's Bay Company land holdings to the new Dominion of Canada. The absence of law enforcement produced the brief era of



the whisky trader — a breed dealing in what Mr. Dempsey describes as "death and havoc" from outposts with such apt names as Whoop-up, Stand Off and Slide Out.

This version of the U.S. Wild West prompted the formation of the Mounties in 1873, but the foot soldiers of God were the first to tackle the problem. According to early records, the bottle caused so much disruption among the native population that Crowfoot, chief of the Blackfoot, sought the help of the Catholic Church. He asked Bishop Vital Grandin in Edmonton, writes N. R. Anderson in his book *Oblate Fathers in Calgary*, that "the good fathers be sent to speak right things to his Indians."

Thus, a party led by Father Constantine Scollen arrived at the confluence of the Bow and Elbow Rivers in 1875. Father Scollen was Irish, but his order was French — it had been invited to Canada to spread the gospel in 1841, and did so throughout the West. With the help of Father Joseph Doucet and Alexis Cardinal, their Métis guide, Father Scollen pitched a tent and established the mission of Notre Dame de la Paix.

Later in the year, however, a young Mountie named Cecil Denny arrived with an advance party to pick a site for Fort Calgary and begin enforcing Canadian law.

The military presence assured the mission's safety, but as Father Doucet noted in his diary, it was also a source of temptation. "Our Métis [who had arrived to trade goods and help build the fort] are more interested in the dances and festivities of the troopers and the Americans than in coming to Mass."

So in the fall it was decided

to move the mission farther from the fort. Two moves later, it landed in its final location: the place where Calgary's St. Mary's Cathedral now stands.

Real growth in Calgary began with the coming of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1883. While the CPR surveyors laid out the city's characteristic grid, the location of the train station began to draw settlement to the west — away from the fort and toward St. Mary's.

A year earlier, the extraordinary Father Albert Lacombe had taken charge of the parish. An Oblate from Montreal who had served in the West since 1852, he was well known both for the respect he accorded native people and his desire to see the region developed carefully.

The increasing encroachment of settlers prompted Father Lacombe to acquire two quarter-sections of land around the mission — bounded by what are now 2nd and 4th Streets and 7th and 34th Avenues SW. His immediate goal was to create a buffer zone, but he also saw the land as the home of a full-scale French community. Before long, the site began to attract francophones, both the *cheminots* who'd come West to work on the railway and immigrants who left Quebec, said Prof. Dansereau, because there was no land left.

"It was impossible for anyone but the eldest sons to inherit, and so they came West and took a homestead. At first, the Church encouraged this, sending *prêtres-colonisateurs* to parishes in Quebec to convince whole families to move West."

As a result, there was a thriving community of 500 French-speaking families next door to Calgary by the late 1880s. Prominent members of this society were the brothers

Rouleau — Charles, a respected judge who arrived in 1886, and Édouard, a surgeon attached to the Mounties who followed a year later.

JUDGE Rouleau's considerable influence enabled him to champion the causes of Catholic education and French-language rights. Calgary's separate-school system is his lasting legacy, but his efforts on behalf of his language were not so successful. Just as the influx of anglophones was accelerating, the flow from Quebec had begun to wane. Alarmed at the shrinkage in their own congregations, the eastern bishops had begun to discourage migration.

"They also realized," says Prof. Dansereau, "that with the increase in East European and British settlement in the West, the population was going to be English-speaking."

Still, the western francophones persisted in trying to maintain their culture, and in 1899 attempted "to achieve official recognition for their community" by incorporating it as the Village of Rouleauville.

Their efforts were in vain. A mere eight years later, Rouleauville was absorbed by the City of Calgary and renamed the Mission district.

The district's religious heritage was kept, but the connection with the Rouleaus was severed and the aspirations of Father Lacombe cut short. By the time he died in 1916, the linguistic tide had turned for good.

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Laura Fenniak and Patrick Rengger are freelance writers in Calgary.



## NOUVELLS DU PAYS D'EN HAUT

Tidings from the northwest country. This begins a series of articles dealing with topics related to French Canadian heritage.

Since these writings are meant to cover topics concerned with French-Canadian heritage, I feel a good place to start with is common ground. What could be more common than the voyageur? To start with, the word "voyageur" is French for traveler. But for our use we need to get more specific. So we turn to Grace Lee Nute and she states "a voyageur is a French-Canadian canoemen. (Nute:1955:3). By further study we learn that he was generally short, average height, 5'6", very strong in the arms and chest but he narrows from the waist down. The voyageur was brightly dressed in his best clothes at rendezvous and when visiting home, very courteous especially when a young lady was present, and he lived for the moment. Most voyageurs could not read or write and they spoke French. For the most part they were born in hamlets off the St. Lawrence river around the areas of Quebec and Montreal. The voyageurs primary task was the transportation of goods and furs from one point to another. This included working up to 16 hours a day and portaging at least two 90 pound pieces (packs) on their backs. A portage was necessary when there was no navigable body of water.

The term "voyageur" first appears in the French period in the early 1700s, and it continued through the British period. The number of voyageurs increased in the British period. There are differences in opinions when voyageur times ended. Some would state that 1821 was the end, when the Northwest Company and Hudson Bay Company merged, and Montreal was no longer the center of the fur trade. (Eccles 1983:190). Others would state that 1850 was the end when the American Fur Company failed (Nute 1955:204). So ends our brief look at the term voyageur. I do hope that it will be useful as we continue to look at and understand our heritage.

Your humble servant,

John Paul (John Edel)

History/Heritage Committee

References/Suggested Readings

Eccles, W.J., 1983, The Canadian Frontier 1534-1760. Revised Edition, Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press.

Lavender, David, 1977, Winner Take all A History of the Trans-Canada Canoe Trail. Moscow ID, University of Idaho Press.

Nute, Grace Lee, 1955, The Voyageur, reprint edition, St. Paul, Minnesota Historical Society.

**Wish to be a member of LaSociete and receive Chez Nous six times per year? Write John England at 2002 Palace, St. Paul MN 55105. Depending on age, dues range from \$8 to \$15.**

## FRENCH-CANADIAN FOOD AT PRAIRIE DU CHIEN

from a publication obtained at Villa Louis Prairie du Chien WI and reprinted in the history of St. Mary's, Range WI

The French-Canadians who first settled at Prairie du Chien were men connected with the fur trade. Many were the canoemen who paddled the trade goods and pelts to their destinations. The yearly trips made from Montreal to Mackinaw to Prairie du Chien, then back again, were long and laborious. The engagees required huge amounts of nutritious foods to maintain their strength. Not only did the food have to be nutritious, it had to be some thing that did not spoil on the journey. Even after the men retired from the fur trade to farming or became small traders within a village, these hearty foods remained part of their diet. Their children and grandchildren prepared the same food, refining and adapting the engagees meal with produce they raised. A continuity was maintained that is evident today in dishes prepared by descendants of those first French-Canadians.

Through the writings of the English-speaking men who entered the fur trade as clerks or bourgeois, one learns of the dishes that were the basis of the French-Canadians' diet.

Thomas Anderson, on a trip to Prairie du Chien in 1800, found "The men's practice in the culinary art was simple but good." One dish was prepared every day on the trip from Montreal to Prairie du Chien and each night the same ritual was performed. A kettle "was hung over the fire, nearly full of water, then nine quarts of peas - one quart per man, the daily allowance - were put in; and when they were well bursted, two or three pounds of pork,



cut into strips, for seasoning, were added, and all allowed to boil and simmer until daybreak, when

**YESTERDAY is KNOWN  
TOMORROW is a MYSTERY  
TODAY is a GIFT**

**That's why it is called a PRESENT.**

MERCI to JOHN COTE, Brooklyn Ct

the cook added four biscuits, broken up, to the mess, and invited all to breakfast. The swelling of the peas and biscuit had now filled the kettle to the brim, so thick that a stick would stand upright in it."

Once at Prairie du Chien, the men could obtain corn, maple sugar, and a variety of game and waterfowl from the Indians. This would be enjoyed until the return trip to Montreal. Then the men's meals returned to a filling sameness consisting of hulled corn and tallow. The corn had been boiled in lye to remove the husk, then it was washed and dried. Each day a man ate one quart of corn boiled with two ounces of tallow. According to Anderson, "though their work was severe, they fattened like pigs."

When James Lockwood came to Prairie du Chien in 1816 he found many former engagees settled, raising their families and farming. They still prepared their pea or corn soup, but had added to the meals other foods which they grew. All raised small grains, and every two or three farmers united and had a flouring mill. This flour they traded for goods or exchanged with the Indians for venison, ducks or geese. Lockwood said the flour they ground was coarse and sweet and made good bread. The flour was also used to make galettes, which to voyageurs were a luxury. While the men settled all problems over a glass of wine, the women and children drank a great deal of tea.

Through the years the pork, peas, corn, and bread have remained a part of French-Canadian meals. A hearty pea soup flavored with salt pork or ham is still prepared. The lard biscuits have been replaced by flat dumplings, cooked in a meat broth. As soon as the voyageurs settled into farming, they began to raise pigs.. Easy to raise, pork was used to make boulettes and tourtiere.

Today these dishes are made in home in Prairie du Chien. Each family has its own special way of preparing the food, for which there is no written recipe. Experience and many years of preparation are the guides.

## THE CARIGNAN REGIMENT

by Mary Monty Manchester in  
Lifelines, Spring, 1993

This regiment was raised in 1644 by Thomas Francois de Savoie, Prince of Carignan. It consisted of ten companies of 100 men each. They were all said to be men of exceptional physique and boldness of spirit. They were a picked lot. They marched under the flag of Savoie when the regiment was offered to the French King - really the Queen Regent and Cardinal Richelieu.

This was at the time civil wars known as the Fronde were dividing France. The Carignan Regiment was important to the Cardinal. The Regiment marched under Turenne to Etampes and took part in fighting there, they then fought in the suburb of St. Antoine where it is said to have covered itself in glory. It created for itself a legend of invincibility. To belong to the outfit was deemed an honor.

After the Thirty Years War, the Savoie family could not afford to support the Regiment, and so gave it to Louis XIV. Savoie always took a proprietary interest in it, even after the regiment returned from Canada to France.

In 1657, the regiment was combined with one organized by a soldier of fortune, named Balthazar, who had joined the French army from Transylvania. The Carignan remained under the command of their own officers, but the regiment became known as the Carignan-Balthazar.

Following the Turkish campaign the troops were back in France and Louis decided to send the outfit, splendidly trained and a financial drain if allowed to rust in garrison, to Canada under Henri de Chapela, Sieur de Salieres. Veterans were given the opportunity of dropping out or re-enlisting under the Salieres command. Salieres had been first captain under Balthazar, he was now made a colonel. The name of the regiment changed to honor him.

Most of the soldiers remained in service, the ten companies were up to full strength when they were sent to Canada.

For further reading on the regiment and its exploits see Thomas J. Costains, The White and the Gold, a history of Canada.





# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

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Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

## WE BID A FOND ADIEU....

With August came the announcement of the passing of four loyal supporters of the French-Canadian tradition.

Lorraine DeMillo, Hibbing, wrote August 2 to apprise me of two deaths in Hibbing. **Jerry Ciochetto** and **Sadie Gallagher**. **Jerry**, an Italian through and through, was the spouse of Pat, a proud Quebecer. He passed on in January, 1995. The Hibbing chapter had many gettogethers at the Ciochetto's home at Side Lake, north of Chisholm. He and Pat were always gracious hosts. A party at their home was always enjoyable.

**Sadie Gallagher** went to her final reward on July 27. She was 95. Sadie was a proud French-Canadian. She was born in 1900 in Hibbing. Her father had worked on the Panama Canal. Sadie was always young in attitude and outlook. She was an active volunteer and did her part always to keep visible the French-Canadian tradition of the north country. In her younger days, she and her husband ran a restaurant in Hibbing. It is said she baked great pies. Among her survivors is Lois Genise, who with Sadie has been part of LaSociete in Hibbing for the past ten years.

The August 21 Minneapolis Star-Tribune devoted a full third of a page to obituaries for two wonderful members of LaSociete C-F:

**Will Cheeney**, 88, of North Branch, was a true humanitarian...and character! He died August 18. The headline in the paper credited him with raising "\$70,000 skiing to end hunger." He took up skiing late in life, and rather than just skiing, he used his hobby to raise money for those less fortunate. To many members of the Twin Cities chapter, he will always be remembered as the "honey man" - often bringing home-grown honey to the meetings. Cheeney was born in Hartford, CT, went to school in Quebec City, and farmed in North Dakota for many years, prior to moving to North Branch in 1948. LSCF members Ralph Germain and Leroy Dubois sang a French-Canadian song at his funeral. I am sure that Will was smiling....

**Sister Mary Henry Nachtsheim**, 79, passed away on August 17 in St. Paul. Mary Henry was not a Frenchman by nationality, but she was extremely interested in things French and French-Canadian. For a number of years she was very active in LSCF, serving on the Board and attending activities. She was a quiet yet very pleasant person. She was a native of St. Paul, and earned her Master's and Doctor's degrees at Laval Universite, Quebec City. She taught French at the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul for 52 years. She often took student groups to France.

To each of our friends who paddled their last canoe into the great beyond, we say "adieu" and "bon voyage". Heaven is pleased to welcome them!

Dick Bernard

### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**Monday, October 2, 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Catholic Church, downtown St. Paul. Regular monthly meeting of La Societe. Program to be announced. (La Societe's regular meetings are always on the first Monday of the month. The next meeting is November 6. Participate.)**

**Tuesday, October 17, 8:00 p.m. at Dakota Bar and Grill, St. Paul. Jean-Claude Meurisse, French Vocalist/Pianist performs an evening of musical entertainment. This fine program is organized by the Alliance Francaise and supported in part by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs. You need reservations. Call Alliance Francaise at 644-5769.**

**October 16 is deadline for next issue of Chez Nous. Send contributions of articles, photos, etc., to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301 Apple Valley MN 55124. Merci**

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