



chez nous

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La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Saint Catherine's Wood: Reflections On An Autumn Scene

We looked in wonder from southwestern slopes,
facing the wind, facing the guardian wood
where every shade and shape of leaf was moved
to catch our ears with murmurs, hold our gaze
with bronze, gold, crimson, russet leaves
the windswept boughs let fall
within our old and ravaged,
dear and criss-crossed wood. But then -
it's true -

Progress brings need to dig and dump and plough
now here, now there - where ecosystems grew
fresh revelations of the Love we knew:
the bottle gentians, lupine, ferns and moss,
the owl and thrush, the moth and butterfly -
a myriad of those shy and gentle lives that must
thrive upon trust - all there on common ground
like you and me. Their lives a providence
of earth and sky and love and mystery.

Some trees are bent with burdens not their own.
Some stand tall and open as a prayer
that hasn't yet received its sure response. Their
dignity, their strength will come to life
through temporal loss. Their life's austerity in ways
like Monks whose spirits thrive through Lenten days.

What if today from every compass point
the Angels of the Earth called out, 'Do not impair
the sole protection of the ozone layer. Do not unsheathe
the sun's life-fostering rays; do not pollute
the vital air you breathe; your temporal light
that gives you such delight. Love meant all these to be,
with sheltering trees, the mainstays of your life.'

What if an Angel called to all of us in time
a louder, more peremptory 'Wait! O, do not harm
the land, the sea, the trees! And then revealed
that God, our Love, will now make all things new:
our ravaged planet and polluted air, our ruined
ecosystems' ecospheres. The stones
that tell our old earth's history, the song-birds' bones.
All that we mourn for in our Guardian Wood.

All of creation that He looked upon
and found so good.

With Grateful Thanksgiving
to the poet
Sr. Ellen Murphy CSJ
College of St. Catherine, St. Paul MN
Revised October, 1994

(Sr. Ellen grew up in Bachelor's Grove ND
and her mother, Helen Normand, grew up in
Oakwood, ND.)

FRENCH CANADA

EDITORS NOTE: The below article is reprinted from the periodical "The Nation", August 13 and 20, 1868. Special thanks to LaSociete member Treffle Daniels, who discovered this work several months ago while doing other research at the University of Minnesota.

These articles, written 127 years ago by an unknown writer who seems to have come from New York City to visit Lower Canada (Quebec), seem particularly pertinent given the recent election in La Belle Province of Quebec.

In 1868, it had been barely 100 years since the decisive battle between the French and British on the Plains of Abraham left Quebec a part of the British Empire. The United States had not yet had its Centennial, but was already exerting great influence on our neighbor to the north.

Each reader will doubtless make his or her own inferences from the authors words. We would invite your commentary on the writers opinion, and his vision, as it applied to the October 30, 1995, election in Quebec. Send your comments to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. And enjoy the opinion!

I.

The first question which presents itself to an observer on entering Canada is, Why do the Canadians look so fat and chubby compared to Americans? The climate differs but slightly, if at all, from that of Maine or Vermont, and the diet and mode of life, certainly of the town population, are essentially similar. Both people eat about the same quantities of meats and of farinaceous food, and take about the same amount of exercise. The American is certainly more harassed by politics, and is more seriously occupied with the consideration of man's origins and destiny, than the Canadian is, but that any considerable number of persons in any country can ever be so troubled by either of these things as to grow lean over them remains to be proved. It is true, the Canadians drink beer in much larger quantities than Americans. Two rows of bottles of pale ale, or even porter, are an ordinary phenomenon of a Canadian *table d'hote*; but to say that ale and porter make Canadians fat only removes the difficulty one degree further back.. Why do they drink ale and porter in their climate? Why does it not make them bilious and give them a headache? Why don't they take to whiskey and champagne, or confine themselves to coffee and ice



water? are questions which still remain to be answered.

If it were possible for men to grow fat and rosy in imitation of other people, we should say the Canadians were fat and rosy because the English were, so many other peculiarities in their life and manners are to be accounted for in this way. One has hardly set foot in the country when one is struck by the well-known colonial tendency to out-Herod Herod. They are considerably more English, in all things in which resemblance to the English is possible, than the English themselves. The old Tory of the year 1816 is now no longer found in the fauna of the United Kingdom. His habitat is in the colonies, and especially in Canada, though some stray individuals are to be found in Philadelphia and Baltimore. The animal has a very odd look on the banks of the St. Lawrence; but he thrives, and seems to be thoroughly acclimated, and is a very jolly, very hospitable, but somewhat illogical person, and, though sadly deficient in what the French call *lumieres*, is reasonably good company. The English influence on Canadian externals - perhaps it would be correct to say the influence of the British garrisons - is curiously shown in the great care with which the men of the towns, young and old, dress, and the rigidity with which they preserve the English type of appearance. The shopmen even are fair copies of the military officers in all but a fanatical attachment to canvas shoes in hot weather - a device to which the military men do not seem as yet to have lent themselves, and the value of which, we confess, seemed to us doubtful.

Our observations on Canadian manners being made during a very short visit, we offer them,



of course, with proper diffidence, and should not be at all surprised to hear that we had not penetrated the secret of Canadian society, but we came to the conclusion, among others, that in the well-to-do classes in Canada the English custom of later marriages has spread among the men. Anybody fresh from the United States is struck by the age of the Canadian beaux, as seen at watering-places and other places where what Beau Brummel called "well-dressed young people" congregate. The spectacle of men from thirty to forty dancing attendance on girls, flirting with them, ogling them, discussing them, and making the study of them one of the serious duties of life, is one with which we are familiar enough in England and France. In a new country like Canada it looks odd, particularly as, on this side of the border, men of that time of life have usually abandoned all care of their neckcloths and boots, are apt to have an interesting family of their own, to spend a portion of their nights in contention with babies, and to regard unmarried women in the light simply of actual or possible friends of their wives. Seeing an elderly Canadian gentleman too, of about fifty-five, and tolerably corpulent, dressed, as to his legs, in "knickerbockers," and parading the pier of a watering-place with great satisfaction, we could not help figuring to ourselves with some amusement the effect of the appearance of Moses Taylor or George Law or A.A. Low at a "summer resort" in the United States in a similar costume.

The English respect for aristocracy, and English belief in it, not as the result of convention but as a natural product of human society, not only flourishes in Canada, but is shown in ways singularly English. One of the reasons which was offered us for staying at a hotel - a very good one on the whole, let us add - was that the Prince of Wales had lodged there and that the Governor-General and his suite were in the habit of doing the same thing.

Now, we would willingly have exchanged our knowledge of this circumstance for a slop-tub in the bed-room - an article in which we found all the hotels we visited deficient, and the want of which occasioned us considerable embarrassment, whereas the selection of another house by the Prince of Wales and the Governor-General would at most have only caused us a momentary pang. So also, asking a young swell, one day whose acquaintance we made on board a boat, what kind of hotel there was in a certain village, he said a relative of his had stayed there and liked it, and mentioned parenthetically that the relative in question was - to be discreet, we only say, occupied a high military position. The tone in which the information was given, and its perfect gratuitousness, for a moment called up a vision of Pall Mall.

Another illustration of the same thing, and we confess it seemed to us a sad one, is offered by the monument to Wolfe and Montcalm, at Quebec. The structure is, in the first place, inexpressibly shabby, though it stands on one of the noblest sites for such a purpose in the world, and is intended to commemorate one of the most moving episodes in the history of war. An obelisk which not only is not a monolith, but is built of rather small stones, is something which gods and men abhor, or ought to abhor, and this one is rendered doubly odious by the fact that the frosts of forty Canadian winters have made away with the mortar, and the pile looks as if it would tumble down the first windy night. One might overlook these things, however, if the inscriptions breathed real taste and sentiment, but they do not. The first one is fine, and touching for its simplicity:

MORTEM VIRTUS COMMUNEM,
FAMAM HISTORIA,
MONUMENTUM POSTERITAS
DEDIT¹

A word more than this anywhere, except the names of the two heroes, spoils all. Not only is there a word more, however, but a long inscription covering the whole of one face of the monument, and throwing the tribute to Wolfe and Montcalm

¹ - The inscription reads "Virtue gave them a common death; history gave them fame; posterity gave them this monument." As to the comments in the following paragraph, the remaining Latin portion says "George, Count of Dalhousie, administrator of the highest things during the reign of George IV King of the British Isles."

covering the whole of one face of the monument, and throwing the tribute to Wolfe and Montcalm completely into the shade, telling us how the poor piece of dilapidated masonry was the work of "Georgius Comes de Dalhousie, summarum rerum administrans," undertaken after it had been for many years neglected, and finished during the reign of "Georgius Quartus Britanniarum Rex." The impression left on the mind of the spectator by the monument is, in fact, that it was a far finer thing to build it than to die sword in hand on the Plains of Abraham, and that the "Comes de Dalhousie" had, on the whole, the advantage of Wolfe and Montcalm.

One cannot remain very long in Canada without having the idea very strongly presented to one that even a slight political connection between a colony and "the mother country" is a curse to the colony. As long as they are bound together, even by the light silken tie of allegiance, really healthy political and social life seems to be impossible for the latter. A people whose manners are not the natural result of its own character and culture, but a laborious copy of those of another people, differently situated and in a different stage of development, of course suffers much both morally and mentally, no matter what amount of political freedom it may enjoy. The loyalty of colonies seems almost always to have something morbid about it, as was well illustrated in the recent outburst of folly in Australia touching the attempt to assassinate the Duke of Edinburgh. It does not consist, as it does in England, of devotion to the country through the monarch. In most of the colonies there is in it a strong infusion of disgust with the colony, and eagerness to leave it and get back to the "old country," and this feeling is probably strongest in the most able and energetic of the inhabitants. A more unhappy state of things, as regards sound and healthy progress, can hardly be imagined. To have expatriation constantly present to the flower of the population as the final reward of success in life must, of course, partially paralyze any state. We saw in Canada, in the course of a single week, four reports in the newspapers of the lower Province of dinners given to successful traders on the occasion of their retirement from business and going to England to live. We were told, on enquiry, that it was now very general for men who had made fortunes in Canada to go to

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England to spend them. There are probably very few who are not haunted, as they find their means increasing, with dreams of a landed estate, a seat in Parliament, and a fair run for wife and daughters during the London season. We were a good deal entertained, too, by observing that at two of the dinners to which we have referred a display of prudent regard for the success of the business he had built up was made by the guest of the evening, in a strong compliment to the extraordinary business ability of the remaining members of the firm.

Lower Canada is not thriving. We suspect the same thing may be said of Upper Canada, but, perhaps, with less certainty. New countries do not thrive much without a steady and rapid increase in their supply of labor, and consequently a steady and rapid addition to the area of their cultivated soil. But Canada now receives no additions to her supply of labor. Immigration there is none and such immigrants as are cheated into shipping for Quebec, go straight through to the United States, unmindful of the advantages of the British Constitution and of the awful future which awaits democracy. Not only this, but a stream of native Canadians begins to flow over the border. The movement has even reached the French, to whom the United States has been hitherto a land as far off as when the Indians came down from the St. Lawrence to harry the New England heretics. We were assured everywhere that there was a pretty general outward drift of young men from the villages of the lower St. Lawrence. When at Saguenay we heard that the fame of the prairies had reached the north bank too, and the day of our arrival two families had started from that remote and isolated community weary of a long struggle with the Canadian winter, and anxious for a better chance for their children than the parents had had. Facts of this sort suggest strongly the enquiry what the effect of increasing facility of locomotion and increased diffusion of information is likely to be on all inhabited northern regions? How long will habit and local attachment resist the influence of stories of bright skies, short winters, and teeming soil elsewhere? What, in other words, will be the condition of Canada, Norway, and northern New England one hundred years hence?

But Lower Canada has for the tourist from the United States what is of far more importance to him, *qua* tourist, than progress or prosperity - the

charm of complete difference of life, manners, ideas, history, and traditions, and of complete indifference to the subjects which most occupy and perplex him at home. The tumult of the campaign not only does not pass the "Province line," but all its sounds die out almost as soon as you have crossed over. A French Canadian watches the whole process of a Presidential election as one watches the movements of cawing crows on a warm summer day, and understands it just as little, and is as little troubled about stocks, bonds, railroads, mines and the other "big things" of American progress as if he lived in Paraguay, instead of within a few hours of Maine and Vermont. You have, in fact, hardly reached Montreal when Grant's cotton thefts, Seymour's insanity, Blair's bar bills, Colfax's brutal treatment of the one-armed soldier, and "H.G.'s" negotiations with the Niagara Falls rebels fade into remoteness and insignificance. Consequently, an American who is tired out, as Americans are apt to be in summer, and who wants real rest and real refreshment - change not simply of scene, for, in a country in which society is so homogeneous as in this, change of scene merely does little for jaded nerves, but change of people, of currents of thought, and of manners and of social problems - nay, even a clergyman with a sore throat, can hardly do better than spend a month or two on the lower St. Lawrence, provided always he is armed with a respectable knowledge of French. This is necessary to enable him to see more than the outside of things, and to save him from some foolish inferences. The want of it makes Thoreau's account of his Canadian trip as nearly worthless as anything emanating from so close an observer could well be. Going to Europe is, of course, better; but then a month of a short vacation has, in going to Europe, to be spent on the ocean in the company of mariners, and of members of the shoddy circles on their way to astonish the bloated aristocracy, and of dry-goods men going out to prepare for the fall trade - and this is not soothing. It must be remembered that Lower Canada contains the only relic of the state of society which prevailed in France before the Revolution, which in France has completely passed away, and left as few traces of itself as if it had perished five centuries ago, and puzzles the historian almost as much as the Gallo-Roman civilization - yet for a thousand years this *ancien regime* played the foremost part in moulding Europe into the shape in

which we see it. It made a vigorous effort in the seventeenth century to reproduce itself in the New World, and it in a measure succeeded. The Canadian colony came out fully organized. The cadets of good families selected the choice tenantry of the family estate, and brought them over with them, and planted them on an estate of their own in Canada, becoming their "seigneurs," reserving all the feudal rights of the landlord in the old country, endeavoring in company with the priest, to make society in the new France as exact a reproduction of society in the old France as the wilderness would permit. The success of the experiment, so far as it was an attempt to transplant and preserve a certain social type, was very great. It survived the conquest of the colony by England; the storm of the French Revolution did not reach it; and though seigneurial rights have disappeared very recently under the reformer's axe, and of the seigneur's former social and political influence there is consequently very little left, still society in French Canada even now rests largely on feudal ideas, and is held together by medieval laws. Hearing one day from a lawyer, himself a seigneur, and bearing a name that most Frenchmen would be proud to follow into a salon, that he practised under the "coutume de Paris," and used Pothier as a text-book, we told him he must excuse us if we looked at him well, for he was, for those who knew the *ancien regime* only through books, a real and very interesting curiosity, and would certainly "draw" in Paris, if put into the hands of an enterprising showman. Having never been in France, and evidently regarding French society with a slight touch of horror, he seemed scarcely aware of the depth of the changes which it had undergone. The impiety and immorality of the Revolution were what evidently most impressed him, one of the many evidences one meets with in Lower Canada of the large share the clergy have had in modelling the new society. This gentleman told us, with a slight glow of enthusiasm, that to this day he did not believe there was a single French family in the whole of the thickly settled parish in which he lived in which man or woman omitted to "faire ses Paques" every year, or to attend mass with tolerable regularity. He said he hardly ever met with a French peasant who had "lost the faith," unless he had been in the United States. Those who went there even for a short period, he said, came

back irreligious men; not Protestants, but indifferent.

II.

Although there has been until now no system of popular education amongst the French Canadians, and though the priests have done little or nothing to make up for the want of it, and although the feudal tenures and feudal organization of society may be said to have held their own down to 1837, colonial life, with its usual concomitants of good food, good clothing, security, and the absence of class feeling, and exemption in a great degree from the blighting influence of feudal traditions have raised the bulk of the people, both physically and morally, far above the peasantry of France. The French race in the New World certainly weighs more and stands higher in its stockings than the French race in the Old World, though of course the question might be raised whether this was not due rather to the fact that the original settlers were picked men than to the influence of the new soil and climate on their descendants, or whether Frenchmen, as has been often asserted, have not dwindled greatly in size under the influence of the wars of Louis XIV, and of the first Napoleon. The families of the earlier years of the eighteenth century, and the relegation, during the earlier years of this one, of the task of perpetuating the population to the halt, the lame, and the blind, owing to the insatiate demands of the army on the able-bodied, no doubt have done much to lower the French stature, and something, no doubt, also to mar the regularity of French features. At all events, their Canadian cousins are now vastly better looking men and women. One who is at all familiar with the appearance of the French peasantry at home, or even with the appearance of the French army, which contains the flower of the peasantry, cannot go very far along the lower St. Lawrence without asking himself whether the good sized people with the well-cut faces whom he meets are really Frenchmen and French women.

If what we were told be true, they are, however, not only bigger and handsomer than their cousins but better, more intelligent, and more moral. In spite of their piety, they do not keep up the supply of priests needed even for their own education - a circumstance for which one gentleman accounted to us by the startling assertion that celibacy was more repugnant to them than to

Frenchmen. Consequently, drafts have from time to time to be made on the French clergy, but the French priests are rarely put in charge of country parishes. They are kept for service in the larger towns, and in schools and colleges, nearly every case in which the experiment has been made of sending them out amongst the peasantry having proved a total failure. In the first place, their manners are found by the country folk intolerable. Priest-ridden and seigneur-ridden though he has been, the free air of the wilderness has given the Canadian a dignity and self-respect in which the French peasant, in spite of the Revolution, is still wanting. The former will not, in short, allow the priest to treat him as a clodhopper and ignoramus. Moreover, the preaching of the French priests has proved as offensive as their pastoral demeanor. In country parishes in France, they communicate moral instruction from the pulpit, and descend into the particulars of immorality with startling plainness and simplicity. In the few cases in which they have been permitted to try this style of instruction on the Canadians, it created such an uproar that they had to be recalled, and the country cures are now almost invariably natives. They are generally well-educated, and often polished men; they still levy tithes by law, the rights and privileges of the Catholic Church having been reserved by the treaty of cession; are consequently well paid, keep a good table, are well housed, and if they suffer from want of society, have *per contra*, the satisfaction which results from being the chief men of a comfortable and very religious community.

Some idea of the sums they extract from their flocks for religious purposes may be formed from the size and costliness of the churches, which are generally, judged by the American standard, amazingly out of proportion to the means and numbers of the worshippers. In New England, one rarely finds, out of the large towns, churches of half the size, or costing half as much, as one is almost sure to meet with in the smallest Canadian village. We found in perhaps the poorest parish in the province, which for eight months of the year has no means of communication with the civilized world without a four days' journey through the wilderness, a lofty stone church, 130 feet long by 75 broad, with a large vestry in the rear. The number of families which can reach it in winter, in fine weather, does not, we were assured, exceed 300. The only country

church in New England, in fact, which we have happened to see, which can compare in size, cost, and material to great numbers of country churches in Canada, is that at Greenwich, Connecticut.

One can, of course, readily give a dozen reasons why Americans and Englishmen continue to speak the same language in much the same way, though it is over two centuries since they separated. Their literary and religious and commercial intercourse would alone have prevented any very serious divergence from the common standard, even if the intellectual activity of the colonists and their attention to literature and oratory, at least in the Northern States, had not been as great as it has been. But the Canadians and Frenchmen should speak the same language in much the same way, after two centuries of separation, one can hardly help regarding with surprise, considering how small the amount of intercourse which was at any time carried on between them, how completely it has ceased since the fall of Quebec, and how small and how sluggish the educated class in Lower Canada has always been. And yet the Canadian peasantry - for peasantry they are - speak not only very good French; but they all speak the same French. The French priests, when they come out, are astonished to find that, wherever they go, they never come upon a trace of *patois*. The original settlers were mainly Normans and Bretons; but no trace of mixed origin is to be discovered in the language of their descendants. The accent of the country people is, of course, rude, and they use plenty of words unknown to Frenchmen, called into existence by the wants of colonial life; but there is probably no part of France in which a foreigner will find so little difficulty in understanding and in making himself understood by the farmers as in Canada. Of intonation it hardly becomes a foreigner to judge; but we received abundance of good testimony to the effect that though Canadian speaking was much more monotonous than that of Frenchmen, the cadences were the same in character though generally less marked. Some ways of using the voice with which one becomes very familiar in France, but which are impossible to describe on paper, produce a strange and almost startling effect when heard in a Canadian village or wood-path. We were told by a young man who had studied in Paris that he surprised and delighted some of the lovers of the older French poesy in that city by producing and

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singing as common village, with which he had been familiar from childhood, songs which for the last century have been only known in France to literary antiquaries.

Oaths are always a delicate subject, but that they are not an utterly despicable subject a social philosopher may readily satisfy himself. There are very few well-established oaths that do not tell something worth knowing of the people who use them. They may be divided into two great classes. Oaths belonging to the first connote a belief in a future state and in a system of rewards and punishments after death; oaths belonging to the second class connote looseness of manners and disbelief in female virtue. The oaths of nearly all northern nations are of the first class; the oaths of Oriental nations mostly belong to the second while, curiously enough, the great oath of the Hungarians, with which everybody who has heard much Magyar spoken is doubtless familiar, may be said to be a horrible mixture of both, the Hungarians being an Oriental race Christianized. The disguises in which old oaths are frequently found are often amongst the most curious of the many ways in which people show the effect of early religious training and of a social atmosphere strongly pervaded by religious feeling, or even of sensitiveness about the *convenances*. The most brutal and unblushing swearers in the world are the English and Americans. In many parts of the North, however, oaths are a good deal disguised, as in the former's "swan" and "swow," and "dun," and "gosh," and in Ireland some of the earlier English oaths, which have been long extinct in England, are preserved in such phrases as "blood an' 'ouns" or "blood an' oundhers." In France variety in oaths is almost gone, though in such phrases as "ventre-bleu" the remains of some primitive Norman swearing may be detected. But there is one French oath in disguise which everybody who has passed a night in a French camp will remember as almost invariably the first sound which fell on his waking ear, coming through the canvas from the lusty throats of grooms and cooks, "Sacre nom d'un chien." We have always supposed it to be a device of comparatively recent origin, dating probably from the First Empire or at all events from the latter days of the Revolution. There is nothing of the grace or wit of the *ancien regime* about it, and it is very difficult to say from internal evidence whether it is the

composition of a worshipper of the goddess reason or of a Christian who retained traces of an earlier respect for the proprieties of the tongue. But our doubts were set at rest by hearing it in a remote Canadian village from the lips of a very old man who was in a great rage with one of his neighbors about some eggs. There it was with the same emphasis on "nom," the same dropping of the voice at "chien," with which one is familiar in France, and yet the old man was of the old Canadian stock, and had probably never seen a Frenchman in his life.

The French Canadians, instead of declining before the Anglo-Saxons, gain on them rapidly, and bid fair before many years to have the lower province almost entirely to themselves. There is a Scotch colony on the Lower St. Lawrence, of not very ancient date, from which every trace of Scotch origin has disappeared, and in which French only is spoken. Wherever Canadians intermarry with the English or Scotch, the Canadians, owing to their greater religious tenacity, almost invariably succeed in bringing up the children as Catholics; and the children being Catholics, they naturally consort with the French, and are soon absorbed by them. Moreover, commerce is deserting Lower Canada. Quebec is a declining city; and there are few things more melancholy to the eye of "enterprise" than the almost complete absence of ships from the magnificent expanse of water which connects the port with the sea. Even the lumber trade has moved up to Ottawa. The English and Scots, of course, will not stay in a place which commerce is deserting, and the Canadians, who are still content with their small farms and retail stores, move in and fill their places - and we suspect are not sorry to be rid of the others and their restlessness and heresy.

The number of Irish who have got a foothold in the province is small, and the inhabitants, in spite of their Catholicism, detest them for their turbulence and love of politics. The French lawyer whom we have already mentioned spoke of them with great bitterness as a kind of scourge. He said they were "lances sur l'humanite comme des lous." In his own town of five thousand inhabitants, he said there were only twelve Irishmen. "Figurez vous, monsieur," he said with great earnestness, taking us by the button-hole - "seulement douze," and yet one of them had got to be mayor, in the way with which we are so familiar in New York. He kept a grocery, and bought up

"the people" - that is the poor Canadians - partly in money and partly in groceries. The Anglo-Saxon race has rendered incalculable service to the cause of civil and religious liberty; but it has committed the two greatest crimes of history - worse crimes by far than Caesar's slaughter of the Gauls - in the elaborate legal degradation of the Irish and the negroes; and there is something comic as well as striking in the way in which retributive justice is being dealt out upon it in both the New and Old World, by the conversion of the descendants of the victims into a political and social thorn of the first magnitude from which there appears to be no escape. The rage of the Irish for political offices is one of the most curious phenomena in history, and is a really unprecedented result of extraordinary and long-continued oppression; but it is certainly rather hard that the French Canadians should suffer from it.

The latter will probably preserve their language and manners intact till the whole country is annexed to the United States. Both will probably then disappear rapidly before the terrible solvent of American ideas and institutions. With them will disappear the last relic of Old France, and probably, outside the Tyrol, the purest and simple, most prosperous and most pious Catholic community on the globe.

A beautiful limited edition print of "The Little French Church" - St. Louis Catholic Church in St. Paul - is being offered for sale.

The print is 15 3/4 by 21 1/2" in size. The depiction is of a winter scene, viewed from the northwest, and includes the l'Ecole Francaise.

The artist is Susan Amidon, a parishioner at St. Louis. Her watercolor was done in 1991. Only 550 prints of the painting will be made, and these will be individually signed and numbered by the artist.

Orders must be placed by November 25.

Submit your order to:

Noel Productions, Ltd.

4436 140th Street

Savage MN 55378.

Cost is \$100.00 each plus \$6.50 sales tax plus \$15 if you wish the print mailed to you. (You can ask that your print be delivered to St. Louis Church for pickup.

Questions? (612) 890-8525



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La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

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WHO ARE THE ACADIANS?

Fear, persecution, expulsion, smallpox and typhoid epidemics may sound like CNN reports of tragic wars, but it is, in fact, the 18th century story of the Acadians, a small group of primarily French speaking Catholics in what became Canada's maritime provinces. The events are a blot in North American colonial history, and memorialized in Longfellow's classic *Evangeline: A tale of Acadie*.

The Acadian colonists of the 17th century settled on the border of new France and New England. Although the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht turned the colony over to England, the Acadians attempted to define a neutrality from both England and France, refusing to swear oaths of English loyalty while being viewed by the French with suspicion.

As a result, the Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia, under considerable pressure from both Massachusetts and British Admiral Boscawen of Halifax, sent the colonists into exile. Between 1755 and 1763 three quarters of the Acadian population

"Acadians" page two

UNE JOURNÉE ACADIENNE (ACADIAN DAY)

Saturday, February 17, 1996

Hotel Sofitel, Bloomington MN

For most of us, part of our education included reading Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's 1841 epic poem *Evangeline: A tale of Acadie*.

On February 17, The Canadian Consulate General and the Alliance Francaise of the Twin Cities are sponsoring an outstanding day-long program exploring the Acadians, their history and way of life.

The program will be held from 9:45 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. at Bloomington's Hotel Sofitel. It will include a lecture by Dr. Naomi Griffiths entitled: *Acadians in North American History: their origins and contemporary culture, including the music and food of Cajun Louisiana*.

The award-winning film *Acadie-Liberte* will be shown, and discussed. This film covers the history of Acadia from 1604 through post 1755, and demonstrates that loyalty and tenacity may, in fact, win over intolerance and persecution.

There will also be an Acadian lunch with Cajun music.

Cost for this fine program, including the lunch, is only \$16.00 per person (program only is \$7.00). Reservations must be received by February 12. Make your checks payable to Alliance Francaise, and mail to A-F at 821 Raymond Avenue Suite 150, St. Paul 55114.

Please pass the word - and remember the deadline for reservations of February 12. Those who attended the 1994 program on Quebec, as well

"Une Journee" from page one as previous programs, will attest to the high quality that you will experience with this event.



EVANGELINE

GRAND PRE PARK

NOVA SCOTIA

one of the note cards from a series distributed by G. R. Saunders Ltd Kentville Nova Scotia

"Acadians" from page one

(then totally about 13,000) were deported by boat, largely resettling in France, Maryland and Louisiana.¹

But the Acadians withstood their exile with fortitude. After England and France came to terms in 1763, some of the exiles stayed in their new found homes. By far the most significant proportion returned to Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and new Brunswick (which today is the only fully bilingual province in Canada).

¹ For historical reference, it is important to note that the British defeated the French at Quebec in 1759, and that the American revolution dates from 1776, and the U.S. Constitution from 1787. These were turbulent times in the fledgling countries of North America.

Acadian culture flourishes today and efforts are made to ensure that "Acadian" will continue to signify a present reality as well as an eventful past. Native daughter Antonine Maillet won the prestigious Prix Goncourt (1979) for her novel *Pelagie-la-Charette*. The same is the case in the United States as well, particularly in Louisiana, whose musical and culinary achievements are probably best known to those in the US. Some readers may be unaware that the word "Cajun" is a derivative of "Acadian".

A CHRONICLE ON CHAMPAGNE (AND A COMMENTARY ON "DIT" NAMES)

by John Cote

Brooklyn, CT

CHAMPAGNE is a word that has come to mean joy and festivities throughout the world. It also designates humble origins. CAMPAGNA, the Italian counterpart, takes its roots from the Latin CAMPUS, meaning an open field.

CAMPUS in the French language, becomes CHAMPS. The old language extended it to CHAMPAIGN meaning battlefield, and CHAMPAINE, a district of the plains.

LA CHAMPAGNE is a province in France that lies between the Ile de France and Lorraine, with Belgium above it and Burgundy below it. It is famous for the growing of a special grape variety, CHARDONNAY, from which Champagne is made by blending the best of the harvest. It also lends its name to that district and the special effervescent wine we know as Champagne.

CHAMPAGNE the district, is criss-crossed with old Roman roads along which defenders and invaders have clashed for over 2000 years. In our own times, World War I history is dotted with names of some famous towns and localities such as Rheims, Verdun, Soissons and Chemin de Dames (Road of Women-Ladies). Of more recent fame, the village of Colombey des Deux Eglises (Colombe of the Two Churches), has entered the pages of history as the birthplace of Charles DeGaulle, who after the fall of France to Hitler's invaders in the late 1930's, became the leader of the free French forces in World War II.

CHAMPAGNE, the province, is varied enough to provide us with a scenic variety of forest,

fields, flowers, hills, streams and even several caves that are intrinsic to its history, but for the most part consists of monotonous chalk plains. In this region, the chalk deposits are 2000 feet thick in some places having been left by a prehistoric inland sea that once covered the entire area. These deposits do not enhance the beauty of the district, but the chalk plains are the principal source of "Champagne's" glory - the Cathedral of Rheims was built from great blocks cut from these huge depositories of chalk. The Romans mined the deposits extensively for their building needs and in so doing created endless miles of tunnels honey-combing the hillsides. The tunnels, enlarged at various times, are now used to store and age Champagne.

CHAMPAGNE the terrain, is devoid of these flat chalk plains and comprises about 27,000 acres of vineyard scattered over the beautiful countryside of rolling hills and valleys. The chalky sub-soil however helps the grapes to flourish and imparts in them a distinctive taste and flavor. Beneath the soil of Rheims and Epernay, through solid chalk, there are more than 120 miles of cellars and caves with a constant 50 degree temperature. Into this natural phenomenon, the wine is laid to rest to age and mature.

CHAMPAGNE the region is also famous for the section known as the Ardennes. This locale vividly recalls to all the monumental Battle of the Bulge, when the remaining German military forces broke through the lines in an attempt to shatter the Allied armies near the end of World War II. Many, still living today, took part in this conflict and recall the engulfing violent moment when victory or defeat hung in the balance. That the Germans, here, were repulsed is factual history. Topographically the Ardennes is a land of forest and water, fishing, hunting and camping which are an inherent part of the Champagne region. This is the only place where one can hunt the SANGLIER (wild boar). A native of this region is known as a "Sanglier", immediately identifying his origin and conferring upon him an aura of distinction.

CHAMPAGNE as a family name: The name of BEAUGRAN dit CHAMPAGNE was the surname of a certain Jean Beaugran who denoted his place of origin by the use of the hyphenated DIT. it indicated that he originated from the Champagne district of France described above.

Now you may wonder and ask, who was this individual with the hyphenated DIT?

Jean Beaugran Dit Champagne was a soldier in the famous regiment of Carignan that was sent to Canada between June and September, 1665. They were charged with the task of forming a militia, ready trained and able to defend themselves and other colonist from Indian attacks, and from any incursions below the border. The soldiers of this regiment, under their own officers, were to be settled in frontier villages to protect the inhabitants. When their enlistment period terminated, they had a choice of returning to France or settling under their own officers and brothers in arms on land, granted to them by the king. Thus by allotting each discharged soldier a small farm, the Royal Treasury was enhanced by putting into production virgin forest and negating the expenses of feeding and transporting the soldiers to France.

The "DIT" appellation was a common practice in this time period. It could also denote besides the place of origin, a second marriage with the stepchildren adopting the father's name then giving his own name. The "dit" or the "hyphenated" surname was important, an undeniable fact not to be ignored.

Instances abound where in the same family both names were used by different individuals. One individual carrying the name Beaugran, the other person carrying the name Champagne, while a third would carry both names, as Beaugran Dit Champagne.

It is not at all strange that our ancestors would adopt the common custom of the times, by using both the family surname and the district name from which they came. It was the accepted method used as an identifying characteristic of the birthplace, hometown or district of the person using this descriptive form of surnames.

To illustrate the above statement, I cite a case in point. In the small Connecticut town where I grew to manhood, there was a Canadian family named Brodeur. One brother carried the name Brodeur, while the other brother carried the name Lavigne, yet both brothers were natural sons of the same parents and one marriage.

Another personal example in line with the above concerns my wife's family. Her maternal grandmother was a Champagne married to a Dubois. In turn, the daughter married a Beausoleil

dit Sylvestre. Thus the name Champagne is meaningful to me because through this maternal line, the Cotes and the Champagnes are united through the children and grandchildren as are also the Beausoleils and Sylvestres/Silvestres.

There is another branch of Champagnes but that bifurcate is principally from Acadia and carry the name Champagne dit Orillion.

From my knowledge to date, no connection has been established between the two Champagnes dit Beaugran and dit Orillion, but I have a feeling that both the Beaugrans and the Orillions are related to a common ancestor whoever he may have been.

Although different one and all from the original name, tracing and hunting the common denominator between the Champagnes and the Orillions with all their DITS is a captivating lesson in perseverance. It just may be that in continuing the trail we could trace these families back to the ancestral homeland, the province of Champagne France and the glorious product that gives this district its name.

THE VOYAGEUR RETORQUES

From the editor: In the last issue of Chez Nous we printed a commentary about French Canada as viewed by a visitor in 1868. Jean-Marc Charron from Deux Montagnes, PQ., wrote, commenting that the article was "very interesting", enclosing the following portion of W.H. Drummond's early 1900s book "The Voyageur", in which the Voyageur philosophizes on "Yankee Families". Readers will remember another poem of Drummond from his book, The Habitant, in an earlier Chez Nous. Merci, Jean-Marc.

Yankee Families

"You s'pose God love de Yankee
An' de Yankee woman too,
Lak he love de folk at home on Canadaw?
I dunno - 'cos if he do,
W'at's de reason he don't geev' dem familiee
Is dere anybody hangin' roun' can answer me
W'ile I wait an' smoke dis pipe of good tabac?

An' now I'll tole you somet'ing
Mebbe help you bimeby,
An' dere's no mistak' it's w'at dey call sure
sign -
W'en you miss de baby's cry
As you're goin mak' some visit on de State

Dat's enough - you needn't ax if de train's
on tam or late,
You can bet you're on Yankee side de line.

Unless dere's oder folk dere,
Mebbe wan or two or t'ree,
Canayen is comin' workin' on de State -
Den you see petite Marie
Leetle Joe an' Angelique, Hormisdas an'
Dieudonne,
But you can't tole half de nam' - it don't
matter any way -
"Sides de fader he don't t'ink it's not'ing great.

De moder, you can see her
An' she got de basket dere
Wit' de fine t'ing for de chil'ren nice an' slick -
For dey can't get fat on air -
Cucumber, milk, an' onion, some leetle cake
also
De ole gran'moder's making on de farm few
days ago -
W'at's use buy dollar dinner mak' dem sick?

But look de Yankee woman
Wit' de book upon her han'.
Readin' readin', an' her husban', he can't get
Any chance at all, poor man,
For sit down, de way de seat's all pile up wit'
magazine -
De t'ing lak dat on Canadaw is never, never
seen.
Wouldn't she be beter wit' some chil'ren?
Wall! you bet!

No wonder dey was bringin'
For helpin' dem along
So many kin' of feller I dunno -
Chinee washee from Kong Kong
An' w'at dey call Da-go, was work for dollar a
day,
But w'en dey mak' some money, off dey're
goin', right away -
Dat's de reason dey was get de nam' Da-go.

Of course so long dey're comin'
From ev'ry place dey can,
Not knowin' moche, dere's not'ing fuss about
Only boss de stranger man -
But now dem gang of feller dat's come across

Thread of ethnocentrism runs through separatist movement

Los Angeles Times

MONTREAL — Lilian Yossa is a child of the new Montreal. The daughter of Egyptian immigrants, Yossa, 25, is a graduate student in engineering at McGill University who was educated at French-language schools, speaks English with her friends and feels at home in the multicultural cross-currents of Quebec's largest city.

At least she felt that way until earlier this month when, watching the televised returns of Quebec's referendum on separation from Canada, she saw Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau blame the separatists' narrow defeat on "money and the ethnic vote." And she heard him vow, "We shall reap our revenge."

"I was very, very angry; I was hurt," she said a few days later. "I have as much right to be here as anybody else."

Although Parizeau's speech was widely denounced, even some separatists acknowledge that it is indicative of a thread of ethnocentrism and intolerance that runs through the fabric of French Canadian nationalism in Quebec.

The phrase "nous et les autres" — "we and the others" — has been used for generations to inspire French-speaking Quebecers. Fifty or 60 years ago, it was a term of affirmation in the face of a sometimes oppressive English-speaking elite.

More recently, it has been raised in arguments describing the putative threat to the French language posed by new immigrants and by the surrounding English-speaking populations of the rest of Canada and the United States. And protection of French and the Quebecois culture it has spawned is the primary calling of the separatist movement.

"The secessionist ideology is essentially xenophobic," argued William Johnson, a Montreal writer and political analyst. "The theme of [Parizeau's] speech is, 'We are an aggrieved people . . . and we will only reach the apotheosis of our existence by becoming our own state.'"

In his speech, Parizeau pointedly noted that 60 percent of French-speaking voters approved the referendum proposal, which would have empowered Parizeau's government to declare sovereignty, but English speakers and immigrants lined up more than 90 percent against the measure. The referendum was defeated 50.6 percent to 49.4 percent.

When Quebec Premier Jacques Parizeau blamed "money and the ethnic vote" for the defeat of an initiative to secede from Canada, he was giving voice to the thread of ethnocentrism and intolerance that runs through French Canadian nationalism.

French speakers, or Franco-phones, make up 82 percent of Quebec's 7.3 million residents, while English speakers, or Anglo-phones, and those who claim neither French nor English as their mother tongue account for the rest. The latter group includes most new immigrants, who have been the fastest-growing segment of the population in recent years.

Quebec absorbed 212,413 immigrants from 1990 to 1994, and only 11,747 came from France. Lebanon, Hong Kong and Haiti sent the largest numbers.

Montreal, the historic meeting place of English- and French-speaking Canada, has become the destination of most of the province's newcomers. The city also is home to a vibrant and long-standing Jewish community, which numbers about 100,000.

Community organizations report relatively little racial, ethnic or religious tension among individuals, but fears were voiced that Parizeau's comments might prompt retaliation against minorities and reinforce historic prejudices in favor of so-called "pure laine" Quebecers. The expression translates as "pure wool" but means those who claim ancestry from the region's 18th-century French colonials.

Parizeau declined to apologize for his remarks, though he did concede that his words were "too harsh." And he denied that the controversy had any impact on his decision to resign at the end of the year.

Plenty of others in the separatist movement, however, have scrambled to distance themselves. Lucien Bouchard, the leader of the separatist opposition in Canada's federal Parliament and potential successor to Parizeau as provincial premier, publicly repudiated the remarks.

But Bouchard himself had drawn complaints when he not-

ed that French-speaking Quebecers have one of the lowest birthrates among the "white races." Bouchard later said he regretted the comment.

Separatist leaders have had plenty of practice in such damage control over the last year. Much of the controversy has focused on the prospect of a majority Francophone vote for separation being "thwarted" by near-monolithic opposition from English speakers and immigrants, precisely the scenario that developed.

► Shortly before the referendum, separatist political scientist Pierre Drouilly wrote in Montreal's largest French-language newspaper that such a situation would lead to "the conclusion that now the French Quebec nation is democratically subject to the English Canadian nation. Against other peoples on Earth, you shoot. Against French Quebecers, you vote. In some ways, that's more efficient."

► Philippe Pare, a member of Bouchard's separatist party in Parliament, said last spring that non-French speakers should abstain from the vote and let Franco-phones settle the issue themselves.

► Bernard Landry, Parizeau's deputy premier, opined last year that "it is not healthy that democracy in Montreal is at the complete mercy of the vote of ethnic communities."

There is disagreement, even among nonseparatists, over whether incidents such as these are revelations or aberrations.

Walter Tom, the Quebec regional director of the Chinese Canadian National Council, said he thinks ethnocentrism is likely to fade as a new generation takes leadership of the separatists. "It's the old guard that's the problem," he said.

A
POINT
OF
VIEW

de sea -
He's gettin' leetle smarter, an' he got de
familiee -
So Uncle Sam mus' purty soon look out.

wonder he don't know it -
It's funny he don't see
Dere's somet'ing else dan money day an'
night -
Non - he'll work hese'f cra-zee,
Den travel roun' de worl', an' use de money
too -
De King hese'f can't spen' lak de Yankee man
is do -
But w'ere's de leetle chil'ren? dat's not right!

W'at's use of all de money
If dere ain't some boy an' girl
Mak' it pleasan' for de Yankee an' hees wife
W'en dey travel on de worl'?
For me an' Eugenie dere's not'ing we lak bes'
Dan gader up de chil'ren an' get dem nicely
dress -
W'y it's more dan half de pleasure of our life.

I love de Yankee woman
An' de Yankee man also,
An' mebbe dey'll be wiser bimeby -
But I lak dem all to know
If dey want to kip deir own, let dem raise de
familiee -
An' den dey'll boss de contree from de
mountain to de sea,
For dey're smart enough to do it if dey try."

LETTERS - "HELP WANTED"

from Marie-Reine Mikesell, Alliance
Franco-Americaine du Midwest, 1155 E 56th Street,
Chicago IL 60637 (312) 643-7865. (Marie-Reine
is the editor of the superb French in America
Calendar which is in its 11th year). "I would like to
ask if your readers know of any "Pea Soup Days"
and if so, where? and what do people do on that
day? There was one in Somerset WI in former
times but apparently no longer today. I would like
to find a photograph of "Pea Soup Day" for the
1997 calendar, either an old one or a recent one."
Readers...?

The superb 1996 edition of the calendar is
now available for \$6.50 (plus \$1.50 per calendar

for shipping - postage and handling included for ¹⁴
a minimum of five calendars sent to the same
address.) Make check payable to French in
America 1996 and send to Virgil Benoit, R.R. 2,
Box 253, Red Lake Falls MN 56750. Some back
copies of the calendar may be available. Inquire
of Virgil Benoit if interested.

from member Mr. Lee Leriger (L'Eriger
de LaPlante) PO Box 1544, Norfolk NE 68702
(402) 371-9139: "My ancestor on the North
American continent is Clement L'Eriger de LaPlante
who was a Marine sent to the defense of Montreal
in 1685. He had 13 children. One of the
descendants was Leadre Leriger (de LaPlante) who
was born 4 Jan. 1860 in St. Urbain in Quebec. I
believe he ended up in North Dakota. His son,
Lorenze (Laurence) Leriger (de LaPlante) went to
school somewhere in North Dakota and then moved
to Wanham in Alberta....So far, I don't know exactly
where in North Dakota the family lived...if you
have any information on any Leriger (L'Eriger de
LaPlante)...please advise. Some of our family went
by Leriger and some by LaPlante later on but
initially they used both in the surname. My
greatgrandfather was Joseph L'Eriger who was born
in Dec. 1837 in St. Constant, Quebec. He migrated
to Kankakee County in Illinois in the later 1800s.

THANKS TO LOWELL MERCIL, we have a
limited number of a very attractive and informative
brochure about Treasures from the Bibliotheque
Nationale de France. Lowell saw this exhibit at the
Library of Congress in the Fall of 1995. Send a
Self-addressed stamped envelope to Dick Bernard,
7632 157th St W 301 Apple Valley MN 55124 if
interested in receiving the brochure.



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

NEWS FROM LA SOCIETE C-F

* **1996 St. Paul Winter Carnival:** La Societe and Les Canadiennes Errants are again sponsoring a gettogether at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, January 27, 1996. The party will begin after the Winter Carnival parade and will be held at **Day's Inn on West 7th Street (across from the Civic Center) in downtown St. Paul.** Everyone interested in French Canadian culture is invited. We will be inviting teachers of French this year. **Please RSVP to Louis Ritchot at (612) 323-8729 if you plan to come so we can better plan for refreshments.**

* **La Societe will again be having a booth at the annual spring Festival of Nations in St. Paul.** This years theme is "Ethnic Markets". **Leo Gouette at 489-8306 needs your ideas and your help as a volunteer.**

* **The next regular meetings of La Societe are Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. on February 5, March 4, April 1, May 6, and June 3.** Due to remodelling at St. Louis Church, all future meetings will be held at the **International Institute, 1694 Como Avenue, St. Paul.** This fine facility is easy to find, on Como, just west of Snelling, directly across the street from the State

Fairgrounds.

* **We are seeking genealogy-type articles for Chez Nous.** How about from you? Send to **Editor Dick Bernard at 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.**

* Policy matters:

1. **Candidates are solicited for three Board positions.** The Nominating Committee will make selections in February. **Contact Leroy Dubois at 484-1622 if interested in serving.**
2. **The Board is looking for someone to head up our Sales Committee.** Contact **Louis Ritchot at 323-8729 if interested.**
3. **We will now accept advertisement for Chez Nous.** Costs will be \$100 per year (six issues) for personal card size space, prorated if less than a year. **Send requests attention of Leroy Dubois, secretary, 54 Suzanne Dr., St. Paul MN 55127-4116.**
4. **Membership cards will no longer be provided unless specifically requested.**
5. **All expenses incurred by members must be pre-approved by the Board, either by specific action or implied by assignment of task.**



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**Louis Ritchot
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Pager# 650-9206**



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mars-Avril, 1996 VOL. 17 NO. 5

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

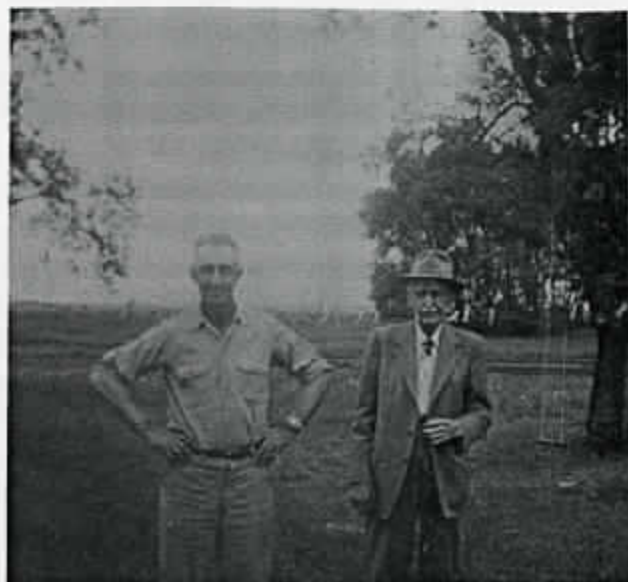
SIXTY YEARS AGO - THE TERRIBLE WINTER OF 1935-36

by Ernest Ebert, Grand Forks ND

Editors Note: In our country, we seem to celebrate bad winters by celebrating other winters which may even have been worse! So does Ernest Ebert in the following article remembering the winter of 1935-36. Mr. Ebert has previously submitted interesting articles for readers of *Chez Nous*, and the following is no exception. He writes about farm days near Auburn, North Dakota, a hamlet which was located a few miles north of Grafton. In the next issue, we will have a wonderful "...Visit to the Old Farm Home" by Mr. Ebert.

A foot of snow fell on Armistice Day in 1935. Even that too-generous amount was scarcely a harbinger of what was to come - a total of 69.3 inches of fallen snow in the Grafton area during the winter of 1935-36. The heavy snowfall and the intense sustained cold combined to make that winter the worst in my memory.

At that time, our farmhouse was not insulated so a considerable amount of coal was needed to keep it comfortably warm. Early in January, our supply of coal was running low and I was waiting for a decent day to make a five-mile trip to Auburn ND to replenish our supply. In the meantime, Dad was busy buck-sawing oak fence posts that had rotted off at ground level and were now useful in supplementing our waning fuel supply. By 1936 standards, January 20th was a relatively nice day. It was only 20 below and the constantly moving snow was reduced to a ground storm. So the team, bob sleigh and I headed for Auburn. Surprisingly, except for the team having to struggle through some deep snow at times, the trip



The author, Ernest Ebert, with his father Janvier Ebert, at the home farm near Auburn ND in the early 1950s.

was uneventful.

In 1936, the country was still in the throes of the Depression; funds to remove snow were very inadequate. Equipment was deficient in quality and quantity. Highway 81 [a major highway] near our place was frequently blocked. Townships had no money to open roads either. Sometimes, we would use a team and wagon to "break" a trail through the fields, say Saturday morning, for a car equipped with chains to follow in the afternoon. If it didn't blow again before Sunday morning, the same trail could be used for a couple hardy ones in the family to attend church services on Sunday. We always traveled in pairs - so one could push if it was needed.

Early in January, we had to give up on using the car because of the snow depth. This meant that

we had to rely entirely on our horses. Highway 81 was blocked for five weeks. Having lived in the automobile age since World War I, we no longer had fancy cutters and high-stepping driving horses. In fact, we were thankful we still had reliable draft horses. We found out all over again that a bob sleigh equipped with a wagon box, straw on the floor and blankets to wrap up in, was not such a bad way to travel - especially when it's the only way available.

I had two brothers, they along with their families, were members of two households under one roof. My parents, my bride of the previous summer, Georgia, and myself had a similar arrangement. They asked us over for a noon meal one day and the only way we could go was by team and bob sleigh. We had been in touch by telephone but hadn't seen each other for weeks. We were as happy as the pioneers must have been when they were reunited with old friends! There is something

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wonderful about getting back to basics once in a while.

Early one Sunday morning, we were awakened by the most wonderful sound of the winter - the authoritative voice of what we surmised to be a huge caterpillar tractor cleaning off Highway 81, our lifeline. How thrilling it was to see this mechanical monster belching black smoke with each Herculean effort to dislodge snow well-compacted from many weeks of below-zero temperatures! We felt like we were being "liberated." It was nice to be back in the right spot of the twentieth century - to be able to drive the car again and be able to do such basic things as to go to town for groceries, go to church, visit friends and relatives.

Our sojourn in the past was ended. Our faithful horses, as they often had in the past, had pulled us through once more.

THE LONG, LONG, LONG WINTERS

by Lowell Mercil, Mentor MN

Editors Note: Mr. Mercil has been and continues to be a loyal contributor to Chez Nous. In a note accompanying this article Lowell "wishes to dedicate this article to his sister, Nora Mercil Brusseau, who died November 26, 1995 in Vancouver, Washington, after a prolonged confinement with Alzheimer's disease. Her contribution to Chez Nous, "Nora Remembers", was published in the Aout-Septembre, 1990, issue. The author also wishes to thank his sister Lorraine, and brother Jerry, for jogging his memory and keeping him on the straight and honest factual road!"

"But where are the snows of yester-years?" Francois Villon asked over 400 years ago. They may be back based on the recent weekend blizzard of 1996. I wonder if, with our great advances in weather predicting technology, the use of satellites, the doppler, etc., - are we any better today at predicting weather than the great ability developed for many generations by our native Indians?

I hear that many years ago Yvette and Joe Mafroe were driving down Highway Two, through the Chippewa Indian Reservation in northern Minnesota, when they saw an old, wrinkled, stately, gentleman sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch of his teepee (some teepees had rain shields over the entrance). It was late fall and Joe wanted to know if it would be a good year for his fuel supply business so he decided to stop and find out if he could take advantage of Indian lore to predict the season. He could gage the purchase of stock accordingly. Joe introduced himself and after they exchanged a few pleasantries, he asked: what kind of a winter do you think we will have this year?" The response came quickly: "heap, long, cold winter!" Joe was curious: "what makes you think it will be a long, cold winter?" The answer came without hesitation: "Indian see white man bank house with straw - heap long cold winter!"

Well, I can't answer Francois Villon's snow question or make predictions as accurate as our native Americans but I will try to respond to a request that I describe how some of us farm children in northern Minnesota amused ourselves during the long Minnesota winter months.

Kids today have all those wonderful, safety designed, mind developing toys, games, television programs but still are bored. How come? Is it that today kids are hyperactive and we were just plain slow? Is it, as I have seen in some cases, that kids have so many things to choose from that they get mixed up and the child just doesn't know where to start - the child must make a decision and pick one of a hundred toys to concentrate on - decisions, decisions! When he selects a toy, he must go through a thousand pieces to the ones that belong to

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that selected. We did not have those problems because it is much easier to pick one out of two toys than one of a hundred.

Our clouded memories can do strange things to us. It seems to me that I remember much snow and endless days of frigid weather in the late 1920s and early 1930s. This in spite of the fact that our secluded farm near Crookston MN was north of the "snow belt" that runs through central Minnesota to the Great Lakes area. Also, these were the drought years when there was little humidity so little snow. I doubt if there could have been as much snow as I remember. But I do think these were also the winters of the black snow. Not the blue snow that Paul Bunyan survived but the black snow which was the same shade as the North Dakota topsoil. That snow seemed to last forever and it was only the warm spring winds that could dispel the dark moods that accompanied those snows.

Our living conditions exceeded most others with respect to the important qualities of meaningful family values. However, we dragged behind most of our neighbors with respect to the amenities of the "easy life". Our grandfathers had left Canada to settle in the Red River Valley of the North. They were a prolific people those Frenchmen - one with eleven children, one with fourteen and another with fifteen. It was great for farming but the individual portions of the inheritance pie are not very big when you cut it into that many pieces. We lived about a third of a mile from the "new dam" but never hooked up the electricity. Not only had television not been invented, but we could not take advantage of such basic other wonders as indoor plumbing, electric lights, radios or any of the dozens of appliances and entertainment devices that we now require to live even at the lowest standards.

As a result of our lack of "luxuries", we were required to help perform many chores that kept us occupied. Most of the time the chores were accomplished under the guise of doing the job - which was actually done by Mama, Papa or one of the older brothers or sisters. We spent a lot of time "helping". The girls helped Mama with the cooking, mending, cleaning, etc., etc. The boys helped Papa feed the horses and cattle their fodder and grain, the pigs their slop, the chickens their chicken feed, helped clean and bed the stalls, etc. When I think about it a lot of children's time was consumed learning how to do things in the company of parents - the children of two employed parents today miss much of this contact. Thus, when the cows were milked it was necessary that one of the young ones be present to haul the full milk pails from the stalls where the cows were being milked to the milk separator room. Of course, it was the helper who received credit for milking the cows when he was really just "hanging around" in today's idiom. But I suppose "hanging around" with the kerosene lantern in one's hand was really helpful during those pitch dark, long winter evenings. I still think the sense of smell remains with us longer than any of the other sense memories for I can still recall the different, pungent winter odors of the barn, the pigpen, the chicken coop, etc. Whenever I attend county fairs I find that the odor memories don't go away.

Another example of a chore that consumed some of our time was "helping" with the winter laundry. Man! That laundry was a back-breaker. The memory of Mama bending over a boiler or tub and old fashioned copper washboard was engraved in my memory. I always thought that the laundry may have been the principal cause of her many backaches and those horrible migraine headaches. The ones that at times required that we walk on tiptoe and not make a sound in the house and be quiet outside. One summer a traveling salesman came to our out-of-the-way farm and demonstrated one of those beautiful, gasoline put-put powered washing machines. Wow! I was only about five years old but I dreamed of the day I could get a job and buy the washer so Mama would not have to bend over that washboard on those hot summer days.

But in winter the washing was done in the kitchen. The water was heated in the copper boiler on the kitchen range - some also in a pail on top of the pot-bellied space heater. There usually was clothes hanging to dry or to warm-up around these heaters. However, because of the resulting high humidity and quantity. It was necessary to hang most of the laundry on the outside clotheslines. We were too short to reach the lines but we did have to help carry the frozen clothes into the house. The pliable cloth became as stiff as a board but the fresh, pungent, airy smell was very pleasant. As I recall, we got a lot of laughs out of this chore. Especially, when we brought in the long-handled underwear (how did that name originate?) Man, those were practical. Especially, the drop seat model. They were very handy when you were in trouble in below-zero weather and you shunned the under-bed pot in favor of the outside two-holer.

Of course the first thing we children did when we woke in the morning was to shiver in bed for a while - I guess there was a contradictory sensation. We could feel the cold air on our faces and the outside of the blankets and knew there was a shock waiting to hit us as soon as our feet would hit the ice cold wood floor. But we were real comfortable under the wool blankets and quilts that Mama had made - except for our feet. Our arms and hands would be warm if we kept them under the blankets but our feet were usually cold - the hot water bottle was fine when we went to bed but had cooled during the night.

Eventually, we would build up enough courage to make a dash out of the bedroom, down the stairway and next to pot-bellied stove or the kitchen wood-range. We would rotate for if the stove had not been poked-up for very long, the stove side of your body would get hot while the opposite side would cool. We would be dressed in our pajamas (long-handled under-wear) and robe (wrap around blanket). These were also our breakfast clothes.

After returning to our room I often spent time at the window. There was usually a layer of ice on the window caused by the extreme cold on the outside freezing the humidity on the inside - especially after wash-days. The ice would be thick on the bottom decreasing to thin on the top. There were beautiful patterns that resembled a miniature winter-wonderland. We would spend a lot of time leaving our melted finger prints on the glass, breaking off large pieces of thin ice, moving the pieces around the non-iced surface, trying to pry pieces off the surface without breaking them, and day dreaming about far distant places. Were we bored? Would the kids today while away their time by doing such things? Is it good or bad? H-m-m-m!

I must admit that we did, also, while-away many hours with the "dream books" - the Sears-Roebuck or Montgomery Ward catalogues. Wow! Those high laced boots looked beautiful - or you could look at the washing machines, houses, or cars that you were going to buy for Mama and Papa some day after you had grown up and made your fortune. When the temperature got below zero one did not spend much time reading last years catalog that was utilized in the little square house in the back yard. We did spend some time with the Farm Journal and similar magazines that had those beautiful idealized pictures of farms with rolling hills and beautiful homes and people. Our life just was not like the living depicted in those magazines.

As small children we did spend considerable time playing outside in the snow. We must have because I remember how raw our wrists would get. I think now that we lacked common sense. The snow would cake-up between the tops of our mitts and the cuff of our coats, melt, freeze, etc. The result would be chapping like I have not seen for many years. The wrist would be red on the bottom and sides and just about blue on the top where the horizontal cracks formed. It would usually take prompting from Mom: "y'an isit ton-fou!" (come here you fool!) before we would finally have enough sense to come inside and dry off our mitts, socks and under-wear by standing next to the wood stoves. Pass the jar of petroleum jelly! We used a lot of it. Also, a lot of Vicks Vapo-rub on the chest and under the nose which usually was raw - how come we never had dry handkerchiefs? As I recall, w had "hot" Vicks with a red devil on it that would make one scream when it got in the raw cracks.

When one tries to account for how children amused themselves on those long winter days in the twenties or thirties, it is necessary to reflect on the sick days. There were plenty of them! Mumps first on one side and then the other - even as kids we were afraid of the possible future effects. Was it true? Impotence? Sterility? We were very young but it still scared us. Red measles, German measles, chicken pox, flu (they did not have the fancy names for the different kinds of flu then.) diphtheria, bronchitis, sinus, adenoid and tonsillitis and always headaches, sore throats, coughs, etc. On the high temperature days there was no problem of what to do. We just laid there. It was the low temperature days that were rough! Mama just about had to tie us to the bed. Our bedrooms were upstairs so there was a lot of yelling going on: bring me some crayons and a color book! I'm hungry - when do I eat! And what did one get when it came? Hot milk soup with home churned butter accompanied by buttered toast. Sometimes, home canned tomatoes in the milk soup. Or maybe chicken broth - we did not know its medicinal effect! When we started fighting with each other epidemic was over and we were released from confinement.

Sunday was still a day to look forward to. Mama and Papa took the day off too - that is except for necessary chores such as milking, cooking, etc., etc. If possible we would go to Mass at St. Anne's Catholic Church in Crookston - four miles by sleigh or buggy. We would sit in our usual pew - third seat from the rear

right aisle. There were some of the sets without name markers where those who could not afford to pay the seat rental could sit. The altar was raised a few steps so the taller people could see what was going on - but all we little people could see was a lot of backs that were standing-up, kneeling-down and sitting-down. (Non-Catholic friends were always amazed at the amount of exercise we had in church). We could hear some Latin but I am afraid it sounded like mumbo-jumbo to us. Or, we might hear the French sermon, which some could understand, or the repetition of the Sermon in French-accented English which few could understand - all done at a decibel range guaranteed to "scare the hell out of you". I am sure that all parishioners who survived a number of those celebrations could make claim to a high place in the after-world. But we could look at those bas relief's of the stations of the cross. We could really get saddened by looking at the station over our pew: "Christ falls for the second time." Oh well! We could always look at the strange people: the guy with the full beard, the women with big noses, the tall ones, the tiny people (we had a bunch of them), etc.

Winter Sundays at home were fun days. No question "Mama was the best cook in the world!" (I suppose a few others have made that claim!) I think, in those early years on the farm, we had our Sunday banquet in the evening. We were poor farmers but we ate better than any of the prosperous farmers. The house would be full of the beautiful odors of baked chicken, pork or beef roast - all cooked and served with the trimmings. Every one in the family had dinner at the same time. None of that leaving the table early with permission, or being too busy to eat at the same time as the others. One would go hungry like that!

Oh! We spent considerable time teasing and fighting amongst ourselves. We were like two families - Nora, Elphage and Lorraine at the top, and Jerry, Lowell and Ray at the bottom. I, Lowell, complained that there was no justice! Jerry could beat me up and not get caught, but if I tried to get even by beating up Ray, I usually got what I had coming. There were plenty of Sundays that we got kicked out into the cold outside to cool off a little - and I still remember how difficult it was on some occasions to apologize because I was in the wrong. Sometimes it would take a half hour in the corner of the room staring at the blank wall (it seemed like ten hours) before I would decide that humility was better than imprisonment. Man! Those walls were boring! It was not too bad when Mama took pity on me and permitted me to sit on a chair but it was pretty rough when I had to kneel without slumping or to stand still in one spot. I suppose today's family psychologist's would say that all that was good - that we learned how to get rid of our aggression. Well, maybe so. But it did cost me a few black eyes.

Winter Sunday afternoons were usually fun times. Mama might make divinity, fudge, burnt sugar candy or, a real treat, toffee. We kids got to scrape the pans - we would try to induce Mama not to do too good of a job when she poured from the cooking pot to the hardening sheet - the more left in the pot the better for us. Those toffee days were special. Everyone got a chance to "pull" first. I still remember the toffee skeins drying, wound in the butter coated platters - then the great moment when the skeins would be broken into one or two inch pieces and sampled.

Some Sundays we had rich home-made ice cream - no problem freezing - just put the makings outside and stir once in a while. Due to the fact that we produced the cream the resulting delicacy was about as rich as possible - that, accompanied by home made cookies or dark chocolate cake. Other Sundays, Mama might make a bread pan of popcorn (home grown of course) and pour on that rich butter and sprinkle with Morton's salt and voila - who gets to the pan first?

The "goodies" were just the accompaniment to the games we people played. Different kinds of card games. Let's see - how did "pig" go? Was it that three cards were dealt to each of the players, each drew from the deck in turn, when someone got the "pig" (the jack of spades?), he would try to conceal putting his finger to his nose, and the last one playing to do the same was eliminated. Sounds rather simple now but we did spend many happy, laughing hours together playing that game. We, also, played Battle, Hearts, Old Maid "even with our old maid aunt - the game might be shunned today as being politically incorrect.", etc. Some games we played were the store bought kind that we had received as birthday or Christmas gifts: Authors (one had to guess the name n the back based on the portrait on the front.), Chinese Checkers, Pick-up Sticks, etc. Many, many great family hours that I just don't see happening today.

Some Sunday evenings we might be given a special treat and we would have some "floating islands", I guess the whipped white of eggs over the yolks mixed with cream and sugar with a dash of nutmeg. I had not

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had any for many years until I ordered a custard dessert several years ago while traveling in France. Several their foods that must have been handed-down from generation to generation that I could identify closely with my Mothers cooking were: leftover pieces of dark chocolate cake and bread pudding covered with hard sauce, head-cheese (tete-de-Fromage) and various ways of preparing pork, it seemed to me that I could identify some of those tastes that would have had to have been handed down from mother to daughter from France to Canada to the United States over a period of three hundred years, it was a sort of homelike feeling - like a fiber of my heritage.

Many of those long winter days and evenings were spent helping Mama with her rugs and quilts. Before she was married in 1909, she had been a seamstress of the highest quality. We did have store-bought overall and coveralls but about everything else was homemade.

Quilting and rugs remind me of an aside: A program was established during the depression years that was belittled and brunt of many jokes - especially if you were well enough off that you did not have to participate. It was known as the WPA - Works Progress Administration (in derision: "We Poke Along"). The program was established under the Roosevelt Administration to provide jobs and incentives to some of the millions of unemployed. One phase of the program was a project to index articles in early newspapers - I recently utilized those indexes while doing historical research at the Minnesota Historical Society. I understand that more than sixty thousand bridges were built under the program. The region "sports arena" in Crookston where I ice and roller skated and danced to big bands was built under the program - the arena is still used by young people. Maybe those who criticized the program as a waste had seen Papa when he was employed on the arena project -this was after he had to abandon farming. The story goes that his supervisor saw him throwing up behind a shed and he told Papa that he had no business there, that he was too sick to work. It turned out that Dad was riddled with stomach cancer and the supervisor was right. He did not last through the summer. It was with great courage that the family managed to survive those dark, trying days.

A phase of this program was designed to encourage and employ artists, writers, craft persons, etc., to keep them off the bread lines. Some recent art exhibits have promoted the works accomplished during this period. Prizes were offered in competitions of craft people that took place at the local level. Our family, under Mama's direction, won many of the prizes by taking the competition in crafts through rug making.

We usually had a number of frames leaning against the wall with the basics of a rug. We made hooked rugs with strips of leftover cloth (maybe one rug wool and the other cotton), leftover yarn or silk stockings - no wonder I collect so much junk and can't throw things away.

Some were "braided rugs". They were made by braiding short strips of cloth or stockings into a long tubular shaped component which was wound in a circle or ellipse and sewed together in that pattern. Maybe a light strip next to a dark strip or three colors braided together. it was sometimes necessary to dye the cloth and us kids often had the job of cutting the strips. The scissors were not always very sharp and blisters often resulted.

Some were "hooked rugs". First, a piece of burlap, maybe six by eight feet, would be tacked to a wood frame, then Mama would draw a pattern on the burlap with charcoal or crayons and each portion of a design would be labeled as to color - the procedure to that point was similar to that utilized in the production of "painting by numbers" ("you too can be a painter!") that was a popular pastime a few years ago. The next step usually was to define the pattern with an outline hooked onto the burlap - probably a black, narrow strip of cloth or yarn - depending on which was the basic fabric. Then came the fill in of the pattern blocks. Early-on we used standard hooks - a pointed notched shaft of steel set in a wood handle to make about one half inch loops on the top side - very closely woven. We later obtained a contraption that was held on the upper side that worked on somewhat the same principle as a sewing machine. It was necessary to slide the shuttles up and down with the hands. No matter which method was used ones fingers became numb after a while. But the worst chore was when we had to cut the top of the loop - we thought we would grow up with our fingers molded in the scissor cutting position.

We were very young when we were first able to "help" Mama with her knitting - she made warm wool socks, mitts, sweaters, etc. We would hold the skeins of yarn while she sat on her rocker rolling the thread into a ball. I wonder, how did we survive such peace and quiet?

We did obtain one luxury - a beautiful floor cabinet model, seventy eight RPM, phonograph. Our bachelor uncle Clem (everyone should have a bachelor uncle Clem!) had sent Mama \$10 or \$15 to buy us something for Christmas and Papa used it for a luxury. That was a fabulous experience when he brought it home, cranked it up, and we heard sound out of it for the first time - I doubt if Thomas Edison was as happy as we were to hear that sound. Many hours were enjoyed listening to that prized possession. We had a few records: The Meditation from Thais, something from Xerxes, a German band, an old fashioned talking comedian - storyteller, etc. The oldest children in our family, Nora and Al, purchased some of the records from a few pennies saved from the little money they earned from odd jobs. I think that phonograph was responsible for the birth of a love of great music that we developed and from which we received many hours of enjoyment over many years.

Every night a portion of the evening was devoted to a practice that is fading into the past - the family Rosary. We thought it took hours but it actually was from thirteen to fifteen minutes. I know - I frequently timed it. It usually took place in Mama and Papa's room but on sick nights. It was in the sick one's bedroom. We said it in French "*Je vous Sainte Marie, plene de grace, le Siegneur est avec vous.*" etc. etc., Like the Latin prayers, we did not know too well what we were saying and if we lost our beads we could fake it with our ten fingers. The problem without the rosary was that one would get mixed up on the number of decades completed and not know how close to the end one was. Man! It got sleepy sometimes but if we slumped over the bed too much we heard about it. I must have been influenced by the other side for I got in plenty of trouble needling others and spent considerable prayer time in the corner. That would have been a good time to go because after doing that penance I am sure St. Peter would have welcomed us directly.

I recently visited the house we had live in. It was an experience in perception! Wow! In my "minds eye" I had remembered the home as huge - with plenty of room, many steps to the second floor, etc. Now, I can't understand how a family of six could live comfortably in that place. I learned, once again, the difference between the child's mind's eye and the adult minds eye. I suppose the same applies to those "Snows of Yester-year". Maybe they were not as deep as I remembered and maybe those those winters were no worse than the one we are now experiencing.

**LA SOCIETE IS YOUR ORGANIZATION -
HELP PROMOTE MEMBERSHIP IN YOUR ORGANIZATION.**

LaSociete Canadienne-Francaise du Minnesota came into existence in the late winter of 1979, and has been a constant representative of the French-Canadian heritage since that time.

We are noting, each year, a decline in members. The decline is slow, but consistent. We are nearing a point of major concern as to whether or not this organization will continue to be able to exist and serve its most important functions. Without members, there is no La Societe. Without La Societe, there is a "hole in the soul" of our heritage.

Each member should assume a responsibility for keeping this organization alive. A major way you can help is by identifying in your own family one or two or more persons one generation younger than you who have at least some interest in preserving their heritage. Urge them to join, or purchase a membership for them. We all need to do our part.

**DUES AMOUNTS: Family \$15.00; Senior over 62 \$8.00; Senior Couple \$10.00; Single \$10.00
MAKE CHECK TO LA SOCIETE C-F AND SEND TO:**

John England, 2002 Palace Avenue, St. Paul MN 55105.

MERCI BEAUCOUP



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

NEWS FROM LA SOCIETE C-F

MEETINGS: The next regular meetings of La Societe will be held on Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. on March 4, April 1, May 6 and June 3. All meetings are held at the International Institute, 1694 Como Avenue, St. Paul. This facility is easy to find, on Como., just west of Snelling, and directly across from the State Fair Grounds.

The April 1 meeting program will be Dick Bernard, reporting on a January, 1996, trip to the Holy Land.

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS: This years Festival is at the St. Paul Civic Center May 2-5. The theme is Ethnic Markets. Persons with ideas for our booth should contact Leo Gouette at 489-8306. We especially need people to help staff the booth on the following dates/times:

Friday, May 3, from 5-11 p.m.

Saturday, May 4, from 11 a.m. - 11 p.m.

Sunday, May 5, from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

We would like people to work four hour shifts if possible. You will be teamed with at least one other person. Call Leo Gouette at 489-8306.

LA SOCIETE will be electing three members of the BOARD OF DIRECTORS this spring. Your interest is solicited. Call Leo Gouette (489-8306) if interested.

MISCELLANEOUS:

* We are seeking genealogy type articles for Chez Nous. How about from you? Send to editor Dick Bernard, at 7632 157th Street W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.

* The Board is looking for someone to head up our Sales Committee. Contact Louis Ritchot at 323-8729 if interested.

* We are accepting advertisements for Chez Nous. Costs is \$100 per year (6 issues) for personal card size space, prorated if less than a year. Send requests attention of Leroy Dubois, secretary, 54 Suzanne Drive., St. Paul MN 55127-4116.

CONGRATULATIONS to LES ERRANTS for a fine performance at Landmark Center during Winter Carnival January 27. The group sang for a very appreciative audience.



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seven years while my parents lived on the first floor. At first, we had no running water. The simple sink and pump I installed when time and money permitted has long since been replaced. The outside door is still functional but the private, outside stairway that we used so often to carry baby girls and their paraphernalia and to reach the ground level, has been dismantled.

The two east dormer windows provided an excellent view of our small farm as well as the main road leading to and from our farmstead. I recall how one of these windows framed a smiling Georgia waving at me as I drove the tractor to the field that first day in the spring of 1936 when we began what was to be 39 years of farm life together. The trend toward a hot summer was established early in the spring. No substantial amounts of rain came until early in June. Then one Sunday evening, dark clouds moved in from the southwest and life-giving rain poured down throughout the night. We felt relieved. It was in this bedroom with its slanting, uninsulated ceiling that Georgia had to lie in bed for many days after the birth of our first girl in 1936.

The erosion of numbers in our family began, in a sense, with Ellen's graduation from high school in 1953. She continued to work for a year for a law firm with whom she had been taking office practice during her school years. She then attended the University of North Dakota for one year. Alice graduated in 1954 and also continued to work for the firm she had been taking office practice with during her school term. In the fall of 1955, they were both ready for college but due to two subnormal crops, we could not afford to send them to school. Georgia and I reached a spiritual low; we felt that we had failed them. After an all-night discussion, the two girls decided to seek employment in Salt Lake City - a city that had been recommended to them by the local employment office. The following Sunday, this house became the scene of a farewell party attended by many relatives. There was much good cheer on the outside but many heartaches within. After they arrived at their destination, letters shuttled back and forth several times each week. And oh, how we missed them!

Five years later, we helped one of them through college and the other one chose to marry. This house witnessed the first wedding in our

family in 1960. This was followed by two weddings in 1965, another in 1968 and a final wedding in 1973. Events in this old house reached a climax in 1974; our youngest daughter, Diane, graduated from UND, Georgia and I sold all our farm equipment and retired from farming. We continued to live in a much quieter house for about a year. But there is nothing so empty as that which was once so full! In the winter of 1976, we moved to Grand Forks where we would be near three of our daughters and five of our grandchildren.

This aged structure also brings back fond memories of my boyhood days when my parents, brothers and sisters farmed this land. All hoped and prayed, experienced triumphs and frustrations, as they sought to wrest a living from this land, to battle a sometimes hostile Mother Nature and often harsh economic laws. But they enjoyed good times too, especially in the late fall and winter months when social activities were more frequent. This dining room is silent now, but these walls often reverberated to the music of the fiddle, the stamp of dancing feet, the call of the caller and the happy sound of laughing voices. Party games as well as card games were also a popular form of entertainment. Unannounced evening visits by Ernest and Fabian Desautel or Eloi and Albert Major were regular occurrences in this house - they lived down the road a little way.. I can recall listening to friendly as well as "hot" arguments as to the relative merits of horses versus tractors; the merits of one threshing machine over another; the merits of one township candidate over another. Nobody ever changed anyone's mind! Whatever the outcome of the always unresolved issues, the evening ended on a friendly note when coffee and lunch were served.

Back then, kerosene or gasoline lamps furnished light for these rooms; only natural light filters in around the blinds now. In order to make efficient use of heat and lamps, the family members congregated in the kitchen and dining room. The living room, sometimes called the "parlor", was reserved for Sunday visitors or special occasions. There were two bedrooms upstairs; the big one was for the five boys and Grandpa and the other was for my two sisters. Both rooms were heated by whatever heat found its way up a narrow stairway. Ample covers were of the utmost importance.

Time moves inexorably. After celebrating their Golden Wedding, my parents retired from farming in 1942 and moved to Grafton. They had lived in this house for 29 years. For the first time in their married lives they were free of debt!

Some milestones for this place: Party line telephone, 1917; First car, 1917; First tractor, 1924; First radio with speaker, 1925; REA electricity, 1939.

THE TORNADO OF 1947

It was through this north window of our dining room that I saw the devastating effects of one of the worst tornadoes in the history of North



from the Grafton News & Times
July 9, 1947

Dakota. This storm occurred July 3, 1947, and came at the end of a hot, muggy day. When an extremely strong wind accompanied by heavy rain bent the nearby trees over to an alarming angle, my family and I sought shelter in our small, secure cellar. But I was curious about the storm and shuttled back and forth from the cellar to the north window. And each time I saw a new stage of destruction - a yawning maw after the large doors on the machine shed had been blown off; later, the shed was now crushed down on the machinery; just north of our buildings, a huge tornado funnel was visible through a veiled shroud of mist. When I returned to the cellar, Georgia was leading in prayer, 11 year old Ellen and 10 year old, Alice. 3 year old, Marjorie, was trying to keep up but 1 year old, Joyce, was noncommittal. Meanwhile, this house, a stable structure, shuddered from the fury of the gale without.

Violent storms often end abruptly. Soon, all was calm and the sun was shining beautifully. When I walked out toward the machine shed, I had

an unobstructed view to the north and sensed that something was very different - an immense void. After I marshaled my somewhat dulled wits, I realized that an entire farmstead was gone. The tall, stately cottonwood trees that had ever sheltered that farmstead, lay almost in a horizontal position. The three buildings that had always stood outlined against the north sky had been completely obliterated and now there was an awful openness. We learned later that seven of the many Mexican laborers who had lived there had been killed by that devastating storm.

THE 1950 FLOOD

On the morning of April 19, 1950, we looked out from our west kitchen window and saw a great lake to the west of us. It was not unexpected. The Grafton area had received 84 inches of snow since the fall of '49 and it had become apparent that the coming flood would equal or even exceed the extensive inundation of 1948. Early in the morning daughter Ellen and I had taken a tractor ride to survey conditions west of us. The old, familiar neighborhood had taken on a new, strange look. The many farmsteads that had dotted the broad acres of farmland had become islands of trees in a huge lake. It was unreal. It was eerie. It was awesome! And all that was holding back that reservoir of potential destruction was a small levee formed by freezing water combined with twigs and straw washed up from already conquered-by-high-water farm fields. We hurried back and all of us mentally braced for the coming onslaught.

We didn't have long to wait. The small, frozen levee was but a temporary impediment that soon succumbed to the pressure generated by a body of water that extended many miles to the northwest. The onrushing water quickly made its way over or around any obstacle in its path; each became a short-term island of dryness; the gray water cascaded down the steps of the potato pit. Our oldest daughter, Ellen and Alice, rode on the tractor with me as I drove from one building to another watching the "progress of destruction". All day long, the dirty water rushed by the north side as well as the south side of the house leaving it its wake transient potatoes, sugar beets and straw it had swept up from the many farm fields it had crossed.

We were having our noon meal about the time our cellar was being filled with muddy water. Each time the water level reached to a higher shelf

that was stocked with Mason Jars, we could hear the tinkling sound of newly-floated jars softly nudging one another as each sought floating space for itself. By this time, we were a bit slap-happy from a multiplication of recent events and we giggled like small children each time a new row of jars was sent a-tinkling.

Well, it's been a long day. It's time to leave this former dwelling place - perhaps for the last time. But the memories will live on; there are many more than have been recorded here. So, to the old house which long sheltered the ones I loved and the ones I love. Thanks - for the memories.

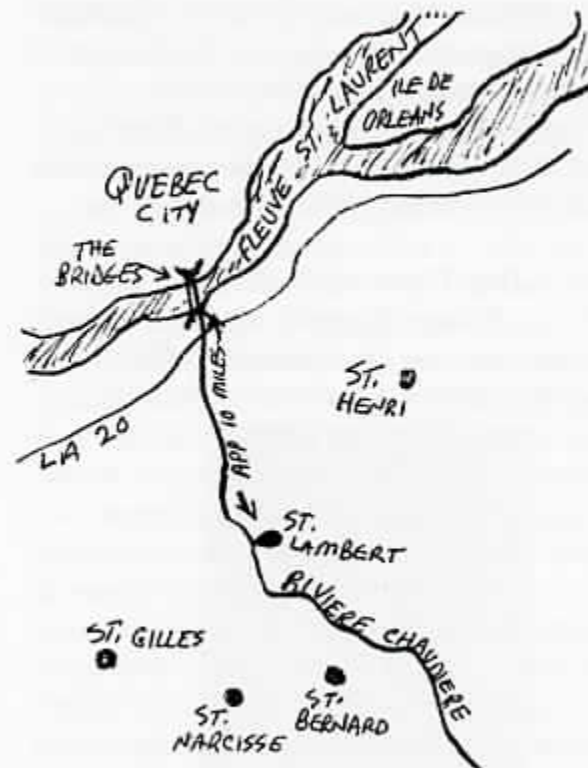
THE CASE OF THE MISSING FINGERS

by Jean-Marc Charron
Deux Montagnes, PQ

(Editors Note: Jean-Marc Charron has previously submitted very interesting articles to us. He is a retired RCMP, and accomplished genealogist, in the Montreal area. Merci, Jean-Marc. His comments about St-Lambert relate to the famille Collet, many of whose members migrated in the early 1860s to Minneapolis-St. Paul (Centerville and old St. Anthony) and later to North Dakota.)

Imagine yourself approaching "*la ville de Quebec*", the cradle of French civilization in America, coming from Montreal on Auto route Jean Lesage (also referred to as "La 20" or "*La Transcanadienne*"). For some time now your attention has been grabbed by the alluring sight of Quebec when, in the approaches to the two bridges (*Le Pont de Quebec* and *Le Pont Pierre-Laporte* which can take you north, if you like, high over "*Le Saint-Laurent*") you go over "*La Chaudiere*". The Chaudiere River takes its source at Lac Megantic, some 85 miles to your right to the south, near the Maine-Quebec border, and flows northward through the Beauce region. It also overflows, almost yearly, giving "*les Beaucarons*" the nickname of "*Les jarrets noirs*", the black legs, as it were. A book or two could easily be written on the history witnessed by "*La Chaudiere*". From before and after the last 400 years of documented history we can pick out various activities the river has seen. For the Montagnais-Naskapi and Algonquin tribes of the north, "*La Chaudiere*" was a major route to the Appalachians of the south, lush grounds for hunting, fishing, trade, romance, sightseeing, war,

and home of the St. Lawrence Iroquois and Abenaki. Benedict Arnold floated down "*La*



Chaudiere" on his dashing attempt to seize Quebec. And colonists established themselves along its fertile banks, clearing and cultivating the land. Our story of the missing fingers is framed in the decor of the town of St-Lambert, straddling "*La Chaudiere*" just ten miles south of the Quebec bridges.

It is 1912, and the construction of the 600 foot long Pont Tachereau has been completed and is now being duly blessed. Peer into the crowd and pay attention to the men. More than a few of them show, in their faces, an air of mixed feelings about the whole event. Observe which man is holding his hands unnaturally, appearing self-conscious about one or even perhaps both of his hands. Anyone signing himself awkwardly with his left hand? To give their deniers at "*la quete*" (the collection), is anyone foraging their pockets for their deniers after having turned their backs to the watchful eyes of friends and relatives ever fearing their good natured teasing? Anyone shaking hands with "the other hand", always keeping one hand closefisted? What you are seeing, of course, are some of the "amputees" of St-Lambert. Still today, knowing or not, probably hundred can claim one of them as their ancestors, even as close relatives. What caused so many severed fingers?

For an answer, let's approach Etienne Roy. Today, at the blessing of the Pont Tacherau, he has good reasons to look sullen, and that irrespective of the fact that has a closed fist or not! Actually he was so opposed to the construction of the bridge that nobody expected him to be here. This event is making him the last operator of the "*Bac de St-Lambert*", the ferryboat service first operated by Romuald Vallieres of St-Henri, then by his son Louis, Napoleon Morin, Johnny Roy, and then Etienne Roy. Etienne was a daily sight at the crossing, so much so that he actually seemed to be living on his "*Bac*". But Etienne has so many friends, and everybody knows him so well that he just could not miss the "*fete*". And a celebration it is in a way because from now on both parts of St-Lambert will be united by a bridge. After all, election promises have to materialize sometime - at least partly! And why not a bridge? No more waiting for the "*Bac*", no more fares, no more breakdowns or sad accidents. Of course, the "*Bac*" will be missed because to thousands it gave time. Time for lovers to be romantic, especially on a balmy summer evening under a moonlit sky, time to relax for the stressed farmer and his family, bouncing back from Quebec with an empty wagon, having sold all their produce at the *Marche Central*; time for the *Gendarme* to catch the thief, the smuggler or his girlfriend. What price progress!

It started on a big scale around the middle of the last century. It was free enterprise at its best. "*Une Digue*", a dike, had first been cast in the shallowest part of the river and it had a dual purpose. It would allow the water to be of sufficient depth for the operation of the "*Bac*" but it would also allow for the buggies to "*traverser a gue*", to ford the river when the level of the water was at its lowest. In 1994, remnants of the dike are still visible, just downstream from the bridge. The owner would build a "*bac*" and assume all the costs but had to comply with the rules of the town Council. For exclusivity, the owner had to pay \$25.00 for the annual permit. Of course, it was not a complete guarantee as there was competition from the many moonlighting canoe operators who made a few cents on the sly by transporting people across.

Sunday was free of charge. The first chapel had been built in 1850 to be replaced by the first church, built in 1854 on land given by Charles and Denis Collet. There was a crossing for each call of

the bell announcing the mass and one for "*les vePRES*", the vespers. On other days, as it was in the beginning, one had to pay \$.15 for a double carriage and \$.05 for a single one and the number of passengers did not add to the cost. A pedestrian, who by law had to be picked up, had to fork out \$.02 for the crossing, but would pay only \$.01 if accompanied by a carriage.

Fridays and Saturdays, market days, were very busy indeed. Besides catering to the St-Lambert people, there were a good many carriages from St-Gilles, St-Narcisse and St-Bernard. Especially at the end of those days, the *bac's* conductor had to resort to a lot of "*doighte*" (!...), patience, tact, and a tall order of "*reserve*" as the custom to offer a drink, "*un petit coup*", was very much alive. The conductor had to constantly remind himself of the inevitability of the long night ahead.

Now to the gist of it. The "*batiment*", the vessel, was 10 feet wide at the water line with a working surface of 18 feet wide. As for its length, two enormous beams, 14 inches square by 45 feet long, were needed. These beams would form an integral part of the "*bac*", installed as they were on each of its sides and joining at their extremities. Such a ferry could transport 120 persons and 5 carriages at most. Considering such a load, we can appreciate the brute arm's strength needed by a conductor as the "*motor*" consisted of pulling on a steel cable....

Two cables were needed and were essential for the proper operation of the transport. The higher one would only hold the "*cable directeur*", or guiding cable, at the proper height in relation to the water level during the entire crossing. The guiding cable would pass between two vertical wooden rollers and would rest on a third horizontal roller. Even though these rollers were made of the best "*bois franc*", or hardwood, the weight of the steel cable would slice through them in three or four days. And...you guessed it...that steel cable would occasionally slice through more than just wood. A moment of inattention, clumsiness, "*un petit coup de trop*", perhaps, the conductor with his hands too near the guiding rollers...and...crunch. One finger, sometimes two, would painfully and irremediably be severed. A "major" loss for the unfortunate operator but a net gain for the local lore and "*la petite histoire*".



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

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Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

NEWS FROM LA SOCIETE C-F

MEETINGS: The next regular meetings of La Societe will be held on Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. on May 6 and June 3, and August 5. All meetings are held at the International Institute, 1694 Como Avenue, St. Paul. This facility is easy to find, on Como, just west of Snelling, and directly across from the State Fair Grounds.

Directors for LaSociete will be elected at the June 3 meeting. Please plan to attend. There are three positions and three candidates, as follows:

Dorothy Landry has been a long time active member. In the past she has held office and served on many committees with LSCF. She has also been active in various community groups.

Leroy Dubois has been an active member of LSCF for many years, including service as president. Presently he is secretary of the club. He is also a member of Les Errants.

Leo Gouette has been a member of LSCF for a number of years, and has served as president, as well as active on various committees. He has chaired, and again chairs this year, the committee which handles LSCF's booth at the Festival of Nations.

FESTIVAL OF NATIONS: This years Festival is at the **St. Paul Civic Center May 2-5**. The theme is Ethnic Markets. We still need people to help. Leo Gouette 489-8306.

MARK YOUR CALENDRE AND JOIN US.

The annual picnic/potluck will be at Spooner Park in Little Canada on St-Jean Baptiste Day, Sunday afternoon, June 23. Another note: hold open the evening of June 28. Dance. More later.

* We are accepting advertisements for **Chez Nous**. Cost is \$100 per year (6 issues) for personal card size space, prorated if less than a year. Send cards and payments (to LSCF) to **John England, Treasurer, 2002 Palace Ave St. Paul 55155**.

NEW MEMBER? Single \$10 (senior \$8); Family \$15 (senior \$10) Checks to "LSCF" send to **John England, 2002 Palace Ave St. Paul 55105**

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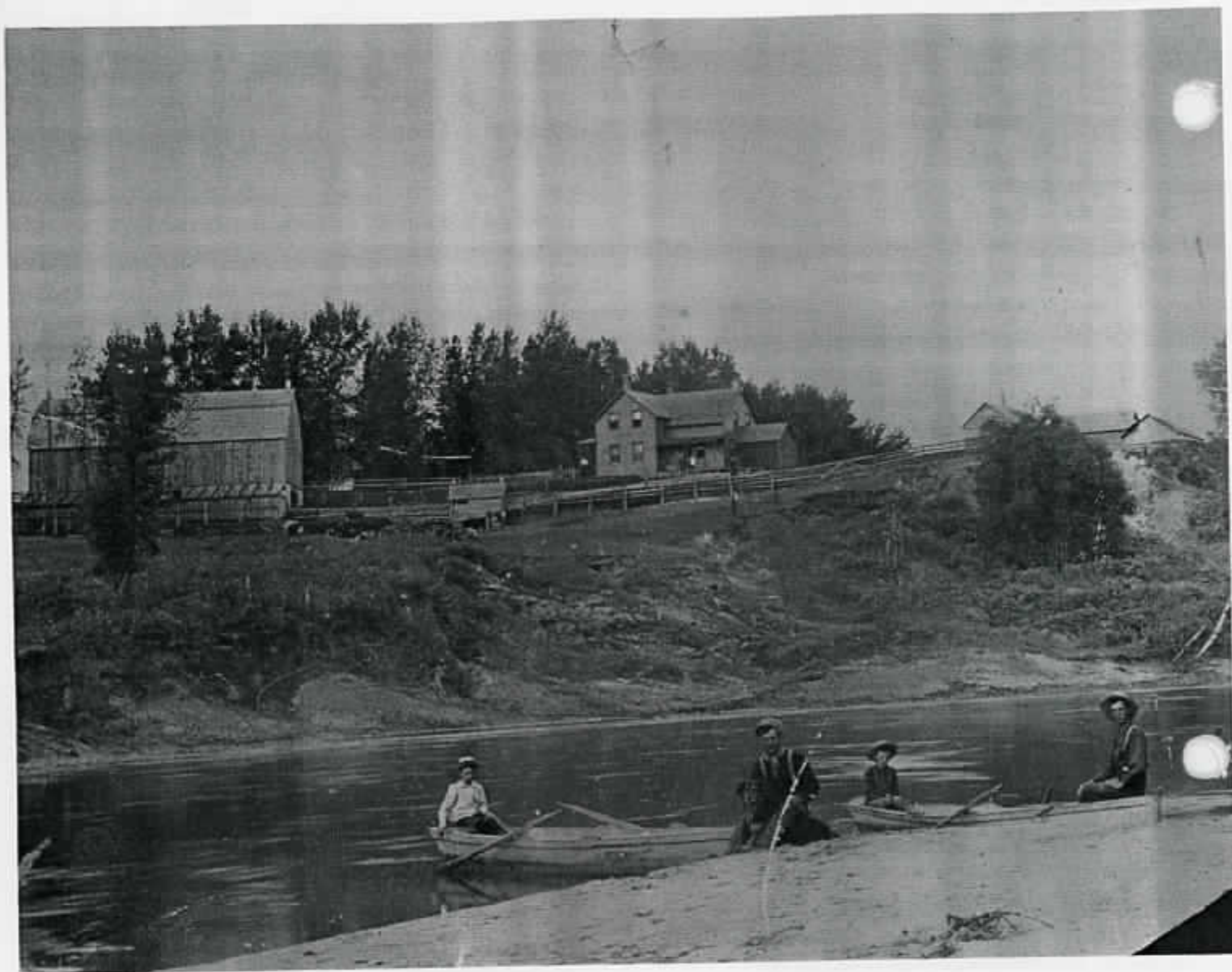
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THE FRENCH-CANADIAN COUNTRY OF NORTHERN MINNESOTA

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This fascinating photo, provided by Lowell Mercil of Mentor MN, was likely taken in the late 1880s or early 1890s at the Joseph O. Sauve farm.

Mr. Mercil, who is directly descended from the Sauve-LaFramboise families, provides the following information: "The Sauve farm was located four miles east of Crookston MN bordering the Red Lake River and what later became U.S. Highway #2. The unnamed individuals [another case made for labelling your photographs by people and date] are probably four of Mr. Sauve's five sons - there were, also, eight daughters.

The boys in the photo appear to be just whiling-away a pleasant Summer Sunday afternoon. It must be Sunday or they would be working in the fields! Fishing was a popular and useful amusement - food gathering entertainment.

The Sauve family immigrated from St. Timothee, Beauharnois County, Quebec, in 1881 as part of a wave of settlers to the Red River country in Polk County. They were among those who formed the predominately Canadian-French communities of Gentilly, Red Lake Falls, Terrebonne, etc., in the area. The farm pictured was purchased in 1888 and was the second farm purchased by Mr. Sauve. His first farm was located three miles southeast of the river farm.

The early experiences of Mr. Sauve on his first farm, and those of his brother-in-law, Joseph Laframboise, were contained in letters written in 1883 to apprise those still in Canada of the conditions in the

recently developed frontier¹ (James J. Hill's Twin Cities to Winnipeg railroad had come through the area in 1878). The letters - a portion of one is printed below - are part of a soon to be re-published booklet entitled "Description of the Canadian Colony of Polk County by a Committee of French Canadians", which is a valuable historic look at the new country as seen by its pioneers.

From a letter dated Gentilly MN, February 5, 1883:

"Messieurs of the Committee:

I have had just two years of experience in this country. It was painful for me at first to leave Canada and the good property that allowed me to live at ease and without anxiety, to come and apply the money in a country, where I believe, the 7 or 8 year statistics offer only weak guarantees. I wished to have a large farm, and I bought 620 acres from the railroad company at \$7 per acre. I have applied considerable sum to masonry, fences, horses, etc.

Since I have only a few acres under cultivation, I have had only an insignificant harvest. It has taken a very long time for me to get an idea of this country; and the object of this letter that was requested by the committee, is to give my opinion on this question: is it desirable for a man who has \$5,000 to \$12,000 to come and settle in the Canadian colony of Polk County? I answer with empasis - Yes!

By all reports, this place offers more advantages than Canada.

The rigor of the climate, about which some people make so great a noise, is not, for me a serious objection.

As for me, I believe I have property values that will double if I apply myself. Aside from the peculiar advantages of the country, one should not neglect to mention the improvements made in the five years existence: our bridges built, our roads opened, our churches and schools nearby, a good market at our door, and the hope of a better tomorrow.

Finally, I am content with what I have done, for I have reason to believe in a fine future."

Joseph Sauve

Finally, from another letter dated February, 1883, from Joseph Laframboise:

"I came to this country in 1869. I had \$2,700. I bought the rights of a predecessor for \$825.

The first year I harvested 656 bushels of wheat and 300 bushels of oats. I had cultivated 30 acres.

The second year I obtained the following harvest: 1100 bushels of wheat, 500 bushels of oats and 300 bushels of potatoes.

The third year I harvested: 1338 bushels of wheat, 840 bushels of oats, 400 bushels of potatoes and 55 tons of hay.

I have bought woodland and I estimate my property at a value of \$9,000.

I can only encourage those who have the idea of emigrating to come to this county, or at least to visit it before going elsewhere.

This letter is prepared for the sole purpose of being of help to prospective emigrants."

Joseph Laframboise

¹ These letters originally appeared in French. It is not known whether the letters were actually written by the writer, or transcribed by someone else after an interview with the two farmers. It was very common in the early days of colonization of "the west" for railroad companies and other entrepreneurs to market their new country in the eastern regions, hopefully to entice new immigrants to the area. Without immigrants, the new country was essentially worthless to the builders of the railroads, as well as to the merchants developing new markets in the region and in the embryonic towns along the railroad routes. Thus, much effort was expended to attract people to actually make the land productive - and thus, valuable - in the short and long term. Tens of thousands of pioneers from Lower Canada and elsewhere made good on the entrepreneurs dream - and often of their own.

As stated in Mr. Sauve's letter, the new land was agriculturally untested, and pioneers had no assurance of how their land would produce long term. This was often an important consideration, since the land from which they were migrating had been farmed for over 200 years. Having once arrived, the new settlers made what was essentially an irrevocable commitment since they could not afford to return home if things didn't work out in the new land since in many cases they had invested their savings and sold previous property in order to invest in the new land. How many of us would risk all in such a venture? The Editor..



Visiting was a common activity among the French-Canadians, as among all nationalities. Visiting was most common on Sundays. The above photo was taken sometime in the early 1920s at the home of Henry and Josephine Bernard (3rd and 5th adults from left) in Grafton, North Dakota. Standing at left is Henry Bernard, Jr., the father of the editor of *Chez Nous*. To the right of Henry Bernard Sr. is their daughter, Josephine. Among the youngsters - probably second from left sitting in the 1902 Oldsmobile - is their youngest son, Frank Peter, who later was to lose his life as a sailor on board the USS *Arizona* at Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941.

Henry Bernard owned the old Oldsmobile for many years, and virtually every year up to the mid-1950s drove it in the Grafton July 4th parade. When last checked, the car was in an automobile museum in the Denver area.

Henry Bernard Jr. recalled that among the two families visiting the Bernards on this day was the Bilodeau family of Winnipeg, Manitoba.

THE LONG HOT SUMMER from p.1
harvested over 125 bushels of potatoes per acre.
We didn't fare as well but we did harvest 85 bushels an acre and at \$1.50 per bushel, it helped fill some of the gaping financial holes left by the Depression of the early 30s.

So, the long, hot summer of 1936 turned out well for the Eberts. We were the happy recipients of a new little stranger who came to live with us; Georgia fully regained her health; financially, 1936 was one of our better years. All this despite the fact that it was the hottest, driest year we experienced in all the years we farmed in the Grafton area. So....

A "toast" to the long, hot summer of 1936!!!

A PROJECT FOR YOU:

We'd like to print some bare basic genealogy information about members, so that you can get to know connections. If you care to, please send a brief letter before August 15 to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St. W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. Include the following information:

Your name

If you know, for each French-Canadian ancestor who came to Minnesota :

1. Their name(s)
2. Where in Canada they came from
3. Where they first came to in the U.S.
4. When they came to Minnesota, and where they settled.

SOME OLD TIME SUMMER HAPPENINGS IN THE CROOKSTON MN AREA

collected by Lowell Mercil, Mentor MN

Gone fishin' - from the Minneapolis Tribune, May 20, 1884: "Crookston, May 18.--- Several sturgeon are caught below the dam every day. The fish weigh from forty to one hundred and twelve pounds apiece, after making the usual reduction for lies."

Lumber drives - an onlooker attraction? - Minneapolis Tribune, May 14, 1885: Crookston. The log drive for Walker's mill passed Terrebonne last week. it contains 10,000,000 [board] feet. There is plenty of water for driving, and it will reach Crookston in about fifteen days."

As early as June 2, 1881, baseball was an organized sport at Crookston. Polk County Tribune June 2, 1881: "Base Ball Club. The members of the Crookston B.B.C., are requested to meet at the office of Reynolds & Watts on Saturday evening, June 4th, at 8 o'clock sharp to elect a captain and transact other business of importance."

In the same year as organized baseball arrived, horse races were held in Gentilly where the population of the Parish was 118 families or 700 individuals (practically all of the residents of the township were Catholic). Polk County Tribune, June 2, 1881: "The races at Gentilly, advertised elsewhere in this issue will be an event which the sporting fraternity of the county will hail with delight. There are a number of "flyers" in the county many of which it is expected will be present and no pains nor expense will be spared to render the event one long to be remembered in sporting circles."

"...[I]t has been decided to have a series of races to which the attention of sporting men and all others is invited. The following program will be observed:

FIRST RACE will be a mile trot in sulky; three to enter, two to go. Three best in five wins.

SECOND RACE will be a mile trot in double harness; The best two in three wins.

THIRD RACE will be a race of rackers, either in sulky or under the saddle; The best two in three wins.

FOURTH RACE will be a gallop under the saddle; three...two to go. The best two in three...."

NOT A MEMBER, BUT FEELING YOU SHOULD BE ONE? GREAT! It's very simple to join:

Single membership is \$10 per year (\$8 for seniors);

Family membership is \$15 per year (\$10 for seniors);

Membership includes six issues of *Chez Nous*.

Make checks to "LSCF" and mail to John England, Treasurer, 2002 Palace Avenue, St. Paul MN 55103.



Another boat, another place...and not in the summertime. Sometime in the early spring of 1907, Henry Bernard took to the Park River in Grafton ND with his totally homemade boat and motor. Riding with him was his oldest daughter, Josephine. If one looks closely, an outboard paddle wheel is visible. This was connected to an inboard engine of some type. The Bernard's lived right on the river bank in Grafton.

A PRIVILEGE OF MEMBERSHIP IS CHEZ NOUS...but with membership there is a price, and more than a few dollars.

Each reader of this newsletter should consider him or herself a recruiter for new members to La Societe. Without members, there is no organization; without an organization there is no newsletter. It is as simple as that.

Help us continue to speak to your interests.



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

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Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

NEWS FROM LA SOCIETE C-F

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT: Robert Dery, Canadian Consul General, and his wife, Lorraine, will be hosting La Societe members at their home in Minneapolis on a Saturday afternoon in late September. Details, including specific date, will be in the next Chez Nous. Please plan to attend this extra special event

MEETINGS: The next regular meetings of La Societe will be held on Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. August 5 and October 7. All meetings are held at the International Institute, 1694 Como Avenue, St. Paul. This facility is easy to find, on Como, just west of Snelling, and directly across from the State Fair Grounds.

OTHER EVENTS:

July 31, 7 p.m., Rice Street Parade, St. Paul. If interested in participating, contact Rene Juairé at 739-3491.

August 10, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Elk River Sesquicentennial Heritage Festival. Les Errants are performing here. Parade is 2 p.m. on August 11. Voyageur costume is required. Les Errants is scheduled to perform.

August 11, 11 a.m. to 6 p.m., Minnesota Historical Society Cultural Festival at Minnesota History Center, St. Paul. Free admission. More

info: Tamara Layman, 296-4975.

August 11, Little Canada Days Parade and Festival. Contact Louis Ritchot (323-8729) for more information.

August 31 through September 2, Fort Snelling Rendezvous. Free admission if in Voyageur costume.

September 14, Snake River Rendezvous, Pine City. Free admission if in Voyageur costume.

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