



# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mai-Juin, 1998 VOL. 19 NO. 6

*La société canadienne-française*

Editor: Dick Bernard

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## GOING TO WAR – SPRING, 1898

By Dick Bernard

Editors note: Most of us know of the sinking of the Battleship Maine in Havana harbor in February, 1898. We know about Teddy Roosevelt leading the charge up San Juan Hill, and perhaps even about the Spanish-American War 100 years ago, and the fact that it not only related to Cuba, but to Puerto Rico, the Philippines and Guam, and that the war officially ended with the Treaty of Paris December 10, 1898.

Few know that the war didn't end with Spain's cession of it's territories, and the following story, about my Grandfather Henry Bernard Sr, gives another dimension to this story.

When the Battleship Maine sank in Havana harbor February 15, 1898, Henry Bernard was nearing his 26th birthday in Grafton ND. He had

migrated from Quebec perhaps six years earlier, and was certainly not yet fluent in English, having come from a completely French background. He was probably a U.S. citizen by the time "Remember the Maine" resonated throughout the U.S. of A.

The passions of the time led to an outpouring, most likely, of patriotic zeal against Spain, even in landlocked North Dakota. It seems to have taken little effort for the National Guard to build a full company of troops in Grafton. One was my grandfather, another was his future cousin-in-law Alfred Collette, then an 18 year old in the nearby farming community of Oakwood.

Their company – Company C of the First North Dakota – began basic training at Fargo on



Grafton ND resident Henry Bernard, standing at left, with some of his fellow soldiers in 1898. We are uncertain where the photo was taken, but it most likely was in Manila or San Francisco. Reclining on the ground, at right, is Henry's future "cousin-in-law" Alfred Collette, 18, of nearby Oakwood. (In 1901 Henry married Josephine Collette of Oakwood.)

May 2, 1898. This was the day after the Spaniards had effectively been defeated at Manila! Nonetheless the company took the train to San Francisco for more preparations for the Philippine campaign. Before they embarked to Manila via Honolulu on June 27, 1898, the need for an American campaign against the Spaniards was essentially past. And Philippine leaders had declared their country's independence much like our founding fathers in 1776. In fact, the country of the Philippines celebrates its centennial on June 12, 1998!

That made no apparent difference to our countries leaders. "The boys" sailed on, arriving in Manila on July 30, 1898. They stayed on Luzon (the island on which Manila is located) until July 7, 1899, when they returned for the states via Yokahama, arriving again in San Francisco on August 29, 1899.

(Some American units did, to be sure, some "mopping up" of the Spaniards after May 1, 1898. In fact, the Filipino freedom fighters led by Aguinaldo helped the Americans force the final capitulation of the Spanish commander in Manila in August, 1898. But the Filipinos had different ideas about what this defeat of the Spanish meant. To them, they felt the Philippines was now a sovereign nation and the Americans would recognize this and leave. Much to their chagrin, the Americans did not see it similarly, and the war continued – now, American vs Filipino. (Other troops from other states came later, and the "war" was really not over until about 1904. At times it was a rather dirty guerilla war, even as wars go.)

Henry and Alfred, as foot soldiers in

Company C, spent their one year fighting not against the Spaniards, but against native Filipinos led by Aguinaldo. Soldiers do what they are told, and that was likely true for Henry and Alfred as well. It made no difference who the enemy was; the enemy was the enemy, and they slogged through the territory between Manila and Paete, including Pagsanjan, defending new-found American interests against Filipino patriots. They likely never saw a Spaniard.

The "American interests" they were defending were very unclear – I read somewhere that then-president McKinley initially didn't even know where the Philippines were; and then Secretary of War Teddy Roosevelt was most interested in a war against somebody to both help the economy and his own political ambitions. If so, it worked very well for Teddy.

There were other factors, such as the advent of yellow journalism, about which "the Boys" from North Dakota could not possibly have been aware, and which helped fan the flames of patriotism in the U.S. They had their day to day duties, suffered from tropical diseases, were ambushed, and lost a few men in skirmishes now and then. A few years after they returned home to Grafton, a monument was erected there to the veterans. On it is a plaque that says "You can't stampede the First North Dakota."

Grandpa was exceedingly proud of that monument, which was just down the street from his home. Until he died in 1957, he and an ever dwindling group of soldiers from 1898-99 would gather each summer at that monument to commemorate the past.



Henry Bernard (third soldier from left) and buddies on shore leave in Yokahama, Japan, in late summer, 1899. They were returning to the U.S. after over a years service in the Philippines in the Spanish-American War.

Company C mustered out in San Francisco on September 25, 1899. Grandpa bought a gold watch in San Francisco, which I still retain, and my brother and I still have some other artifacts from that year in the Philippines. These artifacts include Grandpa's leggings and bayonet, his eating utensils in a leather case, his straight razor case labeled "raza Pilipinas"; some chunks of shrapnel and some medals.

Years later, my Dad told me that their service was apparently not well rewarded. "The Boys" apparently had to pay their own way home from San Francisco, which raised their ire, and redress of that grievance, and pensions, were apparently not to be forthcoming until an act of Congress many years later.

Grandma Bernard's cousin, Alfred, after a number of years back in the states, re-enlisted and went back to Philippines during World War I, and lived the rest of his life there. He became a highly successful businessman in the Philippines, married Mimi Dime at the old Manila Church at Malate, and, it is said, became a member of Manila's prestigious Polo Club.

The family fortunes changed drastically when the Japanese occupied the Philippines in early 1942. For a time period Alfred was a prisoner in the notorious Santo Tomas POW camp in Manila. One of his young children - named Marie Josephine after my grandmother (who was Alfred's cousin) - was killed in her mother's arms by shrapnel from, probably, an American plane during the liberation of Manila in 1945. Along with many others, the family was fleeing to hoped for safety of a church, when the death occurred. After the war, Alfred and Mimi and family resettled with his family in Bacolod, on the Philippine island of Negros and Alfred lived the rest of his life there, owner and operator of movie theatres. He died in the early 1960s, about the time of death of one of his teenage children. He is buried in Manila. His wife, Mimi, who I met a few years ago, was a charming woman. She lived in the Bay area of California until her death a few years ago.

The two surviving Collette children, Alfred and Julie, moved to the states 30 years or more ago. They live in the south bay area of California. I keep in close touch with them to this day.

I wonder how my grandfather would view the Philippines centennial of independence this year, June 12, 1998. Doubtless, he knew little or nothing about what was really going on at the time

he went to Manila, and even if he had, he still would have acted as loyal soldiers have always acted....

Happy Independence Day.

## ROBIDOU'S IN THE MIDDLE WEST

By Eugenie Fellow  
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Some members of La Societe Canadienne-Francaise may have Robidou ancestors as I have. The immigrant ancestor was Andre, son of Emmanuel Robidou and Catherine Alvez who were married ca 1640 at Ste Marie de Galice (Santa Maria de Galicia) in the northwest of Spain. Andre was baptized there about 1640. All persons in America bearing the name ROBIDOU are probably descended from Andre.

This article deals with a branch of the family that came to the Middle West for the fur trade, which was important in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. Furs were a valuable commodity, much wanted by persons in the eastern part of our country and in Europe.

Joseph Robidou (son of Joseph and Marie-Anne Leblanc, married 3 Feb 1749, Sault-au-Recollet, Quebec) was born in 1750. As a young man, in 1770, he went to St. Louis, then the headquarters for fur traders who bought furs from the Indians up the Missouri River. Joseph engaged in that business until his death in 1809. Joseph also acquired some land in Florissant, now a suburb of St. Louis. On September 23, 1782, Joseph married Catherine Rolet dit Laderoute of Cahokia (daughter of Michel Rolet and Jeanne-Marguerite Legrain, married in June, 1765, Kaskaskia). Joseph and Catherine had several children. Of the boys, several also were in the fur trade following the example of their father. Sons whose records have been found were: Joseph, born 1 August 1784, married (2) 3 August 1814, St. Louis, to Angelique Vaudry; Francois, born 24 September 1788, married in 1807, St. Louis, to Therese Delisle-Bienvenu; Pierre-Isidore, born 2 November 1791, married 14 October 1815, Cahokia, to Julie Desjerlais; Toussaint, born ca January 1793, married 14 October 1815, Cahokia, Marie Rapieux; Antoine, born 22 September 1794, married in 1828 at Santa Fe (now in New Mexico, then a part of the colonies of Spain) to a young Spanish woman, Carmel

Benevides; Louis, born 7 July 1796, apparently went with Antoine to the Spanish area; Michel, born 3 August 1798, married 22 June 1825, Susanne Vaudry, St. Louis. Joseph, the first son, married (1) Julie Eugenie Delisle-Bienvenu in 1806 in St. Louis. With her he had three children: Therese Caroline, born 7 June 1807, St. Louis; Eugenie, born 29 July 1808; and Joseph, who may have been born near the time of his mother's death 22 May 1810, St. Louis. I also have data on children of Joseph with his second wife (several) and on the many children of Francois.

Antoine Robidou spent quite a lot of time in the Santa Fe area in the Spanish territory. There is record of an application for citizenship for "Antonio and Luis" Robidoux in Santa Fe 16 July 1823 and other records there of 1824 and 1825. Antoine's activities in the Spanish territory, including Taos, were for the fur business. Antoine was also involved in the construction of forts, including one on the Gunnison River. He was active in that area during the 1830s and 1840s. Either in 1844 or 1845 Antoine left his activities in the Spanish area and moved to St. Joseph, Missouri. Quoting from Wallace (op.cit.) "In 1846 he joined General Stephen Watts Kearny as an interpreter...in the war with Mexico. After the occupation of New Mexico he remained with Kearny in the advance on California. On December 6, 1846, Antoine received a lance wound in the back during the battle of San Pascual. The St. Joseph Gazette's obituary of Antoine presumed that he had lived in California for several years. His brother, Louis, by this time had become a major landowner in Southern California having acquired control of large portions of what are now San Bernardino, Orange, and Riverside Counties." Wallace states that the last five years of Antoine's life were spent in St. Joseph where he died on 29 August 1860. No records apparently exist of children born to Antoine and Carmel, but Wallace reports that they adopted a little girl and when she died, after being married and having a girl child, Antoine's widow returned to Santa Fe to live with her granddaughter and died in 1888 at Durango, Colorado.

Besides Antoine, three other sons of Joseph were engaged in the fur trade in the Middle West. Joseph, the oldest; Francois; and Louis. Thwaites, in his edition of the LEWIS AND CLARK JOURNALS, page 386, footnote, state that the first territorial legislature of Missouri was held in 1812 in the house of Joseph the father. Also reported is

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that his son Joseph had already erected a trading post by 1800 upon the site of present-day St. Joseph, and later was its first permanent settler, maintaining a store and trading post for the American Fur Company from 1826 to 1830. He died there in 1868. Joseph and Francois, in 1818, are listed among those receiving licenses to trade with the Indians. (Carter, op. cit.)

The following Robidou men (various spellings) are listed in the Index of the Missouri 1850 census: Felix, Mitchel, Francis B., A., Francis, George, Joseph, Julius C., and M.J. All but Felix and Francis B. are listed for Buchanan County, in which is located St. Joseph.

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## SOME FRENCH-CANADIAN FOLK TALES

(As gathered by Treffe Daniels at the University of Minnesota Wilson Library.)

From the Journal of American Folklore, Vol XVII, No. LXVII, Oct-Dec, 1904

"The following tales were kindly communicated to me by Mr. John C. Day, of Toronto. These tales were related by Mr. Day's mother, a French-Canadian.

### TRANSFORMATION INTO ANIMALS

"Once upon a time (about the year 1850) a man refused to pay his church fees, so he was put out of the church by one of the officers. This church officer was taking a load of hay to market next day, when he saw a colt come up and stop the horses, and also bite and annoy them. The man took his whip, and getting down from the load, he

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tried to drive the animal away, but the colt ran with full force against him and tried to stamp him to the ground. He then thought of his long knife, which he opened and stabbed the colt. As soon as blood appeared the colt turned into a man, and it was the man that had been put out of the church. The officer then tied his horses and led the evil man to a priest, but the priest only banished him to an island to be heard of no more."

"Once upon a time, an old woman was so possessed with an evil spirit that she could turn herself into several different animals. She lived on the cream of milk stolen from her neighbors while turned into a frog. But one day, after disturbing the pans of milk for days, she was caught hopping around in a neighbor's cellar. Her neighbor took her and put her upon a red-hot iron over the fireplace. She hopped off and out through the door to her home. When she came over the next day to see her neighbor, her hands were seen to be burned and blistered, and she wasn't able to work for days."

### THE EVIL EYE

The events narrated in the following story are said to have occurred in 1850, near Coteau Landing, in the county of Soulanges, Quebec: -

"My uncle and wife went to Glengarry one day, and left their only daughter, about eighteen years of age, to take care of the house. About three o'clock in the afternoon an old tramp passed by the door, then stopped and, seeing the door open, asked for something to eat. The girl, being afraid of the tramp, closed the door on him and told him to go on, for she would not give him anything or let him in. The old tramp became mad, and with oaths and threats he pounded on the door until he became tired; then, seeing the girl through the window, through madness he bewitched her and went away.

When the parents returned the girl was going through all sorts of manoeuvres, such as crawling through the rounds of chairs and trying to climb the walls, so the folks had to tie her. The next day a quack doctor passed up the road and stopped at the house as usual. Upon seeing the girl in such a way, he asked the cause of it. When told, he asked for the petticoat she wore, and two packages of new pins. Getting them, he put the girl in bed, sat in the old fireplace, with the door open, and taking the petticoat and pins, he put [stuck] all the pins into the petticoat, then pulled them out and put them in again until the old tramp arrived before the door and

asked, 'What are you doing there?' 'Go on!' said the doctor, 'why do you want to know?' 'But stop!' said the tramp, 'you are doing no good!' 'Oh!' said the doctor, 'you are the villain, are you, that put this poor girl in such a state? Now I want you to take that spell off the girl immediately!' 'I can't,' said the tramp, 'unless I have something to throw it on.' 'There's an old hen before the door,' said the doctor, 'throw it on her.' The tramp did so, the girl got out of the bed sensible, but the hen turned over and died. The doctor took the tramp at once in charge and went away, but the girl was for years silly at spells."

### JACK WITH HIS LANTERN

"About the year 1837 the Lower Canada French were very superstitious, so much so that they believed the devil was about them in different forms. One form was 'Jack with his Lantern,' that would lead travellers into swamps and laugh at them afterwards. Upon one occasion, one Louis LaFontaine was driving home from Alexandria [Glengarry County, Ont.] with his grist, when he was attracted by a light in the road before him. He knew the road well, but as it was dark and the light seemed to make on to his house, he decided to follow it. In the course of about twenty minutes he plunged into a deep swamp and the light also disappeared and left him in the dark, to get out the best he knew how. Through his excitement he heard the light, or the devil as he called it, laugh at him until morning dawned. So afterwards the people would always keep clear of 'Jack with his Lantern.'"

"One Johnnie Saveau went fishing one dark and foggy night, about one hundred yards from his house, when he saw 'Jack with his Lantern' moving in his direction. He had a torch-light at the bow of the boat, so didn't feel timid until 'Jack' came pretty close to him; and then he became afraid and tied his boat to the shore as quickly as possible; and to make it more secure pinned the rope to a log with his jackknife and hammered it down as much as he could. Then he ran for the house and closed the door as quickly as possible on arriving there; but the 'old devil' (as he called the evil spirit in the light) pulled the knife out of the log and threw it after him, planting it in the door, just as he closed it, with such force that he could not at first pull it away. So, to be sure, the devil was working in many a form."

W.F. Wintemberg  
Toronto, Canada



# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

## SOME BRIEF NOTES FROM LSCF:

Officers for the Board of Directors will be elected at the Monday, June 1 meeting. Declared candidates thus far are Leroy Dubois and Leo Gouette. As usual, this meeting will be held at the International Institute of Minnesota, which is on Como Avenue, St. Paul, just west of Snelling Avenue, and just across the street from the State Fairgrounds. There is ample and well-lighted parking.

The Spring potluck, held April 6, was a success. The next social event will be the annual picnic of La Societe, scheduled for 1 p.m. Sunday, July 19, at Spooner Park in Little Canada. Please plan to attend. Spooner Park is just off 35E, just a few northeast of the Freeway at the Little Canada exit. Directions will show the way. This annual event is a potluck, and is always enjoyable. Plan to attend.

The second annual celebration of la fete du St. Jean-Baptiste, will be 7-9 p.m. Wednesday, June 24, at the Sibley house Historic Site in Mendota. Those at last years will attest that it will be very enjoyable. Follow the signs. It's at "the other side of the Mendota bridge from Ft. Snelling"!

**NOTES:** Please renew (OR BEGIN) your membership in LSCF, if you have not already done so. Please send dues - checks to LSCF - to John England, treasurer, 2002 Palace Avenue, St. Paul 55105.

### DUES RATES:

Family:	\$15.00
Senior Couple (over 62):	\$10.00
Single:	\$10.00
Senior (over 62):	\$ 8.00

Advertising is available in Chez Nous - business card size. For rates, contact John England at 612-699-5178.

We are always seeking articles, photos, art, etc., for the Chez Nous. Send your contributions to Dick Bernard, editor  
7632 157<sup>th</sup> St W #301  
Apple Valley MN 55124  
Phone 612-891-5791

## SOME INTERESTING THINGS:

George LaBrosse sends along a couple of ideas which may be of interest to members: 1 - Concordia Language Village will be having a French Adult Week September 18-23. Cost is \$310. For more information contact Concordia Language Villages, 901 8<sup>th</sup> St S, Moorhead MN 56562. 2 - A new 2-volume set, Birchbark Canoes of the Fur Trade, is available from Silver Fox Enterprises, PO Box 176, 11504 US 23 South, Ossineke MI 49766. Cost is \$49.95 U.S. or \$65.95 Canadian, plus 5.00 for shipping. Send SASE to Dick Bernard, 7632 157<sup>th</sup> St W #301 if you wish more information about this book.

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# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Juillet-Aout, 1998 VOL. 20 NO. 1

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

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## From Minnesota to California: the story of two members of the Riopelle Family of Argyle MN

This story comes with extra special thanks to Michael Bedard, 11448 Terracina Blvd, Redlands CA 92373, as printed in the August and November, 1997, issues of the family newsletter he publishes, Bedard Calendrier de la Famille et bulletins d'information. Both articles, about his grandmother, Grace Bedard, and her brother, Walter, illustrate the joys and frustrations of seeking out a family history.

Walter Riopelle, whose 98<sup>th</sup> anniversary of birth is observed in August, 1998, was one of the first family members whose obscurity attracted me early on to finding out as much as I could about him. Here was the brother of my grandmother, Grace Riopelle Bedard, who had lived to be an adult and yet tragically was killed at an early age, and at least for my generation was really unknown. What was he like, did he marry, have children? Why did he leave a majority of his family and go to California? How did he die? The mysteries are there to be solved.

Walter Joseph Riopelle was born on August 24, 1900, to Oliver Thomas and Alexandrine (Goulet) Riopelle in Argyle, Minnesota<sup>1</sup>. He was the second born child and the first born son of what was to be a family of eleven. My grandmother, Grace Riopelle Bedard, who was seven years

<sup>1</sup> Oliver (Tom) was born in Montreal in 1874, and arrived in Argyle in 1881. Alexandrine was born in St. Boniface, Manitoba, her parents came from Trois Rivières, and they moved to Argyle in 1882. In all, at least nine of the eleven Riopelle children ended up moving to California. (Information from Michael Bedard and the Centennial History of St. Rose of Lima Catholic Church, Argyle MN, 1979)

younger than Walter, once told me "I think he was easy going, but I didn't know him too well." A seven year age difference in those days would put even siblings in different "worlds". Where one would be helping outside on the farm, the other would be much younger and in the house. And in 1920, when Walter ventured off into California, Grace Riopelle would have been only 13. I would assume Walter Riopelle worked with his father on the farm throughout his teenage years. Ultimately though, he did leave Minnesota and go to California, for no other reason I know of thus far than for the opportunity that California offered. In Walter's case it would be working on farms and then the oil fields of Long Beach. He married a woman named Lidia, who was three years older than he. I would assume the marriage took place in California, but where exactly is still unknown. The St. Rose of Lima history (Argyle MN) book has her name listed as "*Loleta (a woman from California)*". I wonder if this reflects a bit of an observation by someone of Walter going off and marrying an older woman from the fast paced life "out there in California!!" Or maybe they just really thought her name was Loleta!

Regardless, Walter eventually went out to California for the opportunity it held. What was it in Argyle that initiated the thought to look elsewhere? Were times on the farm not good in 1920? Was it just an ambitious personality looking to satisfy itself in the "promised land"? Grace Riopelle said, "When he first came to California he went up North. I don't know what he did though. I think she (his wife) worked in the fruit orchards. They lived by Pete and Cleone Riopelle." My grandmother also remembered that "Uncle Louis (Louis B. Riopelle) was out in California then as well as his son 'Pete' (Emil). Uncle Louis had

retired and moved to California." So Walter wasn't venturing out totally alone. Coming to California brought Walter first to the work he knew, that of the farm. It may have been here that he met Lidia, and went to work in the fields when he first arrived. Ultimately though Walter ended up in Long Beach where he went to work on the oil derricks in Signal Hill, California. He and Lidia lived at 2185 Pasadena Avenue in Long Beach. Here they lived with their daughter who was born in 1934. My grandmother told me her name was Rose Rita. She would be 63 today. Walter got a Social Security Card, probably just after the Social Security Act was passed in 1935. His Social Security Number was 558-03-9261.

Details of his and their day to day life in Long Beach and in the oil fields are unknown. But eventually, of course, other family members had arrived in California to live. Euphemie Bedard Riopelle arrived with husband Elmer, another son of Louis B. Riopelle, and Victor Riopelle, Walter's brother, lived at 733 Vernon Street in Long Beach. So Walter had some more family around him by the mid 1930's. And things must have begun to settle in for him and his family a bit by 1940. The United States had just implemented the Selective Service Act and started the draft in late October of 1940. This didn't affect Walter personally, but Hitler's successful war machine in Europe was continuing to bring its devastation to the headlines of newspapers in the United States. Walter may have spoken of the events taking place in Europe with the family, or perhaps the word at the oil fields was of the potential for the great demand for oil needed for a possible war effort of our own.

Walter got up for work on Friday, November 29, 1940, and may have read the paper first before going off to work. The country was becoming increasingly concerned with European events, and was observing still the re-election of the first third term President in its history three weeks previous, that of Franklin Roosevelt. Sometime later that morning, quite possibly just before he was to break for lunch, around 11:30 in the morning, Walter was working on the oil derrick and "reached over to grab a pump, and it went right through him." His sister Grace recalled. The steel pump part went into his abdomen. Walter was taken to Seaside Hospital in Long Beach where three and a half hours later he died from shock and loss of blood. One of course can't help but think of Walter being saved today by our paramedic system of medicine.

I don't know if Walter was conscious or not any time after the accident, or whether or not his wife was present when he died at 3 p.m., but Lidia must have arrived at the hospital at some time in all the tragic confusion. Funeral arrangements were made and Walter's body was brought to the Sheelar-McFayden Mortuary at 1952 Alameda Avenue in Long Beach. His brother Victor Riopelle provided personal information for the death certificate and telegrams were sent back to Minnesota to inform family members of the tragic news. Arrangements were made to have Walter's body sent back home to Argyle. In Red Lake Falls, Minnesota, where Joe Bedard had moved up from Argyle in 1936, the headlines in the newspaper for December 5, 1940, read: "*Walter Riopelle Killed in California on Friday,*" and "*Brother of Mrs. Joe Bedard in Fatal Accident Between Long Beach and San Francisco.*" There were many inaccuracies in the article. It said that Walter was 38 and implied he was killed in an automobile accident. ("Killed in an accident on his route...") The article did state that Walter was born in Argyle, and lived in Minnesota "prior to 10 years ago when he moved to California." It also mentions his "*six year old daughter*", but states no name.

His body was sent back to Argyle from Long Beach. Victor Riopelle accompanied the body back and Walter's funeral was held on Friday morning, December 6, 1940, at St. Rose de Lima Catholic Church. I don't know whether Father Rousseau or Father O'Dwyer was the priest who officiated at the funeral. The paper states that one or the other would perform the services. Walter Riopelle was buried in Block 12, Lot 8, of the St. rose Cemetery, his father's lot. His mother and father are buried next to him.

Did his wife remarry? What became of the daughter? What were the circumstances of Walter going to California? More questions to answer still. But Walter Joseph Riopelle as the pioneer of our family to California is still not forgotten.

Walter's sister, **Grace Riopelle Bedard**, turned 90 on November 24, 1997. She was the fifth of eleven children born to Oliver Thomas and Alexandrine (Goulet) Riopelle.

She grew up on the farm in Argyle, and went to Argyle High School, graduating in 1925. It was there in high school that she met Joseph Bedard. After graduation they were married on her birthday in 1925 at St. Rose de Lima Church in Argyle. On July 24, 1926, their first child and only



son, Donald Joseph, was born. In 1930 a daughter, Rhodyne Grace, was born, and in 1933, June Claire made the family a total of five.

In 1936 Joe and Grace moved their family to Red Lake Falls, Minnesota, where Joe opened up the "Sanitary Meat Market". It was in Red Lake Falls that Sandra Lee was born in 1940. In 1942, during World War II, Grace and her children moved out to join Joseph Bedard and other family members in California. Opportunity and work had inspired a few Riopelle's and Bedard's out to the West Coast. Having found work, Joe sent for the rest of his family to join him and his father, Arthur Joseph Bedard, in Long Beach. Walter Riopelle had already gone out to California earlier and was killed in a oil derrick accident in 1940. Eupheme Bedard, who had married Elmer Riopelle (Grace's cousin) had also already come out to California and had done very well. So with the car packed up and with children aged 16, 12, 9 and 2, Grace Bedard headed out to California with son Donald driving, and saved up rationing coupons to get them there.

Following a breakdown in Arizona, they arrived safely in Long Beach. In 1948, the last child of Joseph and Grace Bedard, Adair Maria Bedard, was born in Long Beach. Grace worked in the family dry cleaning business in Long Beach.

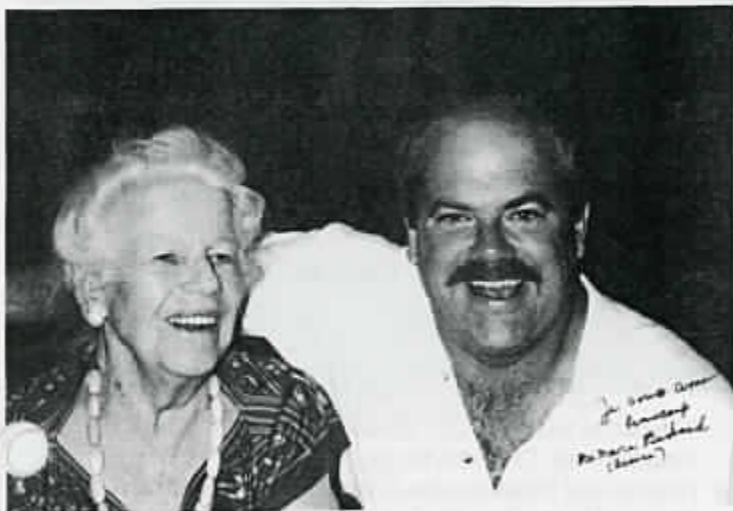
She eventually went to college and came within 3 units of getting her college degree. She was a wonderful painter and many of her children's and grandchildren's homes have her paintings on their walls.

An early memory I have of her is when she took us all down to the beach in Three Arch Bay

(Laguna Beach, California) and had me and my sister's all paint little miniature's of an ocean scene she was painting. She and my grandfather loved to travel and went to many different places. Their trip to Europe was a highlight. Following my grandfather's death on November 2, 1977, my grandmother continued to live at their house on Gaviota Street in Long Beach, but eventually moved to several different places. She moved to Hemet, California, for a long period. It was at her Condominium in Hemet that she and I sat down one day in 1992 and began to put down all of this genealogical information. After she moved from there, she has lived with her daughter Adair in Nuevo, California, and in an apartment behind my brother Dana's house in Cypress, California. Finally she moved to her place on Medical Center Drive in Anaheim, then over to a new place on Dale Street in Anaheim.

In the fall of 1997 she suffered two heart attacks, the last of which had her in the hospital for nearly a month. She has recovered from those enough to be released from the hospital, and moved to a new place in Stanton, California, where she could get more care. She lived for a time with her daughter Rhodyne in Ramona<sup>2</sup>, California. She now lives in Poway CA.

She knows of my feelings for her, as I have written them and spoken them to her nearly each time I am with her. But I have described her in a letter to her once as "that of which Saints are made." I am so thankful to have been so fortunate to have had the time and opportunity to really know such a woman. She is everything I think a grandmother should be. She is so loving, intelligent, fun. She is family. She tells all when she is in pain, that she has lived long enough, yet I cannot imagine my world without her. We don't get to choose our grandparents, but if I could, I would have picked no other.



Grace Riopelle Bedard with Grandson Michael Bedard

We are always seeking articles, photos, art, etc., for the Chez Nous. Send your contributions to Dick Bernard, editor 7632 157<sup>th</sup> St W #301 Apple Valley MN 55124 Phone 612-891-5791

<sup>2</sup> Ironically, Ramona, which is a small town northeast of San Diego, is also the current home of the 1901 Oldsmobile featured in the Jan-Feb '98 Chez Nous.



Sister Jane about 1906

## Letters to France from Sr. Jane Frances Bochet, CSJ

With grateful thanks to  
Sr. Ann Thomasine Sampson, CSJ  
Bethany Convent, St. Paul

Note from the Editor: One early becomes aware of the intimate connection between the early Catholic Church of the Diocese of St. Paul and France. There were numerous connections. Father Goiffon, a historical personage in early days of Minnesota, Wisconsin and North Dakota, is one French born and trained Priest. Ireland-born and St. Paul-raised Archbishop John Ireland went to seminary in France – indeed at the same seminary as Goiffon.

Sister Jane Frances Bochet was one of the noted women of the Sisters of St. Joseph in the St. Paul Province. About Sister Jane Bochet and her order, Sister Ann Thomasine writes: "The Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet were a French congregation founded in 1650 in LePuy, France. In 1836 six Sisters came as missionaries to Carondelet, now a part of St. Louis, Missouri. In 1851, at the request of Bishop Joseph Cretin, four Sisters came to St. Paul where they opened St. Joseph's Academy one week after their arrival. The community rapidly expanded and opened many schools, hospitals, orphanages and the College of St. Catherine.

J.M.F. Marshall Minnesota 1  
Le 27<sup>e</sup> Novembre 1906  
Ma Bien Chère Sœur et toute la famille  
Vous voyez par le nom que j'ai  
changé de Maison je suis maintenant  
à 200 Miles plus au Sud & cependant  
c'est encore de l'Amérique du Nord la  
même chose. Ce-ci est une Academy  
ou il y a des Pensionnaires, un externat  
et des écoles Paroissiales. Nous avons  
un Prêtre Français pour la Paroisse  
Sr. Pere Paul. Il vient du Département  
de Seine et Marne <sup>en France</sup> et reçoit les journaux

Part of one of Sr. Jane's Letters

One prominent Sister, Jane Frances Bochet, who was born in Savoy, France, in 1840, entered the Sisters community in Montiers in 1864 and one year after her profession volunteered to come to Carondelet "to teach Indians." She was later sent to St. Paul in 1869 where she early "showed qualities of leadership, business acumen and an ability to relate well with people."<sup>3</sup>

Mother Jane, as she was to be called, occupied many important positions – mistress of novices, and superintendent of three hospitals in St. Paul, Minneapolis and Winona. She was also provincial superior of the St. Paul Province, where she devoted a great deal of attention to the formation and education of the novices and professed Sisters. She was also superior of several convents where the Sisters taught school. One of these was St. Joseph's Convent and school in Marshall, Minnesota, where she spent 12 years. She seemed to be assigned missions in need of expansion and building.

As historian for the Sister of St. Joseph, I was able to correspond with descendants of the

<sup>3</sup> All biographical references come from Sister Ann Thomasine Sampson CSJ, Bethany Convent, St. Paul, and from her book Care with Prayer, A History of St. Mary's Hospital and Rehabilitation Center, 1987. The portions of translated letters from Sr. Jane also come from Sr. Ann, and were translated by Pauline Cadieux, Eagan MN. Both Sr. Ann and Pauline are LSCF members.

Bochet family in Arches-Beaufort in France. The latter sent genealogical information and pictures of Mother Jane and her ancestral home in the mountains where she was a shepherdess. They also sent excerpts of four letters she sent to her family in France while she was living in Marshall. These letters were translated by LSCF member Pauline Cadieux of Eagan MN. Mother never returned to her native land. She was, however, vitally interested in what was going on, particularly the effects of the French Revolution of 1904 and its persecution of the Church. Since Mother spent over 50 years in the St. Paul province where she conversed and wrote mainly in the English language, she lost the facility of writing fluent French and her letters to her family show evidence of this handicap as is shown in the following translations.

Her letters reveal the importance of communication about even mundane things between people. They can be a lesson to us in these days, when written communication seems almost quaint and unusual. One wonders about the written record which will remain from us for those yet unborn.

It is interesting to note that according to the Bochet family, they never knew that Sister Jane Frances had been "a superior, administrator and business woman." In 1921 Mother Jane retired to St. Mary's Hospital and died at the age of 84 in



Convent at Marshall about 1906

1927. She is buried at Calvary Cemetery, St. Paul, surrounded by other early pioneer Sisters of St. Joseph."

Following are contents of some of Sr. Jane's letters from Marshall MN to France:

**1. JMJ Marshall MN Nov. 27, 1905**

My Dear Sister & All of the family

You can see by the name that I have changed mission. I am presently 200 more miles to the south [from Minneapolis to Marshall].

However, it is still the same North America. [St. Joseph] is an academy, a parish school with day pupils & boarders. We have a French Priest for the parish. Pere Ouillot [Rev. Joseph Guillot], he comes from Du Departeneur de Seinatre in France. He receives the Parissien newspaper La Croise.

I see the bad news every day, only 10 days later, as things are on the wrong side<sup>4</sup>....

As stated in the newspapers, the bishops are very close & firmly devoted to their ministry. This is very good, they are greatly admired by the Americans.

All the bishops & priests here are very interested.

Lots of prayers are recited for their intentions, so that they can continue to be Jesus Christ's soldiers [followers].

As for you, I believe you are firmly praying, try to make sure that you receive God's blessing.

This huge problem is only a visit that our poor France well deserves. The good people suffer for the vicious. The good will be rewarded. If they suffer now they will not have to suffer in the eternity. It is a consolation for myself and my family.

Write to me now and tell me what is going on at your place, and if the priest is still at ease. Give him my respect and tell him we are all praying for the faith of France. May God bless them and give them lots of courage.

I still hope that things have at least improved, if they are not totally changed.

**2. Jesus, Mary, Joseph Marshall MN  
Jan 12, 1909**

My dear Sr. Francoise and all the family.

I just read the letter written by Mary on May 29, 1908.

<sup>4</sup> The French Revolution of 1904 resulted in religious persecution.

I believe this is the last letter I received, I can't remember. I may have answered her letter and again maybe not, but it is not because it wasn't appreciated. All of her letter was very interesting to me.

I can visualize you moving about in and around Corroz & Cambettes [her home area in France]. I think of the times I used to watch the sheep.

It feels like only a few days ago and here I am @ 68 years old. I am very close to my coffin, but I still am very healthy. I get cold very easily but fortunately I don't have to go outside.

We have Mass every day at home in the convent. My work does not require me to go out.

We have very little snow, not as much as you have, but it is very cold, especially this year.

The accident underneath the snow that Mary was telling me must have been very painful for the parents.

The little one, Jacques, and her mother Palagie must have been distressed. How old was she? Had she made her first Communion?<sup>5</sup>

What is at Cravanner? Do you still go to the village in the winter time? Did you sell it? Was it any good for the cold? Maybe it was too small for the family.

How is the father of the house feeling? I visualize him as being young and you also. Do you have white hair? I have very few.

### 3. Part of a letter probably written some time in 1910 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> pages

"You are asking for news of our country. There is hardly anything interesting for anyone who has not seen it and don't know anybody.

Most homes are made of red or white bricks, and many are made out of wood and painted white, gray, green and yellow.

Ours is all painted in a light green (more olive). I will send you a photograph. We have a lot of them [photos?] around here.

Our fields in the country are big. They are not cultivating them well. One person can have hundreds or almost 1,000 acres of land of wheat, hay and all sorts of corn.

We make good bread every day. The bread has to be eaten warm with butter to be at it's best, it is very good. In our kitchen we have ovens, also

<sup>5</sup> These two paragraphs appear to refer to a death(s) in an avalanche.

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small ones for bread. We make white bread almost twice a week, we sometimes buy rye bread from the bakery.

We see cows and sheep quite often, but no goats. I believe goat cheese is the best.

A few of our sisters are in Rome on business. I received a French book from them in Rome. I prefer to read English books, unless it is news.

I hope I don't send you English words as I can read and write them better.

I am sending you all my affection.

Pray and love a lot, it is our duty to God.

Your sister and aunt

Sister Jane Frances

### 4. Another part of a 1910 letter

...I think of you in my prayers.

I wander all over Carroz of Combette, the village of Hauteluce in spirit. I haven't forgotten anyone.

How is Francois' and Francoise's father, the children and the family. I always like to know what they are doing.

What is the married one doing and how is she? I forgot her name. I would love for her to write, so I could still remember one of them in my prayers.

Do you still have all the boys at home? Some of them must be as tall as their father.

Don't you ever take pictures? I would just love to have one of the whole family. Perhaps, they are too expensive. Around here you can have some for \$.05 cents.

I think you are all at the lower level at this time<sup>6</sup>. It will be approx. Dec. 11 when you get this.

Tell me what's happening with the churches, if they can still [celebrate] Mass there yet.

Are the people well enough to help the priest, united to our Father the Pope. If all would be unified with him, we could save France, only prayers can do it. We blame the Masons. They are totally wrong, but at the same time God permits it....

Goodbye

Your affectionate sister

Sister Jeanne Frances

<sup>6</sup> Another speculation: the family may have occupied two small houses, one in the higher mountains in the summer; another in a lower valley in the winter. Her home area is in a mountainous area in the border area of Italy and France.

## A fine Sunday afternoon in Brooklyn CT March 29, 1998

Editors note: One of the truly happy happenings of my life was to meet John Cote in about 1986. He and I share roots (my great-grandmother was Julienne Cote) going back to the 1630's. We met through genealogy; we are cousins; we are friends, mostly by letter and phone. John, a retired submariner and lifelong resident of CT, and his wonderful wife, Jeanette, have been married 51 years. Among his many activities, John has been extremely active in his chapter of the Knights of Columbus, and has shepherded over 100 Eagle Scouts through the Eagle program in eastern CT.

On March 29, at their home in Brooklyn CT, Cote's treated me to a special family dinner. John sent in the following account of the superb five-course dinner. Merci, John and Jeanette! (The editor is not a cook, but loves to eat, and apologizes in advance for misreading any of John's recipes!)

The author of this article was pleasantly surprised and pleased to once again welcome his cousin Dick Bernard from Apple Valley Mini-Soda for a short visit (a few days). Dick's plans were finally realized when, after being a speaker at a conference in Hartford CT, Dick took a short side trip to drop by and say Hi.

29 March, Sunday, the call finally came that Dick was here - hitching up the young horse to the shay, I picked up Dick and made our way back.

A short, emotional, touching welcome started "La Grande Visite" (The great visit). Cordialities, reminiscences, re-acquaintance made time fly.

Meanwhile the author's Canadien menu was ready so the first course was served "family style" "Pot on the table" The pot is a six quart stainless steel container - after a few helpings of pea soup, probably two quarts were left.

Then followed the main meal - garlicked loin roast pork with assorted vegetables in a wine sauce/pan gravy. This was accompanied by potatoes, fresh hot rolls and a French table white wine which complemented the meal.

Dessert followed which was angel food cake with butterscotch ice cream and a freshly brewed pot of coffee.

The author cooked the entire meal. His wife prepared the cake as well as the table, which was well decorated in her usual manner. Pretty.

There was engaging conversation, with comments, questions, news added to this visit, Dick's first since 1992.



The dinner party, eyes down, engaged in the serious business of enjoying dinner. John Cote and his spouse Jeanette are standing. John's brother and sister are seated.

### John's recipe for Pork Loin Roast

Choose very carefully a center cut of 3-4#. Wash and pat dry. Insert lots of garlic cloves (pieces) - the more the merrier. I use 5-6 cloves.

Rub Paul Prudhomme Magic Seasoning blend Pork and Veal Magic Spice well into meat.

A bit of savory or sage rubbed well all around will improve.

Wrap tightly and put in freezer. If using in a few days, marinate in large oven proof dish, making sure it can go from hot to cold or vice versa.

Prepare following veggies:

White taters quartered or scrub clean if baked. 3-4 carrots pared and scrubbed - cut in chunks. Coarse diced celery; white or yellow turnips in small cubes or mashed as preferred; 4-5 medium onions either sliced or diced. Lots of them.

The Roast is in the pan and veggies ready so slather meat all over with honey mustard sauce Texas Pete Mild (also Kraft Teriyaki bar-b-cue sauce can be used.)

Lightly pepper meat.

Now the secret: use 1/2 to 3/4 cup of port wine. Be generous. Add a wee bit H2O if need be.

Meat in pan, veggies around meat, onion slices on top of meat. Salt very slightly if at all. Cover with aluminum foil - make a tent, or cover if using a small roaster. Set oven at 300 and allow 45-50 minutes per pound. Let meat stand 10-15 minutes before cutting. Editors Note: Yummy



# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

## NOTES FROM LA SOCIETE

The annual election of La Societe Board members and officers was on June 1. Re-elected to the Board were LeRoy DuBois and Dorothy Landry. New member Marie Nichols was also elected to the Board. Immediately following the election the Board members met and elected the following officers for the coming year:

President John Edel (714-2155)  
Vice-President Marie Nolin Nichols  
Secretary LeRoy DuBois (484-1622)  
Treasurer John England (699-5178)

Other Board members:

Dorothy Landry (788-0095)  
George LaBrosse (455-3128)  
Ralph Germain (439-7087)

**Future Activities:** Mark your calendar.

La Societe annual picnic will be July 19 at Spooner Park in Little Canada, pot luck as usual. Invite all French-Canadians as guests.

Canadian Thanksgiving celebration will be on October 12. Details to be supplied later.

Christmas Party will be on December 5 at the International Institute, St. Paul. Pot luck.

## Letter to the Editor

Of course, I found the story of the 1901 Oldsmobile most delightful and it brought back many memories! I imagine that the old CDO will present many more tales before it "passes away". It's truly a remarkable tale. Your Grandpa Henry [Bernard] would have loved reading the article.

Marvin Campbell, Brainerd MN  
(Marvin lived with the Bernard's for two school years in the early 1930's and often saw the car. He says it was "hands off" for the kids!)

Don't forget to listen to

**BONJOUR MINNESOTA**

On Fresh Air Radio, KFAI,  
90.3 and 106.7 FM

Every Wednesday from 8:30-9:30 p.m.

Requests welcome during the program.

Call 341-8988 or voice mail 341-3144x831

**STAY TUNED**

**NOTES:** Please renew (OR BEGIN) your membership in LSCF, if you have not already done so. Please send dues – checks to LSCF - to John England, treasurer, 2002 Palace Avenue, St. Paul 55105.

**DUES RATES:**

Family:	\$15.00
Senior Couple (over 62):	\$10.00
Single:	\$10.00
Senior (over 62):	\$ 8.00

Advertising is available in **Chez Nous** – business card size. For rates, contact John England at 612-699-5178.

**MARK  LABINE**

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# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Septembre-Octobre, 1998 VOL. 20 NO. 2

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

# 109

## Cardinal

Justa Y., age 84, suddenly at home on 8/4/98, born 8/25/13 to Alberic & Louise Archambault, West Warwick, RI. Resident of Maplewood, MN, since 1949. Preceded in death by husband, Baptiste A. (1988); and brother, Raymond. Loving mother of Dianne (Tony) Stephens, Alberic (Sherril), Louise, Benjamin (Mary), Philip (Phyllis), Robert (Sharon), and Christopher (Katie). Beloved grandmother "Memere" of Colleen, Tom, Andrew, Joanna, Brian, Ryan, Rory, Dirk, Courtney, Grace, and Young Baptiste. Dear sister of Cecile, Francoise, Dion, Gerald of Rhode Island, and Aline of New Jersey. Also survived by many nieces and nephews. Member of St. Jerome's over 55 club, Hearts & Hands, Social Justice Committee, Maplewood Seniors Committee, Minnesota Historical Society, La Societe Canadienne Francaise Du Minnesota, Minnesota Territorial Pioneers, Little Canada Historical Society. Gardening and flowers were her joy. Funeral leaving PHALEN PARK FUNERAL HOME, 1235 Arcade St. @ Hawthorne on Tuesday, 9:30 AM. Celebration of her life and Mass of Christian Burial at THE CHURCH OF ST. JEROME, 380 E. Roselawn Ave., Maplewood, Tuesday, August 11, 10 AM. Visitation Monday 3-8 PM at the funeral home. Parish vigil 7 PM. Interment St. John's Cemetery, Little Canada.

## To Honor the Memory of Justa Cardinal Charter member of LaSociete Canadienne-Francaise

Reprinted from Chez Nous Vol. 1 No. 2 Juin, 1980

### Je Me Souviens

As years add up along life's span, sweet memories are the flowers in the scan!

One of these memories was my grandmother's crepes. She lived with us for a few years after her husband passed on, and she too passed on when I was eight. Memere, as we called her in French, used a large heavy black cast iron skillet, on the black iron stove centered against the chimney in our kitchen.

The recipe was kept in her memory bank – a forerunner, I'm sure, of today's computer. It held many facts at her fingertips. Remedies for aches and ails, advice, solutions to problems, and solace for those in need.

She put in the milk, eggs, and flour in the proper proportions, all measured by feel, I'm sure. The skillet had to be at the proper heat – regulated by gamble and luck, on the wood burning stove, and slid back and forth to warmer and cooler spots. Often a crepe was for the neighbor's chickens – who often roamed in our yard.

The chosen crepes for us were golden brown, plate size and very thin, spread with fruit or maple syrup, rolled into a log and sliced crosswise like miniature slices of jelly roll. MMMmmm...they were so good! Often in summer she took me by the hand, and we went down the hill to the woody area by the meandering stream, and picked wild blueberries and raspberries, which she would chill and sprinkle with sugar onto the crepes. Crepes were an "any meal" treat.

Sweet memories recall pleasurable times, they linger – and then leave you with warmth and smiles. How times have changed! The thermostat! The commercial sack! The prepared foods, frozen fruits! Now the busy grandma often needn't give a hoot...It's all there ready in the store booth.

Justa A. Cardinal

A note from all of us in LSCF: Au revoir, Justa. Merci beaucoup for many, many fond memories, beginning with your role as Social Chair of La Societe in it's first year, 1979-80. For us, too, there are very many – to use your words – *"sweet memories recall[ing] pleasurable times, they linger – and then leave [us] with warmth and smiles."*





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

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

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

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

**SOCIAL CLASSES**

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

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

**READING CHEZ NOUS AND NOT A MEMBER OF LA SOCIETE C-F?**  
You are certainly invited to join us. Annual dues are as follows: Family \$15 (Senior \$10); Single \$10 (Senior \$8). **Mail dues to John England, 2002 Palace Avenue, St. Paul MN 55105. Make check payable to "LSCF".**

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

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

**WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE**

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

(Continued on page 6)

## MILL VILLAGE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



# Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

**Please note the invitation by Consul General and Mrs. Robert Dery on reverse. Do attend this gathering. And note that they ask for an RSVP by September 9.**

Is your name highlighted in yellow on this month's address label? If it is, this means that you did not renew your Societe membership for 1998. Please renew. Please let us know if you do not wish to continue to receive Chez Nous, which is a benefit of membership. Membership year is January through December. Rates, etc? See page three of this issue.

### A Brief Note from the Editor:

I returned from an out of town trip on August 11. It was a shock to learn, then, that **Justa Cardinal**, a vibrant and youthful lady of 84, had died suddenly and tragically on August 4. I considered Justa a very good friend. She could always be counted on.

Justa was from the beginning of La Societe a very large part of our heart. She, and a few other stalwarts, have kept our organization alive for 19 years. Now she is gone. We need to carry on.

Justa leaves a vacancy in our membership that requires 100 or more people to fill. Why not, as a tribute to Justa, enroll one or two or more new members into our society. People who are in your family, or French-Canadians you know. Otherwise this organization, and Chez Nous, will inevitably wither and die.

For sure, do as Justa certainly did, and leave memories for those who follow. Each of you have memories such as she conveyed in June, 1980 (see page one of this issue). Write them down for those who follow you, and make them available to readers of Chez Nous. As you know, I am open to your memories. Simply send them to **Dick Bernard, 7632 157<sup>th</sup> St. W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124**. They will be printed. (Please don't worry about little things like grammar. The memories are what is important.)

Justa gave us great gifts. Let's build on her very substantial legacy to us. It takes every one of us, in whatever small or large ways we can help.

Dick Bernard

### Actions of the Board of LaSociete:

If you know the location of any LaSociete property, please notify Leroy Dubois, secretary;

At its June 1 meeting, the Board decided to give outgoing presidents membership and voting privileges on the Board. Leo Gouette is the first former president with this privilege.

**October 12 will be our first Canadian Thanksgiving Day bash at the International Institute, St. Paul. The party, which will be potluck, will begin at 6:30.**

### Officers and Board members are:

- |                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| John Edel, president      | 651-714-2155 |
| Marie Nolin Nichols, v.p. | 651-578-2517 |
| LeRoy DuBois, sec'y       | 651-484-1622 |
| John England, treas       | 651-699-5178 |
| George LaBrosse           | 651-464-3611 |
| Dorothy Landry            | 612-788-0095 |
| Leo Gouette               | 651-489-8306 |

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



The Consul General of Canada  
and Mrs. Robert Déry

request the pleasure of your company  
for wine and cheese with

La Societé canadienne française du Minnesota

and

Les Canadiens Errants

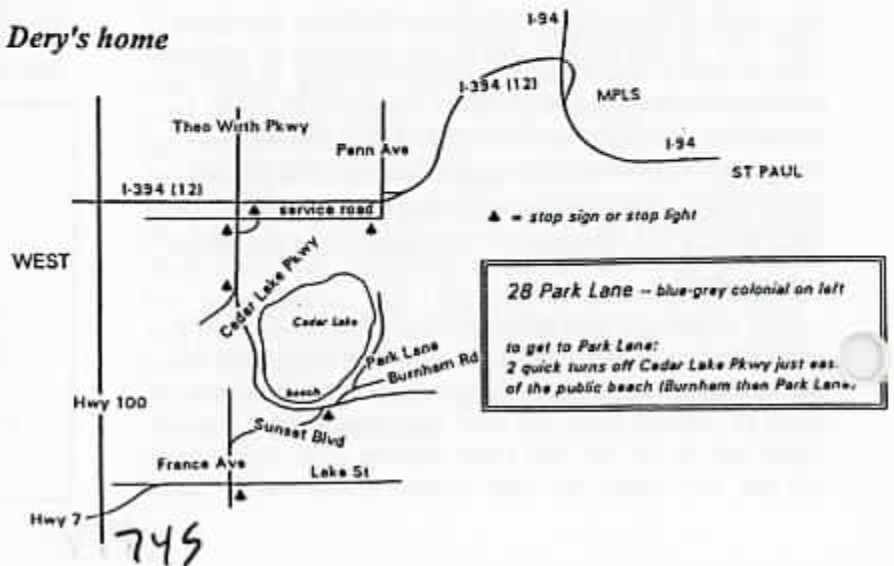
Sunday, September 13, 1998  
3:30 to 6:30 p.m.

Official Residence  
28 Park Lane  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Please reply prior to  
Wednesday, September 9  
(612) 332-7486, extension 3201

*Map to Dery's home*

Justa loved the gatherings at the home of  
Mr. And Mrs. Dery. Let's honor her by our  
presence.



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CORRECTION TO  
OUTLINE:  
JUSTA GREW UP IN  
WEST WARWICK & WENT TO  
SCHOOL W/ GEORGETTE'S GRANDMA.



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



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

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

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

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

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

#### SOCIAL LIFE

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



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

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

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

**THE FRENCH-CANADIAN**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANCAISE  
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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55458-1413

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# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Novembre-Décembre, 1998 VOL. 20 NO. 3

*La société canadienne-française*

*Editor: Dick Bernard*

#110

La Societe's annual Christmas Party begins at 6 p.m. Saturday, December 5, 1998, at the International Institute of Minnesota (on Como Ave St. Paul, directly across the street from the State Fairgrounds) As always, our party is potluck, informal and enjoyable. Come one, come all.

La Societe normally meets the first Monday of each month (January excepted) at 7:30 at the International Institute. Do plan to get involved.

**Will  
you  
miss  
Chez Nous?**

(Read Page Two)

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## TOWARDS THE FUTURE...A LOOK AT THE PAST.

By Dick Bernard, Editor  
7632 157<sup>th</sup> St W #301  
Apple Valley MN 55124  
612-891-5791

In my own opinion – only my own opinion – our organization is at risk of not surviving its 20<sup>th</sup> year in 1999. If the organization dies, so does Chez Nous, which I have edited for 13 years. I do not relish this prospect. Please read on, and please think of ways to help.

It was 17 years ago, October 24, 1981, that I first learned of LaSociete Canadienne-Francaise (LSCF). A neighbor had told me about a program to be held that night at Jeanne d'Arc Auditorium on the campus of the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul. It sounded interesting, and it turned out to be fantastic. It was the first production of LaSociete. Performers Louis Dube, Oliver LeFebvre, Martin LaVoie, and our own Francine Courtemanche Roche made wonderful music and brought joy to the house. I recall I joined LSCF either that night, or a short time thereafter.

In the Decembre, 1981, Chez Nous, our founder John Rivard said as follows about that concert: "Our first venture...was a huge success. Over 300 good people came to "An Evening in Old Montreal"...It was a jolly crowd that enjoyed the music and mixed well at the wine table. Our own Francine was the star of the concert. Her stage presence and lovely lilting voice enchanted everyone...." (This is the same Francine who is presently a very popular regular performer at the Loring Café and Sofitel Hotel and elsewhere in the Twin Cities).

Over the years since, if one thinks back, there have been many accomplishments of this society. Unfortunately, however, it is too often necessary these days to think back.... To many of our accomplishments are in our past.

This is not the fault of the leaders still active. All of us are trying. But the active, and even dues paying, membership base is dwindling – most recently the loss of Justa Cardinal, an active member non pareil, caused much pain. And we are all getting older – one of those facts of life not to be ignored.

**We of French-Canadian ancestry represent an incredibly rich heritage – a heritage which deserves to continue to be recorded and celebrated.**

The unfortunate reality is that we will continue to dwindle, and sooner than later LSCF (and Chez Nous with it) will die, without a little of your time, money and/or talent. Even if you can't come to meetings, you can identify relatives, neighbors, or friends who might be good members – and ask them to join (a sheet with three membership blanks is enclosed for your use). And, of course, you can pay your small dues to keep us alive and well. Or contribute a story, or a photo, or tell us about an upcoming program of interest to our readers.

Especially we need your talent. Let us know that you'd like to help us. **Let me know who you are, and I'll pass the information along.**

**Our ancestors lived through tough times, and came out even tougher. Perhaps we're at that rebirth stage, and when our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary is celebrated on March 19, 1999, we may be set to march forward into a vibrant and successful third millenium. I invite you to join with us in making this success.**

*Dick Bernard*  
October 6, 1998

**La Societe Canadienne-Francaise du Minnesota**  
**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION**

27

Please send with check made to La Societe C-F to  
 John England, treasurer  
 2002 Palace Avenue  
 St. Paul MN 55105

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 Street City State Zip

Annual Membership dues:		2-Year Membership Dues:	
Family	\$15.00	Family	\$30.00
Single	10.00	Single	20.00
Senior (over 62)	8.00	Senior (over 62)	16.00*
Senior Couple	10.00	Senior Couple	20.00*

**HELP YOUR SOCIETE THRIVE – RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP  
 NOW...AND ENCOURAGE OTHERS TO JOIN....**

**La Societe Canadienne-Francaise du Minnesota**  
**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION**

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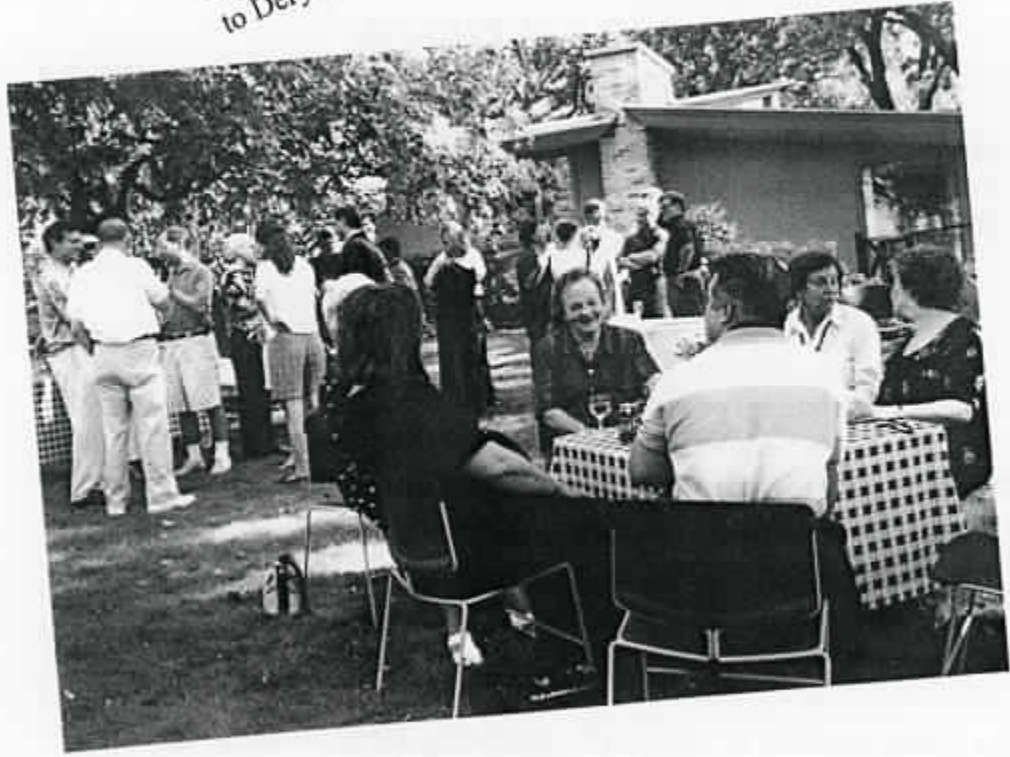
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Senior Couple	10.00	Senior Couple	20.00*

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Canada Consul-General Robert Dery (at right) and spouse Lorraine, hosted a delightful lawn party at their residence in Minneapolis on a beautiful afternoon September 13. Les Errants (above) performed. Among 50 or more guests from LaSociete and others, was Georgette Pfannkuch (with the smile, below), host of Bonjour Minnesota on KFAI-FM (see accompanying article). MERCI to Dery's.



### Tune in to Bonjour Minnesota

Chaque mercredi a 20:30 heures  
Every Wednesday from 8:30 to 9:30 PM  
On Fresh Air Radio, KFAI 90.3 or 106.7 FM  
Host Georgette Pfannkuch and Caryl Minnetti

Bonjour Minnesota est un programme de radio bilingue (a bilingual program —French-English)

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

Bonjour Minnesota showcases music, songs and interviews from France and francophone countries. Requests from listeners are welcome during air time (612-341-0980)

Special upcoming feature will be some Grandes scenes d'amour du Theatre Francais:

- 28 Octobre - MERIMEE Le Carrosse du Saint Sacrement, extr.
- 4 Novembre VIGNY Chatterton, acte III, scene 8
- 11 Novembre HUGO Ruy Blas, acte V, scene 4
- 18 Novembre MUSSET Il ne faut jurer de rien, acte III scene 4
- 25 Novembre ROSTAND Cyrano de Bergerac, acte V, scene 5
- 2 Decembre CLAUDEL Partage de Midi, acte I, scene 6
- 9 Decembre MOLIERE Le Misanthrope, acte IV, scene 3

**For pleasant listening, turn to Francine Roche's new CD of French ballads. These are the same ballads she sang at the La Societe concerts. These make a wonderful gift for all occasions. To order, call Francine at 571-7834.**

**From Evelyn Lund**

- Officers and Board members are:**
- |                           |              |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| John Edel, president      | 651-714-2155 |
| Marie Nolin Nichols, v.p. | 651-578-2517 |
| LeRoy DuBois, sec'y       | 651-484-1622 |
| John England, treas       | 651-699-5178 |
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| Leo Gouette               | 651-489-8306 |

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Office: (612) 644-1739 • Fax: (612) 645-2439

### 1999 CALENDAR

### LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE/FRENCH IN AMERICA

Those who would like to learn or learn more about the contribution of the the French to the building of two nations: Canada and the United States, will find a unique and valuable resource in this bilingual calendar:

- The 1999 edition (15th) celebrates among other events:
  - the tricentennial of Louisiana (1699),
  - the tricentennial of Cahokia in Illinois Country (1699),
  - the 475th anniversary of the voyage of discovery of Verrazano (1524) --i.e. the beginning of the French presence in America--
  - the 175th anniversary of the triumphal return of Lafayette (1824) . . .

**Prices:** US\$6.95 + US\$1.55 each for postage = **US\$ 8.50**  
 US\$6.95 (postage included) for an order of 5 or more calendars sent to a same address.  
 Back copies also available at US\$4.95 each, postage included.

Make check payable to: *French in America Calendar-1999*, and send it to R. Mikesell: 1155 East 56th Street, Chicago, IL 60637-1530.

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# chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Janvier-Fevrier, 1999 VOL. 20 NO. 4

*La société canadienne-française*

*Editor: Dick Bernard*

#111

## JOIN US IN CELEBRATION OF 20 YEARS OF LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANCAISE DU MINNESOTA

Saturday evening, March 20, 1999, 5 p.m. to ?

At the Parish Hall of St. Louis King of France Catholic Church, St. Paul MN

Special guests and Entertainment

Watch for your invitation in the mail. RSVP. Join us, March 20.



October, 1982, La Société was given its day by proclamation of the Governor of Minnesota, Albert H. Quie (seated at left). Included in this photo are La Société's founder, the Official Voyageur of Minnesota, John Rivard (second from left); Dick Bernard, current editor of *Chez Nous*, is behind the Governor; current La Société Board Member George LaBrosse is at far right. Seated next to Governor Quie is Lt. Governor Lou Wangberg. We invite readers to identify for us the remaining four members in the photo.



#### 1998-99 Board of La Societe

President	(vacant)
Marie Nolin Nichols, v.p.	651-578-2517
LeRoy DuBois, sec'y	651-484-1622
John England, treas	651-699-5178
George LaBrosse	651-464-3611
Dorothy Landry	612-788-0095
Leo Gouette	651-489-8306
Ralph Germain	715-294-4887

## THINGS REMEMBERED

By Dick Bernard, Editor

It was in a letter to 25 persons, dated March 12, 1979, where John Rivard called for a meeting on March 19 of that year for the expressed purpose of "...organizing a French Club in Minnesota." The meeting was held at the International Institute of Minnesota, our current meeting place. Out of that meeting was born La Societe Canadienne-Francaise du Minnesota.

Now, 20 years later, we are at the end of the first generation – a second generation about to begin. This Chez Nous, and the issue following, will remember our past. While we remember, let us also begin anew for the next 20 years.

Much goes into the "history" of anyone, of anything. It is what we have done, and how we choose to remember what we have done, which makes our history.

In this issue are three remembrances:

On page one is a photo from our past;

On pages three through six of this issue is reprinted in its entirety the very first Chez Nous, edited by Catherine Rivard. (Note that we were a year old before the first newsletter was printed. Ventures like LaSociete take time to evolve!)

At left is the symbol you have seen on each Chez Nous since September 1982, when Francine Roche and Lucille Ingram were editors of Chez Nous (with Dick Bernard assisting!). There is also a second, similar, symbol, which you have never seen before today!

Both of the symbols for La Societe were created by St. Cloud resident, and very active LaSociete member, Gaston Rheume. Those involved in LaSociete before 1991 knew Gaston, a proud native of Chicoutimi, PQ. He was an outgoing man of great energy and enthusiasm. Unfortunately, he passed away January 8, 1991, at the young age of 50. But like many of our members past, Gaston was dedicated to the preservation of his heritage. And, like many others, he left an indelible mark for the future.

Enjoy the recollections included in this newsletter, and the following issue. But most important, especially if you are a young person reading this newsletter, make a commitment to help keep the French-Canadian heritage alive as we enter our second generation.

# chez nous

Newsletter of

La société canadienne-française

No.1 Vol.1

## Le président parle John Rivard

AVRIL 1980

Every organization must have a "raison d'être." We have an excellent one - to gather in assembly and rejoice in our French Canadian heritage. We have so much to remember and retain from our parents, grandparents, forefathers and foremothers. It must not be lost nor forgotten, lest we betray the riches given us with the implied command that we pass it on to future generations.

In "Roots", that famous television show, one of the strong mothers said to her son, "Son, if you don't know where you came from and what you have inside of you from those who came before you, you cannot dream of still greater things to be done in the future." A living person is one who has the past and the future wrapped up within

He must use the leverage of the past to forge a new and more wonderful progress.

Our organization must marshal our collective abilities to preserve and promote all the good qualities of our past. For this purpose we have a Constitution to guide us and to direct our efforts, otherwise we tend to run off in all directions without purpose or definite goals. It is the duty of the President to point out and keep on track the various activities of the Society in the search for reaching the goals set by the Constitution and By-Laws.

For the above reasons you can see why the work of the committees is so important. The committees do the spade work and nurture the activities; after that they execute and implement the functions of their planning.

We will proceed joyously together to make our SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE one of the liveliest and most productive societies in the state. "Ensemble on peut tout faire!"

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### NOUS SOMMES NÉS \*\*\*

LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE was born on May 4, 1979, after many months of hard work, careful planning and several initial meetings led by John Theophile Rivard. The Constitution and By-Laws were written by John, Catherine Rivard, Madeline Roche and Ralph Germain, who slaved over these documents with praise-worthy devotion. The Constitution and By-Laws were adopted on May 4, 1979, and a Board of eleven Directors was elected. The first membership meeting of the SOCIÉTÉ was held at St. Louis Parish Hall, 506 Cedar Avenue, downtown St. Paul, on November 5, 1979. Guest speaker was well-known columnist Oliver Towne, who spoke on the history of the French Canadian with a proper reverence and engaging wit.

Regular membership meetings of LA SOCIÉTÉ are held on the first Monday of each month, 7:30 p.m., at St. Louis Parish Hall. LA SOCIÉTÉ presently boasts a membership of 108 persons, and growing!

Chez nous. It means "our house" or "our place", and it connotes warmth, congeniality, familiarity, and support.

LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE believes in these things; we have based our foundation on them. Please come and see for yourself the many wonderful things this group can offer you.



Most of us speak only English, read only English, write only in English. Our heritage as Americans has become basically English. We have studied American and world history through English eyes. England's friends and foes have been our friends and foes. English fears have been our fears, their law our law.

Unfortunately, there is much in history that is not written in English but in the other languages of the world. Most Americans have remained in ignorance of this history. American historians have not had the linguistic ability or resources to research the archives at Quebec, at Paris, at Madrid, at Moscow, and elsewhere to translate handwritten documents that would shed much additional light on early American history. Most Minnesota historians will sum up all of the French exploration and settlement efforts in a few paragraphs in the opening chapter of their books.

In all honesty, of course, even the French Canadians were far from being the first settlers. But let us now put everything into proper perspective. First there is the little known prehistoric period of Minnesota history, from the beginning of the world until a few centuries ago. Then there were those who have Indian heritage. Then - possibly - the Vikings, if the Kensington runestone should some day prove to be a true artifact. But then, for sure, the French Canadians, in 1679 - some believe that even earlier, 1620 or so, Etienne Brule, the Daniel Boone of French Canadians was at the head of the lakes. And finally, the arrival of the English and Americans from perhaps 1790.

Our purpose is to sum up a story of a heroic age and people who were our forefathers. The history of French Canadians in Minnesota is impossible to tell without a look at their background and the forces both in France and New France which shaped them. The earliest French arrivals appear to have been fishermen who exploited the great Newfoundland cod banks. Fish was the great Lenten staple of medieval times and the French and the Basque fishermen - somehow - discovered the American cod source. Slowly they came in contact with the Indians, and stories, often untrue, of gold, mineral wealth and furs began to circulate in France. The Portuguese by now had discovered the route around Africa to the Far East and its riches. Columbus was traveling west and had landed in the islands of the Caribbean. The French heard stories of the great St. Lawrence gulf from their fishermen and thought followed that perhaps here was the passage to the Far East....

To be continued.

#### IN REMEMBRANCE

We are saddened to note the passing of Alma Dubois Rivard, the beloved mother of our President, John Rivard. Mrs. Rivard passed away on February 22 at the age of 93. She was the oldest native-born person in Turtle Lake, Wisconsin and the wife of Louis Honoré Rivard, who died in 1955. Alma Rivard is survived by one brother, three children, 17 grandchildren and 30 great-grandchildren.

Sister Claire Germain, librarian of the St. Croix Catholic Schools, was an enthusiastic member of LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE. On January 7, 1980, Sr. Claire was injured in a fall and on January 25 passed away at Crookston, Minnesota. She was 64 years old. Sister Claire was 100% French Canadian, and is survived by her father, six brothers and three sisters.

To the families and friends of these dear ladies, LA SOCIÉTÉ extends its deepest sympathy.

# potpourri

The Festival of Nations is coming up! LA SOCIÉTÉ will, of course, be there to represent the French Canadians. We will participate in the bazaar, the educational exhibit, the food booth, and the entertainment program. Volunteers are needed for all of these areas, so please call Chairperson Francine Roche at 755-5936 if you can spare some time. The hours of the Festival are:

- Friday, April 25 - 4 p.m. to midnight
- Saturday, April 26 - 11 a.m. to midnight
- Sunday, April 27 - 12 noon to 8 p.m.

Tickets for the Festival will be available through LA SOCIÉTÉ for \$3.75. At the door you must pay \$4.50. LA SOCIÉTÉ will benefit if you buy them in advance, so please try to get your tickets early. More information on this will be available at the April 7th membership meeting.

The Festival will be wonderful exposure for LA SOCIÉTÉ - about 75,000 people pass through the St. Paul Civic Center during those three days! Most people will be hearing about us the first time. Help spread the word - and bring a friend!

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### Suggested Reading:

- White and Gold by Thomas Costain
- High Towers by Thomas Costain
- History of Canada by B. G. Creighton
- Voyageurs and French Canadians in the Minnesota Territories and Other Travels by Grace Lee Nute

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These delightful items are available for sale at our regular membership meetings:

Sash	\$6.00 member
	\$6.50 non-member
Fleur de Lis pin	\$4.50 member
	\$5.00 non-member
C'est La Vie T-shirt	\$4.00 members
	\$4.50 non-members
Charter Member Button	\$1.00

Don't miss April's General Membership meeting! Francine Roche will lead us in a sing-a-long. Francine's beautiful voice is an inspiration. Come on April 7th, St. Louis Parish Hall, 7:30 p.m.

# Recette

## Traditional Meat Pie \* Tourtiere

- 1 lb. ground pork (not lean)
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 small garlic toe
- 1/2 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. celery salt
- 1/4 tsp. cloves
- 1/2 cup water



Combine all ingredients and bring to boil. Set on low heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from heat, skim excess fat. Cool mixture. Pour into pie shell and cover with crust. Bake in oven at 500 til crust is golden brown. Serve hot. These pies can be frozen and easily reheated.

### "DO THE LOVING THING"

I wondered how to show my love  
To you and a world full of division;  
I've found the key I'm thinking of,  
This is my philosophy and my religion...

Do the loving thing at the moment that we meet  
Say the loving thing at the moment that we greet.  
Our love should not be planned,  
Nor run by rules and laws,  
Just let it be as it happened  
Today, tomorrow or just because.  
Let's walk that extra mile,  
Let's give that lifting smile,  
Let's just love everyone  
From east and west and under the sun.  
Do the loving thing at the moment that we meet,  
Say the loving thing at the moment that we greet.  
We'll love and give together  
Without sifting, without measure;  
Forget that eye for an eye,  
Seven times seventy is what we'll buy.  
Let's give the shirt from off our back,  
Let's give bread to those who lack,  
Let's reach out to friend and foe,  
Let love happen, let it go.  
Do the loving thing at the moment that we meet,  
Say the loving thing at the moment that we greet.

Written by John Rivard in dedication to his mother's memory.

Sunshine Club. Lucille Ingram will be sending cards or flowers to those members who are ill, have just lost a loved one, or to recognize other family occasions. Please call Lucille if you know of anyone who would benefit from this service. 533-0890

# Le calendrier

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## APRIL

7 General Membership Meeting  
St. Louis Parish, 7:30 p.m.

25, 26, 27 FESTIVAL OF NATIONS  
St. Paul Civic Center

MAY NO GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

## JUNE

2 General Membership Meeting  
Annual Elections of Board of  
Directors - St. Louis Parish

24 Ste. Jean Baptiste Day

LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE is a non-political organization; nonetheless, we wished to express our thanks, as a group, to the Canadians who returned to freedom some American diplomats being held in Iran. On March 3, a letter of appreciation was sent to the Canadian Consul, George E. Blackstock. Last week we received this reply:

"This brief note is to say thank you for your recent letter about the part Canada played in the events in Iran. The kind thoughts and good wishes of the LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE is very much appreciated by all of us here at the Canadian Consulate.

We would like you to know that we will be sending your letter on to Ottawa to those who were directly involved in helping to secure safe passage out of Iran for the American diplomats.

I am sure that our two countries will continue to help each other in times of need and will maintain the close and harmonious relationship that has existed for such a long time.

Yours sincerely,

George E. Blackstock  
Consul and Senior Trade  
Commissioner"

## Board of Directors

John Rivard	Catherine Rivard
Madeline Roche	Ralph Germain
Chelle Stone	Mae Mitchell
Evelyn Lund	Dorothy Landry
Seraphine Byrne	Lucille Ingram
George LaBrosse	

## COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

President	John Rivard	1-253-2
Social	Justa Cardinal	776-5087
Historical	George LaBrosse	455-3128
Cultural/Educational	Francine Roche	755-5936
Membership	Evelyn Lund	789-7051
Financial	Seraphine Byrne	226-2233
Publicity	Catherine Rivard	874-8698
Newsletter	Catherine Rivard	874-8698
Sunshine Club	Lucille Ingram	533-0890

## TO READERS OF CHEZ NOUS IN 1999:

We take advantage of the address block of the 1980 Chez Nous to deliver a request: In the next issue of Chez Nous, we wish to print your memory of La Societe. Search your memory bank for some person, event or activity you vividly remember, and tell us about it. If you have a favorite photograph, send it to us.

**DEADLINE IS FEBRUARY 20, 1999.**

Send your contribution to

**DICK BERNARD**

7632 157<sup>TH</sup> St W #301

Apple Valley MN 55124

Or you can e-mail it to Dick at [dbernard@nea.org](mailto:dbernard@nea.org)



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LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE  
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