

LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE
P.O. BOX 581413
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55458-1413

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 911
Minneapolis, MN



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Septembre-Octobre, 1996 VOL. 18 NO. 2

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard



The Consul General of Canada
and Mrs. Robert Déry

request the pleasure of your company
for wine and cheese with

La Société canadienne française du Minnesota

and

Les Errants

Sunday, September 29, 1996

4:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Official Residence
28 Park Lane
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Please reply prior to September 24
(612) 332-7486, extension 3201

Map to Dery's home on page eight

THE GIFT OF A SMILE

Merci to Stephanie Wolkin

Provence, one of the best-known regions in southeastern France, is filled with exotic sights and sounds. The bright fuschia of bouganvillea cascading down the sides of buildings and stone fences, the pungent aroma of fish soup, the glistening smooth surfaces of handcrafted olive wood bowls – all can be found in abundance in Provence.

I was fortunate to visit this part of France in July and came away with wonderful memories of the region and its people. Perhaps no town embodied the spirit of Provence more than Eze. Sunbathed and nestled into the picturesque mountainside, Eze offers a quiet sanctuary from the fast lane lifestyle of nearby Monaco. The following poem, which I found tacked onto the wall of a side chapel in the church at Eze, speaks to the outlook and attitude of the Provençal people.

Le Don du Sourire

Il ne coûte rien et produit beaucoup.
Il enrichit celui qui le reçoit
sans appauvrir celui qui le donne.
Il ne dure qu'un instant,
mais son souvenir est parfois immortel.
Un sourire, c'est du repos pour l'être fatigué,
du courage pour l'âme abattue,
de la consolation pour le coeur endeuillé.
C'est un véritable antidote
que la nature tient en reserve
pour toutes les peines.
Et si l'on refuse le sourire que vous méritez
soyez genereux, donnez le vôtre.
Nul, en effet, n'a autant besoin d'un sourire
que celui qui ne sait pas en donner aux autres.

The gift of a smile

It costs nothing and produces a lot.
It enriches the person who receives it
without impoverishing the person who gives it.
It lasts only an instant
but its memory may last forever.
A smile gives rest to the weary person,
courage to the battered soul,
comfort to the heart in mourning.
It is a cure
that nature holds out
to all pain.
And if someone refuses the smile you give
be generous, give them yours.
No one has more need of a smile
than the person who doesn't know how to give one
himself.

REVISITING YOUR FAMILY HISTORIES

A note from the Editor: In the last issue we invited readers to send information about their families for publication in *Chez Nous*. Following are some wonderful offerings we received from our first request. We greatly appreciate the information.

Now, we'd like to hear from you. Let us know a bit about your family history. Include your name and address and the following kinds of information about your French-Canadian ancestors who came to Minnesota (or the state you came from): 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. **Send your information to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St. W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.**

From Dorothy (Viger) Fleming, 7495 McCarthy Beach Rd, Hibbing MN 55746.

Dorothy's parents were Ferdinand and Mary Louise (Dennis) Viger. "My Dad was born in Waubashene, Canada, and I know they went to Crystal Falls, Michigan, from Canada. They then came to Virginia MN and my grandfather was a carpenter for United States Steel. After the city of Virginia burned they moved to Eveleth, MN and my grandmother ran a boarding house for the mining company.

I have my grandfather's naturalization certificate and it is dated in 1898, and since they had to be in the U.S. for 5 years before applying for citizenship they must have come to the Iron Range in 1893¹.

¹ This would mean that Dorothy's parents and grandparents most likely came to Minnesota's famous Mesabi Iron Range as it began production of high grade iron ore.

My grandfather built the family home on Fayal Road in Eveleth and it still stands to this day, although it is not in our family any more. My grandparents are buried in the Eveleth MN cemetery."

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

"I can supply the following ancestors:

1. Georges England, son of Guillaume England and Marie Beland, was born October 1, 1847, at Ste. Ursule, Quebec. The Family later moved to St. Gabriel de Brandon.

Georges emigrated to Chicago about 1870 with a pal from St. Gabriel, Charles Boucher. The two men made their way to Rice County MN [south of Minneapolis-St. Paul]. Georges married Ermina Dulac, a Faribault native, in 1875, while his buddy married Ermina's sister, Margaret. Records at Faribault don't give Ermina's parents. One of George's sons, Emile Joseph, married Marie Albina Brule, also a Faribault native, in 1907.

2. Albina's parents were Arsene Brule and Julienne LeBlanc. (Brule is one of seven "dit" names for the surname Francoeur).

Arsene was born about 1845 at St. Cuthbert, Quebec. He married Julienne LeBlanc at St. Gabriel, May 29, 1871. I haven't found out how they came to the Faribault area. Church records indicate they were there in the mid 1870s.

Julienne was born December 26, 1857, at St. Gabriel. She and Arsene were the proud parents of fifteen, four of whom died in infancy. My dad told me that she had red hair, with matching hot temper. But I suppose keeping eleven Frenchies in line was enough to give anybody a temper!"

From Annabell (Payment) Filpula, 519 1st St, Nashwauk MN 55769

"I am the daughter of Legier Payment, who was born December 5, 1887, to Anton and Elena (Pilon) Payment.

Anton and Elena married in Quebec and had four children there before coming to Minnesota in 1879. They homesteaded first in Gervais Township, Polk County MN. Eight more children were born later in or around the area of Red Lake Falls MN.

Anton and family moved to Cohasset MN [west of Grand Rapids] in 1908 and lived out their lives on a small farm near where Minnesota Power

and Light now operates its Power Plant on the Mississippi River.

More details are available if anyone knows the family."

A MEMBER OFFERS ASSISTANCE. A long time member of LaSociete who has an active interest in genealogy, has agreed to give assistance on family history to those who ask. The member prefers not to be identified at this time. Persons with queries should send a #10 (business size) self-addressed stamped envelope with your question(s) c/o Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St. West #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. Indicate "Genealogy" in the lower left hand corner of your envelope. We'll forward your request.

The member writes:

"We all have family roots! Somewhere! Someplace! Some are longer than others, and others harder to connect for continuity!

Perhaps you might wish to pose a question, or make a contribution, to this portion of Chez Nous. For those with questions, we will try to answer your queries, and publish some contributions as well. I am sure we can help each other.

A first hint: I am sure you are aware of the problems generated when French names are translated into English. Here are a few:

Boisvert also appears as Greene or Greenwood.

LeMontagne as Hill or Mountain.

Coutu (Couture) has appeared as Youso (You sew)!

LaJeunesse appears also as Young

Poisson appears as Fisher or Fish

Courtemanche - Court or Short Sleeve.

This is just a small beginning. Let us hear from you!" A Helper Genealogist.

From Eugenia LaPlante Fellows, 28042 Lindenhurst Drive, Zephyrhills FL 33544-2705:

Eugenia is seeking any additional information any one might have on the following French-Canadian ancestors of hers who came to Minnesota.

"My father, Emile Joseph (Leriger de) LaPlante came to the U.S. in 1892 from St.

Constant parish, LaPrairie County, Quebec. He came to Crookston MN area about 1893.

Octave (Leriger de) LaPlante (grandfather) came to U.S. in 1892 with children and wife. They also came from St. Constant parish, and came to Crookston area about 1893. Derumene (Gagne) LaPlante, wife of Octave, also came from St. Constant. The children of Octave and Derumene were: Joseph, Emile, Eva, Alvina, Alexander, Felix, Marie, Aime.

Narcisse Martineau (grand-uncle) came with his family from Chateaugay, Quebec, to Red Lake Falls MN about 1900. His wife was Marie-Catherine Bouchard from LaPrairie County, Quebec. Their son, Narcisse Henri, was born in Montreal, and married my aunt Alvina LaPlante (listed above).

Catherine Delphine Poupard, mother of Marie-Catherine (above), came to Red Lake County MN about 1885 with second husband, Remi Cote, from LaPrairie County, Quebec.

Andre-Louis Prud'homme, and wife Georgina Laurent, came to the Crookston MN area about 1879 from St. Justin-de-Maskinonge, Quebec. Children who came with them to MN were Cordelia and Lydia. They were my great-uncle and aunt, as their son Arthur, born in MN, married my father's sister Eva LaPlante.

Simeon Patnaude from Longueuil, Quebec, came about 1870 to Hennepin County MN, later settling in Red Lake County. He was my great uncle by marriage as his daughter Olivene married my father's brother Joseph LaPlante.

Michel Patnaude, from Boucherville, Quebec, came about 1850 to Hennepin County MN. He is the father of Simeon (above)

Henriette Mercil from Longueuil, came with husband Michel Patnaude.

Louis Huot from L'Ange-Gardien, Quebec, came about 1850 to Ramsey County MN. His daughter Angelique-Philomene, born in Minnesota, married Simeon Patnaude (above). His his second wife was Henriette Patnaude, sister of Simeon.

Joseph (Leriger de) LaPlante, born 1826, St. Constant, Quebec (oldest brother of my grandfather Octave), came to area of St. Paul-Minneapolis about 1855-60 with family. He later moved to Polk County MN [Crookston area].

Mathilde Letourneau from St. Constant, wife of Joseph, is the sister of my great-grandmother Euphrosine Letourneau.

Mederick-Isidore (aka Frederick) (Leriger de) LaPlante, from St. Constant, son of Joseph and Mathide above, came to Minnesota with his parents.

Felix-Pierre LaVallee, from Sorel, came about 1850-55 to the area around St. Paul. He married in Little Canada and died in Centerville. His daughter married Mederick Isidore (above).

Charles Caron (1834-1905), wife of Marguerite Morin (1839-1909) and son Oliver (1863-1925), wife Julia Benoit (1871-1961); Charles Benoit (1822-1916) (unsure of their birthplaces) and wife Lucie Badayac from Yamaska, Quebec, all may have come to MN. Oliver and Julia are listed in 1910 in Polk County MN. Clara Caron married Albert LaPlante, son of Mederic-Isidore (so my cousins).

Joseph Gagne from St. Constant Parish, Quebec, and his wife Euphrosine Letourneau from St. Constant, came to MN about 1850-60, settled and died in Stillwater MN. They were my great-grandparents, parents of Derumene, my grandmother, above. They brought children whose names I don't have."

EUGENIE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY HELP YOU CAN PROVIDE.

MORE ON THE SUBJECT OF NAMES

A note from the Editor: On August 1, 1995, my good friend and outstanding genealogist Jean-Marc Charron of Deux Montagnes, Quebec, wrote a long letter about an important issue (which will appear in a future issue of Chez Nous.) As part of his letter, he included a commentary on some French surnames translated into English.

"...[A distant cousin of mine], Isidore Charron, born 2 March 1827, married Zoe Dubreuil. [They] moved to Los Angeles, but to find work, he needed to change his name to Wheelwright. The name became Wright, and so numerous "Wrights" in the Los Angeles area are his descendants....

How many millions have blended in with the rest of the crowd? As I have been collecting them, I could cite you names by the thousands, names that have been changed to fit with the new life. How to explain that Jewish or Polish or others did not seem to "require" a change? Sometimes I seriously think that our non-French people were just

madly jealous of the French, what with their joyful and happy go lucky dispositions, their large and happy families, their religious convictions, their manual dexterity, and what not. Think about this for a minute! Anyway, here are a few:

Alfred Archambault=Freddy Shambo
(Lyster)

Zephir Beauchemin=Sweetbreeze Macadam
(Worcester)

Noel Boulanger=Christmas Baker
(North Brookfield)

Jean Dompierre=John Stone

Alfred Leblanc=Fred White

Noe Gilbert = Noah Gibbett

Henri Frappier = Henry Foot

Joseph Gouin = Joe Wedge

Alfred Potvin = Fred Wine

Alexandre Duclos = Pitt Nealer

Michel Saunier = Michael Sweenyer
(Worcester)

Edouard Dumont = Edward Duemo
(Massena Spring)

Toussaint Tousignant = Allsaint Coughin
(Worcester)

Anne Beique = Ann Beakes
(Massena Spring)

Who would recognise French-Canadians under the following names: Wright, Pinkerton, Godboug, Goodman, Hart, Lennard, Fisher, Golden, Wells, Soft, Dress, Lafave, Tyo, Berry, Burrows,

A VERY IMPORTANT NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

This is the 66th issue of Chez Nous since I began co-editing with Jerry Forchette in August, 1985. The 67th issue could be the last if the discouragement of your active members continues unresolved (see boxed section on last page).

LaSociete C-F has a very proud history. From its beginning in March, 1979, active members have appeared in parades, sung thousands of songs, participated annually in the Festival of Nations, had picnics and Christmas parties, and otherwise been visible evidence of French-Canadian heritage.

But the number of really active members is at a truly critically low point.

I know many of you personally, and I know that many of you cannot be active for a variety of very good reasons. This includes not being able to attend meetings.

I do need to ask you to do three favors, however, between now and October 7: 1) write a letter to LaSociete, giving your impressions, your ideas, your thoughts (to **Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124**)...and I will pass the messages along to the officers of LSCF. They need to know that you care enough to keep this organization alive.

2) Respond to and attend the Canada Consul General's event on Sunday, September 29 (see page one)

3) Finally, actively encourage others, especially younger persons, to become members of this most important cultural preservation organization. It is their ancestors past that we wish to preserve for their descendants future.

Buckwheat, Brooks? They hide the Charron, Falardeau, Godbout, Jolicoeur, Therrien, Poissant, Dore, Dupuis, Ledoux, Vetu, Lefebvre, Taillon, Laframboise, Bureau, Sarrazin, Rousseau (MSGCF).

And this Mary Drinkwine that I spotted in a Vermont 1860 census, aged 99 years. Of course, Marie Boivin must have nevertheless lived a happy life surrounded by numerous descendants.

And these: Allard-Lord, Boileau-Drunkwater, Boisvert-Greenwood, Chamard-Catdead, Breton-Burtese, Chalifoux-Catbedcrazy, Boucher-Butcher, Bouthillier-Dutter, Clouatre-Coldwater, Desjardins-Gardner, Desjarlais-Dejerl, Descarreaux-Diamond, Giguere-Geer, Sirois-Seroy, Larue-Street, Thivierge-Littlevirgin, Ladouceur-Sweetness, Trepanier-Trepanay, Riendeau-Yando, Dubois-Wood, Harel-Red, Dupuis-Wells, Leblanc-White, Lenoir-Black, Letourneau-Blackbird, Lesage-Wiseman, Normandin-Norman, Monat-Miner, Laframboise-Raspberry

Lefebvre-Bean, Roy-King, Levesque-Bishop, Lavoie-Levoy, Thibodeau-Littlelowback, Ouellette-Wheler, Saint-Denis-Santany, Lamoureux-Love, Chaput-Catstinking, Noel Vincent- Christ, Courtemanche-Shortsleeve, Rapidieu dit Lamer - Rapidgod of the sea (MSGCF)...."

Merci, Jean-Marc. WHEW!!!!



Lake Superior in 1667-1669--the most accurate map of the lake made before the 20th century.
(See month of September, footnote (21) in the 1997 calendar).

1997 Calendrier LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE/ FRENCH IN AMERICA

The 13th edition of the calendar is now available. With its 13 color photographs, and many historical anniversaries and cultural events, it will enhance your knowledge of the important contribution of the French to the history and civilization of North America.

NB - The February photograph depicts the founding of Peoria by the French in 1691. Politicians and the press have since endowed this Illinois town with archtypical American values, exemplified by their perennial question:
"How will it play in Peoria?"

Prices: US\$6.50 + \$1.50 each--for postage & handling.
US\$6.00 each (postage & handling included) for an order of five calendars or more sent to a same address.

Make check payable to *French American Calendar -1997* and send it to:
R. Mikesell, 1155 E. 56th Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60637-1530.

number of copies _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

*For the persons who requested back copies: copies of previous editions of the Calendar still in print (1991-1996) can be obtained for **\$4.00** a copy, postage included.*

ALLIANCE FRANCO-AMÉRICAIN DU MIDWEST
Chicago, Illinois. Tél.: (312) 643-7865



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

NEWS FROM THE AUGUST 5TH MEETING OF LA SOCIETE C-F:

**1. RESERVE MONDAY
EVENING, OCTOBER 7, ON YOUR
CALENDAR. THIS IMPORTANT
REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING
WILL BEGIN AT 7:30 P.M. SHARP
AT THE INTERNATIONAL INSTIT-
UTE, 1694 COMO AVENUE, ST.
PAUL (ON THE SOUTH EDGE OF
THE STATE FAIRGROUNDS, JUST
WEST OF SNELLING). IF YOU
WISH TO SEE THE SOCIETE
CONTINUE, YOU MUST ATTEND!**

**2. FETE DE NOEL: DUE TO
LACK OF INTEREST (POOR
ATTENDANCE), THE ANNUAL
CHRISTMAS PARTY IS
CANCELLED.**

A long-time very active member who was at the August 5th meeting says this: "Our [LSCF leaders] morale is very low."

UPCOMING MEETINGS (All meetings are at the International Institute the first Monday of the month beginning at 7:30 p.m. See directions in #1 above.

October 7 - See box at left

November 4 - Henry Scholberg, author of "The French Pioneers of Minnesota", will speak. (His book is available, \$10, No.Star Publications, 195 Windsor Ln, New Brighton MN 55112)

December 2 - Duane Thein, great-grand nephew of Fr. Goiffon, "the peg leg Priest", will discuss his research into this remarkable man.

January - no meeting.

WE ACCEPT ADS 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 MN 55105.

MARK LABINE

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Mark Labine and Associates, P.A.
Suite 204, Evenson Building
2239 Carter Avenue at Como, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108
Office: (612) 644-1739 • Fax: (612) 645-2439



Maureen Ritchot
REALTOR®
GRI, ESA

Coon Rapids Office
11375 Robinson Drive NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433
V.M. (612) 486-5679
Res: (612) 323-8729
Off: (612) 754-5400
Fax: (612) 754-7313



TRI-STAR CORP. ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

11809 Vintage St. N.W. Coon Rapids, MN 55433
Office (612) 422-8555
Fax 323-3984

AL Dehmer
HM#(612) 428-7748
Pager# 908-1055

Keith Erickson
HM#(612) 472-7917
Pager# 650-2435

Louis Ritchot
HM#(612) 323-8729
Pager# 650-9206



FAREWELL, GEORGIA....

We bid a fond adieu to Georgia Ebert, for 61 years the beloved spouse of Ernest Ebert (shown above, February 8, 1996).

Georgia passed away July 1, about the time that Ernest's article which included references to her was published in *Chez Nous*.

TO BECOME A MEMBER OF LA SOCIETE:

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

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

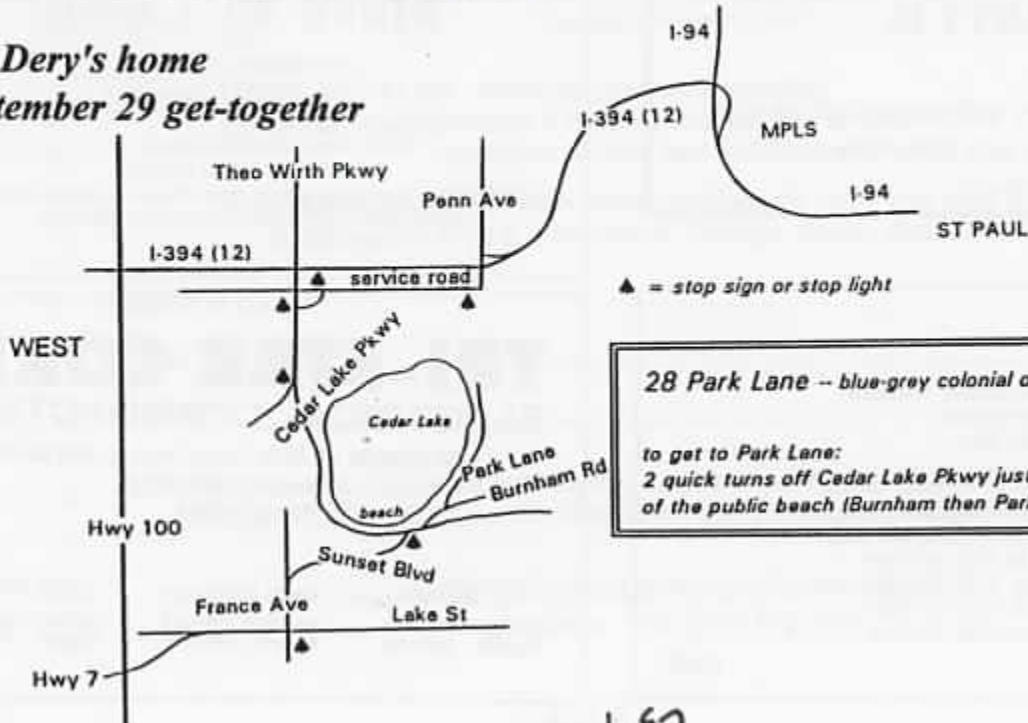
Membership includes six issues of *Chez Nous*.

Make checks to "LSCF" and mail to John England, Treasurer, 2002 Palace Avenue, St. Paul MN 55105.



A convivial, but small, group of members joined at the annual summer picnic of LSCF in Little Canada. The weather forecast - cool, and possible rain - dampened attendance, but the day turned out to be very nice.

**Map to Dery's home
for September 29 get-together**



28 Park Lane -- blue-grey colonial on left

*to get to Park Lane:
2 quick turns off Cedar Lake Pkwy just east
of the public beach (Burnham then Park Lane)*

697



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Novembre-Décembre, 1996 VOL. 18 NO. 3

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

In Memory of Jean-Marc Charron November 19, 1936 - September 15, 1996

EULOGY FOR JEAN-MARC CHARRON
given in French and English
by his children at his funeral Mass
September 19, 1996

Our father was a special man.

He was a man with an open mind and a big heart. He was a man of few words, yet the words he spoke were sincere and from the heart. And so, this eulogy will be one of few words and from the bottom of our hearts.

Each of us here today has a story that he or she could tell, or has spent special moments with him, or has been helped by his generosity.

Many of us are here today because of his genealogy work. He had great pride and received much happiness in bringing the Charrons' together from both sides of the border.

His life was rudely interrupted, as he put it. But, in his usual unselfish way, he used the time he had left to ensure that our Mom was all right and his children also.

Our Mom took excellent care of him with her infinite love. She helped him to die, with dignity, at home in the house that he loved. He will continue to forever live within our hearts until the day we join him.

We love you very much, Pa.



Jean-Marc at his beloved Tadoussac in about 1985-86. Tadoussac is near the point where the Saguenay River joins the St. Lawrence. Joan, his spouse of 36 years, says this photo is one of her favorites. The Charron's spent many days here, watching the whales at Cap Bon-Desir at Les Grands-Bergeronnes.

Au Revoir, Jean-Marc Charron

by Dick Bernard

On Monday, September 15, 1996, Jean-Marc Charron of Deux Montagnes PQ, left this world for the next. He was only 59 years old, and had suffered from cancer for some time.

Jean-Marc's friend, John Cote, remembers him in a following article. But I need to take some notice also of this remarkable man who I consider a great friend, though we never saw each other in person, and talked only once on the telephone. Our friendship was through letters and *Chez Nous*, spanning only two and one-half years.

I learned of Jean-Marc's passing on September 19.

At Bible Study a couple of days later we happened to be talking about the weekend's gospel, Matthew 20: 1-16. This is the Gospel in which the parable is told of the laborers who went to the vineyard. Those who worked all day were paid the same wage as those who worked an hour, and there was, of course, grumbling from those who had worked hardest.

We discussed what this parable meant. I observed to the group that perhaps I, with respect to Jean-Marc, was like the laborer who worked the least but got the full wage regardless. He knew me for only a moment of his life, yet he paid me in full.

You've read Jean-Marc's work several times in *Chez Nous*¹. His most recent contribution, on names, appeared in the last issue. His spouse, Joan, probably received that *Chez Nous* on almost the same day her husband of 36 years passed away.

Jean-Marc and I were introduced through John Cote, a WWII and navy career submariner with a great love for genealogy and things Canadian-French and himself a frequent contributor to *Chez Nous*. I met John Cote because I knew my maternal great-grandmother was a Cote, and because I saw his name and address in Volume VI of Thomas LaForest's *Our French Canadian*

¹ Merci to Jean-Marc for the following:
Sep-Oct, 1994 - Tadoussac, Quebec and Louis Cyr
Jan-Fev, 1996 - "The Voyageur Retorques"
Mai-Juin, 1996 - The Case of the Missing Fingers
Sep-Oct, 1996 - More on the subject of names

Ancestors.² I wrote to John about seven or eight years ago, thus beginning an enduring friendship (he describes our genealogical relationship more in the article that follows).

I came to know Jean-Marc as a magnificent genealogist who traced my French-Canadian roots for me - at no cost.

There are very simple genealogical sleuthing lessons I learned in the relationship that developed between John Cote, Jean-Marc Charron and I: ASK QUESTIONS OF ANYONE WHO YOU THINK MIGHT HAVE INFORMATION, AND CONTRIBUTE WHATEVER INFORMATION YOU CAN, BE IT GREAT OR SMALL, AND BE PATIENT. The three of us asked many questions about each others roots. We learned a lot. I contributed the least and received the most!

So, to Jean-Marc Charron, born November 19, 1936, died Monday, September 15, 1996, I say "Au Revoir" (because we will, some day, meet again.)

The sun did not shine on Monday

by John Cote, Brooklyn CT

I wish to talk about Jean-Marc Charron, who was a special person to many who will miss him very much for his wit, honesty, inspiration, love of family, country, a raconteur of tales, dedicated researcher, genealogist and a one of a kind friend that one is lucky to have, but most of all a cousin and accomplished writer.

Jean-Marc was born 19 November 1936. He was the son of Dolor Charron and Lucienne Lemieux³. Graduating from Superior School he was accepted in the RCMP after a rigorous physical and entrance exam. This he passed with superior grades and high honours. He was chosen to serve with the famous RCMP mounted colour guard troop whose reputation is world famous. This elite troop travels to many countries worldwide and are renown

² "Our French Canadian Ancestors" is an outstanding series of books giving brief biographies of a large number of French-Canadian families. It is filled with very interesting information. For information write The Lisi Press, Palm Harbor FL 34682-1063.

³ Jean-Marc was a life-long Quebecer. He was born at Brownsburg PQ, which is just north of the Ottawa River, and about 30 miles west of Montreal's St. Joseph's Oratory ("...a the Snowy Owl - Quebec's official bird - flies...." Jean-Marc Charron January 16, 1995).

for their horsemanship, style, flair and superior training. While in high school he won contests and prizes as an essayist and represented Montreal as a contestant. He was known for his ability with words, his writing style, and superior reports and especially his translations of English and French. Being bi-lingual was a plus and many times when at a meeting with only one or two non-French speaking superiors and 5-6 French speaking troopers, English was spoken but not French. Jean-Marc retired after 35 years of service with an honorable discharge and many accolades and best wishes for a happy retirement.

Almost thirty-six years ago cupid flung a bolt that smote Jean-Marc when was serving on duty in Montreal. Under the impulses of this bow he married an American girl, Joan Thivierge, an American citizen. Joan was born in Rousses Point NY. They settled in Montreal where Joan was employed by the US Customs Service, working as an inspector with the immigration service at the airport. As she likes to say "I still have my Green card" and "I am an immigrant." Thus a Franco-American-Canadian union took place and once again a circle was closed with the errant branches originally Canadian born who had emigrated to New England returned once more to their natal land two-three generations later. The Canadian heritage was too strong and finally the urge to return to the source was fulfilled. One of Jean Marcs uncles emigrated to Massachusetts and Rhode Island and also Vermont in the 1860s and returned in the 1890s back to Canada. Joan's grandfather also emigrated to Massachusetts and Rhode Island and finally settled in Rousses Point NY. An uncle ran a barber shop in Springfield MA in the late 1800s. Thus the errant branches of the Charron and Thivierge families united and closed the circle making the union complete after a sojourn south of the border.

As to Jean-Marc, our friendship dated back eight to nine years when a letter was received from him asking me if I could help in locating some Charrons in my area. Upon further correspondence with this Canadian stranger I discovered that he was related to me thru his great grand aunt Cordule Charron, who married my great-grandfather Jean Baptiste Cote in 1837 at St. Cesaire PQ. What a surprise to find a cousin involved in genealogy who could fill in the blanks for me on this Charron.

I digress a bit to mention that I am also related with the editor of *Chez Nous*, Dick Bernard, to the 6-7 degree as we both descend from the 5th son of Jean Cote and Anne Martin⁴, Jean Noel Cote. Jean Noels son Augustine is Dicks ancestor while Augustine's brother Joseph is my direct ancestor. Actually the relation between Dick and I is thru his grandfather, Honore Celestin (Henry) Bernard, whose parents were Romain Bernard and Julienne Cote. It is possible that we are also doubly related thru the Collette line, but so far no connection has been made in Canada, but all indications are that we must search for the connection overseas, which exists in France.

A strange twist of fate now comes into play showing that family oral histories are based on some factual happenings or events that were woven but twisted or changed over the years. May I cite this example. In the Cote history it was repeated

Time to renew.

In the last issue we worried aloud about the survival of LSCF and *Chez Nous*. No need to worry. We had a good meeting on October 7, and *LaSociete* and *Chez Nous* will continue for the next twelve months.

It is now time for most members to renew for 1997 (note your mailing label for your membership expiration date.) Checks for membership dues should be made to "LSCF" and mailed to John England, treasurer, at 2002 Palace Avenue, St. Paul MN 55105.

Dues amounts are:

Single - \$10 (seniors \$8)

Family - \$15 (seniors \$10)

Membership includes six issues of *Chez*

Nous.

We ask you to urge non-members to join us, and if you are reading this and not yet a member please joining as well. We continue only through active member support.

that our great-grandfather Jean Baptiste's wife, a certain Cordule Charron, had red hair and was

⁴ Jean Cote is believed to have come to Canada from France in 1634 or 1635 and is thus among the first families of Canada. It is believed that Anne Martin was the sister of Abraham Martin, after whom the Plains of Abraham in Quebec City is named.

commonly called L'Allemande - German. Thus she was known as the German girl. That was borne out as Cordule's mother was a Marie Louise Reimschneider whose father was Henry married to Marie Josephte Bolduc. Henry's immigrant ancestor was a Pierre Reimschneider, a soldier from Schleswig-Holstein, who came to Canada circa 1665. Thus Jean Marc was happy to receive these little tidbits that were passed down in the Cote history and unknown to him.

Other bits of such data filled in for Jean-Marc some fine details as he did the same for me. Thus we were able to complete many many families by copies of documents on my family and even births, wills, burial, baptism certificates and other legal documents that he procured or looked up in the Montreal records, etc. That he was generous, kind, friendly and willing to help anyone out if possible is well known. That he also tended to be a pacifist is not so well known. That he was an indefatigable researcher is true. He carried on extensive correspondence with many people in the U.S. and Canada. He was a writer of some note as he was published on various subjects in many periodicals. He was also a raconteur of tales about Canadiens histories. In fact, Jean Marc was a special person, a special friend, who strove to help out strangers in Canadian research, a lover of the outdoors, an outstanding family man and a model of what a father should be plus, after his retirement, an inveterate traveller with his house trailer and his white pickup. He and Joan travelled into the U.S. many times. I had the occasion to meet him personally in 1994, when he left a note on my door saying he would be at the Chaplin campground for a few days. We met for the first time and had a beautiful day showing him his ancestors graves, some of the historical sites. and all told that splendid day is now a pleasant memory for me. The dinner we had with Jean-Marc and Joan was memorable and made the end of a perfect day. Excellent food, companionship, stories, etc.

What Jean-Marc was most proud of besides the other accomplishments was his tireless and voluminous research in the Montreal archives at Salle Gagnon, etc. He even took a course in reading old documents amongst other subjects. His translations were excellent with a huge repository of information about the history of Canada.

12

Much more could be said about this wonderful person. Much is left unsaid. To know him was to respect him and love him and know that he would meet you more than halfway and keep his word. As for me, I will miss him sorely not only for his sources of information and research that I asked for, but as a cousin known for too short a time - a kindred spirit - a teller of tales, a generous kind loving person who saw good in everyone. A patriot who served his God, his country, and a splendid example of what one hopes to be.

So with these words about this unique person, I must close with a proper epitaph for him. Many epitaphs could be written large, extolling his accomplished service and other attributes. But I firmly believe that the best accolade and epitaph that fits this special person would be

**HERE LIES
JEAN-MARC CHARRON
AT REST.
WHEN GOD TOOK HIM
HE TOOK THE BEST.**

Between Genealogy Friends

by Jean-Marc Charron

Editors Note: John Cote shared with us part of a letter written to him by Jean-Marc November 26, 1994. It shows the conversational style of Jean-Marc, while he was about researching his own family history. Genealogy is often pure detective work which takes many years, often including many loose ends, dead ends or errant conclusions when one takes the wrong fork in the road. Experts share with amateurs many similar frustrations in their search for answers. The true investigator never gives up, always looking for a kindred spirit who shares his or her passion. Here Jean-Marc writes to John Cote, trying to dig up some more of his roots, and tossing in some personal philosophy besides!. In an upcoming issue we will share a later letter from Jean-Marc in which he commented more at length on the state of French and English speaking relationships in Canada.

Jean-Marc Charron wrote John Cote with some information and inquiry about his roots: "...Louis II Charron (Louis II because he is the second Louis in my ancestry), my great-grandfather...married Christine Cote. Five of their children (my grandfather Charles, Godefroi, Eloise, Reine and Emma) were born in the U.S. One possibility, therefore, is that Louis Charron and Christine Cote, after marrying in 1861, moved down to the U.S. after the birth of Delia in 1865, with their three children, and remained south of the border until about 1873, during which period the

five children were born. Having come back into Canada with their 8 children, they had another 3 children for a total of eleven. IF YOU COULD FIND WHERE THOSE FIVE WERE BORN YOU WOULD MAKE ME VERY HAPPY INDEED.

Consider looking under any transformation of the name Charron: Wright, Wheelright, Cartwright.... Quite many emigrating French-Canadians (almost a majority I think) had their names anglicized and most did not fight it because it meant survival. Bread on the table by assimilation and a job prevailed over pride.

I have no clue whatsoever of WHERE those 5 were born and lived in the U.S. I did a few forays in upstate Vermont a few years back and could not find a thing. I actually checked only the birth records of 2 or 3 municipalities taken at random in the Richford, VT, area, a shot in the dark because Godfroi, a brother of Charles, bought a farm there when he was 50 years old, and [it is] where many of his descendants live today. Of course I looked only under the name CHARRON. One day I shall go back and check the anglicized versions...

The general idea when you are born is to get ahead, not lose ground. So forget about Quebec being anything else than La Nation Quebecoise and perfectly happy with being just that in its present state. Experts agree with me (or vice versa) that Canada is not a nation per se. Quebec IS a NATION however, and in the true sense of the word. It is recognised as such the world over. To BE a Nation, the existence of a very real and palpable SOUL has to naturally flutter about. Although the U.S. generally does not fall within the definition [of nation], the same experts agree that it is in a special and unique category in that Americans are quite proud of their acreage and power and that if you consider their flagwaving ability their entity is in a category all by itself. Perhaps many little Nations in a big Nation? Like imagine the following leaving their home, let's say, on a Monday morning in Boston: the Jewish-American, the Italian-American, the Irish-American, the German-American, the African-American, the Franco-American, the English-American, etc.... Once the first step outdoors is taken one then becomes a full-blooded American for the whole day until returning to the warmth of their home where they resume being Jewish-American, Italian-American, Irish-American....in

their clothes, language, food, music, demeanor, reading....[their] culture or more to the point SOUL. L'ame de ma Nation. Just letting it out as I see it...."

Letters to Chez Nous:

Readers: we refer these letters to a member willing to give ideas to assist folks enroute to their roots. Feel free to share with these readers any information/insights you may have about their families.

An inquiry from Mona Nied, 1340 9th Avenue South #301, St. Cloud MN 56301.

I am very interested in the Morrisette and Bourgeoise heritage. If you can help me I would be grateful.

My father Edmond Edward Morrisette was born January 4, 1893, and died August, 1976. He was born in rural Elk River MN. He married Jenny Green in January, 1923.

His father was also Edmond Edward Morrisette, who married Eugenia Bourgeoise. Edmond's father was Cleophasse Morrisette who married Denige Toussaint. They farmed near Ft. Ripley MN.

My grandmother was Eugenia Bourgeoise, born November 15, 1866, and died 1966. Her mother was Rose Romillard. Her father was Jean Baptiste Bourgeoise. [I believe] they were the first Catholic couple married in Minneapolis. Jean Baptiste was the 11th or 14th person to come to Minneapolis. He later moved up the river and farmed between Dayton and Anoka. They had twelve children: Joseph, Matthew, Louis, Horace, John, Stella, Elizabeth, Eugenia, Roseanne, Josephine, Minnie and Mary.

Jean Baptiste owned Nicollet Island and traded it for cattle.

from Eugenie Fellows, 28042 Lindenhurst Drive, Zephyrhills FL 33544-2705

Here are some transformations of French names that I have encountered:

- Gotea = Gauthier
- Jolly = Joli
- Lasha = Leger
- Laundry = Landry
- Tatro = Tetreau

I would like some help on the following:

birth date, death date, place, marriage (to a French wife), parents, of Toussaint Charbonneau. He was born in Canada, I think; he came to the western area of Missouri and Dakota and was the husband of Sacajawea, the Indian woman who guided the Lewis and Clark expedition to the Pacific Ocean. Toussaint, Sacajawea, and their child went with Lewis and Clark all the way to the Pacific and then came back with them to the Mandan Indian tribal area where they were living when they joined the expedition. I would like to have as much information as possible about Toussaint.

from Linda Dube, 39 Birch Street,
Madawaska ME 04756:

"...I have published a five volume set about the Cote family. I've also done the "Bouchard", "Paradis", "Therault", "Plourde", and "Ouellette" families. Some of these are still available for purchase.

Presently I am compiling the "Dube-Dubay" line for publication in 1998, and I've also been asked to do the "Guimond" book for their international reunion here in Madawaska in 1997.

(Editors note: Madawaska has an annual tradition of recognizing families who were early residents of the area. Madawaska is in the border area of Maine and eastern Quebec.)

from Adella Gaboury, 165 N McKnight
Rd #217, St Paul MN 55119:

My husband's ancestors name was Marie Anne Gaboury, first French-Canadian woman in the northwest. I keep looking for news of my ancestors, DeRosiers and Dupre's. Fun reading. Thanks.

THE FRENCH PIONEERS OF MINNESOTA (Les Pionniers Francais du Minnesota) by Henry Scholberg

This new book focuses entirely on the French presence in Minnesota starting with the first Europeans to set foot in the Land of 10,000 Lakes, Groseilliers and Radisson, to "Jolly Joe" Rolette who made sure the state capitol remained in St. Paul and Pierre "Pig's Eye" Parrant, after whom St. Paul might have been named.

Your library will be enriched by this book, available for \$10 (includes tax and shipping). Send order with check to NorthStar Publications MN, 195 Windsor Lane, New Brighton MN 55112.

ANNA, LETTERS FROM THE ATTIC by Sally Dare

The below editorial, by former Governor Elmer L. Andersen, describes this new book very well. The book costs \$15.80 (includes tax and shipping). Make checks to DeForest Press, and mail to Sally Dare, 1237 Main St. Elk River MN 55330. Sally will speak at La Societe's meeting in March, 1997.

Page 2

ABC NEWSPAPERS

Friday, September 27, 1996

Opinion/Letters

A notable contribution to history of the area

by Elmer Andersen, publisher

Sally Anne Dare, of Elk River, has made a notable contribution to local and regional history in the just published, "Anna, Letters From The Attic." The letters from Anna Delia Fournier of Otsego to Laurence Albee Dare of Elk River were literally discovered in the attic of the Dare family home in Elk River, now occupied by Sally and Charles Dare and their daughter.

They tell the fascinating story of life in the Elk River-Otsego area before there was a bridge, of the old fashioned and touching romance between the young woman of Acadian French-Canadian Catholic antecedents and the young man descended from Protestant pilgrims.

In a preface, rich in historical detail, Mrs. Dare reviews the early 20th century scene, genealogical relationships and family history. It is a local story, but there is a universality about it that lifts it to a more significant level of historical importance. It has the makings of a fine epic movie or TV documentary with the Pilgrim and Acadian backgrounds, the political rivalries and pressures that caused people movement, and the bringing of people to the Minnesota territory, then Anna's story of the seasonal struggle with the Mississippi and its logjams. There are several strands of mighty stories in the background of this tale of a gentle romance.

Another value of the work is to inspire others to gather evidences of earlier times, publish them as important pieces in the mosaic of Minnesota and American history. American democracy is an important development in mankind's struggle for freedom, peace, prosperity and individual development. Letters sent back to the "old country" are frequently the best sources for colonial history and the periods of great immigration.

To submit articles/photos send to Dick Bernard,
7632 157th St W #301 Apple Valley Mn 55124.
Requests for genealogy info to same address.
Please include self-addressed stamped envelope.

663



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

15

NEWS FROM LA SOCIÉTÉ C-F

MEETINGS: The regular meetings of La Societe are held on Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. 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.

November 4: Henry Scholberg will give an illustrated lecture on Les Pionniers Francais du Minnesota. His very interesting new book of the same name (text in English) is available for \$10 from NorthStar Publications, 195 Windsor Lane, New Brighton MN 55112.

December 2: Duane Thein, relative of the legendary "peg leg Priest", Father Joseph Goiffon, will discuss his research into the life of this most remarkable man, who came to the diocese of St. Paul in 1857.

January: No meeting
February 3 - Program to be determined.

COLLETTE/DESCHENES 1997 HERITAGE TOUR

April 29 to May 13, 1997

Switzerland

and

France

Heritage Cities of

Fribourg, Switzerland

Lyon, Brouage, and Chartres, France

also the Monet Gardens in Giverny,

Paris and the Monastery in Solesmes.

This tour will be conducted by Vernon Sell PhD, a member of the Collette/Deschenes family, who grew up in Minneapolis, is fluent in French, and has taken many tours to Europe. For more information (act now) write Vernon Sell, 725 Copeland St, Madison WI 53711.

MARK  LABINE

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Mark Labine and Associates, P.A.
Suite 204, Evenson Building
2239 Carter Avenue at Como, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108
Office: (612) 644-1739 • Fax: (612) 645-2439



BURNET
REALTY

Maureen Ritchot
REALTOR®
GRI, ESA

Coon Rapids Office
11375 Robinson Drive NW
Coon Rapids, MN 55433
V.M. (612) 486-5679
Res: (612) 323-8729
Off: (612) 754-5400
Fax: (612) 754-7313



TRI-STAR CORP. ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING

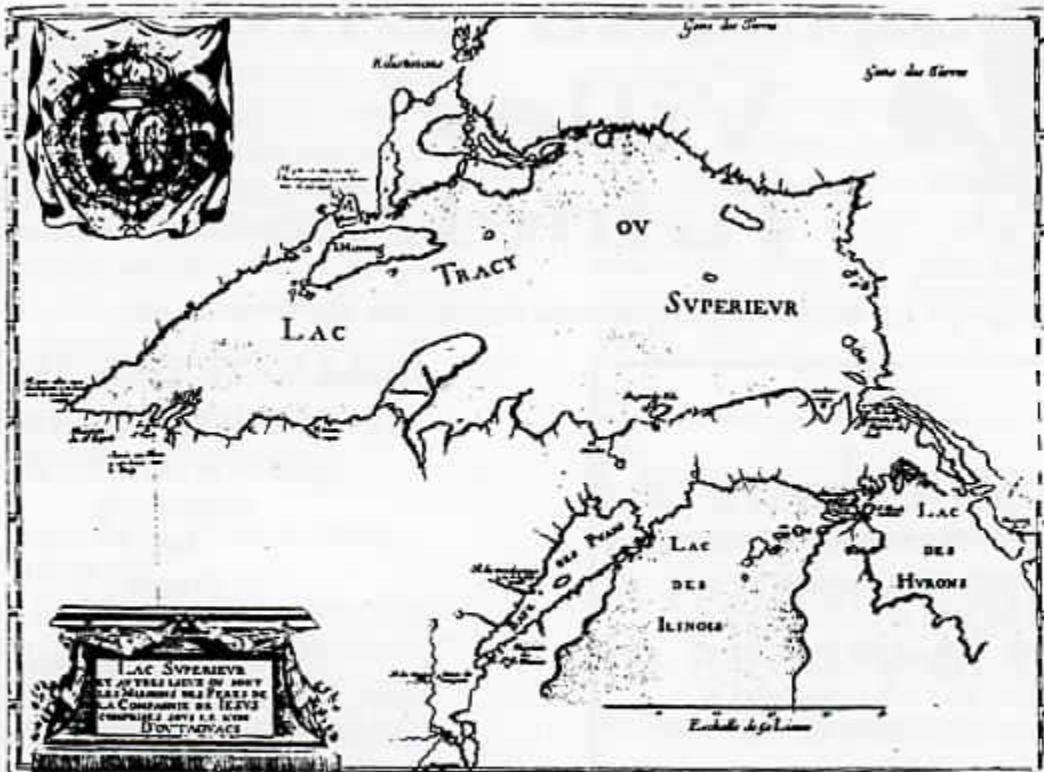
11809 Vintage St. N.W. Coon Rapids, MN 55433
Office (612) 422-8555
Fax 323-3984

AL Dehmer
HM#(612) 428-7748
Pager# 908-1055

Keith Erickson
HM#(612) 472-7917
Pager# 650-2435

Louis Ritchot
HM#(612) 323-8729
Pager# 650-9206

664



Lake Superior in 1667-1669--the most accurate map of the lake made before the 20th century.
(See month of September, footnote (21) in the 1997 calendar).

1997 Calendrier LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE/ FRENCH IN AMERICA

The 13th edition of the calendar is now available. With its 13 color photographs, and many historical anniversaries and cultural events, it will enhance your knowledge of the important contribution of the French to the history and civilization of North America.

NB - The February photograph depicts the founding of Peoria by the French in 1691. Politicians and the media have since endowed this Illinois town with archtypical American values, exemplified by their perennial question:
"How will it play in Peoria?"

Prices: US\$6.50 + \$1.50 each--for postage & handling.
US\$6.50 each (postage & handling included) for an order of five calendars or more sent to a same address.

Make check payable to: *French American Calendar -1997* and send it to: **R. Mikesell**, 1155 E. 56th Street, Chicago, Illinois, 60637-1530.

number of copies _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

*For the persons who requested back copies: previous editions of the Calendar still in print (1991-1996) can be obtained for **\$4.00** a copy, postage included.*

ALLIANCE FRANCO-AMÉRICAINNE DU MIDWEST
Chicago, Illinois. Tél.: (312) 643-7865

665



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Janvier-Fevrier, 1997 VOL. 18 NO. 4

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Inquiring about your Roots?

LSCF member **Treffe Daniels** noted with interest the genealogy questions which came in previous issues. He offers some suggestions in a November 14, 1996, letter: "Perhaps the following groups or people could be noted in *Chez Nous*, to let [inquirers] know of places to turn in their quest:

Northwest Territory Canadian and French Heritage Center (NWTCF) PO Box 29397, Brooklyn Center MN 55429. NWTCF has a journal which is useful because through it one can ask questions about ancestors and answers are found by the group.

Minnesota Genealogical Society Library, 1650 Carroll Avenue, St. Paul MN 55116-0069 (mailing address PO Box 16069 St. Paul 55116-0069). Wednesday is usually Canadian Day. For information, contact Dorothy Chandler, 612-832-9923 (before 9 p.m.).

Both groups are extremely well organized and helpful to researchers. They have aided me quite often."

The Return of the Cribs...

by Frank R. Binette, Gilford NH 03246

Reprinted from *Lifelines*, Vol 10 Nr 1 Spring 1993

Twice in the history of Canada incentives and bonuses were offered and used as encouragement and rewards to produce large families.

The first time was in 1670, when on the 1st of April of that year, the Conseil de L'Etay of the King of France, handed down a decision that was clear-cut, far-reaching, and seriously intended to accelerate and increase the population of the emerging colony of France on the North American continent. The French called their land in North America New France, and at the same time facetiously nicknamed it Kanata/Canada.

This new law specified that...

"any household in New France who had 10 living children born of a legitimate marriage and residing all under one roof shall be entitled to receive a yearly pension of 300 livres/pounds from the government."

An amendment to this law dictated the following: "that 400 livres/pounds shall be allotted as a yearly pension, to families that have 12 or more living children who meet the requirements previously described above." Furthermore "for families with 12 or more living children under one roof a one-time bonus of a 100 acres land grant of farm land" was also available.

With the passing of time and because of the many historical changes that took place in Canada, particularly due to the British conquest and the establishment of English Rule in 1760, many of the French laws and customs were discontinued and/or disappeared.

The second time of record that qualifying large families were rewarded happened in the Province of Quebec in 1890. A provincial Law was passed and titled, "La Loi Des 12 Enfants"/ "The

Law of the 12 Children", which accorded "A 100 acres land-grant of farmland to all families with 12 or more living children residing under one roof, and born of a legitimate marriage."

...[A] survey conducted in 1906 revealed that 5,143 families had claimed and received the deeds to such land grants.

In 1944 the Canadian Federal Government passed a new all-encompassing law that allocated monetary allowances for all children in Canada under the age of 16. This Law [was] commonly called "La Revanche Des Berceaux"/"The Return of the Cribs."

One name particularly stands out, that is the name of Joseph-Jean Baptiste-Pierre LePage. In November 1940 two newspapers in Montreal, LaPresse and LeDevoir, reported that the 41st child had been born to Pierre LePage. Here listed are a few details concerning Pierre LePage, his three wives and his children:

[He] was born 29 June 1872 and was baptized at Notre Dame de Montreal. He was the son of Ovila LePage and Josephine Cusson of Montreal. Pierre LePage was first married 23 November 1891 at Saint-Enfant Jesus Church in Montreal to Rose Delima Campeau, the daughter of Jean-Baptiste Campeau and Emma Sigovin. They had 6 children. Rose Delima died 27 April 1903 at 28 years of age.

Pierre LePage married a second time on 2 May 1905 at Saint Enfant Jesus du Mile End of Montreal, to Parmelia Briere, daughter of Guillaume and Salome Desjardins. They had 14 children. Parmelia Briere LePage died 18 October 1918 at 32 years of age.

Pierre LePage married a third time 10 November 1919 at St. Colomban Church to Rose Delima Francoeur, daughter of Raphael and Aenoulm LaFlamme of Cap Des Rosiers, Gaspé Peninsula. They had 21 children. This makes Pierre the parent of a total of 41 children. The civil and church records can account for 38 births, and, as there were three premature births, we can then have the total of 41 births.

In the Fall of 1940 residing on the LePage farm were 25 of the children of Pierre LePage.

Pierre LePage died 19 September 1948 at the age of 76. Rose Delima Francoeur LePage, his widow, died in Montreal 24 March 1949, at the age of 50 years, 9 months and 25 days. If the exploits

of Mr. Pierre LePage are not a record of family size in North America, I surely would like to hear from the challenger.

Sources of information:

Archives Nationale - Mullin St. Montreal
Montreal City Library Sherbrooke St E
Societe Genealogique Can-Fran Montreal
PQ LDS Family History Research Center,
Salt Lake City UT

"LaRevanche Des Berceaux" by Jean Hetu,
Montreal

Am-Can Genea Soc - Manchester NH
ACA Research Library 52 Concord St
Manchester NH

Farewell to Leonora Collatz

Faithful long-time LSCF member Leonora Collatz went to her final reward on December 4, 1996.

Lee, as she was called by everyone, was born August 4, 1915, in Duluth. She remained active until illness made it impossible for her to attend meetings. She was always a loyal member, and active contributor to our club.

Lee was a graduate of the University of Minnesota and Catholic University in Washington DC. Her specialty was Nursing. For 25 years she worked with the MN Board of Nursing, and after her retirement worked for 4-H and did many years of volunteering.

She is survived by many nieces, nephews, and grandnieces and nephews. Memorials are preferred to Presbyterian Home, Arden Hills MN, or to Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Roseville.

Query:

Joe Gagne, 5025 Peabody Street, Duluth MN 55804 writes with this request:

I am seeking information as to where my grandparents were married in Minnesota, mainly the name of the church and town or city around 1882.

Couple One: **Maximin Gagne**. His parents were **Joseph Gagne and Euphrosine Letourneau**. They came from LaPrairie Quebec and lived in Stillwater MN around 1875-80.

Henrietta Arcand. Her parents were **Joseph Arcand and Margarete Bazil**. They came from Les Becquets (St. Pierre) Nicolet Quebec and I

believe they settled in the Centerville-Hugo area around the 1870s.

Couple Two: **Onezine Cossette**. His parents were **Archange Cossette and Christine Gervais**. They came from de Champlain Quebec and were members of St. Stanislas parish there.

Leone Ouellette. Her parents were **Augustin Ouellette and Susan Cry**. They were married in 1847 at St. Basil, Madawaska, New Brunswick. I do not know if Leone Ouellette's parents ever came to the United States.

I feel that this couple were married in Minneapolis in 1888. I would like to find out at what church they were married. I hope someone out there can help.

Believe it or not but I found a cousin (in print, of course) in your Septembre-Octobre Chez Nous. It happens to be Eugenia LaPlante Fellows who lives in Zephyrhills FL. She was seeking the names of her grandmother's sisters and brothers from the marriage of Joseph Gagne and Euphrosine Letourneau. Believe it or not, these people are my great grandparents also, and her grandmother Derumene (Dorima) is my grandfather Maxime's sister. What great news!! Thanks to your newsletter.

We have reminded you often that Chez Nous and La Societe Canadienne-Francaise are your publication and your organization. Neither will thrive (or even survive) without your active support and encouragement.

DUES. It is a new membership year and your dues are due:

Single - \$10 (seniors \$8)

Family - \$15 (seniors \$10)

Membership includes six issues of Chez Nous.

Make checks to "LSCF" and mail to **John England, Treasurer, 2002 Palace St. St. Paul MN 55105**.

IDEAS: The articles and photos we print in the newsletter do not materialize out of thin air! They are all provided to us by someone. Keep your eyes open for articles and photos which seem to fit our format, and mail them to **Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St. W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124**. The same goes for portions of family or church histories, old photos, etc. Please help us out.

More on names... and a request....

Note from the editor: We continue, here, the discussion of French surnames in all their endless variations with extra special thanks to John Cote of Brooklyn CT, who wrote of the topic in two letters dated November 22 and December 6, 1996.

But all of this discussion of surnames leads to a topic of interest to the editor, and perhaps readers will contribute to a new project...French first names and some of their variations. For example, I have a great uncle, Theodules, who went by the name Odule; and my grandfather - I knew him as Henry Louis Bernard - was christened Honore Celestin Bernard in Quebec - a fact discovered only a year or so ago by Jean-Marc Charron.

These are only two of many examples. What are yours, s'il vous plait? Send to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.

A Curious Transformation of a Noble Family Name (The Boulanger of St. Pierre)

by John Cote, Brooklyn CT

Here are some examples of what a family name can be transfigured to after a series of so-called EDUCATED persons write and spell a typical French name. Here is an example:

Pierre de St. Pierre, one of the pioneers of St. Roch des Aulnaires, originated from St. Martin of Pomt in Normandie. He came from an enobled family and he carried as his name "The Boulanger of St. Pierre". Of his name it seems that he only retained his place of origin (St. Pierre) and abandoned his family name Boulanger (Bakers). This was one of the first transformations, but certainly not the last. In effect, some of his children were called "De Saint" and later on "De Saint dit St. Pierre" and eventually the following variations are noted of Pierre Boulanger de St. Pierre:

Desson	DeSein	DeCindes
Dessen	Dexsaint	Des Saints
Des-sin	Descant	Des Seints
Dessain	Descent	Dessant
Dessein	Decin	Desainte
Des Saint	Decins	Desant
DeCens	Dessina	DeSaince
Desin	DeCint	DeSend
DeCent		

Altho the above may seem impossible to believe, it is true. During almost 300 years Priests, Lawyers and other officials have spelled our

honored family name as they understood it and disfigured our name forever.

Another example of this in my family would be our grandmothers paternal name of Cournoyer. I searched over seven years for her birth certificate, and those of her parents and other family members in Spencer, Massachusetts, her birthplace, which is about 34 miles from my home. I finally located her birth certificate when the town clerk of Spencer allowed me to look thru the records about 1872. I finally found the record and other documents registered, but if I wasn't familiar with some variations of spellings I would have been defeated.

Grandma's full Baptism name was Hermine Emma Cournoyer. Her father was Samuel and her mother Hermine Collette. Registered in the town records was the following: "Arminga Corneiller dother to Samieul Cornoillier and Armingne Colet."

This was Grandma under this odd spelling and it made clear the reason why I could not locate it until I made that special trip and looked at the birth records myself.

The correct spelling was Hermine Emma Cournoyer, daughter of Samuel Cournoyer and Hermine Collette. As her parents could not speak Anglais they likely took for granted that the name was properly recorded, satisfying the Law in the U.S. The clerks record was bad enough, but the St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church record was even worse. The priest was a Jesuit Rev P. Riley, and he spelled the name this way: Amma Ermine born this date to Samuel Corginoier and Emily Collect.

Play that on your old kazoo! I could cite many other examples in my family and others, but this gives one an idea of how a foreign name was twisted and disfigured by the American officials when dealing with Canadiens barely literate in our English tongue.

This is/was common especially in Ellis Island when the waves of immigrants came through. All wore a name tag in their language, could not speak English, and the clerks being unable to read pronounce or spell their name actually assigned the individuals an arbitrary name that the clerk could write or spell. Thus many immigrants lost their family name and were forced to adopt their new given name by officials, and today their descendants are still known only by their immigrant name. Strange how destiny wiped the slate clean and gave all immigrants a real clean start and forced them to

break all ties with the old country. Even their family name was given up. Sad, but who knows if it wasn't for the best. I don't....

More Variations: the name "Dequenne", etc.

Dequenne	Dekenne	Duqun
Dequesne	Dequaine	Duchene
Desquesne	Duquesne	Duchenes
Desquesnes	Duquenne	Duqenne

These names could be found spelled differently within the same document!

Regarding the family name De Chene. This name means "a man who lived near or in an oak tree grove or forest."

In ancient France this was Chesne-Chene (oak), also Chesnaie.

Archaic French Jarris-Houx-Chene Vert = green oak, untilled land.

Or Garric - Chene et Gariga - space where grows oak acorn (kernels)

Different forms of the word, oak=chene are found in different countries in Europe.

France=duchene, duchesne, chenais, chenay, chesnay, chesnois (chestnut), chenois, chesnoy, duchesnoy, chenoy, duchenois, cheneau, chesneau, chesnel, chenal.

Chenier, chesnier=surname of a woodchopper and/or a worker of oak/chestnut wood.

Some examples of the name elsewhere in Europe:

Germany = Eiche, Eichmann; England = Oak, Oaken; Denmark = Eggen; Finland = Tammi; Spain = Roble, Robles; Italy = Cerretti; Bulgaria = DeBov; Poland = Dabrowski; Russian = Doubinski

Some famous bearers of the name and it's variations:

1. Marquis Abraham Duquesne: French sailor 1610-1688. He distinguished himself particularly in the war against Holland and England.

2. Raymond Queneau: French writer 1903-1976. He left amongst many other works of note his amusing "Exercises in Style" published in 1947.

3. Alfred Jarry: French writer 1873-1907. His famous "Pere Ubu" incarnates all of the worlds wickedness and nonsense.

Some composed forms:

La Societe Canadienne-Francaise

Montreal-Quebec City Tour

The tour is initiated by the St. Cloud Chapter, La Societe Canadienne- Francaise.

July 15-22, 1997

8 days & 7 nights

We invite you to come along and enjoy this wonderful trip to Montreal and Quebec next summer. It's a great, low-cost way to see and experience our French-Canadian heritage without the headaches of planning. Everything is taken care of! *The tour is being handled by Les Tournees Club Select, Inc. of Quebec. Prices quoted are in Canadian dollars, (Note: Canadian dollars are valued at about 25% less than US dollars). Participation is open to all — you need not be a member of LSC-F.*

TRIP SYNOPSIS

Tuesday, July 15 MINNEAPOLIS/ST PAUL/MONTREAL

Flight from Minneapolis/St. Paul to Montreal

Arrive at Montreal airport/The tour director will welcome the group /Settle in at the hotel

Wednesday, July 16 MONTREAL

° City tour of Montreal with the famous Marguerite Bourgeois

(the first person to become a teacher on the island of Montreal): stops will be made at St. Joseph's Oratory, Mount Royal look out, Notre-Dame Basilica, etc...

° Montreal Botanical Garden - (10 greenhouses & 30 outdoor gardens)

° Ascension of the Montreal Towers - *a beautiful view of Montreal and its region.*

° Free time at The Casino of Montreal or participation at one of the Montreal festivals

Thursday, July 17 MONTREAL - QUEBEC CITY

° The Fur Trade at the Lachine National Historic Site

Bus to Quebec City/Settle in at hotel/ free time

Friday, July 18 QUEBEC CITY

° City tour of Quebec City / possible stops incl. Terrasse Dufferin, Place Royale, Rue du Tresor, etc...

° Lunch at The Capitoile of Quebec

° Suggested tours: Anima G (city observation point), Chateau Frontenac, Quebec experience sound & light show

° Dinner at the Sugar Shack Erabliere Le Chemin du Roy: savory meals lavishly enhanced with maple syrup. Live traditional folk music, sleight ride and trails with access to the St. Lawrence River.

Saturday, July 19 QUEBEC/COTE DE BEAUPRE

° Guided tour of the Plains d' Abraham : theater of famous battles between the French and British armies.

° Montmorency Falls: ride cable car to the top of the falls (optional).

° Tour of Ile d'Orleans

Sunday, July 20 COTE DE BEAUPRE/LAMALBAIE

Mass at the St. Ann de Beaupre Basilica

° Whale watching cruise

° Casino of Charlevoix (possible)

Monday, July 21 LA MALBAIE/MONTREAL

Return to Montreal via road to St. Prosper

° Lunch at the Ferme La Bissonniere: follow by a visit to the site (buffaloes)

Return to Montreal

Tuesday, July 22 MONTREAL/MINNEAPOLIS/ST. PAUL

Return flight to Minneapolis/St. Paul free time to explore city prior to flight.

PLEASE SEE REVERSE SIDE FOR PRICES & MORE INFORMATION...

22

La Societe Canadienne-Francaise Montreal-Quebec City Tour

July 15-22, 1997 8 days & 7 nights

PRICE & RESERVATION INFORMATION

1997 PRICES

TOTAL COST: \$1239/per person, double occupancy (in Canadian dollars) — or approximately \$905 US dollars (Canadian dollars are valued at about 25% less than US dollars - check the rate of exchange with your bank at the time you make your reservation). Of this, \$840 is a fixed tour cost; \$399 is allotted for airfare, which is the only variable. Travel agency will notify you of any change in air fare.

PRICE INCLUDES

- Transportation (deluxe motorcoach) and air fare from Minneapolis
- Accommodation (7 nights)
- Meals (7 breakfasts, 3 lunches, 1 dinner)
- All attractions & sightseeing
- Bilingual tour guide
- Gratuities for tour director and driver
- Gratuities for local guides (Montreal & Quebec)
- Applicable taxes (GST & PST)
- Baggage handling

NOT INCLUDED

- Coffee breaks on the road
- Meals (4 lunches, 7 dinners)
- Items of a personal nature
- All insurance
- Additional sightseeing admissions

INSURANCE

In any case, the amounts paid to the travel agency are not fully refundable. **We strongly advise all of our clients to provide themselves with good travel insurance when they make their reservations.**

Insurance is a low-cost investment and is easily obtained from any travel agent and usually covers: trip cancellation, delay, accidental or sickness medical expenses, accidental death and dismemberment, loss of personal baggage...)

**FOR COMPLETE INFORMATION & RESERVATIONS, PLEASE CALL
CLUB SELECT TOLL FREE AT 1/800-463-2265, ask for Dorris or Joanne Simms.**

LOCAL MINNESOTA CONTACT: Mr. Merle Plante (320) 253-3689 *information only — no reservations*

**PLEASE NOTE: RESERVATIONS AND DEPOSITS MUST BE RECEIVED
BY CLUB SELECT BEFORE APRIL 1, 1997**

Chenegros, Chesnelong, Cheneval, Chenebenoit, Quesney, Quesnay, Queneau, Quenet, Dequenne, Desquesne, Duquesne, Jarry, Jarrit, Jarrige, LaJarrige, Jarrigon(southwest massif), Jary (Britain), Garric, Garrigue, Garriga, garrigou, Garriguene (southeast Languedoc)

The family escutcheon - arms for all the above different variations - carries an oak tree blazoned in different looks to show relations to the ancestral patriarchal family name bearer.

The arms are at times shown impaled with cadency marks with an escutcheon at the point of honour, but centrally an oak tree, acorns, are figured prominently showing the original family who bore the arms.

To those who wonder how I came to be interested in this aspect of genealogy, the answer is simple. My mothers grandmother on the paternal side was Desiree Dequenne (1845-1911) daughter of Henri (1815-?) and Romaine Plichon (1806-1864). She married our grandfather, Auguste Ernest Conseil (1844-1920) on 10 October 1868 at Charlesville, Meziere, Ardennes France.

After an absence of some 24 years out of touch, we relocated our 1st, 2nd and 3rd cousins in Belgium and France in 1993.

We are fervently unravelling the skeins of my mothers family in France and Belgium. Mom came to the U.S. in September 1919 as a WWI War Bride.

She was born in Charlesville France, the youngest of 4 sisters. She corresponded with her family regularly until the late 1960s when we lost contact with her family, due to the death of three aunts, Our cousins did not keep in touch for about 20 years and we had no address for them.

In 1992, my sister received a letter stating that the writer hoped that the address she had found in her mothers effects would reach us.

Fortunately it did, and a lively exchange of letters, etc., carried on. My youngest sister, a retired teacher, visited mother's birthplace in 1995, and spent five weeks with our cousins and this led to our attempt to unravel the family of "Conseil", mothers maiden name. All we had was a letter written in 1972 by a Leonie, daughter of Gabriel, a 1st cousin of mother. Slowly as time went by, we exchanged information of mothers family as they knew nothing of their aunts and uncles, etc. For the last year or so, my relatives in France and Belgium

have been involved in procuring documents from the "Marie" (town hall) of births, marriages, deaths, for us and weaving the tapestry of mothers family.

We have a cousin in Belgium who is active and very knowledgeable in this as both he and his wife (Lily and Adam) are related on the Dequenne family tree to our great grandmother, Desiree Dequenne, married to Auguste Ernest Conseil 10 October 1868 at Charlesville. We have now, through Adams efforts, reached back another generation to Auguste Conseil's father, a Jacques Conseil, married to Marie Louis Basin in 1844 in Paris. She was daughter of Guillaume Bazin and Jeanne Louis Jebrun.

Another benefit of these researches is the putting back in touch of cousins previously unknown to each other who live within 40-60 miles in adjoining countries and towns in France and Belgium. Such is the case of mothers nieces, etc. Our 1st cousin lives in the Charlesville area of France and the Adam and Lily Marchand cousins live in Belgium. The phone and Postal offices are busy as we continue being astounded findings.

From mothers side up to now we only could go back three generations to her grandfather. We now go back to 6 generations on the Conseil family, 7 on the Bazin side, and 8 generations back to 1680 to the ancestor Nicholas Dequenne. If we add the descending generations from our mother we are now in the 12th generation on the Dequenne tree and more is coming as the French connection is once again whole and unbroken.

As a sidelight to this story, I learned through the Nov-Dec '96 Chez Nous that a member of LSCF, Vernon Sell, has a maternal grandmother who bore the name DesChenes. This name is a variation of DeChene, the original ancient spelling meaning Oak.

Is it possible that under the old oak tree there is a common acorn that germinated and produced all these other names? One wonders at how this could have happened.

That's why genealogy is so exciting - finding common ancestors, common backgrounds, etc. Imagine going back 380 years to find a common ancestor who lived near an oak forest, maybe was a worker of oak, chestnut wood, and might have been a sculptor or carpenter or wood chopper. The possibilities are endless and exciting for the searcher of knowledge.



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

UPCOMING PROGRAMS OF LSCF:

Monday, February 3: A group of LSCF members are planning what appears to be a very interesting tour to Quebec this summer (see insert). They will be at this meeting to talk more about the plans. Note, there is a deadline of April 1 for making a commitment for this tour.

March: No meeting.

Monday, April 7: Sally Dare of Elk River, who compiled the Letters of Anna Fournier into a fascinating book, "Anna, Letters from the Attic" (publicized in the last *Chez Nous*), will speak about her project. Anna Fournier grew up in turn of the century Otsego MN, which is across the river

from Elk River, and at that time was also called part of

Dayton. She was part of a significant French-Canadian community there.

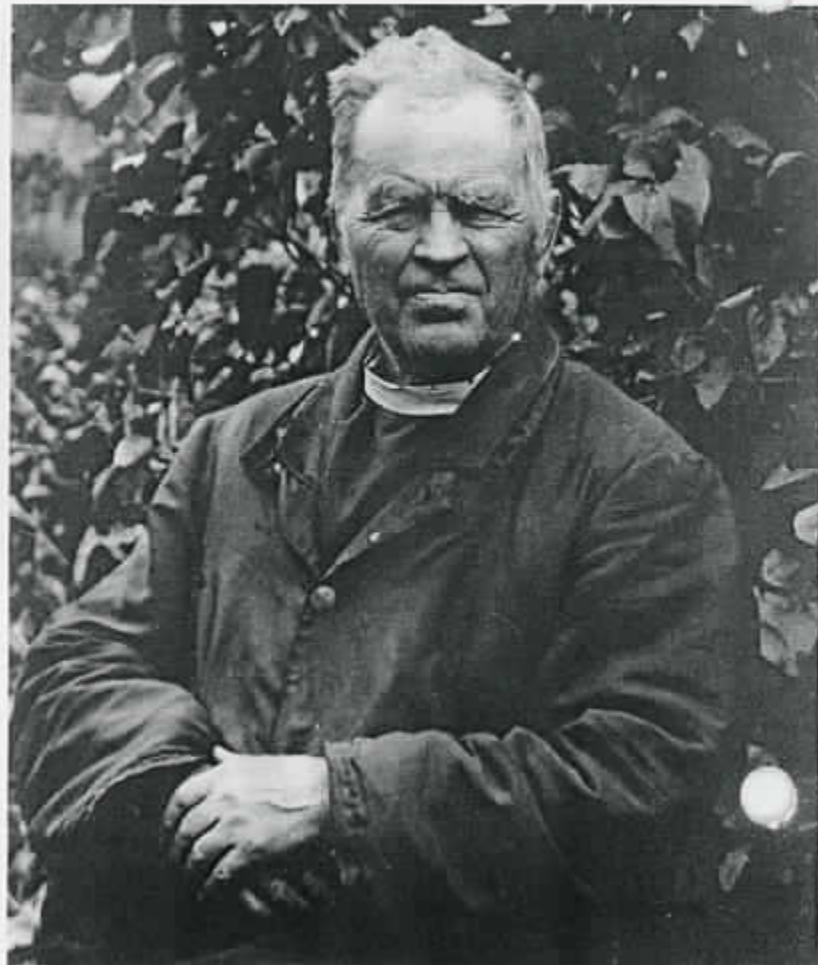
May: No meeting

All meetings of LSCF are held at 7:30 p.m. at the International Institute of Minnesota, on Como Avenue in St. Paul, directly across the street from the Fairgrounds. There is excellent parking available.

**Advertising is available in *Chez Nous*.
For arrangements and costs of a business card size ad, contact LSCF president Louis Ritchot at 612-323-8729.**



Duane Thein (above), LSCF member and great grand-nephew of the famed "Peg Leg Priest" Father Joseph Goiffon (at right), gave a highly interesting and informative talk at the December 2 meeting of La Societe. 27 persons were in attendance. Mr. Thein talked about the many aspects of this famed Priest, who came to the St. Paul diocese in 1857 from France. Duane's ancestor, of Father Goiffon's family, at some point followed Father Goiffon to Minnesota.



673



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mars-Avril, 1997 VOL. 18 NO. 5

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

MODESTE MAILHOT, THE FRIENDLY GIANT OF DESCHAILLONS

with great thanks to Jean-Marc Charron
Deux Montagnes, PQ

Editors note: In November, 1994, Jean-Marc, still robust and healthy, sent us some fascinating information about this fascinating man/legend - almost the Paul Bunyan of Quebec. His offering follows, unedited, to catch the flavor of his written conversation. A short while earlier, Jean-Marc had answered a question for a reader about another French-Canadian strongman, Louis Cyr. That article appeared in the ep-Oct, 1994, edition of *Chez Nous*.

In body, Jean-Marc is no longer with us, having gone to his reward in 1996. In spirit, he lives on. And readers can expect at least a couple of more articles based on his writings. Merci! Jean-Marc.

Reading another one of Edgar Andrew Collards' columns in the Montreal Gazette this morning (5 Nov. 1994 - see following page) brought back souvenirs for me and made me think you might be interested in the story of another Quebecois strong man, Modeste Mailhot. Even though I was there on the spot way back some 35 years ago, I remember distinctly seeing the boulder Modeste Mailhot moved with his bare hands. One day in the late fifties, when I was working out of Drummondville, I had the occasion to go to Deschaillons. From Deschaillons, going towards Quebec City on Hiway 132, in a curve to the right, on the north side of the road, my attention was drawn to the boulder. There was a plaque on the boulder which told the story of the feat. I remember



Jean-Marc's photos of Modeste's boulder, taken in 1994. He says "I placed my briefcase (13" high by 18" long) beside the stone so that its size can better be appreciated." The plaque on the stone says, in French and English, "According to tradition, in 1810 Modeste Mailhot, known as the Canadian giant, moved alone this enormous stone, since then called "Mailhot's stone" and rolled it to this very spot. Born at St-Pierre-les-Becquets July 9, 1763, Mailhot was buried at Deschaillons March 1st 1834. He stood 7 ft. 4 in. And weighed 610 lbs. One of his shoes is exhibited at the Laval University Museum."

Nothing modest about Mailhot's size

Quiet, patient, he was the friendly giant of Deschaillons

In the autumn of 1831, Montrealers had an opportunity to see "the living Phenomenon of the Age." He was Modeste Mailhot. If he stepped on to the scales, he was likely to break them. His height was over seven feet. His weight was 619 pounds. Mailhot was muscular, capable of extraordinary feats of strength.



**EDGAR ANDREW
COLLARD**

From time to time, he might make public demonstrations but his energy was mostly directed to his little farm on the Richelieu River near Deschaillons.

In his home area, he was not a freak but a wonder, bringing honor and respectful fame to his neighborhood. Many visitors from beyond the parish made their way to see him. They might arrive, of course, unexpectedly, at any hour of the day.

The Canadian giant was very patient; he seemed glad to welcome his unknown visitors, to talk and to send them off happy that they had come. Never did he seem inaccessible or irritated. He never ordered visitors off his land.

Mailhot had a longing to be highly honored, to be recognized in exalted places for his exceptional endowments. He planned to be honored by the king as one of the most remarkable members of the empire.

To fulfil his dream, he set out for England to see the king. The king was then William IV, an uncle of the young Victoria who was to succeed him.

William had spent his years in the navy and in many parts of the globe. His had not been a sheltered court life, but life out in a rough world.

The king received Modeste Mailhot with great cordiality. Their meeting was a happy occasion for both. It ended with the king giving Mailhot a parting gift of 100 gold coins.

Back in Canada, Mailhot felt for the rest of his life the glow of his visit to the king. He never parted with his gold coins. Sometimes he

would show them to his visitors, as his highly prized possession.

Except for his occasional public appearances as a "strong man," Mailhot lived quietly with his wife on his little farm. Of an even, contented nature, he had few disputes.

Once, however, a neighbor, a testy captain in militia, straightened a trench on his property and defiantly encroached on Mailhot's property in doing so. He declared he wasn't afraid of the giant.

The giant confronted him. "Listen to me," he said, "If I fall on you, you'd never get up again. That's the way it will be. Are you ready to die? As for myself, I am not."

The matter was rapidly settled. The captain did not fancy being instantaneously crushed to death under 619 pounds.

Such threats were rarely made. The giant of Deschaillons, being peaceable by nature, preferred to use his strength for the benefit of his community.

A huge boulder in the middle of the road near Deschaillons was a hindrance and danger to all who had to detour to get by.

One day, when things seemed quiet, Mailhot, rousing his full strength, wrenched the boulder out of its hole, dragged it out of the way and set it by the side of the road.

This huge rock, sitting at the roadside, was long pointed out as an example of the giant's tremendous strength.

Modeste Mailhot did not die conspicuously young. He lived to be 61, a comparatively long life considering the average life span of those times.

His funeral, like his size, was gigantic. The whole population of his own parish, with the population of

all neighboring parishes and from communities much farther afield, crowded to the service.

His coffin was carried on the shoulders of a dozen of his relations. One of his cousins, Father Faucher, Curé of Lotbinière, had been invited to take part in the final ceremonies.

He, too, was gigantic - over six feet tall and weighing 400 pounds. He was known as "the biggest priest in French Canada."

In the margin of Modeste Mailhot's burial record are written the words: "He weighed 619 pounds." That was 219 pounds more than his kinsman, Father Faucher, who took part in burying him.



11. Les souliers du géant Mailhot
huile sur toile; 8 X 10; 1985

Les enfants du géant Mailhot
glissent dans les souliers de leur père.

Illustration from
Legendes du Coeur du Quebec
by Jean-Claude Dupont

being quite amazed, for the size of the boulder was really quite impressive. It was hard to believe that one man could have moved it with sheer strength alone. I have been mentioning that feat of strength every now and then since that time long ago and now comes Collard to remind me of it. I intend to take a ride to the area soon and take a picture of the "stone" [which photo is reprinted on page one of this issue of Chez Nous]. He actually rolled the boulder, but wait till you see the size of it, and it was not actually all that round.

By the way [Collard's] article says "...farm on the Richelieu River near Deschaillons". The geography is wrong, as Deschaillons is actually on "Le Saint-Laurent", some 75 miles east from where the Richelieu ends. To locate Deschaillons on the map, look almost half way between Trois-Rivieres and Quebec City, on the south shore, about 30 miles east of Trois-Rivieres.

5 Nov. 1994: I go into Montreal, find and make a copy of Mailhot's parish burial record [reprinted below]. This document is quite interesting, I think. It shows his weight written in the margin, the signature of Rev. C. Ed. Faucher, the "biggest Priest of French Canada" and the notation "...in the presence of numerous citizens..." I have seen literally thousands of parish burial records, and such an addition to a church record, very rare and usually reserved for the passing of great and important people, is quite a testimony in itself. And as if to prove the point, we have the signatures of two Priests.

I also found, in the "Bulletin des recherches historiques", an article by Rev. J.Ed. Houde, a Priest who evidently did not want Modeste Mailhot to be forgotten. The June, 1927, article is translated on a following page of this issue:

From "Legendes du Coeur du Quebec" by Jean-Claude Dupont we find this entry: "DESCHAILLONS. Modeste Mailhot was seven feet four inches tall, four feet around the thigh and three feet six inches around the calf. The circumference around his belly measured seven feet and he weighed six hundred and nineteen pounds. His feet were so long that in winter his children used his shoes for sliding [note illustration in this issue which is copied from the book, "Legendes du coeur du Quebec" by Jean-Claude Dupont].

When he died in 1834, at the age of sixty-eight, twelve of his neighbours were needed to carry his coffin.

It is said that, one day, when some men were building the road at Deschaillons, they had been hampered in their work by a large stone. They had tried unsuccessfully to move it out of the way, even after using a team of horses in the effort. Their work temporarily interrupted for mealtime, they intended to resume their task of removing the stone after eating.

But Modeste Mailhot, the giant of Deschaillons, happened to pass by at that particular moment and he played a trick on them: he leaned with his back against the stone and rolled it out of the way. And the more to amaze the road workers, he carved his name on the stone with his fingers.



A very gentle man, he nevertheless did not accept mockery. One day some fishermen could not bring their boat, loaded with fish, way up on the shore. Modeste grabbed the boat and pulled it on firm ground. One of the fishermen having said to him "Big strength, little brain", the giant, with a push of his foot, sent the boat back out into the ocean, far away and out of sight. He then told the fishermen: "Many brains, little strength; now go out there at sea and get your fish."

Another time, his neighbour Adam, himself also renowned for his physical strength, challenged him to a fight. Mailhot answered him with these words: "Go to confession, come back with your offer and I'll dispatch you to heaven".

I looked up the records and here's a few things I found about Modeste Mailhot:

He was from St-Pierre-les-Becquets, 6 miles west of Deschaillons, the son of Louis Mailhot and Josephite Brisson. His grandfather Louis, married to Madeliene Houy, was the son of Rene Mailhot dit Laviolette and of Marie Chapacou. This Rene Mailhot dit Laviolette, having arrived in North America in 1655 from the Languedoc region of France, was a member of the Porte Company of the famed Carignan Regiment. He is found living in Deschaillons as early as 1702.

When he died, Modeste Mailhot was survived by his third wife, Catherine Lafleur, whom he had married in Montreal in 1806. She was the daughter of Gabriel Lafleur and Charlotte Lagrave. He had married his previous wife, Agathe Chandonne, daughter of Charles and Cecile Gaudin, in 1786, at Gentilly. And his first wife was Marguerite Tousignant, daughter of Louis and Marianne Joubien, whom he had married in 1783 at Deschaillons.

There appears to be a discrepancy concerning the age of Modeste Mailhot. Let's start with the date of his burial on 1 Mar 1834. This date is pretty firm as the event is clearly indicated in the original of the parish record itself. So on this 1 Mar 1834, Father W. Chertier writes down the age of Modeste Mailhot as 68. It is probable that the age of Modeste was given to him by a family member and the accuracy is not necessarily 100% sure as it could depend if the family member gave him the right data, if he heard it right assuming that it was right, and if he did not make a mistake when he wrote it down. If we subtract 68 from 1834 we

28
would have 1755 as his year of birth. The plaque on "La Rote a Mailhot" on the other hand says that Modeste was born on 9 Jul. 1763. This would make him 71 years old when he died. I checked the St-Pierre-les-Becquets parish record for 9 Jul. 1763 and yes there is one Modeste Mailhot, son of Louis and Josephite Brisson, who is baptised on that date. At this point I would opt for the side of caution until a full study of the records is made because this Modeste Mailhot (baptised 9 Jul. 1763) could be a older brother who died soon after his baptism and Modeste the Giant could have been born at a later date and given the name of this late brother. In the records we often see one name repeated several times until it is kept by a surviving child. And Edgar Andrew Collard, in his Gazette article, says that "he lived to be 61". Case pending. This is a good example of how some "facts" of history are tricky to establish, even with the best of intentions.

MODESTE MAILHOT THE GIANT

by Joseph-Edouard Houde, Pretre
from Bulletins des Recherches Historiques,
Vol. 33, June, 1927.

Translated by Jean-Marc Charron

Modeste Mailhot, the Giant, has entered the realm of legend. I think it is appropriate, at this time, to spread the correct history of this extraordinary man, before new generations fail to resist bending the truth somewhat about his life.

Modeste Mailhot was far from being deformed. No doubt he was a giant. His exceptional height of 7 feet 4 inches made the scale tip at a handsome 619 pounds. One may think that this awesome weight is too much to believe, but it was duly registered in a real, and always truthful, document, the parish burial record of Modeste Mailhot himself. Let's read [original is reprinted on p. 2]:

"Burial of Modeste Mailhot.

Today, the first day of March eighteen hundred and thirty-four by the undersigned priest of this parish, was buried in the cemetery of this church the body of Modeste Mailhot (nicknamed the CANADIAN GIANT) former farmer of this parish, husband of Catherine Lafleur, who died yesterday morning at the age of sixty-eight years; and this was done in the presence of Reverend

29

Faucher undersigned head-priest of Lotbiniere and of a large number of participants, citizens of this and of neighbouring parishes.

C Ed. Faucher, priest (paraphe)

W. Chertier priest (paraphe)

(And written sideways in the margin, under the name of Modeste Mailhot, we read "PS he weighed 619 1/2 pounds.")

And, with a true sense of pride, the good old people of Deschaillons would love to tell about their giant who had become the national giant. They would usually start by the end: "Ah!" they would say, "you should have seen the crowd at the funeral of Modeste Mailhot: the entire parish was there plus the villagers from all around. And what a coffin! It was really impressive to see this powerful man being carried on the shoulders of 12 of his neighbours - at that time, our ancestors were still following that old custom brought over from France - and, furthermore, imagine that our Cure at the time was assisted by his neighbour, the venerable Rev. Faucher, Cure of Lotbiniere, and what a priest he was", would add these narrators. Now long gone, Father Faucher still lives in the memory of that beautiful parish, memories of legend perpetuated by a handsome portrait that must be seen at the sacristy of Lotbiniere's church. That painting would benefit from a plaque which would inform future generations of a few facts of history in the following terms: "Mr. le cure Faucher was the tallest and biggest priest of the Canadian clergy". And to be more precise it could be added that "he was over 6 feet tall and weighed 400 pounds". So, that was by no means a commonplace event, the burial of the Canadian giant, presided over by the biggest priest of his race.

Let me add these few details that Modeste Mailhot, in the opinion of those who knew him well, was a very handsome man, straight in stature, powerfully framed, with enormous shoulders and with feet....

And yes, of course, if you wish to learn about the giant's feet, go into the museum of memories at Laval University and, in one display window, you will see "une paire de souliers "sauvages". A pair of Indian shoes, as it was then called, identified as the "shoes of the Canadian giant". No doubt whatsoever, the good giant had a solid base.

Aware of his prodigious strength, Modeste Mailhot was very much of a peaceful nature, willing to help anyone and of an hospitality which would serve admirably the legitimate curiosity of travelers. He was also revered by all his neighbourhood. To his qualities of good citizen, the giant had added to his peaceful existence a trip which, in that era, was considered a rare exploit. He was persuaded to pay a visit to the king of England. Gracious and cheerful, King William IV had welcomed with great cordiality that remarkable subject from faraway Canada, and had given him a gift of 100 louis in gold. Many a times that trip was narrated by Modeste all the while showing off the beautiful god pieces. The trip was a great event in the existence of that brave man.

The private history of Modeste Mailhot was the one of every hardworking farmer of our countryside. In his unique way, he was searching for his happiness on his own small domain, on the shore of the great river, some 2 miles east of the village of Deschaillons. One day, however, this calm life was disrupted. One of Modeste Mailhot's neighbours was Captain of the Militia, Adam. Somewhat muddleheaded and perhaps even jealous of the Giant's extraordinary strength, one day Adam provoked the classic squabble of the time: a border ditch he thought should be modified. After a few useless explanations, the time came that it seemed only a physical combat would settle the matter. The hotheaded captain always thought he was invulnerable. The good Giant, on the other and, knew very well all the strength his body could release. Squarely standing in front of his adversary, the Giant told him: "Listen, Adam, if you are stronger than me, you will not fail to knock me out. If I knock you over, I guarantee you will not get up again. So, are you ready to die? Me, I am not." The captain understood and the matter was then and there settled.

The generation who knew that powerful man is gone. With what pride his feats of strength were narrated. One of them, which everyone remembers very well, has nothing to do with the legend. At that time, there already was the question of highway upkeep. On "le chemin du Roi" (the King's highway), it had been ordered to get rid of stones detrimental to safe public transport. Work "a la corvee" bee style, was the order of the day in those happy times. Just in front of the giant's house, an

enormous rock had been isolated and cleared all around. As the ways to move that boulder out of its hole was being discussed, "la mere Mailhot" rang for dinner.

Whilst paying homage to the good food, it was not forgotten that the hard part was still to come. Everyone agreed that the next thing to do was to find the appropriate pieces of wood to back up the strength of the men's arms, and a skillful man to direct the operation. After dinner came the usual chat and "la bonne pipee de tabac", the enjoyment of a good pipe. No one had noticed the short absence of the master of the house. After some fifteen minutes, he appeared at the door of his house and said "well, my friends, let's have another go at it". Work was resumed by finding the solid pieces of wood thought to be needed and when all was ready for the big effort and when the men approached the dug out boulder, they realized, with stupefaction, that it had already been taken out of its hole and rolled next to the road. The giant had done his giant deed. The big stone still stands at that exact spot today, on the same side of the otherwise transformed road, and it is still called by its historic name "la pierre du geant" (the stone of the giant). Billboards are hopefully on their way out and we want to replace them with historical inscriptions. Let's hope that we give this stone the name of the good and robust giant.

Modeste Mailhot died peaceably in his parish. He rests now at the parish cemetery. He was buried in the southeast corner of the old cemetery, which is now situated in the center of the current one. Before the enlargement of the cemetery, people would regularly visit his grave, perfectly indicated by the sinking of the soil. A modest epitaph, broken by our harsh climate, perpetuated the memory of this extraordinary man; the elderly would salute with respect that interesting corner of the parish cemetery. The children would never go there alone, everything we had told them on the life of that famous giant somehow filled them with a mixture of great admiration and fright. All that is left today are souvenirs of that already distant past, and "la pierre". I hope these few lines will help perpetuate the memory of our "bon geant", Modeste Mailhot.

30

The preceding articles, and the ones to follow, are compliments of members like you. We say in every issue that Chez Nous could not exist without member contributions. If you have any items that might be of interest to readers of our periodical, please send them to

Dick Bernard, Editor,
7632 157th St. W #301,
Apple Valley MN 55124.

We really want to hear from YOU.

IT HAPPENED

"IN THE DEAD OF WINTER"

by Ernest Ebert, Grand Forks ND

Editors Note: The following two articles were given to us by Ernest Ebert, and seem most appropriate at the end of one of the worst winters in memory in this part of the world. Mr. Ebert has written frequently for Chez Nous. He is a retired farmer from the Grafton, North Dakota, area.

Whatever has become of that time-honored expression, "In the dead of winter?" What did it really mean? Presumably, it meant the low point of an uneventful time of the year - mid winter or mid-January. At this time of the year, physical and spiritual activity was at a low ebb following the furor of the preceding holiday season. Those engaged in the seasonal occupation of farming, settled down to the uneventful daily grind of tending to livestock and making an occasional trip to the little city of Grafton, ND, for supplies and to chat with some of the townspeople.

In the pre-REA (Rural Electrification Administration) era with its lack of power and effective lighting, farm shops were not practical. And before the advent of battery operated radios in the early 1920s there was little to do indoors except to talk and play cards. Reading in a room full of people imposed too great a challenge. I remember that most conversations dated to or from some seemingly important event past or anticipated in the future such as a neighborhood house party, someone's extended sickness or some big storm. The family spent most of its winter evenings in the kitchen or the adjoining dining room where the warmth of companionship, conversation and the light from our best kerosene lamps dominated. The "front room" or "parlor" didn't offer the coziness

and informality of the other two rooms. It was more often used to entertain special guests.

In 1917, we became members of a party-line telephone group. We could call each other on the line without going through the Central office in Grafton. If we wished to call someone on another line, we had to ring through Central in Grafton. In a sense, the old party-line was a precursor of the present day Internet - you could and did get lots of news off of it! Simple as it was to operate, the neighbor men seldom used it to tell us when they were coming for a evening of visiting. They simply donned clean overalls, walked over and joined the family shortly after its members had moved away from the supper table.¹ It was here that such momentous subjects as to the relative merits of horses and buggies versus those new automobiles, draft horses versus the steel muscles of tractors and threshing machines versus combines were discussed and argued over at great length but never settled during that particular evening. No matter how "hot" the arguments had been, all was forgotten when the evening's refreshments were brought in.

In the "dead of winter" in 1917, a team drawn wagon containing a tall, canvas covered object pulled up to our back door. The driver explained that a furniture dealer in Grafton had received more pianos than he had room for and would we like to try a new player-piano for a few days? We could play it as much as we wanted to and were under no obligation to buy it. Undoubtedly, the dealer was gambling that once he got it in the house we wouldn't want to part with it. He was right. It took Dad a while to come around to the idea that his family "needed" a piano, but he did.

Each family member took turns operating that player-piano and it was played from morning until bedtime every day. It also provided a source of entertainment for our neighbors and other visitors. It became an established practice for my brothers to take their girlfriends home and for my sisters to take their boyfriends home for a singalong songfest.

We enjoyed that player-piano for several years. However, after earphone radio wedged its way into our household and soon was followed by

¹ Farm women had their own social rituals, and perhaps Ernest will comment on some of these in a future issue.

loudspeaker radio in the early 1920s, this once magnificent musical instrument which had captured our hearts for all those years, quietly spent its last year, unwept, unhonored and unsung!

Blizzard vet remembers long spells snowbound

from the Grand Forks ND Herald, January 10, 1997
by Marcia Harris

Get a horse?

Maybe that's what each of us should do to get us through this winter. A horse and a bobsled got old-timers through many a harsh winter.

Ernest Ebert of Grand Forks is 87, and he remembers those winters on his farm northwest of Grafton ND.

The winter of 1936 sticks out as one of the worst. He had been married just one year.

"That winter, the highway that went by our place was blocked for three weeks," Ebert recalls. "It was quite a thrill one Sunday morning to hear a Caterpillar trying to plow out three weeks of compacted snow. It was sweet music to our ears.

"We were down to using our horses and bobsleds to come to town and get supplies."

The horses came in handy for relief of cabin fever, too. During that winter, a neighbor who lived three miles away asked the family for dinner. So, Ebert and his new bride, Georgia, and his mom and dad lined their sled's box with straw for warmth, set up chairs for the women and took off.

"We had a nice ride, had a nice meal. And it was really quite an experience for all of us. We hadn't ridden in sleighs for years, and I remember thinking that the horses had pulled us through once more."

Most of the time during bad winters, families would stay put. Without TV, video stores or computer games, what did they do?

"I have six daughters, and they all ask me that, too," Ebert said. "Some played cards, some read and sometimes there was a lot of conversation. There were 10 of us, with grandma and grandpa."

Farm families made sure they had plenty of food stored up to get them through, but sometimes heating was a problem. During 1936, the Ebert family burned scrap lumber and fence posts in the daytime, saving their coal to burn at night. Even so, they nearly ran out of coal. So, on what Ebert recalls as "one of the nice days -20 below and a

ground blizzard," Ebert took the horses and set out cross-country for Auburn, about two miles away.

"That was really a greenhorn thing to do," Ebert says, because the horses had a great deal of trouble getting through the drifts. Nevertheless, he made it and brought back the coal. But he took the horses on the safer route - using the road - during the return trip.

Ebert was born in 1910, and the whole decade from then until 1920 was distinguished by harsh, snowy winters.

"School was a mile and a half from home,

and not a tree the whole way. No running water and not lights, of course. Fortunately, we never had to stay overnight because there was no insulation." 32

Ebert remembers the kids huddling near the stove until about noon to get warm after walking to school.

But Ebert is kind to those of us who may have it a little easier these days. He doesn't think we're wimps.

It's all relative. By the standards of that time, it was one thing. Now, of course, if the car doesn't start, it's a big thing."



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

UPCOMING PROGRAMS OF LSCF

Monday, April 7: Sally Dare of Elk River, who compiled the Letters of Anna Fournier into a fascinating book, "Anna, Letters from the Attic" (publicized in a recent *Chez Nous*), will speak about her project. Anna Fournier grew up in turn of the century Otsego MN, which is across the Mississippi River from Elk River, and at that time was also called part of Dayton MN. She was part of a significant French-Canadian community there.

Monday, May 5: Regular meeting

All meetings of LSCF are held at 7:30 p.m. at the International Institute of Minnesota, on Como Avenue in St. Paul, directly across the street from the Fairgrounds. There is excellent parking.

LOOKING FOR PHOTOGRAPHS

The LaSociete Board is requesting that members pull together photographs which they have taken to record LaSociete members and events since the organization was founded in 1979. We want to have a photo record for posterity. Information on where to send the photos, etc., will be in the next issue of *Chez Nous*.

LAST NOTICE OF LASOCIETE MONTREAL-QUEBEC CITY TOUR.

This event was publicized in the last *Chez Nous*. It seems to be a particularly good value and should be of interest to anyone who wants to have an informative tour of Quebec.

The dates of the tour are July 15-22, 1997, for 8 days and 7 nights.

The tour cost is \$905 U.S., which includes round trip airfare from Minneapolis, all accommodations, most meals and other amenities included in tours of this type.

For more information, including full itinerary, call Merle Plante at 320-253-3689 or send an SASE envelope to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301 Apple Valley MN 55124. Deadline for reservations is April 1.

Advertising is available in *Chez Nous*. For arrangements and costs of a business card size ad, contact LSCF president Louis Ritchot at 612-323-8729.

THE BIGGEST CIRQUE ON EARTH

from the Los Angeles Times
September 22, 1996
by Diane Haithman

When Gilles Ste. Croix, a street performer in Montreal, became one of the founding members of Cirque du Soleil, the last thing he would have imagined was that someday he would find himself sitting in a Santa Monica hotel talking about a \$100-million industry forging mega-deals with Las Vegas hotels, European real estate developers and 30,000-acre theme parks.

But that's exactly what he's doing - and he doesn't want to. Ste. Croix, 46 - who used to fly through the air, launched from a teeter-board and land on stilts in Cirque's first show - is bored with earthbound concepts like profits and box office.

"We were just trying to make a show and live off our art," he says. Numbers? "I don't know, I have no idea," he says. "I would say a number, and I might be wrong. I don't say numbers. I don't learn them, and I don't say them."

Ste. Croix, the troupe's director of creation, would rather talk about the theme of its ninth production, "Quidam," [which opened in Santa Monica on September 25, 1996].... "*Quidam* is a Latin word meaning anonymous and unknown," he says. "We are at the end of a millenium. We always pick a theme that is close to our lives, and everyone is concerned about what the end of the millennium will be like.... Through technology of the past 10 years, there is now a global community, but at the same time we have become more and more lonely, more individually separated, the community feeling has been forgotten.

"There have been many changes in the past five years, and there will be more in the next five. We talk about the individuals who are suffering the changes, but they don't have a word to say about it. So *quidam* is the scream of all the *quidams*, to wake up and make themselves known."

Ste Croix doesn't want to talk about the numbers. But in the second year of Cirque's second decade, the numbers are too big to be ignored.

In 12 years, Cirque du Soleil - French for "Sun Circus" - has transformed from an eccentric show-biz *quidam* into a popular global commodity with four touring shows, one permanent show in

Las Vegas and three new permanent productions slated for the near future - in Vegas, at Disney World and in Berlin. 34

The troupe is also looking at film and television, as well as more international shows. As Cirque continues to grow, balancing art and commerce has become as precarious an act as anything you'll see under its blue and yellow big top at the Santa Monica Pier.

"The people who created Cirque, some of them were performers, and some of them were entrepreneurs," marketing director Jean David says. "So we found out it was very important to marry the relationship between the arts and the business, the culture and the business - it was extremely important if we want to survive. We are the kind of people who, when we learn something, we learn it forever. And we learned that at the very beginning.

The Cirque machine has its entrepreneurs, but it is also an organization in which a publicist is as likely to have walked the tightrope in an early show as to have studied communications in college. Although it is big business, it still contains plenty of renegades like Ste. Croix, who describes the show as "acrobatics with emotion."

Cirque was born in 1984 when Ste. Croix, founding member Guy Laliberte and a small circle of French Canadian street players put a tent over their heads and reinvented the circus as we know it. The players had already begun performing together in local festivals in the early '80s, calling themselves Les Echassiers.

Laliberte was the chief negotiator in bringing the troupe here for its U.S. debut at the 1987 Los Angeles Festival, an offshoot of the 1984 Olympic Arts Festival, in a tent at 1st and Alameda Street. Back then, festival artistic director Robert Fitzpatrick and the festival could offer Cirque only minimal financial guarantees, so its decision to venture to L.A. meant taking a substantial risk.

"Other festivals wouldn't touch them because it wasn't quite 'cultural' enough, and towns looking for a standard circus were used to dealing with horses and elephants," says Fitzpatrick, who was first mesmerized by the troupe in Toronto on a trip with his daughter, then 12.

He decided instantly to showcase Cirque as the festival's opening performance, though Peter Brook's nine-hour "Mahabarata," was the more

obvious choice because it was a more serious entry with extensive artistic credentials.

Cirque sold out every night, says Fitzpatrick, former chairman of Euro Disney and now dean of the Columbia School of the Arts in New York. "If I'd been smart, and rich, I would have paid all their costs and taken 10%," he adds ruefully.

Even in its early days, Fitzpatrick says, the Cirque clan was hardly wide-eyed when it came to business. "That's part of the savvy myth they have created. For all the 'naiveté' and street smarts they are supposed to have instead of MBAs, these guys can negotiate like Michael Ovitz and still come off well."

The exponential growth of Cirque would indicate Fitzpatrick is right. It boasts a worldwide staff of 1,250, including 266 performers from around the world. There are two main offices - in Montreal (where a \$30-million headquarters is under construction) and in Amsterdam - as well as a permanent office in Las Vegas.

More than 7.5 million people have seen its shows, which include "Cirque du Soleil - Le grand tour" (1984). "La magie continue" (1986). "We Reinvent the Circus" (1987-89), "Nouvelle Experience" (1990-91). "Saltimbanco" (1992-96), "Mystere" (running since 1993 at Las Vegas Treasure Island hotel), "Alegria" (1994-98) and the new "Quidam," which will tour through 2002. Tours have taken the troupe to 118 cities, including San Francisco, Chicago, New York, Tokyo, Paris, London, Amsterdam and Vienna.

Although Cirque officials decline to spout budget figures, Alan Feldman, spokesman for Mirage Resorts, which owns Treasure Island, said \$27 million was spent building the permanent theater for "Mystere" and \$24 million more on creating the show. Feldman adds that "Mystere" ranks as the second most financially successful show in Vegas, topped only by the Mirage Hotel's Siegfried & Roy show, featuring flamboyant German magicians and their cadre of lions and white tigers.

The Siegfried & Roy acts earns about \$54 million in ticket sales; "Mystere" brings in about \$40 million," Feldman says. "There's not a Broadway show in the land that does as well."

The cost of "Mystere" more than doubles the current budget for the touring shows, which Cirque public relations director Diane Laberge reluctantly

estimates at between \$10 million and \$15 million. (This year Cirque will replace the big top's bleacher seating with chairs.)

In 1998, Cirque plans to open an as-yet-unnamed show in Las Vegas at the soon-to-be-built \$1.3-billion 3,000-room Bellagio Hotel and casino - the troupe's first "water production." For it, the Bellagio complex, also a Mirage Resorts hotel, is building a \$50-million 1,800-seat water theater to Cirque's specifications. The production budget, more than \$20 million. Marketing director David would reveal only that the show will take place "in the water, on the water, over the water" in an area the size of three Olympic swimming pools.

Also in 1998, Cirque is to open a new show at the 30,000-acre Disney World in Orlando, performing in a 70,000-square-foot, 1,650-seat theater that will be part of the Disney Village Marketplace entertainment district with the House of Blues, a Wolfgang Puck Cafe, Virgin Records and 24 AMC theater screens. It's a 12-year deal for two shows a day, five days a week.

Cirque has also reached an agreement with German real estate developers Peter and Isolde Kottmair to open a new show in 2000 in a new \$52-million permanent theater in the heart of Berlin. That agreement extends to 2015.

Cirque officials, as well as representatives of the new venues, agree that Treasure Island's success with a grand-scale version of the show triggered the new deals. Feldman says Cirque came along just as Mirage Resorts and other Vegas hotels were trying to broaden their family appeal, as well as to attract a more sophisticated international clientele.

Feldman notes that Cirque, like Siegfried & Roy, appealed to Mirage because it transcends language barriers.

"It isn't like Bill Cosby. We love Bill Cosby, but if you don't speak English, it's going to be a tough evening. And [someone like] Kenny Rogers, who we also love dearly - if you really don't like country music, if Cher is your thing, then Kenny is going to be tough to spend an evening with.... We saw Cirque in Chicago and Los Angeles and immediately reacted to the humanity and excitement. But we wanted something bigger; there's only so much you can do in a tent when you are traveling every six weeks."

In order to feed an increasingly hungry appetite, Cirque officials are combing the globe for

potential artists. Cirque has an affiliation with the national Circus School in Montreal and finds artists at prestigious circus schools in Russia and Europe. The organization also draws talent from Olympic competition. The Olympics may also become the talent pool, no pun intended, for the Bellagio water show.

"[Some athletes] do the Olympics, and then their career is finished," David says. "If you are the 10th- or 12th-best diver in the world, nobody talks about you anymore. Yet they are fantastic performers, fantastic athletes. We do recruit those types of people."

Whether drawn from the Olympics or from circus schools, most Cirque artists undergo a year of training with the troupe's coaches.

"They are fantastic gymnasts," David says, "but they don't know how to dance, they don't know how to smile on the stage, how to cry on the stage, how to sing. We teach them those things."

Along with training its artists to think Cirque-like, observers say, the troupe has fought off all comers who would change them. About eight years ago, David says, Cirque was approached by Columbia Pictures about doing a movie. About the same time, partly because of Fitzpatrick's ties to Disney through his former Euro Disney chairmanship, Cirque also began talking to Disney. Cirque nixed both efforts for fear of losing creative control.

"We were young and they were big," David says now of Disney. "They are *still* big, but we are not as young. And then Columbia Pictures at the time also tried to do something with us, but you know, they were asking for too much, and we said, 'no, sorry. forget it.' They wanted to put us in a position where we would have to change what we are, to do something we didn't believe in. We said, 'No, sorry. We don't make a deal on that basis.'"

Although there still are no deals with Columbia, Disney World's Weiss says Disney is more than willing to give a more mature Cirque complete creative control. Where Las Vegas wanted Cirque mostly to increase family appeal, Weiss adds, Disney World wants the troupe for the opposite reason: to expand its attractions for adult audiences.

Hollywood remains more elusive.

"We found it's not easy to just take the Cirque production and put it on the air," David says.

36
"There's a need to adapt your production to television, we understand that. So we are still talking to Hollywood. Hollywood is talking to us... For each of our shows, we create 40 to 50 very original characters, each character offers a lot of possibilities for major television production."

Along with the new productions, David says, Cirque has its eye on Tokyo. London's theater district and Broadway. It all raises the question: When does the big top get *too* big?

"I don't think any of us knows what that point is," Fitzpatrick says. "I went to see them in Las Vegas, and I've seen them in other places, and I'm always a bit worried. Have they 'gone Hollywood' in the worst connotation of that term? And to my joy and surprise, they've kept the edge."

David says Cirque is determined to walk that edge.

"There is an enormous demand for what we are doing: we could have 20 permanent productions around the world, just from the offers that we have," he says. "But we don't take all the business offers that we have, because we know that we cannot. We have to take time to respect the people in each of these productions. You do not rush the characters: you do not rush the designers. But we were ready for the new contracts we signed."

"We learned a lot with the experience at Treasure Island. We were used to touring, and we thought it would be very difficult to be in one city, and *Las Vegas* - my God, not everybody wants to live there. But, in fact, it's not tough at all, living conditions are wonderful, people are very nice. Artists are buying their own houses, with pools....People are happy."

And Cirque will probably always have people like Ste. Croix to make sure business never overwhelms the pleasure.

"Every two years, we change 30% [of each show]," Ste. Croix says. "And we don't have shows that are the same: we can't. When you do a musical like 'Cats' or 'Phantom,' you can have 10 of them. The cast influences what our content is."

"I look for artists who have an open mind.... We don't want stars; we want really a team spirit. Of course, there are some people who are making a big impression, but we *will* not put them on a billboard."

"We were 12 people; now we are 1,200. We've become a great success, and I think Guy

Laliberte is very responsible for that; he always took great care in keeping the spirit of what Cirque was in the beginning, to see that we do things in a respectful way.

"We must not let that go. It is what we do

for a living. We don't make T-shirts; we make shows. So if we cannot do this anymore because we have too many shows? We should stop making so many shows." 37



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

NEWS FROM LASOCIETE C-F

Upcoming programs of LSCF

Mondays, May 5 and June 2 are regular meetings of LaSociete C-F. The meeting on June 2 will be the yearly election meeting. Call John England at 699-5178 with additional Board nominations (see below). **Meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. at the International Institute, St. Paul.** To reach the Institute take Snelling Avenue to Como, which is on the south side of the State Fairgrounds, and go west just a few blocks on Como. There is excellent parking available. There are drawings at each meeting.

May 1-4 is the Festival of Nations. LSCF will again have a booth. Festival chairwoman Marie Trepanier needs much help at our booth. Call her at 487-9048.

The Annual picnic of LSCF will be July 27 at Spooner Park in Little Canada. Please mark this date on your calendar and attend.

Nominees for 1997-98 LSCF Board of Directors

John England is a charter member of LSCF. He has served on Heritage and Cultural committees, Christmas Party committee, and on the Board for many years. He is past and current Treasurer of LSCF and has written articles for Chez Nous.

John Edel is married with two children. Was president of student body at St. Cloud SU in 1985-86. Has studied French-Canadian Heritage for 15 years and is a member of LaCompagnie. Is an expert in the field of French-Canadian costumes and in the history of the fur trade.

George LaBrosse is another charter member of LSCF and is married with three children. Has served on the Membership Committee since 1980 and on the Board since 1979. Also served on the Historical Committee. Would like to see more activities for children.

Ralph Germain is yet another Charter member of LSCF. Married with three children, he is recently retired from 3-M. Has been a Board member for six years and is past Vice-president. Started the Sales Committee. Served as chairman of the Festival of Nations and organized some of the annual picnics. Made arrangements for LSCF to be in the annual Somerset WI Pea Soup Days parade. Organized a pig roast on Keller Island and two boat trips on the St. Croix River for LSCF.

Louis Ritchot is a native of St. Boniface, Manitoba, and is married and has four children and five grandchildren. By profession, Louis is an electrical contractor. He is past and current president of LSCF. He is also a member of Les Errants and is the singing group's performance coordinator.

MARK  LABINE

ATTORNEY AT LAW

Mark Labine and Associates, P.A.
Suite 204, Evenson Building
2239 Carter Avenue at Como, Saint Paul, Minnesota 55108
Office: (612) 644-1739 • Fax: (612) 645-2439

PERFORMANCE SCHEDULE OF
LES CANADIENS ERRANTS

- Sat May 3 - Festival of Nations 1-3 p.m.
- Sat May 24 - Eagle Ridge Rendezvous, Murphy's Landing, Shakopee.
- Sun, June 15 - Pea Soup Days Parade Somerset WI
- Sat June 28 - Mille Lacs Rendezvous performance
- Fri July 4 - Minneapolis Rendezvous at Lake Harriet
- Sat July 19 - Forts Folle Avoine, Webster WI
- Wed July 30 - Rice Street Parade (Tentative)

Advertising is available in Chez Nous. For arrangements and cost of a business card size ad, contact LSCF president Louis Ritchot at 612-323-8729.

Your membership in LaSociete is solicited. Checks for membership dues should be made to LSCF and sent to John England, 2002 Palace Ave St Paul MN 55105. Dues amounts: Single: \$10 (\$8 senior); Family: \$15 (\$10 senior). Membership includes subscription to Chez Nous.

'Charley Boot Lake' Boiteau remembers

By IRENE HERRMANN

July 20, 1966

During Chipewa Valley logging days the French Canadians arrived in northern Wisconsin in great numbers. They left their imprint on the life and customs of the area and their names are well known in the villages and countryside of Chipewa County.

One such name is Boiteau. I had a rewarding visit with 'Charley Boot Lake' Boiteau who has lived more than 80 years on land homesteaded by his Quebec father and German mother in the Boot Lake area, east and north of Eagleton.

A more isolated area than the woods around Boot Lake would have been hard to find, for even today the curvey blacktop road and an occasional cultivated field are all that hold back the vegetation.

"How did your father ever discover this home site?" I asked Mr. Boiteau, visualizing the stands of virgin timber and uncharted Indian trails.

"A Frenchman called 'Old Ed', who surveyed for the loggers, told my dad about a level spot here among the hills," replied Mr. Boiteau. "When we arrived in our covered wagon we found the place just as he had described it."

Charles Coiteau was just one year old when his family came to Chipewa County but he was told that they lived eight days in the covered wagon while timber was cut and a home built on the six forties which they were homesteading.

For two years their home knew only the light of home-made candles which rested in hand-fashioned metal holders, flanged on one side to



protect them against drafts.

The Boiteau's nearest neighbors were three miles away, and their mail was left at Liehe's General Merchandise Store in Eagleton. As he mentioned the mail a smile came across Charles' weathered face.

"We had a little song we sang to the tune of 'Casey Jones'," he chuckles, "which ended with 'eight hours late with the Boot Lake mail!'"

Window screens for the summer months were made of cloth, and were by no means mosquito-proof. Charles' mother knew how to combat the vicious insects, however, and would make a smudge fire of rotten wood in a pail. Charles recalled the choking smoke which resulted from these drastic measures and seemed, as he spoke, to be wondering if the cure was not worse than the affliction.

Charles described the rabbit snares he used to make with bent-over brush to provide meat for the table. Catching frogs for fishermen was another side-line for Charles.

He disclosed the fact that he sometimes worked on his snares rather than attend school, for he was large for his age and felt ill at ease with the little children. He timed his going and coming with the school hours to avoid arguments at home.

Frank Durfee taught for four years at the log school which Charles attended for three years—the extent of his formal education. The floor was made of logs, and the table and

benches were of split butternut. A stove given by Bill Cody, a logger, heated the small building.

Much of the work at home fell on the shoulders of Charles and his brother, John, the only two sons in a family of ten children, for their father worked out on the prairie most of the time. Octave Boiteau dug many an open well, with one ascending and one descending bucket, on Eagle Point farms.

When Charles was 13 years old he applied for work in a logging camp. He was considered too young but his size was in his favor and he convinced the boss of his strength and willingness.

A man associated with the Chipewa Boom Company whom he had known previously gave Charles \$25 to buy some new clothes.

\$25 bought a lot of clothes in those days," said Mr. Boiteau.

Wearing some of his new attire the young lad rolled his hated homemade apparel into a bundle and threw it into a creek.

"I was so excited that night I couldn't sleep," recalled Charles.

Though characterized by hard work and lack of worldly goods the days of Charles' youth were not without the fun and excitement which the French enjoy. Many are the tales he can tell of those days.

The Boiteaus raised many horses and there was always a spirited team available to drive to a community dance.

After one winter-time dance in

Eagleton Charles loaned his team to Del Stickney so Del could drive his girl home. After delivering the girl Del fell asleep at the reins and the horses headed for the Boiteau farm. Not knowing where he was when the team stopped in the farmyard Del had to arouse the household and be directed the five miles back to Eagleton. Meantime Charles had a long wait.

"Dad had to plant by the moon," said Charles, relating another happening. "though my brother waited after a two-day party at the King place, the potatoes had to be planted right then. John fell asleep on the planter and was well into the oat field when he awakened. He was the only one who was not surprised when the oat field sprouted a row of potatoes."

In 1910 and 1911 Charles again engaged in lumbering when he drove logs in the Montana woods. He had intended to log another year but met Gertrude Flackey, his future wife, at a dance in 1912 and as he said "That was that!"

The Octave Boiteau moved across the road to a home John built for them, where they lived until their death. Both lived to be 93. Charles and Gertrude lived in the family home, a brick structure, where they raised four sons and three daughters. Gertrude Boiteau passed away in 1955.

There is pleasure in reminiscing about the past, but there can also be sadness.

"The only old-timers left between here and Chippewa Falls, besides myself," said 'Charley Boot Lake' Boiteau, "are Albert Liehe and Charles Hebert."

Thanks to Jerry Forchette.

Chippewa Street Telegram SR. 1996

687