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Winter 2-2020

Le Forum, Vol. 41 No. 4

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Recommended Citation

Michaud, Lisa Desjardins; Michaud, Richard; Gauvin, Marie-Anne; Coulombe, Gérard; Wing, Katherine; Moreau, Daniel; Myall, James; L'Heureux, Juliana; Beebe, Suzanne; Lacroix, Patrick; Arsenault, Kerri; Beaupre, Normand; Pelletier, Susann; Duclos, Marcel; Foundation of MN, French American Heritage; Bergeron, Wilfred H. (Chip); Labbé, Wilbur; Langford, Margaret; Levesque, Don; and Chenard, Robert, "Le Forum, Vol. 41 No. 4" (2020). *Le FORUM Journal*. 93.

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Le FORUM



“AFIN D’ÊTRE EN PLEINE POSSESSION DE SES MOYENS”

VOLUME 41, #4

WINTER/HIVER 2019-20



Painting by Patty A. Labbé

Websites:

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Oral History: <https://video.maine.edu/channel/Oral+Histories/101838251>

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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

Franco-American Women’s Institute:

<http://www.fawi.net>





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Volume 41 Numéro 4
 WINTER/HIVER 2019-20

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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.

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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,

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 Le FORUM

Centre Franco-Américain, Orono, ME 04469-5719



Lettres/ Letters

Chère Le Forum;

A subscription for me, (electronically only), a subscription for my sister-in-law (paper only), and some extra.

Always a pleasure working with you—plenty more article ideas to work on. You'll be hearing from me as always.

Merci à tous au **Le Forum!**

Suzanne Beebe

Merci Suzanne,

Thank you for renewing your subscriptions. Likewise, it has been a pleasure working with you as well! Our readership thanks you for your interesting submissions and we look forward to more!

**Merci bien!
Le Forum**

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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.

Chère Le Forum;

I read the whole **Forum**, French & English. I love it, every page is beautiful! Keep up your good work. It's great!

*Cecile M. Vigue
Fairfield, ME*

Merci Cecile,

The Le Forum would not be possible without our great community support! I thank you for your kind letter!

**Merci bien!
Le Forum**

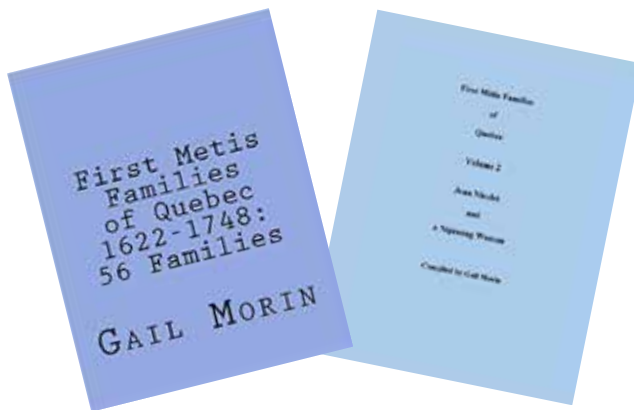


SAVE THE DATE ~ Mardi Gras Potluck

**February 25, 2020
6:00 p.m. -
8:00 p.m.**

*Join us for fun, food & music!
Franco-American Centre*

*Contact: Lisam@maine.edu
Call: 581-3789*



Are you interested in genealogy? Do you need help?

Consider joining our genealogy group, "Orono Franco-American Research Opportunity Group (OFAROG)". We have a genealogist available to help answer any questions you may have regarding research and sources. We have a library dedicated to Genealogical research, filled with materials and resources, the Adrian Lanthier Ringuette Library.

*We are here from 8:00 to 4:30 and by special appointment.
Contact Lisa Michaud at Lisam@maine.edu or 207.581.3789
or our Genealogist:
Debbie Roberge at deborah.e.roberge@gmail.com*



Maine Trip

By *Richard Michaud*

13 August 1999

*Trip to Quebec/Maine
family history trip*

It didn't hit me as to where I was and why until the afternoon of the second day while standing in the middle of the St. Louis Catholic cemetery in Kamouraska, Quebec Canada. I had stood in one place and slowly turned in a full circle and everywhere I looked the names were almost as familiar as my own. Here was Pelletier, Dube, Ouellett and there was Tardiff, Boucher, and Dionne, to name just a few. They were all French Canadian names and I was walking the home ground where my Michaud Ancestors had lived, walked and died. The spirit of the extended family seemed to wash over me in waves. My throat tightened and tears came freely as my spirit seemed to join with those of the family members of my heritage who had come to this land some 350 years ago. It all began over two years ago when my Air Force fighter squadron planned to hold a reunion in Danbury, CN in the summer of 1999. It was long ways to go but the New England fall colors and old friends would be worth it. Then trip expanded to include a later discovered Michaud and also an Ouelette reunion in Canada and a six week RV trip around the ancestral area of northern Maine. But finally and more realistically, family existences distilled it to just the family history effort (a tough decision to miss the old Air Force gang) consisting of a nine day trip to the Michaud reunion and for the first time in my life to the Michaud area of northern Maine where my dad was born. I tried to brush up on my French, get all the family history data history together in a plan, and otherwise prepare for the trip, but other family things seemed to take priority. After a fun, four day RV trip with daughter Stan and Kath and Merrill to fish in Idaho waters, I got back and found I had just two days to get ready. But then nothing works out perfectly.

13 August 1999

Friday I flew out of SLC on Friday the 13th our wedding anniversary (but Pat was in Mesa anyway) and mother in law Tory Gossner's birthday (nothing was timed right), and got into Montreal about 4:30pm

just in time to struggle to exit the city in the afternoon "escape" race and in the middle of a driving rainstorm to boot. After seven plus hours of driving up the south shore of the St. Laurence River I arrived in Kamouraska, Quebec at 12:30am only to find my reserved motel closed and I had to go back down the road to one I could find open. Kamouraska, Quebec is the town where the original immigrant from France-Pierre Michael (Michau) finally settled down, worked a large section of land, died and where most of the first



*Parish clerk helps me find info on
Jean Romain*

five or six generations also lived and died. Pierre had come to Quebec in 1655, served his three years of indentured work for his passage on the "La Fortune," got married to Marie Ancelin (Assellin), moved from the island of Orleans just offshore Quebec City, downstream to the Isle of Geese, to the Isle of Cranes, to Islet on the south shore, had nine children along the way and finally to Kamouraska.

14 August 1999

Saturday I moved into my reserved motel in Kamouraska) there are just two in town plus several B&B's) and drove up and down the main street several times (about a mile long running along the St. L-took awhile to figure out that all the houses had the number "325" on them which turned out to be the number of years Kamouraska had been in existence; found the civic center in back of the Chapel of St. Louis (built in 1909 after the previous three had

burned down) and wandered in to see what was going on. The hall was about the size of two church rec halls, but laid out with the stage at the far end. I quickly ran into Françoise Michaud Dufresne, a petit lady in her seventies who is considered the premier author and historian of the Michaud family. She is the former president of the Michaud Association and the author of the most complete work (in French) on the first four Michaud generations in French Canada, which I have. She and I have talked on the phone and written several times and we gave each other a warm hug, chatted for a bit and then I invited her to continue with her to continue with her reunion duties and we would see each other later. She asked me to have lunch at her house on Monday before we parted. I wandered around, noticing the paintings of notable houses on the walls, took pics of a couple of them including the Michaud one, noticed a corner table devoted to Michaud's and one to Asselin's (first time the two families have ever met together); went to the Michaud table and met Louis, the president, and several other association officers, all of whom spoke very adequate English. Unfortunately the only officer who doesn't speak a word of English was the genealogist! Stopped at the Asselin's table and picked up their family history (and through that was reminded that they had a lot more children besides Pierre's Marie). Found some English speaking Canadians and some Americans (Maine and Michigan), had lunch with the group and then all went on a two hour bus tour of the old Kamouraska Parsh, which included about five or six other towns, each having their own church. In the early, Kamouraska was the primary center for church, social seaport, judicial for many decades. It "lost" the judicial when the court house burned down and politics moved the seat of justice to Riviere du loup, a larger town to the north; and later the sea trade went to nearby St. Pascal when the railroad came through the valley. It is a beautiful little town now on the river's edge. The St. Laurence valley is broad and fertile. Lots of dairy farms along with grain and corn in the fields. Scattered throughout are "mounds" of rock-granite or shale, upon which many towns, including Kamouraska, are built, thus leaving all the valley land for farms. It was interesting to note that if a road came to one of the mounds; it just went straight up and over it. Coming down the far side was sometimes quite a thrill. At the end of the tour we went to the area they had

(Suite page 5)

(Maine Trip continued from page 4)

marked the fields, which were believed to be Pierre's. His was a large farm for the times -14 argents (acres) frontage on the St. L. At one time the chapel was only a few blocks from Pierre's, but after two chapels burned down the Catholic Bishop determined that the next chapel was to be built where the town now stands (on a three mile by one mile mound). Actually the third one also burned down and the current one (the 4th) is build on its foundation. At the site of the first two chapels is a memorial to the first pioneers of Kamouraska, and Pierre's name leads the list and the comment that about 1300 plus early residents are buried at the site, but there are no gravestones. So I'm assuming that Pierre/Marie Asselin, and the sons in our line residents are buried at the site, but there are no gravestones. So I'm assuming that Pierre/Marie Asselin, and the sons in our line Jean Baptiste/Marie Vaillancour, Jean Baptiste/Cecil Ouellet Jean François/Marie Cote, Pierre/Marie LaMarre are all buried there. The next in line, Jean Romain came to Maine in the mid 1800's. After the tour, we had free time and that's when I wandered into the cemetery to see if I could find any family graves. It was then that I experienced the sensation of being surrounded by the spirit of my ancestors, as in truth, I recognized almost every name there. However, none there were readable, or even still standing, from the period earlier than about 1875. The ones prior that time had since become unreadable because of the wearing away of the particular kind of stone, most often a light, tan colored, sandstone. The readable ones after 1870's are mostly granite. Later I changed to a sport coat and tie and went back to dinner and evening festivities. Sat with several English-speaking folks, including two ladies from Ontario whom I called the dynamic duo. They will be a good contact for family history. The new "standard operating procedure" at reunions (and probably other gatherings) now is that you don't worry about their name and address, you just ask for their email address. It's the most productive connection. Then we ate and watched some entertainment and I left early to get out of the cigarette smoke.

15 August 1999

Sunday we all went to a High Mass at St. Louis Church. Amazing that the chapels were built for an area which had only about 300 people in it (every town has one generally on a hill in the middle of town very

picturesque). They are improved upon as the years go by and I thought this one was quite ornate and very beautiful. Probably would hold 6-700 people. They had a presentation by members of the Michaud/Asselin families before the Mass which was interesting in that the people were all dressed in clothing of the early French style. When they passed the contribution basket to a rather full house, the one (of four) that got to me didn't have much in it although there was a good crowd. I gave a good sum extra on behalf of all the past Michaud's. The Association had a business meeting that afternoon but I didn't go as it was to be all in French. Instead I drove about



Fort Kent Title Office

20km upstream to Riviere Ouelle which is mentioned often in our history and ran into the commemoration to Rene Ouellete, major wife line-Cecille. I would have gone further to Islet where Pierre was for a while, but I was short on gas and didn't want to buy any on **Sunday**.

16 August 1999

Monday I found a little bakery (a German lady who had married a local Frenchman) and got a few goodies to take to Françoise, walked through the cemetery again, took a picture of the Pierre Michaud bridge over the Kamouraska creek, and went to Françoise's at 11:30 am. She has a lovely house with the backyard right on the St Laurence River. You could see a ship on the opposite side of the river in the deeper channel as I just noticed by the picture of Françoise and me that the tide is out leaving little water on her side. On the Kamouraska side you could see the eel nets getting ready for the fall catch which will be sent to Asia. She had a sitting room of wicker and pillows with windows on three sides over looking

the river. It was the most lovely, peaceful setting. She had fixed a lunch and then we talked for over three hours. I had written to her after getting a copy of her "First Four Generations" book on the Michaud's and expressed my gratitude for her significant work (it really is) so we got along like two old friends. While there, she gave me, with what I perceived as evident pleasure, a complete set of the past journals of the Michaud Association. She had been president and is the editor. I can't wait to get into them even tho they are generally in French. Her husband, a retired doctor, had to go to Quebec City so I missed him. Afterwards, I took quick tour through the local musee' (museum) which really had the best collection of household and farm tools I have ever seen. Took a couple of more pics and headed, short on gas, down the river bank (the road on the south side of the St. L is like Route 66 in that all the vacationers take it for the view and history) and then east to Maine. I figure that I got the following good family history stuff from the visit to Kamouraska.

1-A feel for the ancestral homeland of Pierre which you can only get from actually going there.

2-a future identity with the Michaud Association and officers

3-A chance to meet family genealogical expert Françoise Michaud Dufresne and to increase our friendship

4- Got a copy of Françoise' genealogy on all of the pioneers of Kamouraska about 150pages

5-Got a copy of Asselin (Pierre Marie) genealogy history book of 360 pages

6-Pictures of the Michaud Monument, bridge, land etc. and historical Graphic material.

7-Pictures of Rene Hoallett (Ouelette) monument in River Ouelle

8-Gift of full set of past (twelve years) Michaud "Le Brelan" association publication

I found out that you need to get your dollars changed for Canadian money at a bank because every gas station and motel gives you way less then the going rate. A Canadian dollar is about 60% of a US dollar at a bank. I got to Clair, NB just across the border (St John River) late in the afternoon and decided to stay in a Canadian motel as it would be cheaper. Found the very nice Maple Leaf in Clair overlooking the border checkpoint. The owner Reno, who spoke excellent English, and I got along just fine. The St. John is about 80-100 yds across (Continued on page 6)

(Maine Trip continued from page 5)

and is a lot of water. I saw photographs of huge log drifts taken years ago when they used it to float the logs downstream (now they use trucks). Incidentally, one of our families drowned in the St. John downstream by Fredricton. I drove around Ft. Kent/Wallagrass for a couple of hours to get a feel for it. Ft. Kent, Frenchville and Madawaska run along the south bank of the St. John. Wallagrass, Soldier pond and Eagle Lake run south by the Fish River.

17 August 1999

First thing, I called Aurora and Bernard and made an appointment to go to their place in the early afternoon. So that morning I drove over to Frenchville and Madawaska, both Michaud connected, and is downstream (east) of Ft. Kent. Didn't have time to do much other than walk the St. Louis (Ft. Kent) and the St. Luce (Frnchville) cemeteries so I had to go back the next day. I spent the whole afternoon with Aurora and Bernard. They have a lovely, two stories, and porch, white home beside the "Wallagrass Stream" creek on an old family Michaud farm of 4-500 acres. Bernard was born in the house. Aurora was the original Michaud (she's a Pelletier) who had sent us some genealogy 20 or 30 names. She had a 3x5 card on each person-two recipe boxes full. And some other printed material, an old daguerreotype pic. of ggggrandfather Romain, another of his son Nalbert and wife. I asked her for some photo copies of all of it which she did for me the next day. We talked for three or four hours about the family. Bernard would come in every once in a while and take a quick look at some of the stuff, offer a short comment (classic New England man of few words) about not understanding all this stuff and then go back to the TV. When we were through he wanted to "show me the farm", so we hopped in his pickup and took a tour. I think he was truly hoping to show me a moose. I was surprised that they could grow potatoes and grain on what seemed to be the tops of the hills. It was leased out now, but I was a beautiful farm, and house, and a great place to raise kids. One of their boys went to the Air Academy and one to the Naval Academy. All were good looking kids in the family picture.

18 August 1999

I took the morning and went back to Madawaska and found Linda Dube, (we had already talked on the phone) a major

genealogist in New England. I got a volume on Cote (Marie Ann, wife of Pierre II abt 1786), and Dube (Helene, mother of Marie Cyr, ggf Calixte wife)- I can still see in my mind's eye Marie's name on their tombstone as I stood and looked at it Whoaaa, I just got all choked up and teary eyed thinking about these great ladies and the certainty of meeting them some day. There is surely truth to the testimonies of a spiritual connection between us when we are involved in finding our ancestors. And a volume on Thibideaus (Margaret, gggmother of Marie Cyr). Linda is awesome. She gets a contract to "do" a family line and she'll jump on it about Sept/Oct when winter approaches in Maine and by May/June she'll have three big volumes covering the first to the last of the family, complete with pics of most of the families of the 1900's. What an organizer!! We got talking about a couple of my family and she



Aurora's home on Michaud Road in Wallagrass, Maine

lead me downstairs to her "office" and proceeded to go to a six foot long cabinet, about six drawers high, all full of 3x5 cards-and she had a card on all of the families we were talking about. I really think she has a card on every French-Canadian there ever was. She then told me about Geraldine Chasse, whom I just had to see. She called Geraldine and in ten minutes I was on the other side of town at Geraldine's big, farm house. Found out that it had a 200 a year old log cabin inside of it (couldn't see it, but it was supposed to be fitted in there) and a mass of rooms on the second floor. Geraldine is another family history guru of the area and a hoot to visit with. I ended up with 125 bucks worth of books out of her retail library. It would take me a bunch of pages to relate all her tales

(and that's the ones I could remember). I got a small book on the Ayottes, Fourniers, and eight other history books on the Maine/New Brunswick area and the Acadians. She's on email and said "write me any time!" Lovely lady. On the way home I detoured to the Diagle cemetery to see if I could find Vital Ayotte's grave (that's where my records show he's supposed to be), but couldn't find anything on him, but I did get chased by a flock of white geese who wouldn't take "git" for an answer. So went to St. Louis Parish in Ft. Kent and found death record on him and Romain, ggf. That's a neat experience to have the rectory clerk open the vault (big, creaky metal door) and reach up and take down a volume which was the actual book of entry for the 1800's and then they shift from one to the other in nono-second. Aurora had a comment from a local historian that he thought that Romain had left Kamouraska because the English had "impressed" him into the military for the War of 1812 and he did the only honorable thing a Frenchman could do under those circumstances-he disserted and came to America where they couldn't find him. The historian also said that Romain wasn't supposed to have been the most devoted Catholic, so when he died, he was buried "over the fence" between the cemetery and the Fish River. The clerk also thought that was where Vital Ayotte probably was buried because I couldn't find him in the old cemetery. And as chance would have it, in later years the Fish River really flooded and Gpa Romain and Vital (and others) were washed out into the St. John River and thence to the Atlantic Ocean!! You can only come up with those stories when you go back to the old home site. That afternoon I went back to Aurora's and she had all the photocopies for me. We still have a lot to talk about next time I go back.

19 August 1999

Thursday in the morning at 8 am sharp I stopped in at the Aroostook city office and only was able to barely scratch the surface of what I'm sure is there. I got a copy of a couple of deeds which state that GF Denis sold a couple of strips of land to the Fish River RR Co. I think I can come closer to pin pointing the location of his farm now as at least I know remembers his dad saying that GF Denis was often at their house before he, Denis, left. Now "left" was kind of uncertain as to where, however I had Waterville, ME as a death location, but no date. Aurora/Bernard thought they had heard that is where (Continued on page 7)

(Maine Trip continued from page 6)

he had “left” for. I had called cousin and professional genealogist, Mary Michaud in Manchester outside of Augusta, ME, the night before and had arranged to take her to dinner when I got down there. Here’s a list of more family history goodies that I got in the Ft Kent area:

9-Dube family book

10-Cote family book

11- Madawaska History book of 150 pages

12-History geneology of Madawaska Fourniers of 30 pages

13-History geneology of St. John Valley Ayottes of 32 pages

14-Thibodeau family book of 95 pages

15-23-Seven “half-sized” maunuals of about 40-50 pages each on the history/culture of the northern Maine area.

24-Picture of gggfather Romain and short history

25-Document of Romain’s death

26-Document of Vital Ayotte’s death

27-Complete pedigree of Vital and family

28-Eight pages on Michaud’s from U of Maine publication

29-Twenty eight more pages (single spaced) on Michaud’s by same U of M author

30-Ten more pages on Michaud’s as commissioned by Annette E. Michaud

31-Map of St. Laurence showing where Pierre lived and when

32-Two pages from “History of Maine” on Thomas and T.T Michaud, descendants of Romain

33-Letter on “two” Romains from Guy Dubay of the Madawaska Historical Society

34-Eleven page pedigree on the St. John Valley Cyrs

35-Two deed extracts on Denis/Mary Jane sale of land to Fish River RR

36-Reunion with Aurora and Bernard who have given us so much family history

37-Found and photograph ggf Calixte/Marie’s grave in old St.Joseph’s Parish cemetery in Wallagrass

38-Determined that Vital is not buried in New Canada cemetery and probably both he and Romain’s graves no longer exist

39-added to family history network Linda Dube, Geraldine Chasse, and several other agency connections

So about 9:30am I took off for Manchester/Waterville. Two lane road for the

upper half of the state, past Eagle Lake where Aurora said that they had a “camp”. I first thought, a place where they pitched a tent and camped? But found out later that is the term for cabin, generally on a lake, of which Maine has many of. Lots, repeat lots of camps in ME. It is the same thing as I remember about the Minnesotans who go to their cabin on the lake (dad had one on Lake Krononis). When I go back again, I’ve got to go either to Bernard’s camp or a commercial



Family genealogist, Françoise Michaud Dufresne at home in Kamarouska, Canada

one and experience how folks from Maine go to camps. The two lane roads were just like driving up by Yellowstone-lined by pine trees, but Maine, a few hardwoods mixed in. Beautifully green and verdant. Had to stop at the Old Town Canoe Co. factory store. Could have gotten 1500-2000 dollar canoes for 5-600 dollars because they were scratched. I’ll have to tell Jim and Clay that I’ll pick up a canoe and haul it back to AZ if they’ll make a good contribution to my next trip back. You see lots of canoes on top of cars in Maine. The small lakes and ponds and slow, no rapids, rivers are ideal for canoes. Still had some time when I went to Waterville, so I swung off the freeway and stopped at the city clerk’s office. She found Denis’ death certificate and that’s when I first found out that he had been killed by a train! Got a couple of other papers from her and the instructions to the Catholic Cemetery

and I drove to it. There was a clerk and her dad in the sexton’s house and they located Denis’ grave right away (3X5 cards). Also got some obits on Alvin and Belle. They took me to the site and there was Gpa Denis and Gma Mary Jane Ayotte, plus son Calix (Denis), son Alvin (the only family member I had ever seen and the one who left three silver dollars in my hand when he shook hands to say goodbye) and his wife, and a Nancy B, sister Belle and I think, his sister Philomene squeezed in between them and the next family. I still need to do some document searching on the whole family. So then I took off for Manchester, down to Augusta to meet Mary. Found her place thanks to a map I had made back home on my Street Atlas software. And per chance, her ex husband (as of several months back) was there when I pulled up. He left; we fed the 8 cats and took off for an Olive Garden restaurant. Mary is an executive secretary for a construction company and in the more slack winter season, she does genealogical research for people. She was a Michaud before she was married and her ex was a Michaud so she still is a Michaud. And she has, she said, about 9000 names on her computer (Family Tree software) on the family. She said any time I’m ready she’ll GEDCOM me my lines. I’m going to load my new Legacy program, then take a six week class on it in Oct/Nov, at the Family History Center and then maybe I’ll be ready for them. We had a gabby good time. She is very sharp and said if I had any Maine problems cases just let her know. It was about 8pm so I drove back up to Waterville and got a motel room.

20 August 1999

Friday I worked on getting a news release or obit of Denis’ accident up at Colby College library (got news release of accident), went to the State Archives in Augusta to see what I could get later on the internet-not much, got to Fairfield too late to get a death certificate on Mary Jane and any others, so will have to write for those, managed to lock myself out of the car twice, but pulled out my trusty, little Swiss army knife, cut me a long, thin branch and by forcing the windows got at the door lock and opened it; checked back at the sexton’s house but could find nobody; ran to several close towns trying to locate grandchildren of Belle who were still living; finally found/identified a Wayne Pelletier, but couldn’t raise him; and generally ran out of time with a lot I could have done still undone. (Continued on page 8)

(Maine Trip continued from page 7)

I did phone Wayne when I got home and he seemed to be quite well informed on the family (for a man) and very willing to help. I have to get a family group sheet and pedigree updated and sent it to him. Friday night I pulled into a mall to get a digger to trim the edges of the flat gravestones of the grave site and what do I see but an LL Bean factory sale. I couldn't pass it up a couple things for me and a few things for others.

21 August 1999

I went back to the cemetery and cleaned up the individual markers on Gpa Michaud's site, blew them a kiss and a prayer, and headed for Montreal. Somewhere out in the no man's land of Maine outback. Eustis I think, I spotted a historical society museum so I had to stop. Interestingly they had the Maine Registers, in the 1917-18 (FHL didn't have them so I'll have to look on film). One under Wallagrass Plantation (old world for like a district) I found that they used to have a post office called Michaud. You never know what you'll find. Then a little ways further I saw a sign saying "stone mason." I had really been wondering why some rock outcropping were granite and some shale. His answer, "well, it depends on what the glaciers left where!" Seems reasonable. Then a little ways further I saw a sign "T-shirts, gifts etc" I had been looking for a shirt with a loon on it (state bird)-(I was wrong on that) all the time I had been in Maine so I had to pull over and see what she had. She didn't have one, but kind of

wondered why she made me some loon Maine as a logo where the pocket goes on a polo shirt. Neat. Also picked up some 2000 calendars (Maine scenes) for mom and GG and a cute pair of salt and pepper shakers for the kitchen, island stove. I now had so much stuff crammed in my bags that I had to buy a security strap for the big one. Then it was time for lunch and I stopped at the



Sign indicates location of Pierre's farm on South bank of St. Laurent

"lumberman's café" where you walk straight up to the counter and order (the cook's right behind the order taker and starts throwing your order on the stove even as you speak, you are called back to pick up your order, and you eat sitting on sawed off stumps and on wooden tables, have more than enough to eat, and then bus your own dishes. Can't have experiences like that on the freeways. I had already decided that since I had to get up early enough to turn in the car and be an

hour early to a 6 am takeoff that I would just sleep in the passenger lounge. Which I did. So to make a long story end, I finally made it home after a late takeoff, a missed flight out of Cincinnati and a sleepy drive home to Logan. But a grand, grand trip all in all. Everyone should go back to their roots and I hope I can go back again and do some more. And the list of family history goodies from

this location.

40-Found and photographed Gf Denis' and Gm Mary Jane's gravesite other family member.

41-Denis Death Certificate

42-News release on Denis' death

43-Sister Belle death certificate

44- Alvin's death date and site's name

45-location and photo of Denis' family plot in St. Francis Catholic Cemetery in Waterville, ME

46-Various data on other members Denis' family

47-Contact with a cousin of my generation who will help me identifies and contacts other cousins and hopefully, one of them will have the pictures and history of the family

I'd say that it was a very successful and profitable trip to acquire at least 47 valuable items of family history. I'll let you in on its many contributions to our history as I get it organized. And thanks for reading the whole thing!! Much love and hugs, Dad/Gpa.Dick P.S Sorry they didn't have a special on color this week so you get to see these lovely, neat color pics in unlively shades of gray.

(N.D.L.R. Reprinted from Le Club Français Newsletter, Le Fanal.

Publié par Marie-Anne Gauvin dans Le Fanal (Le Club Français). Soumis par Jacqueline Blesso)

LA PIE BAVARDE

À tous et à chacun:

Comme vous le savez tous, nous avons cinq sens, l'ouïe, l'odorat, le gout et le toucher. En général, nous ne sommes pas conscients de ces sens qui nous permettent de fonctionner normalement. Une interruption de la normale nous fait réagir de différentes manières.

Par exemple, l'ouïe permet la perception des sons. Si c'est trop fort nous avons envie de se mettre les mains sur les oreilles, l'organe de l'ouïe. C'est une réaction normale qui veut protéger les parties délicates internes. De nos jours ceux qui travaillent près de ou avec des machines bruyantes

doivent se protéger en portant des cache-oreilles.

Si le son est bref mais très fort, il peut nous faire sauter ou nous faire échapper un cri de surprise. Je me rappelle qu'un beau matin j'étais allée essayer de pêcher dans le petit ruisseau qui se vidait dans le lac pas très loin de mon chalet. Je suis arrivée

silencieusement au bord d'un remous. J'ai envoyé ma ligne dans ce remous avec un ver de terre accroché au hameçon. J'étais seule. Tout était silencieux sauf quelques oiseaux et le ruisseau qui chantaient à leur façon. Soudain, tout près de moi, un son comme si quelqu'un avait lancé une grosse roche dans le trou d'eau. FLOC! Un grand

cri m'a échappé tellement ça m'a fait peur. Je ne l'avais pas vu mais un castor, lui, m'avait vue. Lui aussi, je crois avait été surpris. C'est leur façon de nous avertir. Il se claque la grosse queue plate sur l'eau. Je l'ai vu s'en aller la tête sur l'eau suivant le courant, fier de son coup! La vue m'a aidée à comprendre ce qui s'était passé.

De temps en temps, plusieurs sens ensemble nous font réagir. Longtemps passé, 1944, j'étais assise à lire dans un fauteuil à bascule dans le petit salon de la maison familiale et mon père supposément écoutait la radio dans l'autre coin du salon. Je crois qu'il sommeillait plutôt, les jambes (suite page 9)



Things that Happen*

By Gerard Coulombe

I believe in miracles. I don't know if you do. And, before you ask, I believe in all kinds of miracles. If this goes against the grain, let me explain. Never mind. I'm going to tell you.

One, I must declare that I was born Catholic. Catholics like my parents believed in miracles; so did we. Certainly, there were many miracles prayed for, and many of these miracles were granted. I can attest to that. My mother, for example, prayed that I be cured of Legg-Calve-Perthes disease. I was thirteen in 1944. Our home physician told my mother that it was TB of the bones. So, Mother prayed to the Reverend Zenon Decary, a saintly, deceased parish priest whose canonization was being sought by parishioners who knew of his holiness. He was buried on the grounds of Saint Francis College, which later became the University of New England in Biddeford, Maine. With the passage of time, "Le Pere Zenon's cause in Rome died with the passing of the elderly parishioners like my mother and the *laicization* of the College.**

Two of my mother's sisters were nuns. And they too prayed for their nephew. They prayed for an intercession from Mere d'Youville, foundress of the Soeurs Grise of Montreal. I believe, as my mother did, that through the intercession of these holy people, I was helped to overcome this malady, which originally had been diagnosed by our family practitioner as "TB of the bones." Saint d'Youville was canonized in 1990.

Although our mother spent a great deal of her time when we were young taking care of us, she had developed the custom of relying on prayer and self-medication as the primary cures, the rosary, cough syrup and something else, like castor oil, that tasted just awful.

When she developed breast cancer later in life, she took care not to tell anyone, not even my sisters, so that before she died her cancer had metastasized and was growing outside the breast tissue. My wife, a nurse, saw it. By then, Mother had also showed it to my oldest sister with whom my mother was, by then, living. It was all too late. As far as she was concerned, she was to die at the good age of eighty-one. It was time anyway because her friends had all passed including all of her sisters, some I had known and some

that she had never told me about.

I grew up figuring out that my mother had four sisters and one brother who was not allowed in the home because his wife died, he was dating a hairdresser who was divorced and so whenever on occasion he visited for whatever reason, he was not admitted, but required to stand in the doorway to deliver his greeting or request, whatever had brought him to the doorsill.

Over a number of years, or by the time I left home, I had learned that Mother had had two brothers and six sisters. Then, surprisingly, another sister appeared out of Canada, someone my mother had never mentioned [nor had my aunts or uncle]. And, in recent years, I learned again, inadvertently, through a little research and by happenstance, having hit upon the right branch of the family, that there had been eleven children born to my grandparents. By this time, I was nonplused, as I had long ago learned that a living uncle and wife of my wife's had had twenty-seven some live births, and I had known him, but never met her. Although I did learn that she had divorced him after the last of the living children left home.

When my brother-in-law, my younger sister's husband, my older sister having been deceased for some years, passed away of Alzheimer's, it had been the second time with this diagnosis in the family.. It is not at all difficult to explain. The first time he was diagnosed, he had been gradually diagnosed through the stage of dementia before he started exhibiting behavior assigned those with Alzheimer's disease.

His wife, my sister, was with him all the way. He had expressed to me on the occasion of a family wedding, that he had no idea why it was that he had married my sister. This is unrelated to my sister's or his state of mind at the time. It was something said reflexively. Yet, I wondered about his state of mind, but never about his mental state. It was something that I could understand, and I forgot about it.

His disease grew, and the family watched it, whenever they visited in Maine, and I heard about it, upon our family's visits or whenever we happened to get together for some celebratory occasion. My older sister
(Continued from page 10)

(La Pie Bavarde suite de page 8)



allongées devant lui. Ma mère dans la cuisine, la première à réagir au pet qui nous a paru comme un coup de fusil. Sans avoir le temps de réagir au cri de mort de ma mère, la radio s'est mise à péter du feu. Aie! Je suis restée figée dans ma chaise. Mon père s'est vite replier les jambes. Tous les deux, nous avions la vue fixée sur les étincelles qui pétillaient en arrière de la radio et qui roulaient vers nous sur le plancher. Puis une odeur de foudre et de fumé nous avertissaient que quelque chose brûlait. Nous avons compris plus tard que le tonnerre était tombé dans l'antenne installée dans un poteau dehors rendant meilleure réception de la radio. En suivant le fil de l'antenne, le tonnerre avait pénétré dans la maison et brûlé l'intérieur de la radio. Il a continué à suivre le fil qui brûlait au fur et à mesure qu'il avançait jusqu'au sous-sol en s'évadant par le fil de terre à l'extérieur.

Ce petit récit prouve que plusieurs sens, l'ouïe, l'odorat et la vue ensemble peuvent s'engager à nous surprendre ou à nous prévenir du danger. Ma foi, j'étais tellement traumatisée que j'ai eu peur jusqu'au lendemain quand j'ai pu enfin maîtriser mon énervement. Heureusement, jamais plus ai-je eu peur des tempêtes de tonnerre. Apprécions tous nos cinq sens. Ils sont merveilleusement créés.

— Votre pie bavarde. Marie-Anne



(Things that Happen* continued from page 9)

and brother-in law noticed and talked about it with us. My two sisters certainly discussed it. On walks around the neighborhood, he might get lost and enter the wrong house. In a condo neighborhood where people know all the neighbors, it would not be unusual to leave the doors unlocked if one were home or visiting another in the same development.

My brother-in-law's behavior took on a gravity that underscored a change in the disease when his actions caused considerable consternation to his wife. He had become a sundowner. When he was found by a local patrolman in the nude and stuck in a snowbank in the middle of the night, it was time for action. He was taken to a hospital and then transferred to a home from which he would most likely never return.

Of course, his wife was not about to give up. She prayed, and she asked her friends and family to pray for him. They prayed for a miracle. After some time in the nursing home and after whatever adjustments were made in his care my brother-in-law was released to go home. He knew

who he was and was totally aware of his surroundings. They could once again take their morning walks in the mall, have their coffee in their own coffee cups hanging in their special places on the wall along with other cups belonging to the regulars at their favorite rural village coffee shop. It was down some highway familiar to them all where they had enjoyed years of breakfast and coffee with Rotary friends.

I asked my priest if he still believed in miracles because, well, because we Catholics don't hear as much about local or personal miracles as we used to, not even about someone local holding a winning lottery ticket. That's my view. Father told me he still believed; he did not confirm my view about their frequency. Since I wrote this, the above priest was reassigned, and the one who took his place was so loaded with tasks and challenges; It is my view, that he disappeared, one day, never to be heard from again.

When next I saw my brother-in-law in Maine, they were there visiting from Vermont, and we had come up from Connecticut; I thought he was, indeed, cognizant of what was going on and, of course, what

was being said. It was the same when I called his home, later, and he picked up the phone. It was the same when I called again, and he picked up the phone. Our conversations were short, and he would pass the phone on to his wife, "It's your brother," he would say. Soon, he was back in hospital.

He died during the apple-picking season. In the last photo I ever saw of him, posted on **Facebook**, he wore a cardboard headband with an apple cutout affixed to its center. My brother-in-law's face, that once, bright, energetic face, with a head full of ideas for how young people with disabilities ought to be able to learn, was puffy. His eyes were closed. His lips were puffy. His mouth showed that he had just swallowed his lips, and his chin hung on his chest. The family surrounded him. His wife had been at his side every day. His granddaughter had been nursing her grandfather without having to know a bit of French.

* From: **Leaving Maine** a memoir by Gerard Coulombe, Fairfield, CT.

**The priest's remains were removed from what had been consecrated ground to some other resting place.

An Immersive Experience Something about living on Freeman Street My Dad in the Pepperell Mills

By *Gérard Coulombe*

As youngsters, we Franco-Americans had the choice of using our ears with which to listen to the radio where adventures of various sorts rang supreme, from **The Lone Ranger** to **The Shadow Knows**. As we grew older, we also had the choice of using both our ears and eyes to watch and listen to movies screened in the parish hall, the church basement, Saint Andre's church, now closed, and, later, to attend Saturday afternoon feature length films, including cartoons, approved for viewing, and screened for our entertainment at the Mutual Theatre in Saco. I think that the marquee is still there.

Going to the movies, I thought, was a lovely bargain because it cost only a dime. I would wait for the appropriate moment, to ask "Ma man" for the dime. That was after

she had paid the rent collector, the Raleigh man who was her cousin, and the ice man and then the milkman, too.

Asking was difficult, it was more like begging even as I knew that she would give me the dime. It had been five cents at one time. Maybe it was for the errands I ran for her because she needed something from the market, usually "cubed steak" which was really a slice of beef shoulder put through a tenderizer. I loved to listen to the noise the tenderizer made, it was a just brief, Brrrut, through a spiked electric metal roller.

I have to interject here, simply to say, that I had two younger sisters, and the difference between us was gigantic. Although only two years between Therese and I and three between Julianne and I, they really

did not seem to me to exist. Maybe, I was just that selfish. But, frankly, I never knew where they were in my day, except for the times all three of us came down with the same sickness that had all three of us quarantined in one bedroom for what I recall were days on end.

We had moved from Bradbury Street in Saint Joseph's parish, to escape the Irish, as far as my dad is concerned, to Freeman Street in Saint Andre's parish, culturally, miles apart.

At the time, as a near bilingual youngster, I could also listen with my dad to Montreal stations, one of which featured a French-Canadian soap opera called, *Un Homme et Son Péché*. In many ways, listening to the on-going story line was much like eavesdropping to a penitent on the other side of the confessional while one knelt, waiting with the shutter closed to block out the priest's head in profile and being able to hear the penitent on the other side who couldn't modulate his voice, as he recited all of his venial sins as he worked up to the list of mortal ones to be recited, while father probed with his questions before giving his absolution and then assigning a penance of endurable difficulty.

The radio was a tabletop Cathedral
(Continued on page 11)

(An Immersive Experience Something about living on Freeman Street My Dad in the Pepperell Mills continued from page 10)

Philco, "cathedral," because of its shape, pointed like that of a church window or façade. My dad loved it, or so it seemed to me, as he was the one who tuned in to the station that brought Canada, Montreal, specifically, into our small living room at the front of the house.

Our apartment was on the first floor. It required about six steps up a stairway to the first landing in the front to attain the landing. In the back, because of the four-truck type garage driveway* and its elevation from the street to the garage doors, the back landing was a walk on, no steps necessary. The living room windows faced the street directly in front of us, and the entrance to the living room was immediately to one's right, and along the railed landing were the stairs up to the second floor where and from which one had a partial view of the kitchen before one attained the landing to the second floor, where one found the back door to the second floor apartment, which would later become our backdoor after the war, as things settled down, and people moved out, and we moved into the second floor apartment, instead.

Meanwhile, if after attaining the first landing, one walked toward the back to the shed, and, once inside the back door entrance located there, one could see where we, the children, for the years we were in that apartment, bathed, and where my dad had his week-end work station.

At the workbench which held a vice that held the piece that he worked on when he was home weekends, on a Saturday afternoon always, he turned to the piece in

waiting, perhaps to reimagine what it needed done to it.

The free time he had to himself was to use his workshop and the tools that he owned, the hand tools, simply, to modify a part or to add to its functions whenever he, my dad, felt comfortable with a design of his own. I don't know that the owners ever knew how my dad improved the mechanics of his machine; although, those who worked the first and third shifts had to know, as they worked that machine as much as he did, but none knew its operation and the functions it performed better than he, is what I have always believed

None of this would win him a prize for ingenuity or a copyright, but it meant just a better way of doing his job; if things worked as they were supposedly designed to, that would always be a feel-good situation for him. But he never talked to us about his work, even less so about what he was doing in the shed. It was I who asked him one day when I was older. He told me, then, that he was designing his own parts for his machine. No one asked him to. I don't even know that the boss knew what he was doing. Certainly, as it was a three-shift operation, somebody had to know as I have said before. To improve on a design was a result of my father's ingenuity. So long as his small inventions advanced his ability to be increasingly more productive, he would make this possible. In this corner of the shed. I think he liked his life and his work.

Otherwise, work might have been

Just a routine thing [which it was for me when I visited him at work. That visit took place when I worked at the Pepperell folding blankets to hold me over financially, in between my discharge and starting college at the University of Maine on the G.I. Bill] But for him, work had become some kind of drug to which he had become addicted.

He never complained. He was on time, and a steady, reliable employee in a necessary sweaty environment with high humidity is constant, so as not to break the characteristics of the field of threads on the warp. Human life was another matter. That's why I would never have worked were my father did at the job that he did or at any other in a mill... and, for a lifetime.

As I stood by my dad's side on that last visit, with the noise adding a certain kind of crescendo music or beat to it that matched the sounds of the warps and looms, I knew that he was not crazy doing his job, but the job that he was doing would have driven me crazy sooner than it took the years to wear him down.

It was such repetitive work, as this is much a repetitive story, something that I could never do and never did, except for the year he was sick when I worked double shift, one in school and one at the Bates on Saco Island.

*[The trucks were rendering trucks that contained barrels in which rendered products were dumped, having been collected by the rendering men. As these trucks were parked in the driveway, there was a smell and a health issue. But in those days, we, neighbors, did not complain and there was no official policy as to where, for health sake, the trucks could park.]

(Katherine Wing, FAS 329, Independent Study, Katherine Wing, November 11, 2019)

Leaving the farmlands and leaving Canada:

In the late 1800's and early 1900's after many fruitless years of farming hundreds of Canadians found they were unable to make a living on the family farm and were no longer willing to continue farming. Many chose to move to the cities to provide for their families. For some families it would be the father with his sons who were of working age. He would leave his wife, daughters and younger children to tend to the farm. In other instances daughters would go into the city to find employment in service industries. Still yet, whole families would leave the

farm and move into the city. With all these people moving to the city, there was now an overpopulation in cities such as Montreal, Toronto and Quebec. The infrastructure was not there and this created an unsanitary living situation for many. Unfortunately, all who went to the city to were not so lucky as to gain employment. With the plethora of potential employees to choose from, employers were selective. Many times it would be a friend of a friend, or a relative who would get the job over others. Children also found it easier to gain employment as employers would exploit the children, lower wages, longer hours, unsafe working conditions.

Finding it difficult to gain employment, Canadians found themselves crossing the border to the United States to work in mill-towns such as Lewiston, Waterville and Biddeford, Maine; Dover and Manchester, New Hampshire; Lowell, Worcester, and Fall River, Massachusetts; and Woonsocket, Rhode Island, to name a few.

The Mills:

Once in the United States, many found themselves easily employed in the Bates Mill of Lewiston or the Pepperell Mill of Biddeford, or one of the many others in New England. These mills were all built along the water for hydro power to power the machines. Along the water you would find shoe shops, textile mills, and paper mills. *(Continued on page 12)*

(Katherine Wing, FAS 329 continued from page 11)

While they now held jobs and had a steady income, they worked for meager wages, yet they maintained high work ethics. Often times, one would find many of the same family working side by side in the same mill. Many mills had shift work, which in smaller families the father may work all day and then the mother on the opposite shifts in order to bring home enough money for the family. Much of the work was piecework, the hours were long and wages were low. An average worker put in 60 hours a week, working six days a week for a take home pay of \$11.34. People were at the mercy of their employers, some had good employers who were willing to improve work conditions while others had employers who didn't mind their employees getting ill on mice-infested or damp work areas. These employers felt employees were easy to come by as there was always someone looking for work and willing to put in their time for a wage and they didn't mind reminding their employees of this.

Schooling and Child Labor:

Many children were schooled until they were needed in the mill. For many this could be as young as 12. Most boys upon reaching 12 years of age went into the mill. For girls, depending on the size of the family and the number of older brothers, many were able to stay in school longer. Again, depending on the size of the family and the number of those who were able to work in the mills, determined if the mother was able to stay home and raise her family or if she too needed to work. For many of the boys, working in the mill or learning a trade was expected. It was a rare occasion for a boy to stay in school. Once a boy became older and married, his place was taken by one of his younger siblings to help provide for the family as he now need to provide for his new family. Many girls worked as well though not all went to the mills. Girls often became nannies, or worked in the hospital, or in other service industries. Child labor laws changed the scenery at the mills as age restrictions as well as hours they could work were placed on minors. In many instances,

they were not allowed to work before age 14 or work the long hours their parents did. Labor laws also changed the work minors could do. Over time, minors would not be allowed to work the machinery to protect them from life-threatening injuries.

Life for the workers:

For many workers the hours were long, many worked from 6 am until 5 pm 5 days a week and in many cases worked Saturday as well. They did have Sunday off to observe the Sabbath as well as to spend the day with family. Many families had as many as 12 children living under one roof. It was important to provide for the basic necessities of the family. Moving from their own land to apartments was expensive. They now had

in those days. Even today a family could not begin to survive on this pay and would need multiple family members to work to sustain the family home.

This poster depicts the transition from farm life to millworker. It shows that not only the men had to go to work but also women and children. For me, seeing a child as young as 10 years old working in the mill, is sad. They lost their childhood as they were needed to help provide for their family. They barely knew how to write their name and many did not know how to read as they were pulled out of school before they had time to learn. If they were lucky to work for a compassionate employer, they were treated well.

As a person who has worked in many shoe shops over time, I am well aware of the many injuries one can sustain in the mills. It takes a toll on one's body as well as one's self-esteem. These young children faced a long future of working in the mill with no hopes of ever working elsewhere. They dealt with toll it would take on their young bodies over time. Depending on the machine they worked on, they may



a rent payment to make as well as pay all the other expenses. Living in the city was definitely more expensive than the farm, as simple things like milk and eggs now needed to be bought instead of harvested from the farm animals. Depending on where they lived, some were able to keep chickens or a pig but many were not able to do so, thus requiring them to purchase all food for their family. Families kept their traditions and observed their holidays in the traditional way they would have before coming to the United States. Many first-generation Canadians still spoke French especially in the home. Their children over time learned English in school.

Conclusion:

I chose to do a poster as I wanted a visual representation of this period in time. The paycheck in the background shows the wages (\$11.34) a man would have earned in 1914 for a 60-hour work week and how that compares to today (\$291.50) in 2019 wages. The wage comparison puts in perspective the necessity for multiple family members to work to sustain a large family

work unscathed, or in the case of my grandfather, he lost the tip of one of his fingers to a paper machine.

One begins to wonder if this is all there is to life, working 6 days a week for meager wages and little time to do much else. For many women who worked in the mills, the thought was work until they got married. Once married, their job was to take care of the home and have babies.

The mentality was still there when I was working in the mill. I was one of the lucky ones who was able to complete high school and move away from the mill eventually, though I did do my time. It was not thought of to further your station in life. This is what your grandfather and grandmother did, your parents after them and then you. It was what you would pass on to your children.

While I did not pass on the mill work to my children, I did pass on a strong work ethic, which to me is just as important. I learned these work ethics from those who came before, just as those first Canadians (Continued on page 13)

Tourtierre and Cul-de-Sacs

By Daniel Moreau

November 17th, 2019

Man has not created a killer like the Car. Purely through its existence, and through its use. It may not be efficient at it (considering the amount of cars on the road), but it surely is deadly. According to the National Safety Council, in 2018 alone, over 40,000 people were killed in car accidents in the United States, and 4.5million were seriously injured. Then there is the way the car killed and displaced many passively through its existence. Especially Franco-America.

In order to understand the true roots of mass assimilation of Franco-America during the 60s-70s, we need to first start on Long Island, NY during 1947 in Levittown; the prototype of the American suburb. Before Levittown, the suburb mainly consisted of denser single-family homes or townhouses called "Streetcar Suburbs" because of their service by streetcar. Some examples include Somerville, MA, and the Park Extension neighborhood of Montreal. Typically, the mainstream design for these neighborhoods are multi-story residential buildings.



Levittown, NY, under construction. Photo courtesy of ACME Newspictures.

These types of neighborhoods, and those just denser, are perfect examples of the types of neighborhoods the drastic majority of mill-town French-Canadian immigrants lived in (so-called Petite Canadas). The reason for Franco-America's survival, is because this dense land use was (and still is) the perfect incubator for continued social life within the cultural climate. While immigrants were shoved into dense neighborhoods, that density is what kept each culture alive and strong. So what happens if you disperse the population of a culture?

When I talk about the car being a killer through its existence, I reference the mass urban renewal efforts of the 50s-70s in the United States. The Housing Act of 1949 essentially let cities raze masses of houses with the concern of them being slums with the aid of the federal government. The biggest problem with this, is how a "slum" was defined. It was very loose, and the standards for a building being blighted could be determined by the city. This did not work out in favor of American cities, most of the time, these plots of land were turned into parking lots, or highways, thus removing the housing stock away from the central business district of the city, and creating induced demand for the car. And with every building torn down, parking lot paved, and highway built, more and more people moved to the suburbs. I encourage the reader to view aerials from 1940 and today of Detroit, Rochester, Boston, and Kansas City just to see the effect of urban renewal. What neighborhoods city officials chose to demolish for highways or parking lots, were almost always working class and/or neighborhoods with people of color.

(civilcircumstances.wordpress.com)



A neighborhood on Hale St, Lowell, MA being demolished as a result of Urban Renewal. Photo courtesy of Tyrrell Richard Schein via archive.org.

The biggest problem with destroying existing neighborhoods for car infrastructure, besides displacement of residents, is creation of induced demand. Induced demand as a principle itself means that as supply increases, more of that good is consumed. In terms of city planning, induced demand for the car means that adding more infrastructure for it leads to more vehicular traffic. This is the same principle which makes widening roads pointless; if you add
(Continued on page 14)

(Katherine Wing, FAS 329 continued from page 12)

who came to work in the mills learned from their ancestors. Having a language barrier when they arrived, meant they needed to depend more on family than they did others in order to converse. I am told my great grandmother never learned to speak English and her children would have to translate everything for her when she encountered English-speaking people. This must have been the case for so many others.

My poster is a culmination of research depicting Canadians moving to the United States, their wages, the people and their desire for survival. While the focus was on the mills they worked in, their life, and a specific time in history, this report would be true for many ethnic groups who immigrated and encountered language difficulties, cultural changes and assimilation to their new country.

(Tourtiere and Cul-de-Sacs *continued from page 13*) another lane, then induced demand tells car traffic to use that road instead. The perfect textbook example of this is North America's widest freeway: the Katy Freeway in Houston which at its widest is 26 lanes wide, the reason for all of these lanes is to reduce traffic, but because of induced demand, after the highway was widened, travel times in the evening went up 55% as a result of more congestion. Induced demand creates the need for the car as a necessity. Suburbanization, and Urban Renewal created the perfect conditions for Franco-Americans to move outside of the dense city center, where Franco-America was established, and had a great force.

The reason for Franco-American assimilation was not language oppression, religious pressure, or even the threat of forced assimilation. These have been going on for decades before Franco-Americans started to assimilate en masse. But the true reason is that suburbanization spread Franco-Americans out so much, that the cultural web was weakened, and in turn, those forces that have been ever so present and threatening, were able to tear the threads of that web.

To understand why suburbanization was responsible for Franco-American assimilation, we need to understand the differences between urban life (where Franco-Americans have been living for generations) and suburban life (the shiny new American Dream). The density of urban life creates a social lifestyle that cannot be synthesized anywhere else, as described in

great detail in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* by 1960s New York City activist, Jane Jacobs. In the suburbs of these Franco-American mill towns, life is more spread out in comparison to the urban core. The cultural fabric of the neighborhood is more personalized and individual-centric compared to the established, community base of an urban neighborhood.

In this era came along inventions that drove assimilation forward, both as a result of the suburbs, and the era's technological advances. The television was by far, the most influential force on the boomer generation's assimilation. On this screen were pictures of a commercialized pop-culture America. Fantasizing and idolizing these images were easy (and still are), and pop culture took off in America. As pop-culture became the forefront of Americana, and settled down in Franco-American suburban living rooms, social pressures at school and young social lives in general brought forth the biggest push on assimilation yet. And it worked. My own father told me that he stopped speaking French because of the social pressure, and when you're a teenager, the only thing you really want is to be socially accepted.

Another force of assimilation during this era was the anglicization of the Catholic Churches in Franco-American mill towns. In Lewiston, for instance, there were two French Catholic churches prior to suburbanization: Saints Peter and Paul Church (as it was known then before it was consecrated as a minor basilica in 2004), and St. Mary's Church (now the Franco-American Center in Lewiston). With large concentra-

tions of Franco-Americans, the Catholic church was able to use this concentration as a Franco-American cultural stronghold. However, as Lewiston suburbanized, the existing Franco-American population became less concentrated in these French Catholic hubs as Franco-Americans dispersed to the houses of the suburbs, and into the smaller churches of Holy Family on Sabattus Street and Holy Cross on Lisbon Street. According to Franco-American historian Mark Paul Richard, Holy Family was the first of these to anglicize. In contrast, the much larger Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Downtown Lewiston, still offers Mass in French (as well as Bi-lingual, Latin, Spanish, and of course English) which now benefits the older Franco-American generations, and the younger French-African generations in a wonderful complement of each other and of a French America.

When one looks between the urban and natural geography of Lewiston, it's noticeable that the suburbs sit on a hill looking above the dense urban core. Often said is that as the Franco-Americans moved up in the economy, they moved up the hill to the suburbs, as well. The hill has become an analogy for the economic mobility of the generations of Franco-Americans during the era of suburbanization, however, it's more fitting to use the hill as an analogy for assimilation of Franco-Americans. The suburbs have always been what defines Anglo-Americana, and sending Franco-Americans into the suburbs was the first push off the hill of Franco-American culture, toward Anglo-Americana.

The "Canadian Washington" Visits Lewiston

September 3, 2019, Lewiston-Auburn, Maine, Politics, Quebec

By James Myall

The band played patriotic tunes as a cannon roared a salute. Local dignitaries including the mayor and a former governor had turned out to meet the train, at the head of a large crowd. The scene had many of the trappings of a state visit. The guest was not a head of state – though he, and many in the crowd, had ambitions for him to become one.

On the morning of Monday, August 7, 1893, Honoré Mercier arrived in Lewiston

to a hero's welcome. His visit was the latest in a series of stops he had made in French Canadian communities across New England that summer. Not to be left behind by their countrymen elsewhere, Lewiston's Franco community pulled out all the stops for the visit of the former Premier of Québec.

Le Messenger ran a detailed account of the visit in its August 9 edition. Stepping off the train from Old Orchard Beach at



Honoré Mercier, 1890. Image: Bibliotheque et Archives Nationales de Québec.

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(International Language Acquisition Compared to National Practices and Averages continued from page 15)

English first mentality.

So, what can we do now? Well, fortunately all of the statistics presented in this article can begin to change effectively and easily simply by putting an importance on foreign language in this country. We NEED to keep Rosetta stone out of the classroom. Two years of foreign language experience is much cheaper when your teacher is an application or a subscription, but if we will never see “CoolMathGames.com” playing the role of “Algebra Teacher,” then we need to have thoughtful, productive, and inspired language teachers to be in schools as well. Some simple steps can be taken. Firstly, start foreign language education earlier, the average person learned their first language in total immersion in around 3 years. If a Kindergartener is verbally proficient upon arrival at 5 years old due to the capacity of growing brains too quickly and effectively learn language, then we need to introduce language two, or even three, at that time. Additionally, young children don’t feel frustrated by incomprehension and confusion when they think they’re playing a game, as compared to a high schooler who shuts down when they feel “too challenged.” Pushing a child out of their zone of proximal development is as easy and fun as it

is to get them to fall in love with a new toy or activity. Another step we can take is by funding foreign language education with the same intentionality that we fund STEM programs. The most talented engineer from the United States is still LESS marketable than an average one in Morocco if that person is the standard trilingual, like most adults who enter the educated workforce. Studies show invariably that employers look for bilingualism and beyond (Diggs). But, before we can make any of these physical and tangible changes to our language learning in this country, we must first change our mentality. We are confined by our own beliefs as humans and the general (and scary) opinion that we live in the most important four walls in the world leaves us no room to improve. Verbs, grammar and conjugations aside, if we want to improve how we relate to the world around us, we need to start paying attention to foreign language and how other places are doing it way better. We need to finally realize that even if we won’t be a German speaking nurse or a Spanish speaking electrician, that international concepts help us become informed members of the international community. We owe it to ourselves, to our children, and to our future that we can finally start putting importance on foreign language education in this country.

(The “Canadian Washington”

Visits Lewiston continued from page 14)

half past nine in the morning, Mercier was formally greeted by a delegation on behalf of Lewiston-Auburn’s French Canadian community, which included the (Yankee) mayor and members of the city council. Other prominent non-Franco citizens were also present, Alonzo Garcelon, a descendant of French Huguenots who had served a tumultuous term as Governor of Maine from 1879 to 1880. Despite an elite English-speaking background, Garcelon had some familiarity with the Franco-American community, including being one of the few Yankee doctors to practice at St Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston.

The official welcome on behalf of the community was read by Doctor Joseph-Amedée Girouard, a prominent member of society, who published poems on progressive and nationalist themes.

From the station, Mercier was taken to the DeWitt Hotel, the city’s oldest and grandest establishment, in a procession of carriages. Having been followed by the

crowd of onlookers, the former Premier felt compelled to make another short speech from the hotel’s balcony to satisfy his admirers. According to Le Messenger, this address was met with “a splendid demonstration. Loud cheers rang out and for five minutes



Interior of the Old Lewiston City Hall, ca 1880. This building burned in 1890 and was replaced with the current structure. Image: Lewiston Public Library/Maine Memory Network

the admiration of the crowd never ceased.” After a short period of rest, the honored guest began a schedule of meet-and-greets – first with at the Mayor’s office then the Dominican monastery. After the reception with the church fathers, the guests enjoyed the most American of past times – a baseball game.

Finally, at seven-thirty came the big event, a public address at Lewiston City Hall. The venue was significant. Mercier had been officially invited to speak by the mayor and City Council. While French Canadians had not yet come to dominate Lewiston politics as they would for much of the 20th century, their growing numbers made them a potent electoral force. Just before the public event, Mercier had met with delegations from both the Lewiston and Auburn city councils.

The theme of the night’s address was straightforward – Canadian independence. Simple-sounding though this might be, the idea was a radical one at the time. In advocating for a Canadian Republic, independent
(Continued on page 17)

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(The “Canadian Washington”
Visits Lewiston continued from page 16)

from Great Britain, Mercier was potentially associating himself with individuals like the Patriotes of 1836 or Louis Riel, whose armed rebellions against the crown had seen them executed for treason. Mercier’s own time as Premier had earned him the fierce enmity of authorities in Ottawa simply for advocating for greater provincial autonomy within the existing federal system. The ex-Premier was careful to couch his push for an independent Republic as a political, not a military, effort, and he spoke of independence for Canada as a whole, not separatism for Québec specifically (though some suspected him of aiming for the latter). Nonetheless, his position was a bold and even dangerous one.



Image from *Le Messager*, Aug 9, 1893

By *Le Messager*’s account, the Lewiston crowd showed no qualms about the message. The paper itself headed its account of the visit with an image of the Statue of Liberty, and the headline “Vive la Liberté!” Lewiston’s Mayor Chandler called the visitors “our countrymen” and former mayors Daniel McGillicuddy (a Democrat) and Frank Lord (a Republican), who also spoke at the event, promised “not only moral support, but even material support” for an independent Canada, pledges which brought a tear to Mercier’s eyes. P.X. Anger, a local Franco-American attorney (and first Franco-American elected to the city’s board of aldermen in 1887), who presided over the event, introduced the former Premier as

“the Canadian Washington” and the “*Lion du Jour*.”

These sentiments echoed those of Dr Girouard in his opening address earlier that morning:

“Your arrival in our midst has no longer has the significance of an ordinary visit. You are coming in the name of the Fatherland, and it’s why we take it on ourselves as a sacred duty to wish you the most cordial welcome.

“While it’s true that we have reason to be content with the generous hospitality so liberally granted us by the American Republic, it’s also good to know that a shard of our heart is left behind and remains forever attached to the distant Fatherland...

“It is thus easy to understand all the joy which we feel in this moment to see you return in all your grandeur and strength, demanding with the eloquence of your first youth, the emancipation of our dear homeland. We are also putting together our most ardent wishes for the success of this noble task which you have so freely imposed on yourself. And on the occasion, you may be assured that we will offer you all the material and moral support of which we are capable”

The venue was certainly filled with thousands of supporters. *Le Messager* noted that the audience consisted not only of “Canadiens” but also “Americans” and “Irish” (Mercier accordingly spoke in both French and English). The support of the Irish-American community was significant. Not only was it a contrast to the long-standing inter-ethnic rivalry that pervaded city life and politics, but Mercier himself drew explicit parallels between his cause and that of Irish independence.



William Gladstone, Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, ca 1893. Image: Wikimedia Commons.

The Emerald Isle’s long struggle for freedom from British rule had been roiling throughout the 19th century, but had become especially potent by 1893. In 1886, a first attempt to grant “Home Rule” (political autonomy) had been made in the British House of Commons. Though that effort had failed to pass, Britain’s Liberal Prime Minister William Gladstone, was currently pushing through a new Home Rule Bill in 1893. (The Second Home Rule Bill, would pass the Commons in September 1893 but ultimately fail in the House of Lords, leading to Gladstone’s own retirement soon after).

In his Lewiston speech, Mercier cited Gladstone’s support for Irish Home Rule, and suggested that if they could build a popular movement for Canadian independence, that too could receive London’s blessing. Mercier even said he hoped that the 83-year old Gladstone would receive a gravestone that read “liberator of Ireland, liberator of Canada.”

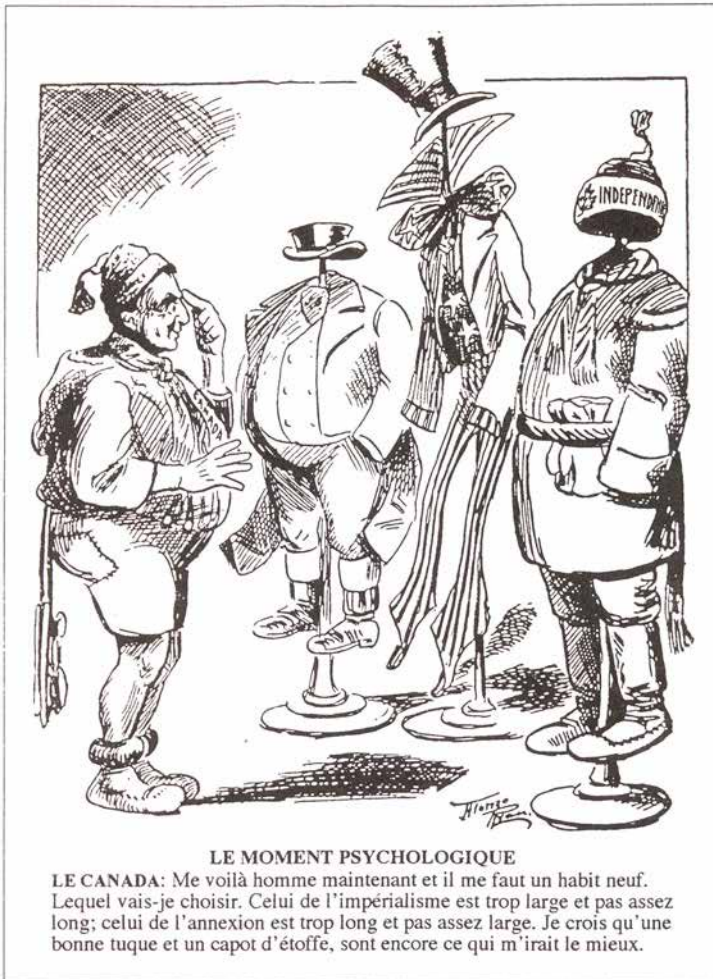
Gladstone aside, Mercier pulled no punches against “les Anglais” and their governance of Canada. Conflating the Anglophone governments in Ottawa and London he noted:

“So where are the treaties signed by England during the capitulation of Canada, and which guaranties to Canadiens their rights, their institutions and their laws? How have these treaties been observed? In abolishing the language and persecuting the religion wherever the Canadiens are in a minority, firstly in New Brunswick, and then in Manitoba.

“If the English were sincere in their promises of liberty, would they be committing today the historic crime of taking the French language away from the French and Catholic minority of Manitoba? These people did not stop, despite our spirit of cooperation and justice; a crime against a people lead to a crime against a religion. Only independence can give true liberty to Canada.”

By contrast, the ex-Premier had only praise for the United States. He compared the US with Canada, saying that while Canada was older, with richer soil, better sea ports and more natural resources, Canadians were poorer and fewer in number because they lacked the liberty of Americans.

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In this political cartoon from 1903, “Jean-Baptiste” the French Canadian chooses between the costumes of imperialism, annexation to the United States, or independence. Image: Libraries and Archives Canada

If Mercier’s assessment of Canada’s geographic advantages and potential wealth was optimistic, his description of French Canadians’ experience in the United States was even more so:

“What a difference between [the Canadiens in the United States] and the majority of Canadiens of their birthplace! Here there acquire honorable positions through the price of their work and their energy; they are liked and respected in the positions which they occupy and share in the peace of American liberty. In Canada, it’s all the opposite. They do not reach in higher positions except by the strength of their genius and through circumstances, and even though there are in number two and a half million French Canadians, they are often ridiculed, despised, vilified, insulted. Eleven thousand of their compatriots make up the population

of Lewiston and Auburn, one million living in free America, and every day, they prove brilliantly what Canadiens can do when nothing stops them taking flight, when their have a clear field.”

Some of this may have been Mercier playing to his audience. He explicitly talked of Franco Americans as making a success of their choices to emigrate, and while he recognized them as “compatriots” he was clear that he did not expect them to return to Canada. This would have been a welcome tone to those in the crowd who were used to politicians north of the border seeing the émigrés as disloyal or somehow inferior to the French Canadians who stayed. Mercier flipped that narrative on its head, saying that he was prepared to refute the claims of those in Canada who “insulted” the emigres. “We do not have, we Canadiens of Canada, to

be ashamed of you; you might perhaps be ashamed of us.” In the Franco-Americans, Mercier saw the potential of “the French race” in the Americas when freed from British rule. He praised his audience for keeping the Catholic faith and French language alive.

In its August 11 edition, *Le Messager* introduced an interview it had conducted with Mercier by saying:

“Our compatriots in Canada who know nothing about us and take the liberty of insulting us, would do well to read this interview and draw a valuable lesson from it.”

However much he might have delighted the crowd, Mercier’s description of Franco-American life in 1893 comes across as naïve with the benefit of hindsight. In his interview, Mercier recounted meeting successful businessmen – but ignored the plight of mill workers living in overcrowded tenements that were magnets for disease and dangerous fire traps. He celebrated the number of Francos he had met who were elected officials, but just weeks after his speech, Maine voters would implement a literacy test to bar Francophones from the polls. In his city hall address, Mercier praised the way Americans had welcomed immigrants, overlooking a growing contemporary nativist movement.

Regardless of shortcomings, the city hall speech, like the rest of Mercier’s visit, was a wild success. *Le Messager* printed no word of criticism against the Premier and heaped effusive praise on him and his cause.



Banner of the Institute Jacques-Cartier of Lewiston, ca 1900. The banner’s mottoes, “Religion et Nationalité” and “Loyaux mais Canadiens Français” sum up the complexities of Franco-American identity. Image: University of Southern Maine, Franco-American Collection/Maine Memory Network (Continued on page 19)

Twenty Years for a Crime

he Didn't Commit

*December 1, 2019, Crime, Home, Logging,
Maine, Shirley*
By James Myall

Henry Lambert was an outsider. In the spring of 1901 he was working as a general laborer, doing jobs on farms in the Greenville area after a winter spent with the logging crews in the Maine woods. The short, wiry French Canadian was 26 years old and sported a prominent red-blond mustache. He lived alone in a camp on the outskirts of the town of Shirley, coming into town to work, play pool, and hang out at the hotel bar. When the Allens' Farm burned to the ground on the evening of May 13, killing the family inside, locals suspected foul play, and suspicion soon fell on the French Canadian loner.

In an episode that echoes the plot of Harper Lee's "To Kill a Mockingbird," Lambert was accused of the murder of the entire Allen family, as well as the attempted rape of their fifteen year old daughter. Lambert had been working on the Allens' farm, but the case for his guilt was slim. Nonetheless, he was tried and sentenced to life in the Maine State Prison. Twenty years later, he walked free with a full pardon. The story of Lambert's conviction and exoneration says a lot about the justice system of the era, and the dangers faced by "outsiders" in close knit communities.



Henry Lambert, illustration from the Bangor Daily News, Nov 20, 1901

According to his own testimony at trial, Henry (Henri) Lambert was born in Québec in January 1875. His family appears to have lived the precarious life of many marginal farming families of the period. Lambert said that he began working at the tender age of 10, helping his father who cut wood in the winter. When his father died that year, young Henry walked to a neighbor's farm three miles away to earn \$3 a month, plus clothing. The money went to his mother to support the family, including one older sister and eight younger siblings. In the spring of 1886, he worked a month on a maple syrup farm.

But the earning potential of a 10 year old boy was almost certainly inadequate to support the large family. And later that year, the Lamberts came to Waterville, Maine to work in the textile industry. There, Henry, his mother, sister and a younger brother could all be employed in the mills. Women and children were paid less than men, but the cotton mill probably offered an opportunity for multiple members of the family to earn regular wages. The younger Lambert children, too young to work, appear to have remained in Quebec with extended family.

But work in the spinning room didn't agree with Henry. Two and a half years in Waterville and Augusta mills took a toll on his health. Lung diseases were common among the textile workers of this period, who endured claustrophobic conditions with cotton fibers filling the air. Lambert spent a summer as a farm hand in Belgrade Mills and a short time in the pulp mill in Augusta. For the next decade or so, from 1892 on, Lambert settled into a rhythm much like that of many rural landless Québécois of the time. In wintertime he worked in the woods felling trees, and in the spring and summer he earned money as a farmhand. It must have been a somewhat isolated existence.

At trial, Lambert said he had lost touch with his family. His mother was already dead. His sister had gotten married in Waterville around 1889, and he had a brother living in Waterville or Harpswell – but he hadn't spoken to either in six years. He had
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(The "Canadian Washington"

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After the gathering ended in "three rousing cheers," the guest of honor, his companions and the welcoming committee paid a visit to Lewiston's Club Musical-Littéraire, and finished off the day with a glass of champagne at the offices of Le Messager. The next morning, the ex-Premier left by train for Montreal, leaving the Lewistonians to bask in the glow of a successful visit:

"In sum, our visitors were enchanted by their reception and we may say with honesty that, as always, Lewiston is still at the forefront. Thanks to Canadiens, thanks to the organizing committee, thanks to our irish comrades, thanks to those who wanted to decorate so well, thank finally to all those who participated in this grand demonstration.

We are proud of the Canadiens of Lewiston and Auburn."

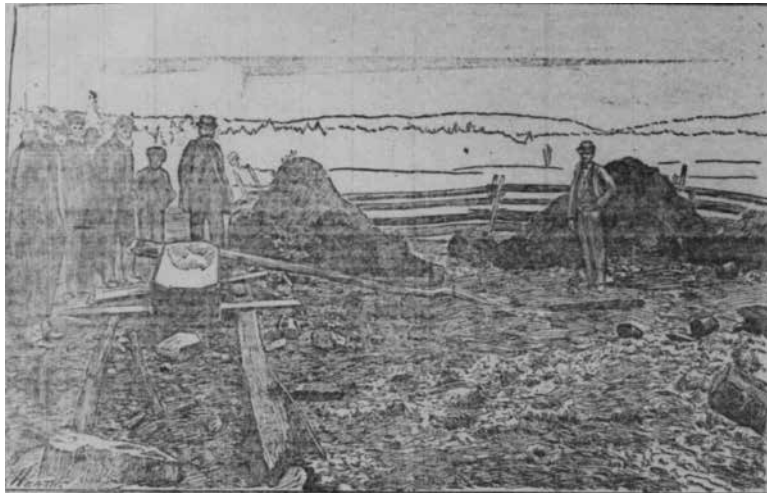
Whether or not Mercier's vision for an independent Canadian Republic would have resonated with others as much as it did with Lewiston's Franco-Americans is an unanswered question. He would not live to become the "Canadian Washington." He died in October 1894, at the age of just 54. Canadian independence would not be realized until nearly a century later, in 1986. Québec's independence is, of course, an ongoing debate. For several decades after his death, Mercier was regarded as a godfather of Québec nationalism. Yet in the later part of the 20th century, he became less well regarded, as his brand of nationalism was replaced by the left-wing secular nationalism of the Parti Québécois. Mercier's commitment to Catholicism as a cornerstone of French Canadian identity puts him sharply at odds with the modern separatist movement.

Ironically, Mercier's vision of a national identity rooted in faith and traditional values lasted longer in the Little Canadas of places like Lewiston than it did in Canada itself. The grandchildren and great-grandchildren of those who welcomed "the Lion of the Day" to Lewiston in 1893 were still living, working, and praying in French into the latter 20th century, and some of their descendants maintain these traditions to this day. Were Mercier to return today, he might find a warmer welcome in the streets of the Petit Canadas than some parts of his homeland.

(Twenty Years for a Crime he Didn't Commit continued from page 19)

made one trip back to Canada to visit family in or around Sherbrooke around 1895.

Which brings us to May 12 1901, when Lambert was working on the farm of J Wesley Allen, his wife Mary and teenage daughter Carrie. Lambert had become friendly with the Allens, who had allowed to build a log cabin, 12 by 14 feet, on their land. On the night in question, Lambert was staying elsewhere, at the nearby home of Telos Smith. That night, a fire broke out at the Allen Farm, destroying the buildings



Ruins of the Allen Barn, illustration in the Bangor Daily News, Nov 21, 1901

completely and apparently killing the Allens and their daughter.

There were few, if any, signs of foul play, yet the Allens' neighbors immediately concluded that this was a deliberate killing. The human remains found in the ruins were too charred to give much indication of what had happened that night, but a belt buckle belonging to Mr Allen, and Mrs Allen's false teeth suggested the family had perished. A small pool of blood was also identified on the ground outside. In a sign of how much the incident shook the small community, the Lewiston Daily Sun of May 14 reported that "hundreds" had visited the fire site that day, and that the local stores had sold out of guns and ammunition as panicked residents sought to protect themselves.

Some imaginative locals constructed an entire narrative for the happenings that night. Someone (or someones) had come to the Allen place looking to rape Carrie. The girl struggled, her father came to her rescue, and the would-be rapist murdered the father and the whole family, before setting the fire to hide his crime. There doesn't seem to have been much evidence for this colorful story,

but it soon became the accepted version of events.

In small towns, the suspicion for crimes often falls on outsiders, especially when the crime is as serious as murder and attempted rape. No-one believes their neighbors to be capable of such atrocities, so blame falls on the outsider. The residents of Shirley first suspected the group of men who had recently held up the mail stagecoach. Presumably the thinking went that if these ruffians had committed one crime, why not another? The fact that one of the three was described as "dark, like an Indian" may have added to the assumption that this group was

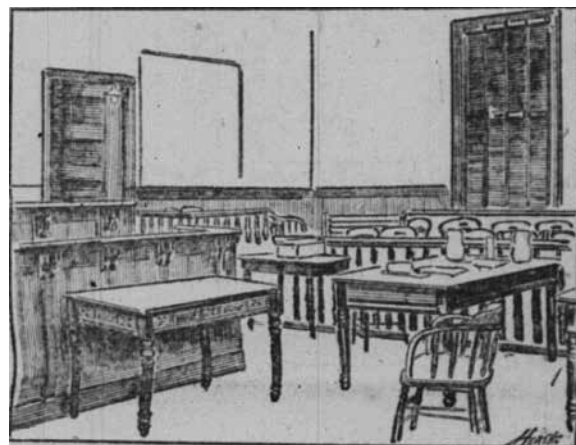
to have been the lack of a strong alibi. Nonetheless, the State of Maine brought charges of murder against him, with a case built almost entirely on circumstantial evidence. The key pieces of evidence in the trial, which began in November 1901, included a set of boot marks from the farm to Lambert's cabin, the fact that Lambert had cut off a piece of his shirt, and the whereabouts of a missing umbrella.

The Lambert trial was a sensation. The grisly details of the fire and supposed "crime" had been covered breathlessly in the Maine press, as had the hunt for the guilty party. Several selected jury men admitted to having read newspaper coverage of the events before the trial, but were selected anyway. When the trial began on November 20, every twist and turn was covered in the newspapers. The latest dispatches from the trial were on the front page of the Bangor Daily News every day of the two weeks it was in session, accompanied by diagrams of the "crime" site and illustrations of the key players. Reporters also filed background stories on the activities of the jurors and conditions in the jailhouse. The trial proved to be one of the longest and most expensive in state history. It lasted 14 full days, and the trial records eventually filled 1200 pages.

The length of the trial was partly because the state had to spend a long time constructing a case from the circumstantial evidence at its disposal. As the trial continued over Thanksgiving, those in attendance found themselves eating turkey in the town's hotels. The jury, off-duty for a day, were served a special holiday meal as well. Despite the length of the trial, and the relatively isolated, the small courthouse in Dover was packed with spectators. It was reported to be only the third murder trial in Piscataquis county in 30 years. The sheriff and his deputies had to Limit attendance to a seated audience only.

behind the suspected murder. The *Lewiston Daily Sun* reported on May 16 that at least two groups were apprehended – one group at Fort Fairfield, which included an Indian, and a group at Brunswick which included a black man.

But when this lead did not go anywhere, law enforcement looked closer to home for the culprit, and attention turned to Henry Lambert. There doesn't appear to have been strong evidence tying Lambert to the fire. The primary indicator of guilt seems



Trial room at the Piscataquis County Courthouse. Illustration from the Bangor Daily News, Nov 25, 1901

(Twenty Years for a Crime he Didn't Commit *continued from page 20)*

Though Lambert was officially tried for murder, the attempted rape motive was still present. In his opening statement, the County Attorney charged that Lambert's motive was "the outraging of this pure young girl, Carrie Allen." The attorney general would claim Lambert had wanted to do so for the past two years, which would have put Carrie at the implausibly young age of 13.

There were other attempts by the prosecution to paint a picture of Lambert as a bad character. This included the fact that Lambert has purchased a bottle of whiskey on the night of the fire. In a moment that wouldn't be out of place in a daytime TV drama today, Attorney General George Seiders began his cross-examination of Lambert by asking him when he changed his name from "Henri Champine." Lambert, confused, said he had never used that name. Seiders may have gotten this idea because historically, Champagne was indeed used as a "dit name" with Lambert in Quebec. Even if his family had used Champagne in past generations, Lambert (who after all had lost his father as a boy) may not have even been aware of it. Seiders' source for Lambert's "pseudonym" was Father Joseph Forrest of Jackman. As a priest, Father Forest might have been drawing more on his historical knowledge than his association with Lambert. In any case, this French-Canadian naming tradition probably sowed suspicion in the minds of the all-Anglo jury.

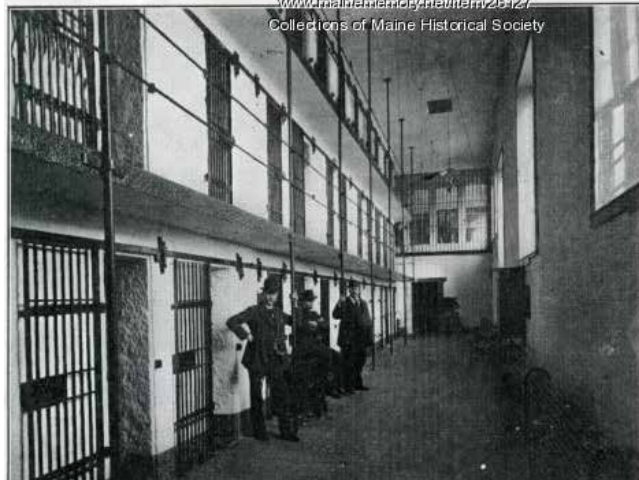
Another item of sensational evidence was the testimony given by Detective Timothy Hartnett of the Portland Police Department. Hartnett has been assigned to the Allen case shortly after the fire, and the policeman had gone to the scene to investigate the cause and identify suspects. However, Hartnett also went to the county jail and impersonated a prisoner to try and extract a confession from Lambert. He even had Lambert, who admitted to being barely literate, sign a note asking Hartnett to fabricate an alibi in exchange for \$200. The judge presiding over the trial noted that "it would be hard to find any code of ethics in law that would uphold the methods followed by Hartnett in the Dover jail."

Defense counsel Henry Hudson pointed out that there wasn't even irrefutable proof that the bodies found at the farm were those of the Allens were dead, let alone that had been murdered, let alone that Lambert

was the culprit.

Nonetheless, the jury returned a unanimous guilty verdict after two hours of deliberation and two separate ballots, and the French Canadian received a life sentence at the State Prison in Thomaston. The case was appealed, but Lambert lost the appeal, and would spend twenty years behind bars, starting in 1903.

The Maine State Prison had a fearsome reputation. By the early 20th century it represented an outmoded theory of criminal justice. Cells were small and overcrowded. Inmates had to contend with freezing cold in the winter, and furnace like conditions in the summertime. When Lambert first arrived, inmates did not even eat together, being confined to their cells even at mealtimes. The Somerset Reporter described the system of solitary eating as "a relic of barbarism, when the chief idea was punishment and only punishment." state prison, was quoted in the Brunswick Record of January 31. He described the prison as an "archaic, man-de-



Inside the Maine State Prison, ca 1915. Image: Maine Historical Society/Maine Memory Network

stroying machine." with prisoners confined to cells 6 by 10 feet and only a bucket to relieve themselves in – "a constant denigrating factor tending to brutalize the prisoner and reduce him to an animal's scale of living."

A new wing was constructed to partially address these problems, with wash basins and flush toilets installed for the first time. Yet the State Board of Corrections noted that the new cells were still damp in the summer time, and fitted with iron slat beds that were too small for many prisoners. What's the more, the new wing only housed about a third of the inmates, with others left in the old conditions.

During his time at the state prison,

Lambert worked at the sleigh shop, one of the two main workshops the prison operated to teach inmates a trade, and to produce items for sale. According to Lambert, he also learned to read and write for the first time in the prison.

By 1923, attitudes to incarceration and the criminal justice system in Maine had changed. One of Augusta's most prominent citizens, Charles Hitchborn, took up Lambert's case as a grave miscarriage of justice. Hitchborn was not a lawyer, but likely had influence with the Governor and his council, who heard clemency cases. Hitchborn had previously served as mayor of Augusta and was president of the local bank. A few years earlier he had overseen renovations to the state house, including the very council chamber in which the case was heard.

Noting the lack of hard evidence at the trial, and the role the media played in influencing its outcome, Hitchborn appealed to Governor Percival Baxter for a commutation of Lambert's sentence to 40 years. Having already served 20, he would be eligible for early release on good behavior. (The plea for clemency was printed as a pamphlet and a copy is available at the Maine State Library).

Governor Baxter went further, issuing a full and complete pardon to Lambert in July 1923, which Hitchborn delivered personally to the prisoner. There's no record of any compensation for the wrongful conviction and imprisonment, just a new suit and a \$5 bill. Nonetheless, the New York Times described the newly free man's face as "wreathed in smiles."

Following his release, the Times reported that Lambert planned to move to New York State, to work on the estate of an unnamed benefactor who had "befriended him and aided in his release." What happened to him afterwards isn't known. I've been unable to track him in the census or other records.

Henry Lambert's case is a particularly striking example of the ways our criminal justice system has failed to deliver true justice, especially for individuals outside the dominant culture. Lambert may have been one of the lucky ones, since he was eventually pardoned and released. We don't know how many others suffered miscarriages of justice that went undetected.

<https://myall.bangor-dailynews.com/author/myall/>

Franco-American TED Talk

by Susan Poulin

November 27, 2019 *Franco-American News and Culture* Poolye Productions, Susan Poulin

By Juliana L'Heureux

Franco-American culture with humor! “Can You Find Your Identity Through A Heritage-Language?” is an entertaining Ted Talk, by Susan Poulin, now available on-line.

Susan Poulin with Alphonse Poulin at the 2017, Franco-American Hall of Fame induction in the Augusta Capitol. Distant cousins! In the presentation, Poulin narrates a joy filled educational lecture about her personal journey as a Franco-American who is trying to connect with her primary culture and language. She has lived the American dream as a Franco and as an American.

During Les Fêtes, the season when families naturally gather to share memories and to tell stories, might be the perfect opportunity to watch this enjoyable 20 minute video. Poulin’s experiences transcend generations. She speaks about her French-Canadian family and her coming of age as a Franco-American. In fact, she has worked long and hard to “find the French in her head” and to reconnect with her primary language, spoken at home and learned before she spoke English.

French is Poulin’s first language, but she only spoke it until she was 4. Although

proud of her heritage, she didn’t know a lot about what it meant to be Franco-American. So, she and her husband Gordon Carlisle began a search to help her re-connect with her Franco-American identity. She explains that, since her 40s, she has been trying to find her identity through relearning her lost language.

Watching this Ted Talk can support conversations about the Franco-American immigration experience and teach how assimilation has impacted cultural awareness, even among those who grew up in other cultures.

Poulin speaks about her experiences with wit and wisdom.

I was delighted to receive this video link from the Poolye Productions.com https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-5fJ3z0WQ_8&feature=youtu.be

This video is an entertaining way to learn about what it means to be Franco-American.

Poulin recorded the video in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.



Alphonse Poulin and Susan Poulin

Susan Poulin is a gifted performer. She travels the country as an actor and facilitator for PowerPlay, a professional applied theater company based at University of New Hampshire. In May of 2019, during a joint session of the Maine State Legislature, Susan was inducted into the Franco-American Hall of Fame in honor of her body of work and promotion of Franco-American cultural identity. She continues to be a leader in bringing a female voice to New England storytelling, and humor, and sharing the healing power of laughter with audiences statewide and beyond.

In 2017, it was my honor to be with Susan when she and I were inducted into the Franco-American Hall of Fame, at ceremonies hosted by the Maine Legislature.

Poulin’s narrative is a story for all Americans. Her experiences are especially relevant for Franco-Americans who have lived as proud “hyphenated Americans”.

Franco-American history about business entrepreneurs

November 15, 2019 *Franco-American News and Culture* Androscoggin County, Bonneau, LeBlanc, Lepage, Marcotte

By Juliana L'Heureux

LEWISTON, Me – “Celebrate Maine 2020”, bicentennial will include an exhibit about Franco-Americans who participated in building the state’s economy. In fact, the Board of Directors, with the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College (USM LAC FAC), are preparing to participate in the state’s bicentennial history by organizing an exhibit to tribute Franco-American entrepreneurs.

Several well known business families will be included in the exhibit, scheduled to open at the LAC in March, 2020, during “le mois de la Francophonie” (the month of the Francophone). A primary focus will be to exhibit histories about the families Leblanc, Lepage, Bonneau and Marcotte.

A theme for the exhibit is “Le Pain Quotidien”, a concept meant to reflect the ways in which the entrepreneurs saw to



This on-line book was published in 1892, and made available by Harvard.

basic, everyday human needs.

This exhibit will eventually include other entrepreneurs and their families, in a sequel, proposed for 2021.

(Continued on page 23)

(Franco-American history about business entrepreneurs continued from page 22)

- Leblanc- established the Lewiston steam dye house or “bleachery”
- Lepage – established a bakery
- Bonneau – the Bonneau Brothers market
- F.X. Marcotte- created the furniture sales company helping immigrants to furnish their residences.



History of the Bonneau Market circa 1946

Oral histories have been recorded with surviving family members who also volunteered to loan, or donate photographs and visual artifacts to display in the planned exhibits. Doris Belisle Bonneau, of Auburn, is the chair of the exhibition committee. Mary Rice-Defosse, a French professor who teaches at Bates College in Lewiston, is assisting with the exhibit and Celia McGuckian, a FAC board member, is among others who are volunteering on the committee.

Anna Faherty, a professional archivist who works with the FAC, is providing technical expertise.



An on-line book about Lewiston and other Maine cities, published in 1892.

Franco-American families who descended from the French Canadian immigrants that arrived in Lewiston, during the second half of the 19th century, were essential to the economic prosperity of the Lewiston and Auburn cities. Some saw how meeting the daily living needs required by the immigrants was also an opportunity to build economic security for themselves, while also helping their French speaking neighbors. They provided needed services to the thousands of laborers who worked in the mills, built along the Androscoggin River during the late 19th and into the middle 20th centuries. Their business investments were successful because they met the expectations of the Franco-Americans and the citizens who lived in the Androscoggin County’s twin cities. Rice-Defosse said, “Entrepreneurship offered the immigrant families an escape from the alienation of industrial labor and a means to control one’s own destiny.”

French-Canadian immigrants who arrived in Maine by foot, in horse drawn carts and on the Grand Trunk Railroad, caused the City of Lewiston to grow into a commercial hub.

This growth was documented in a fascinating on-line history book, made available by Harvard, titled, “Leading Business Men of Lewiston Augusta and Vicinity”, published in 1892, (at this link) by Mercentile Press.

On page 58 of the on-line edition, Mr. Leblanc, who established the “bleachery”, was described as one among those “leading business men”. Written in language peculiar to the late 19th century with excessive use of capital letters, this description presented a compelling advertisement for the cleansing services provided. The narrative, as I transcribed it, from the book reads: “Mr. Leblanc is a native of Canada and inaugurated his present enterprise in this city (Lewiston) in 1886. He began operations with no flourish or trumpets whatever, confident that the merits of his work had only to become known to assure him of a large patronage and the progress of time has proved his confidence to be well founded. Premises are occupied at No.141 Maine Street... employment is given to five assistants and a specialty is made of the handling of clothing of all descriptions, the same being Cleansed, Dyed and Neatly Repaired at the shortest possible notice. Ladies Dresses’ are Cleansed, Dyed and Finished without Ripping, and a feature of the business which will be of particular interest to all housekeepers

is that thorough steam cleansing of feather beds, pillows, Bolsters, Curled Hair, etc.. House Furnishings goods are dyed in the most fashionable colors and finished in the most skillful manner and Ostrich plumes are given the utmost attention and are Curled, Cleansed and Dyed any desired shade.” (Mon Dieu! Personally speaking, this service sounds like something I could pay for today, because my pillows could surely use a “thorough steam cleansing”!)

Sponsors who can help to support this exhibit are encouraged to contact Doris Bonneau at this email: dbrbonneau1@gmail.com



About Juliana

Juliana L’Heureux is a free lance writer who publishes news, blogs and articles about Franco-Americans and the French culture. She has written about the culture in weekly and bi-weekly articles, for the past 27 years.

<https://francoamerican.ban-gordailynews.com/author/jlheureux/>



La jeune Clara Fabiola Coutu

by *Gérard Coulombe*

I called my sister in Vermont, yesterday afternoon [10-26-2019] because I had been looking closely at a photograph of our mother and some of her friends, seven of them. Now, my mother appears to be all of seventeen in this, the earliest of her in a photograph that I have seen, maybe not, but she does look younger than all of the others in the staid photograph of the time. Only my mom appears to be wearing an elegant dress as five of the eight girls, women, pictured appear to be wearing the formal dress of the times. I say this only because their dresses are dark and highlighted by frilly white collars of the kind that I have seen before on ladies photographed in their fineries.

My sister, Julienne Coulombe married Gerard Asselin who graduated from a Maine college and administered and superintended schools in Northfield, Vermont where he was highly respected before he moved on to work with the State Department of Education where I believe he supervised special education programs of which he was a proponent for the good education of all students.

My brother-in-law died a few years ago, but my sister, who survives him at age 85, lives in Northfield Falls, Vt., along a stream flowing in-between mountains, on its way to Montpelier.

I know that there was always something of a mountain rising to the side of their home, up and up into the hills, mountains, for all I know, as I am a flatland boy living, with my own family, near a Sound in-between us and Long Island New York, on which we first lived upon leaving the University of Maine in 1958 following, upon graduation from high school, my stint in the military and the Korean War G.I. Bill that permitted my own university attendance.

Meanwhile, my sister and her husband

raised five children, a girl and four boys. Of the four boys, the oldest is married, works for the government, has been a professor of ancient Chinese poetry. A younger brother lives atop one of those Vermont mountains with a wife and three boys, one of whom, I just discovered, either lives or worked, once, in our hometown, here. And the other two are either working or still in college. A younger brother works for the State, is married too, and has a boy and girl in college. Another works in senior housing as a chef and lives at



*La jeune Clara Fabiola Coutu et des amis. Pris a Sanford, Me., Date ?
Mother could have been sixteen*

*L. to R. Julia Horton; Marie Louise Coutu; Albina Valliere; Eugenie Martin;
Imelda Valliere*

L. to R. Marie Horton; Clara Coutu; Blanche Bouchard

home and is also caring for his mother. The boys have a sister who has two daughters, one married and living in North Carolina, I think, and the other, independently capitalizes on opportunities in her native Vermont.

Another sister, older than Julienne by a year, I think, Therese, died a few years ago and she left six children. The one I know best is the one whom I traveled all over the country and Canada with following my retirement. All of the time, we camped out. He in his tent and I in mine. The two of us loved the open road and the wonder of the vistas we saw and the surprises that nature continuously provided on our trips. Once we camped North of the highest peak in Maine, on a lake with the view of loneliness personified, but for the hoot of some lake

water fowl.

The other siblings, are Deborah who now lives with her husband on the Florida panhandle and has her children living in Maine; Denise used to live on an Island with some of her children and grandchildren but moved to the mainland to simplify shopping; Susan lives with her partner nearer to campus of the University of New England, and her adult children are in the area, along the Pool Road; Peter manages an aluminum fabricating company and lives with his wife in Arundel, Maine, and Peter owns a concrete slab and foundation business and lives in Saco. My brother-in law enjoys condo-type living, his in-line unit is cared for by him as is, voluntarily, the rest of the condo property in which he lives.

Our own children, my wife and I had four: The oldest, Kevin is married and a retired container-ship master, living in the State of Washington. He writes about and teaches mariner skills and life; he is active in the Coast Guard Auxilia; Thad works for a Hartford insurance company, has one son who works as an independent contractor, and looks over us; Theo is a photographer/owner of an art studio in upstate Ct., and Renee lives

with us, works from her home-office, and keeps track of her four adult children, one in the publishing workplace, the other three, triplets, are seniors at different colleges, East-West.

I await my Julienne's remembrances of Clara. A young woman in the photo. Mom had a younger sister whom I did not like, growing up; I shouldn't have disliked Eva, but I actually had visions of her when I was older but only in my late teens. If some here suspect that my choice of "vision" might be inappropriate given my age, I assure readers, that as a Catholic boy, in those days, I was perfectly and totally familiar with the notion of a vision.

Finally, one last comment, if I may, *(Continued on page 25)*

(N.D.L.R. The Lowell Sun daily newspaper of Lowell, MA published the accompanying short article on December 24 using text and photos submitted to them by Suzanne Beebe, a frequent contributor to this publication in recent years. The article highlights the global reach of New England's best-known writer, Jack Kerouac, and is reprinted with permission from The Lowell Sun.)

From Italy, with love for Kerouac



Italian artist Elia Inderle displays a portion of his Dr. Sax inspired scroll.

An unexpected visitor from Italy attended a recent Lowell Celebrates Kerouac! presentation at Umass Lowell's O'leary Library.

Artist Elia Inderle, a devoted reader of Jack Kerouac, popped in to present the LCK! Committee with two gifts that enrich the collection of artwork inspired by Lowell's native-born and world-renowned writer.

Inderle had come to Lowell to visit Kerouac's grave in Edson Cemetery and see the sites associated with the author's life in Lowell and made famous in his

Lowell novels, especially "Dr. Sax," which is based on his pre-adolescent boyhood in Pawtucketville.

"Dr. Sax" is Inderle's favorite Kerouac book, and he created a scroll and spiral-bound booklet inspired by the words and imagery of that intensely visual book. Both the scroll and spiralbound booklet are now in the possession of the LCK! Committee, which is pondering how the scroll, in particular, might be displayed for other Kerouac devotees to see and appreciate in the future.



Inderle holds the spiral-bound booklet also inspired by Dr. Sax.

(La jeune Clara Fabiola Coutu

continued from page 24)

about my sister Julienne's husband, now deceased. When I knew him he was a genteel, well-educated, gentleman; the picture that I saw of him in his wheelchair, in hospital or nursing home, before he died, was that of himself sitting, looking blankly, with a cap on his forehead signifying some holiday or birthday. He looked so nonplus in that photo that I felt like crying for him, and asking those in his surround, "What is happening to me?"

Of course, no one knew, as the focus was not upon him. It's only what the photo reveals. There could not have been a sadder moment in his life or for me in considering his achievements.

Still, I look at my mom in the photo above, and I say to myself, what a beautiful woman, even as I recall her as a tired house-

wife, heavier some, much older, with much of her youth having been used up in daily household chores, raising the children with little to meet the weekly bills in those days. No wonder that I do not recall a word that she might have said to me when I left with my dad in a rented car and driver for the novitiate at the end of sixth grade and later when I said to her one late midweek afternoon, days after high school graduation that I was leaving because I had enlisted. She just signed the papers for me, as my dad, as always, was at work for the second shift. I had neither seen nor spoken to my sisters that day, as they were away at play, I imagine.

©Coulombe.10-26-19

* Mom always said, "I took the late train when I married." And, that, in French. She was younger than Felix who was already

a young forty. But, as father had always been the actor that he had been as a young man, there is no telling. Marie Louise Coutu, is one of mom's sisters who became "une soeur grise," a grey nun of Montreal. I knew Blanche Bouchard as one of mom's close friends and one of several we, as children, visited, as one of mom's favorite and frequent outings when we were kids were visits to her friends, of which Blanche was one.

**In this photo, our mom appears to be young to me, as thin as my sister Julienne was when she married. My sister, Therese, could tell me more about this photograph were she still living. I think mother was eighty-three when she died and had not visited the doctors or had her breast cancer treated, as some were inclined to do in those days. Whereas, today, we see the doctor at the drop of a pin; it wasn't always so.

The History of Lowell's Franco-American Male Chorus

[Editor's Note: The following account is adapted from a 50th anniversary program booklet of Lowell's Franco-American Male Chorus as submitted to the Lowell Franco-American Committee website (<http://www.francolowellma.com>) by then-director Robert Gaudette in December of 2004.]

In 2004, the now-discontinued Lowell Franco-American Male Chorus consisted of thirty members from the Lowell, MA and Salem, NH areas. The group included family groupings of two and three generations, as well as members who had originally sung as boys in the Ste. Jeanne d'Arc Boys and Men's Choir in the late 1920s, as well as members of the St. Louis de France Choir in Lowell. The chorus was formally registered as The Franco-American Male Chorus in 1948 by its founder, Mr. George A. Ayotte, Lowell's mayor at the time.

At the passing of Delia Ayotte, accompanist and wife of Mr. Ayotte, their daughter, Fleurette Ayotte Sheehy, took over as the group's accompanist, serving to 2004 and beyond. In 1977, her father retired as the group's director and turned the reins over to Mr. Robert Gaudette, a loyal member since 1948, with years of valuable experience as director of Mary Queen of Peace's Parish Choir in Salem, NH, as well as director of the Salem Choral Society, which he founded in 1972. His expertise was an essential element in maintaining the professionalism exhibited by the group throughout its existence. (Three of Bob's sons were members of the chorus as late as 2004.)

The group had a storied history and widespread exposure including three tours of Canada in 1948, 1952 and 1970. Their 1952 tour included the honor of being the first U.S. male chorus to sing at St. Joseph's Oratory in Montreal. From 1960-1961 the chorus performed weekly in the Franco-American

Program on TV-9 in Manchester, NH. In 1968, the group was invited to sing a special Mass in New York City's Sts. Peter and Paul Cathedral and shortly thereafter sang on Boston's TV-5 for a television Mass for shut-ins. A tradition of providing musical performances for the elderly and needy continued with variety shows and musicals scheduled annually in the Salem and Lowell areas.



The members of the Franco-American Male Chorus seen in this 1950 photo are: (1st row, left to right) Joe Harvey, Marcel Therriault, Leo Cloutier, Director George A. Ayotte, Raymond Jussaume, Henri Lagasse, Armand "Sparky" Desmarais and Normand L. Ayotte. (2nd row, left to right) Albert Gaudette, Bob Gaudette, René Ayotte, Henry Pellerin, Richard Lagasse, Leon Bedard, Henry Morrisette and Napoleon Milot. (3rd row, left to right) Robert Daigle, Donald Richards, André St. Gelais, Adolphe Brassard, Normand Richards, Raymond Brassard, René Vigneault, Leon Payette and Arthur Germain. [Photo from the Hank Frechette Collection, courtesy of Gert Frechette.]

Additional honors bestowed on the chorus included an invitation to sing in 1979 for the newly-elected NH Governor Hugh Gallen. In 1980, the group sang on The Mount Washington cruise flagship of Lake Winnepesaukee. In 1983, the group sang for then-presidential candidate astronaut John Glenn. And through the years, it participated frequently in Lowell's Franco-American Cultural Week and Irish

Cultural Week, in addition to being a charter member choir of the Lowell Choral Festival. It also participated in the 150th anniversary celebration of Lowell's historic St. Patrick Church in the Acre; the 150th anniversary celebration of Lowell's St. Joseph Hospital; and a Christmas program on Channel 9, Manchester, NH.

Other performance venues and events included Old North Common in Boston; the historical naval vessel, USS Constitution; Harvard University; the famed Methuen Organ Hall (as part of a SIDS Foundation event); a concert for Merrimack Valley United Way; a Dracut High School fund raiser telethon; Lowell and Lawrence Elks Memorial Services; and St. Marie Parish's 50th Anniversary Mass. And, much to the benefit of many young couples, the chorus sang at over 750 weddings.

In 1987, the chorus was chosen to be part of the Lowell Folklife Project, a yearlong effort to document the life and traditions of a proud, intensely ethnic city. The materials and tapes produced by that effort are now housed in Lowell's Patrick Mogan Cultural Center as well as in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. for use by students and scholars.

Far more than just another community chorus, the Franco-American Male Chorus embodied the best musical aspirations and accomplishments of an ethnic community drawing inspiration from its vibrant cultural background.



Finding Francos in Le Forum (1975)

2019-11-07 PL Contemporary Francos, Franco-American Women, Franco-Americans,
French Language, Le Forum, Survivance <http://querythepast.com/>

From Survivance to Fulfillment

This begins a journey into the pages of *Le Forum*, a product of the FAROG and later the Franco-American Centre in Orono, Maine. Again, a word of caution is in order: this is only one of many sources for the period at hand. We cannot take the *Le Forum* as a perfect or comprehensive representation of the Franco community's concerns and sentiments. Nevertheless, it hints at the important—and vigorous—debates of the day and ways in which we might approach recent Franco-American history.

During the past nine months, we have evolved into a real newspaper, with pictures no less. In the process we have tried to provide a source of information about Franco-Americans in the 1970's. We have hoped to create the beginnings of a communication network within our disparate Franco-American community. And, we have tried to exchange ideas for the benefit of all those involved, by blood, marriage, or love, with Franco-American life.

Our achievements have perhaps fallen short of our objectives, but the intention persists and the struggle goes on. Oddly enough we have a poster in the office which reads: 'F.A.R.O.G. is an underdeveloped program as defined by the gap between its aspirations and its resources.'

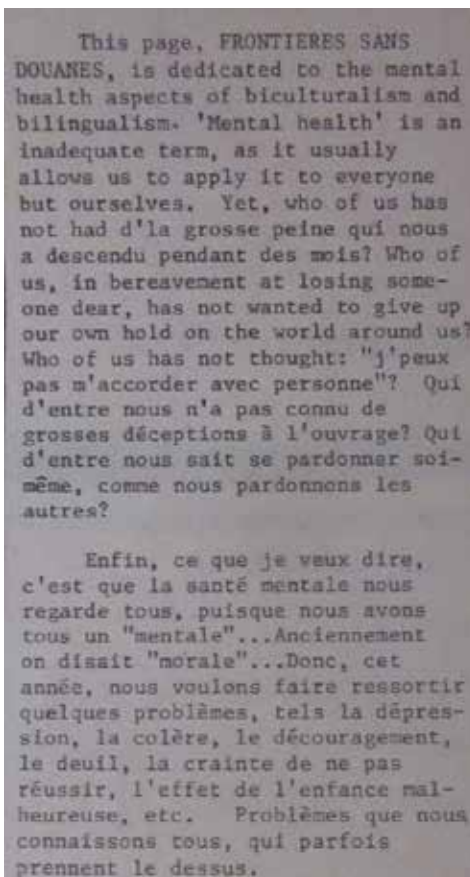
– Editor Celeste Roberge, May 1975

Three years after the creation of the Franco-American Resource Opportunity Group, its outlet was a little engine with a small budget and high hopes. Roberge, Yvon Labbé, and their acolytes had already achieved a great deal to ensure the visibility of the fait français in Maine. The road to recognition and legitimacy was a long one, however.

A new political age was at hand in Maine, with recent legislation restoring bilingual education and the appointment under Governor Ken Curtis of Armand Dufresne as the state's chief justice. At a local level, Omer Picard wrote of efforts to promote French education in northern Maine. Irene Simano discussed Project

FACTS, a televised early childhood education program, which enabled participants to evaluate self-esteem in Franco-Americans. In “Un coup d’oeil sur FAROG,” Labbé attested to the hard work being done at the University of Maine for the revitalization of French-Canadian culture. There ought to be no question, he stated in the fall of 1975, that one could be a good American citizen and a francophone.

That only meant so much after decades of marginalization and discrimination. Franco-Americans youths were contending with that heavy legacy and what they perceived to be the failures of traditional elites. The FAROG Forum of the 1970s reflected growing ethnic awareness, a democratization of the Franco cultural project, and a search for allies and resources.



The issue of mental health front and center in Le Forum in 1975

One of those allies proved to be the University of Maine's James Muro, then dean of the College of Education. “I’d love this place to be a center in the U.S. for Fran-

co-American everything,” Muro explained (presciently) to FAROG members. “Curriculum development, etc. I would like to see a series of offices, like a center, an institute.” In fact, in FAROG’s early years, much of the support would come from education faculty, with two courses focusing on the Franco-American experience.

Still much more a newspaper than a magazine, the Forum included papers written for one of these courses on the education of Franco-Americans. Nicole Cécile Collin’s work traced the history of resistance to Anglo-Protestant influence, a history that she had internalized and that blocked the full expression of her identity. Resistance was, for Collin, a quintessential part of the Franco-American identity. The decline of traditional institutions like the Church and parish schools meant that the struggle had become individualized. “In order to arrive at a dynamic, creative living awareness and definition of Franco-American culture and self-identity,” she wrote, “I must get beyond this resistance. To redefine it so I can live and have enjoyment and space to grow.”

In a later issue, Irene Simano shared a powerful, heartfelt reflection under the telling title, “La Survivance Is Not Enough.” “Even now,” she explained,

it seems ironic to speak about change when referring to the people of a culture whose main concern has been continuity, traditions, la survivance. Furthermore, it seems strange to speak about change in a positive manner and devoid of the defensiveness which characterizes the speech of many Franco-Americans when they bemoan the rapid rate of assimilation among the young. For so long, the criteria for the retention of true Franco American credentials have remained elusive for the young, because these credentials have been strictly tied to conformity, traditions (which are sometimes oppressive, not liberating) and la survivance. The answer to the question of what is a Franco American has traditionally followed a set pattern of 'speaks French, is a Catholic, follows certain rituals and traditions, most of which are Church oriented, has a non-anglicized surname.'

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That, Simano explained, may have been fine in 1875—but no longer. Surely there was another way. “Somewhere between the land of the petrified forest and the acres of assimilation lies the kingdom of the possible,” she stated. She hinted at the torrent of change known as the Quiet Revolution in Quebec and activism in the African-American community; even the Catholic Church was changing! The time had come to move from survivance—“defensive, archaic and destructive of vital energy”—to fulfillment.

Many contributions attested to the personal quest for self-confidence and a healthy, “normal” Franco-American identity. The Forum was at the vanguard of mental health awareness with a new column dedicated to issues pertaining to the mental well-being of francophones, no small step forward in 1975.

As for democratization, Roberge and Forum correspondents together expressed a desire to hear more voices. Youths could at

last be heard in their own words. The writing of Collin and Simano and the leadership of Roberge reflected the essential role played by women in both the FAROG and its publication. There was also a desire to reach out to Francos in other states. Appropriately, one series titled “Du nord au sud” provided the lay of Franco-American communities in the New England states, including statistics and history. The Francos were significant—they simply had to recognize their significance.

On a lighter note reflecting its conversational tone, the paper regularly featured quizzes that were really inside jokes. It is likely that these short tests, appearing under “Votre quotient intellectuel francophone,” would only make sense to speakers of a certain colloquial French. The answers became increasingly obscure over time. In September 1975, one question was:

Péter de la broue =

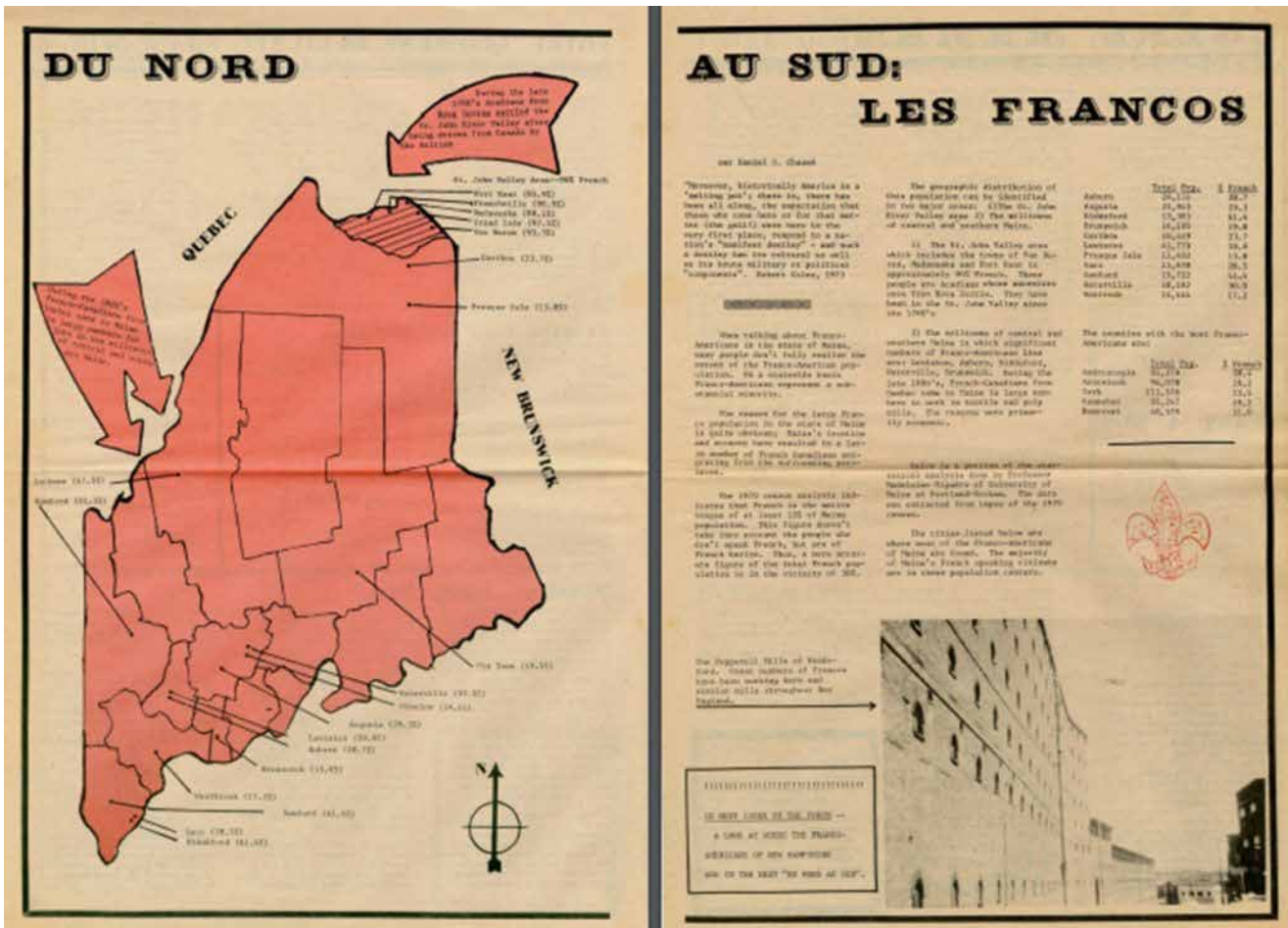
a. déformation physiologique qui entraîne beaucoup d’ennui[s]

b. procédé par lequel on fabrique de la bière chez soi

c. action de couvrir la réalité d’un vernis loquace

(Since an English translation would be at best imperfect, we might understand this as asking the meaning of “blowing hot air.”)

The language issue was also a matter of serious debate in the pages of Le Forum. One clergyman from the Madawaska region denounced the paper’s style; in his view, the writing “sent le chantier,” i.e. it had a whiff of the logging camp on account of the colloquial French and critiques of the Catholic Church. (Another correspondent issued a blunt “Stop printing.”) On the other hand, Don Dugas of the University of Massachusetts defended the French-Canadian dialect in the face of the Parisian. This was emblematic of the times. Scholars increasingly brought legitimacy to the ancestral tongue, such that younger generations might no longer feel ashamed to speak their parents’ French on account of its quality. That issue would linger for some time.



Cut-out from a four-decades-old copy of Le Forum – a relic of a far more turbulent era among Franco-Americans

(N.D.L.R. The original printing of this article first appeared in the bi-annual *Freeman's: Home*. Spring 2017. And is reprinted with permission.)



Vacationland

Kerri Arsenault Living in the Shadow of a Smoke-Spouting Paper Mill

By Kerri Arsenault

Mexico, Maine sits in a valley or “River Valley” as we call the area, because I suppose you can’t have one without the other. The hills are low and worn and carved by the waters surrounding them, and trees line the rivers, which confine the town. It’s a paper mill town where smokestacks poke holes in the smog they create. *That’s money coming out of those smokestacks*, my father used to say about the rotten-smelling upriver drafts that surfaced when the weather shifted. That smell loitered amid the high school softball games I played beneath those stacks and lingered on my father’s shirtsleeves when he came home from work, allowing me to forgive the rank odor for what it provided.

From the porch steps of the house where I grew up, to the right, you’ll see a street of clapboarded homes, the quiet interrupted every now and then by a braking logging truck. A mile or two out of town, the road narrows and small creeks knit through pastures shadowed by hills, a working farm or two, a long straight road, and smells of cut hay, muddy cow paths, rotting leaves, or black ice, depending on the time of year. The seasons, they calendared our lives.

To the left of the porch, you’ll see the end of the road. There, the pavement dips down to reveal the town’s only traffic light, a gas station, and the roof of the Family Dollar Store. Behind the store lies the wide, slow-moving Androscoggin River. Just beyond the Androscoggin, on an island in the neighboring town of Rumford, the paper mill’s largest smokestack emerges like a giant concrete finger. From anywhere in

town you can orient yourself to this stack or the ever-present ca-chink ca-chink ca-chink of the mill’s conveyor belts and find your way home, even from a pitch-black walk in the woods. When mill shutdowns occur for holidays or layoffs, the smokeless stacks resemble the diseased birch trees dying throughout New England.

Where stack meets sky, the river pivots and heads southeast, under bridges and over rapids, pushing through falls and dams, around islands and along inlets, through Jay, Lewiston, Topsham, Brunswick, and other small towns, until it meets and mingles with five other rivers at Merrymeeting Bay, whereupon it finally and quietly slips into the Atlantic Ocean.

April 2009 and I am home for my grandfather’s funeral.

My parents’ house sighs with winter’s leftover lethargy. Spring has arrived in Maine with driveways full of mud and sculled up snow-plow debris; salt stains, shredded earth, and derelict mittens lie in the wake of its embracing path. A few dirty buttresses of snow linger like pocked monoliths, meting out the new season’s arrival. The swollen Androscoggin pushes flotsam downriver in the commotion of spring’s thaw, and insect hatches will soon begin bursting along its surface until summer opens like an oven. My mother comes out on the porch where I’m standing. *Want to go for a walk?* she asks, her face pinched with the sharpness of her father’s death.

We head up Highland Terrace and

stop to peek in the windows of an abandoned house, one I always liked, with its wraparound porch, turreted roof, and but-tercup-yellow paint. *The owner is sick but refuses to sell the house*, my mother says as we walk across the battered porch. So it sits there, this once elegant home, shedding its brightness, yellow flecking the half-frozen ground. Spray-painted in the road near the driveway: “F__ you, b_____.” The fug of the mill swallows us.

Ahead, we reach the top of the hill, and there, my old high school. To the east, snowmobile trails and abutting them, the mill’s decommissioned landfill. To the west, the football field slices the horizon and beyond that, lazy fingers of smoke lick the sky.

We walk inside the school, and my mother stops in the office to chat with the principal. The lobby smells of Band-Aids, warm mashed potatoes, and damp socks. Being there reminds me of Greg, my high school on-again, off-again lumberjackish boyfriend who lived near the town incinerator. I loved him like I would a sorry stuffed animal, one who had lost an eye or whose fur was rubbed raw. Kelly, a girl who wore her black, perfectly feathered hair like a weapon, was in love with him too. When he and I fought—usually because of her—I’d listen to sad songs on my cassette player over and over until he’d call and I’d forgive him in a pattern of everlasting redemption. I only saw Greg once since I graduated. He came to my parents’ one Christmas break when I was home from college. He and my mother caught up while I leaned against the kitchen countertop across the room. *P____head*, my father said when he entered the room. He called all boys I dated “P____head” but only if he liked them. If he didn’t, my father would sit at our kitchen table like a boulder while the boy fidgeted by the kitchen door in blank-faced silence. Greg eventually married Kelly and got a job at the mill, alongside his sister Janet, who pitched for my high school state championship softball team.

After my mother and I leave, we follow the dirt path behind the football field, past Meroby Elementary where I got into a fistfight with Lisa Blodgett. Lisa and I took turns swinging horizontally at each other’s head until a teacher intruded on the brawl. Lisa’s strength was tremendous for a sixth grader, her grit shaped by being one of the youngest girls in a family of 14 kids, most of them boys. When I looked in the mirror that night at home, I was sure I looked

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different, the way you think you do when you lose your virginity. It was my first and last bare-knuckled fight, except for a few unconvincing swipes at good old Kelly one night at a dance. My best friend, Maureen, who towered over both of us, protected me from Kelly's sharp, red fingernails.

Down Granite Street, an untied dog begins following us, growling. *Just ignore him*, my mother says. But I hear his snarls over the thrum of the mill. As I turn to look at him the dog sniffs my heels, his tail down. I walk faster. My mother continues talking. The dog gives a final bark and sits down in the middle of the road. I look over my shoulder until we are out of his sight and he is out of ours. Down the hill, past the Green Church, the town hall, the library, the fire station, the post office, we walk through the oversized parking lot at the Family Dollar Store. Someone sits inside the only vehicle parked there eating a sandwich with the windows rolled up and the engine running. Nearby, the vacant lot where the Bowl-O-Drome used to be and behind it, St. Theresa's, our shuttered Catholic church where Father Cyr gave me my first communion, confirmed me, and listened to my first confession. *I'm sorry I lied to my parents*, I said to him, though that itself was a lie.

"Our mill's primary product has become as precarious as the livelihoods of the men and women who make it."

On the corner at the traffic light, a gardening store, a newish shop, to me anyway. Lawn decorations, perennials, stuffed animals, and miniature tchotchkes for terrariums strain the overstuffed metal shelves of the store. Most mom-and-pop shops have closed in town, but for a few. In their place, discount stores like Marden's Surplus & Salvage, Wardwell's Used Furniture, the What Not Shop Thrift Store, and other such second-hand outlets and pawn shops appeared over the years, as if the people who live here only deserve leftovers. Walmart with its blinking fluorescent lights and the faint smell of formaldehyde, hijacked the rest of the commerce.

I am inspecting a snow globe when I hear my mother shout, *Kerri, guess who's here? Do you know who this is?* Inevitably, she plays this remembering game, usually in the grocery store, where she will stand next to someone, grab his or her arm as if she were a koala, and ask me, do you remem-

ber so-and-so? I will stand there frozen, in the frozen foods, staring at my mother and the person she has grabbed, their eyes like dinner plates, waiting for my answer. *Sure, yes, I remember you!* I had said earlier that same day to Mr. Martineau, the man who lives across the street from my grandfather. After Mr. Martineau left the store my mother told me he has Alzheimer's. *He doesn't remember you*, she said.

Kerri, come *see who's here!* she shouts again. I walk around the aisle like Gulliver, jiggling the doll-sized plastic floral arrangements, pitching the teeny flowers to and fro. My mother raises her arms upward like a magician. DO YOU KNOW WHO THIS IS?

"Our mill's primary product has become as precarious as the livelihoods of the men and women who make it."

Hi. Long time no see, the woman says. *Yeah, what is it, about twenty years?* I say. Her dry yellow bangs slump over oversized round glasses that hide pink powdered cheeks. On her bulky sweatshirt, something plaid. *Where do you live now?* she asks, leaning on the counter, arms crossed like a fortress. *California*, I say, feeling bad, not knowing why. *San Francisco!* I clarify. *Oh, I went there once. Didn't like it. The people are not very nice. And I never found anything good to eat*, she says.

I look around the store for my mother, for the exit. *It seems quiet around here nowadays. Much less going on than when we were kids*, I say. *No, not really*, she says. *Really?* I say, wondering if she means there is something going on or there isn't. *I went by the Recreation Park yesterday. It's just so . . . so different*, I say, hopeful. I glance at her around the periphery of her glasses, our conversation. She stares at me over the top of her rims, as patient as a road, looks at me without blinking: my leather jacket, my Prada eyeglasses, my fitted jeans. *Nope, you're the one that's different*, she says.

We leave the store and my mother tells me the mill plans to shut down Number 10 paper machine, and others are on a transitional schedule, meaning they too may lumber to a slow hissing halt. In the past few decades, with technology displacing people and digital media overtaking print, the production of coated magazine

paper—our mill's primary product—has become as precarious as the livelihoods of the men and women who make it. *We want to sell the house, but nobody wants to live here anymore*, my mother says, panning her hand from one side of the street to the other. Homes sag with ruined lawns—and the families who live in them haven't fared much better. Around the block, we pass Kimball School where I attended K–4.

Weeds root in the tar playground and a plastic bag twirls in the damp breeze. A rusty chain-link fence girdles the property. Dr. Edward Martin gutted the school years ago and transformed it into a medical office, but after he died, the building closed up permanently. Broken glass breaches the milkweed that surrounds the maple tree we had sought shade under during recess. Down the street, my grandfather's house, buttoned up, the furnace long expired. Remnants of crabgrass and soggy leaves flatten his once thriving garden. Mr. Martineau, who my mother and I saw at the grocery store earlier, emerges from the house across the street. He waves. We wave back.

My mother and I walk home in silence. Halfway there, I run my hand along the cool green iron railing that parallels the sidewalk and snag my sweater on it. The rusted, dismembered rail is scattered in bits at the bottom of the banking. On my way from school, I'd roll on my side down that banking, again and again. With grass stains on my clothes, I'd run home, as if my head was made of that same iron rail and my house was magnetic north.

I see the porch of our house from several blocks away, and it looks as it's always looked, only smaller as things often appear when you are older. My mother and I stomp our feet on the front porch to dislodge road grime from our boots. *I can't imagine what will happen if the mill closes*, my mother says, as she opens the door. *So many people are out of work already*, she clarifies. *It will be a ghost town*. I take off my coat while my mother digs out the local newspaper, her forefinger thumping a news article about the mill. *We have to sell the house*, she says. But she has been saying this for years.

The next day, I go for a run through Strathglass Park, a collection of two-family homes by the mill's founder, Hugh J. Chisholm.

Brick-by-brick—five million to be exact—Chisholm assembled the houses with long-lasting materials for what he hoped

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would be a long-lasting industry: slate roofs, granite foundations, handmade headers and balustrades, concrete steps, plaster walls. He even wallpapered the living rooms. Now, broken snowmobiles and other lifeless remnants litter front lawns, and listing, half-baked additions or porches scab the once pristine houses. Sheets shroud leaded glass windows, their bottoms knotted to let in light or keep rooms dark. Garbage lies in heaps alongside scattered woodpiles and abandoned bright plastic toys are half-covered in snow and dog shit. Wind chimes tinkle above the din of a yowling mutt. The road is a glacier. I mince my way along the icy path ahead.

Wandering around in this forlorn landscape, I think later that night, it is a ghost town, a place all but vanished but for its dull eggy odor. It complied with my memory of it, yet it also did not, a blend of nostalgia and something else as unrecognizable as the back of my own head. *It's not where we grew up*, a childhood friend said to me years ago. What, then, was it? It was home, that much I knew, and home is the heart of human identity, a blurry backdrop like that fake plastic tree I leaned on during my high school senior photograph.

When I was a kid, my mother stayed home while my father worked: her making pot roast, him making smokestack money. We explored the world through textbooks, Matchbox cars, and made classroom dioramas of what we thought a Mayan village or a Midwestern dairy farm looked like. The rest of the world seemed to be New Hampshire or Canada. Families didn't go on overseas vacations, or hardly even interstate. Our lives were focused inward . . . Red Sox scores, union strikes, and long gas station lines in the 70s, though nobody ever connected the high price of fuel to what was happening in other countries. For us, it was just inconvenient.

Monumental changes were happening in America. However, there were no movements in Mexico and Rumford but for the men walking across the footbridge to work. Blue-collar families like mine were more likely to dry bras on a clothesline than burn them. We lived in a Shrinky-Dink world where everything was there, just smaller. We were lucky in this, felt safe with our doors unlocked at night and ameliorated most of our sins within the latched doors of St. Theresa's confessional. At nighttime

football games we watched our high school fire-twirling majorettes toss their batons skyward in a spinning, blazing fan. They caught them dead center every time. Those kerosene-soaked batons in the dusk of autumn, they smelled of permanence.

One year blended into the next with only slight differences in star athletes or town leaders and sometimes one turned into the other. Family businesses occupied Main Street, anchored by the Chicken Coop. "Good Eatin' That's Our Greetin'!" their tagline declared in flat, red paint. On Wednesdays the Bowl-O-Drome hosted my gum-chewing junior high league, and on Fridays it murmured with the sporty jesting

*Don't eat the fish, we
were always told, but we
couldn't have anyway be-
cause we never saw any to
catch.*

of my father's league. I bought penny candy from the variety store next to the bowling alley, as did my mother, as did hers. Up and down the street, businesses opened and closed their doors with the seasons, the economy, and the sun: Lazarou's car dealership, the Dairy Queen, RadioShack, Dick's Restaurant, and our radio station, WRUM. The footbridge to the mill spans the Androscoggin where Main Street tapers off. Three generations of my family and exponential relatives worked there, as did most people who spread *cretons* on their toast before clocking in. We were stamped out like Christmas cookies, as good French Catholics were. We got up, ate, worked, and went to bed, deriving small pleasures between the routine and sometimes because of it.

In the drowsy summertime, when the sun dipped low over the foothills and the humidity of the day invaded kitchens and bedrooms, people in our town flocked to their porches. There, they chatted while dusk knit itself into a tight blanket. The sounds of clinking dishes, faint music, vehicles purring, and light-as-vapor laughter scented the air. Night fell like a bruise. During those school-less days, I often sat on the dusty curb in front of our house and counted the out-of-state license plates as they sped by on their way to somewhere else. When I could finally drive myself I'd cruise around Rumford and Mexico with all the other

teenagers, pivoting our used Monte Carlo in the Tourist Information Booth parking lot before another revolution through town. My parents thought the Information Booth was where all the "druggies" hung out, and sometimes the pot smokers did, but really, it was a harmless venue in a small town with nothing else to do but drive around in aimless circles.

My parents shaped their own well-worn paths. While my father walked back and forth across the bridge to work, my mother lugged laundry up and down the cellar stairs, day after day, one skinny arm cradling the laundry basket, her free hand gripping a Viceroy. With a screech and a whack, the screen door would slam shut after she elbowed it open. She would dump clean laundry on the kitchen table, snap each article of clothing three times, fold them sharply into tight wedges of fabric, and stack them like the reams of white paper my father brought home from the mill. When the screen door wore out, my mother replaced it with a new one that came with a squeaky spring. She left it defective, announcing herself into infinity with only my father to hear. His hearing, long dulled by the hum of paper machines, was the perfect match to her perpetual clamor. She'd let her Viceroy expire before finishing it and send me to fetch her a new pack from the corner store. *I'll time you*, she'd say. *Now GO!* And off I went. Go? She didn't need to tell me twice.

In Mexico and Rumford, what we needed, we had. Everyone knew everyone and we liked it that way—for what other way was there? *It was quite the place*, my mother says. *There was never any reason to leave.* Things stayed in this balance, with minor adjustments every now and then until small working-class towns started to ebb alongside the industries that nourished them.

I still gag every time I drink a glass of water, a reflex that emerged in my youth when I lived within a football field's reach of the mill and the Androscoggin. At the time, I sweetened the mephitic water with Tang or Zarex or drank no water at all. But as an adult, the memory of our drinking water's brackish and sweetish chemical smell/taste, combined with the sour air above it, precipitates what feels like smothering when I put glass to lips.

By 1970, when I was three, the river's dissolved oxygen level was exactly zero. Newsweek named the Androscoggin one of
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the ten filthiest rivers in the United States. Everything in the river died. *Don't eat the fish*, we were always told, but we couldn't have anyway because we never saw any to catch. There also were no swimmers, fishermen, or boaters in the river William B. Lapham, in his 1890 book, *History of Rumford*, called it "beautiful," noting "the scenery bordering upon it is picturesque and often grand." If you squint, the Androscoggin still fits Lapham's description. But if you open your eyes, you'll see what was invisible to me my whole life: the mill's pollutants hovering low over the naturally formed glacial bowl of our valley and in the toxic sludge congregating in landfills and the riverbed. What I did see when I was young, however, was the rainbow-colored foam eddying on the river's edge, which was as enchanting as the gray "mill snow" that floated softly up from the smokestacks and down upon any surface in town.

What did we all do? We plugged our noses and placed our drinking glasses upside down in the cupboard so ash wouldn't get in our milk. The pollution was as trapped as we were. Dioxin, cadmium, benzene, lead, naphthalene, nitrous oxide, sulfur dioxide, arsenic, furans, trichlorobenzene, chloroform, mercury, phthalates: these are some of the byproducts of modern-day papermaking. Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, lung cancer, prostate cancer, aplastic anemia, esophageal cancer, asbestosis, Ewing's sarcoma, emphysema, cancer of the brain, cancer of the heart: these are some of the illnesses appearing in Rumford and Mexico. Occasionally in suspicious-looking clusters, sometimes in generations of families, often in high percentages. When anyone tried to connect the dots between the mill's pollution with these illnesses, logic was met with justification, personal experience with excuse, stories with statistics, disease with blame.

Between 1980 and 1988, 74 cases of aplastic anemia, a rare and serious blood disorder, are recorded in the River Valley. It is the highest rate in the state. A study is ordered to find the cause. Researchers examine potential environmental and occupational sources, such as benzene, a chemical used in papermaking and a known cause of cancer in humans. Each aplastic anemia case gets parsed: some are eliminated from the study because they are referrals from other hospitals; some are eliminated because the stated

diagnosis didn't fit into the strict scientific criteria; some are eliminated because certain cancer treatments themselves cause aplastic anemia. In the final report, nobody can determine the exact cause. It is as if nobody ever had the disease at all.

"Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, lung cancer, prostate cancer, aplastic anemia, esophageal cancer, asbestosis, Ewing's sarcoma, emphysema, cancer of the brain, cancer of the heart: these are some of the illnesses appearing in Rumford and Mexico."

It was often difficult to tell where the mill ended and where Rumford and Mexico began.

1984-1986. Hospital discharges indicate nine leukemia cases in the Rumford and Mexico area.

1989. The Rumford mill discharges 1.2 million pounds of toxic chemicals into the environment.

1991. In rapid succession, five people in Rumford and Mexico are diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, a rare form of blood cancer associated with exposure to dioxin, a toxic chemical formed in the paper-bleaching process. WCVB, a Boston TV station investigates the flurry of diagnoses in their news series *Chronicle* and calls the episode, "Cancer Valley." During this time, the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston asks our town physician, "What the hell's going on in Rumford? We're getting all these kids with cancer coming in from your area."

The *Los Angeles Times* talks to our state representative, Ida Luther: "We have a very, very high cancer rate, but we always have lived with that. Nobody can prove anything, but I just can't see how tons and tons of air pollutants going into the air can do you any good. At the same time, I don't want to make [the paper mill] out to be a villain. They're here to make paper and—there's no question about it—this valley depends upon that paper mill." The mill responds by claiming there's "no clear link between mill wastes and cancer or other diseases."

2001. WCVB films "Return to Cancer Valley" in Rumford and Mexico.

2002. Cancer is the leading cause of death in Maine.

2003. Maine's age-adjusted cancer incidence rate is the second highest in the nation and Maine's death rate from cancer surpasses the national average.

2004. Cancer remains the leading cause of death in Maine. 2010. Toxic environmental exposures associated with childhood illnesses cost Maine about \$380 million every year, according to the 2010 Economic Assessment of Children's Health and the Environment in Maine.

2012. A headline from Maine's Kennebec Journal: "Some Label Toxin Spike as Positive; pulp and paper industry says increase is a good sign, state officials not alarmed." What doesn't alarm state officials and the Maine Pulp and Paper Association are the "9.6 million pounds of chemicals [that] were released by 84 Maine mills between 2009 and 2010, an increase of 1.14 million pounds over the previous year" because the increase in pollution shows an increase in papermaking. Our mill is fingered as the number one pollution producer, releasing over three million pounds of toxic chemicals into the environment for those same years.

2012. Cancer is the leading cause of death in Maine. Dr. Molly Schwenn, director of the Maine Cancer Registry, tenders an explanation. She says contributing to Maine's high cancer rates are "lower levels of education, high rates of poverty, unemployment, and lack of health insurance."

2013. The Cancer Surveillance Report by the Maine Center for Disease Control confirms cancer is still the leading cause of death in Maine.

There's a lag between exposure and diagnosis, experts declared. *People could be exposed from other sources*, scientists explained. There are uncertainties, decried the Environmental Protection Agency. *Continued follow-up is needed*, said the mill. While organizations debated who to blame, people in Rumford and Mexico quit jobs or school to care for sick family members; lose health insurance because they lose their jobs; and put canisters on pizza shop countertops to pay for medical bills.

It was often difficult to tell where the mill ended and where Rumford and Mexico began. The mill's employees, in the 1920s, published *The League*, a compendium of work and community related activities. In it, you'd learn "Charlie Gordon was seriously ill Thursday A.M." or in the "Rewinder Gossip" column, you'd find out "Joe
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Provencher is in his second boyhood for he is wearing short pants again.” The newsletter also reported first-aid room statistics, townwide events, movie times, attendance at mill fire drills, or changes in the sulphate mill, the bleach plant, and the finishing room. It changed to the *Oxford Log* in 1952 where someone wrote a story on Labor Day beauty parade “Cutter” girls “dressed in daring ankle-length dresses” and whose “blue bonnets and sashes were made of fine Oxford paper.” In that same newsletter, you could also read about Johnny Norris, who worked on the supercalendar machine, who, while on vacation in New York City, found it “hot and confusing.” Or Hollis Swett of the “Island Division” who got caught in a lightening storm while fishing at Weld Pond. *The Oxford Log* published profiles of high school basketball stars who were sons of millworkers. Or of Nick DiConzo, a paper tester, who prepared the ski jump for the Black Mountain’s Winter Carnival. You’d see vintage photos of the workers adding bleach to vats of pulp, or working in the Kraft mill—gloveless, barefoot, smiling as if there was no end to the prosperity. And it looked to be true; by 1930, our mill was the largest paper mill under one roof and Hugh J. Chisholm, eventually combined 20 paper companies to establish International Paper, then and today, the biggest paper company in the world.

I am home visiting. My parents and I sort through papers, organizing things after their move to a new, one-story house in Rumford.

They still haven’t sold their old house. It’s been on the market for a few years. *If the bank takes our old house, who cares?* my mother says. She flips through a newsletter from 1970. It’s thick, printed in color, and features my mother because she helped plan that year’s Winter Carnival Ball at Black Mountain on account of her “first-hand knowledge” of the queen’s duties; she won the title and a tiara in 1962 when she worked in the mill’s personnel department. She was a young mother at the time, wearing a pixie cut and polyester miniskirts that showed off her good legs. In her victory photo, my sisters Kelly and Amy sit in front of her wearing matching blue velvet dresses with white Peter Pan collars, stiff as Communion wafers.

In 1942 when my mother was born, legendary 20-foot walls of urine-colored foam emerged from canals 40 miles down-

stream in the Androscoggin. By then, almost 50 years of flotsam and effluent had choked the fish. Aeration of the river dimmed. Water temperature rose. Manufacturing and its concomitant pollution reached a stinky zenith. The smell emanating from the river was so appalling people fled town or shuttered themselves in. Coins in men’s pockets tarnished. Stores closed. House and car paint peeled like burnt skin. Residents vomited. Laundry hung on clotheslines, blackened with ash.

I was 16, my mother says, when the National Geographic Society entered into a 15-year contract with our mill. The windfall, while providing steady work, also brought with it a windfall of pollution that



exacerbated the toxic load the Androscoggin River-master was already trying to manage. National Geographic demanded white, coated, glossy paper and our mill made it. Making it, however, required using even more chemicals. The town’s economy flourished. As the mill modernized and expanded, each year that newsletter, like the town’s future, got whiter and brighter. And each year the Androscoggin River and the skies above, seemed dimmer and dimmer. My parents were caught between a stinky past and a hopeful future.

My father, in between the overtime hours or double shifts, along with other millworkers, built Black Mountain on land leased to them by the paper company. The men felled trees, carved up the rocky slopes, and jammed iron ski lift poles in unsympathetic soil so they could have a place to ski. Every winter of my childhood, on weekends, my father piloted our station wagon along the frost-heaved roads winding through the outskirts of town, past the smokestacks, past the Swift River where he learned to swim,

past the cemetery where his father was buried, where I lugged my steely equipment uphill through the icy parking lot, collapsed on the snow, and thwacked down the metal buckles on my leather boots pinching my fingers.

I was small, the runt in a pack of kids who were already small, and tried to keep up with them and my father, who was probably one of the best skiers on the hill. As I followed them, my leather boots and leather gloves became soaked with sweat and subsequently frozen, in an endless circle of discomfort. We skied until the T-bar stopped clinking and growling, lolling to rest like an iron dinosaur and the last light of dusk would slam shut over the smudged hills. We’d return the following week just as the T-bar purred awake.

A video: I am four. My father crouches over me on skis and I stand in front of him on skis too, between his legs, facing forward, gaining speed as we race down the mountain. He warns me to watch what’s in front of me, but to also look far enough downhill to see what lay ahead. I think I’m skiing on my own volition. Unbeknownst to me at the time, I couldn’t have stood for two seconds without his arms there to carry me.

I ask my mother, *What about the pollution when you were a kid?*

What do you mean? she says.

Didn’t it bother you? The pollution?

I say.

It was the smell of money, she says. *Plus, we just had a lot of pride.*

Pride.

I heard this word a lot as a child. You were “proud” to be from Rumford and Mexico. You took “pride” in the mill. “Pride” in the paper we made. “Pinto pride” we scrawled on pep rally posters in honor of our mascot. Mill managers instilled a “pride” in their workers. What did it mean, this pride?

I learned from an early age, to be conspicuous was to be coarse. You didn’t speak too loudly or too much, *blend in*. This sameness, it turns out, was partially the source of our pride—we were all in it together, no matter what “it” was. We were a community and like most communities, were proud of what we did, even if it was something we didn’t necessarily like. It was part of the same invisible social rules that also felt claustrophobic, so it was difficult to differentiate the two. It was a subtle force, *(Continued on page 34)*

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like airplane cabin pressure—massive but invisible. In this togetherness our loyalties to each other and our town were fierce, even if the intimation to conform was benevolent.

This absolute loyalty didn't stop at the edge of town; it extended to hopeless causes like the Boston Red Sox and the New England Patriots who for decades disappointed us with their fruitless company. But we stuck with them because that's what we did despite their unwillingness to love us back. This mix of sameness and loyalty and pride and stubbornness made us tight. We created this shelter for ourselves but it also meant outsiders remained outside. People "from away" weren't allowed into the sanctity of our tribe. And we certainly didn't want to be part of theirs. Solidarity was a matter of safety and comfort, but it was also a matter of hardheadedness that didn't always serve us well.

The mill, the main source of this pride and connectedness, provided us with what seemed like limitless opportunity, the tentacles of its fortune reaching into the county, the region, the state of Maine, America. Our reliance on the mill was like our Catholicism. We were given something to believe in while ignoring our own suffering, all the while waiting for the big afterlife party in the sky. We depended on the mill, as did loggers, whose lopping of the trees was seemingly anathema to the very thing relied upon to earn an income.

Brenda Nickerson walks into the kitchen where my parents and I are still looking through old mill newsletters. My mother and Brenda have been friends since childhood and I went to school with her daughters who were named after Louisa May Alcott's Little Women. My mother says to me, to Brenda, It was like *'Happy Days.'* *You know the show? That's what we lived. We lived like 'Happy Days.'* Brenda agrees. I ask my mother if this was true for when I was a kid. *Yes, pretty much . . . but I don't know what happened after that. It's when our kids had kids that everything changed.*

You mean like me? I ask. It changed in my generation?

Yes, she says. We had our parents' and grandparents' values.

Your generation has different values.

Brenda says, *Your generation had too many choices.*

When my father retired from the mill after 43 years, he received a toolbox (that he used), a Bulova watch (that he never wore),

and asbestosis of the lungs. The toolbox decamped to our dusty barn and I found the watch years later, in perfect shape, in the garage on a shelf by the cat litter. Since retiring, asbestos manufacturers, whose products he came into contact with as a pipe fitter, compensated him for his scarred lung tissue; sometimes he received three dollars, sometimes a few hundred. Eventually, the monies petered out as did his lungs. He was tough, sometimes to a fault, and I never heard him complain even on the night he died. He told me a story once about how when he was a kid he walked around all day with a sharp pebble in his shoe, so that when he took it out, the relief was even greater than if it were never there at all. In the summer of 2013, he collapsed on the ninth hole of the golf course, face up, in the middle of his



daily game. After months of tests, he was diagnosed with esophageal cancer and then a few months later, lung cancer, which can develop from asbestosis; with that trifecta, the man simply couldn't breathe.

My father asked us not to speak to him about his prognosis and our family complied in mute alliance. Weeks of chemotherapy and radiation, a blood clot in his lung, a catheter, a feeding tube, an oxygen tank, the gloom of hospice, my father shrank to half his size. *No taste*, he said as he tussled with a piece of pasta as if it were barbed wire. He lost more weight and lost interest, too. My mother tried to get him to do his physical therapy, eat a popsicle. He just stared out the living room window while we whispered behind his back.

I went home almost every week that winter. When I did, I drove into Maine from New Hampshire across the Piscataqua River Bridge. One of the first things I'd see was the state-funded welcome sign: "Maine. The

Way Life Should Be." *Was there ever such a Maine as this?* I wondered as I sped up the Maine Turnpike. The promise of that phrase just never added up. The silvery creeks, iron gray lakes, red lobsters, rocky beaches, the deluge of trees—they summoned a representation disconnected from my Maine experience. It seemed we had lived on the edge of poverty, anxiety, and illness rather than on the edge of a primeval forest. Practically everyone in our town called the area "Cancer Valley" in a jokey way, yet nobody ever took the nickname seriously, even to this day. *It smells like farts!* kids from other high schools would say about our town because of the foul odor discharged by the mill. And so it did.

"It seemed we had lived on the edge of poverty, anxiety, and illness rather than on the edge of a primeval forest."

Maine's story somehow became so appended over the years, that the story became the story itself. It was like that game you played as a kid where you sat in a circle and one person would whisper a phrase in their neighbor's ear, and that child would whisper it to the next one, and so on. At the end of the circle, the last child would repeat the phrase aloud. Inevitably the murmured telling and retelling distorted the words so the original phrase was no longer recognizable.

I was riding the Metro-North train from New York City to Connecticut one night that same winter, exhausted from my visits home. When I told my seatmate I was from Maine, he said, *I love all that fresh air and woods! Maine is God's country!* I wanted to tell him that behind the photos of birch-lined streams and the lobster logo-ed gifts on the Maine Tourism Bureau website, there is a state perishing under the weight of its own advertisement and where "God" is noticeably absent. Instead I said, *It's a terrific place to grow up*, which was largely true.

But the real contradictions were these: we clear-cut our forests while tourists exalted them; pollution bankrupted the fresh air we advertised; we poured dioxins into our environment, which ended up in lobsters that tourists ate; Henry David Thoreau lauded the "Pine Tree State" but his voice was drowned out by the growl of chainsaws; and what gave our town life could also be what's killing it. As the folksy Maine saying goes, *you can't get they-ahh from heeyahh.* In other words, the way life should be, *(Continued on page 35)*

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idealized state of Thoreau and tourists, may have never actually existed except in the landscape of our minds.

Slowly, my father began to eat. All he wanted was pistachios, so I bought bags of them. *Those are too expensive for me*, he'd say, as he gobbled them up. We talked about baseball and books so I bought him *The Art of Fielding*, which I read from at his funeral. We watched movies. He made puzzles. By spring, he was able to roll his wheelchair outside to sit in his driveway in the yawning sun.

Always a great athlete, he loathed just sitting around. *You're throwing like a goddamn GIRL!* he'd yell at my throws from third to first if they weren't fast enough, even if I was only ten. He played third base too, the "hot corner" he called it. He was an institution in that position, never relinquishing it to younger guys as he aged. I watched him summer after summer fielding stinging line drives down third base line as he crept in to take away the bunt. He was quick, efficient. I never saw him make an error. Now, he struggled to lift a knee.

Late summer, 2014. I kiss my father hello and after a few minutes, he turns to the TV. My mother shouts something from the kitchen over the clamorous rattle of *Pawn Stars*. I slump in the overstuffed chair.

Over the next couple of days, I learn the new routine of their lives: my mother empties his catheter bag, changes his cannula, washes dishes, makes coffee, turns the heat up, turns the heat down, helps him to bed, tucks him in. One day the "oxygen man," a nurse, Andy (their handyman), on the next a parade of strangers and friends amass then disperse, like a dandelion gone to seed in a quick wind. In the morning, my mother walks my father to the kitchen, her arms wrapped around his waist. I hear them in the hallway.

I slept liked shit, he says. *I just couldn't sleep. I don't know.*

What's the matter!? my mother says. *It ain't much of a life*, he says.

My mother procures a voice-activated phone, a walker, the best hearing aids, a hospital bed, bathtub rails, hospice aides, ice cream, Netflix. The days drift. Dinner comes early. The late afternoon winter light hesitates, then crashes, darkening the curtained room. We fold ourselves into the furniture and flip channels.

"Do you or does anyone you know

suffer from lung cancer? Give us a call at . . ." The lawyer on the TV beckons.

Maybe I'll call, my mother suggests.

What the hell are you talking about? my father says.

Your lung cancer. Maybe I'll call them about your lung cancer, she says.

I don't have lung cancer, he says. My mother never brings it up again.

My mother tracks his oxygen levels, like volunteers do on the Androscoggin River, judging impairment by percentages, keeping the lower numbers at bay by turning up the O₂. The river's oxygen percentages lie somewhere between impaired and threatened, as do my father's. In 1966 the Androscoggin Rivermaster tried to recreate the river's natural aeration by installing "bubblers" in the Androscoggin, which injected air into the water to increase oxygen levels. My father's body, like the Androscoggin, seems to be recycling the toxins discharged by the mill. But he, unlike the river, would never breathe again without a machine to help him.

When I get better . . . he says as he hunches over, his oxygen tank hissing away in the other room, its plastic line leashing him to his chair . . . *I'll visit your new house.* As he keeps trying to live he keeps dying. He is dying at the same exponential rate as the town . . . an unbuilding of a body that had previously built a mountain. His chest working overtime like he often did in the mill.



"Vacationland," our state motto, appears on key chains, tee shirts, coffee mugs, and our license plates but the holidays of my youth were never a seaside fete. As a teenager, my sister and I would sometimes drive to Old Orchard Beach, two hours south, where we'd buy fries on the pier and watch French Canadian men in skimpy bathing trunks cavort in the water. Rather than swim, I'd smother myself with iodine and baby oil and lie on the hot sand, getting the tan that

proved I had been somewhere.

We also made yearly visits to my father's mother "Nana" and my step-grandfather "Pop" in Kennebunk, Maine. Despite its sacrosanct location, they lived closer to the town dump than to the beach. For hours, we'd sift through other people's trash with Pop, or play on the broad front lawn with their dog Bijoux, a crabby spoiled Chihuahua. When Pop entered a room, his egg-shaped bald head flirted with the ceiling. His voice was booming and fearsome, yet he was affectionate in his toothless smile, the way an octopus was, embracing his grandchildren with a manic repulsive grip. My grandmother kept her emotions as tightly bound as her arms, which were always crossed over her chest, and she only allowed small giggles through her thin hand, which rose to cover her mouth when she laughed.

The rooms in their house smelled of cigarette smoke and age, a sour, untidy odor I evaded by sleeping in their camping trailer parked in the driveway. Pop, we learned after he died, molested a few of my female cousins. As for the beach, we would sometimes go, but I would rather have been pawing through the trash or the animal-shaped candles in the tourist shops than face a marauding jellyfish sloshing in the lazy waves or meeting up with Pop in an unkempt, upstairs hallway.

E. B. White wrote dispatches for the *New Yorker* from his saltwater farm in Brooklin, Maine. When he drove there from New York, he too crossed the Piscataqua River. In his essay "Home-Coming" he wrote that every time he drove over the river, he "had the sensation of having received a gift from a true love." While he and I may disagree on how we feel traversing the state line or our reasons for doing so, we agree on the reason we are pulled there. "Familiarity is the thing—the sense of belonging," he wrote. "It grants exemption from all evil, all shabbiness." I'm tethered to Maine by this sense of belonging but also by a sometimes paralyzing ambiguity I wrestle to understand—an inexplicable love for Maine and what it represents, even if some of those things are false. I don't think it was ever really a paradise, except maybe for the Abenaki Native Americans who fished the Androscoggin until their lives and the salmon they ate were choked out by disease and settlers.

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When we leave home, we leave behind our past and encounter a version of home when we return, built of legends true and false. For me, those legends are so big—Hugh J. Chisholm, Edmund Muskie, Cancer Valley, Henry David Thoreau, Paul Bunyan, Black Mountain, my parents, and trees, endless trees—that it is hard to see beyond their shadows. So when I drive back over the Piscataqua River Bridge with Mexico in my rearview mirror, I may not see “true love,” but I know leaving home can be as complicated as living there and as inescapable as your own DNA.

The night I watched my father die he kept trying to speak, but only a thin awful wail emerged as he thrashed his body against the steel bedrails and wrestled with his sheets. It was the only time I ever saw him make a fuss about anything. What he was trying to say, I’ll never know, but I do know I no longer have to keep secrets from him or for him. *What you don’t know won’t hurt you*, my mother always said offhandedly. She was dead wrong.

I saw in that outline of his body, a lifetime of 7–3 shifts at the mill, where the hot racket of the paper machines would have made me turn into a lifeless cotton ball, a weeping remnant of a human being. I saw in him, too, a lifetime of working for an industry that in the end, led to his end.

You look like your father! People always said to me and still do. Our eyes, in particular, are/were the same blue-gray and one of mine sags a little, as if I am falling asleep, the same as his. In that sameness, I saw what he saw, or at least I imagined I did, or tried to, especially on our walks around town where his telling and retelling of the same stories became more distilled each time he told them. He’d narrate as we went: *This is an historic spot*, he said one time, pointing to the road, as we passed a vacant lot that used to be his high school. *This is where Roger Gallant dropped a jar of mercury*. I imagined the balls of silver pinging along the road in tantric lines. We walked across the frozen soil and scuffed our boots across the thin snow to uncover a plaque of people who donated money for the plaque. He pointed to a Gallant, class of 1951. *That’s him*, my father said. *That’s the guy that dropped the mercury*.

“I saw in that outline of his body, a lifetime of 7–3 shifts at the mill, a weeping

remnant of a human being.”

In the aftermath of his death, two years on, I still can’t look at photographs of him, because in them I remember his emaciated body, sacrificed so I could have a new pair of shoes to start school every fall or a new softball glove when I turned sixteen. And in his eyes I see me.

Paul Bunyan looms over the Tourist Information Booth in front of the Androscoggin where Bunyan-sized logs once floated downstream toward the mill. In blue pants, a matching blue watch cap, and a short sleeve red polo shirt exposing his brawny arms, he proffers an equally enormous axe that could clear-cut the Amazon. That statue has been around as long as I remember, although it used to tower above Puuia’s Hardware across the street, a catchall shop where I bought charcoals and sketch pads for juvenile renderings of horses. He was donated to the town when Puuia’s closed. As a kid, I didn’t pay much attention to Bunyan despite his size, and he blended into the background, as improbable as that seems.

I read that Rumford’s Paul Bunyan got a facelift between 2000–2002, a body overhaul including a paint job, a new axe, and steel supports secured to a huge block of concrete, which to replace, they had to remove Bunyan’s head. After they fastened the supports and before reinstating Bunyan’s head, the workmen wriggled out of Bunyan’s neck. After Paul’s resurrection, Rumford held a festival in his honor featuring a lumberjack breakfast, zip line rides over the waterfalls, a facial hair contest, a flannel shirt dinner dance, and an axe-throwing competition.

Bunyan’s origin remains a mystery. Small towns, from Maine to Minnesota, claim him as their own, yet they agree the boy giant was the hero of all woodsmen. Legend maintains when Bunyan’s cradle rocked, the motion caused huge waves that sunk ships. He also allegedly whittled a pipe from a hickory tree and could outrun buckshot. Our Bunyan, I found out, was crafted from the mold of the Muffler Man, a giant fiberglass statue who proffered mufflers as advertisement on US byways in the 1970s. Whatever the myth, there our Bunyan stands as a guardian or curiosity for those ambling through the waning mill town of my youth, his shadow sometimes as brooding as the

hurtling river beyond. Senator Edmund Sixtus Muskie’s smaller, more serious memorial of squat dark gray granite lies just down the riverbank from Bunyan. Muskie was a giant in real life at 6’4” and the man who penned the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts, though no match for the long shadow cast by Bunyan. Both memorialized in Rumford, their acts equally significant; one deforested the woodlands, the other tried to reclaim them, the rocky pools on the edge of the Androscoggin spanning the gap between the two of them.

My father used to make fun of the Bunyan statue and the ludicrous blue hoofprints painted on the sidewalks in downtown Rumford, made by Babe, Bunyan’s blue ox. The town selectmen voted, in 2009, to use \$6,500 from their economic development fund to create Babe, figuring that he and his hoofprints would encourage tourists to follow his path. What they forgot to consider was that there’s not much left in town to see but Paul Bunyan himself and those garish blue steps that end abruptly at Rite Aid.



About the Author:

Kerri Arsenault serves on the Board of the National Book Critics Circle and is the Book Review Editor for Orion magazine. She teaches nonfiction in The Master of Arts program in Writing and Oral Traditions at the Graduate Institute in Bethany, CT.

Her book, MILL TOWN, is about how our landscapes define us and how we define our landscapes, due out from St. Martin’s Press, 9/1/2020.

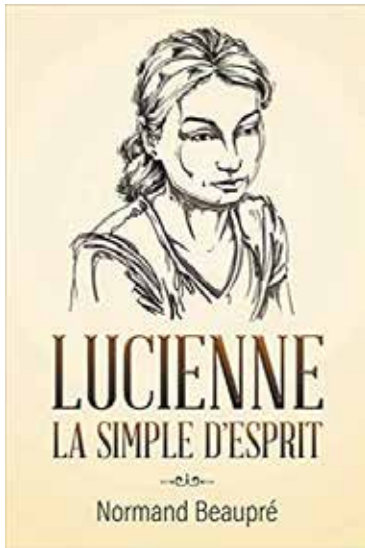
MILL TOWN (St. Martin’s Press, 9/1/20) is available for preorder from Powell’s, IndieBound, Barnes & Noble, Amazon, & Books-a-Million

<https://us.macmillan.com/books/9781250155931>

<https://lithub.com/growing-up-in-maines-cancer-valley/>



BOOKS/
LIVRES...



“Lucienne, La Simple d'Esprit”

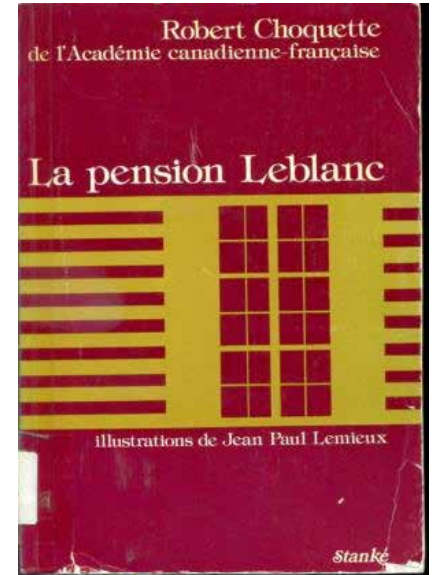
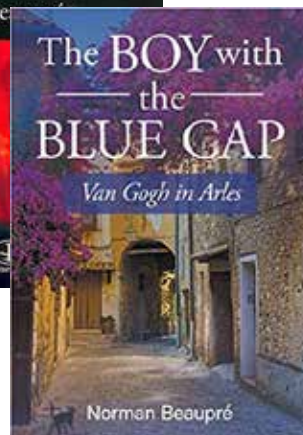
Voilà l'histoire de trois générations québécoises qui aboutit à l'émigration aux États-Unis en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Elle est tissée d'aventures et d'événements assez frappants pour susciter l'intérêt de ceux et celles qui jouissent des effets de la passion d'amour, de l'attachement à un héritage vibrant, du défi de l'émigration, du chagrin de la mort, en plus du bouleversement d'une jeune femme hantée par ses incapacités intellectuelles et qui est connue sous la appellation de Lucienne, la simple d'esprit. Son histoire nous emmène au centre des filatures en Nouvelle-Angleterre où oeuvrent ces émigrés, souvent appelés les travailleurs de moulins. Cousue dans cette aventure est l'histoire de Célié et son amant algonquin, Timiskamengo, ainsi que l'histoire de Héloïse Lanouette Charbonneau, la femme qui a du “casque” et de l'entrain. Sa fille, Lucienne, découvre, malgré ses limites intellectuelles dites d'arriérage, qu'elle a des dons de la guérisseuse. Lucienne devient la femme qui, en dépit de ses challenges, se

voit femme entière et mûre dans une communauté en gestation façonnée d'émigrés de la descendance des colons pur-laine telle les Lanouette de Batiscan au Québec. Plus qu'un roman, c'est une page de la réalité historique qui nous révèle les défis et les luttes, ainsi que les accomplissements et les succès d'un peuple d'émigrés qui devient à la longue les Franco-Américains.



Normand Beaupré est né dans l'État du Maine en Nouvelle-Angleterre où il grandit comme Francophone, et plus tard, devient écrivain bilingue. Il a passé plus de trente ans dans l'enseignement universitaire. Il est présentement Professeur Émérite à l'Université de la Nouvelle-Angleterre au Maine. Il a beaucoup voyagé en Europe, au Mexique, et en Amérique du Sud. Il est l'auteur de vingt-deux oeuvres publiées en français et en anglais. Sa dernière oeuvre est un roman basé sur la vie artistique de Rosa Bonheur. Il fut décoré par le gouvernement de France alors qu'on lui décerna une médaille avec le rang d'Officier dans l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres en 2008.

(Suite page 38)



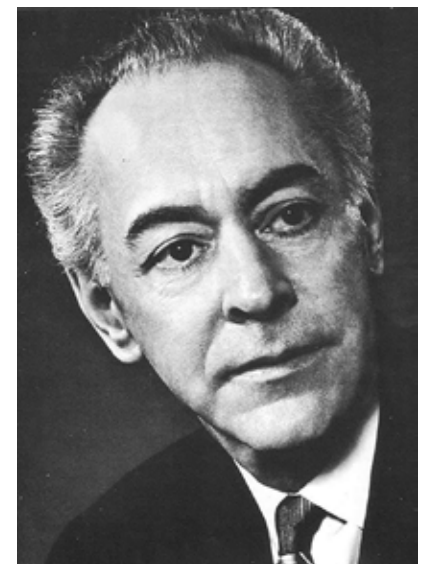
Robert Choquette

*Soumis par Jacques
Paquin*

*French Canadian
Descendants*

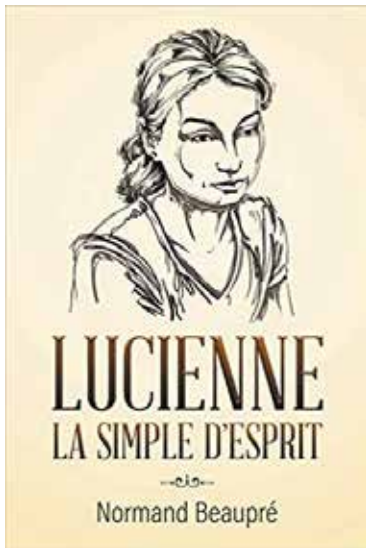
Le 22 janvier 1991 est décédée Robert Choquette, auteur de «La Pension Velder» Robert Choquette était un poète, romancier, scénariste et diplomate québécois, né le 22 avril 1905 à Manchester, dans le New Hampshire, et mort le 22 janvier 1991 à Montreal.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/123913478208149/>



(More books on page 38)

https://www.amazon.com/Norman-Beaupre/e/B002CB2S32%3Fref=dbs_a_mng_rwt_scns_share



A la demande de Lisa Desjardins Michaud, la rédactrice du journal Le Forum, je lui soumetts un article en français, un extrait de mon dernier roman en français intitulé, Lucienne la simple d'esprit.

Première partie: L'Histoire de Célie Lafortune Lanouette.

Les Lanouette venaient d'un tout petit village à l'est de Trois-Rivières appelé Sainte-Geneviève-de-Bastiscan. Les Lanouette furent des colons du premier jour de la région Bastiscan. Bastiscan était redevable de son nom au chef d'une des Premières Nations, les Algonquins. Les Lanouette ne laissaient personne oublier le rôle important des Lanouette, dit précieux, dans les alentours où l'on prêchait chaque jour le charme sinon le devoir d'appartenir et d'être du sang de colon. Personne n'aspirait à la loyauté du Québec et de son propre village comme les Lanouette. Ils en étaient des plus fiers sinon des plus orgueilleux. Lorsqu'on appartient, on ne s'écarte jamais de sa terre et de sa famille, disaient les Lanouette. Jamais ils auraient cru de se voir transplantés ailleurs que Sainte-Geneviève-de-Bastiscan. Jamais ils n'auraient voulu se séparer des leurs tout comme les Lavertu, les Lantagne, et les Tousignant qui étaient partis pour les États-Unis afin de rejoindre tant d'autres Québécois qui travaillaient maintenant dans les usines là-bas qu'on appelait les moulins. Jamais les Lanouette auraient voulu même songer à cet exploit qui changerait sinon abolirait à jamais leur identité de colon

pur-sang. L'héritage de ces gens-là n'aurait jamais toléré cet accroc culturel. Jamais de la vie. Mon Dieu, partir pour se défaire de son village, de son pays et de sa culture aurait été un sacrilège pour eux, ces mardits colons, parce qu'ils perdraient certainement leur religion, leur langue, et leurs valeurs culturelles, une fois déplacés *au-diable-au-vert*. "Ça c'ne fait pas," avaient-ils beau dire. Les Lanouette chantaient cela à coeur de jour. "Ça c'ne fait pas."

Marjolain Lanouette était de la cinquième génération des Lanouette de Bastiscan. Il était reconnu pour son intelligence vive et pénétrante. Il avait épousé Énergine Bellavance et les deux avaient élevé une famille de plusieurs enfants, tous en bonne santé excepté la dernière, Héloïse, car elle avait eu la malchance d'avoir genre de paralysie infantile lorsqu'elle avait atteint l'âge de dix ans. Héloïse n'avait connu son père que pour neuf ans, La mort avait emporté le père trop tôt, disaient les gens. C'est la bru, Célie, qui avait pris soin d'Héloïse, car la mère n'en pouvait plus puisqu'elle était rendue à un âge avancé de soixante-quatre ans. La mère était rendu au bout de ses forces après avoir donné jour à dix-sept enfants. Les élever voulait donc dire les soigner, les nourrir, les habiller, et leur apprendre les prières prescrites par le curé de la paroisse de Sainte-Geneviève à ses ouailles. Ces oraisons furent confiées à elle, la femme-pourvoyeuse et fidèle à son devoir de mère de famille. Par dessus le marché, Énergine avait perdu son mari à l'âge de cinquante-et-un ans. Il était mort de cancer. Tout le monde du village de Bastiscan avait pleuré Marjolain Lanouette. Il était si bien connu et respecté par les gens du village et des alentours que personne n'aurait osé dire un seul mot en mal de lui. Il était un modèle d'homme, un mari exemplaire, et un père de famille hors pair. Personne, pas même ceux qui auraient voulu trouver un seul geste malencontreux de Marjolain Lanouette aurait pu dénigrer cet homme. Il était bon travailleur, bon raconteur d'histoires, bon chanteur, au choeur de chant à l'église paroissiale, bon "veilleux", et surtout bon touche à tout. Disparu comme ça sans fanfare et sans trompette, disait Madame Levasseur, une de ses voisines de vingt-et-un ans. Madame Levasseur aimait Marjolain comme un proche parent. La parenté au Québec était une des valeurs que l'on reconnaissait comme intrinsèques et intarissables. Oui, Marjolain Lanouette en était un dans lequel coulait fort et bien le sang des colons québécois archétypes. Puis,

Énergine Bellavance Lanouette tâchait de tout son coeur et de sa fierté d'âme de conserver son appartenance à ses braves colons, les Lanouette de Bastiscan. Après tout, le mariage avec un Lanouette l'avait comme scellée, elle et son alliance avec le cachet de colon immanquablement pur-sang. Elle en était convaincue. C'est pour cela qu'elle se disait qu'elle ne manquerait point de partager cet héritage avec ses enfants et même ses petits-enfants à venir.

Énergine s'accordait un peu de loisir le soir après la vaisselle assise dans son fauteuil de Chantung grossier juste après le coucher des enfants. C'est là qu'elle pouvait enfin s'allonger les jambes et lâcher un long soupir de soulagement. La bru, Célie, avait accueilli la dernière chez elle parce qu'elle ne pouvait plus supporter les pénibles supplications de sa belle-mère. Énergine qui se lamentait de jour en jour d'avoir à soigner et encourger une petite fille qu'elle trouvait si malchanceuse d'avoir subi une telle maladie qu'elle trouvait pernicieuse et troublante, à sa façon de penser. Pourquoi le Bon Dieu avait-il permis une telle naissance tardive dans sa vie à elle., Énergine. Pourquoi une naissance que elle-même n'ait pas espérée rendue au point de sa vie où tout semblait s'écouler vers la mort et le repos éternel qu'elle souhaitait avec tolérance et espoir malgré son aversion pour la mort. Elle souffrait et acceptait les épreuves tenaces d'une vie vouée aux sacrifices et à la misère quoique jamais elle ne tolérerait en elle-même l'aveu de la misère. Elle faisait son devoir et c'était tout. Malgré le décès de son mari, il y avait plusieurs années, Énergine s'était abstenue de blâmer Dieu et une fatalité qui venait lui arracher son gagne-pain et le père de ses enfants.

Quant à Célie Lafortune, elle avait marié Maurice Lanouette, fils de Marjolain et d'Énergine. Elle était veuve depuis une dizaine d'années. Célie avait perdu son mari au chantier alors qu'il travaillait avec la hache et le godendard. Il était mort d'un accident dans la forêt vierge, seul et sans appui des autres bûcherons qui l'avaient trouvé baignant dans son propre sang, mort, et la tête fendue en deux. On n'avait jamais su la raison de sa mort. D'ailleurs on savait bien que Maurice Lanouette était un écerelé. Pourquoi l'avait-on permis de travailler comme bûcheron, on ne savait même pas. Mieux dans la forêt qu'à la maison et sur la rue à se faire rire de lui, avait-on dit. Sa pauvre femme s'arrachait la vie à faire le ménage des autres et à repasser un tas de chemises

(suite page 39)



BOOKS/
LIVRES...

(“Lucienne, La Simple d'Esprit” suite de page 38)

et de tabliers des autres ménages plus fortunés. Célie était une femme forte de corps et d'esprit. C'est elle qui avait épargné assez d'argent pour se procurer une petite terre. Elle l'avait fait au bout de ses forces de ses jointures rougies par le dur travail de frotter avec du savon jaune et de l'eau de javel. Tout en épargnant ses propres sous ajoutés aux quelques sous gagnés par Maurice au chantier, elle avait réussi de convaincre son mari d'acheter une terre à eux-mêmes. C'est pour cela qu'elle n'aurait pas pour tout l'or du monde vendu sa terre quoiqu'elle se trouvât seule et parfois un peu désespérée puisque l'argent ne rentrait pas trop. Célie se trouvait souvent rendue à corde. C'est-à-dire qu'elle ne pouvait que rarement se payer un bon repas hors des quelques légumes et un peu de pain qu'elle pouvait boulanger avec des restes de farine qu'elle avait su ménager. Cependant, elle ne se plaignait jamais, trop fière et trop enhardie par la misère qu'elle rencontrait assez souvent. Elle et son mari n'avaient pas eu la grâce d'avoir des enfants. Oui, la grâce parce tous deux croyaient dans le Bon Dieu qui octroyait ses bontés par la grâce divine. Que faire lorsque la grâce n'est pas accordée. Et bien, il faut souffrir avec les yeux fermés et le cœur tordu, avaient beau dire les Lanouette, fils, femmes et beaux-parents.

Les enfants des grand-parents Lanouette, Edouard et Livine, avaient tous survécus malgré les douloureuses peines des maladies qui ravageaient les nouveau-nés du voisinage. Ces Lanouette avaient élevé tous les dix-huit enfants sans s'apercevoir qu'il y avait eu un seul accroc dans leur petite vie québécoise au bord de la rivière Bastican. Le Bon Dieu leur avait été généreux envers ces Lanouette dont les arrière-grandparents furent les descendants des premiers colons distingués à la vue de toute la petite population de Sainte-Geneviève-de-Batiscan. Oui, les grand-parents Lanouette avaient été bénis de Dieu, disait-on chaque fois qu'on parlait d'eux. On ne manquait pas de répéter au temps et au lieu propices que leur fils Marjolain était des plus galants et les plus talentueux de la région. Puis, on ne cessait point de passer la remarque que Marjolain et Énevrine Lanouette avaient la bonne chance d'avoir Céline Lafortune comme membre de

la famille. C'est elle qui les avait honorés par sa présence comme épouse en se liant intimement au nom Lanouette. Elle portait ce nom avec fierté et fidélité depuis son mariage avec l'un de leurs fils.

On avait fait baptisé le mari de Célie, Joseph Maurice Henri Arthur Lanouette. On l'appelait souvent Henri-le-bavardeur parce qu'il aimait tant parler et dire des bêtises. Les parents ne voulaient point admettre que leur fils, Maurice Henri, était un peu écervelé. Célie, sa femme, voulait à tout prix, s'écarter de cette condition qu'avait son mari puisqu'elle ne pouvait jamais accepter que son Maurice ne soit pas comme les autres hommes, sain et intelligent de corps et d'esprit. Elle l'avait plutôt emmitoufflé de soins et d'affection, et puis elle s'était dite qu'un jour son Maurice sortirait de son impuissance cérébrale. Il ne l'avait jamais fait jusqu'alors. Il était mort dans ses bévues d'écervelé. Sa femme l'avait enterré avec tous les humbles honneurs qu'une femme puisse donner à son époux défunt. Il y avait eu une grand-messe chantée à l'église Sainte Geneviève. L'église avait porté les banderoles noires accordées aux funérailles de ses paroissiens, et les grands cierges dressés à côté du catafalque sur lequel on avait mis le drap mortuaire noir avec la croix brodée en fil d'or. Célie avait porté le deuil du costume noir pendant toute une année, et elle l'avait remplacé par une couleur plus mesurée pour le deuil, le violet ou le gris. Elle avait fait chanter trente messes pour le repos de son âme et puis elle ne manquait pas de réciter une courte prière pour son âme à chaque soir. Personne ne pouvait dire qu'elle n'avait pas pleuré son Maurice comme il le fallait et selon les traditions du village. Cependant, elle avait descendu le portrait de son mari accroché au mur du salon parce qu'elle ne voulait plus faire face à ce mari chaque fois qu'elle pénétrait dans le salon pour y faire le ménage. Ce n'était pas qu'elle voulait ignorer ou même se défaire de la mémoire de son mari. Non, elle en avait eu assez de lui et de son impuissance intellectuelle, un sentiment navrant qu'elle avait nourri dans le fin fond de son cœur, sinon de son âme meurtrie, pendant des années. Elle n'aurait jamais appelé son mari d'une façon ou d'une autre, un écervelé, mais elle ne pouvait pas s'empêcher d'y penser. Célie était une femme écrasée par le grand malheur d'une mésalliance renfrognée. Elle n'aurait même pas révélé d'une façon ou d'une autre, ce mal de cœur et de conscience qu'elle appelait sa croix. La belle croix qu'une bonne chrétienne

doit porter afin d'obtenir le mérite de son salut au dire de Monsieur le curé Lapointe. Ceci faisait aussi partie de son héritage québécois. Célie ne déviait point en aucun temps de son héritage qu'elle avait reçu de ses parents et de ses ancêtres. Même ses beaux-parents lui portaient secours dans cet héritage dont les valeurs culturelles étaient inévitablement attachées. Morfondue, tempérée par la petite misère et portant les cicatrices de ses longues luttes intérieures, Célie s'était réfugiée dans la résignation et l'espoir qu'un jour tout irait mieux. Après tout, c'était sa manière d'envisager son futur, car elle croyait bien qu'une vie bien vécue obtiendrait ses mérites un jour. De jour en jour, de mois en mois, et d'année en année, Célie attendait les beaux jours qui lui rendraient le bonheur d'avoir exercé d'une vie où tout est sassingé par le devoir. Célie attend encore. Jusqu'à sa mort.

Le seul bienfait dans la vie de Célie Lafortune Lanouette fut le lien étroit établi entre elle, la belle-mère et la petite Héloïse, la cadette si souvent appelée par ses frères et soeurs, “la petite fourrée partout”. Elle en avait de l'entraîn et du casque comme le disait Hector. L'un de ses frères. Oui, Héloïse avait la tête pleine de trafic, disaient ses frères, assez pour remplir les rues et les ruelles du voisinage. Et puis, elle avait du cran. Elle avait toutes sortes de plans et d'imaginations dans la tête, et quand ça lui disait, elle en fabriquait d'autres plus avertis et plus osés que les gens auraient pensé d'elle. On disait à tort et à travers, qu'elle ne pourrait jamais grandir avec une maturité bien ordonnée. Qu'elle ne pourrait jamais porter “une tête bien vissée sur ses épaules,” disait le voisin, Monsieur Dumouchel. C'était un garmement leste et agile aux petits tours, disait-on d'elle. Excepté Célie qui la trouvait aimable, un peu agitée, oui, mais remplie d'énergie qui la rendait exceptionnelle et intéressante à ses yeux. Héloïse c'était la joie de sa vie mûre, se disait Célie.

Malgré grandette, les yeux clairs et saillants, la bouche grande et les lèvres grasses et rougeâtres, les joues un peu fades, les oreilles qui lui sortaient des deux côtés de la tête comme deux champignons, et le nez un peu trop long, Héloïse ne prétendait aucunement qu'elle était belle. C'était le reste d'une corvée d'enfants que sa mère avait produit et elle, Héloïse, n'avait rien eu des bienfaits qu'accorde la nature en tant que grâce et beauté. Elle s'en foutait bien. Elle se disait que les autres enfants jouissaient (suite page 40)

French Azilum: American Refuge for a Queen?

by Loretta Treese, Paoli, PA

Around the turn of the twentieth century Louise Welles Murray began collecting documents and recollections about the intriguing history of her family and her Pennsylvania hometown for a book published in 1903 which she titled *Some French Refugees and their Azilum 1793-1800*. Her daughter Elsie Murray continued the research for her own book, its 1940 edition titled *Azilum: French Refugee Colony of 1793*.

In their day, their ancestors' colony had vanished and Azilum had become a place name attached to a farm community nestled in a bend of the Susquehanna River. Louise Welles Murray recorded that one got there by taking the Lehigh Valley Railroad to a station called Homet's Ferry, then crossing the river, and prevailing upon some passing farmer for a ride. By the time her daughter's book was published, the place had become more easily reached thanks to the completion of the Roosevelt Highway (now Route 6). Back in 1793, anyone who wanted to travel to Azilum would have gone from Philadelphia to Harrisburg on horseback, then up the Susquehanna to Catawissa or Wilkes-Barre, finally reaching Azilum's landing by flatboat or dugout canoe.

Among the reasons that French Azilum's original settlers might have chosen to establish themselves in a place so remote was their refugee status, most of them having fled the Great Terror of the French Revolution or the slave uprising in the French Caribbean colony of Saint-Domingue. Louise Welles Murray emphasized the romantic elements of French Azilum's history describing the royalists and aristocrats who had lost friends and been stripped of their property finding refuge in log cabins seventy-five miles away from the nearest sizeable town. She commented, "But here at least they were safe from Robespierre and the guillotine. So the real life began at Azilum."

In 1795 the French nobleman Francois Alexandre Frederic, Duc de la Rochefoucault-Liancourt described French Azilum in a journal he kept of his travels in America. He described a warm welcome to a village of houses somewhat more stylish than frontier cabins. By then some had been shingled over and embellished with glass windows,

chimneys, and staircases. Some even boasted outdoor "piazzas" and summer houses.

Louise Welles Murray drew upon the recollections of her mother Elizabeth LaPorte to describe one very unique building in the settlement. It was a large two-story log building eighty-four by sixty feet with eight fireplaces on each floor. Elizabeth said that her grandfather had always called it the "Queen's House." Murray wrote that it had



This marker placed in 1930 identifies the founders and later distinguished visitors to French Azilum. Courtesy ExplorePAhistory.com

been torn down in 1846 "for fear of fire," but its foundations had still been visible in her own day.

Elsie Murray added that the Queen's House had been intended as a refuge for Marie Antoinette and her daughter. Its original great hall had later become a gathering place for concerts and card parties. Today it is considered more likely that this structure had always been intended as a showplace and community center as well as a fine residence for one of Azilum's founders and property manager: the nobleman Antoine Omer Talon. Contemporary receipts for its construction mention a building the workmen called the "Grande Maison."

The actual Grande Maison may have evolved into the legendary Queen's House as the story of French Azilum became increasingly romanticized over the years. Even had Marie Antoinette been rescued by one of many royalist plots, would she have chosen to emigrate to rapidly developing but still relatively unsophisticated America?

Besides courtiers and noblemen, Azilum's settlers included royal office holders, clergymen, and military officers. Refugees from Saint-Domingue had been plantation owners. Some had supported the creation of a constitutional monarchy, then balked at the imprisonment of the royal family and the execution of the king.

The Duc de la Rochefoucault-Liancourt mentioned that what the settlement needed was a few more "industrious families," commenting, "The gentlemen cannot so easily dispense with the assistance of the artisan and the husbandman, as these can with that of the gentleman." He also ominously noted that French Azilum was already having some cash flow problems.

In the late 1790s, the colony's original financial backers, Robert Morris and John Nicholson, went bankrupt and their land company was reorganized in 1801. After Napoleon Bonaparte gained control of France, he offered amnesty to all French refugees, prompting many Azilum settlers to return. By 1809 the town of Azilum was nearly deserted.

Two of Azilum's original settlers, Charles Homet and Bartholomew LaPorte bought the land of the departed settlers. Homet went into business operating a river ferry, and LaPorte continued to farm the land and occupy the Grande Maison. In 1836 LaPorte's son John, who had served as a congressman and judge, returned to Azilum where he constructed a French colonial style mansion. According to Louise Welles Murray, the LaPortes used a part still standing of the Grande Maison as a kitchen. That same year the old town site was completely plowed up leaving scant evidence of its original structures.

It was likely the books written by the Murrays that led to plans to turn Azilum into a tourist attraction in the twentieth century. In February 1954 a local newspaper reported that S.K. Stevens, the state historian, would be working on the new "Azilum Project." A commission was formed to rebuild the settlement, complete with log cabins and Queen's House, but this was not going to be
(Continued on page 41)

(French Azilum: American Refuge for a Queen? continued from page 40)

cheap. The non-profit French Azilum, Inc. was formed that fall, and the following year there were plans for a fundraising pageant depicting eighteenth-century life in Azilum called "Buckskin and Velvet" to be held in an outdoor amphitheater.

Over the years folks had found various artifacts in the fields, but the first archaeological excavations were conducted by French Azilum, Inc. board members in 1956 digging in an area identified by Elsie Murray where she thought she could see evidence of the vanished Grande Maison. They located a partially dug cellar and stone foundation that was for years identified to tourists as French Azilum's "wine cellar."

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission followed up in 1976 after John LaPorte's French colonial mansion had been ceded to the state. Archologist Stephen G. Warfel exposed a stone building foundation with an H-shaped chimney footer whose artifacts led him to conclude

it had been part of a residence occupied from the 1790s through the first half of the nineteenth century. It was later identified not as the Grande Maison but the home of a Frenchwoman from Saint-Domingue who had arrived with an entourage of servants and slaves.

The most recent Azilum excavations were conducted by Maureen Costura of Cornell University who was working on her PhD dissertation. In 2007 she focused on an area adjacent to the LaPorte house and located a foundation of local stone with evidence of burning that might have once functioned as a kitchen wing. The following year she explored the area between the LaPorte house and what had long been known as the wine cellar. During her third season Costura concluded that this wine cellar had actually been a slave cabin.

Warfel had been first to suggest that John LaPorte might have built his mansion on the already excavated foundation of an earlier building. When Costura added the dimensions of the burned kitchen to the

existing LaPorte house she got something approaching the traditional dimensions of the Grande Maison. Perhaps the mystery of the Queen's House had been solved.

Costura wrote in her dissertation, "A massive amount of work remains to be done at Azilum." At today's historic site you will find a cabin transported there in the twentieth century, the remains of what is still often called a wine cellar, and you can take a tour of the LaPorte house, built long after Azilum's heyday. However oral tradition and archaeological evidence are now merging into a clearer image of what those settlers had intended to create. No doubt inspired by Enlightenment Philosophy, they may have been trying to build an idealized French county town complete with a rustic chateau. Marie Antoinette never arrived, and likely never even heard of the place, but if she had come, it might have reminded her the idyllic rustic retreat she created in the park at Versailles, with its cottages and working dairy, still known as Hameau de la Reine.

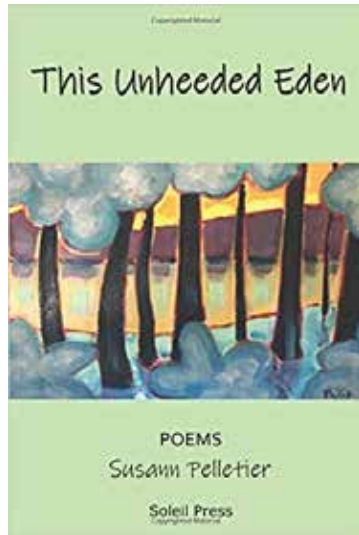


The LaPorte house built in 1836 as it appears at French Azilum today. It may have been built on part of the foundations of the Grande Maison, or Queen's House. Courtesy Bradford County Tourism.

This image of the Grande Maison also appeared in Elsie Murray's book. It was drawn based on a description by Elizabeth LaPorte who was born there. It was later used on postcards.



(Continued on page 49)



This Unheeded Eden

by Susann Pelletier
(Author)

Lewiston native Susann Pelletier gives voice to family and place in Franco-America and beyond, a narrative of immigration, labor and struggle to thrive. Her work also honors and attends closely to a landscape, both imperiled and resilient, that continues to sustain us.

Susann's poems have been published here and abroad in anthologies, literary journals, the chapbook *Immigrant Dream* and in political and environmental magazines. Her poems are a part of Francophone Studies college curricula and have been translated into French and Spanish. In 2018, the first edition of *This Unheeded Eden*, a chapbook of new and selected work was published. Recently, her poems also appeared in the anthologies *Fierce with Reality*, *Literature*

(*"Lucienne, La Simple d'Esprit"* suite de page 39)

des bontés de la nature, mais elle avait reçu en revanche l'intelligence et la verve d'une fée. Héloïse était devenue la joie et la consolation de Célie, surtout pendant la grande et terrible maladie qu'avait souffert Héloïse. Célie avait convaincu sa belle-mère, la mère d'Héloïse, qu'elle prendrait soin, nuit et jour, de sa petite belle-soeur. Héloïse n'avait que dix ans lorsqu'elle fut abattue par une maladie sérieuse et débilitante. Elle avait perdu l'agilité et le mouvement de ses deux

on Aging and Heliotrope—French Heritage Women Create.

She has read at conferences, political rallies, colleges, galleries and at international poetry festivals in Canada and the U.S., representing not only Franco-America, but a vision of social and environmental justice for all. In 2019, Susann co-hosted with Maine Poetry Out Loud state champion João Victor a Maine Poetry Express community performance focusing on the theme of migrations and displacement.

Susann has worked as a college instructor, journalist, editorial consultant, writing specialist/tutor, and co-editor of a progressive monthly. A pacifist, Susann is committed to non-violent social change and economic justice. A long time volunteer with Maine People's Alliance, she served on its board for a decade. Currently, she is a LA Arts board member and coordinates its Arts in Education and Maine Writes programs.



Susann Pelletier
(Author)

<https://www.amazon.com/This-Unheeded-Eden-Susann-Pelletier/dp/1704526205>

jambes. Le médecin l'avait diagnostiquée comme soit comme la paralysie infantile soit une autre débilite sur laquelle il ne pouvait mettre le doigt. Aucune précision voulue ne lui permettait de satisfaire ses diagnostics tâtonnants. C'est alors qu'on l'avait mise au lit pour un an sans sans se lever, sans satisfaire à ses besoins de courir et de joueroit dans les champs fleuris d'été, dans les prairies enneigées d'hiver qu'elle aimait tant. Tout ce qu'elle pouvait faire c'était de se fier sur la bonté et l'imagination de sa chère belle-soeur.

Immigrant Dream

Back then, the city where I was born gave little comfort.

It shook me with the clatter of looms and nigh machines, blinded me with that immigrant dream burning—

Angry flames in men's eyes, soot and smoke in the bars and on the altars

the stuff baked into daily bread.

When I read that the quality of mercy is not strained or how music is the food of love, fair Portia, beneath the wide, white porticos did not appear, nor Orsino on that Illyrian bank. The dews of heaven did not rise sweet strains did not fall and I saw only the tired stream of men and women treading through snowy streets to the factories.

French people who built cathedrals—LaMontagne, DeBlois, Thibault—their backs stooped now with the weight of the dream, each carrying a black lunchbox. Not trowels, mortar and stone or loads of shimmering glass. Not skeins of silk, wool, linen for the woof and weft of a thousand flowers, virgins and horned horses Not even my father, once a boy with no boots in the Maine winter, understood why the people were tramping over the old bridges and gathering at mill doors.

But, then, my father is a maker of whole things (houses, fences and gates, tables and chairs cupboards and counters)

And when his saw sang through the board and his hammer drove the nail, the din of those mill machines was stilled, I saw how a world is crafted by two steadfast hands.

Tiré du roman Lucienne la simple d'esprit de Normand Beaupré. LitFire Publishing, 2017. Ce qui s'ensuit c'est l'épisode avec les Algonquins et plus tard la naissance de Lucienne Charbonneau Rafferty, la fille d'Héloïse Lanouette Charbonneau qui sera reconnue comme guérisseuse.

BOOKS/
LIVRES...



**A Word From
Back Home:
Book of Poetry**
1st Edition

*by Normand Camille Dube (Author),
Marcel Aime Duclos (Translator)*

A book of poetry inviting the reader into the intimate world of a thoughtful Franco-American New Englander. The poet's life spans the second half of the twentieth century. The poems reveal a childhood in Northern Maine through to the precursors of a limited adult life.

A book of poetry inviting the reader into the intimate world of a thoughtful Franco-American New Englander. The poet's life spans the second half of the twentieth century. The poems reveal a childhood in Northern Maine through to the precursors of a limited adult life.

The author speaks urgently of his beloved Franco-American heritage. He reveres the valley that formed his soul. He portrays precocious youth and innocent children. He reveals the uprisings of young lovers. He paints lasting images of wise elders, family feasts and village celebrations. He cries out against injustice. And he extols ordinary living in a language revealing the naked clarity of the heart.



**Normand Camille
Dube (Author)**

About the Author: Born in 1932 in Van Buren, Maine, the author obtained his doctorate in foreign language teaching in 1971. He devoted his life to bilingual education. He was involved in children's television, French cultural organizations, human rights. A prolific writer and artist, his works are archived in the Fogler Library at the University of Maine, Orono.

A CHILD'S VISION

My grandfather,
child of the village of Lille,
was afraid of werewolves.
He told me tales by the hundred,
stories and superstitions
about these sinister howling beasts
that haunted the woods.
My father,
according to the tales he told,
feared "Old Man Seven O'clock".
Every night, as a child,
he lived under the illusion that he would see,
through his bedroom window,
fantasies and the black-magic
of the phantom who prowled
around the house.
But, I you see,
I am afraid of nothing.
For I have, at the foot of my bed,
newspapers,
a television,
and magazines
that immunize me against the visions
troubling children
less well-behaved than I.
But, pray tell me:
who will tell such tales to my children?

MAPLE TREES

I like maples
and the sap
in the buckets
I like maples
and the taste
of dipped bread

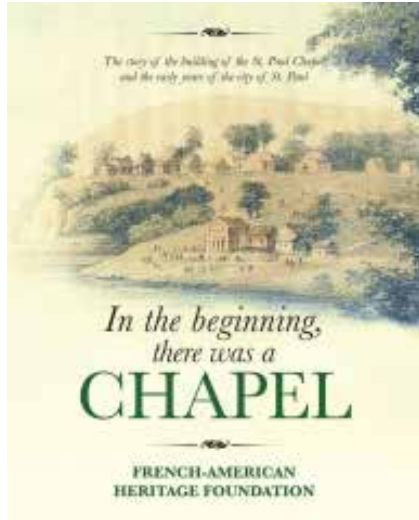
I like maples
and the taffy
in my mouth
I like maples
and its sweetness
on my pancakes
I like maple syrup and Henriette!

<https://www.amazon.com/Word-Back-Home-Book-Poetry/dp/1492788376>

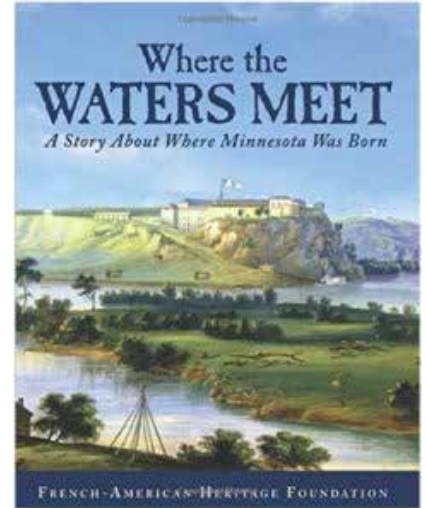


OUR PUBLICATIONS...

In the Beginning, There was a Chapel

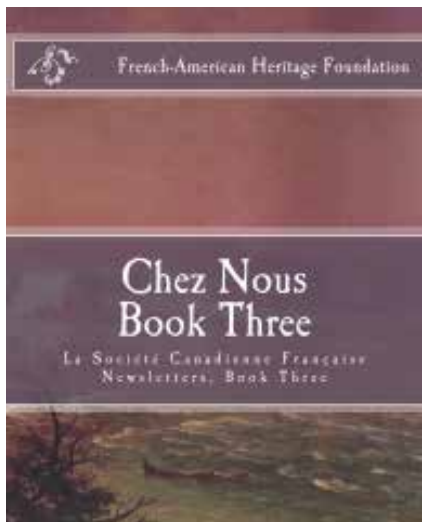
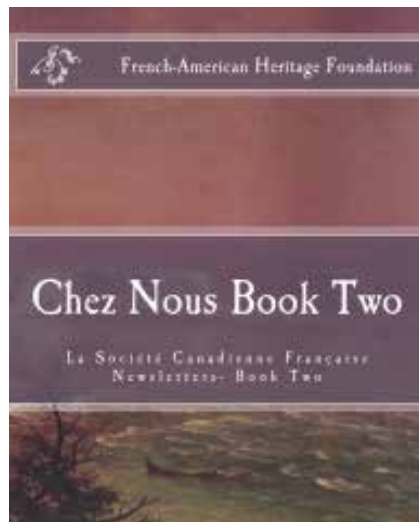
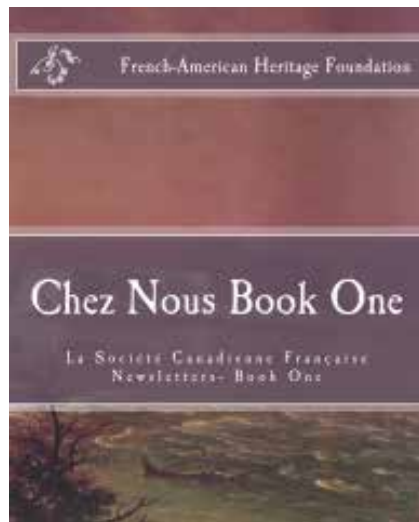


On the Feast of All Saints' Day, November 1, 1841, a small log chapel was dedicated on the bluff overlooking the Mississippi River some four miles downriver from Fort Snelling. At the time the chapel was built, there was only a small number of French Canadian families living in the area. Little did these parishioners know that this little chapel would evolve into a cathedral, a school, and a hospital, and would become the inspiration and the nucleus of a city that would adopt its name and become the capital of Minnesota. This book can be purchased at amazon.com, or at our heritage events. All sales proceeds from this book go to support the mission of the Foundation.



Where the Waters Meet-A Story About Where Minnesota Was Born

Where the Waters Meet—A Story About Where Minnesota Was Born. This book is the story about the place “where the waters meet” or where the Minnesota and Mississippi Rivers intersect. Discusses progression of events involving French explorers, to Selkirk colonists, at this location that led to formation of the modern state of Minnesota.



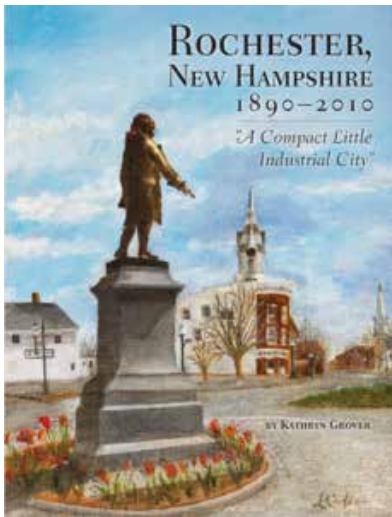
Chez Nous Books One to Three

Chez Nous This is a series of three books published by the French-American Heritage Foundation that contains 928 pages of the Nouvelles Villes Jumelles and Chez Nous newsletters published by La Société Canadienne Française du Minnesota (LSCF), from years 1980 to 2001.

These books can be purchased at amazon.com, or at our heritage events. All sales proceeds from these books go to support the mission of the Foundation.

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Woodbury, MN 55125
Email: foundation@fahfminn.org

BOOKS/
LIVRES...



**ROCHESTER,
NEW HAMPSHIRE,
1890-2010:
“A COMPACT
LITTLE
INDUSTRIAL CITY”**

by Kathryn Grover

Rochester, New Hampshire, 1890–2010: “A Compact Little Industrial City,” picks up the history of this Strafford County

community where its last comprehensive history left off, Franklin McDuffee’s History of the Town of Rochester, New Hampshire, from 1722 to 1890.

When McDuffee’s history was published in 1892, the town was on the verge of becoming a city. Its robust transportation network, woolen goods and shoe industries, and thriving commercial center all warranted city status. Still, making the transition from town to city was fraught with challenges. A newfound emphasis on the application of scientific understanding to municipal infrastructure, a growing interest in professionalism in urban management, the emergence of new technologies in transportation, industry, and entertainment presented both problems and opportunities to the new city.

Interspersed with articles that describe particular events in the city’s history, this book describes Rochester at the point of its early 1890s transition and then explores in detail its industrial, commercial, transportation, agricultural, political, and social worlds from the late nineteenth to the early twenty-first century.

About the Author: Kathryn Grover is an independent researcher, writer, and editor in American social, ethnic, and local history. She is the author of *The Brickyard: The Life, Death, and Legend of an Urban Neighborhood* (2004), *Lynn Album II: A Pictorial History* (1996), *The Fugitive’s Gibraltar: Escaping Slaves and Abolitionism in New Bedford, Massachusetts* (2001), and *Make A Way Somehow: African-American Life in a Northern Community* (1994). She lives in Windsor, Vermont.

BOOK REVIEW:

**ROCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE, 1890-2010:
“A COMPACT LITTLE INDUSTRIAL CITY”**

by Wilfred H. (Chip) Bergeron

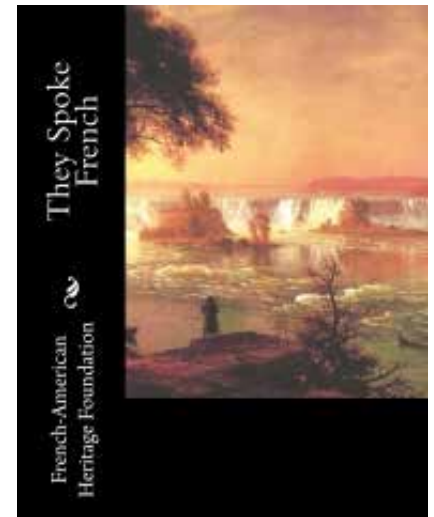
All over New England, wherever there was a source of water to power mills, towns and cities sprung up where wool, cotton, shoes and many other things were manufactured. Most of these towns and cities attracted emigrés from the Franco Diaspora, and neighborhoods called “Petit Canadas” grew up near the mills, ethnic enclaves where the language, religion and customs of “home” were preserved. One such city is/was Rochester, N.H.

This book is a sequel to “McDuffee’s History of Rochester, N.H., that covered

the city from it’s earliest settlers to it’s publication in the 1890’s. Much happened from 1890-2010, and this book purports to tell that story. It is a combination of written history, oral accounts and newspaper articles, lavishly illustrated with photographs and drawings.

While not specifically Franco-American in outlook, it talks about some areas of special interest: the rise and fall of the mill culture in Rochester, East Rochester and Gonic, it’s suburbs. It describes the growth of the main Franco area in the Lafayette St.

French-American Heritage Foundation of Minnesota



They Spoke French

They Spoke French, French Heritage in Minnesota. Book published by the French-American Heritage Foundation that discusses the French heritage in Minnesota. This book can be purchased at amazon.com, or at our heritage events.

All sales proceeds from this book go to support the mission of the Foundation.



Area. It talks about how people lived in general, the growth of public works, downtown, and civic and educational institutions.

Of special interest to Franco readers would be a section devoted to the rise of the Ku Klux Klan and how Rochester became a major area for Klan activity in New Hampshire.

The book, like all such accounts, has gaps. One could have wished for a wider cross-section of first person accounts, there were stories left untold, and the Rochester story post about 2000 is a little thin. All in all though, it is a worthwhile account and the author is to be commended.

There were only a small quantity printed. It might no longer be available new, but used copies should be available through Amazon.

POETRY/POÉSIE...

Loneliness

Loneliness, can make a poor heart cry
Emptiness, sometimes I wish I could die
Endless tears, so many sleepless nights
Just because you're not here to hold me tight

Then I close my eyes and suddenly you're near
And for a moment heartaches disappear
Then I awake and then I find you gone
And loneliness keeps coming on and on

Love is a game, a game I just can't play
Your tenderness stole my heart away
You were all I dreamed that love could be
Now all I have is a memory

Then I close my eyes and suddenly you're near
And for a moment heartaches disappear
Then I awake and then I find you gone
And loneliness keeps coming on and on

— *Wilbur Labbé*
Caribou, Maine



Sonia Labbé
August 6, 1938-June 14, 2019



A golden heart stopped beating,
Hard working hands at rest,
It broke our hearts to see you go,
God only takes the best.

They say that memories are golden,
Well maybe that is true,
But we never wanted memories,
We only wanted you.

Your life was love and labour,
Your love for your family true,
You did your best for all of us,
We will always remember you.

We sat beside your bedside,
Our hearts were crushed and sore,
We did our duty to the end,
'Til we could do no more.

In tears we watched you sinking,
We watched you fade away,
And though our hearts were breaking,
We knew you could not stay.

Our lips cannot speak how we loved you,
Our hearts cannot tell what to say,
But God only knows how we miss you,
In our home that is lonely today.



POETRY/POÉSIE...**For Emmeline**

My cousin has died. Just two months older
 Than I, she's with her parents now, one
 Brother, four grandparents, assorted aunts
 And uncles, a friend or two or so — all citizens
 Of a world that's passing, not to return.

Emerging from World War II, our parents —
 Lowell-rooted, French-Canadian, Catholic,
 Blue-collar, high-school educated (or not),
 And fearful of the next great depression —
 Held onto jobs, lived carefully, worked hard.

But ours was a time of growth, expansion,
 Technological advancement, research,
 Product enhancement, and so many things
 To buy — TVs, toothpaste, appliances —
 With cash, credit, or rent-and-try.

New music, clothes, ideas abounded, as did
 New wars — distant, endless, confounding —
 Along with home-grown riots and strife. But Emmeline,
 Kind child of French-Canadian faith and culture,
 Flowered in the garden those provided:

French schools, French church, French hospital
 Where she, a nurse, attended to ailing lives
 When not at home attending to the lives
 Of nine children, each welcomed by
 A mother who had dreamed of having twelve.

Perpetually laughing, generous, unflustered,
 She rarely thought of self, even when
 Disease set in to rob her health. She lived
 To give her life away prodigally,
 Seemingly never calculating cost.

She loved her God and Christ's dear mother to
 The end, and at her funeral Mass "J'Irai
 La Voir," the unofficial funeral anthem
 Of French Canadians hereabout was sung:
 "In heaven, in heaven, in heaven I will see her one day."



*Emmeline I.
 (Bordeleau) Cronin
 January 8, 1947 ~ October 10, 2019*

J'Irai La Voir

***(English translation of selected
 Père Janin lyrics)***

I'm going to see her one day — in heaven, in the homeland.
 Yes, I'm going to see Mary, my joy and my love.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.

I'm going to see her one day! I'm going to join with the angels
 To sing her praises and form her court.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.

I'm going to see her one day, this Virgin so beautiful!
 Soon I'll be near her to tell her my love.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.

I'm going to see her one day! I'm going to be near her throne
 To receive my crown in the eternal place of sojourn.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.

I'm going to see her one day! I'm going far from the earth
 To rest on the heart of my mother without return.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.
 In heaven, in heaven, in heaven, I'm going to see her one day.

— © *Suzanne Beebe, 2019*

— © *Suzanne Beebe, 2015*

Elegance

The merry party's ending.
 The last guests have drifted away.
 I end the festive evening
 with champagne and marrons glacés.

— *Margaret S. Langford
 Keene, New Hampshire*



Grandi a Grand Isle

(au nord du Maine en 1960)

par Don Levesque

J'ai pêché au bôrd su' Primme
En arrière d'su' Leaudivine.
J'ai marché su' l'île de Lille
Écouté d'la musique avec ti-Gill,
Joué d'la guitar avec Jim pi Jim,
Allé a Van Buren pour voir les filles,
Manger des bines l'samedi soir
Des hot dogs rouge routis b'en noir.

Assis su' l'bôrd d'la rivière Saint-Jean
Pêcher pour d'la truite, poigner des p'tit blancs,
Manger des ployes pi des cortons,
Jouer au file avec un vieux bouton.
Ont allais patiner su' Guy Beaupré
Pi ont allais au movies l'samedi après midi.
Jouer d'la basketball au côté d'su' Neil,
Rider jusqu'a Lille avec nos vieux bicycles

Jouer d'la pool s'Octave Caron,
Jouer au cartes assis su' l'perron.
Aller s'beigner a l'éclûge a Pierre Cyr.
Manger des crêpes avec d'la tire.
Rider en skateboard dans route a 'Lexis.
Voir mon oncle Denis bouère son Pepsi.
Manger des groisselles pi d'la rhubarbe sûre,
Des p'tites pommettes pi des confitures



Soigner 'es poules su' pepère Ouellette,
Couper du bois su' un vieux joualette.
R'garder l' tv su' Guy Beaupré
Pendant qu' mon père prenais une p'tite bière.
Rider en chars dans l'chemin des concessions,
Écouter ma mère jouer son accordéon.
Sonner 'a cloche d'école avec un gros clou.
Ramasser des noissettes pi des fraises itou

J'ai grandi a Grand Isle au nord du Maine
J'ai grandi a Grand Isle au nord du Maine

Don Levesque was born in Grand Isle, went to high school in Van Buren, university in Fort Kent, and worked in Madawaska for 25 years at the St. John Valley Times, the last 15 years as editor and publisher.

He is in the Maine Journalism Hall of Fame and the Maine Franco-American Hall of Fame, neither of which has an actual physical presence anywhere.

L'bon Dieu d'vais nous aimer

Le Bon Dieu d'vais nous aimer
Pour nous avoir donné
Sans qu'on l'aie demandé
Une si belle et si grande Vallée

Assis sur un nuage
Dieu veut qu'on le partage
De la rivière jusqu'au large
Une Vallée qui vie sans âge

L'été une rivière très luisante
L'automne une rivière assez calme
L'hiver c't'un ruban souvent glissant
L'printemps rivière toute tourbillante

Une frontière involontaire
Séparant des soeurs et frères
La Saint-Jean, plus qu'une rivière
La Saint-Jean c'est une prière

Le Bon Dieu d'vais nous aimé
Pour nous avoir donné
Sans qu'on l'aie demandé
Une si belle grande Vallée.

La rivière Saint-Jean
Coule dans nos veins
La Rivière Saint-Jean
Coule dans nos veins



—par Don Levesque



FAROG Manifesting A People's Identity (circa. 1972-73)

ORONO—At a time in history when the old “melting pot” philosophy has gradually given way to increased affirmation of ethnic identity, probably no minority has been so thoroughly ignored as the Franco-American. Now a small group of dedicated individuals at the University of Maine’s Orono campus is working hard to change all that.

The Franco-American Resources and Opportunity Group (FAROG), founded last year on very little money and a lot of enthusiasm, has so far managed to implement two modular courses in the College of Education, an orientation program for incoming Franco-American students and various lines of communication with the Franco-American community. There is, however,

a great deal yet to be accomplished.

Yvon A. Labbé, coordinator of Franco-American student affairs, feels that despite hostility and fear, lack of financial support and widespread ignorance of the Franco-American situation, FAROG has had an impact on the community.

Labbé describes FAROG’s ultimate objective as the “validation of Franco-American cultural and linguistic experience as a living and creative force.”

Franco-Americans account for at least one-third of Maine’s total population and number at least one million in New England.

What Labbé and other FAROG members are asking is simply that the University of Maine, as the state’s primary educational institution, recognize the existence of a large Franco-American minority in the state and deal with it accordingly.

Recommendations include a review of admissions policies and the hiring of Franco-American personnel on all levels, the encouragement and support of Franco-American groups, formation of adult education programs for bilinguals, collection of material relating to the French experience in North America and the institution of exchange programs with French-speaking universities.

FAROG further recommends that departments in the humanities and social sciences acquaint themselves with the “Franco-fact” and devote a part of their efforts to courses dealing with Franco-American life, such as the training of bilingual Franco teachers and guidance counselors rather than simply “retreading” Anglo

students.

Such programs require space, time and money in order to meet the needs of Franco-Americans. As a start, FAROG suggest the funding of an interdepartmental Franco-American chair at the Orono campus, and has offered its services in recruiting candidates for the post.

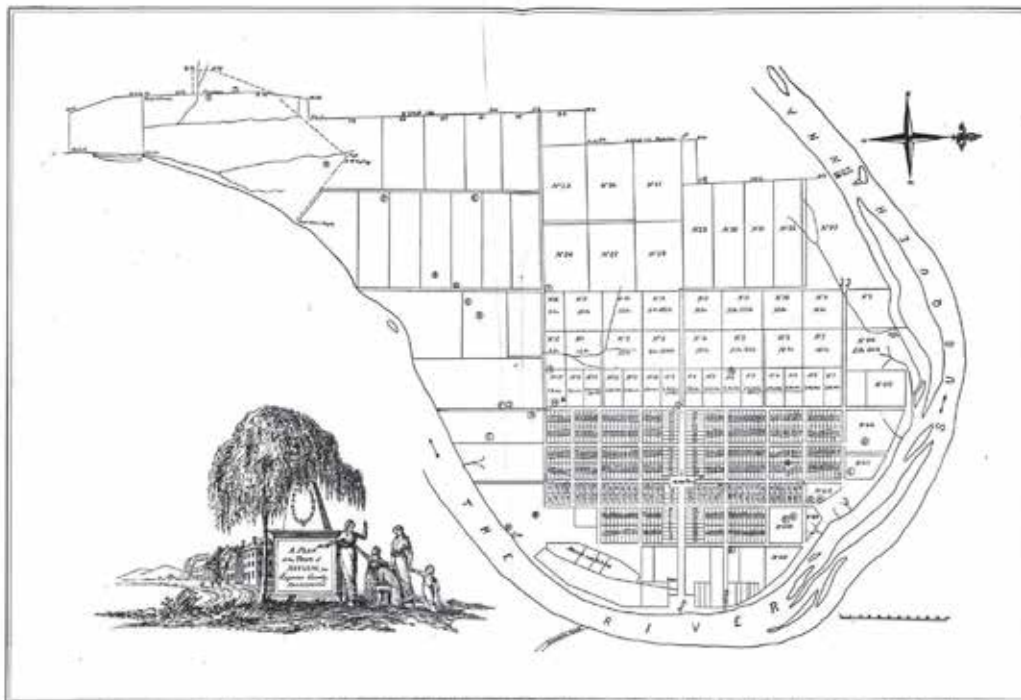
Thus far FAROG regards as its most significant achievement a five-week modular course, “The Franco-American in Maine Schools,” presented twice last year and again this year under the auspices of the College of Education at Orono. The course is taught informally by FAROG members.

Labbé describes the module as “process oriented” rather than “product oriented.” “What were looking for,” he said, “isn’t a regurgitation of knowledge from the student, but the establishment of the kind of classroom freedom in which the Franco student can react freely to what we are trying to say.”

The theater is another area in which FAROG hopes to involve itself in the near future, provided sufficient funding can be found. Since no Franco-American plays are known to exist, the group intends to write its own material. FAROG member Claire Bolduc described a proposed theater workshop as an attempt “to explore the creative potential, the dramatic content and the joy contained in the Franco-American situation.”

**“plus ça
change plus
c'est la même
chose”**

(French Azilum: American Refuge for a Queen? continued from page 41)



This map was published as an illustration for Elsie Murray's book. The original was held by the Tioga Point Museum. It shows the town's layout with lots for dwellings small and large. Mansions like the Grande Maison would have occupied the large lots at the river's edge.

Reference made as contained by the French, location indicated on the map by letters; a, b, c, d, e, f, g, h, i, j, k, l, m, n, o, p, q, r, s, t, u, v, w, x, y, z, aa, ab, ac, ad, ae, af, ag, ah, ai, aj, ak, al, am, an, ao, ap, aq, ar, as, at, au, av, aw, ax, ay, az, ba, bb, bc, bd, be, bf, bg, bh, bi, bj, bk, bl, bm, bn, bo, bp, bq, br, bs, bt, bu, bv, bw, bx, by, bz, ca, cb, cc, cd, ce, cf, cg, ch, ci, cj, ck, cl, cm, cn, co, cp, cq, cr, cs, ct, cu, cv, cw, cx, cy, cz, da, db, dc, dd, de, df, dg, dh, di, dj, dk, dl, dm, dn, do, dp, dq, dr, ds, dt, du, dv, dw, dx, dy, dz, ea, eb, ec, ed, ee, ef, eg, eh, ei, ej, ek, el, em, en, eo, ep, eq, er, es, et, eu, ev, ew, ex, ey, ez, fa, fb, fc, fd, fe, ff, fg, fh, fi, fj, fk, fl, fm, fn, fo, fp, fq, fr, fs, ft, fu, fv, fw, fx, fy, fz, ga, gb, gc, gd, ge, gf, gg, gh, gi, gj, gk, gl, gm, gn, go, gp, gq, gr, gs, gt, gu, gv, gw, gx, gy, gz, ha, hb, hc, hd, he, hf, hg, hh, hi, hj, hk, hl, hm, hn, ho, hp, hq, hr, hs, ht, hu, hv, hw, hx, hy, hz, ia, ib, ic, id, ie, if, ig, ih, ii, ij, ik, il, im, in, io, ip, iq, ir, is, it, iu, iv, iw, ix, iy, iz, ja, jb, jc, jd, je, jf, jg, jh, ji, jj, jk, jl, jm, jn, jo, jp, jq, jr, js, jt, ju, jv, jw, jx, jy, jz, ka, kb, kc, kd, ke, kf, kg, kh, ki, kj, kk, kl, km, kn, ko, kp, kq, kr, ks, kt, ku, kv, kw, kx, ky, kz, la, lb, lc, ld, le, lf, lg, lh, li, lj, lk, ll, lm, ln, lo, lp, lq, lr, ls, lt, lu, lv, lw, lx, ly, lz, ma, mb, mc, md, me, mf, mg, mh, mi, mj, mk, ml, mm, mn, mo, mp, mq, mr, ms, mt, mu, mv, mw, mx, my, mz, na, nb, nc, nd, ne, nf, ng, nh, ni, nj, nk, nl, nm, nn, no, np, nq, nr, ns, nt, nu, nv, nw, nx, ny, nz, oa, ob, oc, od, oe, of, og, oh, oi, oj, ok, ol, om, on, oo, op, oq, or, os, ot, ou, ov, ow, ox, oy, oz, pa, pb, pc, pd, pe, pf, pg, ph, pi, pj, pk, pl, pm, pn, po, pp, pq, pr, ps, pt, pu, pv, pw, px, py, pz, qa, qb, qc, qd, qe, qf, qg, qh, qi, qj, qk, ql, qm, qn, qo, qp, qq, qr, qs, qt, qu, qv, qw, qx, qy, qz, ra, rb, rc, rd, re, rf, rg, rh, ri, rj, rk, rl, rm, rn, ro, rp, rq, rr, rs, rt, ru, rv, rw, rx, ry, rz, sa, sb, sc, sd, se, sf, sg, sh, si, sj, sk, sl, sm, sn, so, sp, sq, sr, ss, st, su, sv, sw, sx, sy, sz, ta, tb, tc, td, te, tf, tg, th, ti, tj, tk, tl, tm, tn, to, tp, tq, tr, ts, tt, tu, tv, tw, tx, ty, tz, ua, ub, uc, ud, ue, uf, ug, uh, ui, uj, uk, ul, um, un, uo, up, uq, ur, us, ut, uu, uv, uw, ux, uy, uz, va, vb, vc, vd, ve, vf, vg, vh, vi, vj, vk, vl, vm, vn, vo, vp, vq, vr, vs, vt, vu, vv, vw, vx, vy, vz, wa, wb, wc, wd, we, wf, wg, wh, wi, wj, wk, wl, wm, wn, wo, wp, wq, wr, ws, wt, wu, wv, ww, wx, wy, wz, xa, xb, xc, xd, xe, xf, xg, xh, xi, xj, xk, xl, xm, xn, xo, xp, xq, xr, xs, xt, xu, xv, xw, xx, xy, xz, ya, yb, yc, yd, ye, yf, yg, yh, yi, yj, yk, yl, ym, yn, yo, yp, yq, yr, ys, yt, yu, yv, yw, yx, yy, yz, za, zb, zc, zd, ze, zf, zg, zh, zi, zj, zk, zl, zm, zn, zo, zp, zq, zr, zs, zt, zu, zv, zw, zx, zy, zz.



Franco-American Families of Maine

par Bob Chenard,
Waterville, Maine

Les Familles Coulombe

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.

COULOMBE

(Colombe, Conlogue# Columbus* CoolongΔ)

Louis **Coulombe**, born 1641 in France, died 1720 in PQ, son of Jacques Colombe and Rolline Drieu from the village of le Neubourg, department of Eure, ancient province of Normandie, France, married on 30 September 1670 at Ste.Famille, Ile d'Orléans, PQ to "Fille-du-Roi" Jeanne Foucault (or **Boucault**), born 1651 in France, died in PQ, daughter of Nicolas Boucault and Marguerite Tibault from the suburb of St.Germain in Paris, France. Le Neubourg is located 14 miles northwest of the city of Evreux.

17	Éloi	07 Nov	1809	Marie Boucher	St.Joachim	33
	Élie	16 Feb	1819	Archange Patenaude	Longueuil	
	Léon	29 May	1826	Suzanne Boivin	Eboulements*	34
				*aka "les Eboulements"		
	(d. 16-8-1891 St.Isidore, age 67)					
	Zéphirin	15 Jan	1856	Marie Turgeon	St.Gilles, Lotb.	49B
50	Louis	14 Apr	1856	Philomène Fortin	Lambton	99
	Frédéric	27 Feb	1865	Caroline Roy	Lambton	100
	Honoré	19 Jun	1865	Tharsille Ruel	Lambton	50A
51	Joseph	11 Nov	1851	Delphine Turgeon	Ste.Flavie, Rim.	105
55	Pierre	04 Feb	1862	Marcelline Bernatchez	Montmagny	112
	Eugène	before	1892	Eugénie Gendron	Lévis, PQ or NH	55A
	(b. 24 Jul 1859 Can. - d. 02 Oct 1918 Lewiston)					
56	Joseph	13 Jan	1880	Sophonie Langlois	Montmagny	56A
58	Hubert	05 Aug	1884	Céline Lacombe	Montmagny	58A
60	Hubert 1m.	14 Jul	1903	Catherine Gaudreau	Montmagny	60A
	" 2m.	16 May	1916	Antoinette Gaudreau	Montmagny	
62	Jean-Baptiste	16 Mar	1907	Valentine Gagnon	Carleton, ONT(ND)	62A
	(b.9-1-1884 or 4-6-1884)			(Joseph Gagnon 2m. Emma Clément 16-5-1896 Moose Creek, ONT)		
				(Valentine was 22 yrs. old when married; i.e. b.1884-5.		
63	Télesphore-Ls.	09 Nov	1869	Rose Charron	St.Nicolas, Lévis	63A
	" 2m.	07 May	1889	Aurélie Marchand	Victoriaville, Artha.	
64	Joseph	21 Feb	1887	Angèle Girard	St.Urbain, Chlvx.	64A
65a	Ambroise	09 Feb	1841	Luce Gonthier-Bernard	St.Gervais 118	
	Louis	25 Feb	1851	Charlotte Lacroix	St.Michel 119	
65b	Ambroise	12 Jan	1847	Marguerite Patenaude	St.Jean-Richelieu	120
66a	Ambroise	11 Aug	1852	Sophie Langlois	St.Laurent, I.O.	121
66b	François	26 Nov	1861	Eléonore Goulet	Ange-Gardien	122
67	Rémi	08 Jan	1856	Tharsile Desrochers	St.Antoine-Tilly	67A
	Didier	22 Feb	1859	Marie Hamel	Ste.Foye 67B	
68	François-X.	12 Jan	1874	M.-Léa Beaudet	Ste.Emélie, Lotb.	68A
	(b.11-4-1849 Ste.Croix) a twin					
	Antoine-Louis	16 Aug	1880	Arthémise Tremblay	Ste.Croix, Lotb.	
	(b.11-4-1849 Ste.Croix) a twin					
69	Clovis	30 Jan	1883	M.-Philomène Lavoie	Baie-St.Paul, Chvx.	69A
	(b.Oct 1860)			(Théophile Lavoie & Philomène Pilote)		
71	Charles	25 Jan	1886	Rosanna Thibodeau	Windsor, Richm.	71A
	Elzéar	28 Jun	1886	M.-Lise Joncas	Windsor, Richm.	
74	Adolphe	31 Jul	1882	Alexina Labadie	Weedon, Wolfe	
	(b.1862)			(François Labadie & Mathilde Fortin)		
	Napoléon	12 Jul	1904	Adéline "Nellie" Boudreau	Ham Nord (to Sanford)	
	(b.1869)			(sister of Frs. who m. M.-Anna Roussin 25-8-1902 Ham Nord)		
79	Cléophas	03 Sep	1878	M.-Louise Dumont	Montmagny	79A
80	Jos.-Éleuthère	23 Sep	1891	M.-Amanda Bernier	Cap St.Ignace	80A
97	Godias-J.	13 Jul	1885	M.-Dina Chamberland	St.Isidore, Dorch.	
	(b.8-8-1860 St.Isidore)					
	Michel 1m.	04 Feb	1890	Florida Roy	St.Isidore, Dorch.	97A
				(b.1865 Can. - d.9-5-1905 Springfield, age 39y 10m)		
				(Chrysostome Roy & Marie Gagné)		
	" 2m.	07 Nov	1905	Joséphine Roy, 31	Springfield, MA	97B
	(b.8-3-1862 St.Isidore)			(Hubert Roy & Joséphine Paquet dit Lavallée)		
	Achille	1892		Valentine Montreuil	Minnesota	97C
	(b.21-10-1865 St.Isidore)					
99	Évariste	06 Sep	1892	M.-Louise Coulombe	Coaticook, Ststd.	99A
100	Joseph	01 Apr	1913	Alma-M.-A.-R. Bélanger	Courcelles 100A	
105	Joseph	20 Aug	1878	Adèle Pelletier	St.François, NB	105A
112	Télesphore	26 Nov	1888	M.-Délina Lemieux	Mont-Louis	112A
118	Joseph	26 Sep	1871	Léocadie Beaudoin	St.Raphael, Blchs.	118A
	Ambroise	25 May	1875	Marie Labrecque	St.Raphaël 132	
119	François	14 Apr	1885	M.-Amaryllis Maurice	St.Magloire	119A

(Continued on page 51)

(COULOMBE continued from page 51)

Charles	05 Nov	1889	Wilhelmine "Annie" Aubé	St.Magloire	119B
120 Ambroise (b.26-7-1852 St.Jean, St.Jean cty.)					
121 Eugène-Turias	31 Aug	1887	M.-Evangéline Gendron (Ambroise Gendron & Esther Chamberland)	Québec(Hotel Dieu)	
122 Philias 1m.	19 Nov	1888	Albertine Hudon-Beaulieu	Plessisville, Még.	
" 2m.	27 Apr	1891	Mathilda Gagné (George Gagné & Marcelline Bourgault) Mégantic cty.	Thetford Mines,	122A
(Mathilde divorced him on 3-4-1900 due to his imprisonment in NH State Prison for more than 1 year)					
132 Adélar	07 Jan	1901	Elmina Théberge	Armagh	132A
<i>The following are descendants of the above who married in Maine & NH:</i>					
25A Paul	19 Jun	1859	Euphémie Lavoie (Benjamin Lavoie & Marie Laforest)	Frenchville	25C
25B Gilbert (b.9-7-1862 Cap-St.Ignace)(imig. 1883)	01 Apr	1883	Philomène Kirouac (b.23-5-1854 Islet - 1-10-1903 So.Berwick, ME) (Ambroise Kirouac & Anastasie Bélanger)	Brunswick(SJB)	25D
25C Paul Δ 0	7 Nov	1887	Lydia Perroe (Perron) (Auguste Perron & Philomène Philomène Morin)	Winn(RC)	
Auguste-Eustache	07 Apr	1896	Catherine Pelletier	St.John, Me.	25E
George	08 Jan	1905	Priscille Ouellette	Sheridan 25F	
25D Aimé (b.Mar 1888 Brunswick)	19 Oct	1912	Annie-E. Peasley	Randolph(Prot.)	
25E Dorothée-M.	18 Jun	1917	Antoine Martel	Lewiston(St.Mary)	
Jessie	17 Apr	1922	M.-Alina Poulin	Lewiston(SPP)	25G
Lilly	01 Apr	1929	Léo Comeau	Lewiston(SPP)	
25F Charles-J. Δ	04 Jan	1927	Iona Philbrick	Rangeley(JOP)	25H
Agnès	Nov	1934	Timothy Mynahan	Lewiston(St.Jos.)	
Rosanna Δ 1m.	09 Jun	1931	Wayland Phillips	Madrid, Me.(JOP)	
" 2m.	07 Jan	1952	Albert-G. Côté	Waterville(JOP)	
" 3m.	27 Aug	1960	Alfred-V. Grenier	Waterville(SH)	
25G Roger-Robert	27 Nov	1941	Germaine-T. Pelletier	Auburn(SH)	25J
25H Pearl-Maryan Δ	14 Feb	1948	Linwood-Elmon Tyler	Avon(Prot.)	
Agnès-May Δ	11 Dec	1954	Howard-Thomas Seymore	Portland(Prot.)	
" 2m.	19		Cook	Maine ?	
25J Michael-R.	09 Jun	1962	Thelma-C. Laliberté	Auburn(SH)	
Ronald-Roger	31 Dec	1966	Carol-Elaine Doiron	Lewiston(St.Jos.)	
Sandra-G.	17 Jun	1967	Michael-N. Swift	Lewiston(St.Jos.)	
32A Herméline	12 Oct	1924	Elphège Boudreau	Rochester, NH	
36A Nérée	17 Apr	1872	Marie Renaud	Lewiston(SPP)	36C
Pierre ca.		1875	Exilda Lottinville (b.13-5-1852 Kingsey; Cyrille Lottinville & Louise Archambault)	Lewiston 36D	
36B Mélanie (b.18-11-1859 Bécancour)	29 Oct	1888	Georges Beaumier	Bécancour, Q.	
36C Léonie-M.	26 Apr	1897	François Dubé	Lewiston(SPP)	
Napoléon	02 Sep	1912	Alice Bélanger	Lewiston(SPP)	36E
36D Joseph-Napo.	26 Aug	1901	Oliva Boisvert	Warwick, Artha.	36F
(b.Mar 1876 Lewiston, Maine, plumber - d.15-11-1910 Lewiston)(bur. St.Joseph Cem., Biddeford)					
(wife, Oliva Boisvert 2m. Joseph Grenier 29-5-1912 Biddeford)					
M.-Malvina	31 Mar	1918	Émile Boutet Biddeford(St.And.)		
(b.21-4-1880 Warwick, Artha.)(parents said to be from the U.S.)					
Edouard (b.4-7-1882)					
J.-Arsène (b.23-2-1885 Princeville, Artha.)					
Félix-J.	30 Jun	1930	Clara-Fabiola Coutu	Biddeford(St.Jos.)	36G
(b.6-1-1889)					
36E Philippe	04 May	1946	Émilienne Vaillancourt	Lewiston(St.Mary)	36H
36F Conrad-J.	05 Nov	1928	Cécile Vallières (of Waltham, MA)	Waltham, MA !	36J
(b.15-6-1902 Warwick)					
Joseph (b.& d. 6-7-1903 Warwick, Artha.)					
Jeannette-Gertrude (b.5-2-1907 Biddeford)					
Edouard-Roland (b.23-4-1908 Biddeford)					
36G Thérèse	30 May	1953	Raymond Collard	Biddeford(St.And.)	
Julienne	29 Jun	1957	Gérard Asselin	Biddeford(St.And.)	

(Continuation in the upcoming issue, SPRING/PRINTEMPS 2020)



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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