

Spring 2017

## Le FORUM, Vol. 39 No. 1

Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Rédactrice

Roger Parent

Amy Morin

Maegan Maheu

Michel Roberge

*See next page for additional authors*

Follow this and additional works at: [https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/francoamericain\\_forum](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/francoamericain_forum)

---

### Recommended Citation

Desjardins Michaud, Rédactrice, Lisa; Parent, Roger; Morin, Amy; Maheu, Maegan; Roberge, Michel; Shepherd, Michael; Dubay, Guy; Lacroix, Patrick; Coulombe, Gérard; Marceau, Albert; Myall, James; Findlen, George; Larson, Denise; Bérubé, Robert; Chenard, Bob; Michaud, Carroll R.; Walton, Andrew; Levesque, Don; Perry, Maureen; Langford, Margaret S.; Bishop, Jim; LePage, Adrienne Pelletier; Roberge, Mitch; and Bragdon, Austin, "Le FORUM, Vol. 39 No. 1" (2017). *Le FORUM Journal*. 45. [https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/francoamericain\\_forum/45](https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/francoamericain_forum/45)

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UMaine. It has been accepted for inclusion in Le FORUM Journal by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UMaine. For more information, please contact [um.library.technical.services@maine.edu](mailto:um.library.technical.services@maine.edu).

---

**Authors**

Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Rédactrice; Roger Parent; Amy Morin; Maegan Maheu; Michel Roberge; Michael Shepherd; Guy Dubay; Patrick Lacroix; Gérard Coulombe; Albert Marceau; James Myall; George Findlen; Denise Larson; Robert Bérubé; Bob Chenard; Carroll R. Michaud; Andrew Walton; Don Levesque; Maureen Perry; Margaret S. Langford; Jim Bishop; Adrienne Pelletier LePage; Mitch Roberge; and Austin Bragdon

# *Le* FORUM



VOLUME 39, #1

SPRING/PRINTEMPS 2017



## Websites:

**Le Forum:** <http://umaine.edu/francoamerican/le-forum/>

**Oral History:** [Francoamericanarchives.org](http://Francoamericanarchives.org)

**Library:** [francolib.francoamerican.org](http://francolib.francoamerican.org)

**Occasional Papers:** <http://umaine.edu/francoamerican/occasional-papers/>

## Maine's French Communities:

[http://www.francomaine.org/English/Pres/Pres\\_intro.html](http://www.francomaine.org/English/Pres/Pres_intro.html) [Francoamericanarchives.org](http://Francoamericanarchives.org)

other pertinent websites to check out -

**Les Français d'Amérique / French In America**

**Calendar Photos and Texts from 1985 to 2002**

[http://www.johnfishersr.net/french\\_in\\_america\\_calendar.html](http://www.johnfishersr.net/french_in_america_calendar.html)

**Franco-American Women's Institute:**

<http://www.fawi.net>





Le Centre Franco-Américain  
 Université du Maine  
 Orono, Maine 04469-5719  
 Lisa\_Michaud@umit.maine.edu  
 Téléphone: 207-581-FROG (3764)

Volume 39 Numéro 1  
 SPRING/PRINTEMPS

**Publishing Board**

Don Levesque  
 Paul Laflamme  
 Lin LaRoche  
 Louella Rolfe  
 Kent Beaulne  
 Joe Arsenaault  
 Tony Brinkley

**Rédactrice/Editor**

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

**Mise en page/Layout**

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

**Composition/Typesetting**

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

**Aide Technique**

Lisa Desjardins Michaud

**Tirage/Circulation/4,500**

**Imprimé chez/Printed by**

Centre Franco-Américain, Orono, Maine

Publié 4 fois l'an par le Centre Franco-Américain.

*Le Forum* est distribué surtout aux Franco-Américains des États-Unis. Les énoncés, opinions et points de vue formulés dans *Le Forum* sont ceux des auteurs et ne représentent pas nécessairement les points de vue de l'éditeur ou de la rédactrice, ou du Collège des arts et des sciences libéraux à l'Université du Maine.

*Le Forum* is published 4 times a year by the Franco-American Center. *Le Forum* is distributed in particular to Franco-Americans in the United States. Statements, opinions and points of view expressed are not necessarily those of the editor, the publishers or the : College of Liberal Arts & Sciences of the University of Maine.

Tous les textes soumis doivent parvenir à —Forward all submitted texts to: Lisa D. Michaud, Rédactrice-en-chef/Editor-in-chief, *Le Forum*, University of Maine, Orono, Maine 04469-5719, U.S., au plus tard quatre semaines précédant le mois de publication—at least four weeks prior to the month of publication.

Les lettres de nos lecteurs sont les bienvenues — Letters to the Editor are welcomed.

La reproduction des articles est autorisée sans préavis sauf indication contraire—Our original articles may be reproduced without notice unless otherwise indicated.

L'équipe de rédaction souhaite que *Le Forum* soit un mode d'expression pour vous tous les Franco-Américains et ceux qui s'intéressent à nous. The staff hopes that *Le Forum* can be a vehicle of expression for you Franco-Americans and those who are interested in us.

*Le Forum* et son staff—Universitaires, gens de la communauté, les étudiants -- FAROG,

## Sommaire/Contents

<b>Lettres/Letters</b> .....3, 7, 13, 14	<b>James Myall</b> .....43& 49
	The Man Who United Irish-and Franco-Americans
<b>L'État du ME</b> .....4-15	<b>George Findlen</b> .....15-18
From Maine to Thailand: <b>Roger Parent</b>	What Did They Eat?
Nos Histoire de l'Île Stories: <b>Amy Morin</b>	
Being & Not Being Franco-American:	
<b>Maegan Maheu</b>	
Le Messenger: <b>Mitchel Roberge</b>	
Maine's Franco voters still hold great sway:	
<b>Michael Shepherd</b>	
Regis "Bonhomme" Daigle: <b>Guy Dubay</b>	
<b>L'État du VT</b> .....24,	<b>Poetry/Poésie</b> .....38-42
30 Prosper Bender (1844-1917): <b>Partick</b>	<b>Books/Livres</b> .....33, 34
<b>Lacroix</b>	
<b>L'État du CT</b> .....17-20, 25, 37	<b>Recipes/Recettes</b> .....35
On Being Franco-American:	<b>Genealogy</b> .....44-51
<b>Gérard Coulombe</b>	Through the Generations:
Six Historically Frecnh-Canadian Parishes	<b>Denise Larson</b>
Will Merge in the Archdiocese of Hartford:	Never Stop Looking:
<b>Albert Marceau</b>	<b>Denise Larson</b>
Raising of the Quebec Flag at the	1649: Abraham Martin: Coupable ou
Connecticut State Capitol, Fri. June 23:	Innocent/ Abraham Martin: Guilty or not
<b>Albert Marceau</b>	guilty!:
	<b>Robert Bérubé</b>
	Daigle Family:
	<b>Bob Chenard</b>

### Endowment

One way to support *Le FORUM* while at the same time reserving life income is the establishment of a charitable gift annuity with the Franco-American Centre *Le FORUM* Fund at the University of Maine Foundation. Call 1-800-982-8503.

#### Abonnement au Le FORUM Subscription

Si vous ne l'êtes pas abonnez-vous — s.v.p.  
 — Subscribe if you have not

Nom/Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Adresse/Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Métier/Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Ce qui vous intéresse le plus dans *Le FORUM* section which interests you the most: \_\_\_\_\_

Je voudrais contribuer un article au *Le FORUM* au sujet de: \_\_\_\_\_  
 I would like to contribute an article to *Le FORUM* about: \_\_\_\_\_

Tarif d'abonnement par la poste pour 4 numéros

Subscription rates by mail for 4 issues:

États-Unis/United States — Individus: \$20

Ailleurs/Elsewhere — Individus: \$25

Organisation/Organizations — Bibliothèque/Library: \$40

*Le FORUM*

Centre Franco-Américain, Orono, ME 04469-5719



## Lettres/ Letters

More letters on pages 7,  
13, 14....

Dear Le Forum,

My husband has passed away, but I want to continue receiving *Le Forum*.

I read every page of the paper. We were both Franco-American and proud of it!

Please continue mailing *Le Forum* to the same address.

Merci!  
Cecile Vigue  
Fairfield, ME

Dear Cecile;

I wish to extend to you my deepest sympathies!

I will certainly continue to send you *Le Forum*, no worries there!

Thank you for your continued support!

Le Forum

---

Dear Le Forum,

I've been getting *Le Forum* for awhile. Can't remember when I last paid. I'm sending you a check to keep getting it and pay for the past.

I enjoy it. Some good articles.

Thank You!  
Yours truly,  
David Lemay  
Dover Foxcroft, ME

Dear David;

You are paid until April of 2017. I corrected your mailing label. It now reads correctly. Year/Month of subscription renewal. It appears on your mailing label below your address.

Thank you for your continued support!

Le Forum

Cher Le Forum,

J'ai envoyé un chèque pour mon abonnement et le chèque a été changé a la fin du mois de déc. Je n'ai pas reçu encore mon petit magazine, j'ai téléphoné la semaine dernière j'ai mis mon message sur votre enrégistreuse.

Voulez vous verifier. J'attends de vos nouvelles bientôt. Je ne veux pas manquer ma subscription que j'ai payer.

Merci,  
Claudette Desjardins  
Presque Isle, ME

Chère Mme Desjardins,

Je vous remercie d'avoir écrit au *Forum*. Je regrette que vous n'avez pas reçu une réponse du Centre Franco-Américain dans une façon opportune. C'est moi seule qui est responsable pour la publication du *Forum* mais j'étais absente pendant quelques mois pour des raisons personnelles. Malheureusement, personne ne prenait ma place.

Récemment j'ai retourné au travail et je viens de finir la publication du *Forum* (l'édition hiver, en retard!). Vous recevrez votre copie en quelques jours, aussi bien que les éditions printemps et été dans les mois à venir.

Téléphonez-moi (581-3789), je vous en prie, si vous avez des questions ou aucun problème.

Merci bien,  
Le Forum

---

Dear Le Forum,

The (Vol. 38 #3) edition, was one of the best! A lot from the St. John River Valley.

Joe Arseneault's letter clearly described what Francos faced throughout our history and the present as well.

Bon travail et bonne chance!

Sincerely,  
Ken Soucy  
Pinellas Park, FL

Merci Ken!

Dear Le Forum,

I am subscribing to *Le Forum* again this year. Can you please begin by sending me Vol. 38 #2, Printemps/Spring 2016 Issue?

I like to have them handy for when I find related material in my research on Ancestry.com.

Enclosed is a check for 4 issues.

Thank You,  
Yvonne Causey  
Woonsocket, RI

Merci Yvonne!

---

Dear Le Forum,

I enjoy "*Le Forum*" every time I receive it. You do a good job, and it's always interesting. As you know, I like the printed copy, which tells you what age bracket I'm in.

I especially liked the two stories by Anne Lucey (Vol. 38 #2), "Memere: The Life of a Franco-American Woman", that were reprinted from 1987, in your Spring Issue (2016). My wife especially enjoyed them, as she lived in that era in Biddeford, and her father and sister both worked at the Saco-Lowell mill.

Biddeford was very French then. My wife, Priscilla's parents were both born there, but both sets of her grandparents, (Hanna and Hamel) were born in Quebec. She lived through those times and remembers when the mills started closing. She graduated from St. Joseph High School in 1957 as valedictorian of her class and made her speech entirely in French (without notes). The nuns were good teachers, and you really learned a subject, (read, write and speak), and not just put in time in class to later claim that you had four years of French.

We visited many of her relatives in Quebec over the years. There was a lot of discrimination in Maine throughout those years. The legislature even passed a law in 1919 making speaking French in school a punishable offense. Some schools, such as St. Joseph in Biddeford, and Ste Agathe, where I went to school, ignored those laws, and we thank them for it. Knowing a second language, (able to read, write and speak it), is such an asset to have.

Sincerely,  
Marc Chassé  
Fort Kent, ME

Merci Marc!

# From Maine to Thailand

## *The making of a Peace Corps Volunteer* by Roger Parent

*ED. NOTE: This is the twelfth in a series of excerpts from a memoir written by Lille, Maine, native Roger Parent in 2004, tracing the first 24 years of his life, from his childhood in Acadian French-speaking northern Maine to the end of his service as a member of the first group of Peace Corps volunteers in Thailand. This article first appeared in "Echoes", No. 98 pages 35-38.*

When Charoon and Luk (my host families) had cautioned me not to use the road by the Buddhist Wat (temple) near our home late at night for fear the spirits of those interred there would invade my body and my mind, I had done so anyway. So when I told them I was going to Vang Village alone, they were concerned, but did not try to dissuade me. I was eager and ready to travel alone to get a feel for the people and their ways without the filter of my good hosts' comments and explanations. I wanted to come and go as I pleased.

I had arrived in Thailand nearly four months earlier in January 1962, spoke Thai fairly well, and was familiar with the local Lao dialect. My trips outside Udorn had been with Thai friends and colleagues, who tended to be overly protective. I understood their concern and I appreciated their caring—I was their friend—but I was oblivious to another reason for their protectiveness. Not only was I their friend, I was a guest of the Thai government and one of "Kennedy's Kids," as the first Peace Corps Volunteers were often called. If something had happened to me, it would have been embarrassing to them, to the Trade School, and to their government.

I was not always sensitive to the acute need to avoid embarrassment, to save face in Thailand, since I come from a northern Maine mix of French-Quebec-Cajun stock where concern for saving face is easily trumped by a strong independent streak. My Thai hosts sensed my need for independence much earlier than I sensed their desire to care for me, and to protect me from an incident that could have caused embarrassment.

School was out and nothing much

was happening when I took off on my bicycle to visit the small village of Vang, about five or six miles from Udorn. I had traveled to Vang earlier with Charoon and Luk, and the village headman, Mr. Kasem, had invited me to return.

The going was slow and the day was hot. Temperatures often exceeded 100 degrees Fahrenheit during the hot



*Drinking Mekong Whiskey in Vang.*

seasons—temperatures I had not known in Lille, Maine, or anywhere else. Yet the idea of pedaling and pushing a bicycle for an hour and a half in high heat didn't dampen my enthusiasm. The extreme cold of northern Maine and the extreme heat of the tropics never bothered me much. I think adapting to extreme temperatures is as much a state of mind as it is a state of biology.

I pedaled to the outskirts of Udorn on paved and graveled streets, continued on dirt roads for about two miles, then turned sharply off the road on a path that meandered across rice paddies and through partially wooded areas, giving me an occasional shady moment. Keeping myself and my bicycle upright on the ridges separating the rice paddies was difficult, and walking alongside my bike on the narrow ridges was almost impossible.

Sometimes I slipped, but since the paddies were dry during the hot season, it was not a big deal—it just made the trip longer.

During the hour-and-a-half trek to the village, I thought of my good fortune at being a Peace Corps Volunteer in Thailand. The people of the northeast were very friendly and gracious. They welcomed me into their homes and shared their food. I had been told during orientation in Bangkok that the northeast was a hotbed of communist infiltration from Laos, but I never sensed any animosity during my two-year stint.

My trip to Vang Village was a direct result of moving from the Teacher Training College residence to my new home near the Trade School. It was Charoon and Luk who had earlier taken me to Vang Village to meet their friends. They went out of their way to

teach me about northeast Thailand Village life, and to introduce me to people outside my immediate circle of colleagues and friends in Udorn. I was growing and learning in Thailand as I had envisioned when I volunteered for the Peace Corps in March, 1961.

After bicycling and walking for about an hour-and-a-half, I arrived at the village. When the children saw me, they came running and waived (to bow

and put the hands together as in prayer) deeply. They remembered me from my earlier visit, but I was still an oddity—maybe the first white person (falang) to visit their village...and one who spoke some Lao dialect. I was something of a celebrity, as were other volunteers in the first Peace Corps groups, especially those who lived outside the larger cities.

I was pleased to be in the partial shade of the village, set among scattered coconut and fruit trees. The houses were on stilts to keep them dry during the rainy season. This had the salutary effect of providing ample air circulation throughout the house and creating something akin to, but not quite, a cool breeze. I found the traditional Thai home comfortable, even during the hot season.

Mr. Kasem, Vang's headman, invited me and the villagers who had gathered into  
*(Continued on page 5)*

*(From Maine to Thailand continued from page 4)*

his home to enjoy his gracious hospitality. The Mekong whiskey, sticky rice and spicy fish sauce were laid out on a woven grass mat, and we squatted on the floor in a circle around the food. I rolled the sticky rice into a ball between my thumb and fingers, dipped in the “hot” sauce and ate it with a sip of Mekong. I was tired after my long trek in the heat and I was hungry for this treat. I enjoyed the sticky rice, the whiskey, the conversation about family and friends and about my life in Thailand. They were curious about me and my reaction to them. “Do you like Thailand? Can you eat our spicy food? Is Thailand too hot for you? Are Thai women beautiful? Do you want a Thai woman?”

“I love Thailand. Your food is delicious. The weather is not too hot for me and yes, Thai women are very beautiful.” But I declined their offer of a woman. “I have a girlfriend back home.” They didn’t always believe my answers, and thought I was just being polite when I said Thai women were very beautiful. They thought the lighter skinned women (men too) of northern Thailand, particularly those from Chiang-mai, were much more

beautiful than the darker skinned women of northeastern or southern Thailand. They thought any white person more beautiful than any person with dark skin.

This thinking was new to me. The people of Lille, Maine, were the opposite of diverse. We were Catholic, French speaking and white. An African American or Asian American coming through Lille in the 1950s was a rare event and attracted much attention – and an oddity, same as I was in Vang. Living in Thailand lifted the veil from my eyes and helped me see through the cracks of my culture.

The Thais love conversation and have great fun playing with words, changing their usual meanings to entertain each other. They sang and asked me to sing too – it didn’t make any difference that I didn’t have a good singing voice. As my

language skills improved, I joined in the repartee, the jokes and the plays on words. I found this kind of entertainment similar to my growing-up-days in Lille when televisions were few, movie houses were distant, and entertainment was something we did for ourselves among family and friends.

Upon arriving in the village I had noticed a few babies who looked ill and listless on their mothers’ hips or lying in the makeshift small hammocks. While eating and drinking, I saw more small babies who were sick. I asked one of the mothers, “What’s wrong with your baby?”

“Our babies are sick. We don’t know what to do? Can you help?”

“I don’t know anything about medicine and don’t think I can do anything to help your babies. I’m not a doctor.”



*Houses on stilts in Vang Village stayed dry during the rainy season.*

More out of curiosity than anything else, I asked if I could touch the babies on their foreheads to check their temperatures. (Thailand people do not normally touch the upper part of a person’s body since they believe that’s their most divine part. This less so for a baby or small child but I didn’t want to take a chance on offending by touching without permission.) I could tell that the babies had very high temperatures, but that was all I could tell. I had a few pamphlets on tropical disease at my home in Udorn and without saying it, I resolved to try to do something for the babies upon my return.

After eating too much sticky rice and drinking too much Mekong. I left the village and reached home by early evening

to the relief of my host families. During my return trek, I thought of asking for help from a U.S. marine doctor I had met in Udorn’s small Catholic Church. He was part of a contingent of about 1,200 marines ordered to Udorn by President John Kennedy to “send a message” to the Pathet Lao – communists in nearby Laos. The marines were camped near the small Udorn airport, also used as a base for Air America, the CIA’s (Central Intelligence Agency) air force, which flew regularly to the jungles of Laos, but that’s another story.

I had stayed away from the marine camp because I was afraid to be identified with the military and the CIA. However, the disturbing images of the sick babies made me break my rule. I went to camp, told the marine doctor about the babies and asked if

he could go to the village with me. He could not leave his post, nor could he diagnose the illness from what I had told him, but he gave me a large jar of aspirin saying, “It won’t hurt the babies and might help them. It will help lower their body temperatures.”

Next day I returned to the village with my large jar of aspirin. I had tied the jar

with elastic cords to the carrier over the rear wheel of my bike but it kept slipping and I had to stop often to tighten the cords. It took me a long time to reach Vang. Mr. Kasem, the village headman and the other villagers were surprised to see me again so soon.

I told them I had some medicine and that maybe it might lower the babies’ temperatures and help them heal. We split the adult-size aspirin tablets in half and I gave about 10 days-worth of tablets to the mother for each sick baby. I instructed them on the dosage, the number of times each day and told them to give the medicine until it ran out.

While returning to Udorn, a new worry came to me: What if one or more of the babies die? Will they blame me for the death or deaths? Maybe what I had done was not such a good idea. I feared the unknown reac-

*(Continued on page 6)*

*(From Maine to Thailand continued from page 5)*

tion of the villagers should a baby die, and I thought of the potential harm publicity about this might have on the young Peace Corps.

But my fears were unjustified, as most fears are. A few weeks later when I returned to the village, I found a bunch of healthy babies. Mr. Kasam and the other villagers greeted me very warmly, thanked me, and gave me too much credit for saving their babies. I emphasized that their babies had gotten better because of the great care they had lavished on them, but they insisted, "Your medicine saved our babies." This was an occasion for celebration and they brought out the sticky rice, spicy fish and Mekong whiskey.

I felt Tom Dooleyish. Dr. Tom Doolley, who had attended the University of Notre Dame and the University of St. Louis Medical School, had become very famous for his work in North Vietnam and Laos in the 1950's. He had written a number of popular books about his work, setting up hospitals and ministering to the health needs of many people in remote Laotian villages. He was considered a forerunner of the Peace Corps Volunteer by many people. I was inspired by his life work. He died of cancer in his early '30s. Later, in more cynical time, the sheen of his work. He died of cancer

in his early '30s. Later, in a more cynical time, the sheen of his accomplishments and adventures were considerably dulled.

I climbed the stairs to Mr. Kasem's home, squatted with the other men around the rice, fish sauce and Mekong whiskey while the women prepared more food for the feast. This celebration was going to last a while so I paced myself with the whiskey. There was always a thing about trying to get the falang (foreigner) tipsy, if not drunk. I suppose that made them feel superior.

We talked and joked and laughed. They wondered how hard it must be for me to be away from my family. It was difficult for them to understand why I would leave my rich country. (Sometimes a mother would offer her baby to me to take to America for a better life. I had a hard time believing she was serious.) I told them I loved my country, that we had poor people in America too, and that I appreciated the benefits and beauty of the Thais and their way of life. I told them I missed my family and friends but I had a new large family here. I said that learning their language and culture, their enjoyable conversations, their play on words, and their great sense of humor made my life with them good. Still it was difficult for them to understand me and the culture of volunteerism from which I came.

Meanwhile the women had killed a duck

or rooster, I forgot which, for a special treat.

While it was being cooked, the wife of the village headman, Mrs. Kasem, brought the blood drawn from the duck or rooster to drink with our whiskey. The men took the glass of raw blood, spiked it with the whiskey and gave it to me for the first swig.

Although I ate and drank most everything in the villages and cities of Thailand, I declined this one special drink.

I told them my stomach could not handle raw duck (or rooster) blood. They accepted my reason for they understood stomach aches very well - a too common malady in the village. That was the only time I refused a food or drink during my time in Thailand. I can still see that glass of raw blood - duck's or rooster's. It looked like tomato juice.

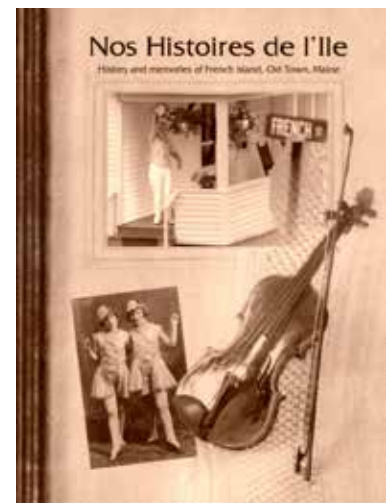
*Roger Parent lives in South Bend, Indiana, where he served as city councilor and mayor in the 1970's and '80's. He is trustee of the South Bend Community School Corporation and found of World Dignity, a non-profit organization focused on educational programs in Thailand, India and South Bend. In 2005 he assisted victims of the Dec. 26, 2004 tsunami as deputy director of the Tsunami Volunteer Center in Khao Lak, Thailand. He and his wife, Rolande (Ouellette), have four children and six grandchildren.*

## NOS HISTORIES DE L'ILE STORIES – SOME OF THE REASONS FRENCH CHILDREN WERE ENCOURAGED TO ASSIMILATE

*by Amy Bouchard Morin, Old Town, ME*

After conducting interviews with the elderly who grew up on French Island in Old Town, Albert Michaud and I presented our work at a conference in Bar Harbor. Al was talking about the Klu Klux Klan activity in the Old Town area in the early-to-mid 1920s. He spoke about how the Klan often burned a cross on the river bank in Milford across from the island and that the people on the island would see that and of course it sacred and worried them. He then told the following story.. One day a man from French island who worked in a store in Old Town accidentally heard two men talking about how the Klan was going to meet that night and burn down the homes on the island. That man left work and went home to the Island. He ran door-to-door to warn the

families. That night the Klansmen in their regalia and holding fire torches had a surprise waiting for them as they were met on the Milford bridge by the island men brandishing whatever weapons they had. And, the Klan was turned back. They never tried that again. One of my friends who grew up on the island, and whose parents insisted that she and her sisters only speak English, was at the conference and was sitting in the front row. On hearing this account of the Klan activities she was devastated. She said that her home was on the side of the island where her parents could easily see that cross burning, and they must surely have been affected by this. When she got home, she went to see her mother and asked her if the reason she and her sisters were made to only speak En-



*(Continued on page 7)*



*(NOS HISTORIES DE L'ILE STORIES – continued from page 6)*

glish was because of the Klan. Her mother simply nodded her head, and that was all the reaction my friend got to her question. Her mother would not speak of it. I spoke with my father about it as well. He said, “Amy, of course, I remember it. I was a young boy and it was terrifying. The Klan was against the Catholics and especially the French. Everybody on the Island was Catholic and French. I will never speak of this.” That was the end of that subject. A couple years later Dad was interviewed by Ben Levine who was making a film about Francos. He also brought up the subject of the Klan and Dad wouldn't give in and talk about it with him either. This just shows how the Klan activity affected all the people on French Island, so that even over 70 years after the events they wouldn't talk about it. My friend has been taking every French conversation class she could to learn to speak French, but how sad that she couldn't learn it at her mother's knee. I am sure this was one of the reasons that the younger generation growing up on the island were encouraged to speak English and assimilate into the English-speaking world on the other side of the bridge.

From the interviews we learned of other methods that the French immigrants were encouraged to assimilate. One of the people interviewed told about how her father came home from his first day in school and told his father that he had a new name. His teacher told him she could not pronounce his French name and changed it to an English name that she could pronounce. Papa visited

the teacher and told her in his very broken English that his son's name would not be changed and that she had better learn how to say his French name. But just how many let the English name stand? I am sure many just went along feeling that the children would fit in better in their new country.

Then there was the fact that even though all of the French who came to the



*Drawing by Peter Archambault*

“Little Canadas” in the States found much needed work, they were hired as manual laborers. They were not hired as supervisors or foremen in the mills with their French names. There were no foreman with a French name at the paper mill in Old Town until 1952 when Mr. Thibodeau from

French island was promoted. So, many were encouraged to Anglicize their names simply to advance and make more money for their families.

Also, there was a law passed in that same time-frame which forbade any French, other than a French language class, be spoken in a school receiving monies from the State or the school would lose their funding. This included all public schools. Now my mother spoke only French until she went to college to become a teacher. Her first teaching assignment was to teach kindergarten in Madawaska, Maine. All the children came to her speaking only French, and she had to teach them in English. Imagine her stress. It would have been so much easier for her and for those little ones to teach them in French. Occasionally inspectors from the State would visit the schools. When word came that the inspectors were coming the teachers were told to be sure that only English was spoken in the school and on the grounds. So when the children went out for recess they were told to be sure to only speak English. These little French children played in silent playgrounds when the inspectors were in the area. I can't even imagine a silent playground.

These were some of the reasons for name changes and the push to assimilate. Fear, pressure from law changes, desire for advancement and the need to earn more money, and the push from the English speaking educational system all played their roles. And we are still feeling the results of all this today.

Bottineau founded Minneapolis.

Therefore from 1628 to about 1850 the language spoken in Minnesota was French. If you wanted to do business in this area, you spoke French. That is a period of about 220 years that most folks don't know about. Our group is attempting to educate the populace about its history.

*Pierre Girard  
Golden Valley, MN*



*Dear Le Forum;*

Thanks for *Le Forum*. I always look forward to receiving it.

One thing that I have noticed from reading it. You folks out East refer to yourselves as Franco-Americans. We here in the Midwest refer to ourselves as French-Canadians. I never heard the term Franco-Americans until I started reading *Le Forum* or other publications from out East.

Our local group French-American Heritage Foundation has remained busy this last year. I will try to write something up about our activities and send it to you.

Also, I wanted to share a little known fact with the folks "out East". That is- Pierre Esprit Radisson and Médard des Groseilliers were the first Europeans to the land we now call Minnesota in 1628. For the next 220 years the other Europeans that came here

were all from Quebec and Manitoba. They all spoke French. It wasn't until 1850 that the treaties with the Native people's allowed settlement to take place. That is when the Easterners began arriving here. By that time most of the French place names were assigned to the rivers, streams, landmarks and villages. Jean Brunet founded Chipewewa Falls, WI, Solomon Juneau founded Milwaukee, Pierre Parrant (nicknamed Pig's Eye) founded St Paul and folks like Pierre



*Check out our website at: <http://fahfminn.org>.*



# Being & Not Being Franco-American: The Perspective of One 21st Century Millennial

Presented at the American Council for Quebec Studies

biennial conference,

Nov. 3-6, 2016, Portland Maine

***Maegan Maheu, Undergraduate Researcher,  
Franco-American Centre, University of Maine***

1.

I am attempting to share a collective analysis of self-explored thoughts as to where and why I have certain viewpoints or biases on whether “this” or “that” might account for my understanding of what a Franco-American is. The question of being and not being a Franco American is a collection of observations and inductions, both through my socially crafted subjective lens and by relating such matters beyond personal experience.

I have lived most of my life to date in Waterville, one of the larger cities of central Maine. For me, the city represents a Franco community with 7.7% French Canadian and 15.5% French, totaling to 22.5%; according to 2013 population data. From an overall feel for the city, I would have initially thought that more than a third of the population is French/Franco based on surrounding demographics. This especially in regards to the older generations, as it contributes to most of the people I was surrounded by on a day-to-day basis. This also I think has to do with my own heritage.

2.

Growing up in Waterville, I took a Franco-American to be someone with U.S. citizenship who has ties with other Americans who identify themselves as sharing an ancestry ultimately determined from France, via indirectly through French-speaking Canada. As a member of the millennial generation, I describe myself as of U.S. nationality with a mostly Canadian-French ancestry via my patrilineage, the branch of the family and ethnic community I grew up in.

I felt that I could confirm my stance not only because I meet my own, subjective ‘minimum criteria,’ but also because I have given thought and appreciation towards this matter as an active member of my community, a mostly Franco community. And I held to certain practices that an ‘outsider’ might

expect of a Franco, e.g. certain religious practice, work ethic, overall appreciation for my current community and its history, since the historical mass is the same as my own -engulfing me in a sense of kinship. Thus, I am Franco.

But this definition has been challenged by others, whether in person or in publication.

---

---

*...the city represents a Franco community with 7.7% French Canadian and 15.5% French, totaling to 22.5%*

---

---

3.

The U.S. Census Bureau’s primary population survey tool, the American Community Survey (ACS), asks, “What is the person’s ancestry or origin?” (Part III, Question 13). The surveyor is provided a blank box in which to write a respondent’s answer. This open-ended question allows respondents to individually determine their ethnicity. It is a self-identifying process. Perhaps this helps shed light why in the State of Maine, in 2013, respondents chose 2:1 to identify as French rather than French Canadian. Yet it seems highly likely that most of the respondents who self-identified as ‘French’ actually have a French-Canadian heritage. But the ACS survey does not include any follow-up questions about self-identification. And respondents are prompted to declare a single ethnic group, which seems especially flawed for U.S. majority where mixed ancestries are to be expected. Why might persons self-identify as ‘French’ rather than ‘French-Canadian,’ even if they know their ancestry is to some extent Canadian? One thing is clear: Maine’s population hosts the largest state percentage

of Francos as its largest ethnic group compared to other state demographical data; with 16.6% ‘French’ and 7.6% ‘French Canadian’, for a total of 24.3% of the population.

4.

Where I was born in Utah, my younger sister was born in Maine. We both grew up in Waterville, within the same Franco community. In high school, I took French; she is taking Spanish. Out of curiosity, while pursuing this research I raised the questions of ancestry/origin and of being “French” versus “French Canadian” with her. She quickly replied by email:

I’m more Canadian than French. I like poutine, I like maple syrup, I think moose are cool, free health care [etc]. And I think Franco American means that you are fully, or almost fully, of French descent but was born and still live in America...Canada is a different place than France...the cultures of French Canadian and actual French people are very different. Canadians are heavily influenced by the Americans, therefore shaping their culture. Although Canada is... inhabited by “French” people, they are not actually French. They are not from France, which is very different from Canada. France is more influenced by European conflicts and whatnot. ...Canadians are descendants of immigrants from long ago who have shaped and changed their personalities, beliefs, and culture since they got [there].” (Used with permission.)

This millennial strongly identifies herself as not a Franco, not a French American, but specifically as a Canadian American. Apparently to her, Canadian culture and its inhabitants are distinctly different from French. I seem to base my identity on bloodline first, however my same bloodline begs to differ, it first must do with sociological interactions and pressures. When does a state in the international system able to define its  
*(Continued on page 9)*

*(Being & Not Being Franco-American: The Perspective of One 21st Century Millennial continued from page 8)*

own nationality the same as ethnicity for its citizens' identity? I personally don't think or don't want to think that it begins the same time the state is officially announced. Justifying my reasoning as to why I consider the older French label before the newer Canadian label. However, I cannot argue against my younger sister's viewpoint that Canadian and French cultures are different and so cannot be compared as an apples-to-apples complex.

5.

How else do people identify themselves as being/not-being Franco? For some, a French last name is the strongest qualifier for membership. For instance, 75-year-old Sidney, Maine resident Betty DeBlois, who first identifies her nationality as "always American first" and then specifies as Franco-American, however making very clear "I love my French heritage," claims that for her, "You are Franco American if your last name is [a] French name and you were born in the United States." To support her view, she cites the "Claremont Club," a club whose membership, according to her, requires the individual to possess a French name for admission. Furthermore, Betty relates how, before the 1970s, if you were born in the United States and your parents held a French name, specifying French ancestry, your birth certificate would recognize your nationality as "Franco-American." (I was unable to find any records of this sort.)

Whether most Franco-Americans would agree with her stance I don't know, yet in some sense, as I learned it, tradition says that a person living in the U.S with a French surname suffices to be called Franco. And while at one time I might have affirmed this view based on my experience, today I am confused by it. In the simplest way, how can one decide whether a child of a man (with a French surname) who weds a woman with a non-French maiden name is any more or less "Franco" than the child of a woman with a French maiden surname who marries outside of the French/Franco culture? Judging Franco-ness merely by last name potentially reduces the recognized Franco population by half! And yet some self-declared Francos I know reserve the right to judge that because an individual in their community has a French last name, they are immediately welcomed into the Franco club.

I didn't ask at the time of our discussion and I wonder how Mdme. DeBlois would take into account Franco descendants who "lost" their last name, traditionally through marriage of a Franco mother.

But also, certainly not all American families with French ancestry have French names, for several reasons. For instance, it is evident in central Maine how many last names of French Canadian families were changed by or for patrilineal ancestors. The reasons vary, from illiteracy to Anglofying to avoid economic prejudice. The inability to write one's own name often meant a witness unfamiliar with the French language and its phonology would attempt to decipher how to spell it from its pronunciation. The result often determined how generations of descendants (mis)-spelled their own last name.

---

*...a person living in the U.S with a French surname suffices to be called Franco. And while at one time I might have affirmed this view based on my experience, today I am confused by it.*

---

My surname, "Maheu", serves as an example. The name "Maheu" is spelled correctly in accordance to French tradition, and can still be seen in Canada and France. However, many families who share this patronym spell it "incorrectly," including "Maheux" and "Mayo" and everything in between. The additional 'x' of "Maheux" was added by a certain branch of the family line sometime in the last two centuries, whether to escape prejudice and or because this sign ("x") was their literal signature, "Maheu" being provided by some literate witness to the signing. The more extreme spelling, "Mayo," suggests an attempt to make the name both sound and appear less French.

Growing up I always thought that my family line had dropped the 'x' to read as more English. It wasn't until recently I discovered that this was not the case. My father and grandmother (Maheu line) were both dismayed when I asked when our family's name became more 'English.' To my surprise it was traditionally 'correct' all along. I think now that a potential reason as to why I was so misinformed was because I noticed from texts and from the various people whose last names were French in

origination tended to have a lot of spellings ending with the 'x' here in the U.S. (and specifically Maine). So, I assumed that it was "a French thing." Turns out these names are the Anglo-versions of the original! And now that I think about it more, whenever I visited Quebec City or Montreal, there were businesses who featured the Maheu name; not too many, but they were all spelled the same as my own. I saw no 'x's.

6.

Betty DeBlois also voiced concerns about how the surrounding Anglo community used to express disapproval of Francos simply based on European ancestry (and its political strife). Her tone became somewhat tense when describing how people coming into the U.S. from Canada during her childhood "had to learn English in order to go to school and get a job." Previous to this I had heard similar, albeit occasional, remarks from older French/Franco persons. A personal example involves a high school memory where I was returning from a tennis meet late one spring. My coach was discussing various matters with the bus driver.

Coach explained that because he had a French name and spoke French (with his parents and some friends) he experienced crude prejudice and discrimination when he was young, not only from his peers but from many older people in Waterville. Coach explained that he would get into trouble at school if he spoke (Canadian)-French on the grounds. "We were the scum of the city all because we spoke that language." This prejudice against Francos, according to my coach, did not stop when he became an adult. If I remember correctly the driver agreed, though he was not French but rather Irish-American. Estimating Coach's age, I would say this must have occurred before and into the 1960s.

7.

Generations of mill-working French-Mainers through the 1960s and beyond fostered a cultural icon for Francos. Many Francos in central Maine in the mid- to late 20th century worked in mills to support a living and a certain lifestyle associated within the Franco community found here. But changes in the U.S. and on a global scale, due to big business, laws and ordinances regarding working restraints and tariffs allow for the disappearing mill crisis seen increasingly as of late. From 2000 to 2013, employment in the papermaking sub-sector (Maine) alone saw a drop from 2,473 employees to 1,450. *(Continued on page 10)*

*(Being & Not Being Franco-American:  
The Perspective of One 21st Century  
Millennial continued from page 9)*

As a young Franco in Waterville, I saw many community people of the two prior generations who were out or temporarily out of work, and not by choice. I remember, while in high school working as a cashier at the local Hannaford Supermarket, an older gentleman who came to my register wearing a Huhtamaki branded cap and shirt. I asked him what it was like working in the paper products manufacturing plant. He quickly explained that he was very fortunate to have gotten his job back after being laid off for quite some time. After my senior year of high school, looking for summer work before leaving for University, I called the plant asking if they were hiring seasonal workers. The secretary on the phone explained that not only were no new workers being hired, but that whenever they needed seasonal help they referred to a whole list of people previously laid off to hire.

This unfortunate circumstance for the working class of Mainers does and has influenced a percentage of young Maine millennials (such as myself and my family) to leave the state in search for jobs once we graduate from college. Of course this is not just due to the disappearance of mills. No surprise, current Maine students, who are mainly composed of Franco heritage, increasingly see the value of obtaining post-secondary schooling and/or professional degrees so to achieve at least the same standard of living of our parents' and grandparents' generations.

8.

But to me this rise in educational achievement is not a new phenomenon in the Franco community. I am the first female in my direct lineage to attend University. My father and uncle (previous generation) represent the first generation of the family to attend University. Their parents' highest level of education was high school. And their parents' schooling concluded at the elementary/middle level. The generation that came before them had no formal schooling. I can only think that this applies to most families in the area.

I remember my father explaining to me that even when he was a young kid he "knew" that he was one day going to attend college. Where did he get such certainty of this idea if his parents didn't go? Inspirations for this occurred in the familial unit. His parents wanted to financially guarantee this

level of education for him (and his brother) "because we didn't have a chance to go, we wanted them to have this ability."

Farm and blue-collar do not currently apply to my family line, though I know that many Francos used to—and still do—work such jobs in mills in the area. Even though this does not apply to my family I still see this as a core component in the Franco identity. Why? Most likely from all the stories told to me when I was little, from so many older people whose livelihoods consisted of millwork. I found out that both Betty DeBlois and her husband were mill workers during the late 20th century. "It's just what you do [for work]... coming down from up north."

Also, it would be false to say that no one in my direct line ever worked for a mill company. My father worked at Huhtamaki seasonally while attending college. And today, being a chemical engineering major at University of Maine, I have accepted an engineering co-op at Huhtamaki. So ironically, perhaps even the current Franco generation will partake in the famous millwork associated with the Franco community! It seems you can't get away from it. However, I am very appreciative that such a path/opportunity still exists in my community.

9.

So what else might be characteristic of Franco cultural identity or experience? More specifically, as a Franco woman? Perhaps related to this question, Juliana L'Heureux (2000) lists what she considers to be ten characteristics of a Franco-American mother:

- The ability to keep religious traditions in practice within the family unit
- Absolute cleanliness
- A strict methodology
- A sound sense of organization
- Skill in handicraft
- Excellent gardening skills
- Upholding an appearance of quiet modesty
- Mastering cuisine on a frugal budget
- Appreciative wit and humour
- Being able to demand and secure family affection/love5.

L'Heureux also lists other traditions, practices, and ideologies that Francos generally maintain: a taste for regional/familial delicacies such as touché, plois, and salmon prés, a strong work ethic, the French language, a positive creed on education,

and a shared appreciation for a common background.

But how important are these traditions and traits in defining oneself as Franco? And have they or will they remain a strong core of this identity?

The list reminds me of common conventions that stereotypically serve through 1950s U.S. media. Are these considered desirable qualities associated with Franco women? I don't think that was what L'Heureux was getting at, rather as a general sum of her own observations seen in her Franco community (and through research). I was not surprised by all the qualities L'Heureux listed for Franco mothers. It reminded me of stories about my meme (great grandmother) and her simple, yet hard working way of life. Modern societal attitudes reflected in my own thinking would suggest that I should feel surprised by the matter. However, when I imagine Francos I envision an older couple who suits the classic traits L'Heureux listed. Must be because I feel surrounded by the older French demographic in this state -as it is the majority. As expected, I do not agree with these terms for my generation. And yet, my personal experience confirms that many Francos of my community (even some of my own peers) hold up some of these features/practices to some extent. Especially the part of mastering your cooking on a frugal, University budget. But does this make them Franco?

I've attended and partaken in forms of some of the characteristics listed above. During Christmastime for example, my family and I enjoy keeping up the old family tradition of serving touché (a meat pie). But for almost as long as I can recall, no one actually made the pie, it was usually pre-ordered from a market or bakery. Although, I do believe that there were a few instances where my aunt hand-prepared the pie (but she is not blood related and would not be considered Franco by this criteria). On the other hand, growing up I never heard of other dishes such as the plois (ploys) or salmon prés that Mmes. DeBlois and L'Heureux mention.

I will also admit I am a converted Roman Catholic. Within my branch of the Maheu family, I am the only officially baptized, catechized, and confirmed member of my generation within the family (to this date). This is a new frontier for my family line! For as early as can be seen in genealogical records down through the next-to-youngest *(Continued on page 11)*



## “Le Messenger:

# A Franco-American Newspaper and its Impact”

Presented at the American Council for Quebec Studies  
biennial conference,

Nov. 3-6, 2016, Portland Maine

*Mitchel (“Mitch”) John Roberge,  
Undergraduate Researcher, History  
& French, University of Maine*

I grew up in Lewiston as a Franco-American on both sides of my family. My heritage has always been a fascination of mine. Anyone who studies Franco-Americans can’t help but notice that there is a striking sense of what it means to be a part of the big-C Community. Franco-Americans are good Catholics, their work ethic is unmatched, families are generally on the large side, and they generally vote Democrat (this is changing a bit, but historically is the case).

This social order is well known to those in the community. One of my favorite moments which really highlighted this for me was in High School. Some quick background on me: As with most Francos, I was brought up Catholic; I went to a private Catholic school, I went to mass on Sundays, I went to confession, my uncles were active

*(Being & Not Being Franco-American:  
The Perspective of One 21st Century  
Millennial continued from page 10)*

generation, anyone with any records was a Roman Catholic and had become one while an infant or young child—but not my generation. Different factors apply here. You could say it’s due to changing times. But in my case, another factor is that both men of the last generation (uncle and father) married outside the Franco community. This does not imply that none of the listed Franco characteristics do not still apply.

10.

My French bloodline may only be 50%, but I grew up around many others who are, or at least self-identify as French/Franco. I personally do not feel threatened from any social consequences when I say aloud to others, “I identify myself as Franco-American.” I can say this (even though it usually never comes up in conversation) with absolute certainty and fear no prejudices.

Knights of Columbus (KoC). However, throughout high school I had found myself attending a Protestant church on the outskirts of Lewiston. Once I got to College, I ended up joining a Freemason lodge up by the University (for those who don’t know, Freemasons are essentially KoC, but KoC are Catholics only and Freemasons are non-denominational).

During one of my breaks I ended up going down to visit my family. During a discussion about what I was up to, I told my Memere about joining the freemason lodge. Her response to me was “Why didn’t you just join the KoC?” and my response was “Well, I’m not really a Catholic. I’m a protestant”. For the next few minutes I sat there and watched the gears try to churn that one out. All she could manage was “But..

Apparently, this confidence is a recent phenomenon, one that, as a millennial, I have until recently taken for granted. We, the current generation, have time and a new freedom to collectively decide whether to take responsibility implementing or not implementing the heritage of practices, customs, creeds, and attitudes of previous Franco generations. For instance, the last generation (parent’s) seem to have all decided not to speak French to their kids. Since I know of no one from my peers who grew up with (Canadian)-French as their (or one of their) first language(s). What is deemed as important and not important shifts at the niche level between individuals but perhaps more noticeably at the macroscopic level through generational change.

If the question is asked today, whether identifying as a Franco American is or ever was important, it is addressed mostly to persons between the Baby Boomer generation and the Millennial generation. It seems that older generations would agree it is import-

you’re... we’re French, you’re a Catholic.” Clearly to her, there was a nonseparable link between Catholicism and being a Franco.

While this may just be a silly anecdote from my personal past, the idea that Francos have a strongly bonded sense of national identity has been well established in the realm of Franco-American Studies. Historians like Mark Paul Richard in his book *Loyal But French* have done an extensive amount of research and come to this conclusion. What I want to know, though, is what caused this to happen? After doing taking my undergraduate thesis seminar in the history of written media, I believe that the newspaper *Le Messenger* from Lewiston had a heavy part to play in forging this sense of identity and homogeneity for the community. In order to prove this point, I’m going to try to prove to you 3 things: That this newspaper was an integral source of information dissemination within the community, that the Francos really did have the overt sense of identity and homogeneity that I think they do, and that the paper consciously pushed this sense of identity on the community. To do this, I’m going to try to focus mostly on the early 20th century, an era which I believe saw the full force of this identity movement.

I would like to start by speaking towards the efficacy of newspapers as a media source. I’m not the first person to postulate that newspapers hold the key to communal information processing.

*(Continued on page 12)*

ant, while the younger generations are more likely to be indifferent to the matter. Perhaps when we’re the old ones, we could change our minds. I can’t see it yet.

This is my impression of the Waterville area. But perhaps the older generation felt the same way a while back as many millennials do today? This might suggest that person’s need to self-identify with their heritage becomes more crucial at some stage of life, or that the education needed to become aware of one’s heritage is not typically learned at any stage of formal schooling. One thing is clear to me, self-identity and the processes associated to its development are malleable and abstract, be it social, conventions that can have no correct answer since what can be determined as evidence or not is subject to individual perceptions. Not to say it is a made-up construct, for the Franco-American exists simply because those people feel and proclaim it so!

("Le Messenger: A Franco-American Newspaper and its Impact" continued from page 11)

In a study done a number of years ago, the Pew Research Center found that in the early 20th century, newspapers were the single most useful source for communities to obtain information on crime, taxes, government activity, politics, jobs, events, social services, and advertisements.

The first place I was able to draw a link between these useful newspapers and community information was a book titled Newspapers and the Making of Modern America, historian Aurora Wallace tells a story of rural Iowa in the early-mid 20th century. The paper Des Moines Register was published and distributed throughout the entire state of Iowa to the rural farmers and other workers, published and delivered by a network of a small team of writers and a large distribution network of paper boys. In her research, Wallace found that, although these rural farmers had almost no communication with each other, all over the state they overwhelmingly shared the same stances on local and national politics, they worshiped and interpreted their religion similarly, and used the same parlance.

I believe this sets the foundation for my first claim: that this newspaper was the integral source of information dissemination for the Franco community of Lewiston.

The Francophone workers in this area during the early 1900s were overwhelmingly mill workers. The 1920 census found that over 50% of Franco American males and 83% of Franco American women worked in industrial mills. These were certainly not high paying jobs and the workers could not afford to splurge with their capital. In need of staying connected, they could turn the Le Messenger, which cost only a few cents per issue. But were they?

I was able to get my hands on a copy of the Pettingill's Newspaper Directory and Gazetteer. This is a compilation of newspapers published within the US at the time of publishing. Inside, there is a small ad for Le Messenger. It boasted 3,200 copies twice weekly to L-As Francophone population of 1300; generously 1 copy for every 5 people. A quote seen within says, "There is not a manufacturing town in NE where French speaking people are employed that does not contain subscribers to Le Messenger".

It would be safe to say, then, that combining the knowledge of Newspapers as a source and the popularity of Le Messenger

yields that it was the integral source for disseminating information to the community.

Onto the second of my 3 requisites, and perhaps the easiest to tackle: there was certainly a strong Franco identity within the community. There are 2 cases that, I believe, strongly make the case for this sense of identity and norms.

In 1902, there was an open Bishop seat and the two candidates for the position were an Irish Catholic and a Franco Catholic. The Irish candidate was selected for the position and Le Messenger says:

Does the Pope ignore the sad state of affairs? There are more than 100 thousand French Canadians and scarcely 40 thousand Irish. The Pope or his advisers must pay for the evil that is done to us.

US. This clip clearly displays a loyalty to the Franco community before even the church to which almost every Franco belonged.

Politically, we see a similar attitude. At one point the English paper in Lewiston published that there were 200 Francophones starting a Republican club in the city. Le Messenger scoffed back, stating that this couldn't be true because there was no way there were 200 French Republicans in Lewiston.

The third and final piece is that this paper presented its information in such a way that it influenced the community to craft this sense of Franco Identity.

Going back to this incident between the Franco and Irish Bishop candidates: While this was happening Le Messenger was publishing information about the whole ordeal. In one issue, there's an article titled "Test of Conscious" which outlines the two candidates. According to this article, the Irish candidate is an awful catholic who disobeys many of the tenants of the faith while the Franco, on the other hand, is a perfect model Catholic. One of the lines in particular that goes very far in pushing the Franco candidate: It mentions that the French Canadian "Race" is the most intelligent race in North America.

A separate article creates a similar sense of connection to the community. I don't have to go much farther than the title on this one: it reads, The Franco American brotherhoods must exist outside of foreign protection. This talks about how Francos as a people must stick to their own, build their own societies, and stay strong without the help of anglophones protecting them.

For the reader, this creates a clear

separation of Francos from the rest of the population and fosters a loyalty to them by claiming that they are inherently better than everyone else. This same effect is delivered within the quote about the Pope betraying the Francos. That is to say, the paper is actively pushing onto the readership that they are a special subset of people who are loyal to themselves before anyone else.

The piece that I mentioned about the paper scoffing at the idea of Franco Republicans. This narrative would have a similar impact on those who read it. If you are part of a community with such strong ties and you are confronted with the information that EVERYONE is a Democrat, and the idea that less than 0.1% of the population is a Republican is funny, it's going to deliver the clear message that you, too, are a Democrat and should be a Democrat.

These articles are additionally significant when you consider that the staff writing them consisted of less than 20 people. The writers had a small enough atmosphere to purposefully and deliberately push the message of Franco unity. The people who would then read this agenda would eat it up and digest its message. With an established large readership, established sense of identity and conformity, and an established agenda, I conclude to you that Le Messenger was a vital source for creating and preserving a sense of Franco identity in Lewiston, Maine.



(N.D.L.R. submitted by Anne Lucey and granted permission to reprint by the Bangor Daily News. Article may be viewed at: <http://stateandcapitol.bangordailynews.com/2017/04/19/maines-franco-voters-still-hold-great-sway-and-they-are-increasingly-up-for-grabs/>)

# Maine's Franco voters still hold great sway, and they are increasingly up for grabs

April 19, 2017 Daily Brief, Donald Trump, Elections, Governor LePage, Legislature, U.S. Congress

**By Michael Shepherd**

Bonjour d'Augusta, where it's Franco-American Day at the Maine State House, which will fill for bilingual legislative sessions, inductions into the Maine Franco-American Hall of Fame with musical performances in the hallways and tourtière in the cafe.

The event is a nod to the broad demographic comprising nearly a quarter of Maine's population, making them our largest ethnic group, according to a 2012 legislative report.

But they have an outsized influence on Maine politics, particularly centered on Lewiston and the St. John Valley. Research published in 2013 by the University of Maine's Franco American Centre gave them credit for aiding many of Maine's biggest political victories since the 1970s.

That spans the time of former U.S. Sens. William Cohen and George Mitchell

to Gov. Paul LePage, a Lewiston native who was the first popularly elected Franco governor in Maine. In 2014, the Republican beat former U.S. Rep. Mike Michaud, the first avowed Franco to win major office here.

Historically, Francos have been a Democratic bloc. But they were put in play for Republican campaigns after 1972, when Maine eliminated the "big box" system that allowed quick straight-ticket voting.

On paper, Franco-American communities are still heavily Democratic. Polling in 2012 for the UMaine center found that 45 percent still are registered Democrats, with Republicans making up 14 percent and independents making up 33 percent.

But these areas aren't voting like that: For example, Lewiston is represented by Democrats in the Maine Legislature and Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton won there in 2016, but it has voted

twice for LePage and thrice elected conservative Mayor Robert Macdonald.

Also, Senate Minority Leader Troy Jackson, D-Allagash, represents the St. John Valley and has the most Democratic district by voter registration outside of greater Portland or Lewiston. However, he only won his seat in 2016 by less than 600 votes to put it back in Democratic hands.

The unpredictability of Maine's Franco-Americans will continue to be a storyline in all big elections for the foreseeable future. However, Franco-American candidates may benefit. In the 2012 polling, nearly 27 percent of Francos said they were more likely to vote for another Franco. That helps explain LePage's wins.

Other avowed Francos could run to replace him: Adam Cote of Sanford is seen as one of the likeliest Democratic challengers and U.S. Rep. Bruce Poliquin, a Republican from the 2nd District, hasn't ruled out a run.



## Dear Le Forum;

Racism and discrimination against the descendants of French Canadians by White Anglo-Saxon Protestants was a common occurrence in New England. Many are familiar with Carroll Wright's accusation that the French Canadians were "The Chinese of the Eastern States" in his 1881 annual report of the Bureau of Labor Statistics of Massachusetts. In a recent issue of *Le Forum*, for instance, James Myall presents some great quotes from Madison Grant in his nativist bible, *The Passing of the Great Race*. David Vermette in his blog about Franco Americans has some great nativist quotes against Franco Americans in that current bastion of liberal orthodoxy, the *New York Times*. I am currently reading the book *Imbeciles* by Adam Cohen, which is a story of the eugenics movement in the United States and of the famous Supreme Court Case, *Buck v. Bell*. The decision was famous because another WASP from Massachusetts, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr., who wrote in

the opinion that the State could involuntarily sterilize an individual deemed to be mentally inferior that "Three generations of imbeciles are enough." Both left wingers and conservatives, including Margaret Sanger, the darling of liberals today, sang the praises of sterilization. In fact the only significant opposition to involuntary sterilization came from the Catholic Church. Cohen estimates that between 1900 and 1930, almost 70,000 men and women were sterilized against their will in the U.S.

Doing research on a prominent Franco American from Biddeford, Maine, Urbain Ledoux, I stumbled on the writings of one Nicholas Smith, another WASP who also appears to have been from Massachusetts given the references to that state in his writings. Smith served as U.S. Consul in Trois Rivières, Canada from 1889 to 1892.

The role of a U.S. Consul in the 1890s was primarily that of trade promotion. But Smith also performed many other functions such as passport issuance, notarial services, writing evaluation reports for local employees, protecting American seamen and even

officiating at weddings. Despite these many and varied duties, however, Smith found time to perform what is called today "political reporting." On February 10, 1890, less than 3 months after he arrived in Trois Rivières, Smith wrote a thirty-four page report entitled "Fecundity of French Canadians." It was the longest communication ever dispatched from the Trois Rivières Consulate.

Rather than addressing the subject scientifically as a demographer, Smith instead simply manifested his prejudice against French Canadians. He began by calling the Catholic Church in Canada not only the Church of State but the State itself. He traced its role in education and criticized the tremendous power of parish priests in Quebec.

Encouraging fecundity so it could spread its gospel, the church in French Canada, in Smith's view, posed a threat to the United States: French Canadians, he warned, "go to the States not as individuals but as colonies, carrying with them, like the pilgrims, their principles and their priests and keeping themselves as separate  
(Continued on page 14)



*(Letters/lettres, Racism and discrimination continued from page 13)*

and distinct from their neighbors as Jews or Chinese ..... They have planted colonies ..... : .. distinct in language, customs and religion in the very heart of Protestantism which in the next twenty years, if they obey their pastors, are destined to replace the exhausted and impoverished Puritan race. They have built one hundred and twenty churches which are all in charge of Canadian priests and fifty large convents where nuns of the same race are giving instruction to 30,000 children. Instead of being absorbed like other emigrants, they have reconstructed their old parishes, are adhering to their own language ..... and have adopted for their motto 'not that (word illegible) dear to every American heart' but 'our religion, our language, our customs but above all our country (Canada)' The balance of power in a state which was hitherto regarded as the keeper of our national conscience is in the hands of the Philistines."

Smith went on to claim that the provincial government was instructing the tens of thousands of French Canadians in Massachusetts to vote against Senator George Hoar because he had taken positions disliked in Quebec. He ended by warning that 'their alliance to Canada might today seriously imperil our American system.'

Smith submitted several other reports accusing the French Canadians of evading the contract labor law and of using their illegally-earned dollars to pay off their mortgaged Canadian farms. On August 9, 1892, Smith asserted that his dire prognostic-

ications about the French-Canadian invasion in Massachusetts had come true.

On September 17, 1892, Smith wrote his last report from Trois Rivieres. His dispatch included the following about the city: "seven persons and a pig, which is made to feel at home, constitute the average family ..... as a defense against both disease and cold the French Canadian pins his faith on a crustaceous integument. Indeed I have sometimes thought that they, like Hindoo fakery, believed in the holiness of dirt."

Smith then discussed measures being taken in Trois Rivieres to ward off an imminent cholera epidemic: "With the usual sagacity, however, of municipal bodies, they have begun setting gangs of men to digging in the streets, turning over earth that for two hundreds years has been saturated with slops, so if by any chance the citizens escape the cholera in October, they may die of typhus in November. A board of health had been appointed but like everything else in Three Rivers, it requires eternities of time to move in and long before it settles down to business, the nimble little bacillus may leap the quarantine and revel in our vitals." He ended with this insult to French Canadians: "I am afraid, too, there is nothing in the inertia of Three Rivers to distinguish it in the province."

Smith's sarcastic and racist comments were somehow made public. He wrote later that his mail had been tampered with. His cynical rants caused a furor in Trois Rivieres. The city government called the report "a malicious satire on a very ordinary situation" and an "unwarranted insult to an entire population." Rather than comment on Mr. Smith's "lucubration and ramblings" the city officials

would "content (themselves) in dealing with matters of fact only." Soon after the incident, the U.S. Vice Consul from Montreal reported that "the town is considered in a good and satisfactory sanitary condition."

The unofficial response to Smith's charges was less restrained. The Consulate was attacked by a group of angry citizens who threw rocks through the windows. Consul General Patrick Gorman, arriving from Montreal to inspect the damage, voiced his surprise, according to one Canadian newspaper, that Smith "was not mobbed." Gorman announced that Smith would soon be replaced in Trois Rivieres on account of ill health. One newspaper opined that perhaps Smith had caught pneumonia from the cold drafts coming in through the Consulate's broken windows.

The next ten years saw the Consulate in Trois Rivieres ably manned by two young officers -Fran!ois Belleau (1893-1897) and Urbain Ledoux (1897-1903). Both were Quebec-born immigrants from Maine (Belleau from Lewiston and Ledoux from Biddeford) who, in all probability had worshipped in that State's French Canadian Catholic churches and attended parish schools taught by nuns from Quebec. Ledoux who is buried in Biddeford and spent his summers in the area went on to have a well-publicized career as a social worker/community organizer in New York City. Ironically, Nicholas Smith's prediction had come true: the Protestant Yankee was replaced by the invading French Canadian migrant- at least in Trois Rivieres. Contrary to Smith's warning, however, our Republic survived.

## REGIS "BONHOMME" DAIGLE 1808-1880

Folks called him Regis, "Bonhomme" Daigle - Rgegis the Good Man, or "Bonhomme Daigle" - Mister Daigle.

A third generation Madawaskan who knew the pioneers of Madawaska, suddenly became an American in 1842.

From a petition of the Madawaska Plantation residents, in 1846, to Bishop Fenwick of Boston we learn that Regis Bonhomme Daigle served as one of three members of the Board of Assessors of Mad-

awaska Plantation.. Madwaska Plantation was set up as an electoral district by the State of Maine in 1844.

From his account in the merchant traders records of Abraham & Simon Dufour - recorded entirely in French but with monetary values in New Brunswick currency, that is in pounds (£), shillings (s), and pence (d., we learn that farmer Daigle relied on lumber operators to purchase his farm produce - chelly oats and hay.

Abraham & Simon Dufour, operating under the business firm name of A. & S. Dufour had earlier bought out Antoine Bellefleur store (cited by Deane & Kavanaugh in 1831), which store was next to the St. Basile Church property.. A. & S. Dufour served as brokers to farmers who wished to supply the lumber operators with the fodder necessary

to maintain teams of oxen in the woods.

Daigle's account at A. & S. Dufour on Feb. 4, 1846 that Regis Daigle brought 77 bushels of oats to the merchant traders who credited Daigles account £10 - 11s - 9d.. The merchant traders also credited Daigle and additional 1£, -8s - 7d. to have Daigle deliver this load "Chez Drake".

The 1850 U.S. census shows Melzar Drake at Portage Lake in the head waters of the Fish River, where he served as lumber camp format in the Shepard Cary lumber operations on the Fish River.

Now imagine this: this is Winter, Feb. 1846 - travel from the merchant trader at St. Basile, N.B. to Portage Lake, Maine would be entirely on the frozen river surface of the St. John and Fish Rivers - a distance *(Continued on page 15)*



# What Did They Eat?

*George Findlen, CG, CGL*

The following is the third of three excerpts taken from a draft of a book the author is writing of his Acadian ancestors. The book traces his lineage from immigrant Barnabé Martin and Jeanne Pelletret in Port Royal / Annapolis Royal in Acadia / Nova Scotia to Marcel Martin and Jane Levasseur in Hamlin Plantation, Aroostook County, Maine. This excerpt comes from the chapter on René Martin and Marie Brun, who married in 1693. Their farm, Beausoleil, was on the north side of the Annapolis River directly opposite Pré-Ronde.

The archeological excavation of the house at Belleisle examined all animal bones uncovered during the dig. The bulk of them were domestic animals. The Acadians there ate mostly beef followed by pork. They ate less mutton and even less poultry. Around 97% to 98% of the meat they ate came from the domestic animals they raised; only 2% was wild game.<sup>1</sup> Few fish bones—mostly cod and stripped bass—were uncovered in the dig, although we know from the

fishhooks found at the site that they did occasional fishing.

Marie Mignier did not leave her favorite collection of recipes for us to study. We are left to do some creative guessing. Fortunately, French cooking is strongly rooted in tradition. Today's dishes are cooked much like those of the past, and several cookbooks remind us of that.<sup>2</sup> The primary difference is the heat source: we now use a gas or electric stove instead of an open wood fire. We are also blessed with two books of "old" recipes. One book is a collection of Acadian recipes collected from a survey of women of Acadian descent in the mid-1970s. Their average age was 72. That means many of them were born around 1900, their mothers were born around 1875, and their grandmothers were born around 1850, possibly earlier. If those women shared recipes that their mothers got from their grandmothers (who'd have been born between 1800 and 1825), then what got into the published collection has much in common with what Acadian deportees had cooked.<sup>3</sup> Another book of "old" recipes is

based on books published in France between 1651 and 1739. These recipes were compared with a list of foodstuffs available to the French living at Fortress Louisbourg in the early 1700s, and several of these recipes are known to have been cooked in the hearths there. A collection of them is available for us today.<sup>4</sup> So it turns out that we don't have to guess hard.

For French men and women, bread was the basis of their diet, so wheat was the largest crop grown. They grew enough that they could sell surplus to Boston in good years. And the presence of ovens attached to houses—assuming most other houses were like the one excavated at Belleisle—is evidence that baking was important for Acadians.<sup>5</sup> Without doubt, Marie baked for her family, making additional loaves as the family grew. She'd have received a small batch of yeast starter from her mother or mother-in-law on marrying René, although she may have had some from her first marriage.<sup>6</sup> Bread was an all-day affair. Early in the evening, some starter was removed from its earthenware container and mixed with a refreshment of dough and water. Just before bedtime, the dough was kneaded and left to rise overnight. Early in the morning, it was

*(Continued on page 16)*

*(REGIS "BONHOMME" DAIGLE  
1808-1880 continued from page 14)*

of -- miles.

In these merchant trader records we see that day laborers are paid 2/6. (two shillings, six pence a day.. Multiple that sum by eight and you get 1£ (one pound) giving the pound the value of eight day's work.. The credit amounts given to Regis Bonhomme Daigle comes to slightly more than 13£ or a value of 104 days wages. The oats are being delivered to an American lumber operation, but the credit earned is reported in New Brunswick currency

At this time the lumber operators had not yet cleared supply farms like the Michaud Farm on of the Allagash River a generation latter. In 1846, Madawaska farmers filled the bill.

Ten days later, Daigle takes up another run. This time he bring 101 bushels of oats to the Dufour brokers who credit him 12£ -12s - 6 d. and an additional 3 £ - 3s - 1 1/2d. to bring the produce "Chez Thomas E. Perley. This credit of 15£ and 15 shillings carries a value of 127 day laborer wages.. James and Thomas E. Perly of Frederic-

ton, N.B. have an operation above the Fish River mills on Perley Brook in Fort Kent... There were no banks in the Madawaska region, but operators like Shepard Cary of Houlton access funds from a Bagor Bakno and the Perley Brothers access their funds from the Bank of New Brunswick in Fredericton, N.B.

Previously in the account on Jan. 31, 1846 and entry of over 10£ to bring 64 1/2 bushels of oats up the St. Francis River where Atherton & Hammond had lumber operations.. The three deliveries would bring to Daigle a credit value of what we'd expect to pay a day laborer for 312 days' wages.

The 1850 U.S. census entry for Regis Daigle shows 12 children in his household aged 18 years to a one year old., but there's also a laborer aged 18 named Antoine Beaulieu in the household.. The hired hand's name figures for a debit of 5 shillings (two day's pay) in Daigle's account as of Feb. 18, 1846 two days after the delivery of oats to Thomas E. Perley. Beaulieu surfaces repeated in Daigle's account for a variety of amounts. But the "eye-catcher" comes on the day of the "Chez Drake" delivery- which reads a one pound debit entry for: " une pair de bottes a son

engag" - a pair of bots for his hired hand..

One might imagine the following scenario after breakfast that day:

Regis Daigle: "Toine, go hitch the horse, we're taking a load to the lumber camp today".

Antoine Beaulieu: "Today?"

Regis Daigle (slightly agitated): "What do you mean, Today?"

Antoine Beaulieu: Bien, Monsieur, look at my boots, I can't go on the river this way, I'll freeze my toes off."

Regis Daigle, (with a measure of impatience): Look, Young Man, you're going to take a loan of oats to A. & S. Dufour. When you are in the store to get the amount credited, pick yourself up a pair of boots and charge it to MY account. But you're going to hitch those horses and will take that load of oats to Perley's or Drakes' or Emerson's or where ever the Dufours will tell you to take it.

*Guy Dubay  
Madawaska, Maine*

(*What Did They Eat?* continued from page 15)

folded or kneaded and left to rise again for several hours, then folded and left again. An hour before she thought the dough had risen enough, she would have started a fire in the oven, letting the small sticks burn hot until reduced to an ash. She would then rake the hot ashes out of the oven, shape the dough into a *boule* (a large disk with the edges tucked under) and put into the oven to bake on the preheated stones that made up the bottom of the oven.<sup>7</sup> If her house did not have a beehive oven attached to it or she wanted to make only a single *boule*, she'd have used a preheated baking pot with a concave lid on which she would heap hot embers and nestle hot embers around the sides. When served, she and René and the children may have used a slice as a pusher, as later descendants have, and they may have enjoyed a bite with maple syrup or molasses on it.<sup>8</sup>

Since peas were the second-largest crop grown by Acadians, and presumably by René as well, Marie Mignier likely made a *soupe aux pois secs* (pea soup). In winter, she'd have soaked the dried peas in cold water overnight. She'd have done the same with some salt pork taken out of its storage barrel. In the morning, she'd have rinsed both pork and peas in fresh water, put them in her *chaudron* with onion, covered all with water, and let them cook slowly for several hours in a corner of the hearth. Before serving, she'd have removed the salt pork and cut the meat into small pieces to return to the soup.<sup>9</sup>

Cod was king along the Atlantic. Most of it caught off Acadia was shipped back to France where almost half the days of each year were days of abstinence.<sup>10</sup> Marie likely made a version of *la chaudrée*, the grandmother of today's fish chowder. She might start with a good daub of butter on the bottom of her *chaudron* on which she'd arrange some chopped onion. On that she'd have placed fillets of cod, covering that with whatever other fish she had available to her on that day. Haddock, mackerel, smelt, and sole would all do. She'd then add a bunch of parsley and cover all with cold water. If she had some white wine from Bordeaux, the wine would be about half the liquid. She'd put her *chaudron* over a low fire until the liquid got hot enough to bubble. Then she would make sure the *chaudrée* did not cook for long after that since fish lost its tenderness if overcooked. She may have made a white sauce, a *sauce Béchamel*, to

serve over it. If tradition tells us anything, she served it to her family with bread toasted over the fire.<sup>11</sup>

Most bones found at the Belleisle dig were beef. If René and Marie ate as their neighbors down the road did, then they ate more beef than pork. If so, Marie likely made a *pot-au-feu* ("a pot on the fire"), a dish that goes back to the sixteenth century. The English version that we know today is New England boiled dinner. The *pot-au-feu* is more sophisticated and tasty. To make it, she'd have put beef or a lamb shank into a cold pot with water barely to cover, brought it slowly to a slight disturbance, not to a full, rolling boil, and skimmed it often. She'd have taken a bone with marrow in it, tied cheesecloth around it (to keep the marrow in the bone), and added that to the pot. Once the surface was shimmering, she'd have added an onion with two whole cloves stuck into it, a stalk of celery, some *gros sel gris* (large sea salt) from her mother's birthplace, some



peppercorns, and a *bouquet garni* (tied bundle of parsley, thyme, and bay leaf). If she added cabbage, which Acadians ate often, she'd have added some pork and made the dish a *potée*. She'd then let the pot simmer for three hours, making sure she added a stick to the fire to keep the pot at a simmer and added water as needed to cover the meat. At the end of three hours, her broth would be complex, rich, and delicious. She'd then have wrapped some carrots, parsnips, and turnips—all cut into large pieces—in another strip of cheesecloth, and added that to the pot, pushing it down to bury it, then left the pot to simmer for another hour. She'd then have discarded her *bouquet garni* and the onion with the cloves in it, probably giving them to the hogs, sliced the meat on a serving platter, and mounded the root vegetables around the meats.<sup>12</sup>

We know that Acadians had access to wine.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Marie possibly made a *boeuf en daube*, another staple of French cooking found in some form everywhere in France. Americans know of this dish in recipes for Beef Burgundy, but other regions of France have their popular form for the dish. If the

cut was especially tough, Marie would have cut up the meat into small cubes and soaked them overnight in red wine from Bordeaux with an onion and a carrot or two with salt and pepper for flavor. On the next day, she'd have browned the meat in pork fat and followed that by cooking the meat slowly for most of the day in a mixture of red wine and beef broth, possibly what she had left from a pot au feu. Alternatively, she'd have put the cold pot on the fire without browning the meat first. Late in the day, she'd have added onion and carrot and maybe a parsnip. She'd have served the dish with bread made that day.<sup>14</sup>

Cabbage was one of the vegetables grown in Acadian gardens, and it is likely that Marie made a *Soupe de la Toussaint* (All Saints' Day Soup), perhaps with a turnip in it as well.<sup>15</sup> Cabbage, turnips, and carrots were the most common vegetables grown and eaten in Acadia.<sup>16</sup> The potato did not show up in Acadia until after 1750 or so and not as a primary crop until 1767.<sup>17</sup>

With the fruit from their fifty-tree orchard, Marie likely made a form of apple or pear pie, a *tarte au pommes* or *tarte au poires*. A French recipe for apple pie has been around since the 1300s.<sup>18</sup> Instead of a pie, especially in the fall when the fruit was fresh, Marie may have made a compote, in which she cooked sliced apples in sugar and water, removed the apples, and cooked down the liquid mixture until it was thick, using it as a sauce to coat the apple slices. If Marie did not have sugar, she'd have used maple syrup. A recipe (using sugar) had been published in France in 1651 and had already been made for many years.<sup>19</sup>

Rum was widely consumed at Port-Royal, and *eau de vie* (brandy) was also available. Rum was easily bought through trade with Boston distillers; *eau de vie* came on supply ships from France and later through trade with ships coming to Louisbourg. On a cold winter evening, especially if guests came by, Marie may have made a warm drink of cider and spices with a touch of rum and *eau de vie* from her mother's region of France. She would have served it in the rounded earthenware mugs as in the old country.<sup>20</sup>

Although these recipes are guesses, they fit what we know Acadians raised and grew, and they ate what they raised and grew. Although Marie may not have made precisely what is listed here, she would have used the same ingredients to make similar dishes.

(Continued on page 17)

(*What Did They Eat?* continued from page 16)

(Endnotes)

1. Leslie Still, "Analysis of Faunal Remains from the Belleisle Site Nova Scotia," in David J. Christianson, *Belleisle 1983: Excavations at a Pre-Expulsion Acadian Site*, Curatorial Report No. 48 (Halifax: Nova Scotia Museum, 1984), 95.

2. See Ann Willan, *Great Cooks and Their Recipes from Taillevent to Escoffier* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1977). Trained at the famous Cordon Bleu culinary arts institute in Paris, Willan has been a lifelong student of French cuisine. In this book, she makes accessible to the general reader a history of French cuisine. Recipes are given in their original form (translated into English), then given in a modern form. An example of a surviving recipe used by French cod fishermen sailing out of La Rochelle is the one used by Ann Willan for *La Chaudrée* in *The Country Cooking of France* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007), 100. The cod chowder our ancestors ate was made in a large black iron pot, a *chaudière*, as this one originally was.

3. Marielle Cormier-Boudreau and Melvin Gallant, *A Taste of Acadie* (Fredericton, New Brunswick: Goose Lane, 1991). The original publication in French was *La cuisine traditionnelle en Acadie* (Moncton, Nouveau-Brunswick: Éditions d'Acadie, 1975). The authors are ethnographers and have looked closely at what Acadians grew, raised, or hunted for food.

4. Hope Dunton, *From the Hearth: Recipes from the World of 18<sup>th</sup>-Century Louisbourg* (Sydney, Nova Scotia: University College of Cape Breton Press, 1986). Each section is pre-

ceded with information on the food item, and many of the recipes are given both in the exact wording (translated into English) of the eighteenth century cookbook they were taken from as well as in a modern form. A more recent work by historian Anne Marie Lane Jonah and French chef Chantal Véchambre, *French Taste in Atlantic Canada, 1604-1758: A Gastronomic History* (Sydney, Nova Scotia: Cape Breton University Press, 2012), does some of the same but includes much more food history of early French Canada. All recipes are 18<sup>th</sup> century recipes "based on ingredients available during the French regime in Atlantic Canada, whether indigenous or known to have been imported." A list of modern reprints of the 18<sup>th</sup> century cookbooks can be found in Ann Willan, *Great Cooks and Their Recipes from Taillevent to Escoffier* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1977), 195-197.

5. After the *Grand Dérangement*, it seems that the oven was not attached to the house. Readers can see an unattached oven at the Mazerolle farm, built sometime around 1777, now reconstructed at the Village Historique Acadien in Caraquet, New Brunswick.

6. Willan, *Great Cooks and Their Recipes*, 124: "Good starter was believed to improve with age and a pot of vintage starter was a treasured present to brides."

7. The *boule* is the traditional shape of a loaf of French bread. Making it has recently become popular in the United States. See Jim Lahey, *My Bread: the Revolutionary No-Work, No-Knead Method* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2009). The only difference between Lahey's method and that used by our ancestors is the substitution of a modern oven for an open

hearth. Details on the work involved in making bread come from Cormier-Boudreau and Gallant, *A Taste of Acadie*, 165. Those wanting to make traditional French breads can find a recipe for *pain à l'ancienne* and for *pain de compagne* in Peter Reinhart's *The Bread Baker's Apprentice: Mastering the Art of Extraordinary Bread* (Berkeley, California: Ten Speed Press, 2001), 191-194 and 195-197. Readers can find a recipe for eighteenth century French soldier's bread at Recipes, "Heritage Gourmet," *Parks Canada* <http://www.pc.gc.ca/media/gourmandgourmet/appintro.aspx> : accessed on 12 March 2012. A recipe used by Acadian descendants is in Cormier-Boudreau and Gallant, *A Taste of Acadie*, 167. For complete information on the twelve steps, Acadian descendants should study (and practice) Peter Reinhart's *The Bread Baker's Apprentice*.

8. Carl A. Brasseaux, *The Founding of New Acadia: the beginnings of Acadian Life in Louisiana, 1765-1803* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana: Louisiana State University Press, 1987), 134. Descendant Marcel Martin ate every meal with a slice of bread in his left hand until his death in 1965.

9. Cormier-Boudreau and Gallant, *A Taste of Acadie*, 28. A soup made almost exactly like that described here was made as recently as 1960 in the home of Marcel Martin and Jane Levasseur. Marcel grew a field of peas right up into the early 1950s. It is likely that his father and grandfather did as well.

10. Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle et capitalisme, XVI-XVIII* (Paris: A. Colin, 1967), 146. Also Mark Kurlansky, *Cod: A Biography of the Fish that Changed the World* (Continued on page 18)

## On Being Franco-American

By Gérard Coulombe  
Fairfield, CT

My mother, Clara Coutu Coulombe, who grew up speaking French, although some would have said that she spoke French-Canadian, not French as spoken in France or by real Frenchmen in the States, sent me a letter that she had received from a professor at Rivier College in Nashua, New Hampshire. The sender invited the family Coulombe to Québec to join other Coulombes in celebrating the 350<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first Coulombe to Isle d'Orléans, situated below the City on the Saint Lawrence River.

Maman was very proud of this letter. I knew that she would not be going. Dad had already passed. The letter was in French, written by a religious who happened to be a priest and professor of the college's Foreign Language Department. When I

received the letter, I, too, had had a feeling of pride because the letter suddenly granted my ancestry a foothold in the pantheon of early settlers, other than the English on this continent.

So, on impulse, I decided to share the letter that my mother had sent to me with Mrs. Black, a highly regarded teacher of French, and set out, immediately, to share the news with her. Madame was a straight stalk of corn, tall, narrow-faced, and always coifed, elegantly. Her ancestral lineage stock was early American English. She took the letter proffered and read it quickly before handing the letter back to me with these words: "This letter is full of mistakes." I took the letter held like her pince-nez between thumb and index finger, turned and walked away feeling at once insulted and betrayed.

I had always been repulsed by that woman's hauteur and absolute lack of sensitivity. I had learned that Madame's pride and lack of empathy was incompatible in a teacher, but, of course, she came highly commended for her sense of what's correct and proper in some circles. She had also learned to be insufferable when chastising or correcting students, particularly when she had already deemed them impossible. There was a certain disdain that she had for them. It was immediately apparent to anyone with common sense. I could never disabuse her of the trait, for she was unforgiving if one's tone suggested anything amiss or if one's words implied something derogatory about her, particularly, if she were caught unaware because she thought of you as a principled advocate. It seemed to me that on matters French, it, the repartee had to be superfluous in the narrowing of her eyes and in a nervous twitching of her nose.

I grew up in the City of Biddeford, a city whose population was overwhelmingly Franco-American, from my point of view, (Continued on page 18)

(On Being Franco-American continued from page 17)

of course, or as some others will say, French Canadian originals, of course. For to the great many who spoke French in an originally American only community, the fact that French or what passed for "French" was dominant as the language of home, church and commerce in many areas of the City was patently, for some difficult to accept, but for other immigrants, the mixture of cultures and languages was highly beneficial to all. By 1949 many French Canadians considered Old Orchard their Riviera. And their visits to Maine's shores often started with visits to

Franco-American relatives. Vacationing "sur la plage d'Old Orchard" became more if not less important than visiting relatives.

French Canadians or Franco Americans in their patois, very much-enjoyed Maine's vacation spots of Old Orchard Beach. Whenever she could, our mother

(What Did They Eat? continued from page 17)

(New York: Penguin Books, 1997), 24.

11. Anne Willan *County Cooking of France* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2007), 100. The recipe for *la chaudrée* (fish soup named for the big pot, the *chaudron*, in which it was cooked) was developed by French and Basque cod fishermen off the Grand Banks. Anne's recipe comes from a chef in the port of Fouras at the mouth of the Charente River in Western France. Marie's mother, who only came to New France at about age 29, would have eaten a dish much like this as a young woman and likely cooked a version of it for her family in Québec. (For Marie's mother's arrival date, see Michel Langlois, *Dictionnaire biographique des ancêtres québécois (1608/1700)* (Sillery, Québec: Maison des Ancêtres / Archives nationales du Québec, 1998), 3: 440.) For the history of Béchamel sauce and a simpler Norman version of *la chaudrée*, see Mark Kurlansky, *Cod*, 262-263 and 255-256.

12. Willan, *Country Cooking of France*, 142. A pot-au-feu may be thought of as the quintessential dish of France, each region having developed its own version. For more about this basic dish, see "The Pot-au-Feu Family" in Anne Willan, *French Regional Cooking* (New York: William Morrow, 1981), 75. A variant that Acadians cook is *bouilli au boeuf* (boiled beef). See Cormier-Boudreau and Gallant, *A Taste of Acadie*, 88. The key to the old country recipe is never letting the water come to a boil, a requirement in making stock or a *demi-glace* (concentrated beef or veal stock).

13. A study of alcoholic beverages consumed at Fortress Louisbourg between 1713 and 1758 revealed that 37.8% was wine, and that 77.8% of that came from Bordeaux. See Gilles

took us by trolley or by train to Old Orchard so that we children, my two sisters and I, could enjoy the outing and picnicking "sur la plage."

All the while, French Canadian, the dominant conversational and business language of the City of Biddeford and Lewiston, perhaps, Waterville, to differentiate from Parisian French, but it was French, nevertheless. If asked what language we spoke by someone noticing the patois, we would invariably answer, French, the kind a Québécois spoke. Our ancestors arrived in North America in 1670, mine did. They later immigrated to the States throughout New England to find work in the mills. Immigration was not a problem. I have said that they walked to Maine, but most, like my grandfather, took the train. They came to find work in the mills that already had been around for a long time Immigration, in those days, doesn't seem, to me, as having been a problem.

Proulx, "Consumption of Alcoholic Beverages at Louisbourg," Appendix D in Jean-François Blanchette, *The Role of Artifacts in the Study of Foodways in New France, 1720-1760*, History and Archaeology, 52 (Ottawa: National Historic Parks and Sites, Parks Canada, Environment Canada, 1981), 146.

14. A southern French recipe for this ancient dish is in Willan, *French Regional Cooking*, 299.

15. A recipe is in Cormier-Boudreau and Gallant, *A Taste of Acadie*, 27.

16. Jonah and Véchambre, *French Taste in Atlantic Canada*, 54.

17. Jonah and Véchambre, *French Taste in Atlantic Canada*, 38-42.

18. For the oldest known published recipe, given both in its original language and in slightly modernized form, see Association Le Tailloir, *Pratiques culinaires au Moyen Age*, assoc.letailloir.free.fr : accessed 11 March 2012, tartes de pommes (Viandier [Taillevant]). For an overview of his contribution to French culinary history, see "Taillevant (about 1312-1395)," in Anne Willan, *Great Cooks and Their Recipes*, 8-19.

19. For the recipe, see Dunton, *From the Hearth*, 92. Intrepid souls may wish to seek out Terence Scully, trans., ed., *La Varenne's Cookery: The French Cook; the French Pastry Chef; the French Confectioner* (Blackawton, Totnes, United Kingdom: Prospect Books, 2006). A recipe made by many Acadian descendants is in Cormier-Boudreau and Gallant, *A Taste of Acadie*, 138.

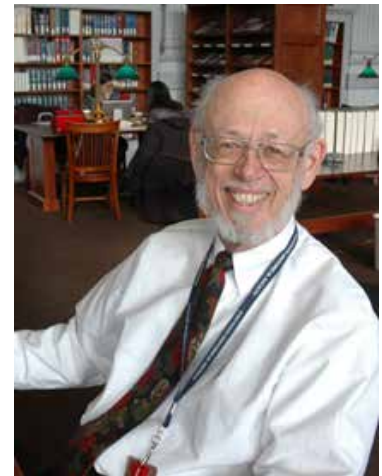
20. A recipe for Hot Jamaica Punch is in *The All New Fannie Farmer Boston Cooking School Cookbook*, Wilma Lord Perkins, ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1965), 41. Rum was 58.7% of the alcoholic beverages consumed at Fortress Louisbourg. See Proulx, "Consumption

Our schools were taught by religious orders of French speaking brothers or nuns: Brothers for boys, grades 5 through 12, nuns, or sisters, for girls and boys, grade 1 through 4 and then girls only, grades 5 through 12 and graduation. The left side of Saint Louis High School in Biddeford was for boys, the right, eventually, for girls. There was little or no mixing during the school day, although I recall a debate between boys that took place in a basement classroom on the girls' side of the school. I do not recall the resolution we debated. It had to do with Communism. Was it? Resolved: That Communism is antithetical to a Democratic Country. [I'm sure that I am wrong about the topic.]

It might surprise some that we pledged allegiance to the flag, but sang, "Ô Canada!" We said our prayers in French and our lessons were conducted in French until the start of the Second World War, right after Pearl

(Continued on page 19)

of Alcoholic Beverages at Louisbourg," 146. Rum was likely the favorite alcoholic beverage at Port-Royal as well.



George Findlen is a retired college administrator. In addition to volunteering at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library and serving on the board of the National Genealogical Society, he researches and writes articles on aspects of his blended Acadian and French Canadian ancestry. He also gives talks to genealogical societies. The author thanks Joy Reisinger, Certified Genealogist, for twenty years editor of the journal, *Lost in Canada?*, and Patricia Locke, Research Department Chairperson for the American-French Genealogical Society. Both read drafts of the article and made valuable suggestions for its improvement. Initially published in 2005, the article has been revised for publication in *Le Forum*.

(On Being Franco-American continued from page 18)

Harbor, when the State of Maine required that instruction in French speaking religious schools be in English. Up until that time, our history was "l'Histoire du Canada." Only later was I able to appreciate that our history to that point had been pretty amazing.

At an early age, I knew more French and even Latin by note if you please, than I did English. Many business people came to the house and most, even those who were English spoke a smidgen of French to be able to conduct business with most people who were our parents' age because they frequently only spoke French. There was no need to speak English in Biddeford while there was a need to do so across the bridges to Saco. Nor was there a need to speak English in most Biddeford locals, as there were always families who practically spoke only French. There were times when I actually did not know who in a neighborhood might be isolated. No matter where home was, even if it were in a multilevel home with four or more apartments, someone spoke French and more than likely, someone else in the building spoke French, even if it were Canuck French. There was no need to speak English in most neighborhoods because the majority of the people were all French speaking, and all conversation on the street around any block and up and down the stairs was French.

The iceman, policemen, the mayor, the milkman, the insurance agent, the Raleigh Products salesman who came to the house to sell his stuff, our mother's cousin, all spoke French. French idioms colored our gossip. Conversation about the weather, the war, accident, illness, disease, and politics were part of the communal French Canadian fabric in Biddeford. Just about every clerk, pastry chef, butcher, the clerks at Sam's Hardware spoke French. Some, not all, librarians spoke French. Of course, all priests with the exception, perhaps of the one assigned to Saint Mary's spoke French, some spoke only French. It was a sign that Biddeford had a goodly number of French Canadian descendants or naturalized citizens, all of whom spoke French in their neighborhoods.

French idioms colored our gossip. Conversation about weather, the war, accidents, illness, disease, and politics were part of the communal French Canadian fabric. The doctors who made house visits, as most

did, spoke French. Medicine and illness were French things. There were French newspapers available like **La Presse** de Montréal was a staple available at newsstands in Biddeford.

We spoke French, only in the home, in our neighborhoods and around town. We boys who hung out and played near home and who later claimed the whole of town as our neighborhood as we grew up through the early grades all spoke French. We swore in



French. Words like "ciboine, ciboire, merde, calvaire" were words to confess; although most priest were pretty liberal on these sins because the men were more likely over their heads in moribund activity and usually took up more time in confessional. With the long lines waiting on the priest to move on from penitent to penitent, always given the time to the most grievous confesses, it was natural for those waiting in line for the priest to hear their confessions; it was also incumbent on the priest to speak clearly and to advise the penitent to concentrate on that which was the most grievous of sins just so people would not simply drop out of line when it became clear that their lives would be amiss if the line failed to move very fast, as men were more likely over their heads in moribund activity and usually took up more time in the confessional.

Although I must say that in those days, a careful and extensive examination of conscience kept one in the confessional almost

interminably, but unlike today, so many went to confession that all four or five priests in the parish had to borrow priests from neighboring parishes, on special occasion. Nowadays, not only have parishes in Biddeford, like Saint Mary's and Saint André's, closed; I think that of the English, Irish, and French, the French Canadians were more sinful than anyone and possibly more inclined to imbibe at local pub on the way home from work than any other national group, and, therefore, more likely to hear from their wives on the subject which often provoked assaults by men or women, depending on who was the strongest: the woman who felt abused by the husband, who might, too often, waste the cash getting drunk and who ended up buying rounds for all his friends and loafers at the bar, was the offender. "Les hommes," having been just paid, were possibly more inclined to imbibe at a local pub on the way home from work with the cash envelope burning in their pockets.

The women who regularly went to Church had the support of an organization ran by a group of "monks," I believe, who supported teetotalism among parishioners; mother was a staunch member and forbade my dad from purchasing alcohol in any form to bring to the home. Secretly, he did buy on a Saturday afternoons his pint of brandy and poured the contents into a container that was a familiar in a shed cabinet that held his paints and denatured alcohol. Félix never failed to take his medication whenever he felt it safest to take a shot whenever mother was away running errands or visiting friends, but that would only be on a Saturday afternoon when he was at home from work and free to work in the shed on one of his projects.

Our Dad's 4<sup>th</sup> of July vacation was his once a year time off because he was literally out of work. They all were because that is when the mills closed for about a week. If we could, and it was possible during the war years, we went to Canada by train, first from Portland to Lewiston and then up North on the Grand Trunk Railroad to Montréal through New Hampshire and then into lower Québec. If we did not stop in Rimouski, there was Victoriaville to go to see my dad's brother of the Order of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart. There were many other stops on our itinerary, including stops at the then very famous "miraculous" ones along or even out of the way. Québec was on our

(Continued on page 20)

*(On Being Franco-American continued from page 19)*

itinerary because I think that my dad's first relatives in Canada were buried at sites on l'île d'Orléans.

It was frequently too expensive to go to Canada, so that is why that Dad and I travelled together. We, all of us, dad, mother, the girls and I did go a couple of times when the break Dad had from work for the Fourth of July included a weekend and time affordable away from work might have proven longer. Savings were very small; I remember trying to save with the assistance of a metal coin bank like that of a trolley conductor's coin dispenser that mother got from the Pepperell Bank of Biddford to help us save.

We never needed a passport. All we needed was a birth certificate, which, I assume mother held for us. Otherwise, all we needed to do to get through customs was to say where we lived and whereabouts we were going—to visit relatives. My father, who spoke French, only, or so he said to American Customs and to anyone who asked. In a way, he was, on these pilgrimages, like his brother, Edward, he was really on his way to visit the holy sites of Canada like those he knew so well—Sainte Anne de Beaupré was one, a way-out-of-the-way favorite.

Some time we did not go to Canada to visit the relatives. The long and short of it is that we did not travel much. That's why our proximity to beaches made it possible for us to go with family or relatives, particularly when we visited with my mom's sister, Eugénie. Her husband and the girls who were older than we were and were dating guys who served in the Second World War made going to Hill's Beach in the back of a truck with panels on the bed that allowed us to stand, look over the truck's top of the cab or sit against the boards to remain pleasantly comfortable, poised in a way that afforded us a way to maintain some balance while riding down Pool Road happily headed to a clambake at Hill's Beach.

Some time the reason we stayed at home during "summer vacation" is that our Canadian relatives visited. They filled all the beds we had while we children slept on the floor. Their reason for coming was probably more to enjoy Old Orchard than it was to enjoy seeing relatives and to visit their grandfather's grave—the one I never knew.

My dad would have been at home

walking with other folk in Chaucer's tales— on his way to Canterbury. I would recognize him as the pilgrim known as the "Warp Tier."

As Mom explained, she and dad had taken the late train when they married. Mom's parents were alive, as mom was younger, but Dad's had long past, as far as I'm concerned. I never heard from him about the nature of his parents, whether they were lenient or strict. "Notre Père rarement" spoke of his parents. I don't recall any extensive dialogue about them, background, work



*Sainte Anne de Beaupré*

or the age they were when they passed-- although, I did discover the art from seeing a photograph of my grandfather at work. He sat at a cobbler's bench—had a shoe hammer in hand. As I recall "mon papa," he was innately, "l'homme silencieux." Rairement avait-il quelque chose a dire." But in agreeable circumstances he would declaim like the actor he had been, but the stories were hidden from us children. I remember seeing it in his posture when he assumed the character of one posing for the photographer in his studio, early in the century, the pose, when he sat back in an ornate studio chair with a book in hand and assumed the authoritative pose of the consummate professional and declaimed at length on the subject at hand in the photographer's arranged pose.

Saint Louis High School, instead of being a passport to a better life for me, was a failure in that instead of providing me with

the advantages I thought it would, only put me behind my neighborhood friends for whom grammar school had been a useless way station prior to attaining the age of sixteen when they could follow their parents into the mills and the kind of work most of their parents were still doing while some others with more élan went into the trades or sales with the promise of a route of some kind driving a truck for a local bread company or tonic company, or as some others did who found work with a City maintenance department.

After a week of sitting at home following graduation, a friend called to invite me to join him on a trip to Portland where he planned to visit recruiting stations. The only one opened that day was the Air Force station in South Portland. So we took the bus out there and soon we had signed up and sent home to obtain permission from our parents, as we were seventeen. There was a train leaving from the Portland Station that evening. Without hesitating or even mentioning my father, my mother signed, and at seventeen, both of us were on our way back to Portland and bused to the train where we joined in a car with other recruits from up-state and there followed stops in Boston, Albany, Buffalo, Chicago, Saint Louis, where cars were added to what became a "troop train" headed South, with the final stop in San Antonio where we disembarked at the Air Base for basic training. Once roughly assembled, we were called to attention to hear the announcement that we were at War in Korea.

My freshman year, at twenty-two, was thanks to the Korean War G.I. Bill. Following training I had spent my enlistment going to Radar Mechanic School in the States, Mississippi, Iowa, Texas, and Minnesota. I was assigned to a radar station in the northeast corner of Missouri where we somehow became known in spook history as one of the stations that had interacted with unidentified aircraft displays showing impossible vectors or changes in direction.

Upon discharge, I ran and took the train to Kansas City where I took a flight out of an Air Force Base there and took a public carrier to Boston and a train to Biddeford. I worked the summer folding blankets at the mill because a manager who had known me as a boy in a sea-scout troop hired me, I think. My first year was a near disaster until I figured out what I wanted to do, and that was to teach.

*(Continued on page 25)*



# BOOKS/ LIVRES...

Review by Dana Wilde

## “Leave a Crooked Path” by Simone Paradis Hanson Shadowlight Press, Roswell, Georgia, 2016

In Simone Paradis Hanson’s novel “Leave a Crooked Path,” Claire Au Clair recounts the events of the summer of her 14th year. She and her mom, dad and little sister, Grace, live in a coastal Maine town that sounds a lot like Brunswick or Topsham, in a pretty typical suburban neighborhood of largely Franco-American families.

It’s a happy, aggravating place to live. The first significant event occurs when the neighbor, Mr. Bergeron, loses yet another finger (now he’s down to seven) to a lawn mower blade. In a different social or literary milieu, this incident might be drawn with solemn attention to the pain and irony of Mr. Bergeron’s apparent inability to learn not to try to free stuck mower blades with his hands. But instead, Claire’s disposition — true to the place and people — is wryly good-humored. Mr. Bergeron bleeds and suffers, to be sure, but the real point of the incident is less his clumsiness, and more the predictable reaction of Mrs. Bergeron, who we learn in the first sentence suffers from “Jumping Frenchman of Maine Syndrome,” or as Claire’s father terms such behavior, “Exaggerated Startle Response.”

“Throw me a towel!” Mr. Bergeron screams. “Duncan Hines!” she screamed back, hurling the towel into the air in his general direction and turning to run back in the house.” Someone in the neighborhood shouts, “For God’s sake, call an ambulance, he’s done it again,” and people come pouring out of their houses to see what’s happened now — “pretty much every household was represented at the accident site.”

“This was Maine after all,” Claire reflects. “A place that sometimes felt more like an extension of Canada than a part of New England, where dumb Frenchman jokes were tolerated since it’s OK to make fun of yourself. It could be a rough place to live, but a place where no one passed a stalled car or stray dog.”

And the picture we get, really, is of a

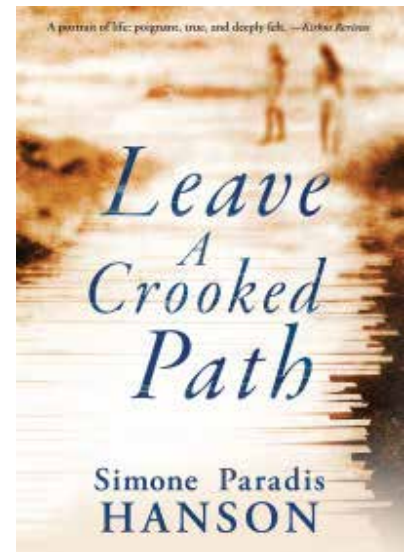
large extended family bound by proximity, ethnicity and overall good feelings toward each other. Except when the feelings are bad.

Claire takes care of her sister during the day while their parents are at work, and she spends a lot of time with her friend Celeste, with whom she frequently skirts the rules and who “could be disgusting.” When Uncle Romeo wants to help Claire’s dad prune a tree branch that precariously overhangs the roof, everybody gets nervous about the prospect of Uncle Romeo on a roof with a chain saw. They humorously figure out a dodge to the well-intentioned offer, but feel compelled to do something about the branch before Romeo tries. So Claire’s father calls the neighborhood handymen, the Menards, to come take care of it. Not to put too fine a point on it, but from there, things go bad for the neighborhood.

And especially for Claire’s family. Because slowly, deftly, it is revealed that her father is what we refer to as a mean drunk. And the second half of the novel discloses, in what is often quite beautiful writing on an ugly subject, Claire’s efforts to deal with him, internally and externally. “There’s a kind of worry that eats at you if you have a father that drinks. It’s like boot camp for bomb diffusers. One wrong move, cut the wrong wire, get lazy for a split second and it’s all over. An explosion will rip you apart.”

The depictions of harrowing, pathetic and irrational scenes are extraordinarily accurate to realities many of us have experienced. At the same time, the emotional tenor of the writing does not get sidetracked by the inherent pain. Claire’s fear, anger and confusion, which are palpable, are yet strongly colored by her perceptive good humor and love. Or is it the other way around?

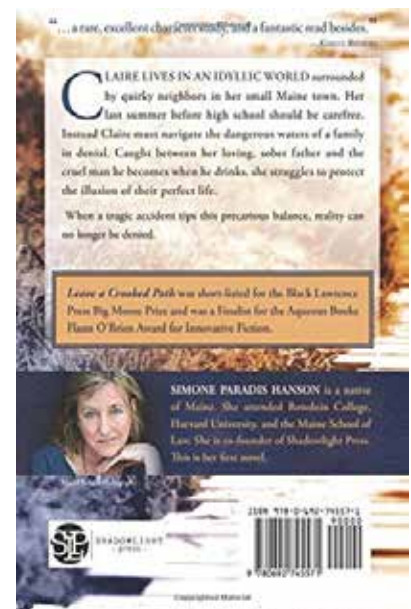
“Leave a Crooked Path” is a skillfully paced, warm, painful, good-humored story, which will channel a sense of comfort and compassion, I imagine, for most people with experiences similar to Claire’s in their pasts.



162 pages, paperback, \$10

Simone Paradis Hanson, who now lives in Georgia, grew up in Brunswick and is a graduate of Bowdoin College and the Maine School of Law. “Leave a Crooked Path” is available through online book sellers such as Amazon and Barnes and Noble.

**This review first appeared in the Off Radar column of the Kennebec Journal and Morning Sentinel newspapers Feb. 2, 2017.**



<http://www.booksamillion.com/pl/Leave-Crooked-Path/Simone-Paradis-Hanson/9780692745571>

<https://www.amazon.com/Leave-Crooked-Simone-Paradis-Hanson/dp/0692745572>

(N.D.L.R.: See page 22 for an interview by Jim Bishop with Simone Paradis Hanson.)

*The following interview was conducted online in April 2017 between Jim Bishop, a Franco-American writer and retired teacher, and Simone Paradis Hanson, author of the recently published novel, Leave a Crooked Path.*



**JB** Simone, *Leave a Crooked Path* is set in a traditional Franco-American neighborhood in an unnamed mill town on the Androscoggin river. The story is told by a narrator, remembering the events that took place during the summer before her entry into high school when she was fourteen years old and her sister Grace was eight. Clearly the book has autobiographical elements. Can you talk about the Franco neighborhood you describe in the book and how the narrator's memories intersect with your own coming of age?

**SPH** I grew up on a street with about 15 or 16 houses. The street dead-ended in a creek. We were insulated there. When we were kids, if we wanted to go anywhere, we rode our bikes or walked. And although we got farther on our own than kids ever would nowadays, we still could never get far from home. We all knew each other, we had no secrets and, in a way, no privacy from one another. Consequently, our neighborhood was a family of sorts. So this became my setting for the book, a neighborhood that was like an extended family, for better or worse.

At the time, my neighborhood was unapologetically French. You could be a complete stranger to the planet and know you were someplace 'special' when you walked from one end of my street to the other. Every house was a different, distinct, very-bright color. Not white, like my in-town friends' houses, or an occasional conservative pale hue of something non-white. My neighborhood ran the color palette. I should have mentioned that in the book, now that I think of it. Pink. Yellow. Brown with orange shutters. Orange. Robin's Egg Blue. Or my own personal favorite, Vick's VapoRub purple. Oh, it was tradition to repaint your house every few years, a sort of keeping-up-with-the-Joneses, French Canadian style. One year my mother, who was decidedly not French Canadian, coerced my father into painting our house beige. She had this thing about beige, it 'went' with everything. What an embarrassment. We were like the one Easter Egg that didn't get dunked in dye. And my father was not quite as into painting the house as the other fathers, so it was beige for quite a while.

So we kind of stood out, in a colorful

sort of way. And it made me stand out, by association.

**JB** I'm interested in hearing how, as a girl growing up in what sounds like a close Franco neighborhood, you may have felt different in your relationships with the neighborhood kids than with your public-school friends.

**SPH** I felt very awkward as a kid. I was thin, had braces, bad haircut, glasses. The whole shebang. It didn't help that my father drank. It just added to my general lack of confidence and self-worth. Unlike my friends in the neighborhood, I attended public school while they went to St. John's parochial school. So I had school friends in addition to my neighborhood friends, and they were the children of white collar families. One friend's father was a professor at Bowdoin College, later to become Dean of Students. Another friend's father was a psychiatrist. Another was independently wealthy and they had a beautiful, enormous house. I felt out of my league half the time.

And so, I lived with the fear that this secret about my father would somehow get out and my school friends would know.

It wasn't so bad that the neighbors knew. I knew stuff about them. Other fathers drank. No one's family was wealthy. Someone had an affair, which was huge back then. We were family, so it didn't really matter. But I had the impression that my school friends' families were perfect and I felt a little honored that they took me into the fold, so to speak. I already felt like I barely belonged; if they knew about my father it would not have been the same as people in the neighborhood knowing. Looking back, I don't believe I would have lost any friendships, they were all nice girls and nice families. But I was scared nonetheless, that this sacred group would cast me out.

I am a very different person from Claire. She looks back on her life with a certain detached pride, I think. I'm kind of a Claire wannabe. I wish I had been able to face my father's drinking and not wish fervently, more than anything, that no one would find out. Shame and embarrassment were always right around the corner. It was terrifying for me.

**JB** Yes, there's a sentence in *Leave a*

*Crooked Path* that calls this up: "There's a worry that eats at you if you have a father who drinks. It's like a boot camp for bomb defusers." Claire's father seems almost to be a Jekyll-Hyde presence, a decent man who becomes a time bomb when he drinks. So Claire and her sister Grace seem to be always tiptoeing around the land mines and pretending not to notice. Did you experience this constant vigilance in your own life?

**SPH** As I'm talking about it now, I get this vision that I never really imagined before. His drinking was this giant monster that had me cowering in some small corner. I barely lived. Very different from Claire, who at least tried to stand up to it. I didn't get out of that corner until I felt sufficiently safe in knowing he probably wouldn't drink again.

As I got older, moving from middle school to high school, I became less close to my friends in the neighborhood. We had different interests, formed new friendships. We stayed friendly, but I moved more securely into a new set of friends. My father had stopped drinking by then and that made an enormous difference. There was always that fear that he would start again, but the longer he went without a drink, the more confident I became.

**JB** And is that when you felt able to allow your early experience with your father into your fiction?

**SPH** Back in the day, if you were sick and both your parents worked, you just stayed home alone. I used to get seriously ill twice a year. In the fall I'd get tonsillitis and in the spring I'd get strep throat. I should have had my tonsils out probably, but whatever.

My father was a radio announcer for a radio station in Portland. He had the morning show, so he was up around 3 in the morning. His show ended at noon so he'd get home early. There was this one day he came home early from work and I was home sick. He didn't know I was home.

He did all the cooking at our house, so  
(Continued on page 23)





## FRANCO-AMÉRIQUE

par Dean Louder

Autrefois les Canadiens français, au sens originel du terme, se sont installés un peu partout en Amérique. Ils l'ont nommée, chantée et écrite. Leurs traces persistent toujours, même si la dimension continentale de leur civilisation a été oubliée par nombreux d'autre eux. Aujourd'hui l'espace, la société et la politique se complexifient. La volonté indépendantiste du Québec est mise

en veilleuse. L'Acadie n'est toujours pas une réalité politique. Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre n'ont pas de structure institutionnelle pour les encadrer. La place de la Louisiane s'amenuise. En même temps, le vecteur haïtien prend de l'importance au fur et à mesure que l'axe Port-au-Prince-Miami-New York-Montréal se constitue. Par ailleurs, les francophones

(Interview between Jim Bishop, a Franco-American writer and retired teacher, and Simone Paradis Hanson continued from page 22)

I expected to hear him start supper. Then he would go to bed and sleep until my mother came home from work, so I was going to call to him when he came down the hall. Get all kinds of sympathy for my sore throat. He'd smooth my hair back, tell me I'd be over it soon. Tell me I was strong. And beautiful, that I looked like my mother.

Instead, he went right down into the basement. There was, of course, only one reason he ever went down cellar. That's where he stashed his hidden liquor.

I will never be able to describe the anger I felt. I won't even bother to try. But I can say this, I wanted to get out of bed and stand by the cellar door, and when he came up, I wanted to kick it open.

I started writing this book back then.

**JB** So that was the seed for *Leave a Crooked Path*. I want to ask you about your writing process, but before we get to that, I know that between the inception of *Leave a Crooked Path* and its recent publication, you managed to earn a B.A. in German from Bowdoin College, an M.Ed. from Harvard, and a J.D. degree from UMaine School of Law. Pretty impressive.

**SPH** Some people look at my resume and think I'm really smart because I have all these degrees. I'm not. I just could never make up my mind about what I wanted to do. I also hate working, but that's beside the point. I chose to go to law school because I was in my late twenties and somehow that felt very old at the time, and I was thinking I may never get married. I wanted to have a better living and I wanted to be able to take

care of my mother if she ever needed it. Which she didn't, but I wasn't sure.

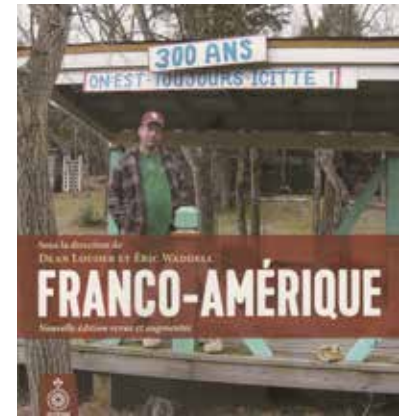
**JB** Well, Simone, as for brains and hard work, your record speaks for itself. So you emerge with a law degree, but I understand you chose not to practice law. Can you talk about that choice?

**SPH** Picture this: a young mother sitting at a big table in the law library of the school she has just graduated from. She was up early getting her 12-week-old son ready for day care, she worked all day writing position papers for a Workers' Compensation Law firm. She picked her son up 30 seconds before the daycare would have started charging her \$5.00 a minute for each minute she was late. She is now frantically researching some aspect of insurance law she is unsure about, hoping she can get this done before the baby starts fussing. Then she'll go home, feed and bathe him, and put him to bed. She will have minutes with her husband before she'll pass out from exhaustion.

The best thing I got out of law school was my husband. He enjoys working and actually gets edgy if he has to be in the house too long. His idea of childcare is taking children to the movies and then Dairy Queen. His nickname for a while was Fun Dad. It was best that he not be in charge too often.

It all worked out. I got to stay home and then when my youngest started school, I had a choice to go back to work and make some paltry salary doing something I didn't like or make no money at all and write a book.

**JB** And your readers will be glad you did. Before we run out of our allotted space, could you say a few words about your writing process, how you midwived *Leave a*



des pays en voie de développement déferlent sur les grandes villes canadienne...et américaines. Les Francos d'Amérique— (Suite page 24)

*Crooked Path* into the world?

**SPH** I had to learn to sit down and write even if I didn't feel like it, even if I thought I wouldn't be able to write anything. People who have normal jobs have to work even if they don't want to; I had to do the same thing. Writing is a job and it's not that different from any other kind of work. Except you pretty much don't get paid.

My first novel ended up in the recycling bucket along with a prayer that no one at the recycling center would read any of it. And then I joined a writing group, which was truly one of the smartest things I've ever done. I finished the first draft of *Leave a Crooked Path* in one year, and then spent the next six months or so rewriting and editing.

I reached a point about six months ago where I had to make a decision: keep getting turned down by more agents and small press publishers, or start my own company. I have a writer friend who joined me in starting Shadowlight Press and we have been learning a lot about the industry, and making slow but steady progress in figuring out the best way to get a book in front of people.

I'm not really measuring success by how much money, if any, I ever make. I'm lucky in that I don't have to financially support my family. I measure it by the people I have reached. My friends and family have learned a lot about me that they never knew. I've met this wonderful lady in Much Wenlock, Shropshire England who traded reviews with me. And a certain gentleman in Bangor Maine whose interest in me and my book has been especially nice.

**JB** Thank you, Simone. The pleasure has been mine. And I hope this brief introduction will help your work reach other readers, in Franco-America and beyond.



# Prosper Bender (1844-1917) Canadian Littérateur, Expatriate, and Intercultural Broker

*Patrick Lacroix*

*For Le Forum, April 2017*

By 1886, Prosper Bender had lost faith in the Canadian political experiment. Nation-building had proved extremely costly and led to corruption, the *métis* rebellion in the Northwest had excited animosities between French and English, and people of both “races” were leaving their native land to seek better opportunities in the United States. Himself an expatriate, Bender argued that Confederation would not hold much longer: the Great Republic would soon annex British North America. Thus, in the 1880s, he sought to awaken the American mind to the circumstances of the Canadian neighbor—the neighbor across the forty-fifth parallel, but also the neighbor who had elected to live in the Little Canadas of New England.

Bender’s father was a Quebec City attorney of French-Canadian and German descent; his mother, a Protestant Irish immigrant. From an early age, Bender moved effortlessly between his parents’ respective cultures. He was sent to the Petit Séminaire in Quebec City and then studied medicine at McGill College in Montreal. In the 1860s, he joined the Union Army as a surgeon in the waning days of the Civil War. Other Canadians who would later rise to fame—Calixa Lavallée, Edmond Mallet, Rémi Tremblay—had preceded him. But it is unlikely that Bender saw any fighting; the war had all but ended when he joined.

Bender returned to Quebec City, practiced medicine, and, in 1868, married Aurélie Esther Scott, who soon died of complications from childbirth. Beyond his household, in Quebec City, Bender was not content to solely pursue medicine. He became increasingly involved in the city’s literary scene, known as the *école patriotique de Québec*. With friends he scrutinized and sought to refine French-Canadian literature. Eminent Canadian writers and political figures gathered at Bender’s home for noisy *soirées* that often stretched long into the night. In 1881, Bender put his pen to the service of this cultural ferment.

His *Literary Sheaves* represented Bender’s ability and desire to serve as an intercultural broker. This first book sought to render to Canadian writing its *lettres de noblesse*. A friend saw in Bender’s work an expert rebuke of Lord Durham’s infamous claim that the *Canadiens* were a people “with no history and no literature.”

Then, in a second book, published in 1882, Bender commented on the rapid social and economic advances made in Canada since Confederation. He happily noted that old grievances between French and English were dissipating. Considering his expressions of patriotism and the praise he won for his work, it is remarkable that he moved to the United States in 1882. His friend Arthur Buies had visited Boston the prior year and had no doubt aroused his curiosity. A sense of unfulfilled potential may also have carried Bender. In any event, Bender was not alone: his departure came at the height of the *grande saignée*, the mass migration of French Canadians to the American Northeast. But he did not follow the endless stream of migrants to Manchester, Lowell, Fall River, and other cities in Boston’s manufacturing hinterland. Separated by class and interests from these families, Bender settled in the more urbane and promising environment of Boston and quickly entered prominent society. In the fall of 1883, he was appointed physician for the city’s planned international exhibition and feted at the Hotel Vendome.

Bender continued to practice medicine, but again it was his writing that drew attention. An article in the *North American Review* in 1883 marked an abrupt departure from the views he had until then publicly expressed. “[W]ith its debt of over eighteen millions and the distracted state of its political parties, including the lack of sympathy between French and British, [Quebec] is in a deplorable condition,” Bender wrote. The *grande saignée* was ample evidence. But his aim was not merely to put the Conservative governments in Quebec City and Ottawa on

trial or to cater to American opinion. Bender genuinely believed in the benefits of free trade with the United States and, in time, annexation. The industrial boom of New England was but a hint of the economic progress Canada might experience if joined to its neighbor. Bender’s old friends in Quebec City were unamused. “We are glad to see our old friend . . . maintaining his reputation as a forcible and agreeable writer,” the *Morning Chronicle* stated. Alas, “[w]e fear our author has got into bad company since he left us.”

Bender reprised his role as a mediator of cultures, educating “old-stock”  
*(Continued on page 30)*

*(FRANCO-AMÉRIQUE suite de page 23)*  
quel autre nom donner à cette famille si bigarrée ?—vivent des réalités changeantes et font face à de nouveaux défis.

Il est plus que temps de faire valoir cette Franco-Amérique d’une richesse historique remarquable et d’un dynamisme culturel inouï.

**Le livre contient deux textes sur les Franco-Américains écrits par des Franco-Américains, Barry Rodrigue et David Vermette.**

\*

In former times, French Canadians established settlements nearly everywhere in America. They named them, sang about them, wrote about about them. Their exploits are visible to this day, even though the continental dimension of their civilization has, for all intents and purposes, been forgotten by most of them. Today, territory, society and politics have become more complex. The independentist option in Québec has been placed on the back burner. Acadia is still not a political reality. New England’s Franco-Americans lack an institutional structure. The place of Louisiana would appear to be dwindling. At the same time, the Haitian vector has become ever more important as the Port-au-Prince-Miami-New York-Montreal axis expands. Elsewhere, waves of French speakers from the Third World break over large Canadian and American cities. The *Franco d’Amérique*—what other name is appropriate for such a colorful and eclectic family?—face constantly changing situations and new challenges.

It is more than time to bring into focus this *Franco-Amérique* and its remarkably rich history and unusually dynamic cultures.

**The book contains two chapters about Franco-Americans written by Franco-Americans, the first by Barry Rodrigue and the second by David Vermette.**

(On Being Franco-American continued from page 20)

I was not the only one in my Catholic High School with ambition. Some of my classmates were quiet about what their plans were. Quite a few went to college because they were smart and not because we were taught well all the time. Quite a few were drafted or enlisted in advance of the draft for the War. In retrospect, nearly all did well after school, some, surprisingly well, considering our prospects, as I thought them to have been. All of us were a lot smarter than our behavior in school which was often undisciplined, and preposterously, intellectually obstructionistic.

But, before my tour had ended, I made a call to my girlfriend because I had made a decision to look for a college that might just be the least expensive in the country. I called my girlfriend to ask her, if we married, would she go to North Dakota to attend university? I had made inquiries and I had thought it most inexpensive and the way to go, having been brought up that way, I would guess. I called the nursing school in Lewiston, Maine, Saint Mary's, and got the supervising nun's permission to speak to my girlfriend. She allowed for five minutes. Juliette said, "No way!"

Then I thought of Catholic Colleges, why not? I knew of at least one Saint Louis High School student who had attended school, a recruited student who had excelled at football. Then I thought of the annual homilies and collections on behalf of a particular Catholic University, which I believe might have been the Catholic University of America in Washington. Why not? Could not afford to go. Boston College? Holy Cross? Then, I decided on Maine in Orono.

John Hankins, Chairman of the English Department at the University of Maine invited me to visit with him in his office. Since I had never talked to Dr. Hankins extensively, I was eager to learn what it was that Dr. Hankins had in mind by calling me to his office. I knew that he was a "distinguished professor." I also knew that he was the author of **Shakespeare's Derived Imagery**, a book that was still on Amazon's list sixty years later. I never bought or read it, as I recall. At the time, I was a candidate for a master's degree in English, and I was spending part of my graduate years satisfying licensing requirements for a teaching certificate in English.

I can't describe the kind of conference

it was with Dr. Hankins. He was asking why it was that I had decided to major in English because I was Franco American, a "Canuck," in common parlance, but, then and now, I can't imagine it. He was such a kind man. It appeared to me as if he was bothered by tearing eyes which made him difficult to read.

If there was anything about my thinking at the time, it was that his question had more to do with his thinking, that I should be majoring in "French." I had had, already, a sense of what his remark meant. In a course on **The Canterbury Tales**, we were encouraged to speak the words for the piece in what



*Clara Fabrola Coutu Coulombe holding Gérard, 18 months, born 9-3-31*

the professor demonstrated was the correct way to speak them. I applied the French I knew to several readings of the parts of the Tales, giving them the French stresses that I thought were indicated by the text. Well, I was corrected for the "Canadien" stresses that I had used, as I spoke the prologue.

I left Doctor Hankins's office wondering about the purpose of the interview. I did not think there was malice involved because he talked, if I am correct, about his son who was eager to follow in his footsteps. Then, I also wondered if he thought that I had made a mistake because he happened to have mentioned that had I chosen to major in French. I would be on my way to a doctorate at some university and a brighter future ahead of me.

Then, my wife remembers that her recollection of that meeting with Dr. Hankins was about his son and my experience with practice teaching in Brewer, Maine. He wanted his son to become a public school teacher. That's what the meeting was about,

she says.

Then, again, I could have gone to work in the textile mill where I learned a lesson in marketing while folding blankets in the interim between my discharge and the start of my freshman year at Maine. I had noted that the blankets I was folding were labeled, MACY, a brand with which I was, as of yet, unfamiliar. I learned an important lesson: A PEPPERELL blanket was also a Macy's blanket.

Like a blanket, a college education could be as good as an other in its market. A lot depended upon workmanship and the quality of the product. When we were growing up, we were very much aware of prejudice—a different kind, perhaps but prejudice, nevertheless. In many ways, we were the lesser class, or brand—no need for embarrassment or shame. In many ways, we left class behind. We assimilate. No one speaks French anymore. Canada is north of the border. They are the foreigners. Madame Clark would be happy. Parisian French is the vogue in school. The majority of kids elect Spanish. The elderly who remain are bilingual. When they go, that's all she wrote. Bonjour! Au revoir!

Of those in the family remaining in the Biddeford/Saco area, only my brother-in-law still speaks French, rarely does he speak English, but all of his children and grandchildren speak English almost exclusively. He is, perhaps, the only one who still goes to church. He misses his wife. They spoke French, together. She passed away some years ago, suddenly, upon waking in bed and sitting up. He visits her grave nearly every day for a conversation about the children and the newborns. He awaits his own passing so that, together, they can share the grave, and miss the children together.

Saint Joseph's Cemetery in Biddeford is the place to go to appreciate the resting place of all those who came to Biddeford with French-Canadian names and are planted here.



(More from CT on page 37)

# Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine

par **Simon Couillard**

*Enseignant en philosophie, Cégep de Victoriaville*

*Doctorant en études québécoises, UQTR*

*J'ai lu les écrits français de Jack Kerouac au printemps dernier. Cela s'inscrivait, pour moi, dans une démarche de découverte du Canada français. Je m'étais intéressé plus tôt à l'Acadie, à la Gaspésie, aux écrits de Jacques Ferron et de Gabrielle Roy... mais pénétrer le monde de Kerouac a été une révélation. Je voulais savoir ce qu'il en restait.*

*Je suis né en 1980 et j'ai grandi au sein de la classe moyenne en région, dans un bungalow non loin d'un centre d'achat. J'avais tendance à dire : « comme tout le monde ». Je suis et j'ai toujours été Québécois. Je n'ai pas vécu l'univers culturel du Canada français traditionnel, ou si peu. Mais voilà : aujourd'hui, même un ministre du gouvernement québécois nous invite à nous redéfinir comme Franco-Canadien. On a beau vivre dans le pays imaginaire, tout ça devient trop réel. Je voulais en savoir davantage. Avec Jack Kerouac, j'ai voulu voir comment ça s'était passé dans le « Canada d'en bas ». Je vous présente ici le fruit de mon travail. Je suis parti pour une semaine en terre franco-américaine, j'ai rencontré des membres éminents de la communauté, et j'en ai tiré le texte que voici.*

**Jour 1, 14 juin 2016.**

**Canada Road jusqu'à Rhea**

« Je suis une Canuck, je vis dans le Maine et je cuisine avec du lard salé. [...] Je suis un cul-de-sac culturel. »

- *Wednesday's Child, Rhea Côté Robbins*

L'agente des douanes au poste frontalier de Coburn Gore, au surlendemain de l'attentat d'Orlando, donne une première impression qui teintera ma perception des États-Unis : celle d'un peuple confiant en ses capacités. Au long de la route à travers les Appalaches, le drapeau américain est partout. À Madison, ville édifée sur une ancienne mission française en territoire

Abénaki, on voit des cocardes tricolores sous les fenêtres. Je goûte dès le départ l'exubérance de cette République dont j'envie, à vrai dire, la force d'affirmation. Comment a-t-il été possible de croire, à une autre époque, que nous pourrions reprendre nos droits, ici? Comment l'humble sensibilité paysanne des Canadiens français, qui était encore celle de Jack Kerouac, aurait-elle pu résister à l'ethos américain?



Au cours de l'après-midi, je rencontre l'écrivaine Rhea Côté Robbins au High Tide à Brewer, sur la rive gauche du fleuve Penobscot. Sur la rive opposée, qu'on voit par la fenêtre, c'est le centre-ville de Bangor. J'ai de la sympathie pour cette écrivaine avant tout, pour quelques détails dans un de ses livres au sujet de son père : ce qu'il lui racontait sur son enfance et la porcherie familiale, sur l'importance de castrer les porcs assez tôt pour que la viande ait bon goût, sur la manière dont il faut les frapper pour les assommer... Mon père me racontait la même chose. Pour elle comme pour moi, il s'agit d'un savoir qui a peu de chances d'être actualisé. « On trouve ça aussi dans les écrits de Camille Lessard-Bissonnette (écrivaine franco-américaine née au début du XXe siècle) et Grace Metalious (alter ego féminin de Jack Kerouac)! », qu'elle m'apprend. Le lard castré, « égossillé » disait mon père, le lard salé : voilà ce qui nous unit à prime

abord, Rhea et moi.

Nous discutons en anglais. Le mien est un peu rouillé, mais elle comprend quand je trébuche et passe au français. C'est sa langue maternelle. « "La Révolution tranquille"... on en a besoin! », me lance-t-elle d'emblée. Et je comprends ce qu'elle veut dire, sans trop en connaître le détail. Avant de rencontrer Rhea, j'ai lu son livre, *Wednesday's Child*, un très bel ouvrage qui décrit sa jeunesse dans le quartier francophone de Waterville, au Maine. J'ai aussi lu certaines critiques, dont quelques-unes avaient des relents traditionalistes étrangers à mon monde. Derrière, on devinait l'austérité et la pudeur qui ne pouvaient exister que dans l'« Ancien régime » québécois. À l'évidence, ces critiques ont heurté Rhea et ont contribué à définir sa vision de la réalité franco-américaine.

Elle en veut à l'hypocrisie des « bon catholiques, » comme les appelait sa mère avec dérision, de ces « vierges mariées » qui refusent la diversité possible d'une communauté franco-américaine qui délaisserait un peu du poids de l'héritage canadien-français. C'est le traditionalisme qui expliquerait selon elle la légendaire discrétion des Franco-Américain (selon la formule de Dyke Hendrickson qui évoque une « minorité silencieuse »). Pour préserver l'image d'Épinal du Canada d'en bas, l'élite aurait veillé à ce que rien ne bouge, à ce que la référence demeure restreinte (« keep the subject small », dans les mots de Rhéa). C'était les sœurs à l'école paroissiale qu'elle fréquentait : « Elle m'ont collé un "D" en français, en troisième année! C'était ma langue, je parlais le français! »

L'écrivaine que je découvre se dit pourtant Franco-Américaine. C'est qu'elle a choisi de prendre part à un récit controversé qui la concerne. Ce récit tissé de silence, il faudrait le comprendre, croit-elle. Et on ne pourrait le juger sans prendre acte de la haine et de la discrimination dont ont été victimes les membres de la communauté. « Le Ku Klux Klan a marché dans cette ville! ». C'est une crainte qui chez Rhéa, à l'adolescence, s'est transformée en honte comme chez d'autres Canucks. Le regard du dominant intériorisé, « internalized ». « Je suis revenu à mes racines par hasard, à cause d'un emploi au Centre Franco-Américain, » à l'Université du Maine à Orono dans les années 1980. Une nouvelle initiation à sa culture, qu'elle s'est appropriée définitivement après un passage par les « women studies » (elle a fondé la Franco-American *(suite page 27)*

(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 26)

Women's Institute, FAWI, qu'elle dirige actuellement).

Jeune grand-mère, elle lit avec avidité les écrivains québécois de la Révolution tranquille. « Jamais on ne nous a présenté ça, jamais parlé de ça. Rien ici ». De la littérature sur le Québec moderne, en anglais ou en français, on n'en trouve pas dans les librairies de Bangor : « Pas d'intérêt, ici. C'est quoi, ça? » Table rase d'une communauté possible, comme on a fait table rase des « tenements » du petit Canada de Waterville dans les années 1960, « poussés sur la plage et brûlés », au nom d'un progrès qui a fait disparaître le patrimoine franco-américain alors que les dominants (ces « Gentrefiers » qui suscitent la colère de Rhea!) refont l'espace urbain à leur image.

...Demain, je constaterai l'état des lieux.

**Jour 2, 15 juin 2016.  
Waterville et Lewiston**

« La survivance est maintenant morte dans les petits Canada de la Nouvelle-Angleterre »

- *The Little Canadas of New England*,  
Claire Quintal

Départ de Bangor pour Waterville qui est à moins d'une heure de voiture. Je file vers les locaux de la *Waterville Historical Society*. Le récit de Rhea m'a donné un angle : ces « tenements » rasés et brûlés, les vieux Francos laissés pour compte... Les locaux de la société se trouvent dans l'ancienne maison d'Asa Redington, premier industriel de la ville, convertie en musée dans les années 1920. J'arrive à peine un peu à l'avance pour les visites et je rencontre le curateur, Bryan Finnemore. Bryan habite la partie arrière de la maison avec sa femme. Il y a d'ailleurs grandi, comme ses parents étaient curateurs avant lui. On discute un peu, mais la question qui m'habite et celle que je finis par lui poser concerne les traces de la présence canadienne-française dans la ville. « Hum... laisse-moi y penser... euh... hum. » Ça commence mal! Si j'avais l'aplomb de ma douanière de Coburn Gore, je le presserais sans doute davantage. Il me dit que la Chambre de commerce doit avoir une carte avec les sites à voir au centre-ville.

Il y a une visite du musée prévue à 11 heures et je suis là. Les sorties d'écoles, les « field trips, » sont terminées et je suis

le seul qui est là. Bryan, finalement bien sympathique, me fait parcourir la collection impressionnante d'artéfacts dont les plus anciens remontent à la guerre d'indépendance de 1776. Des armes, du matériel militaire, du matériel de cuisine, cette boîte à musique dont je n'avais jamais vu le modèle auparavant, etc. Des choses qu'on s'attend à voir dans un tel musée. « Ah! Tu vas apprécier ça! » et il me montre une redingote de la Imperial Legion qui aurait appartenue à un Canadien français de la ville. Il me croit chauvin. J'ai l'air content. Il me pointe deux portraits sur le mur : les Castonguay brothers, qui appartiennent à la légende locale. L'un est mort durant la Première Guerre mondiale, l'autre durant la Seconde. Dans un présentoir, il y a les photos des sœurs Drouin, elles aussi héros de guerre. Ce sont les individus « outstanding » qui trouvent leur place dans l'histoire, ici. On admire le « self-made man/woman, » comme ce monsieur LaVerdiere et sa femme, apothicaires, dont les descendants ont légué à la Maison Redington toute une collection d'opiacés, de toniques et de laxatifs qui clôturent l'exposition, dans une pièce dont l'odeur d'alcool et de bois rappelle celle du Scotch.



Bryan et moi sommes en bons termes, nous avons discuté famille et politique américaine. Avant que je quitte, il me fait signe d'attendre, puis retourne dans son logement. Il en revient, cellulaire sur l'oreille, en train de parler à un ami qui est administrateur à la bibliothèque publique de Waterville. J'ai une autre connexion : Larry va me montrer ce que la Public Library possède sur les Franco-Américains.

Larry est un type corpulent à lunettes, adonné au travail intellectuel, qui détient un master en histoire et a fait une thèse sur Margaret Chase Smith, sénatrice républicaine du Maine à l'époque de McCarthy. Je n'ose lui demander de parcourir avec moi les multiples paliers et étages de cet immense manoir néoroman converti, mais



il m'indique gentiment où se trouve la section qui m'intéresse. Je monte et redescend et me perd, mais je trouve enfin. Je trouve quelques livres, dont celui de Dyke Hendrickson, mais je suis déçu. Presque rien. Rien en français. Le quart de la population de Nouvelle-Angleterre a des racines canadiennes-françaises et presque rien dans la bibliothèque. Je retrouve Larry qui me voit un peu découragé : « Écoute, tu devrais aller à Lewiston au Franco-Center », et il me donne l'adresse. J'irai, mais pas sans avoir vu l'ancien petit Canada, entre la papetière et l'ancienne manufacture, sur Water St. où Rhea a grandi.

« Notre héritage est la pauvreté », m'avait dit Rhea. On ne saurait mieux décrire les restes du quartier canadien-français de Waterville, devant l'ancienne filature. Des habitations délabrées, des commerces fermés et ce bar dont l'écriteau indique seulement « Chez... » (la partie du bas étant manquante). C'est Steve (Bouchard par sa mère), un client, qui m'en donne le nom complet : Chez Paris. Steve et son ami Shane (d'ascendance irlandaise) sont seuls à cette heure et à cette terrasse dont la structure et le treillis donnent l'impression d'une mise à distance volontaire du quartier. « C'est un bar qui se meurt, actually », précise Steve. On discute un peu. Je comprends bien que c'est le secteur au complet qui subit la même longue décadence. Rhea avait raison : les traces de la présence canadienne-française à Waterville, du groupe canadien-français, ne subsistent que là où le développement s'est arrêté, par manque d'intérêt ou de ressources. Entre le haut et le bas de Water St., il y a deux mondes. Le haut forme une artère commerciale assez typique. À cet endroit, la seule trace de l'ancienne présence des Canucks est le « two-cents bridge » qui donne accès à la papetière (mais rien ne signale le lien avec leur histoire, et les adolescents qui flânaient sur le pont quand je suis passé n'en savaient pas plus, pas certains de ce qu'était un « Franco-American » non plus).

(suite page 28)

(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 27)

Je ne désespère pourtant pas (pas encore) de trouver les structures possibles d'une urbanité francophone sur les ruines des petits Canadas. Certains endroits s'imposent d'eux-mêmes comme hypothèse, de par leur concentration historique d'une population canadienne-française : Lowell et Fall River au Massachussets, Woonsocket au Rhode Island, Manchester et Berlin au New Hampshire, et ailleurs. Mais là où on fait le plus grand bruit de la présence canadienne-française, c'est à Lewiston, au Maine. Je reprends donc mon chemin et j'arrive à Lewiston en fin d'après-midi

Arrivé au Franco-Centre, je rencontre le directeur Mitchell Clyde Douglas (pas que je demande la preuve d'un quartier de sang français, mais on peut difficilement faire plus « WASP » comme nom – de fait, Mitch n'est pas Franco, qu'un lointain ancêtre écossais à Fredericton... un peu Canadien, dois-je comprendre). Le Centre se trouve dans l'ancienne église, face à la filature. De l'autre côté de la rue, on trouve l'ancien petit Canada, dont les « tenements » ont été largement préservés. « Il n'y a pas beaucoup de français dans la communauté », me dit Mitch. Les plus jeunes, parmi ceux qui parlent le français, font partie de la nouvelle vague d'immigrants. Ils sont Congolais, Burundais, Rwandais, Ivoiriens.

En réalité, le Franco-Center est un lieu communautaire où l'attachement à l'histoire prime sur la maîtrise de la langue. Parce que le centre est financé par TV5 monde, qui reconnaît l'importance de cette poche française aux États-Unis, la télé trône sur la scène du sous-sol de cette ancienne église lors de « la Rencontre », événement périodique qui regroupe les membres de la communauté franco-américaine de la ville. La nef et le chœur de l'église ont été converties en une salle de spectacle magnifique, ouverte à tous les publics intéressés par le théâtre, les représentations musicales, les comedy show... en anglais, cela va de soi. Et pour ceux qui veulent se retrouver entre francophones exclusivement, il y a le club Passe-temps, en face. Le dernier de 4 clubs similaires dans la ville : on fume, on boit, on joue aux pools. La clientèle ne s'est pas renouvelée depuis les dernières années, selon Mitch.

C'est bientôt l'heure du souper, mais j'en profite néanmoins pour arpenter ce petit Canada dont les tenements doivent ressem-

bler à celui qu'a habité la famille Kerouac, sur Lupine Rd ou Moody St., à Lowell. Il s'agit d'un quartier plus petit et plus pauvre qu'avant, mais l'apparence des lieux donne l'impression, tout de même, d'un environnement qui devait être familier aux Francos de la première moitié du XXe siècle. Ce n'est que la façade. Pour ce qu'il reste du « Canada d'en bas », de son identité, je l'aurai plutôt trouvé à Biddeford le lendemain, chez le professeur et écrivain Normand Beaupré, dans une demeure où notre ancienne culture ethno-religieuse, celle dans laquelle Jack a baigné jusqu'à l'âge de 6 ans, a survécu au temps.

**Jour 3, 16 juin 2016.**

**Normand Beaupré**



*Normand Beaupré*

« Nous savons que des races existent qui se passent plus facilement que d'autres d'or et d'argent, et qu'un clocher d'Église ou de monastère, quoi qu'en disent les apparences, montent plus haut dans le ciel qu'une cheminée d'usine. »

*- Chez nos ancêtres, Lionel Groulx*

Le vieil homme devant moi a choisi la mauvaise journée pour se balader en décapotable. Pas que le temps est mauvais (il est splendide!), mais il n'y avait pas de déjeuner continental ce matin à l'hôtel. Je cherche désespérément une épicerie, j'ai rendez-vous à 11h... Je n'ai aucune envie de rouler 10 miles sous la limite permise. Pas de mention « Veteran » sur sa plaque de licence (j'ai vu les films d'Oliver Stone, je me tiendrais à carreau!). Il se tasse enfin.

Ils ont des muffins à saveur de crème glacée aux États-Unis. Celui érable et noix du « Shaw's supermarket » (ça faisait plus

« déjeuner ») est au moins aussi saturé de sucre que l'autre à la pistache, vert fluo et suintant, qui fut mon dessert à Bangor, mais c'est vite avalé. Je peux reprendre la route. Je serai à Biddeford à l'heure convenue.

Cet ancien centre de l'industrie textile est à quelques minutes à peine des plages de Saco et Old Orchard. Une importante population canadienne-française s'y est installée à partir de la fin du XIXe siècle. Entre les années 1930 et 1950, elle représentait plus de 60% de la population totale de la ville. Aujourd'hui, on s'étonnerait de croiser un francophone sur Main St., à l'ombre de la Pepperell.

L'homme que j'ai rejoint à Biddeford (il y est né et y a vécu la majeure partie sa vie) est néanmoins un pur Franco. Il est par-dessus tout le gardien d'un héritage et d'une identité (qui peuvent se réclamer à bon droit des écrits français du « Ti Gas » de Lowell) en danger de disparaître avec lui. Normand Beaupré est un vieil homme d'une élégance qui tranche avec celle de mon décapoté. Moins exubérante. Sa présence m'impose un calme salutaire.

Après avoir travaillé à la manufacture de soulier de Kennebunk durant l'adolescence, après le travail à la filature pour soutenir la famille durant les temps durs, aussi pour payer sa scolarité à l'Université Brown, et après s'être élevé de ses propres efforts à une remarquable carrière académique, cet homme, qui compte plus de 30 ouvrages à son actif, mérite à tout le moins qu'on ne le brusque pas. Cela dit, on pourrait difficilement le prendre en défaut : l'adversité, il connaît.

Ce diplômé de la Ivy League, donc, ce self-made man a vu les portes des collèges et des universités américaines se fermer devant lui, celles des départements de langues et littératures. Le français parlé de ce spécialiste de Corneille n'était pas de France. « Une forme de discrimination, je crois, » me dit-il. C'est la dignité qui commande cet euphémisme. Le professeur Beaupré a pu obtenir un poste à la University of New England de Biddeford, édifiée sur les restes du collège Saint-François (un junior college qu'administraient les Franciscains de la paroisse Saint-André, au profit de la population franco-américaine) par où il était passé. D'ailleurs, M. Beaupré est le seul, de ces gens que j'aurai rencontrés, qui n'ait quelque reproche à formuler à l'égard du clergé enseignant (qui pesait lourd dans ces enclaves urbaines qu'on s'efforçait de (suite page 29)

(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 28)

garder étanches). Le père Benoît l'a pris sous son aile.

« Faut avoir du casque! », résume Normand au sujet de son parcours. Il faut en avoir aussi pour continuer comme il le fait : « Je ne désespère pas, mais je ne vois pas cette continuité (culturelle). C'est parce qu'on n'enseigne plus le français à l'Université. Mes textes, ça ne marche pas ». Ils sont pourtant bons. À l'époque, M. Beaupré a créé le personnage de « la Souillonne », qui s'est révélé moins efficace que son alter ego de Bouctouche. Les Acadiens ont la cuisine et le tourisme, un patrimoine « rentable » qui manque aux Canucks. Mais les écrits restent, et c'est pourquoi Normand Beaupré continu. Son œuvre s'ajoute à un patrimoine écrit qui témoigne d'une sensibilité particulière : « J'aime Jack Kerouac parce qu'il est fondamentalement Franco-Américain. Le français et les valeurs qu'il tient de sa mère, première enseignante, tabernacle des valeurs, des valeurs sacrées [...], la sensibilité de Kerouac sont franco-américaines ». Ça me rappelle Victor Lévi-Beaulieu dans son essai-poulet. Il résumait ainsi : « Finalement, la chose est assez simple : même à l'époque beat, le seul lieu où Jack se sente à l'aise, c'est chez sa mère – Tous ses livres sont écrits selon le même scénario : un été à courir la galipote, à philosopher et à cuire avec les vieux tchommes d'habitude, suivi d'un hiver à écrire cet été, sous le regard bienveillant de Mémère. »

C'est sans doute ce rapport affectif avec la mère qui a réconcilié Normand avec l'œuvre de Kerouac. Le Jack « beat », à l'époque, il ne s'y intéressait pas. Jack Dulouzo (l'alias de Kerouac dans ses derniers romans), lui a révélé le « vrai » visage de l'écrivain, et sans doute celui d'une mère semblable à la sienne. Dans les romans de Normand Beaupré, les femmes tiennent une place éminente. C'est que, selon lui, sans les femmes, il n'y a pas de Franco-Américanie. Ce sont ses personnages principaux. « J'ai grandi entouré de femmes » : ses sœurs, la tante Eva, la grand-mère paternelle, Laura, et bien sûr sa propre mère, né à Dover au New Hampshire, qui était infirme. Il ne me parle pas de Lucille.

Nous discutons de bien d'autres choses, Normand et moi. Deux générations nous séparent, mais plus nous discutons, plus se crée entre nous un lien d'amitié et de respect qui surmonte cette distance.

Nous revenons finalement chez lui, comme il veut me remettre des livres. Il jette un regard par la fenêtre avant de monter le petit escalier à l'avant. « Ma femme est une Canadienne française! La maison est propre! », remarque-t-il avec une pointe d'orgueil. Et tandis que j'entre dans cette modeste maison de la rue Gertrude (dans le quartier, les noms de rue sont des prénoms de femmes – Je soupçonne que mon hôte y est pour quelque chose), j'aperçois Lucille qui récurse l'évier. Elle se rend compte de ma présence et se retourne, les mains sur les hanches (dans l'une, elle tient toujours la ginige (guenille)) et l'œil brillant : « Bonjour, bonjour! ». Nous échangeons des convenances et je remarque à quel point tout, dans la maison, est impeccable. Normand monte à l'étage et Lucille m'offre la chaise berçante en attendant. J'éprouve un sentiment rare de bien-être, dans le rappel de mes origines ethniques (un mot qui n'effraie pas, ici). Pour un bref instant, je suis au Canada français, au cœur de la Nouvelle-Angleterre.

**Jour 4, 17 juin 2016. Chez les Olivier, non loin de Dover**



« [...] le fleuve qui coule lentement en forme d'arc, les filatures avec leurs longues rangées de fenêtres toutes rougeoyantes, les cheminées d'usine qui montent plus haut que les clochers des églises. »

- *The Town and the City, Jack Kerouac*

Je suis décidément chanceux. Le temps est magnifique depuis le jour 1. Au jour 4, durant la matinée, je fais le tour du centre-ville de Dover avant de rejoindre Julien, Jane et Anique Olivier pour le brunch à Barrington, en périphérie. Julien est plus jeune que Normand. Ancien directeur de l'ACA (l'Association Canado-Américaine qui a fermé ses portes en 2009, après 113 ans d'opération), il a été mon premier

contact pour ce projet. Je le connais, lui, et Jane et Anique, depuis les camps d'été de l'Association au début des années 1990. Ces camps m'ont donné l'impression d'une francophonie américaine soucieuse de préserver ses liens avec la mère-patrie québécoise. Je suis heureux de les retrouver, 25 ans plus tard, mais je vais déchanter un peu sur cette vision d'enfance.

Julien Olivier est un représentant de ce qu'il conviendrait d'appeler « la génération du BEA (Bilingual Education Act) ». Le BEA, amendement de 1968 qui devenait l'article 7 de l'ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act), a donné l'impulsion pour ce qui demeure à ce jour la dernière grande démarche collective d'affirmation identitaire pour les Franco-Américains. Julien et d'autres éducateurs ont pensé et conçu des manuels et des projets locaux visant l'enseignement de la formation générale en français. C'était, à l'en croire, une époque effervescente où régnait un climat égalitariste, dans la foulée du mouvement pour les droits civiques. C'était aussi, au Québec, l'époque de René Lévesque (comme on m'en parle de René Lévesque! – lui qui a tendu la main à ces gens). D'abord enseignant dans une école secondaire de Rochester, Julien a été conseiller pédagogique entre 1976 et 1982, à Bedford. S'inspirant des travaux de Wallace E. Lambert de l'Université McGill sur l'enseignement en langue seconde, il a travaillé à ces projets jusqu'à l'époque de Reagan (il ne le tient pas dans son cœur, lui!) qui a présidé au désengagement du gouvernement fédéral dans le domaine de l'éducation.

La Franco-Américanie connaissait en même temps son époque jouale. On s'intéressait aux dialectes régionaux. On s'intéressait au « nous ». C'était l'époque d'un rapprochement et d'une collaboration plus étroite avec les Cajuns de la Louisiane par l'entremise du CODOFIL (Council for the Development of French in Louisiana). Pour Julien, ces derniers s'en sont mieux tirés. Tourisme, cuisine, zydeco, mardi gras... rien d'équivalent pour les Franco-Américains, leurs filatures et leurs paroisses n'offrant pas cet élément romantique utile à la marchandisation des identités culturelles. Là, l'État a vu son profit à financer des « projets identitaires ». En Nouvelle-Angleterre, c'est autre chose maintenant. « Nous n'avons jamais appris à nous battre », me dit Julien. Émasculé du mâle franco-américain (le lard qui me revient à l'esprit), incapacité de révolte... « J'avais une chronique en français (suite page 31)

(Prosper Bender (1844-1917) *Canadian Littérateur, Expatriate, and Intercultural Broker* continued from page 24)

Americans on French-Canadian culture at a moment when they felt deluged by immigrants who espoused different values. Separating the migrant masses from the eminent minds he had known in Quebec City, Bender wrote in the *Magazine of American History* that French Canadians were “backward in education and primitive in habit.” They were extremely prolific, and yet, their political weight “exceeded the proportion properly belonging to [their] numbers.” Americans could easily find in such remarks—if not in the state of affairs in Canada—a threat to republican institutions.

But the immigrants would not overturn the mores and institutions of American society, Bender assured his readers. In fact, his case for annexation grew from the supposed prevalence of republican sentiments among French Canadians. From their “conquerors,” his countrymen had learned to love liberty; they had “cultivated the good qualities of the Anglo-Saxon.” In the United States, French Canadians further learned to value education. Through diligent work, parents sought to place their children in the professions. The naturalization movement in “Little Canadas” reflected a dedication to their adoptive country.

It is to be wondered whether Bender challenged Yankee prejudice with these statements, or in fact nourished it. He seemed to identify Americanization as a desirable end, towards which the enlightened Canadian would strive. Here, his bicultural identity may have impeded the cosmopolitan Bender: he was less sensitive to the distinct possibility that French Canadians would lose their distinct institutions in the United States. If they did, he seemed to say, it would be but a small loss on the road to education, economic well-being, and sound government.

Such views were not a strict matter of ethnic bias: they arose from the hard line of separation between classes in and out of Canada. Bender had far more in common with the bourgeois elite of Quebec City and Boston—educated, worldly—than he did with the ostensibly parochial Canadian farmer with narrow interests and little exposure to refined culture. A telling instance was his idea that Canadians were moving to American factory cities because the work was lighter there than on the old family farm. This class bias played prominently in Bender’s series on the French-Canadian peasantry for the *Magazine of American History* in 1890. He evinced a romantic and friendly view of the Quebec countryside, which had sustained the virtues and ways of old France. But, he explained, “with people fettered by ancient habits and customs, and proud of their fetters, modern notions have a hard struggle. In the main the *habitant* of to-day is the same as the colonist of the days of Vaudreuil. He has preserved the language, the religion, the laws, the customs, the traditions, and even the prejudices of his Gallic ancestors.” The effect of such declarations was to relegate French Canadians to a lower order of civilization.

These articles read as an ethnographic study of the French-Canadian agricultural class. Bender declared that “[t]he *habitant* is fickle, impressionable, and impulsive.” He also slid into the racial essentialism that became so common in the late nineteenth century. The practices that might seem pre-modern to outsiders were especially suited to the geography of Quebec, however. French Canadians were thrifty, sober, light-hearted, and profoundly communitarian. Bender fondly recalled the hospitality he had received in Montmagny, near Quebec City, as a boy, and brought more of himself into the text than ever before. To those who knew him, this series in the *Magazine of American*

*History* suggested nostalgia. To others, he conveyed the image of an exotic people at once close and entirely foreign.

Bender studied French Canadians’ *américanité*: the extent to which they shared the ideals, interests, and culture of the United States. He was provided with an opportunity afforded to very few expatriates. He had the social and cultural capital and the access to needed to foster tolerance. But the distinctive qualities of his socioeconomic stratum may have prevented him from carrying out such an essential task. As he began to romanticize the *Canadien* countryside and cultivate the quaintness of the migrants, Bender relied on a depiction of French Canadians that made them out to be products of an age long past. Class fractures among migrants have received little attention from scholars, but Bender’s case hints at the need for more research on the influence, or lack thereof, of the expatriated Canadian middle-class on American mindsets.

From his home on Boylston Street, Bender never ceased looking north. “Jamais je ne t’oublierai,” he had written in 1882 of a romantic scene of Canadian field work he beheld as a young man. His American sojourn showed that he did not easily forget his native land and that, in his own way, he continued to view it with affection. In 1908, he returned to Quebec. Bender set up his medical practice in the shadow of the Château Frontenac and continued to write, now reconciled with his native land. He died on January 24, 1917 after a brief illness. The news of his passing was met with widespread sorrow. In obituaries, the press acknowledged his contributions to Canadian literature. His time south of the border was noted, but articles penned in his exile were not. In the United States, on the eve of “one-hundred-percent Americanism,” the *mal aimée* Franco-American community continued to struggle with prejudice.

---

---

## REMINDER!!!

*Please check your mailing labels for expiration date to your subscription. The year/month, for example, 11/09 means your subscription has expired in Sept. 2011. Le Forum is made possible by subscriptions and your generosity! I thank you for your continued support!*

---

---



*(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 29)*

dans le Union Leader entre 1978 et 1998, une chronique appréciée. Quand j'ai commencé, la moitié de la ville de Manchester était francophone. Puis soudain, on a mis fin abruptement à cette chronique. S'il y a eu du mécontentement, personne n'a protesté ». Les reproches de Julien à l'égard de cette communauté m'en rappellent d'autres, entendus au sujet des Canadiens français du Québec, et cette injonction : se tenir coi, satisfait, ne pas se plaindre...

Et les écrits français de Kerouac, alors? Plus trop son truc, à Julien : « Ce n'est plus mon monde. L'univers franco-américain est rétréci, rapetissé, introspectif... c'est trop petit pour y vivre ». Et je pense : tout ce travail, cette vie... car non seulement Julien a-t-il été un éducateur et un animateur de la renaissance identitaire des années 1970 et 1980, il a aussi écrit, il a été conteur, compilateur et historien spécialiste de la tradition orale. Il a animé une émission en français sur la chaîne 8, à Manchester. « Oui, ça devait être fait. C'était l'époque et j'ai eu un vrai plaisir, mais il y a plus grave à perdre que l'identité franco-américaine : la planète, l'environnement, la démocratie américaine... Entre perdre la messe en français ('c'est-y beau, une messe en français!' qu'il me dit avec dérision) et avoir Trump à la tête du gouvernement, le choix n'est pas difficile ». Aujourd'hui, Julien et Jane travaillent auprès des détenus et des malades en tant qu'aumôniers (Julien a fait une thèse en théologie), ils sont plusieurs fois grands-parents (ils ont 4 filles et une dizaine de petits-enfants) et demeurent heureux que la famille ait gardé un contact minimal avec la langue française, pour ce qu'elle offre comme ouverture sur le monde et comme opportunité pour les études supérieures.

Des 4 filles, Nicole a davantage repris à son compte ce legs : elle a fait une mineure en français et présidé le French club de l'Université du New Hampshire. Anique a été plus rebelle. Aujourd'hui mariée et diplômée du MIT, elle est directrice des études au Materials Research Science and Engineering Center de l'Université Brandeis, à Waltham. Sa mère, Jane, est d'ascendance irlandaise, son mari est juif : on devine que la culture franco-américaine occupe une place limitée dans son existence. Mais il y a toujours « pépère », comme l'appelle Isaac (le fils d'Anique et de Josh) qui assure une filiation. Par ailleurs, les deux

filis d'Anique portent des noms français et juif (Isaac Laurent et Lucien Boaz). Fait rarissime, Josh a adopté le nom Olivier, à son mariage, et Anique Olivier-Mason, à la mi-trentaine, revendique sa part d'identité « french-canadian », même si elle a oublié la langue française de son père et de sa grand-mère.

**Jour 5, 18 juin 2016.  
Manchester, Roger Lacerte  
et Josée Vachon**



« Relisez Docteur Sax et au lieu de Lowell écrivez Sherbrooke et tout le monde canadien-français d'avant la deuxième Grande Guerre passera devant vos yeux [...] »

- Jack Kerouac (*essai-poulet*), Victor Lévi-Beaulieu

Je rencontre Roger Lacerte à sa Librairie Populaire, à Manchester, dans la matinée. Roger est né à Lowell (j'y vais le lendemain) au milieu des années 1930. Canuck de quatrième génération et fils de tisserand, il a boulingué pour la peine : les études, le service militaire, l'université au Québec (un mémoire à l'Université Laval sur le journaliste et écrivain de Lowell, Antoine Clément), le Lac Saint-Jean, l'enseignement à l'Université Sainte-Anne... Il tient sa librairie aujourd'hui, et il anime une émission de radio, « Chez-Nous », à WFEA. Il me parle de la ville où il a un jour aperçu Kerouac, au Bon Marché, qui signait des autographes (« surtout des femmes! »). C'était l'année où paraissait *The Town and the City*. Depuis, les choses ont changé : « Dans les années 1960, Washington a lancé un vaste programme de rénovation des centres-villes, 'urban renewal', qui a ruiné la paroisse Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Rasée, pour des 'parking lots', malgré les promesses... une belle blague! » Les « Gentrifiers » ici

aussi.

« Lowell a toujours été une ville de minorités. Aujourd'hui, ce sont les Latinos, les Vietnamiens, les Cambodgiens, les Noirs. À l'époque, il n'y avait pas de Noirs... » Le Lowell de Roger et de Jack était canadien-français, grec et irlandais. Pour les quartiers francos, « c'était la même histoire, la même nation qu'au Québec. De Lowell à Drummondville, c'était la même vie, la même mentalité, la même réalité ». C'était avant la Révolution tranquille... « Vous avez manqué le bateau en rejetant la foi, » qu'il me dit, Roger... que nous avons troquée la sublime religion (il faut lire *Visions of Gerard!*) contre une spiritualité « cheap », synchrétique.

La religion, pour la société franco-américaine, c'était une façon de survivre, mais c'était aussi un recours moral face à la discrimination. « Les Francos du Maine ont été plus mal traités que d'autres. Ils n'avaient pas leur place dans les Universités. Maintenant, il y a [le gouverneur du Maine] Paul LePage ». Roger s'intéresse à la politique, il appuie le gouverneur. Il a même eu sa carte du Parti québécois par le passé... Et l'avenir? Celui des Franco-Américains? « Vous connaissez ça, vous, l'avenir? Jésus a dit 'vous ne savez ni l'heure ni le jour' ». Tout de même! « Tant qu'il y aura un pépère ou une memère, même un Anglo peut être Franco-Américain ». Après...

J'ai fait quelques achats à la Librairie Populaire. Je vais lire un peu en attendant Josée Vachon au parc Lafayette, face à l'église Sainte-Marie dans l'ancien quartier franco de Manchester. Il faut d'abord traverser le pont pour rejoindre la rive droite du Merrimack qui traverse la ville et le New Hampshire depuis les White Mountains jusqu'au Massachussets.

J'ai racheté les écrits français (j'avais donné ma copie à Julien Olivier, au cas), mais je vais plutôt parcourir l'ouvrage de Camille Lessard-Bissonnette (l'édition que j'ai trouvée chez M. Lacerte est celle de 1980, du National Materials Development Center for French de Bedford (là où M. Olivier a travaillé) – le centre a publié une collection entière des classiques de la littérature franco-américaine, à l'époque). Je m'y plonge, mais j'aperçois bien vite Josée Vachon qui me fait signe, juste devant le presbytère.

Chanteuse née au Québec (déménagée à Brownville Junction à l'âge de 2 ans), Josée est devenue avec le temps et après un (*suite page 32*)

(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 31)

passage déterminant à l'Université du Maine où elle a connu Yvon Labbé (fondateur du Centre Franco-Américain en 1972 – c'était l'époque d'Édith Butler et Angèle Arsenault), l'enfant chéri de la communauté franco-américaine. Ses ballades, en français et un brin nostalgiques, l'expliquent assurément. Mais il y a aussi ce charme et une humeur joviale qui tranche avec ce que j'ai connu depuis le jour 1. « Les événements qui ont marqué ma vie [quant au rapport à la langue française] ont toujours été valorisants », dit-elle, évoquant du même souffle le contraste avec l'expérience négative des Francos en général (des histoires de discrimination et d'humiliations répétées), particulièrement dans le Nord du Maine, dans leur rapport avec les Anglo. Elle a constaté leur honte de ne pas parler un bon français. Ce n'était pas son cas, ni pour la honte, ni pour le français.

Josée revient du Connecticut, où elle a chanté la veille. Elle doit se produire à l'église Sainte-Marie en fin de journée. Après plus de 30 ans dans le métier, mariée à un recteur de l'Université du Maine, elle choisit ses concerts. Et c'est avec bonheur qu'elle constate une relève. « J'étais avec Daniel Boucher (pas le Québécois, l'autre) et Patrick Ross hier. Ils disaient avoir grandi en écoutant mes chansons ». La musique franco-américaine se porterait donc bien. « Le folk, ça ne meurt pas. Il y aura toujours un public pour le 'trad' canadien-français ». Mais pour la chanson, Josée hésite : « Le monde aime entendre les expressions canadiennes-françaises qui ne se traduisent pas. Ça crée un lien, une fierté... Un jour, Antonine Maillet est venue ici et nous a dit : 'Qui perd sa langue perd sa culture', et ça m'avait inspiré une composition que j'ai intitulée 'On est toujours là' et dans laquelle j'écris : 'on se parle avec nos chants et nos images, car la joie de vivre ça ne s'oublie pas'... je ne suis pas certaine malgré tout. »

Elle pense. « Ça change ici. Les gens ont vieilli, mes 'role models'... des fois, la salle ne reconnaît plus certaines chansons traditionnelles. Par exemple, je ne vais plus à Biddeford (à la Kermesse franco-américaine qui a longtemps reposée sur les épaules de Normand Beaupré) où tout se passe en anglais. C'est un festival country maintenant. » Ces changements ne la troublent pas outre mesure. Il y aurait un défi, de nos jours, à maintenir ce qui peut être maintenu, mais il n'est plus question de survie : « c'est (le scénariste) Grégoire Chabot (un de ses 'role

models' de l'Université du Maine) qui le dit le mieux. Il ne faut pas voir ça fixe, l'identité franco-américaine. Les jeunes expriment leur créativité culturelle à leur façon, ils cherchent dans ce qu'il y a, dans ce qu'on n'a pas fait. C'est nous-autre mais pas comme nous autres. » J'oserais croire que René Lévesque, qui aimait les chanteuses et à qui elle a remis son premier long-jeu en mains propres, pensait la même chose de Josée : nous-autres mais pas comme nous autres. Car Josée Vachon n'est plus Québécoise. Et les Québécois viennent au Maine surtout pour ses plages, celle de Old Orchard où on peut croiser Roger Brunelle qui vient prendre un bain de français de temps à autre.

### Jour 6, 19 juin 2016. Lowell et Nashua, Roger Brunelle et Steve Edington

« La tête, on la réservait pour la fro-mager. On gardait des rôtis, des côtelettes, de la viande à tourtière, que l'on mettait à la gelée. L'autre partie, bien désossée, était soigneusement disposée dans de grands saloirs en bois et recouverte de saumure. Cela constituait le lard salé avec lequel on faisait les fèves au lard, les soupes aux pois, les bouillis de légumes. »

- Canuck, Camille Lessard-Bissonnette



Journée chargée aujourd'hui. Je me lève tôt, je dois rejoindre Roger Brunelle au Kerouac Commemorative à 9hres, sur Bridge St. J'arrive à l'avance. Je fais le tour du site qui fait dos au Eastern Canal, sur lequel la Massachusetts Mill, l'ancienne filature transformée en un immense complexe résidentiel, jette son ombre matinale.

Le comité organisateur du Commémoratif, dont faisait partie Roger, avait confié au sculpteur Ben Woitena la con-

ception d'un monument à la mémoire du célèbre écrivain de Lowell au milieu des années 1980. Inauguré en 1988, il consiste en un arrangement de stèles de granites sur lesquelles on peut lire des citations tirées de l'œuvre de Kerouac, et disposées de façon à imiter, d'un point de vue aérien, les formes combinées de la croix chrétienne et d'un mandala (Kerouac s'est beaucoup intéressé à la spiritualité bouddhiste, ce qu'on constate à la lecture de ses romans). Au centre, on trouve un disque surélevé dont le rayon fait un demi-mètre. Les quatre stèles qui cernent ce disque ont, sur la face intérieure, un revêtement d'acier qui produit l'écho de tout bruit émanant du cœur du monument, dont le sculpteur affirme qu'il symbolise le centre d'équilibre cosmique autour duquel tourne le chaos du monde. L'éclairage est idéal pour prendre quelques photos.

Après un moment, je vais m'asseoir pour relire certains passages de Dr. Sax – j'ai demandé à Roger de me faire voir surtout les lieux de ce roman, la maison sur Beaulieu St., The Grotto (reproduction de la grotte de Massabielle, « folle, vaste, religieuse, les Douze Stations de la Croix, douze petits autels installés, on se place devant, on s'agenouille, tout sauf l'odeur d'encens [...], culmine une gigantesque pyramide-escalier au-dessus de laquelle la Croix s'érige phalliquement vers le ciel avec son pauvre fardeau le Fils de l'Homme transpercé au travers dans son Agonie et sa Peur [...] »), l'école paroissiale Saint-Louis-de-France, l'église Saint-Jean-Baptiste, l'imprimerie du père... – et j'aperçois un homme au t-shirt noir sur lequel figure les lettres « M-O-N-T-R-E-A-L » et un drapeau du Québec qui cache partiellement un petit bouddha en pendentif qui glisse à gauche et à droite, un octogonaire à l'air relativement jeune, un tatou sur l'avant-bras. C'est mon homme.

M. Lacerte m'avait dit de ne pas évoquer la question de l'annexion québécoise de Kerouac à son ami (ils se voient régulièrement). Je ne peux résister malgré l'avertissement, mais je le fais sourire en coin. Pas décontenancé, Roger m'entraîne vers une des stèles où le comité a inscrit sa réponse dans le granite : « Name: Jack Kerouac, Nationality: Franco-American, Place of Birth: Lowell, Massachusetts, Date of Birth: March 12th, 1922. » Puis il me dit : « Kerouac a une double-identité. Une identité linguistique française – on jouait Molière, ici! – mais aussi une identité américaine/anglophone qu'on retrouve dans son écriture, la sonorité jazz et l'influence de (suite page 33)

(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 32)

Joyce, entre autres. » Mais son style libre, il n'est pas qu'américain : Kerouac disait de Céline qu'il était son maître. « C'est vrai. En français, il fallait se libérer du latin, de sa structure étouffante. » Roger s'y connaît, il a enseigné les langues, français et latin, pendant 48 ans. À ceux qui dénoncent la difficulté de la structure, de l'orthographe (en français surtout) et de la syntaxe de Kerouac, il répond, laconique : « Jack a utilisé l'écriture pour reproduire la parole. C'est un usage possible. »

Ça fait 30 ans que Roger propose des visites du Lowell de Kerouac. Avec Louis Cyr, l'auteur de *On the Road* est sans doute le plus connu des Francos du coin. Après une visite à la bibliothèque où nous rejoignons Shawn Thibodeau qui nous ouvre les portes (c'est dimanche – c'est là que le jeune Jean-Louis Kerouac allait se réfugier, les jours d'école buissonnière) et un tour en voiture au centre-ville au cœur des anciens quartiers canadien-français, nous nous arrêtons à la grotte. Chemin de croix, ascension (à genoux, idéalement) de la pyramide jusqu'au sommet, contemplation du Christ, descente par l'autre bord, bénédiction par une réplique du petit Jésus de Prague, retour devant. The Grotto, c'est un lieu paisible. Pour les « Ti Gas » de Lowell, c'était un peu la forêt d'Hansel et Gretel : « Nos parents nous disaient : 'si vous êtes pas sages, on vous envoie à la grotte!' » À côté, il y avait l'école et l'orphelinat : un milieu de vie auquel on voulait échapper.

Nous visitons la paroisse Saint-Louis-de-France dans Centralville (du français « centreville », on imagine), de l'autre côté du Merrimack. Les Kerouac ont vécu dans cette enclave canadienne-française. Roger y habite, comme son père et son grand-père avant lui. L'aspect général du quartier n'a pas dû trop changer : des petites maisons étroites de deux étages aux façades en lattes de bois. Sur les terrains avant, des niches mariales et des drapeaux américains... pas de français, par contre. L'assimilation est apparue inévitable (« Laissez-vous pas pogner! C'est le temps de faire l'indépendance! », dit mon guide). Roger se rappelle l'école Saint-Louis-de-France qu'il a fréquentée, le serment au Carillon-Sacré-Cœur le matin, le pledge of allegiance au drapeau étoilé en après-midi, et dans l'immense presbytère qui donnait sur la cour d'école, le curé et les

vicaires tendant l'oreille à l'affût du moindre mot d'anglais dont on devait réprimer l'usage. Une politique désespérante, si elle n'était pas désespérée.

Nous nous arrêtons chez Vic's pour diner : tourtière (« pork pie »), fèves au lard (blanches, à Lowell : typiquement, 2 livres de fèves, 1 livre de lard salé en cube sur le dessus, ketchup, recouvrir d'eau et cuire pendant 7 heures à 350 dans un creuset. Ra-



Kerouac, maison

joutez de l'eau après 5 heures), café noir et toasts. Nous discutons. Roger est un poète, il traduit ses états d'âme de façon convaincante. Il me parle de la difficulté de vieillir, du fait qu'il se sent jeune. Sa femme, d'origine lituanienne, qui a récemment frôlé la mort ne sort plus trop de la maison...

Nous avons fait un détour chez lui, plus tôt. C'était pour des affiches de Lowell Celebrates Kerouac! qu'il me donne. D'autres suivront par la poste avec cette mention



: « de Roger, l'Amerloque ». Il me ramène au Commémoratif où j'ai stationné ma voiture. Je dois me rendre à Nashua où j'ai rendez-vous avec Steve Edington.

« L'univers de Kerouac est inclusif. *On the Road* donne accès au reste de l'œuvre et à son langage poétique. C'est le monde de l'art, de la poésie », me disait Roger. Certainement, Steve Edington pourrait en témoigner. Voilà un homme qui ne compte

aucun ancêtre canadien-français, qui n'en parle pas la langue, mais qui est néanmoins un expert de l'histoire familiale (et très québécoise) des Kerouac. Il a écrit un livre sur le clan (Kerouac's Nashua Connection), qui avait pour patrie cette ville du New Hampshire. C'est le hasard, ou l'emploi d'Émile (père de Jack), qui a entraîné la famille immédiate en aval de « s'grosse rivière là », comme disait Gabrielle-Ange.

Steve Edington est pasteur, diplômé en théologie. Un pasteur « liberal » qui se passionne pour le mouvement beat et la musique des Grateful Dead. Pas le genre auquel on s'attendrait, donc. Étudiant, il s'est vivement intéressé au domaine de la religion comparée, et particulièrement aux similitudes entre catholicisme et bouddhisme. On pourrait dire qu'il était prédisposé (prédestiné?) à découvrir l'univers kerouackien, ce qu'il a fait, dans l'ordre le plus évident pour un Américain de sa génération : d'abord *On the Road* et *Dharma Bums*, puis ultimement les romans du cycle lowellien. Le hasard s'en mêlant, il a déménagé à Nashua en 1988.

Steve est devenu un ami et un collaborateur de Roger. S'en inspirant, il a élaboré une visite du Nashua de Kerouac, sorte de complément aux tournées de Lowell. Pour toute personne qui s'intéresse à l'univers canadien-français des Kerouac, c'est un must. En parcourant les bottins dans les archives de la ville et les registres paroissiaux, Steve a pu reconstituer la géographie existentielle du clan, du grand-père Jean-Baptiste, de l'oncle « Mike » (Joseph), de la parenté dans French Hill (où l'on aménageait, une fois prospère et établi, après avoir habité French Village – j'ignore pourquoi, cette migration éventuelle vers la rive gauche du Merrimack semble être une constante de l'existence des Canucks du New Hampshire et du Massachusetts dans la première moitié du XXe siècle), d'Émile et Gabrielle-Ange, etc.

Ce qui l'intéresse particulièrement chez Jack, et c'est quelque chose qui s'applique à la famille Kerouac et aux Franco-Américains en général, je crois, c'est la tension entre l'attachement à un lieu (au sens large) et le besoin de s'en défaire. Tension dans le rapport de l'écrivain au catholicisme, tension dans son rapport à Lowell... une tension qui va de pair avec sa double-identité.

Cette identité, Steve a fini par la connaître intimement. De fil en aiguille, en retrouvant les traces de sa minorité silencieuse, il a acquis une perspective plus large sur l'histoire de Nashua et a diffusé

(suite page 34)

(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 33)

ses recherches sur Kerouac et la « question franco-américaine » au sein de la société historique. La communauté des descendants, dont on présume logiquement son caractère exclusif, en est venu à adopter ce pasteur excentrique. Ils l'ont invité à prendre la parole lors de l'inauguration de « La Dame de notre Renaissance française » qui commémore l'Immigrant franco-américain. Steve Edington a compris tout le sens de ce geste rare. « Ils m'ont inclus... je me suis senti honoré! », qu'il me raconte, un peu ébahi.

### Jour 7, 20 juin 2016. Leslie Choquette et Éloïse Brière

« L'identité bretonne était quelque chose de simple et d'évident, remarquaient Mickaël et Goulven, tandis qu'ils pressaient Pierre de leur fournir des éléments distinctifs de sa culture d'origine. Celui-ci devait rapidement constater qu'à l'exception d'un camembert appelé Vieux Mayennais – mais le camembert était une invention normande et non mayennaise – il était difficile d'exhiber une quelconque spécialité régionale. »

- *L'aménagement du territoire,*  
Aurélien Bellanger

Je garde pour le dernier jour mes rencontres avec les professeuses Choquette et Brière. C'est peut-être avec elles que je me sens le plus chez moi. À cause de l'univers académique et de son impact sur ceux qui y font carrière : surtout, un ethos mesuré qui est la conséquence heureuse du travail intellectuel. C'est un monde qui m'est devenu familier.

Je suis impatient depuis le début de me rendre à Assumption College, l'ancien collège l'Assomption à Worcester, haut lieu de formation et de culture pour l'élite franco-américaine du début du XXe siècle. À l'époque, les pères augustins de l'Assomption, un ordre dissout par la justice française en 1900, antidreyfusard et conservateur, cherchaient un nouvel essor parmi une population catholique et française. Ils ont fondé ce collège qui est vite devenu un centre névralgique pour la Franco-Américanie.

En 1953, le Collège l'Assomption a été complètement détruit par la tornade historique qui s'est abattue sur la ville, avant d'être reconstruit sur un nouveau site inauguré en 1956. À cet époque, l'enseignement

en français était déjà en déclin. Il devait cesser définitivement à la fin des années 1960. Néanmoins, le collège demeurait le détenteur d'importantes archives, qui en faisait un gardien de la mémoire franco-américaine. En 1979, le père Duffault et la professeure Claire Quintal fondèrent l'Institut français pour assurer la pérennité de cet héritage. Je rencontre ce jour-là Leslie Choquette, qui a succédé à Claire Quintal comme directrice de l'Institut en 1999.

Je communique avec mes collaborateurs depuis le début de mon projet. Je leur ai soumis à l'avance une longue liste de questions et leur laisse entrevoir un peu mon propre cheminement, ma compréhension des choses. Avant que je n'arrive à son bureau, Mme Choquette s'est fait une idée de mes préjugés et de ce qu'il importait que je sache. Au milieu de l'entrevue, tandis que je feuillette mes notes avec perplexité, je sens que son regard me quitte, comme pour fixer un objet qui se trouverait au-dessus de ma tête, et elle me lance : « Je savais que je serais la douche froide! »



Leslie Choquette est professeure d'histoire, elle s'est spécialisée dans l'histoire de France et des Français en Amérique. Son livre (prix Alf Heggoy, 1998) sur l'immigration au Canada retrace le parcours et le contexte de chaque immigrant venu s'établir dans la colonie (et en Acadie) durant le Régime français. Cet intérêt m'interpelle, pour la raison que je le trouve typiquement franco-américain : Dans les anciennes enclaves canadiennes-françaises, les sociétés généalogiques ont un rayonnement unique. Je pense aussi à Kerouac, dans Satori in Paris, à la recherche de ses lointaines origines bretonnes. Ça me semble être une réaction normale devant la dislocation de l'identité culturelle : on se rattache au récit familial pour se raconter, pour se connaître, et puisque la référence collective disparaît,

les individus qui peuplent ce récit prennent du relief.

Pourtant, Leslie n'est pas Franco-Américaine. Ou elle l'est, au sens minimal qu'admet Roger Lacerte : à cause de « pépère » Choquette. Pour le reste, elle a des racines canadiennes-anglaises, polonaises... américaines, quoi! Née à Pawtucket, au Rhode Island, elle a appris le français en fréquentant l'école privée, une école pour jeune fille de la haute société à Providence. Entre 10 et 12 ans, Leslie a connu un professeur qu'elle adorait, un descendant d'Huguenot. Poussé par son milieu (plutôt WASP) et admirative de ce professeur, elle a progressivement développé une passion pour l'histoire et la littérature française. Son lien avec le Québec ou le Canada-Français? Elle lisait des brochures de la Côte-de-Beaupré durant ses études en France et elle s'est dit : « Tiens! Ce sont ces gens qui m'intéressent. » On est loin de la nostalgie ou du respect filial...

Elle me voit un peu troublé et en profite pour enfoncer le coin : « Il n'y a plus de Franco-Américain aujourd'hui. » L'immigration canadienne-française aux États-Unis, pour Leslie, doit être conçue sous l'angle de la normalité, en parallèle avec les autres classes d'immigrants. Elle se dit adepte de Gérard Bouchard. « Les Franco-Américains formaient un groupe comme les autres. Le succès, pour tous, c'était l'assimilation. L'assimilation à la culture et à l'économie américaine, et d'abord l'apprentissage et la maîtrise de l'anglais. L'idéologie de la survivance ne pouvait pas fonctionner dans ce contexte. S'il y a une particularité au cas franco-américain, c'est cette idéologie. L'élite s'est montrée coupable d'avoir retardé l'assimilation. » Pépère Choquette lui-même, né en 1905, a fini par perdre l'usage du français. « Vous avez fait la connaissance de tout ce qu'il reste de batailleurs de la survivance. Une poignée de gens sur 7 millions de personnes. Ils ne sont pas représentatifs », me dit-elle.

Quand même, cet exode, tous ces gens. Il doit bien en rester quelque chose. Les descendants des Canadiens-français ne représentent-ils pas un quart de la population totale de la Nouvelle-Angleterre, le plus grand groupe ethnique du Maine? Certainement, il doit y avoir quelque chose comme une culture franco-américaine. « Quel est le groupe ethnique le plus important aux États-Unis? », me demande la professeure Choquette. J'ai quelques réponses vraies-  
(suite page 35)

(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 34)

blables : Les Anglais (non!), les Afro-Américains (non!), les Latinos (non plus!). « Ce sont les Allemands. Et pourtant, il n'y a pas de culture germano-américaine. Pour tous les groupes, le creuset (le melting pot!) opère au plus tard sur la troisième génération. Nous n'avons pas les mêmes mythes fondateurs que vous. »

Puis elle ajoute (toujours douce et avenante – elle dévoile son point de vue avec une précision chirurgicale) : « Pour moi, la Franco-Américanie, ça n'existe pas. On peut inclure les écrits de Kerouac dans la littérature de la diaspora québécoise. Cela dit, son histoire est profondément américaine, c'est une histoire d'immigrant [...]. Sur la question de ses héritiers, il y aurait Normand Beaupré et Grégoire Chabot, mais il n'y a pas de public pour leurs œuvres. » Pour Leslie, l'impression québécoise d'une société franco-américaine historique est une illusion : jusque dans les années 1930, il y avait une immigration constante qui faisait faussement croire à la permanence du français et de la population sur la longue durée. C'est comme pour le Merrimack : apparemment stable, il coule depuis le nord d'une eau toujours nouvelle.

Douche froide, qu'elle disait. Mais c'est surtout la leçon d'histoire du Collège lui-même : le clergé de l'époque a compris qu'il cesserait d'exister si on s'acharnait à le garder tel quel, avec son cours classique en français. On a donc choisi de le garder catholique et de jeter (archiver) le reste. Pour survivre, indeed.

Je dis au revoir à la professeure Choquette et je quitte ce campus paisible pour me rendre à Delmar, en banlieue d'Albany, où je dois rencontrer la professeure Éloïse Brière, récemment retraitée de la State University of New York. Elle revient du Sénégal, pour une conférence. C'est un pays qu'elle connaît pour y avoir donné le premier cours de littérature africaine, juste après l'indépendance. Elle habitait non loin de chez Senghor.

Mme Brière est née au Massachussets (elle est Franco-Américaine de troisième génération), à Easthampton où elle a fréquenté l'école paroissiale sous la garde des sœurs de Sainte-Anne. Elle se souvient des sœurs. Celles qui venaient du Québec étaient plus sévères que les franco-américaines. Sans doute, leur engagement envers la survivance était plus absolu. Peut-être

que cette perception explique l'attraction d'Éloïse pour les situations bilingues, ailleurs dans le monde, contrairement à d'autres Francos qu'elle a connus à l'Université du Massachussets, les Armand Chartier, Grégoire Chabot, Don Dugas, qui se sont plutôt concentrés sur le raffermissement de leur identité.

Avec la jeunesse rurale américaine, comme elle parlait français, Éloïse a abouti en Suisse, puis à Paris où elle a travaillé pour la FAO. C'était après le baccalauréat à la fin des années 1960. Elle a ensuite fait des études de maîtrises en littérature française à Middlebury College, au Vermont, et à l'Université de Dakar, puis en littérature anglaise à l'Université de Bordeaux. En 1982, elle termine son doctorat en littérature française à l'Université de Toronto où elle assiste un jour à une présentation de Claire Quintal sur la vie franco-américaine. Cette présentation agira comme un appel. L'année suivante, elle obtient un poste à la SUNY de Albany (elle y travaillera 30 ans) et renoue avec cette vie, créant des liens avec la communauté franco-américaine de New York, celle d'un ancien centre de l'industrie textile au confluent de la rivière Mohawk et du fleuve Hudson, non loin : Cohoes.



Éloïse Brière

Je tiens donc une spécialiste des littératures francophones, et je tâche d'orienter la discussion sur Kerouac. « La littérature franco-américaine était généralement liée au journalisme. C'était le fait de Québécois, formés dans les collèges classiques, qui échouaient à travailler dans le domaine au Québec et qui venaient ici. Leur carrière était instable, ils allaient de ville en ville et avaient de la difficulté à se fixer. De tous les journaux, Le Travailleur de Worcester faisait la plus grande place pour l'expression de la pensée franco-américaine. » Cela me rappelle Réal Gilbert, ancien président de l'Assemblée des Franco-Américain, que j'ai rencontré à Manchester. Il y avait

travaillé durant les années 1940, comme « porteur de journaux », réviseur des épreuves et recruteur auprès de Wilfrid Beaulieu, le fondateur... il y a même connu Séraphin Marion! Kerouac n'était pas de cette filière.

C'est dans le cadre d'un autre séminaire avec Claire Quintal, de l'Institut français, qu'Éloïse a découvert le Kerouac franco-américain, celui de Visions of Gerard. Celui de On the Road, qu'elle a connu à Bordeaux, elle n'avait aucune idée qu'il était Franco. Que pense-t-elle de lui? « C'est un génie! [...] il a dit : 'quand j'écris, c'est en français', et c'est dans un français phonétique qui a sa place dans le souvenir de Kerouac. Il faut le lire avec l'oreille. » Par-delà cette qualité, il y a aussi le fait que ce français et ce souvenir franco-américain, ilot dans une mer d'oubli, est important pour tout Franco-Américain à la recherche de ses racines. C'est le cas pour Éloïse : « Je me suis construit mon identité franco-américaine par petits coups. » Elle le doit à la littérature, à Mme Quintal... et elle le rend à travers son intérêt pour les littératures oubliées, ici, au Sénégal, au Cameroun...

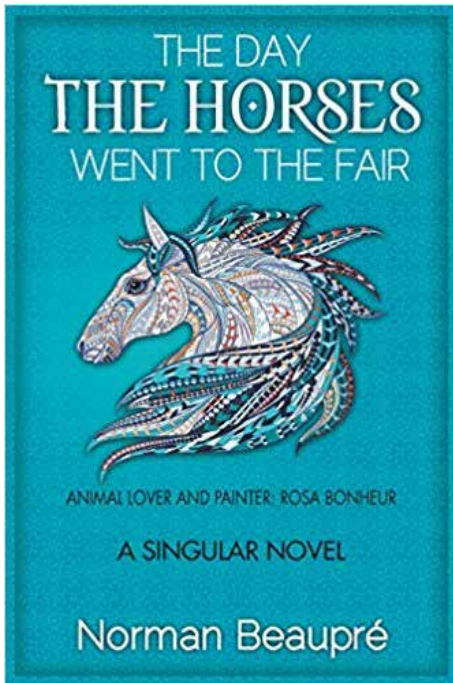
Cela invite la question qui me taraude depuis le début, une question qui me permet de donner à Éloïse le fin mot de mon voyage : Est-il possible d'avoir, de vivre, de se construire, aujourd'hui, une identité franco-américaine? « L'identité franco, elle est là si on la veut. Ça demande des efforts particuliers puisque la question des minorités ethniques est largement monopolisée par les enjeux touchant les Noirs et les Latinos. Et puis, il y a différents niveaux d'identification à la Franco-Américanie. Le problème est que 'mémère', aujourd'hui, est une baby-boomer. Elle n'a pas grandi dans un petit Canada. En plus, à l'époque, les relations étaient plus intenses. Les Franco-Américains étaient tissés ensemble par besoin, à travers les associations et les mutuelles. L'Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste (de Woonsocket) distribuait des cadeaux à Noël et des bourses d'étude. L'univers franco-américain était étendu, on ne pouvait pas s'en défaire : ça collait à la bouche, ça collait à la main. Aujourd'hui, tout ça a disparu. Le monde franco-américain, c'est une géographie d'ilots. Mais il y a des associations très vivantes, comme pour les gens de Brush up your French, ici (Cohoes). Il y a aussi des jeunes, mais pas beaucoup. »

Avec Internet, dans un monde où la géographie est moins contraignante, il me semble en effet possible de retracer l'univers (suite page 36)



BOOKS/

LIVRES...



## The Day the Horses Went to the Fair

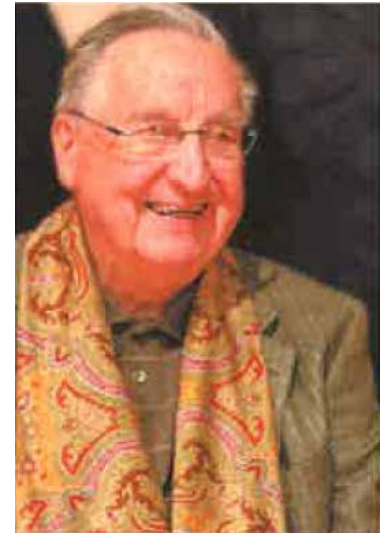
by *Norman Beaupré*

An author always looks for an angle when writing fiction which Beaupré has done with this novel. He came up with revenants or ghosts for all of his characters as a way of weaving the story together without making it a documentary of Rosa Bonheur's life and paintings of animals. The author has conjured the likes of a Mozart, a Cervantes and Sir Walter Scott while including other creative artists that influenced Rosa Bonheur. He has also incorporated the descriptions of the Bonheur paintings by herself, the artist, and by her close friend, Anna Klumpke. He has created what he calls a singular novel in that it is not all fiction but an amalgamation of biography, art history and some fiction to make it a creatively cohesive work. The author even intrudes into his work to give it a personal and lively touch.

ISBN 978-1640450813 Paperback

Format: 6 x 9 in - 157 pages

Language: English



### About the Author

Norman Beaupré, Ph.D. was born in Maine and pursued his graduate education at Brown University. He taught over thirty years at the University of New England in Maine where he is presently Professor Emeritus. He has traveled extensively and spent two sabbaticals in Paris. He has written and published twenty-one books in English and in French. In 2008, he was awarded the medal of -Ordre des Arts et Lettres- by the French Ministry of Culture and Communications in Paris for his outstanding contribution to French culture. (Author)

*(Les batailleurs – Enquête d'un Québécois sur la diaspora franco-américaine suite de page 35)*

et l'héritage franco-américain, d'y participer et de s'en prévaloir pour se construire. Cela ne me concerne pas en premier lieu, mais le rapport que mes collaborateurs entretiennent avec l'identité m'a fait comprendre deux choses, sur le plan personnel. D'une part, je sens maintenant que notre identité culturelle vécue (québécoise) est plus précieuse que je ne le croyais. D'autre part, je crois aussi que l'assimilation n'est pas un processus aussi douloureux qu'on peut l'entendre prophétiser. Cela en tête, je me trouve plus à même de faire le choix de persister dans mon être, refusant la nostalgie canadienne

(quel retour possible au Canada français, aux soirées canadiennes, à la lecture du chapelet à la radio, à l'Église partout?), sans renier un héritage qu'il importe toujours de sonder pour mieux se connaître. Sans renier, mais cela va de soi, des romanciers de génie qui nous sont plus proches que d'autres.

### Bibliographie

CHOQUETTE, Leslie, De Français à paysans, Modernité et tradition dans le peuplement du Canada français, Septentrion, Québec, 2001, 323 p.

CÔTÉ-ROBBINS, Rhea, Wednesday's Child, Rheta Press, Brewer, 2008, 96 p.

HENDRICKSON, Dyke, Quiet presence:

Dramatic, first-person accounts. The true stories of Franco-Americans in New England, Guy Garnett, Portland, 1980, 266 p.

KEROUAC, Jack, Dr. Sax, Grove Press, New York, 1959, 245 p.

KEROUAC, Jack, Satori in Paris, Grove Press, New York, 1966, 109 p.

KEROUAC, Jack, Vanity of Dulooz, Granada, Londres, 1982, 301 p.

KEROUAC, Jack, Visions of Gerard, Penguin, New York et Londres, 1991, 130 p.

KEROUAC, Jack (rassemblé par Jean-Christophe Cloutier), La vie est d'hommage, Boréal, Montréal, 2016, 352 p.

LESSARD-BISSONNETTE, Camille, Canuck, National Materials Development Center for French, Manchester (NH), 1980, 119 p.

LÉVI-BEAULIEU, Victor, Jack Kerouac (essai-poulet), Édition du jour, Montréal, 1972, 235 p.

# Six Historically French-Canadian Parishes Will Merge in the Archdiocese of Hartford

*By Albert J. Marceau  
Newington, Conn.*

There are six historically French-Canadian parishes within the Archdiocese of Hartford that will merge with other parishes in June 2017. Two that will merge with other parishes and their churches will close are: St. Laurent Parish Church in Meriden (1880) and Ste-Anne/Immaculate Conception Parish Church in Hartford (1889/2000). The other four parishes will merge with other local parishes, and their churches will remain open are: St. Anne in Waterbury (1886), St. Louis in West Haven (1889), St. Ann in Bristol (1908), and St. Peter in New Britain (1888/1913).

The Parish of Ste-Anne in Hartford was established in 1889, and it merged with Immaculate Conception Parish in Hartford in September 2000, and the Church of Ste-Anne remained open, until June 29, 2017, when the parishioners of Ste-Anne/Immaculate Conception will be moved to St. Augustine Parish in Hartford. In Meriden, the Parishes and the Churches of St. Laurent and St. Mary will close in June 2017, and the parishioners will be moved to three other parishes in Meriden – Our Lady of Mt. Carmel, Holy Angels and St. Joseph. The

Shrine of St. Anne in Waterbury, which was a parish from 1886 to 2005, will merge with Our Lady of Lourdes in Waterbury, and the two former parish churches will absorb the parishioners from four other parish churches that will close in Waterbury – St. Margaret, St. Lucy, Sacred Heart and St. Stanislaus Kostka – and the six former parishes will form the new Parish of All Saints/Todos los Santos. In West Haven, the Parishes and the Churches of St. Louis and St. Lawrence will merge and their churches will remain open, while the both the Parish and the Church of St. Paul will close, and the three parishes will form the new Parish of St. John XXIII. The Parish of St. Louis was originally in New Haven, from 1889 to 1960, when the parish church burnt down, but the parish relocated to West Haven where it built its parish church in 1964. In Bristol, St. Ann and St. Anthony will merge into the new Parish of St. Frances de Sales, and the two churches will remain open. In New Britain, the Parishes of St. Peter, St. Joseph, and St. Andrew/St. John will merge into the new Parish of Divine Providence, but either the Church of St. Peter or of St. Joseph will be

closed sometime in the future. The Parish of St. Peter began in 1888 as a German Catholic parish, but in 1913, Bishop John J. Nilan of the Diocese of Hartford recognized it as a German and French parish, due to the large number of French-Canadians in the parish.

In the last couple of years, only two parishes still had part of the Mass in French on Sunday mornings – Ste-Anne/Immaculate Conception in Hartford, and St. Ann in Bristol. Since both parishes will merge with other parishes, the decision to retain the partially French Mass will be the decision of the new pastors.

Three members of the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut (FCGSC) have written and published indexes of marriages for three of the six French-Canadian parishes. Robert R. Bissaillon, (member No. 13 FCGSC, died on Oct. 25, 1994), published in 1985 the 382-page genealogy: *Mariages de la Paroisse St. Anne of Waterbury, Connecticut 1886-1982*. Joseph R. Simoneau, Ph.D., of Townsend, Mass., (FCGSC No. 2292), published in 1979 the 194-page genealogy: *Marriages of St. Ann Parish, Bristol, Connecticut (1908-1977)*. Raymond L. Thomas of Windsor, Conn., (FCGSC No. 69), published a fifteen page article and index of 86 marriages in the December 1986 issue of the *Connecticut Maple Leaf*, (the semi-annual journal of the FCGSC), entitled: "Marriage Records for the Years 1880 to 1886 St. Laurent's Parish in Meriden, Connecticut."

# Raising of the Quebec Flag at the Connecticut State Capitol, Fri. June 23

*By Albert J. Marceau, Newington, Conn.*

There will be a formal ceremony for the raising of the Quebec flag on the State Capitol in Hartford, Conn., starting at 8:30 a.m., on Friday, June 23, 2017. There will be a few speeches after the raising of the flag, and one speaker will be Ron Blanchette of the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut, who will give an abbreviated version of the talk that he recently gave at the General Membership Meeting of the

FCGSC on Saturday, April 22, 2017, about the Fall of Quebec in 1759.

Free parking is available in the garage behind the Legislative Office Building.

Chairs are available to all who attend, but it is necessary the ground crew at the State Capitol to have an approximate number of attendees, so **contact Odette Manning at (860)-644-1125**, if you plan to attend, so there will be seats for all.



# POETRY/POÉSIE...

## The Final Roll Call - An Inspiration for a Poem

In the fall of 1998 I retired as a professional engineer after having worked 20 years for Fluor Daniel, an engineering & construction company. My wife and I were in the process of selling our home in Sugarland, Texas and were relocating to my wife's family home in Shreveport, Louisiana. One day during this transition I was returning to Sugarland after having taken a car load of household goods to Shreveport. I was driving alone and was listening to a radio interview of Tom Brokaw about the book he had just published entitled, "The Greatest Generation." It was a very interesting and absorbing interview. Mr. Brokaw noted that 1,500 WW-II veterans were dying every day. This pained me deeply. Consequently, I said to myself, "You haven't done a thing to honor our WW-II veterans and you need to correct that fault before more veterans pass on."

I was a month shy of my ninth birthday when the Japs bombed Pearl Harbor. My oldest brother was drafted into the army and was in the tail-end of the Okinawa campaign. He was an MP guarding Japanese prisoners. I hadn't even thanked my deceased brother for the service he had rendered during WW-II. My conscience bothered me for not having honored our WW-II veterans for the great sacrifices they made. I decided I was going to correct this neglect. So, I thought, "If Tom Brokaw can write a book, I can at least write a poem; a poem to honor the 1,500 WW-II veterans dying each and every day.

So as I drove, I began to compose the poem "Final Roll Call". I had a writing pad on the seat next to me. The words played out in my head as I drove and every once in a while I would pick up the writing pad and put my thoughts to paper. The drive from Shreveport to Sugarland is about four and a half hours. By the time I drove into my driveway in Sugarland, I pretty much had the poem roughed out as I had envisioned it. Once I sat down at my desk with my computer, I arranged the verses and changed some words. And as they say, "The rest is history."

My hope is that this poem will find its way to all men and women who have donned this nation's uniform and gone into harm's way. I want them to know that, regardless of the war era in which they served, I truly



## Final Roll Call In Memory of this Nation's Fallen Warriors

Did you hear the sad news today?  
A great American patriot and Veteran Warrior has passed away  
Called by the Supreme Commander over all.  
Today he has made his final roll call.

Come fellow Vets let us reverently bow and pray  
For our valiant comrade, who has fallen this day.  
We'll drape his casket with a banner of beautiful hues,  
Those glorious American colors: red, white and blue.

That star spangled banner he gallantly fought to defend,  
Unyielding and undaunted, he fought to win.  
He fought bravely and he passed the battle test.  
Now the Supreme Commander grants him, "eternal rest".

With dignity and honor, we'll commit his body to the ground,  
The bugler will sound "Taps" and we'll fire the volley rounds.  
The final military honors we'll render somberly and ever so sadly;  
"Ole Glory" we'll solemnly precisely fold and reverently give to his family.

Each Memorial Day we will recall our fallen comrades' names,  
And attest that their selfless sacrifices were not in vain;  
For this lasting legacy they gave to all generations;  
"It's honorable to respect our flag and to defend our great nation."

So close ranks fellow warriors, for our ranks are thinning.  
We must keep on fighting and keep on winning.  
With pride and honor we'll march and stand tall,  
And we'll proudly - proudly - salute "Ole Glory"  
til we too make our final roll call.

Be At Ease Fallen Comrades; Rest In Peace

*In honor of our Fallen Heroes and their families. By Carroll R. Michaud,  
USAF Ret'd Shreveport, LA. EMail: pepops@hotmail.com*



*Carroll R. Michaud and Col. James Laufenburg Commander, U.S. Army 3rd Infantry Regiment*

*Photo taken 7 July 2003*

appreciate the service they rendered to our great nation. I thank them with all my heart and I pray GOD'S richest blessing for them and their families. Carroll R. Michaud  
"Final Roll Call" at Arlington Na-

tional Cemetery - no better place to honor this nation's fallen warriors donated to "The Old Guard" - Escort To The President at Ft. Meyer, Va.



POETRY/POÉSIE...

**Report to an Academy**

*For a class at the Franco-American Centre, Andrew Walton wrote this prose poem in response to Franz Kafka's story, "Report to an Academy." The speaker in Kafka's story is a great ape, taken prisoner in Africa and transported to Europe, who he has learned to mimic humans and has become a vaudeville performer.*

If they nailed me down, my freedom to move would not have been any less. And why? If you scratch raw the flesh between your toes, you won't find the reason. If you press your back against the bars of the cage until it almost slices you in two, you won't find the answer. I had no way out, but I had to come up with one for myself. For without that I could not live . . . I am deliberately not saying freedom . . . . Incidentally, among human beings, people all too often are deceived by freedom. And since freedom is reckoned among the most sublime feelings, the corresponding disappointment is also among the most sublime.

—Franz Kafka

The search for an alternative perspective is internal, always imminent. A peculiar awareness of the mind, I am but the vagabond within my brain. Aloft these fissures I remain; delving deeper and deeper, I perceive such pain. Sanity regained, I fear the push whose life force is the same. For I, the interpreter of the pain within my brain, interpretation leading to stagnated creation. Deluded by self, you create the stage, an actor, a fraud, a faker, delicately maintained. Push me to the edge, and I will simply walk over; beyond gravity I find calming disorder. There is no sense to be made, or acquisition to be had. I am on a looping track, the bumps in my life, making it impossible to get back. Alas! Obtain the way out you were looking for. Strangely this perception begins to change, why the bars of my brain always remain. I am not what I was, nor what I wish. But I have hope, there is light within. The switch is on, the bulbs are dim but I don't mind; I have six senses as friends. Walk along this staircase with me, please I insist. I see in my eyes your mind, and you haven't found your limits yet. Then, just as the dawn rises and stretches its warmth, cold lust dew painted across the landscape evaporates.

For we are not on stairs—we walk upon fears! Welling up for years I am a steaming engine, a hum with anger. My growl rumbles the ground, rattling the bars, a constant reverberation of my condition. There is no conductor of this runaway train; there are no tracks either that layer the brain. For there is no room for a train within your brain. Yet, I remain, an Ape in a cage within the train of my brain.

—Andrew Walton

**Pendant qu'ont dormais**

*par Don Levesque  
fevrier 2017*

Pendant qu'ont dormais

Not'e belle Vallée changais

Pendant qu'ont dormais

Not'e français s'en allais

<https://scontent.xx.fbcdn.net/v/t31.0->

**The Poem and the Paper: "Rince Ta Guenille" and Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum**

*Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum* showcased the work of Franco-American poets. At times, though, the poems also showcased the work of the paper. Take the case of Paul Paré's "Rince Ta Guenille" (Rinse out Your Rag).

"Rince ta Guenille" used the act of scrubbing a floor to tell about a family's winter. Each stain formed part of the larger narrative.

The poem appeared in the May 1975 issue (p. 3). It sat next to an announcement for a program planning workshop. Also on the page was an announcement about a Rally for Jobs. Whether the placement was intentional or the result of editorial constraints, each news item paired well with the poem. Paré's phrase "des histoires de cuisine" (kitchen stories) in line 11 called to mind the stories Franco-American programming would celebrate. The Rally for Jobs ad brought out the poem's work imagery such as "nez au plancher" (nose to the floor) in

line 12, or the following lines (lines 27-32):  
rince ta guenille,  
frotte plus fort,  
rince ta guenille,  
frotte encore,  
change ton eau,  
t'as mal au dos

(Rinse out your rag/Rub harder/Rinse out your rag/Rub again/Change out your water/You have a backache)

In April 1978 the poem was reprinted word for word (p. 7). This time it shared the page with a Mothers' Day greeting and a poem entitled "Coeur de Maman" (A Mother's Heart). Though "Rince Ta Guenille" never used the word "mother" or "maman," it mentioned "une carte de famille" (family card) in line 8 and "des perles roses de syrop d'enfants aux rhumes éternels" (pink beads of syrup for children with constant colds) in line 17.

"Rince Ta Guenille" used other images, including Religious ones. Still, the paper framed two important themes in the poem. In turn the two printings framed an exciting period in the paper's history. *Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum* launched a Focus on Women/Place aux Femmes section in February 1976 and a literary supplement/Supplément Littéraire in October 1977 (Lisa Desjardins Michaud,

personal communication, June 15, 2016). These moves marked a shift toward the magazine we know today. Yet the paper still reflected its student and community roots. In fact the poem's 1978 printing (p. 7) was in the Campus Observations section.

The paper archived the poem as well. We understand the importance of preserving our culture. Archives not only preserve culture, but also inspire new works. I'm even working on a poem inspired by "Rince ta Guenille."

If you live near a library with back issues of *Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum*, check them out: I thank the University of Southern Maine's Franco-American Collection (<https://usm.maine.edu/franco>) for access. Otherwise check out the online archive at <http://umaine.edu/francoamerican/leforum/> Explore the treasures in each issue. Maybe you'll find a piece that inspires you.

—Maureen Perry

*Maureen Perry is a librarian at the University of Southern Maine's Lewiston-Auburn College. She also serves on the Board of USM's Franco-American Collection .*

## Glory

With the ecstatic crowd,  
he watches Glory passing by,  
He imagines the brave fallen  
lost on distant fields.

Among the soldiers marching past,  
are men with missing limbs.  
He salutes these valiant martyrs  
to the heroic cause.

He does not see what they still see  
or hear the sounds they hear:  
mortars' whistle; rifles' crack,  
and cries of wounded men.

At fourteen, he dreams of soldiering  
with rifle and rucksack—  
he fears no battle dangers  
or perils he might risk.

Witnessing gallant volunteers  
strengthens his resolve.  
Like them, he'll fight for the Union.  
He'll find a way in time.

In 1861, Rémi Tremblay watched the Woonsocket Volunteers, survivors of the Battle of Bull Run (First Manassas) parade through the streets. The sight of these valiant men dazzled him. He would have enlisted immediately, if he could have, but he was only fourteen. Of the volunteers who had enlisted three months earlier, many did not return. Here Eugène, the young hero of Tremblay's **Un Revenant** (English title: **One Came Back**) reacts just as the author did when he was a boy.

Glory first appeared in this winter's edition of **Le Forum**, quarterly publication put out by the Franco-American Centre in Orono, Maine. Editor Lisa Michaud has graciously granted permission to republish the poem in The Keene Senior Center Newsletter. I'll always be grateful to **Le Forum** for encouraging my Rémi Tremblay projects. One unforgettable moment comes to mind: when **Boys Into Men: Rémi Tremblay And The American Civil War** appeared in **Le Forum**, volume 29, numéro 2 (2001). As Dr. Claire Quintal and I pressed onward towards **One Came Back's** publication deadline, we were delighted to read this preview of our collaborative work.. To Lisa and **Le Forum**, Merci/Thank you for your encouragement then and for your permission now--

— Margaret S. Langford

## DREAM

Mama stands in the river, calm, free now  
of the dog-eat-dog of the world. She sees me  
stumble down the bank, a cornered deer, the pack  
in full cry at my heels. She stoops, with one hand  
scoops the water, sends an arc of fine spray

toward me, touching my face like prayer. The air,  
everything about, goes still. The dogs too, stilled,  
lower themselves to the shore. Playing their parts  
in this benediction beyond words, my words' making.

—Jim Bishop

---

---

### A WORD ABOUT THE DEATH OF MY FATHER\*

He was much unknown to me  
Because he lived a life  
Bent over the warp tying  
Machine in a damp weave room,  
Using his eyepiece to see  
The strands of cotton stretched  
Across the woof of would be  
Cloth passing through arthritic  
Fingers of his own lifeline.

He was born in a card room  
Where he was, combed and spun  
Sized and lashed across  
The warp of his timeline where God  
Granted him the same pattern  
Given his father before,  
Lowered by chain into  
The dyeing vat and then hung  
From the rafters, there to dry,  
And, here, he was meant to die.

- First appeared in EMBERS, volume 8, no. 2, 1983, with errors.

Corrected for this re-release.

Gérard Coulombe

POETRY/POÉSIE...

**Loyaux mais français**

Nous écoutons les meules de métal  
Des grands machines qui donnent la vie  
On dit adieu à nos familles  
Mais nous nous souviendrons

À la fin du jour, dans des pichous  
Nous découvrons Cartier et Champlain  
Nos aïeux courageux et savants  
Les vraies légendes des Amériques

Nous sommes les élus de Dieu  
Écoutons les 95 saints  
au lieu des thèses  
Ou l'infidélité du Roé d'Angleterre

Loyaux mais français

Nous portons avec nous le Canada  
Dans notre quartier de la ville  
Pour ne pas perde la langue, la culture, l'histoire  
Mais vivre quand même aux États-Unis

Nos enfants sont cultivé comme des patates  
Ils travaillent fort aux usines  
Ils ne font pas la grève  
comme des MacDonalDs ou des Smiths  
Car la terre a nous appris le sacré du travail

Loyaux but français

Les patrons ne nous comprennent pas  
Et les journaux ne peuvent pas être lu  
Mais nous vivons mieux ici

Peut-être que nos enfants  
Apprendront l'anglais  
Seront des chefs  
Et mangent plus  
Que de la soup  
Et du pain

Loyal but français

Mon enfant a appris  
Une nouvelle phrase aujourd'hui:  
I will not speak French at school  
I will not speak French at school  
I will not speak French at school  
I will not speak French at school

Loyal but français

Mon enfant me parle  
Dans notre langue cachée  
Alors que son fils ne nous comprend pas  
Pepepepe can I tell you about what I did today?

Stay in school  
Do your work  
Move up  
Make more

Memère made tourtière again  
My favorite  
What does tourtière mean anyway  
It's a meat pie

Loyal but french

—*Mitch Roberge*

**A GARDEN  
IN MY HEAD**

Every spring, I plant a garden in my head  
I move the soil and fertilize it well  
I plant mounds of flower-beds  
I put a fountain for my friend.

I plant bulbs of many kinds  
Tulips, daffodils and mulberry vines  
Hyacinths and irises  
To please all of my senses.

They bloom like a rainbow  
Under the warm spring sun  
I enjoy them from my window  
But too soon the time goes.

I plant banks of cosmos  
Every shade of pink and yellow;  
White angels to steal the show  
The best of all cosmos.

Violets, pansies and sweet williams  
Are bright like prisms  
Every may in my garden  
Creeping on the ground like children.

I dream of all that in my head  
As I lay peacefully in that bed  
My garden is a wonderland  
Of colors, butterflies, birds, and bees  
Love and care, my hammock and me.

When I wake, then I see  
I have to start all anew. Oh pooh!

—*Adrienne Pelletier  
LePage*



**Dans Acadie (In Acadia)**

Among the autumn frost,  
 the fight becomes to save the late har-  
 vests,  
 the root vegetables,  
 sealed in the soil.  
 Their bleached nature,  
 born of eternal snow  
 washes the warmth from us,  
 drains us lonely,  
 burdens our backs  
 with the winter.  
 The trees stand longer than us,  
 but we cut them down  
 to build our homes,  
 burn them to ash

to stave off the cold,  
 and to return the warmth to our bones,  
 and to our bodies,  
 together  
 and  
 alone  
 We suffocate here no longer.  
 Our animals froze long ago,  
 and absent the rejuvenation  
 of their flesh  
 we only tarry to survive the winter.  
 How foolish  
 to think  
 we could find warmth in this place  
 abandoned  
 by summer.  
 But we are fettered here.  
 Together  
 and  
 alone.

—Austin Bragdon

**New Word for Beauty**

Your apocalipstick stains can still be seen  
 on the annals of our twisted history -  
 an index that points to that most poignant  
 microcosm of passion.  
 I wash them off again and again,  
 only to see them reappear in alternating  
 shades  
 of red and black, a testament to the twin  
 vividity and dispassion which have sur-  
 rounded  
 our involvement.  
 With the delicate subtlety  
 of a high-heeled boot to the chest,  
 or a gloved hand that takes the breath  
 away,  
 they linger, call, and sing siren songs  
 that beg my lips to meet them.

With all the sensual allure  
 of a cannonball  
 they crack the fragile limits  
 of my somatic restraint.  
 We have formed a  
 violent arabesque, you and I,  
 from which there can be no escape.  
 Our lines, inexorably intertwined  
 have committed themselves  
 to this loveless spirograph of  
 familiarity which threatens  
 to collapse with the gentle  
 caress of a single intimate breath.  
 Embracing the Sisyphian nature  
 of our entanglement,  
 I wash away the lipstick stains once more.

—Austin Bragdon

**TO OUR VETERANS**

Young men and women of yesterday  
 We are here to honor your deeds today  
 You did your duty for our Country and  
 Liberty  
 You have our Loyalty.  
 Sad were the days when you sailed away  
 For God, Country, Honor, Glory.  
 Remember our flag flies higher today  
 Because of your Bravery.  
 Gone are your green years  
 Gone are your carefree days  
 Gone are the friends you made  
 Carrying the burden of Liberty.  
 Flyers, Soldiers, Sailors, Marines, all  
 In our thoughts you are Heroes tall  
 If flowers grow on the fields you trod  
 It is to remind you that God has your  
 reward.  
 Love of Country, Courage, Fraternity  
 Those are the badges of Humanity  
 Gone are the youth of yesterday  
 Carrying the "Torch of Liberty".

—Adrienne Pelletier  
LePage

**Seasonal Change**

I have made it my mission to arrest  
 these urges - facile and always turned to  
 you. The absent minded pleasure of the  
 television screen suffices no longer as  
 distraction. Thoughts race, collect, rise  
 in wicked crescendo, and put to rest the  
 foolish notions of simplicity which I had  
 once cultivated so carefully. Is it my place  
 to whither seasonally like the tree at the  
 predictable but unorganized back and  
 forth flutter of our sensibilities? At least I  
 can fall back on cliches - fear not! I'll grow  
 back in the springtime. Of course, spring  
 is here and I feel no more virile. Perhaps a  
 little sunshine will do me good.

—Austin Bragdon

# The Man Who United Irish- and Franco-Americans

March 17, 2017 Augusta, Lewiston-Auburn, Maine, Massachusetts, Politics, World War Two

*By James Myall*

It would be easy to write about the long history of strife between Maine's Franco-American and Irish communities. The two immigrant groups fought for dominance in many of Maine's mill towns in the 19th century, and for control of the Catholic Church in the state. Fistfights were common. However, on this Saint Patrick's Day, it seems more fitting to examine someone who united both communities – President John F. Kennedy.



*President John F. Kennedy and First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy Depart Ottawa, 18 May, 1961. Image: John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.*

President Kennedy is perhaps the most famous Irish-American of all, but his electoral successes, not only at the national level, but also in Massachusetts, hinged on his ability to unite the constituencies in the New Deal Democratic coalition, which in New England, included Franco-Americans. The president himself acknowledged this on his first overseas visit, in an address to the Canadian parliament, in 1961:

*I feel at home also here because I number in my own State of Massachusetts many friends and former constituents who are of Canadian descent. Among the voters of Massachusetts who were born outside the United States, the largest group by far was born in Canada. Their vote is enough to determine the outcome of an election, even a Presidential election. You can understand that having been elected President of the United States by less than 140 thousand votes out of 60 million, that I am very conscious of these statistics!*

On overseas visits to Francophone countries, President Kennedy would regularly make an attempt to say a few words in French. He did so on the occasion of his address to the Canadian parliament, on his famous visit to France, later that same year, but also when talking with foreign leaders from newly-independent African nations. On such occasions, Kennedy tended to defer to his wife, who was a fluent French-speaker. Although Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy was famously the darling of Paris when she visited the city, it's often overlooked that her French heritage came via her great-great grandfather, Michel Bouvier, a French-Canadian cabinetmaker who settled in Philadelphia.

However, even before assuming the presidency, the importance of bridging the traditional divide between the Irish- and Franco-American communities would have been known to Jack and his family. Robert Kennedy had even had a personal encounter with Maine's Franco-Americans, when he trained with the V-12 Naval training program at Bates College in 1944/5. Robert wrote to his friend David Hackett, that he had trouble finding a mass to attend, since most of the local churches preached in French.[1]



*Bobby Kennedy (second from left) poses in front of a Winter Carnival snow sculpture of a Navy ship at Bates College. 1944 or 1945. Image: Bates College, Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library.*

The Kennedys and the Bouviers were both intensely political families in

Massachusetts, which in the 1950s was still a hotbed of ethnic rivalry and competition. In running first for the House of Representatives, and then for the Senate, John Kennedy made sure to campaign in the Franco-American social clubs and community halls around the state. Kennedy's opponent, Republican US Senator Henry Cabot Lodge Jr., even went to the length of adopting distinctively French-Canadian words in his French vocabulary for his campaigns.[2] The Kennedys maintained this approach for other family members. In Ted Kennedy 1970 re-election campaign, their mother Rose, at age 80, gave speeches in French for Ted in towns like Fitchberg, Worcester, New Bedford, and Fall River, just as she had for Jack a decade earlier.[3]

In Fall River, John Kennedy had the help of Ed Berube, a local campaign operative who became a lifelong friend of the senator and president. The Kennedy campaign was specifically looking for "a French-Canadian blue-collar" person to join the campaign. Berube, a bus driver, had a mutual friend with Kennedy in Judge Maurice Cartier of Boston. The friendship not only helped the future President's election efforts, it also led to a windfall for a local Fall River bakery:

*One day, while in Ed Berube's company, then-Sen. Kennedy expressed interest in marriage (a bachelor getting elected senator was one thing, elected president another), a remark which likely elicited something from an eye roll to a belly laugh from Berube, who knew JFK as a ladies' man. "My dad told him, 'You'll never get married. If you get married, I'll buy your wedding cake,'" Ron Berube said.*

When Kennedy announced his engagement to Jacqueline Bouvier, Berube was true to his word, and ordered a wedding



*Jacqueline Bouvier Kennedy and John F. Kennedy cut their wedding cake during their reception. Newport, Rhode Island, 12 September 1953. Image: John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.*

*(Continued on page 49)*

# Through the Generations

*By Denise R. Larson, Hampden, ME*

This year, 2017, is the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first permanent settlers in New France—the family of Louis Hébert and Marie Rollet and their children, Guillaume, Guillemette, and Anne. Louis, as apothecary and civil official, played an important part at the Quebec fur-trading post established by Samuel de Champlain, who assigned a work crew to build a stone house on Cap Diamant for the Hébert family. The location of the Hébert home in the present day would be between Rue Ste. Famille and Rue Couillard in Quebec City. Marie taught children in her home and is considered to be Canada's first teacher. Louis is said to be Canada's first farmer because he eventually cleared and cultivated approximately ten acres, planting herbs and vegetables, some of which he used in medical preparations or sold to help supplement the dried goods sent from France.

I'm lucky to be one of the thousands of descendants of Louis and Marie, but I wondered how many other 11th great-grandparents did I have? The answer is astounding—8,190. This reminded me that the number of direct ancestors doubles with each generation. I have two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, sixteen great-great-grandparents, etc., until arriving at 8,192 for the number of 11th

great-grandparents, which is fourteen generations ago when counting myself as Generation 1. That's a lot of ancestors in a single generation. If all direct ancestors are added together—from me through Generation



*"Marie Rollet et ses enfants."  
Parc Montmorency, Quebec City.  
Photo Credit:*

*Jean Gagnon, Wikimedia Commons*

14—there's a total of 16,383 individuals. Looking at those numbers, I ask why



I would set myself to the task of searching for so many persons who are long gone, who have returned to the dust from which they were made? I realized that the answer is that I admire my Hébert progenitors (first of my direct line to arrive in the New World) for their courage, but I hope to honor all my ancestors through my genealogical work to find their names, know where and when they lived, and, thanks to marriage and birth records, who they loved. Genealogy is more than names and dates on a chart, more than bits of DNA traced through pedigree. Genealogy is the beat of the collective family heart through generations.

*Denise (Rajotte) Larson is an author and editor who lives in the greater Bangor metropolitan area. She is researching and writing her family's story using members' photos and memorabilia as well as church and civil documents.*

## Never Stop Looking

*By Denise R. Larson, Hampden, ME*

As the family genealogist, I have set goals for myself in the search for family groups in census returns. The following is one example of what can happen.

From family albums and baptismal records, I knew that the first child of Felix and Exilda Rajotte was born in 1897 in Canada. Their second child was born in 1898 in Nashua, New Hampshire. Their third child was born in 1902 in Canada. The questions were: When did they return to Canada? Where were they in 1900 or 1901 (the years in which a census was taken)?

Try as I might, I could not find a listing for my grandparents Felix and Exilda in the online index at ancestry.com of the 1900 U.S. Federal census nor the 1901 Canada national census. I found nothing. Where

were they? Where did they go?

Thinking of a similar situation in which nothing useful came up until I had simplified the search terms to just the first names of the couple, which, luckily were very unusual in that instance, I tried again. In the previous case, the surname had been poorly written on the census form and horribly misspelled in the index, but the combination of first names brought up the right page. In the search for Felix and Exilda, however, nothing came up.

Putting the questions of Felix, Exilda, and their family to the side, I started on another branch of the family, Exilda's parents, Felix and Sophie Bergeron. The index guided me to Page 11 of the 1901 census return for St. Germain-de-Grantham



*Felix and Sophie Bergeron stand together in this ca. 1915 photograph, possibly taken in St. Germain-de-Grantham, Drummond County, Quebec Province, where they farmed for many years.*

*(Continued on page 45)*

# 1649: Abraham Martin: Coupable ou Innocent?

par **Robert Bérubé**

May 4, 2017 / May 6, 2017 / Robert Bérubé: Blogue-Blog

Pour les intéressées et intéressés, je vous encourage à vous inscrire à mon site Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/groups/394084010943300/>



Abraham Martin:  
dessin Charles Huot 1908

Il y a quelques semaines, lorsque j'ai publié l'histoire de Gillette Banne, intitulé: "La belle-mère meurtrière", quelques lecteurs ont réagi en me demandant pourquoi j'avais partagé cette biographie. Un commentaire particulier attira davantage mon attention et je le répète, car je pense que cette réaction en était une ressentie par plusieurs lecteurs: "Ses descendants (Gillette Banne) n'ont pas à avoir honte de l'avoir comme ancêtre. Pourquoi publiez-vous de telles histoires? Il me semble qu'il y a des aspects plus intéressants de notre histoire à rappeler que des chapitres douloureux comme celui-là."

J'avais formulé la réponse suivante: "Cette année je me suis donné comme projet d'écrire une histoire par semaine au sujet d'un(e) ancêtre ou d'un groupe d'ancêtres de ma généalogie sur un blogue que j'ai commencé au début janvier. Ceci est mon sixième texte. Je vais en publier un autre 46! Je n'ai pas honte de mes ancêtres, au contraire! Mon but est de faire connaître des êtres très vivants qui ont surmonté des défis extraordinaires ou bien qui ont contribué à l'épanouissement de ma famille et de la société. Il y aura de belles histoires, des histoires tristes et certaines seront comiques! Il serait triste de cacher certaines histoires car les vies de nos ancêtres qui ont façonné notre société ne sont pas des contes de fées!"

Je partage ces renseignements car cette semaine, dans mon dix-huitième texte, je présente un autre événement choquant. Si Abraham Martin est coupable de son crime, je dois admettre avoir honte de cet ancêtre et de ne pas l'aimer. Je condamne ce genre d'atrocité. S'il est irréprochable, il faudrait l'innocenter! J'en parle dans le but de donner une perspective différente sur un épisode qui a été caché par plusieurs historiens pendant longtemps.

Abraham Martin dit l'Écossais est né en France vers 1589. Il épousa Marguerite Langlois dans le même pays. Nous ignorons le nom des parents du couple, ni leur lieu d'origine. De plus, nous ne connaissons pas les raisons qui expliquent le sobriquet "L'Écossais" ou bien la désignation de "Maître Abraham". Il y a plusieurs théories et probabilités mais celles-ci ne sont pas confirmées. De plus, il est affirmé par les tests ADN que son épouse et ses enfants ne sont pas Amérindiens, ni Métis.

Il faut se méfier des sites et des écrits qui prétendent connaître les raisons justifiant les sobriquets, le nom des parents, le lieu d'origine et les fausses origines amérindiennes de son épouse et de ses enfants.

Il y a peu de renseignements concernant Abraham et Marguerite avant leur arrivée en Nouvelle-France. Nous estimons qu'ils sont arrivés entre 1617 et 1620. Le couple Martin-Langlois migra en compagnie de la soeur de Marguerite, Françoise Langlois et de son conjoint Pierre Desportes. Ils figurent parmi les premiers pionniers français de la Nouvelle-France.

Lorsque les frères Kirke prirent Québec en 1629, Abraham Martin et sa famille sont rentrés en France. Encore une fois plusieurs personnes indiquent que la famille est restée à Québec mais ceci est faux. Des découvertes faites par madame Gail F. Moreau-DesHarnais, membre de la FCHSM, démontre que Marguerite Langlois et Abraham Martin étaient exilés dans la paroisse de Saint-Jacques de Dieppe, à ce temps. Ses recherches sont publiées en anglais sur

le site suivant: [http://habitantheritage.org/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/Gail\\_-\\_exiles\\_from\\_Quebec.14185052.pdf](http://habitantheritage.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Gail_-_exiles_from_Quebec.14185052.pdf)

En 1633 et peut-être même en 1634, après le départ des Kirke, Abraham, son épouse et ses enfants sont revenus en Nouvelle-France.

Abraham Martin et Marguerite Langlois sont parents des enfants suivants:

Jean, baptisé le 23 septembre, 1616.

Eustache, baptisé le 24 octobre, 1621.

Marguerite, née le 4 janvier, 1624.

Hélène, née le 21 juin, 1627.

(suite page 46)

(Never Stop Looking continued from page 44)

in Drummond County, Quebec Province. Felix and Sophie, both age 49, lived in a household with ten of their children, whose ages ranged from 28 to 7.

The Bergerons resided in Domicile 104. Studying the page to see who their neighbors were, I was surprised and pleased to see that in Domicile 102—next door—were Felix and Exilda Rajotte, my "missing" grandparents. The return showed that Felix, age 29, and Exilda, age 25, had two children: Mirza, age 4, and Rosia, age 2.

The 1901 Canada census gives exact birthdates for individuals listed on the return. This is very unusual and very helpful to genealogists. Using the ages and birthdates given, I was able to verify that the two families that I had found were the ones for which I was searching. The dates jived with a family group sheet that a cousin had made for her photo album and with my mother's date book, in which she had listed everyone's birthday.

Though I had used the index search functions in every way I could imagine, I had not found Felix and Exilda. It seemed that the indexer had skipped the household completely. To find the family, I had to look at the census return in a different way—for a related family and then the nearby families. I had to keep my eyes open and my mind ready to play with possibilities. Genealogy is detective work. This "what if" and "if only" paid off. On to the next!

Denise (Rajotte) Larson is an author and editor who lives in the greater Bangor metropolitan area. She is researching and writing her family's story using family members' photos and memorabilia as well as church and civil documents.

(1649: Abraham Martin: Coupable ou Innocent? suite de page 45)

Marie, née le 10 avril, 1635.  
Adrien, né le 22 novembre, 1628.  
Pierre, baptisé le 1er août, 1630.  
Madeleine, née le 13 septembre, 1640.  
Barbe, née le 4 janvier, 1643.  
Anne, née le 23 mars, 1645.  
Charles Amador, né le 6 mars, 1648.

Eustache est le premier Canadien, d'origine Française, a nâtre sur le territoire de la Nouvelle-France. Tous les enfants Martin-Langlois sont nés à Québec sauf Jean et Pierre, qui sont nés à Dieppe, en France.

Une autre affirmation, sans preuves, est qu'Anne Martin, née en France et mariée le 17 novembre 1635, à Jean Côté, était la fille d'Abraham. La fille d'Abraham Martin appelée Anne était l'épouse de Jacques Ratté.

Il appert que la Côte d'Abraham et les Plaines d'Abraham immortalisent le nom de cet ancêtre. La côte d'Abraham était le sentier emprunté par Abraham Martin pour descendre à la rivière Saint-Charles, dans le but de faire abreuver ses animaux. Il est fort probable que les contemporains d'Abraham ont baptisé les lieux et le nom est resté. Certains chercheurs questionnent cette justification.



Les Plaines d'Abraham comme nous les connaissons aujourd'hui ne correspondent pas nécessairement à la terre qui lui a été concédée en 1635, par la Compagnie de la Nouvelle-France, lors de son retour à Québec, après le départ des Kirke. La vraie terre d'Abraham Martin mesure environ 12 arpents et elle était plutôt sur le versant nord du Cap-aux-Diamants. Son domaine comprenait ces 12 arpents, plus 20 reçus en

don, du sieur Adrien Du Chesne, en 1645.

La famille Martin a vendu cette propriété aux Ursulines en 1667. La terre allait donc, de la Côte-Sainte-Geneviève, l'actuelle Grande-Allée, vers le bas, jusqu'à la Côte-d'Abraham elle-même, et vers l'ouest, jusqu'à la rue Clairefontaine, sous l'actuel Grand Théâtre. Sa terre ne couvrait donc pas les Plaines d'Abraham mais la bataille de 1759, s'est déroulée sur les Plaines d'Abraham et aussi sur l'ancienne propriété d'Abraham Martin.

Nous retrouvons le nom d'Abraham dans le testament de Champlain. Celui-ci a cédé 600 livres à Abraham Martin et à son épouse Marguerite Langlois : "qu'ils les emploient à défricher des terres en ce pays de Nouvelle-France" et autant à sa fille Marguerite, comme dote éventuelle, « pour l'aider à se marier à un homme en ce pays de la Nouvelle-France et pas autrement ».

Le 27 décembre 1647, Abraham a reçu



le titre de pilote royal pour le Saint-Laurent, tel qu'enregistré au greffe du notaire Le Coustre. Avec ses gendres, il allait souvent à la pêche aux marsouins (loups marins) pour en extraire l'huile. Ils se rendaient jusqu'au golfe du Saint-Laurent. Il appert qu'il était habile en navigation sur le Saint-Laurent. Il ne faut pas l'imaginer comme pilote d'un grand navire mais plutôt d'un petit bateau.

Le 19 janvier 1649, l'exécution d'une jeune fille âgée d'environ quinze ans, a lieu à Québec. Le 15 février suivant, Abraham Martin est accusé du viol de cette fille et il est emprisonné dans le cachot. Le procès est différé, jusqu'à l'arrivée des bateaux. Cette accusation ne semble pas avoir de suite.

Il y a très peu d'archives concernant cette affaire. Est-ce la pudeur des historiens passés qui est la cause du manque de documents pour faire oublier ce crime aux générations qui suivent? Je ne sais pas! Abraham Martin est l'ancêtre d'une grande partie de



Québécois, de Canadiens et d'Américains. Est-ce que certains descendants ont faussé l'histoire? Je ne connais pas la réponse et je n'ai aucune preuve pour justifier ce que j'avance. Je le fais espérant que quelqu'un puisse m'expliquer l'absence de pièces légales. Qui sait? Il y a peut-être une jeune personne qui dans les années à venir, découvrira les réponses à mes questions.

Toutefois, il est évident dans certains écrits que les rédacteurs de ces biographies oublient ou nient l'existence de l'accusation et de l'emprisonnement de Martin.

D'autres écrits, tels le "Dictionnaire biographique du Canada" ne mentionnent pas le viol mais parlent de conduite et de baisse d'estime: "Plus tard,

Martin baissa dans l'estime de ses concitoyens, lorsqu'il fut accusé de conduite répréhensible envers une jeune fille de Québec. Il fut emprisonné le 15 février 1649 pour ce motif".

Il y a des chroniqueurs qui parlent de "conduite incorrecte envers une jeune fille...une jeune voleuse de 16 ans qui fut condamnée pour ces délits" et de "forfait à l'honneur avec une larronnesse de 16 ans". Espèrent-ils rendre la victime coupable, car elle commit un autre crime? Il faut se souvenir qu'elle fut pendue pour son crime, devait-elle aussi souffrir d'un viol? Certains qui semblent mettre davantage l'accent sur les termes de voleuse et de larronnesse insinuent que la jeune fille aurait menti.

Quelques écrivains du passé tentent d'exonérer Abraham Martin de cette accusation en mentionnant que son fils Charles-Amador Martin fut le second prêtre

(suite page 47)



(1649: Abraham Martin: Coupable ou Innocent? suite de page 46)

né au Canada, que son fils Eustache s'était rendu en Huronie et qu'Abraham est l'ancêtre de deux évêques Racine! Les membres du clergé ne sont pas des saints! Ils sont très humains et il y en a des bons et des pourris!

Cette jeune fille, en plus de sa vie, on lui a enlevé son nom! On déshumanise une personne sans nom. Est-ce que ceci rendrait le crime moins violent et rendrait l'accusation fausse?

Quelques-uns font allusion à l'âge de la fille, insinuant la pédophilie ou l'éphébophilie. Dans bien des cas, ils répondent à leur sous-entendu, en informant que ce n'est ni de la pédophilie, ni de l'éphébophilie car les filles se mariaient à 12 ans. Cette façon de penser, ne justifie pas l'acte de violence, qu'est un viol.

Certains le qualifient de vieux pervers!

Louis-Guy Lemieux dans ces écrits qualifie Abraham Martin comme "un des acteurs les plus insignifiants de l'histoire de la Nouvelle-France. Un personnage obscur. Un simple figurant. Un antihéros". En ce qui a trait à l'accusation, il discerne Abraham Martin de "vieux cochon". Il faut souligner qu'Abraham Martin a autant d'importance que presque tous ses contemporains, car il était un des premiers pionniers de la France, à s'établir à Québec. L'appeler un vieux cochon, même si cela fait du bien, au locuteur, cache la sévérité et minimise l'acte criminel. L'attaque, si elle est prouvée, doit être considérée comme un viol, et un acte de violence criminel!

Certains affirment qu'Abraham Martin n'est pas coupable car il n'y a pas eu de procès lorsque les vaisseaux sont arrivés, et Abraham n'a pas reçu de sentence. En plus, il n'y a aucune mention de l'accusation par la suite. De plus, Abraham a terminé sa vie sans qu'il y ait aucune autre plainte ou insinuation de ce genre ou autres, portée contre lui. Le "Dictionnaire Biographique du Canada" stipule qu'Abraham Martin "baissa dans l'estime de ses concitoyens à cause de



l'accusation", néanmoins, les documents prouvent qu'Abraham a continué de vivre sa vie en société, sans problème.

Nous pouvons accuser une personne mais nous ne pouvons pas la condamner sans prouver sa culpabilité. De plus, il aurait été très difficile d'avoir un procès juste, envers les deux parties, lorsque la victime est décédée. Il est vrai qu'il n'y a pas eu d'autres accusations qui ont été documentées. Étant donné la pénurie de documents disponibles, concernant cet événement, Abraham Martin demeure, aux yeux de la loi, non coupable.

Les prochaines questions portent à ré-

flexion. L'accusation avait été faite quelque temps avant la pendaison de la victime. Pourquoi une victime aurait-elle fait une accusation, au sujet d'une personne innocente, sachant d'une façon ou d'une autre qu'elle devait être pendue? Quelles sont les circonstances qui ont mené cette fille à porter une accusation? Pourquoi les responsables ont-ils cru bon d'emprisonner Abraham Martin? Pourquoi attendre l'arrivée des bateaux au mois d'août avant de prononcer un jugement?

Il y a seulement une victime dans cette circonstance, soit la jeune fille qui dit avoir été violée ou soit Abraham Martin qui serait faussement accusé.

Nous ne pouvons pas porter de jugement dans ce dossier. Le scandale de tout cet épisode, c'est qu'une personne est innocente. Il serait intéressant de trouver les documents soit pour honorer la mémoire d'une jeune fille, sans nom, ou bien d'exonérer un homme innocent.

Abraham Martin est décédé le 8 septembre 1664, à Québec. Sa veuve, Marguerite, Langlois s'est remariée le 17 février, 1665 avec René Branche. Elle est décédée quelques mois plus tard à Québec, le 17 décembre 1665.

En plus des plaines et de la côte d'Abraham, il y a deux monuments dédiés à Abraham Martin.

Anne et Marie Martin, filles d'Abraham et de Marguerite Langlois sont nos ancêtres. Marie a quatre lignes qui mènent à moi, du côté Bérubé et Fréchette et Anne a deux lignes, du côté Fréchette.

## Abraham Martin: Guilty or not Guilty!

by Robert Bérubé

A word to THANK all of YOU for reading my texts! For those of you who take the time to encourage me, I thank you from the bottom of my heart! I am neither a writer nor an historian! I tell stories! I try to make them as accurate as possible by doing a lot of research. However, there are sometimes errors.

Some people have pointed out to me some mistakes in private and even publicly, and I have had the chance to correct the texts to make them more accurate. I thank those individuals who took the time to help me



out. I also thank the persons who ask me for permission before sharing, copying, and repeating my texts.

For those of you interested in receiving my stories automatically, I encourage you to subscribe to my Facebook site at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/394084010943300/>

A few weeks ago, when I published the story of Gillette Banne, entitled "The

Murderous Mother-in-Law", some readers reacted by asking me why I shared this biography. One particular comment attracted my attention and I repeat it, because I think this reaction was felt by several readers: "Her descendants (Gillette Banne) do not have to be ashamed to have her as an ancestor. Why do you publish such stories? It seems to me that there are more interesting aspects of our history to remember than painful chapters like this one."

I had formulated the following reply: "This year I planned to write a story a week about an ancestor or a group of ancestors of my genealogy on a blog, that I started in early January. This is my sixth text. I'll publish another 46! I am not ashamed of my ancestors, on the contrary! My goal is to bring to life beings who have overcome (Continued on page 48)

*(Abraham Martin: Guilty or not Guilty!  
continued from page 47)*

extraordinary challenges or who have contributed to the development of my family and society. There will be beautiful stories, sad stories and some will be comical! It would be sad to hide some stories because the lives of our ancestors who shaped our society are not fairy tales! “

I share this information because this week, in my eighteenth text, I present another shocking event. If Abraham Martin is guilty of this crime, I must admit to being ashamed of this ancestor and not to like him. I condemn this kind of atrocity. If he is irreproachable, he should be cleared! I talk about him, in order to give a different perspective on an episode that has been hidden by several historians for a long time.

Abraham Martin known as “l'Écos-sais” (the Scotsman) was born in France around 1589. He married Marguerite Langlois in the same country. We do not know the names of the couple's parents or their place of origin. Moreover, we do not know the reasons for the nickname “l'Écos-sais” (the Scotsman) or his designation as “Maître Abraham” (Master Abraham). There are several theories and probabilities but these are not confirmed. In addition, DNA tests prove that his wife and children are not Amerindians or Métis.

One must be wary of sites and writings that claim to know the reasons for the nicknames, their parents' names, their place of origin and the false Amerindian origins of his wife and children.

There is little information about Abraham and Marguerite before they arrived in New France. We believe that they arrived between 1617 and 1620. The couple Martin-Langlois migrated with Marguerite's sister, Françoise Langlois and her spouse Pierre Desportes. They were among the first French pioneers in New France.

When the Kirke brothers took Québec in 1629, Abraham Martin and his family returned to France. Again, many people say that the family stayed in Québec City, but this is not true. Discoveries made by Ms. Gail F. Moreau-DesHarnais, a member of the FCHSM show that Marguerite Langlois and Abraham Martin were exiled in the parish of Saint-Jacques de Dieppe. Her research is published in English on the following website: [http://habitantheritage.org/yahoo\\_site\\_admin/assets/docs/Gail\\_-\\_exiles\\_from\\_Quebec.14185052.pdf](http://habitantheritage.org/yahoo_site_admin/assets/docs/Gail_-_exiles_from_Quebec.14185052.pdf)

Abraham Martin and Marquerite

Langlois are the parents of the following children:

Jean, baptized on September 23, 1616  
Eustache, baptized on October 24, 1621.

Marguerite, born on January 4, 1624  
Hélène, born on June 21, 1627.

Marie, born April 10, 1635.

Adrien, born on November 22, 1628.

Pierre, baptized on August 1st, 1630.  
Madeleine, born on September 13, 1640.

Barbe, born on January 4, 1643.

Anne, born on March 23, 1645.

Charles Amador, born on 6 March, 1648.

Eustache was the first Canadian, of French origin, to be born in the territory of New France. All the children were born in Québec except for Jean and Pierre, who were born in Dieppe, France.

Another assertion, without proof, is that Anne, born in France and married on November 17, 1635, to Jean Côté, was the daughter of Abraham. The daughter of Abraham Martin called Anne was the wife of Jacques Ratté.

It appears that the Côte d'Abraham and the Plains of Abraham immortalize the name of this ancestor. The Côte d'Abraham was the path taken by Abraham Martin to descend to the Saint-Charles river, in order to water his animals. It is very probable that the contemporaries of Abraham baptized the place and the name remained. Some researchers question the above justification.



The Plains of Abraham as we know them today, do not necessarily correspond to the land granted to him in 1635, by the Compagnie de la Nouvelle France, on his return to Québec after the departure of the Kirkes. The true land of Abraham Martin is about 12 arpents and it was rather on the northern slope of Cap-aux-Diamants. His domain included these 12 arpents, plus 20,

donated by Adrien Du Chesne, in 1645.

The Martin family sold this property to the Ursulines in 1667. So the land went from Côte-Sainte-Genève, the present Grande-Allée, down to Côte d'Abraham itself, and towards the west, to rue Clairefontaine, under the present Grand Théâtre.. His land did not cover the Plains of Abraham, but the battle of 1759 took place on the Plains of Abraham and also on the former property of Abraham Martin.

We find the name of Abraham in Champlain's will. He left 600 livres to Abraham Martin and his wife, Marguerite Langlois, “that they use them to clear land in this country of New France” and as much to his daughter Marguerite as a possible dowry, “to help her marry a man in this country of New France and not otherwise “.



On December 27, 1647, Abraham received the title of royal pilot for the Saint-Lawrence river, as recorded in the notary's office of Le Coustre. With his sons-in-law, he often went fishing for porpoises (marine wolves) to extract the oil. They went to the Gulf of Saint-Lawrence. It appears that he was skilful in navigating the Saint-Lawrence. He should not be imagined as a pilot of a large ship but rather of a small boat.



On January 19, 1649, the execution of a girl, about fifteen years of age, was held in Québec City. The following February 15, *(Continued on page 49)*

*(Abraham Martin: Guilty or not Guilty! continued from page 48)*

Abraham Martin is charged with the rape of this girl and is imprisoned in the dungeon. The trial is delayed until the arrival of the boats. There does not seem to be any follow up to this accusation.

There are very few records relating to this case. Is it the modesty of past historians, that is the cause of the lack of documents, in order that the generations that follow would not remember? Abraham Martin is the ancestor of many Québécois, Canadians and Americans. Could some descendants have distorted history? I do not know the answers and I have no evidence to justify what I am saying. I do so, hoping that someone can explain the absence of archives. Who knows? There may be a young person who in the years to come, will discover the answers to my questions.

However, it is evident in some writings that some biographers forget or deny the existence of the accusation and the imprisonment of Martin.

Other writings, such as the “Dictionary of Canadian Biography”, do not mention rape, but refer to conduct and low esteem: “In is later years Martin fell in the estimation of his fellow citizens when he was accused of improper conduct with regard to a young girl in Québec. He was imprisoned for this on 15 Feb. 1649.”

There are chroniclers who talk about “misbehavior towards a young girl ... a 16-year old thief who was convicted for these crimes” and “forfeit with a larronness of 16 years.” Do they hope to make the victim guilty of lying because she committed another crime? It must be remembered that she was hanged for her crime, should she also suffer a rape? Some who seem to put more emphasis on the terms of thief and gossip insinuate that the girl would have lied.

Some writers of the past attempt to exonerate Abraham Martin from this accusation by mentioning that his son Charles-Amador Martin was the second priest born, in Canada, that his son Eustache had traveled to Huronia and that Abraham was the ancestor of two Bishops named Racine! The clergy are not saints! They are very human and there are some good and some rotten!

In addition to her life, her name was also taken away! A person without a name is dehumanized. Would this make the crime less violent and the accusation false?

Some allude to the girl’s age, insinu-

ating pedophilia or ephebophilia. In many cases, they respond to their own implication, noting that it is neither pedophilia, nor ephebophilia because girls married at 12 years of age. This way of thinking, does not justify the act of violence, that is rape.

Some call him an old pervert!

Louis-Guy Lemieux in his writings describes Abraham Martin as “one of the most insignificant actors in the history of New France. An obscure character. A simple figure. An anti hero”. As for the accusation, he calls Abraham Martin “an old pig”. It must be emphasized that Abraham Martin is as important, as almost all his contemporaries, because he was one of the first pioneers of France, to settle in Québec. To call him



an old pig, even if it does make the speaker feel good, hides the severity and minimizes the criminal act. The attack if proven must be considered as a rape and an act of criminal violence.

Some claim that Abraham Martin is not guilty because there was no trial when the ships arrived, and Abraham was not sentenced. In addition, there is no mention of the prosecution afterwards. Also, Abraham ended his life without any other complaint or insinuation of this kind or other, brought against him. The “Dictionary of Canadian Biography” states that Abraham Martin “fell in the estimation of his fellow citizens when he was accused” however, documents prove that Abraham continued to live his life in society without any problems.

We can accuse a person but we cannot condemn them without proving guilt. Moreover, it would have been very difficult to have a fair trial, for both parties, because the victim died. It is true that there were no other charges that were documented. Given the shortage of legal papers available, Abraham Martin remains not guilty, in the eyes of the law.

The next questions are reflective. The

charge had been made some time before the victim was hanged. Why would a victim have made an accusation, about an innocent person, knowing one way or another that she should be hanged? What circumstances led this girl to lay a charge? Why did the officials believe that Abraham Martin should be imprisoned at that time? Why wait for the arrival of the boats in August before pronouncing a judgment?

There is only one victim in this circumstance, either the girl who says she was raped or Abraham Martin who was falsely accused.

We can not pass judgment on this issue. The scandal of all this episode is that a person is innocent. It would be interesting to find the documents, either to honor the memory of an unnamed girl or to exonerate an innocent man.

Abraham Martin died on September 8, 1664, in Québec City. His widow, Marguerite, Langlois remarried on February 17, 1665 with René Branche. She died a few months later in Québec City on December 17, 1665.

In addition to the Plains and the Côte-d’Abraham, there are two monuments dedicated to Abraham Martin.

Anne and Marie Martin, daughters of Abraham and Marguerite Langlois are our ancestors. Marie has four lines that lead to me on the Bérubé and Fréchette side, and Anne has two on the Fréchette side.

*(The Man Who United Irish- and Franco-Americans continued from page 43)*

Mainers will be well aware of President Kennedy’s campaign stops in the state – which included Franco-American centers such as Lewiston and Augusta. These towns were also Democratic centers, but it seems unlikely that the presence of large Franco-American populations was lost on the Senator. Appropriately enough, on Kennedy’s campaign tour of Maine he was accompanied by Senator Ed Muskie (of polish descent), and Lucia Cormier, a Franco-American who was running for US Senate. The Kennedy family were successful both at overcoming prejudice against Catholic Americans, and in uniting a variety of Democratic voters within the Catholic community. Without the support of Franco-Americans, America might not have had its most famous Irish-American president.

Notes: [1] Robert Kennedy and His Times, Arthur M. Schlesinger, p58  
 [2] Edward Kennedy: An Intimate Biography, Burton Hersh, p159  
 [3] Rose Kennedy: The Life and Times of a Political Matriarch, Barbara A. Perry.

**Franco-American Families  
of Maine  
par Bob Chenard,  
Waterville, Maine**

**DAIGLE  
(Deag\*)**

**FAMILY #1**

**Les Familles Daigle**

Welcome to my column. Over the years Le Forum has published numerous families. Copies of these may still be available by writing to the Franco-American Center. Listings such as this one are never complete. However, it does provide you with my most recent and complete file of marriages tied to the original French ancestor. How to use the family listings: The left-hand column lists the first name (and middle name or initial, if any) of the direct descendants of the ancestor identified as number 1 (or A, in some cases). The next column gives the date of marriage, then the spouse (maiden name if female) followed by the town in which the marriage took place. There are two columns of numbers. The one on the left side of the page, e.g., #2, is the child of #2 in the right column of numbers. His parents are thus #1 in the left column of numbers. Also, it should be noted that all the persons in the first column of names under the same number are siblings (brothers & sisters). There may be other siblings, but only those who had descendants that married in Maine are listed in order to keep this listing limited in size. The listing can be used up or down - to find parents or descendants. The best way to see if your ancestors are listed here is to look for your mother's or grandmother's maiden name. Once you are sure you have the right couple, take note of the number in the left column under which their names appear. Then, find the same number in the right-most column above. For example, if it's #57C, simply look for #57C on the right above. Repeat the process for each generation until you get back to the first family in the list. The numbers with alpha suffixes (e.g. 57C) are used mainly for couple who married in Maine. Marriages that took place in Canada normally have no suffixes with the rare exception of small letters, e.g., "13a." If there are gross errors or missing families, my sincere apologies. I have taken utmost care to be as accurate as possible. Please write to the FORUM staff with your corrections and/or additions with your supporting data. I provide this column freely with the purpose of encouraging Franco-Americans to research their personal genealogy and to take pride in their rich heritage.

Olivier Daigre (and **Daigle**), born in 1643 in France, died in Acadia, married circa 1666 at Port Royal (today, Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia) to Marie **Gaudet**, daughter of Denis Gaudet and Martine Gauthier of France and Port Royal. Olivier arrived in Acadia around 1663. His ancestors are believed to have originated from d'Aigre in the ancient province of Saintonge, France.

1	Olivier	circa	1666	Marie Gaudet	Port-Royal	2
2	Bernard		1692	M.-Marie Bourg (Jean Bourg & Marguerite Martin)	Pisiguit, Acadie	3
	Olivier		1699	Jeanne Blanchard (Guillaume Blanchard & Hugette Gougeon)	Port Royal	4
3	Joseph-Simon		1716	Madeleine Gaudreau	Pisiguit	6
	René	circa	1733	Madeleine Hébert	Grand-Pré	8
4	Pierre	18 Nov	1720	Anne Arsenault (Jean Arsenault & Anne Boudrot)	Beaubassin	10
6	Joseph-Simon	23 Nov	1762	Marguerite Guilbault	St.François-du-Sud	12
	" 2m.	02 Oct	1775	Charlotte Boulanger	Montmagny	
8	Joseph	17 Oct	1744	Marie Coulombe	St.Pierre-du-Sud	16
10	Paul	19 Jun	1748	M.-Joseph Hébert	Beaubassin	20
12	Joseph		1790	Théotiste Cyr	NB	12A
	Jean-Baptiste		18 Jul	1791 Marie-Anne Cyr	St.Basile, NB	24
16	Joseph	17 Jan	1797	Charlotte Pelletier	St.Roch-Aulnaies	32
20	Fabien	07 Nov	1780	M.-Rose Robichaud (b. c.1750 Malpègue - d.<1823) (d.17-10-1808 age 45 St.Charles-Borromée of childbirth) (Pierre Robichaud & Anne Michel)	Bonaventure	37
24	Jean-Baptiste	13 Jan	1818	Émilienne Morin	St.Basile, NB	48/24A
	<i>NOTE: Jean-Bte. &amp; Emilienne had 16 children born at St.Basile, NB</i>					
	Dominique	13 Jan	1818	Louise Gagné	St.Basile, NB	24B
	Hilarion	17 Feb	1824	Madeleine Ayotte	St.Basile, NB	50
	Augustin	02 Aug	1825	M.-Luce Cyr	St.Basile, NB	24C
	François	14 Oct	1828	Barbe Cyr	St.Basile, NB	52
	Régis	11 Jan	1831	Elisabeth Cyr	St.Basile, NB	53
	Germain	09 Oct	1832	Barbe-Céleste Mercure	St.Basile, NB	24D
32	Joseph	05 Feb	1839	Marie Caouette	St.Jean, Port Joli	61
	Basile	16 Apr	1860	M.-Philomène Gilbert	Beauceville	32A
37	twin infants (buried 3-6-1808 age 16 days St.Charles-Borromée)					
	Antoine	16 Sep	1823	Ursule Suret	Grande-Digue, NB	67
	(b.2-6-1803 Richibouctou - d.1881) (Charles Suret & Marguerite Bro/Brault of Cocagne, NB)					
48	Jean-Baptiste	13 Feb	1844	Anastasie Cyr	St.Basile, NB	74/48A
	(b.4-11-1818 St.Basile, NB)					
	Octave	15 Feb	1847	Suzanne Hébert	St.Basile, NB	75
	(b.29-2-1820 St.Basile, NB)					
	Didyme	10 Feb	1852	Marie Michaud (b.1834)	St.Pascal, Kam.	48B
	Lindor-Jos.	19 Feb	1860	Lucie Cyr	St.François, NB	48C
	(b.25-11-1831 St.Basile, NB) (b.4-9-1837 St.Basile, NB)(Régis Cyr & Euphrosine Martin)					
	Augustin	24 Nov	1863	Elisabeth Cyr	St.Basile, NB	48D
	(b.7-4-1837 St.Basile, NB)					
50	François-Régis	13 Jul	1852	Anastasie Cyr	Frenchville, Me.	50A
	" 2m.	01 Jan	1873	Modeste Martin	St.Basile, NB	50B
52	Isidore	06 Nov	1855	Sara Martin	Frenchville, Me.	85
	François	26 Apr	1864	Sophie Cyr	St.Basile, NB	88
	Anastasie	08 Jan	1881	Frédéric Hébert (d.29-9-1898 Madawaska, ME age 49)	St.Basile, NB	
	Modeste	15 Oct	1861	Octave Hébert (d.9-3-1899 Madawaska, ME age 62)	St.Basile, NB	
53	Salomon	25 Jul	1854	Christine Martin	St.Basile, NB	53A

(Continued on page 51)

(Daigle Family continued from page 50)

Joseph	17 Nov	1863	Philomène Cyr	St.Basile, NB	53B
61 Auguste	03 Feb	1874	M.-Malvina Caron	Ste.Perpétue, Islet	61A
67 Fabien	23 Sep	1854	Catherine Connors (James Connors & Sarah Gaff)	Cocagne, NB	96
74 Horace	20 May	1869	Gracieuse Brisebois	St.François, NB	74A
75 Simon	14 Aug	1890	Anaïse Collin	St.Hilaire, NB	75A
85 Isidore	23 Feb	1909	Agnès Jalbert	St.Basile, NB	85A
88 Joseph-Félix	01 Feb	1910	Marie Jalbert	St.Basile, NB	88A
96 Jacques	1m.	15 Nov	1886 Osite Melanson	Mont-Carmel, NB	96A
“James”			(Joseph Melanson & Madeleine Cormier)		
“	55 2m.	12 Jul	1915 Emelie (Cyr) Girouard, 41	Fitchburg, MA	
(b.1860 Can.)			(Jean-Louis ____ & Sarah Goguen)		

**The following are descendants of the above who married in Maine:**

12A	Vital	15 Apr	1844	M.-Rose Marquis	Frenchville	12B
12B	Maxime	10 Apr	1893	Marie Gagnon	Frenchville	12C
12C	Isabelle	01 Oct	1913	Dosithé Dionne	South Portland	
	Agnès	1m.	circa	1936 Alphée Soucy	Ft.Kent ?	
	“	2m.	19 May	1945 Henri Dubé	Biddeford(St.Jos.)	
	“	3m.	07 Feb	1959 George Lauzier	O.Orchard B.(St.Mgte.)	
24A	Firmin	23 Oct	1854	Euphémie Nadeau	Frenchville	24E1
	(b.22-6-1825 St.Basile - d.4-7-1904 Ft.Kent)			(b.1837 - d.1868-9 Fort Kent)		
	Michel	25 Jan	1855	Eléonore Martin	Frenchville	24E2
	(b.16-8-1826 St.Basile, NB)					
	Vital	31 Mar	1856	Julie Cyr	Frenchville	
	(b.27-1-1836 St.Basile, NB)					
24B	Antoine	26 Jun	1844	Seconde Soucy	Frenchville	24F1
	Honoré “Henry”	20 Jan	1856	Olympe Soucy	Frenchville	24F2
				(d.8-3-1900 Fort Kent, age 66)(Benjamin Soucy & Genv. Paradis)		
	Alcime	17 Feb	1857	Anastasie Chassé	Frenchville	24F3
24C	Raphaël	07 Feb	1854	Elizabeth Michaud	Frenchville	24G1
	Zéphirin	05 Apr	1864	Flavie Martin	St.Basile, NB	24G2
24D	Michel	28 Feb	1865	Marie Martin	Van Buren	24H
				(Rémi Martin & Marcelline Rioux)		
24E1	David	28 Jan	1880	Catherine Guay	Frenchville	24J1
	(b.1855 Daigle - d.26-9-1922 age 67 Frenchville)			(b.1856 ME)(Edouard Guay & Julie Cyr)		
	Malvina	14 Aug	1880	Thomas Audibert	Fort Kent	
	Dosité	15 Jun	1883	Philomène Quinn	Fort Kent	
	(b.Jul 1857 Daigle, ME)			(1900 census: adopted two - Malvina Cyr age 17 & Oral Gagnon age 8)		
	Flavie	17 Nov	1878	Magloire Fortin	Fort Kent	
	(b.1856 Daigle, ME)					
	Virginie					
	(b.1858 Daigle, ME)					
	Peter					
	(b.1860 Township 18 R7 - Daigle, ME)					
	Auguste	30 Oct	1882	Julie Marquis	Fort Kent	
	Alfred					
	(b.1861 Daigle, ME)					
	Josephine	05 Jul	1885	Joseph Gagnon	Fort Kent	
	(b.1863 Fort Kent ?)					
	Nathalie					
	(b.1865 Fort Kent ?)					
	Modeste					
	(b.1867 Fort Kent)					
	Eustache					
	(b.1868 Fort Kent)					
24E2	Thomas	circa	1885	Ruth Ramsay	Ft.Kent !	24J2
	Ovila	29 Apr	1892	Edithe Nadeau	Ft.Kent (to Wtv1.)	
24F1	Dominique	28 Aug	1866	Arthémise Michaud	St.François, NB	24K1
	Aimé	20 Jul	1867	Edith Cyr	St.Basile, NB	24K2
24F2	Médée	08 Jan	1894	Joseph Michaud	Ft.Kent	
	(b.29-9-1901 Wallagrass, age 55y 6m of childbirth)					

(See the next issue for more on the Daigle family)



Université du Maine  
**Le FORUM**  
Centre Franco-Américain  
Orono, ME 04469-5719  
États-Unis

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Orono, Maine  
Permit No. 8

### THE FRANCO AMERICAN CENTRE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE

The University of Maine Office of Franco American Affairs was founded in 1972 by Franco American students and community volunteers. It subsequently became the Franco American Centre.

From the onset, its purpose has been to introduce and integrate the Maine and Regional Franco American Fact in post-secondary academe and in particular the University of Maine.

Given the quasi total absence of a base of knowledge within the University about this nearly one-half of the population of the State of Maine, this effort has sought to develop ways and means of making this population, its identity, its contributions and its history visible on and off campus through seminars, workshops, conferences and media efforts — print and electronic.

The results sought have been the redressing of historical neglect and ignorance by returning to Franco Americans their history, their language and access to full and healthy self realizations. Further, changes within the University's working, in its structure and curriculum are sought in order that those who follow may experience cultural equity, have access to a culturally authentic base of knowledge dealing with French American identity and the contribution of this ethnic group to this society.

#### **MISSION**

- To be an advocate of the Franco-American Fact at the University of Maine, in the State of Maine and in the region, and
- To provide vehicles for the effective and cognitive expression of a collective, authentic, diversified and effective voice for Franco-Americans, and
- To stimulate the development of academic and non-academic program offerings at the University of Maine and in the state relevant to the history and life experience of this ethnic group and
- To assist and support Franco-Americans in the actualization of their language and culture in the advancement of careers, personal growth and their creative contribution to society, and
- To assist and provide support in the creation and implementation of a concept of pluralism which values, validates and reflects affectively and cognitively the Multicultural Fact in Maine and elsewhere in North America, and
- To assist in the generation and dissemination of knowledge about a major Maine resource — the rich cultural and language diversity of its people.

### LE CENTRE FRANCO AMÉRICAIN DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DU MAINE

Le Bureau des Affaires franco-américains de l'Université du Maine fut fondé en 1972 par des étudiants et des bénévoles de la communauté franco-américaine. Cela devint par conséquent le Centre Franco-Américain.

Dès le départ, son but fut d'introduire et d'intégrer le Fait Franco-Américain du Maine et de la Région dans la formation académique post-secondaire et en particulier à l'Université du Maine.

Étant donné l'absence presque totale d'une base de connaissance à l'intérieur même de l'Université, le Centre Franco-Américain s'efforce d'essayer de développer des moyens pour rendre cette population, son identité, ses contributions et son histoire visible sur et en-dehors du campus à travers des séminaires, des ateliers, des conférences et des efforts médiatiques — imprimé et électronique.

Le résultat espéré est le redressement de la négligence et de l'ignorance historique en retournant aux Franco-Américains leur histoire, leur langue et l'accès à un accomplissement personnel sain et complet. De plus, des changements à l'intérieur de l'académie, dans sa structure et son curriculum sont nécessaires afin que ceux qui nous suivent puisse vivre l'expérience d'une justice culturelle, avoir accès à une base de connaissances culturellement authentique qui miroite l'identité et la contribution de ce groupe ethnique à la société.

#### **OBJECTIFS:**

- 1 – D'être l'avocat du Fait Franco-Américain à l'Université du Maine, dans l'État du Maine et dans la région.
- 2 – D'offrir des véhicules d'expression affective et cognitive d'une voix franco-américaine effective, collective, authentique et diversifiée.
- 3 – De stimuler le développement des offres de programmes académiques et non-académiques à l'Université du Maine et dans l'État du Maine, relatant l'histoire et l'expérience de la vie de ce groupe ethnique.
- 4 – D'assister et de supporter les Franco-Américains dans l'actualisation de leur langue et de leur culture dans l'avancement de leurs carrières, de l'accomplissement de leur personne et de leur contribution créative à la société.
- 5 – D'assister et d'offrir du support dans la création et l'implémentation d'un concept de pluralisme qui value, valide et reflète effectivement et cognitivement le fait dans le Maine et ailleurs en Amérique du Nord.
- 6 – D'assister dans la création et la publication de la connaissance à propos d'une ressource importante du Maine — la riche diversité