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Le FORUM



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

VOLUME 42, #2

SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2020



*Ce numéro de
Le Forum est dédié à la
douce mémoire
de
Dr. Claire
Quintal et
Gérard Brault*



*This Issue of
Le Forum is
Dedicated in Loving
Memory
of*

*Dr. Claire Quintal
April 28, 1930-
April 30, 2020*

*Dr. Claire Quintal and
Gerard Brault*

*Gerard J. Brault
November 7, 1929-
February 5, 2020*

*Voyage parmi nous ressentis...
Deeply Felt Journeys...*

(See pages 3-13/Voir pages 3-13)

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Calendar Photos and Texts from 1985 to 2002**
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Franco-American Women's Institute:
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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
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*Ce numéro de
Le Forum est dédié à la douce
mémoire de
Dr. Claire Quintal
et
Gérard Brault*

WORCESTER - Dr. Claire Quintal of Worcester died on April 30th in St. Vincent Hospital, two days after her 90th birthday following a brief decline in health.

She was renowned as a French scholar, internationally and nationally known speaker, author, editor, and translator.

In her academic career, she was a college and university professor and Founder, emerita, of the French Institute at Assumption College,

Dr. Quintal was born in Central Falls, RI, to Armand and Helene (Messier) Quintal and was the eldest of six children. She was predeceased by her parents, her brother, Armand and her sister, Marcelle (Quintal) Arthur. She leaves her sister, Sister Rollande Quintal, Sisters of St. Anne, of Worcester, her brother Henry and his wife Marilyn Quintal of Florida and her sister Cecile Quintal of Albuquerque, New Mexico; nieces and nephews; grandnieces and grandnephews; cousins and other extended family members.

With an endless love for learning, Claire earned academic degrees with highest honors: a B.A. degree in French from Anna Maria College, an M.A. degree from the University of Montreal and a PhD degree

Gerard J. Brault, 90, Edwin Erle Sparks Professor Emeritus of French and Medieval Studies at the Pennsylvania State University, died at Foxdale Village in State College February 5, 2020. Born in Chicopee Falls, Mass., on November 7, 1929, he was the son of the late Philius J. and Aline (Rémillard) Brault. His parents were immigrants of modest means from Lacolle, Quebec, in 1921.

He was a graduate of Assumption Prep and College in Worcester, Mass. He always believed that his ethnicity and education exerted a very positive influence on his life. He earned a master's degree in French cum laude from Laval University, Quebec City, in 1952. He played varsity basketball in college and graduate school. In 1958 he was awarded a Ph.D. in romance languages from the University of Pennsylvania under

from the University of Paris.

She taught at the secondary school level in Central Falls, RI and at the college and university levels in Paris at the American College, in Worcester at Assumption College, where she also served as Dean of the Graduate School and at Clark University in Worcester.

She has received honorary degrees from Assumption College in Worcester, her alma mater, Anna Maria College in Paxton and St. Michael's College in Winooski, VT.

Claire Quintal is a Chevalier of France's Legion of Honor and is also an Officer in its National Order of Merit.

She stood proudly among the first group of Americans to be awarded the Congressionally-sponsored Ellis Island Medal of Honor in 1986.

Claire worked on the creation and dedication of the Franco American Monument in Quebec. The monument was erected for the 400th anniversary of the founding of the city and celebrates the strong cultural and economic ties between Quebec and New England.

In retirement as in her more active years, idle was not in her vocabulary. She turned her attention to translating, lecturing,

the direction of Dr. William Roach.

In June 1948, while he was still in college, he joined the Massachusetts National Guard and, on Dec. 31, 1951, during the Korean War, he enlisted in the U.S. Army. During basic training at Fort Dix, N.J., he was awarded the Expert Shooting Badge in rifle. After 14 weeks schooling at Fort Holabird, Md., he proudly served 11 months in Europe as a special agent in the 66th Counter Intelligence Corps, mostly in its field office in La Rochelle, France. For his Army service he received the National Defense Service and the Good Conduct medals.

On Jan. 23, 1954, he married Jeanne L. Pepin in Assumption Catholic Church, Chicopee, Mass. They celebrated every day of their 66 years as a married couple.

Gerard taught French at Bowdoin
(Continued on page 4)



April 28, 1930 - April 30, 2020 †

and writing and was a consultant to former colleagues and French academics in need of her wide expertise.

It has been written that it would take a 500 page biography to do justice to Claire Quintal. Claire Quintal was a loving, supportive, mentoring and encouraging big sister to her siblings, and a role model to the next generations and extended family. She was loyal and devoted, a generous and endearing friend, a proud Franco-American woman who enjoyed life and her death will be grieved as a major loss.

In accord with current restrictions due to the pandemic, funeral services were private. Family and friends will gather in Claire's memory at a later time. In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Dr. Claire Quintal Memorial Scholarship Fund at Anna Maria College, Paxton, MA. Arrangements are in the care of Rice Funeral Home, 300 Park Ave. Worcester, MA.

(See page 4)



Gerard J. Brault

November 7, 1929 - February 5, 2020 †

SOUVENIRS PERSONNELS D'UNE CHÈRE AMIE : CLAIRE QUINTAL

par
Robert B. Perreault

Le 30 avril 2020, soit deux jours après son 90^e anniversaire de naissance, une championne de la langue et de la culture en Amérique française, Claire Quintal, nous a été enlevée par la Covid-19. Plutôt qu'offrir une notice nécrologique traditionnelle—car on peut lire à propos de la vie et de la carrière de cette grande dame dans « Claire Quintal se raconte »—je préfère partager avec les lecteurs du *Forum* quelques souvenirs personnels à son sujet.

J'ai fait la connaissance de Claire Quintal lors d'un colloque, maintenant légendaire, intitulé « Les Franco-Américains : La promesse du passé et les réalités du présent », organisé par le National Materials Development Center de Bedford, New Hampshire, en juin 1976. À l'époque, comme bibliothécaire-archiviste de l'Association Canado-Américaine de Manchester depuis un an et demi, ainsi que représentant-observateur de cette institution au

colloque, je prenais mes premiers pas dans le monde de l'activisme franco-américain. Jeune—j'avais 25 ans—et naïf quant aux débats auxquels j'allais être témoin, j'étais choqué par l'explosion de colère que j'appellerais une version franco-américaine de la querelle des « Anciens et des Modernes » en France vers la fin du XVIII^e siècle, début XVIII^e. C'était donc pour moi ce que je considère mon « baptême de feu » dans le monde de l'activisme franco-américain.

Malheureusement pour elle, Claire avait accepté, comme elle le disait elle-même, « la tâche de résumer et de réagir aux discours [...] et aux commentaires [...] » du colloque qu'elle trouvait « à la fois mémorables et déplorables ». Âgée alors de 46 ans, elle se sentait sans doute coincée entre la génération des « anciens » avec leurs idées conservatrices datant de l'époque de la « survivance française », et celle des « modernes » qui favorisaient de nouvelles structures

socioculturelles destinées à l'avancement du peuple franco-américain vers le XXI^e siècle. Cependant, de façon soignée mais aussi franche et directe, Claire a trouvé moyen de remplir sa tâche avec respect et diplomatie, ce qui m'avait beaucoup impressionné.

En juillet de l'année suivante, parmi les activités du festival franco-américain « C'est si bon » à Lewiston, Maine, on avait organisé un débat littéraire dont le thème était « En quelle langue doit-on écrire ? » Comme auteur de mon premier essai d'une longueur considérable, *One Piece in the Great American Mosaic : The Franco-Americans of New England* (1976), on m'a invité à participer au débat avec un petit groupe d'écrivains plus âgés que moi, dont Claire faisait partie. Puisque le débat visait exclusivement entre l'écriture en français standard vis-à-vis celle du parler populaire franco-américain, j'ai proposé—avec un degré d'appréhension, ne voulant pas relancer la querelle de l'année précédente—l'ajout de l'anglais comme langue d'expression littéraire franco-américaine. J'ai donc défendu ma position en rappelant que mon essai en anglais avait eu du succès parmi plusieurs Franco-Américains unilingues anglophones. *(suite page 5)*

(Gerard J. Brault continued from page 3)

College, then at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he also was vice dean of the graduate school. In 1965, he was appointed professor and head of the Department of French at Penn State, where he enjoyed the rest of his career. He was named Distinguished Professor of French and Medieval Studies in 1990, then Sparks Professor later the same year. He retired from Penn State on Dec. 31, 1997.

He wrote numerous books and articles about medieval French literature and, from 1985 to 1988, served as president of the Société Rencivals, an international organization for the advancement of romance epic studies. Among his most important works were his two-volume edition of the "Song of Roland" (1978), a landmark literary analysis and modern English translation of the poem; "Early Blazon," (1972); and his 1997 "The Rolls of Arms of Edward I (1272-1207)." The latter earned him the Riquer Prize of the Académie Internationale d'Héraldique and the Bickersteth Medal of the Institute of Heraldic and Genealogical Studies. His book, "The French-Canadian Heritage in New England," (1986) demonstrated his great interest in his forebears and their de-

scendants in the Northeast, and is treasured by his family.

He was awarded France's Ordre des Palmes Académiques and Ordre National du Mérite, both with the rank of officer. In 1976, Assumption College conferred an honorary degree on him, and at Penn State, he was elected a Fellow of the Institute for the Arts and Humanities in 1976.

He was deeply devoted to his wife, children and grandchildren, all of whom survive him. He loved to travel with Jeanne, especially to France, and after his retirement, they spent 12 happy winters in Green Valley, Ariz. He enjoyed working out, lap swimming, walking and reading both fiction and non-fiction. He was among Penn State's most devoted football fans. On June 12, 2013, he survived a cardiac arrest while doing laps in the Welch Pool thanks to the rescue efforts of three alert young lifeguards.

A devout Catholic, Gerard was a parishioner of Our Lady of Victory Parish in State College, where he served, early on, as a religious education instructor, a lector and a Eucharistic minister. In 2008, he wrote the parish history for OLV's centennial booklet.

Gerard is survived by his beloved wife, Jeanne; his son Francis (Suzanne) of Eldersburg, Md.; two daughters, Anne-Marie

Welsh (Timothy) of Erie, Pa., and Suzanne E. Dannemueller (fiancée of Ned Brokloff) of State College, Pa.; a sister, Sister Evelyn R. Brault, S.A.S.V., of Worcester, Mass.; and eight grandchildren: Kara W., Rena Marie Brault, Erin Brault, Emily (Evan) Holwick, Alice Welsh, Bryan Welsh, Carly (Leland) Hollensbe and Zoe Dannemueller. Two other sisters, Irene G. Harrell of Seattle, Wash., and Cecile T. Brault of Chicopee Falls, Mass., predeceased him.

Friends and relatives will be received from 10:30 to 11:30 am at Our Lady of Victory Church, 820 Westerly Parkway, State College, on Saturday, February 8, followed by a Mass of Christian burial held at OLV at 11:30 am. Inurnment and graveside services will follow at Centre County Memorial Park, 1032 Benner Pike.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to the French Institute, Assumption College, 500 Salisbury St., Worcester Mass., 01609.

Arrangements are under the care of Koch Funeral Home, State College. Online condolences and signing of the guest book may be entered at www.kochfuneralhome.com.

(*SOUVENIRS PERSONNELS D'UNE CHÈRE AMIE : CLAIRE QUINTAL suite de page 4*)

Certains d'entre ceux-ci, étant enfin capables de comprendre un texte portant sur notre histoire, m'avaient écrit des lettres de remerciement. À mon grand soulagement ainsi qu'à ma joie, Claire m'a appuyé à 100%, disant à l'assistance que j'avais écrit un essai « assez sérieux » qui avait touché une partie de la population qui n'avait pas accès facile à notre littérature puisque celle-ci était écrite, pour la plupart, en français. De nouveau, Claire m'avait beaucoup impressionnée, et de plus, je lui étais fort reconnaissant.

Au printemps de 1978, Claire et moi avons fait partie d'un assez grand groupe de Franco-Américains qui s'est rendu à Lafayette, Louisiane, pour assister à la « First Annual Franco-American Conference ». Pendant une réception qui précédait la projection d'un extrait d'un film de la pièce théâtrale *La Sagouine* de l'auteure acadienne Antonine Maillet, celle-ci, en apercevant Claire dans la foule, l'a saluée et l'a embrassée en l'appelant par son prénom. À son tour, Claire lui a répondu en s'adressant à « 'Tonine ». Complètement ignorant que Claire et Antonine Maillet se connaissaient aussi intimement, je suis resté étonné devant cette scène. Ensuite, sans hésitation, Claire m'a présenté à Mme Maillet comme « un de nos jeunes écrivains franco-américains qui promet », et celle-ci a signé mon programme-souvenir de la soirée. Grâce à Claire, ce moment est devenu le clou de mon séjour en Louisiane. Par la suite, lorsque j'ai rencontré Mme Maillet à deux reprises—l'été suivant à Québec, et douze ans plus tard à Paris—en me voyant, elle m'a reconnu de visage, tout en s'excusant d'avoir oublié mon nom. Cependant, elle se souvenait très bien que Claire me lui avait présenté comme Franco-Américain. Encore une fois, je me retrouvais redevable à Claire pour sa générosité d'esprit et son encouragement.

Pendant trois semaines vers la fin juin, début juillet 1979, Claire et moi étions parmi une demi-douzaine de Franco-Américains invités par le Ministère des Affaires étrangères de France à visiter Paris, la Bretagne et la Bourgogne. Le but de ce séjour était de prendre contact avec quelques fonctionnaires gouvernementaux, mais surtout avec des directeurs de musées, de centres culturels, de maisons d'édition et de divers médias, afin d'établir des rapports et des échanges. Vivant et voyageant ensemble au

jour le jour, Claire et moi avons eu maintes discussions à propos d'une variété de sujets touchant nos vies professionnelles et personnelles, jusqu'au point où, malgré notre différence d'âge, nous sommes devenus de bons amis et futurs collègues.

Par conséquent, au cours d'une quinzaine d'années suivantes, Claire m'a invité, à cinq reprises, à donner des conférences sur des thèmes franco-américains divers aux colloques annuels de l'Institut français d'Assumption College à Worcester, Massachusetts, dont elle était la fondatrice et directrice. De plus, en publiant les actes de ces colloques, Claire m'offrait un moyen de faire mieux connaître mes écrits en Amérique française. Nous avons



Claire Quintal et Robert B. Perreault dans le parc Lafayette, Manchester, New Hampshire, devant la statue de Ferdinand Gagnon, fondateur du premier journal de langue française de cette ville, La Voix du Peuple, en 1869. Photo par Ronald Héroux, le 7 août 2003.

également collaboré au *Dictionnaire des auteurs franco-américains de langue française* publié en ligne par l'Institut français, pour lequel Claire m'a invité à rédiger les biobibliographies d'une douzaine parmi la centaine d'écrivains qui y paraissent. Sans doute, avec le passage du temps, mes dettes de reconnaissance envers elle accumulaient de plus en plus rapidement !

C'est aussi pendant nos années de collaboration que j'ai appris à quel point que Claire se dévouait à son travail en faveur des Franco-Américains. Je me suis vite rendu compte qu'elle ne dormait que quelques heures, passant des nuits blanches à lire, à faire de la recherche, à écrire et à

traduire volume après volume du français à l'anglais afin de les rendre accessibles aux Franco-Américains unilingues anglophones, ainsi qu'au public en général.

Le 2 juin 2015, à la demande de la revue québécoise d'ethnologie, *Rabaska*, je me suis rendu à Worcester où, dans une salle de l'Institut français, j'ai interviewé Claire à propos de sa vie et de sa carrière. Pendant deux sessions d'une heure et demie chacune le matin et l'après-midi—avec une pause pour un repas à ses propres frais dans son restaurant préféré de Worcester—Claire m'a parlé presque sans s'interrompre, tellement a-t-elle été généreuse avec son temps et ses souvenirs remontant jusqu'à son enfance. Pour moi, ayant fait des entretiens en histoire orale avec des centaines de personnes depuis 1974, c'était un plaisir sans effort, car une seule question pouvait provoquer une réponse qui allait durer sans cesse pendant un quart d'heure ou au-delà. Le résultat de cette conversation de trois heures a paru en 2016 dans la revue *Rabaska* sous le titre « Claire Quintal se raconte ».

* * *

Sur un ton moins officiel et un peu plus personnel, je voudrais maintenant partager quelques précieux souvenirs de Claire que je chéris.

Par contraste avec l'atmosphère formelle qui régnait aux colloques de l'Institut français, on peut juxtaposer l'ambiance relaxe des nombreux « Rassemblements » annuels d'artistes et d'écrivains franco-américains. Je n'oublierai jamais, au tout premier Rassemblement, qui avait eu lieu dans l'île Mackworth près de Portland, Maine, en août 1982, avoir vu Claire y arriver vêtue en jeans ! D'après la condition toute neuve de ce pantalon, il était évident qu'elle se l'était procuré tout spécialement pour l'occasion. Quand je l'ai taquinée à ce propos—« Toi, Claire Quintal, en jeans ? Là, j'aurai tout vu ! »—elle m'a répondu qu'il lui fallait bien s'adapter à la situation. D'après son commentaire, instinctivement, je savais que nous allions avoir une fin de semaine hors pair.

Ayant toujours à la fois plusieurs projets en marche, Claire pouvait facilement passer entre une heure et demie et deux heures au téléphone avec n'importe qui parmi ses nombreux collaborateurs. Parce qu'elle possédait un téléphone fixe ainsi qu'un portable, je ne peux plus compter le nombre de fois, pendant nos conversations téléphoniques, que nous nous faisons inter-

(suite page 6)

(*SOUVENIRS PERSONNELS D'UNE
CHÈRE AMIE : CLAIRE QUINTAL suite
de page 5*)

rompre par un appel sur son autre appareil. Cela me causait toujours de rigoler lorsque Claire disait à l'autre personne qu'elle la rappellerait sous peu—ou bien qu'elle me revenait pour me dire qu'elle devait me quitter pour prendre l'autre l'appel. Dans chaque instance, selon sa décision, je savais laquelle des personnes à l'autre bout de ses deux téléphones Claire considérait la plus importante !

À quelques reprises, lors d'un événement franco-américain quelconque qui l'emmenait à Manchester, Claire nous a rendu visite, mon épouse, Claudette, et moi, chez nous. Elle a souvent complimenté Claudette pour ce qu'elle considérait le bon sens avec lequel Claudette offrait ses opinions sur la vie en général et la façon dont elle organisait une bonne partie de notre vie quotidienne. Claire reconnaissait bien que j'avais la tête perdue dans mes pensées à propos de mes projets culturels et littéraires—c'est-à-dire, que j'étais souvent « dans la lune ».

« Robert t'a bien choisie comme épouse, Claudette », disait Claire, avec un petit sourire taquin. « Il reconnaissait qu'il avait besoin d'une femme pratique comme toi pour tâcher de le garder en ligne ».

Si je pouvais faire sourire Claire, je pouvais aussi l'exaspérer, comme la fois qu'elle nous attendait chez elle à une certaine heure et que nous y sommes arrivés au-delà d'une heure en retard.

« Claudette, je sais que ce n'est pas ta faute ». Ensuite, elle s'est tournée vers moi. « Et Robert, il faut que tu guettes ton heure » ! m'a-t-elle dit, pointant le doigt comme une mère qui gronde sa petite canaille d'enfant.

Mais, je pouvais aussi la toucher de son côté sensible. Après avoir lu un de mes contes, « Les mains du père et du fils », Claire m'a avoué qu'à la conclusion, « Robert, tu m'as fait pleurer ».

Presque annuellement pendant ses années de retraite—c'est-à-dire, comme directrice de l'Institut français, mais certainement pas comme auteure et traductrice, car elle a poursuivi ce genre d'activité presque à sa dernière heure—Claire nous invitait à passer une journée entière avec elle à son chalet d'été près de la côte du Maine à York Harbor. Elle nous a révélé que cette maison avait déjà appartenu à une artiste qui s'en était servie

de résidence et de studio. Fabriquée de bois, ses murs intérieurs ressemblant à ceux d'un camp au fond d'une forêt, elle était à la fois rustique avec un décor artistique, remplie de tableaux et de rayons de livres, en plus d'un balcon qui regardait sur le salon. Cette maison reflétait bien le caractère de sa propriétaire. Soit dehors dans le jardin, soit dans cet environnement intérieur qui inspire la créativité, nous discutons d'une variété de sujets—nos projets littéraires et culturels, nos amis et collègues et leurs propres projets, la vie franco-américaine en général et nos familles respectives. Et ensemble, au cours des années, Claire nous avait fait goûter aux fruits de mer et aux poissons dans plusieurs de ses restaurants préférés sur la côte près de chez elle.

Il y a quelques années, un été entier s'est passé sans que l'invitation annuelle de Claire nous soit lancée. Par la suite, nous avons appris qu'elle était atteinte d'un cancer. Étant grave à n'importe âge, cette maladie pose davantage des complications et des dangers pour quelqu'un d'un âge avancé. Toutefois, femme forte et courageuse comme nous l'avions toujours connue, Claire a lutté en faveur de la vie pour conquérir le cancer et s'en sortir victorieuse.

Comme institutrice, Claire encourageait les parents et les grands-parents qui prenaient un intérêt tout particulier envers l'éducation de leur progéniture, surtout en matières linguistique et culturelle. Pendant notre dernière visite à son chalet d'été, elle nous avait félicités après avoir écouté à un enregistrement de notre petite-fille, alors âgée de six ans, qui récitait par cœur « La cigale et la fourmi » de La Fontaine, et notre petit-fils, âgé de quatre ans, nommant, également de mémoire, tous les présidents des États-Unis en ordre chronologique.

En 2018, pour des raisons de santé, Claire avait déménagé à la résidence Notre-Dame du Lac de Worcester, un ancien couvent converti en appartements pour personnes à la retraite. Nous lui y avons rendu visite en novembre 2019. À part plusieurs heures de discussion dans son appartement, toujours entourée de ses livres et de ses objets d'art, elle nous a fait le grand tour de la résidence, ceci en dépit du fait qu'elle devait maintenant utiliser une marchette. Elle nous a aussi invités à dîner avec elle dans la salle à manger commune, où la nourriture était excellente et où les autres résidents la saluaient, un par un, comme une bonne amie.

Certes, Claire était bien logée et elle semblait en être heureuse, ce qui nous a

bien fait plaisir, Claudette et moi. En lui disant au revoir, nous envisagions encore plusieurs autres visites chez elle dans son nouvel environnement joyeux.

Toutefois, qui aurait deviné, ce jour-là, que ce serait non seulement notre première visite, mais aussi notre dernière ?—car en moins de six mois, Claire n'y serait plus.

Claire me manque énormément, mais au moins, je garde sur mes propres rayons ses écrits et ses traductions, que je peux lire et relire. Et dans mon esprit vivent mes bons souvenirs d'elle.

Adieu, chère amie.



Robert B. Perreault et Claire Quintal devant la statue intitulée « Mill Girl » représentant les femmes qui ont travaillé dans les filatures de coton et de laine. Amoskeag Millyard, Manchester, New Hampshire. Photo par Ronald Héroux, le 7 août 2003.



PERSONAL MEMORIES OF A DEAR FRIEND: CLAIRE QUINTAL

by

Robert B. Perreault

On April 30, 2020, two days after her 90th birthday, a champion of the language and culture of French North America, Claire Quintal, was taken away from us by the Covid-19 virus. Rather than offer a traditional obituary notice, I would rather share a few personal memories about her with readers of *Le Forum*.

I first met Claire Quintal at a colloquium, now legendary, whose title in French translates to “Franco-Americans: The Promise of the Past and the Realities of the Present,” organized by the National Materials Development Center in Bedford, New Hampshire, in June 1976. At the time, as librarian-archivist of the Association Canado-Américaine in Manchester for a year and a half, as well as representative-observer of that institution at the colloquium, I was taking my first steps in the world of Franco-American activism. Young—I was 25—and naïve with regard to the debates that I would witness, I was shocked by the explosion of anger that I would characterize as a Franco-American version of the quarrel between the “Ancients and the Moderns” in France toward the end of the 17th century, beginning of the 18th. I have always considered this colloquium to have been my “baptism of fire” into the world of Franco-American activism.

Unfortunately for her, Claire had accepted, as she said it herself, “the task of summarizing and reacting to the speeches [...] and to the commentaries [...]” of the colloquium that she found “simultaneously memorable and deplorable.” At age 46, she undoubtedly felt caught between the generation of the “ancients” with their conservative ideas that dated back to the era of “French *survivance*,” and that of the “moderns” who favored new sociocultural structures dedicated to

the advancement of the Franco-American people toward the 21st century. However, in a careful yet frank and direct manner, Claire found a way to fulfill her task with respect and diplomacy, which had greatly impressed me.

In July of the following year, among the activities of the Franco-American festival called “C’est si bon”—“It’s so good”—in Lewiston, Maine, was a literary panel discussion featuring the theme “In what language should we write?” As the author of my first essay of a considerable length, *One Piece in the Great American Mosaic: The Franco-Americans of New England* (1976), I was invited to be on the panel with a small



Featured writers at “Meet the Authors Day,” Franco-American Centre/Centre franco-américain, Manchester, N.H., June 29, 1991. Front row, left to right: Robert B. Perreault, Jacqueline Giasson Fuller, Steven Riel, Susann Pelletier, Paul Marion. Back row: Denis Ledoux, Armand Chartier, Claire Quintal, Gérard Robichaud, Richard Belair, Arthur L. Eno, Jr., E. Annie Proulx. Not pictured: Ernest Hebert. Photo by Gary Samson.

group of writers older than myself, one of whom was Claire. Since the panel members were focusing exclusively on writing in standard French versus Franco-American French, I proposed—with a degree of apprehension, not wishing to revive the previous year’s quarrel—the addition of English as a language of Franco-American literary expression. I defended my position by recalling the fact that my essay in English had met

with success among several monolingual anglophone Franco-Americans. A few of them, now finally capable of understanding a text dealing with our history, had written me letters of thanks. To my great relief as well as my joy, Claire supported me 100%, telling the audience that I had written a “rather serious” essay that had touched a portion of the population who didn’t have easy access to our literature since it was, for the most part, written in French. Once again, Claire had greatly impressed me, and moreover, I was most grateful toward her.

In the spring of 1978, Claire and I were part of a large group of Franco-Americans who went to Lafayette, Louisiana, to attend the First Annual Franco-American Conference. During a reception prior to the screening of a film version of the theatrical production entitled *La Sagouine* by Acadian writer Antonine Maillet, the author herself, upon spotting Claire in the crowd, greeted her with a hug and called her by her first

name. In turn, Claire responded by addressing the author as “Tonine.” Completely ignorant of the fact that Claire and Antonine Maillet were on such friendly terms, I was stunned by what I had just witnessed. And then, without hesitation, Claire introduced me to Madame Maillet as “one of our young Franco-American writers who shows promise,” after which the author autographed my copy of the evening’s souvenir program. Thanks to Claire, this moment became the high point of my stay in Louisiana. Subsequently, when I again met Madame Maillet on two occasions—the following summer in Québec City

and twelve years later in Paris—upon seeing me, she recognized me facially but expressed her regret at having forgotten my name. Nonetheless, she indeed remembered that Claire had introduced me to her as a Franco-American. For yet another time, I found myself indebted to Claire for her generosity of spirit and for her encouragement.

For three weeks toward the end of
(Continued on page 8)

(PERSONAL MEMORIES OF A DEAR FRIEND: CLAIRE QUINTAL continued from page 7)

June, beginning of July 1979, Claire and I were among a half-dozen Franco-Americans whom France's Ministère des Affaires étrangères—equivalent to the U.S. State Department—invited to visit Paris and the provinces of Brittany and Burgundy. The purpose of this stay was to meet with a few government officials, but especially with directors of museums, of cultural centers, of publishing houses and of the various media, in order to establish ties and exchanges. Living and traveling together on a daily basis, Claire and I had many discussions about a variety of topics relative to our professional and personal lives, to the point where, despite our age difference, we became good friends and future colleagues.

Consequently, over the following fifteen years or so, Claire invited me, on five occasions, to lecture on various Franco-American themes at the annual colloquia of Assumption College's French Institute in Worcester, Massachusetts, of which Claire was the founder and director. Moreover, by publishing the texts of these colloquia, Claire offered me a way to make my writings better known in French North America. We also collaborated on the *Dictionnaire des auteurs franco-américains de langue française* published online by the French Institute, for which Claire invited me to write the bio-bibliographies of a dozen among the hundred or so writers included in this work. Undoubtedly, with the passage of time, my debts of gratitude to her were accumulating more and more rapidly!

It was also during our years of collaboration that I learned to what extent Claire dedicated herself to her work in favor of the Franco-Americans. I quickly became aware that she slept for only a few hours, burning the midnight oil into the wee hours reading, doing research, writing, and translating volume upon volume from French into English in order to render them accessible to monolingual anglophone Franco-Americans, as well as to the general public.

On June 2, 2015, at the request of the Québécois ethnological journal *Rabaska*, I went to Worcester where, in a room at the French Institute, I interviewed Claire about her life and her career. During two 90-minute French-language sessions, one in the forenoon, the other in the afternoon—with a break for lunch, her treat, at her favorite restaurant in Worcester—Claire spoke to me

nearly without interruption, so generous was she with her time and with her memories dating all the way back to her early childhood. For me, having conducted oral-history interviews with hundreds of persons since 1974, this was a pleasure without effort, as a single question could provoke a response that would last constantly for a quarter-hour or more. The result of this three-hour conversation appeared the following year, 2016, in the journal *Rabaska* under the title "Claire Quintal se raconte"—"Claire Quintal in her own words."

* * *

In a less official, slightly more personal tone, I'd like to share a few precious memories of Claire that I cherish. By contrast with the formal atmosphere that reigned at the French Institute's colloquia, one can juxtapose the relaxed ambiance of the numerous annual "Rassemblements" of Franco-American artists and writers. I'll never forget, at the very first Rassemblement that took place on Mackworth Island near

"And you, Robert, you've got to pay attention to the time!" she said to me, pointing her finger at me as would a mother scolding her mischievous child.

Portland, Maine, in August 1982, having seen Claire arrive wearing jeans! By the brand new condition of these slacks, it was obvious that she had bought them especially for the occasion. When I teased her about this—"You, Claire Quintal, in jeans? Now I've seen it all!"—she responded by saying that she might as well adapt to the situation. By her comment, instinctively, I knew that we were about to have a marvelous weekend.

Forever having simultaneous projects in the works, Claire could easily spend an hour and a half to two hours on the telephone with any one of her numerous collaborators. Because she had both a land line and a cell phone, I've lost count as to the number of times, during our telephone conversations, that we were interrupted by a call on the other line. It always caused me to chuckle whenever Claire told the other person that she would return his or her call in a bit—or when she would come back to tell me that she needed to end our call so as to be able to take the other one. In each instance, based on her decision, I knew which of the people at the other end of her two telephones she

considered the more important!

A few times, whenever a Franco-American event drew her to Manchester, Claire would pay my wife, Claudette, and me a visit. She often complimented Claudette for what she considered the common sense with which Claudette expressed her opinions about life in general and in the way she organized a good portion of our daily lives. Claire easily recognized that I let my mind wander about thoughts of my cultural and literary projects—in other words, I was often somewhere in outer space.

"Robert did well to choose you as his wife," Claire would say with a teasing grin. "He realized that he needed a practical woman like you to try keeping him in line."

If I could make Claire smile, I could also exasperate her, such as on one occasion when she was waiting for us to arrive at her home at a certain time, but we did so more than an hour late.

"Claudette, I know it's not *your* fault." She then turned toward me. "And you, Robert, you've got to pay attention to the time!" she said to me, pointing her finger at me as would a mother scolding her mischievous child.

But I could also touch her sensitive side. Having read one of my short stories, "Les mains du père et du fils," Claire admitted to me that, at its conclusion, "Robert, you made me cry."

Almost annually during her retirement years—that is to say, as director of the French Institute, but certainly not as author and translator, as she engaged in this genre of activity nearly up to her final hour—Claire would invite us to spend an entire day with her at her summer chalet by the coast of Maine at York Harbor. She revealed to us that this home had once belonged to a woman artist who used it as both a residence and a studio. Made of wood with interior walls resembling those of a camp deep in the forest, it was simultaneously rustic yet with an artistic décor filled with paintings and bookshelves, not to mention a balcony that looked down over the living room. This house well reflected its proprietor's character. Whether outside in the garden or within the interior environment that inspired creativity, we would discuss a variety of topics—our literary and cultural projects, our friends and colleagues and their own projects, Franco-American life in general, and our respective families. And together, over the years, Claire would have us enjoy the seafood and the fish in several

(Continued on page 9)

« Je Me Souviens » de Claire

Par
Ronald G. Héroux,
Middletown, RI

Je connais Claire Quintal depuis 1952, lorsque nous nous sommes rencontrés à Notre Dame, l'école paroissiale franco-américaine de notre ville natale, Central Falls, RI. J'étais en 5^e année et c'était la première année de Claire à Notre Dame (et son premier emploi) en tant que professeur de lycée en latin et en anglais. Elle a été la première enseignante laïque embauchée par les sœurs de Sainte-Anne qui ont administré l'école que Claire a fréquentée, où elle a obtenu son diplôme et finalement enseigné pendant cinq ans après l'obtention de son baccalauréat (du Collège Anna-Maria, également sous les auspices des sœurs de Sainte-Anne).

Bien que nos parents se connaissent, j'ai rencontré Claire pour la première fois dans les couloirs de l'école Notre-Dame où je la saluais souvent quand on se croisait, en disant poliment: «Bonjour Mademoiselle Quintal». Je n'avais jamais pensé alors, étant donné qu'il y avait 12 ans de différence entre nous, qu'elle deviendrait une amie et une collègue proche, et oui même mon mentor en quelque sorte, et combien de temps nous passerions au téléphone au cours de ses dernières années.

Ma relation avec Claire a vraiment mûri après mes années universitaires quand mon intérêt pour ma culture franco-américaine m'a de plus en plus consumé. Je rencontrais et écoutais Claire parler lors de diverses activités franco-américaines où elle était souvent la principale présentatrice ou faisait partie d'une fonction qu'elle organisait ou à laquelle elle participait. J'admirais sa capacité bilingue de passer facilement de l'anglais au français avec un accent parfait et une maîtrise des deux langues. Son enthousiasme et sa passion lorsqu'elle parlait avec une connaissance encyclopédique et à sa compréhension de notre héritage franco-américain et de nombreux autres sujets connexes me comblaient d'étonnement.

Nos brèves conversations en personne commençaient souvent en se rappelant (par reconnaître et se rappeler) où nous avons été



élevés. Nous faisons fièrement référence à notre ville de Central Falls en la qualifiant de petite enclave des Nations Unies en raison des groupes multiethniques (Canadiens français, irlandais, polonais, syriens, libanais et portugais) vivant dans notre petite communauté densément peuplée d'un mile carré le long de la rivière Blackstone. Claire était loin de se douter au début que sa carrière la mènerait à Worcester, MA, où se trouve la source de la rivière Blackstone, qui alimentait avec de l'hydro électricité un bon nombre de ces usines de textile étreignant ses berges; les mêmes usines dans lesquelles plusieurs de nos ancêtres canadiens-français sont venus travailler.

J'ai commencé à communiquer régulièrement avec Claire, généralement « par téléphone », quelque temps après qu'elle eut fondé l'Institut français au collège de l'Assomption en 1979. J'écrivais « par téléphone » car l'un des défauts mineurs de Claire est qu'elle n'utilisait pas le courrier électronique, l'e-mail. Ainsi, les informations qu'elle me transmettait m'arrivaient écrites à la main, envoyées par courrier ordinaire ou par téléphone et en personne. Heureusement, la sœur de Claire, Rollande, qui vivait à proximité à Worcester, avait une adresse de courriel (e-mail) à laquelle je pouvais envoyer mes messages à Claire. Le problème pour Rollande était qu'elle devait imprimer tous mes courriels pour les donner à Claire!

Claire et moi nous rencontrions parfois pour le déjeuner dans la région de Newport, RI où j'habitais et où elle possédait (Suite page 10)

PERSONAL MEMORIES OF A DEAR FRIEND: CLAIRE QUINTAL continued
from page 8)

of her favorite restaurants along the coast near her home.

A few years ago, an entire summer went by without Claire's annual invitation having come our way. Eventually, we learned that she had cancer. As serious as it can be at any age, this illness poses more complications and dangers to someone at an advanced age. Nonetheless, as a strong and courageous woman whom we had always known her to be, Claire fought in favor of life in order to conquer the cancer and to come out the victor.

As an educator, Claire encouraged parents and grandparents who took an extra-special interest in the learning process of their offspring, especially in the linguistic and cultural domains. During our last visit to her summer chalet, she congratulated us after having listened to a recording of our granddaughter, at the time age six, reciting by heart La Fontaine's fable "La cigale et la fourmi" — "The cicada and the ant" — and our grandson, age four, naming, equally from memory, all the U.S. presidents in chronological order.

In 2018, for reasons of health, Claire moved to the Notre-Dame du Lac residence in Worcester, a former convent converted into apartments for the elderly. We visited her there in November 2019. In addition to several hours of discussion in her apartment, always surrounded by her books and her art objects, she gave us the grand tour of the residence, this in spite of now having to get around with a walker. She also invited us to have lunch with her in the common dining room, where the food was excellent and where other residents greeted her, one by one, as a good friend.

For sure, Claire was well lodged, and she seemed happy, which pleased Claudette and me immensely. We said goodbye, looking toward many more visits in her new, happy surroundings.

But who would have guessed, on that day, that this would not only be our first visit, but our last? — for, in fewer than six months, Claire would be gone.

I miss Claire terribly, but at least my own bookshelves contain her writings and her translations, which I can read and reread. And in my spirit, there live my fond memories of her.

Farewell, dear friend.

Remembering Claire

By
Ronald G. Héroux
Middletown, RI

I have known Claire Quintal since 1952 when we met in our city's Franco-American parochial school, Notre Dame, in Central Falls, RI. I was in the 5th grade and it was Claire's first year at Notre Dame (and her first employment) as a high school teacher of Latin and English. She was the first lay teacher hired by the Sisters of Sainte Anne who administered the school where Claire attended, graduated and eventually taught for five years after obtaining her BA (from Anna-Maria College, also under the auspices of the Sisters of Sainte Anne).

Although our parents knew each other, I first met Claire in the corridors of Notre Dame School where I would often greet her as we passed each other, politely saying-- "Bonjour Mademoiselle Quintal". I never thought then, there being 12 years difference between us, she would become a close friend and colleague, and yes even my mentor of sorts, and how much time we would spend on the phone in her later years.

My relationship with Claire really matured after my college years when my interest in my Franco-American culture



Claire and Sister Eugena Poulin (Sister of Mercy and Fr teacher at Salve... unfortunately passed away a few years ago) at Salve University in 2008 for the unveiling of their new book: LA GAZETTE FRANÇOISE, a translation and annotation.

Standing in a red blazer is Claire's younger sister, Soeur Rollande Quintal (a St Anne nun) who has been Claire's caretaker, good friend, driver and overall right hand person during Claire's senior years. I am standing to the left of Sr. Rollande.

consumed me more and more. I would meet and listen to Claire speak at various Franco-American activities where she was often the main presenter or part of a function she organized or participated in. I admired her bilingual ability to switch with ease from English to French with a perfect accent and command of both languages. Her enthusiasm and passion when she spoke coupled with her encyclopedic knowledge and understanding of our Franco-American heritage and many other related subjects amazed me.

Our brief in person conversations would often begin by acknowledging and remembering where we were raised. We would proudly refer to our city of Central Falls as a little United Nations enclave because of the multi-ethnic groups (French Canadians, Irish, Polish, Syrians, Lebanese, and Portuguese) living in our small, densely populated community of one square mile

along the Blackstone River. Little did Claire realize early on that her career would lead her to Worcester, MA, the source of the Blackstone River, the power supply for many of those textile mills hugging its banks; the same mills in which many of our French Canadian ancestors came to work.

I started communicating with Claire on a regular basis, usually by phone, sometime after she founded the French Institute at Assumption College in 1979. I write "by phone" because one of Claire's minor failings was not using email. Thus, information from her to me was hand written sent by regular mail or by phone and in person. Fortunately, Claire's sister Rollande, who lived nearby in Worcester, had an email address to which I could send to Claire. The problem for Rollande was that she had to print all my emails to give to Claire!

Claire and I would sometimes meet
(Continued on page 11)

(En souvenir de Claire suite de page 9)

dait un condo à temps partagé. Elle venait souvent à Newport pour travailler avec Sœur Eugéna Poulin de l'Université Salve sur leur livre La Gazette Française ainsi que pour rencontrer d'autres franco-américains passionnés et universitaires, comme Armand Chartier et Normand Ouellette.

De temps en temps, nous nous promenions par auto dans la région de Newport pour examiner les maisons coloniales où des centaines de soldats français ont été cantonnés en 1780-1 pendant la Révolution américaine; et dans le sud-est du Massachusetts (Fall River, New Bedford, Westport, etc.) visitant des églises établies par des immigrants canadiens-français qui s'y étaient installés pour travailler dans les usines. Ces petits séjours nous offraient l'occasion de rouler le long du magnifique bord de mer tout en discutant de certains aspects de notre patrimoine franco-américain et de ce que nous faisons pour le préserver et le promouvoir.

Dans ce cas, Claire était l'érudit et j'étais l'étudiant. Sa mémoire était phénoménale.

Nos conversations téléphoniques duraient souvent des heures alors que nous divaguions d'un sujet franco-américain à un autre, avec moi écoutant et posant des questions la plupart du temps et prenant souvent des notes de peur de ne pas me souvenir d'un livre ou d'un article qu'elle recommanderait. J'ai discuté avec Claire d'articles et de projets que j'entreprenais concernant la préservation de notre patrimoine franco-américain alors qu'elle écoutait attentivement et me guidait vers les ressources que j'avais besoin d'examiner.

Il n'y a pas si longtemps, j'ai informé Claire que j'étais intéressé à écrire un article sur le Frère Wilfrid (Arthur Garneau d'Arthabaska au Québec, un Frère du Sacré-Cœur) qui a fondé l'Académie du Sacré-Coeur en 1908 à Central Falls. Elle a immédiatement déclaré que Frère Wilfrid était un bon ami de son père et qu'il était à

bien des égards la personne qui l'a motivée à lire et à faire plus de recherches sur les nombreux Français aventuriers (Cartier, Champlain, LaSalle, etc.) qui ont exploré de vastes régions d'Amérique du Nord, ainsi que les nombreux Canadiens français qui se sont aventurés et se sont installés en Nouvelle-Angleterre, à New York et dans les régions éloignées du Midwest et du Far West de notre pays.

Passionnée par son héritage, elle a consacré sa vie à cette aventure d'exploration, d'enseignement et de promotion des multiples facettes de son patrimoine, nos ancêtres français et franco-américains et sa langue maternelle française. «Une vraie Franco-Américaine pure laine», que j'appelais souvent Claire en français. Elle sera chèrement manquer par plusieurs d'entre nous, mais son énorme héritage continuera à inspirer beaucoup de franco-américains et de gens intéressés à poursuivre des recherches dans ce sujet.

(N.D.L.R. Claire worked on the creation and dedication of the Franco American Monument in Quebec. The monument was erected for the 400th anniversary of the founding of the city and celebrates the strong cultural and economic ties between Quebec and New England.)

Dedication of the Franco-American Monument Québec City, July 2, 2008

by Claire Quintal

For Franco-Americans, the expression “Je me souviens” (I remember) is deeply meaningful. This monument that we are solemnly unveiling today, in a ceremony attended by prominent leaders of both Québec and the United States, is tangible proof that we have taken to heart the need to give shape and substance to this saying. By means of this monument, we have sought to demonstrate - in a form as solid and durable as possible - our fidelity, not only to this adage, but also and especially to the land of our ancestors, for we have not forgotten our origins.

This monument, placed as it is on the bank of the magnificent river that for the last 400 years has carried the dreams and hopes of those who came before us, the predecessors of us all, generation upon generation, also represents the hope of those of us from the diaspora, that Québec for its part will not forget us, that it too will remember, for a long time to come, those who left with heavy hearts in order to ensure the future of their offspring.

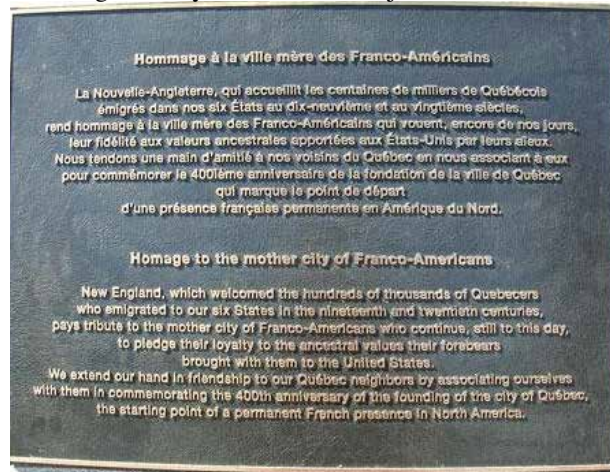
To remember, never to forget, these are the motives that prompted us to unite

(Remembering Claire continued from page 10)

for lunch in the Newport, RI area where I lived and where she owned a time share. She often came to Newport to work with Sister Eugena Poulin of Salve University on their book **La Gazette Française** as well as to meet with other Franco-American activists and scholars, such as Armand Chartier and Normand Ouellette.

We would take drives in the Newport area examining colonial homes where hundreds of French soldiers were quartered in 1780-1 during the American Revolution; and in southeastern Massachusetts (Fall River, New Bedford, Westport, etc.) visiting churches established by French Canadian immigrants who had settled there to work in the mills. These little sojourns offered us an opportunity to ride along the beautiful sea shore while conversing about some aspects

Franco-Americans throughout New England to insure that this monument would see the light of day. Our ancestors, just like those



of today's Québécois, contributed their bodily strength and their own dreams for the future in order to cultivate this land, before crossing the border into another country, leaving behind their farms and their countrymen to settle in another nation where they managed to put down roots through hard labor. And we, their descendants, have wanted to demonstrate that even though we left you, we have not forgotten you, that we

of our Franco-American heritage and what we were doing to preserve and promote it. In this case, Claire was the scholar and I was the student. Her memory was phenomenal.

Our phone conversations would often last for hours as we rambled from one Franco-American related topic to another, with me listening and asking questions most of the time and often taking notes for fear of not remembering a book or an article she would recommend. I spoke to Claire about articles and projects I was undertaking related to the preservation of our Franco-American heritage as she carefully listened and guided me to the resources I needed to examine.

Not too long ago I informed Claire I was interested in writing an article about Brother Wilfrid (Arthur Garneau from Arthabaska in Québec, a Sacred Heart brother) who founded Sacred Heart Academy in 1908 in Central Falls. She immediately stated

remember who we are and from whence we have come.

Our forebears upon leaving Québec did not have to chop down trees to clear the forest, they instead had to strike down prejudice. While attempting to establish themselves on foreign soil, they nonetheless made an enormous effort to survive as Canadians of French stock by remaining faithful to the language of their ancestors and to their religion also.

This is how New England experienced the rise of Little Canadas surrounding a church steeple and a bilingual parochial school in most of the cities listed on this monument.

We, their descendants, have sought to follow in their footsteps; we have aspired to honor them by offering this monument to their mother city that is also ours.

Our fervent wish is that the francophone enclave which is Québec will enjoy a bright future and will continue to exist for a long time to come, serving as a protective sentinel of the French language and culture on this continent.

May this monument stand for generations to come as an expression of our loyalty to our roots, as evidence also, that from afar we continue to cherish this homeland whose ground was trod for generations by our ancestors just like your own.

What has sometimes been referred to as “Québec down below” has answered the call of its ancestors by returning to its birthplace, to dedicate today a monument, worthy both of you and of us.

that Brother Wilfrid was a good friend of her father and that he was in many ways the individual who motivated her to read and do more research about the many adventurous Frenchmen (Cartier, Champlain, LaSalle, etc.) who explored the vast areas of North America, and the many French Canadians who ventured and settled in New England, New York and the far reaches of our country's Midwest and Far West regions.

She was smitten by her heritage and consecrated her life to this adventure of exploring, teaching and promoting the many facets of her heritage, our French and Franco-American ancestors and her native French language. “Une vraie Franco-Américaine pure laine” (A real Franco-American of pure wool), I would often call Claire in French. She shall be missed dearly by many, but her enormous legacy will live on to inspire others.

Remembering Two Franco-American Giants: Gerard Brault (1929-2020) and Claire Quintal (1930-2020)

by *Leslie Choquette*

Although I was born in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, just a mile from Claire Quintal's hometown of Central Falls, I grew up in a very different world from hers. My grandfather's cousin spoke excellent French and was proud of his origins, but my grandfather, who lost his Quebec-born mother to the influenza pandemic of 1918 when just thirteen, struggled to express himself in his native tongue.

I started learning French in fifth grade, as a scholarship student at a girls' preparatory school in Providence. I am forever grateful to my French teachers—Europeans all—for sharing with me their passion for French language and culture.

Despite not belonging to a Franco-American community, I was vaguely aware of Quebecers and Franco-Americans, and curious about them. As a French history student in college, I decided to investigate the original migration from France to New France, a project that eventually became a doctoral dissertation and a book. I also read Jack Kerouac and loved his vivid depictions of Franco-American Lowell.

One year, in the late 1980s, I took a tour of Kerouac's Lowell, organized by local Francos Roger Brunelle and Reginald Ouellette. Taking me under their wing, they brought me over to the museum store to purchase an important new book: *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*, by Gerard Brault. That is how I first learned about Brault's alma mater, Assumption College, and its French Institute, directed by Claire Quintal.

Shortly thereafter, I saw a listing for a one-year job at Assumption, to which I only applied due to Brault's book (since I could renew my post-doctoral lectureship for two more years). It turned out there was also a tenure-tracked job, and the rest is history. Thanks to Gerry Brault's unwitting mentorship, I have just completed my 31st year at Assumption.

I met Claire Quintal at my Assumption interview, and she sent me home with a full set of proceedings from the annual conferences she organized on Franco-Americans. (At that time there were six, which would

be followed by four more, plus *Steeple and Smokestacks: A Collection of Essays on the Franco-American Experience in New England*.) I remember devouring all of them in a short stretch, fascinated by the lively francophone world that remained invisible to most Americans.

Claire was unstintingly generous to me as a new junior colleague, including sharing her many connections across the francophone world. Thanks to her, I had the opportunity to interact with teachers from francophone Africa and Haiti as well as many French and Quebecers, from diplomats and politicians to scholars to ordinary folk. Through her contacts in the French Consulate, I obtained a fellowship at the center for migration studies at the University of Poitiers, where I began turning my unwieldy dissertation into an English-language book. She also introduced me to Quebec historian and publisher Denis Vaugeois, who fulfilled my dream of publishing a French translation of the book in Canada and France.

In 1994, Claire invited me to join her in Ottawa for the États généraux de la recherche sur la francophonie à l'extérieur du Québec. Afterwards, I drove her to Montreal, where I visited friends and she participated in the first international Dictée des Amériques, delivered by the great Acadian writer Antonine Maillet. (The two would once again share a stage in Jules Tessier's chapter, "Antonine, Annette [Saint-Pierre] et Claire: trois vestales de l'Amérique française," from his book *Le ciel peut donc attendre*.) The day of the televised Dictée, I dutifully tuned in, armed with pencil and paper. Let me tell you: that Dictée was hard! Had I been an official participant, I would not have covered myself in glory! But later, when I checked back for the results, whom did I see on screen but Claire, as one of three finalists in the category French-language professional, working **in a francophone environment!** When I congratulated her on her extraordinary achievement, she modestly explained that she had no choice but to do well; she was representing Franco-Americans!

In 2000, one year after Claire's



retirement, I organized a symposium to honor the 20th anniversary of the first French Institute conference. Entitled "La situation de la recherche sur la Franco-Américanie, 20 ans après / The State of Research on Franco-Americans, 20 Years Later," it brought together veteran researchers on Franco-Americans including Gerry Brault with then newly fledged scholars like Mark Richard. Gerry's speech on the significance of Claire's career was eloquent and memorable.

In 2004, Gerry generously donated his excellent library of Franco-Americana to the French Institute, which was celebrating its 25th anniversary. That celebration began with a theatrical performance by playwright Greg Chabot and his troupe Du Monde d'à Côté, followed by Mass in French and a gala banquet, at which it was my honor to bestow upon Claire, our founding directress emerita, the Institute's certificat de mérite. I would like to conclude these reminiscences by citing the French text of Claire's award:

Ce certificat de mérite honore une intellectuelle dont la carrière exemplaire fut dédiée, et se dédie encore, à un idéal : celui de transmettre à des générations futures son attachement sans bornes à sa langue maternelle et au patrimoine culturel de ses devanciers, qu'ils soient franco-américains, canadiens ou français. Enfant de Central Falls, Claire Quintal fit ses premières études sur les bancs d'une école paroissiale et continua sa formation sous la tutelle bienfaisante des Sœurs de Sainte-Anne avant de refaire le trajet de ses ancêtres en sens in-

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Gérard J. Brault : Professeur reconnu dont les racines franco-américaines étaient profondes

Julien Olivier, Barrington, N.H.

Notre communauté franco-américaine a perdu un autre grand penseur. Gérard Brault, professeur émérite de français et d'études médiévales à l'Université Pennsylvania State est décédé à State College le 5 février 2020, âgé de 90 ans.

On dit de lui que son identité franco-américaine et son éducation furent les influences maîtresses de sa vie. Fils de famille modeste émigrée de Lacolle, Québec; athlète de jeunesse qui n'a jamais perdu le goût de l'entraînement; militaire américain avec service contre-espionnage à La Rochelle en France; académique distingué, professeur de français, médiéviste et héraldiste dont les racines s'étendaient du Collège de l'Assomption à Worcester, à l'Université Laval et l'Université Penn State; chercheur et auteur prolifique; décoré de l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques et de l'Ordre National du Mérite par la République française; membre actif de sa paroisse catholique; époux de Jeanne Pépin, père d'Anne-Marie et de Suzanne, huit fois grand-père. Voilà une vie entière, riche et dévouée, mais qui fut aussi aux origines d'un mouvement qui perdure.

Il nous arrive d'oublier que nos propres succès résultent souvent des efforts de nos prédécesseurs. Albert Einstein l'a bien dit : « Ma vie extérieure et intérieure dépend du travail de mes contemporains et de celui de mes ancêtres. » (*Comment je vois le monde*, 1934)

Avant la «renaissance» franco-américaine des années 70, avant le FORUM, le NMDC, l'ActFANE et même le CODOFIL, avant les Centres franco-américains, Bonjour et En Bref et bien avant le renouveau des poètes, romanciers, chanteurs, chanteuses, et des chercheurs en franco-américanie, il y eut le départ de France des ancêtres vers la grande aventure du Canada, puis la « grande saignée » d'un million et demi de nos ancêtres en Nouvelle-Angleterre. De leurs travaux émergèrent les paroisses, les écoles, les hôpitaux, les journaux, les clubs sociaux et sociétés de secours mutuel en grand nombre. Mais la langue de nos grands-parents était celle du 17^e siècle et non celle du « bon français. » Comme résultat, les enfants de l'époque, fatigués de faire rire

d'eux par la société en général et les profs de français en particulier ont abandonné ce qui aurait pu être un patrimoine bien précieux — le bilinguisme.

Mais le début des années 60 a vu naître une vision nouvelle : celle qui valoriserait le parler et la culture de chez nous tout en promouvant le « français standard ». Comment ce faire? Il faudrait un entraînement nouveau pour les professeurs de français. Ce fut la vision anticonformiste de Gérard Brault.

En 1961 Gérard conçut le premier Institut NDEA (National Defense Education Act de 1958) pour professeurs de français de descendance canadienne française. Il s'en suivrait un second l'année suivante, toujours au Collège Bowdoin, puis, en 1964, au Collège de l'Assomption. Mais pourquoi cet institut? Le professeur Brault expliquerait plus tard dans un article intitulé « Some Misconceptions about Teaching American Ethnic Children Their Mother Tongue » (*The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 48, No. 2, Feb., 1964, pp. 67-71) :

Un des buts principaux des Instituts franco-américains était de chercher de nouvelles façons d'exploiter plus effectivement et dans l'intérêt national l'héritage linguistique d'environ un million et demi de personnes de descendance canadienne-française en Nouvelle-Angleterre. (<https://www.jstor.org/stable/320417?seq=1>; ma traduction.)

Il n'était pas seul, mais Gérard fut des premiers. En 1962 Geneviève Massignon publierait *Les parlars français d'Acadie*, et Nornand C. Dubé proposerait d'autres stratégies pédagogiques en 1971 dans sa thèse *Guidelines for the Teaching of French to Franco-Americans*.

En 1975, sous la tutelle de Robert Paris, naîtrait le Centre national pour le développement de matériaux pédagogiques en français (NMDC) dont je faisais partie. Pour débiter sur un bon pied, nous avons voulu construire sur les fondations des « ancêtres ». Donc, très tôt, Gérard Brault vint faire visite. Il nous parla des Instituts. Ses idées sur le fait franco-américain avaient déjà vu jour, par exemple dans son article «The Franco-Americans of Maine,» publié en 1972 dans la *Maine Historical Society Newsletter*. Seize ans plus tard pa-

raîtrait le volume qui pour maintes personnes serait le livre de chevet du fait franco-américain : *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*. Son dernier mot sur l'héritage franco-américain serait un article dans le volumineux *Encyclopedia of New England* publié en 2005 par la Yale University Press.

En disant adieux à Gérard Brault nous célébrons une vie bien vécue et nous le remercions avec tous nos devanciers pour ce qu'ils nous ont légué. Pour nous, Gérard rappelle le vœux qui terminait le mot de Einstein ci-dessus : « Je dois donc faire un effort extrême pour donner autant que j'ai reçu. »



(Remembering Two Franco-American Giants: Gerard Brault (1929-2020) and Claire Quintal (1930-2020) Continued from page 12)

verse, montant à Montréal pour faire sa maîtrise et traversant l'Atlantique pour devenir docteur de l'université de Paris. En 1969 elle rentra à son pays natal, répondant à l'appel du collège de l'Assomption qui allait admettre des filles pour la première fois et qui cherchait à embaucher des professeures. Elle servit le collège loyalement pendant dix ans dans la double capacité de professeure et de doyenne, mais son engagement à son héritage exigea qu'elle entrât dans une troisième voie, plus ambitieuse mais plus risquée aussi. Elle conçut donc l'idée, il y a vingt-cinq ans, d'un institut qui puisse assurer que l'épopée des Franco-Américains soit connue et enseignée, en Nouvelle-Angleterre et au-delà. Elle fut même convaincue qu'un tel institut se devait d'être fondé au collège de l'Assomption, là même où, pendant de longues années, des prêtres français, belges et franco-américains avaient travaillé à la formation bilingue de nouvelles générations de Franco-Américains. Nous savons tous ce qui s'ensuivit de cet engagement osé. Sans ressources propres, mais avec la volonté ferme de réussir et l'esprit toujours créateur, Claire fit de son institut nouveau un abri à la fois intellectuel et psychologique pour le groupe franco-américain, tout en lui dotant d'une renommée mondiale et de solides assises économiques. En créant des liens entre de multiples pays sur plusieurs continents, en assurant la survie de maintes œuvres clefs de la Franco-Américanie, Claire Quintal a su mettre en pratique, de façon spectaculaire, cette belle devise héritée de nos ancêtres québécois, « Je me souviens ».



Stories from my French Canadian Childhood

By
Gerard Coulombe

This is my third attempt at this paper on being Franco-American.* Our mother was born of Franco Americans, here in the States. Her dad was already retired when I was born in his half of a duplex, the half of which was like a farmhouse. The other half belonged to the neighbor, whomever that might have been when I was born.

I thought I had been born at home. I was never disabused of that thought. It was something that I believed until I was told that I was born at the hospital in Biddeford, Maine.

My grandfather Coutu, my mom's dad, owned the house. At the time of my birth, the house was managed by my live-in aunt. I never knew or learned where her bedroom might have been. She lived in the house of her parents while everyone else had moved out once, because she was the one who never married and because of it or not, she was the one who looked after and took care of my grandparents, her parents.

At the time my parents married, I guess they lived in my grandparents' house. This had never occurred to me before, that after they married, they chose to live with my grandparents. My sisters and I were born there, on Cutts Street. There was a block at the corner of Elm Street, Route 1 through Biddeford and Cutts Street. On the first floor of that block at the corner of Cutts and Elm was a small grocery store. Over the years, it was always some kind of variety store.

Like my grandfather's house, that corner store and the building it was in, abutted the property of Saint Joseph's Church, the Franco-American Catholic Church, the only one of three Catholic Churches still standing in Biddeford. The other two, Saint Andre's, which became our parish, later, and Saint Mary's, the Irish parish on a side Street beyond the intersection of Main, Elm, South and Elm. The next block, headed South, is

Cutts. So, there was Cutts, the block with the small variety shop, immediately adjacent, headed South, to Saint Joseph's church whose front steps fronted on Elm and whose right side went along my grandfather's half duplex and property and continued along for a ways of parking lots until it reached Bradbury Street, to which my father moved us, when both he and our mom tired of her sister, my aunt, who just loved me, of my two younger sisters, and I, Therese and Julienne, to bits. Why just me? Maybe it was because I was the first born and male; whereas, my sisters were female and there had been enough of those, her siblings. Several of whom, older by birth, but, in those years, apparently, not survivors.

Antonia was around. he was my mom's and my aunt's brother. He was a butcher at the A & P market on Main Street, this side of City Hall and the entrances to

*My grandfather also
loved to sit on lawn swing,
and I would often join him.*

the Textile Mills, The Pepperell, on Main Street. My uncle, Antonio had been married. I remember where his wife was buried. She was in his plot which was located by the cross monument in Saint Joseph's Cemetery, intersection of Hill and West Streets, where nearly all of the Franco-Americans are married. I always thought it the biggest cemetery of its kind, as all names in it are Franco-Americans. Some Irish or Anglo name might have snuck into this cemetery, but it would have been, extraordinary, a relative of sorts, granted special dispensation because of unlikely circumstances. My parent are buried there, but it is unlikely their names will be found on a tombstone, as I think one of my sister's name has succeeded my parent, and her husband awaits his spot; meanwhile, he watches the Red Sox, and I do not know who he watches or what at other times. If it's not about the Red Sox, my brother-in-law says little else whenever I visit. I used to listen to a Red Sox radio station on my way to Biddeford, just so I would have something to repeat about the team.

The things I recall about living with my grandparents is that I had a run of the house and the barn. The barn was where my grandfather sat when, mornings, he rolled

open its doors. When he sat, my grandfather took out his pocketknife and whittle a piece of wood into some trinket; out of the piece of wood, maybe a branch, he might whittle and whistle. If he did, he would give it to me and admonish me not to run with it in my mouth. Years later, on a trip to New Hampshire to visit relatives on my grandmother's side, I think we were in New Hampshire, maybe, Berlin, when my sister was running in the yard where we were visiting, and she had the barrel-end of a spring-loading toy gun in her mouth. In falling, the barrel pierced her palate. I seem to recall the scene of my sister, Therese, running around, crying hysterically, or so I thought, as the gun hung out of her mouth, and none of us kids thought of trying to pull it out. She made enough noise, screaming, that Mom came out, and courageously, as mother do so well, she dealt with the problem.

At, the time, as Aunt Eva favored me, she would prepare lunch for me because she was preparing meals for my grandparents, and I was my grandfather's best friend, now that I was allowed to wander out doors and, most importantly, into the part of the house on the first floor that was my grandparents' quarters.

My grandmother was blind from cataracts, I believe, she sat in a sturdy rocking chair by the window looking out into the garden which was quite large, and it included, along with a garden display of varietal flowers and rose bushes. I do not know who had care of them. I never saw. There were always many of them in season; in addition, there were two pear trees and one crabapple tree. The latter was big enough to climb to a height wherein I could see the top of the heads of people walking by along the sidewalk, most frequently on a Sunday when they went to and from the RCC, Saint Josephs' whose length ran across our backyard and then, some. My grandfather also loved to sit on lawn swing, and I would often join him. We had enough practice to remember how it went, getting it going, and, how I sometime stood, like a man, and gave my body the go of a hip swing pushing the vertical wood pieces holding the platform separating the seats to the wooden dowels separating the two sides and the seats from each other so that we swung. And when we swung, my grandfather kept the rhythm going with his back against the seat and his feet pushing on the platform separating the two seats. It didn't matter that we sat on

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same seat, side-by side.

My grandfather ate his meals with his knife, mostly. That mean, I never saw him use a fork. My grandmother was blind. I don't recall having said that. Her blindness is the thing I remember most about her. I recall that she sat by one of the kitchen windows by the side door. Another entrance to their home might have been through the barn. The bar door had been slid open most days by my grandfather who enjoyed sitting in an old rocker when he had slid the barn door open. The door itself was located to the right wall, and slid inward, toward the kitchen and "shed." There was a second landing, a loft, where our parent had their "shed." Most of the time, as I recall, we entered the house through the front door which opened onto Cutt's Street.

Next door in the duplex was the other half, and rather than another barn having been there, I recall that there was a building that might have been a barn at one time; however, I do not know this. And the backyard beyond that which was now apartments on two floors, was looking up at the church and its nave and chance, where the building ended. The front-loaded bell-tower of the church rose high above Elm and its bells, too, like the others, could be heard ringing to announce the start of services or the death of a male or female member of its congregation, as well the hour of noon. All in town or from elsewhere who knew the traditions, could tell you whether a man or woman had died, and along with that, in all possibility, exactly who it was who had died and who was a member of that particular parish, here, in our case, it was Saint Joseph, not Saint Mary's. From here, it couldn't be Saint Andre.

The booming sound could not be mistaken.

My aunt Eva could be "bitchy" over the girls, as I might have said, earlier. It wasn't that they were so bad, because as they were out at one at two, to crawl or walk, it was the pulling on the flower because they were nice and interesting, that my aunt disliked. And for good reason. It was not my grandfather who was the center of their attraction in this wonderful of a flowery yard and a swing that you were hot allowed in and a grandfather who, mostly, ignored you, because I was the playmate that he had chosen upon laying eyes on me, I, who was living in his house and was out all day long

following him along the way, having lunch with him, and I, favored of my aunt.

Grandmother was blind and only when told that I was near her by my aunt because I was afraid of her because she couldn't see me and, therefore, I could not see her except to stare at her, which is what I did when she was sick or when she was dying, and I was there by her side, offering some prayers, those my mother had already taught me, and what I already knew about my grandmother, when I was growing up there in her house, because, all that I had to do that my sisters were not allowed to do was come down the front steps from the second floor landing and into the parlor where my grandmother's body was exposed in her opened casket, in those days, announced by the black, crowned and crepe ribbon display at the front door for all to see. Ring the doorbell and be admitted to the front

I know that my mom never called, as we didn't have a telephone, landline type, in those days.

parlor where my deceased memere's body was exposed in the black, wooden casket, where, wherever she was, she could not hear anything, although nearly all visitors, even relatives on her side that I had never met who came to pay their respects, some relatives of pepere from New Hampshire. Although, grandma was a first generation Franco-American, having been born here of Franco-American parents about whom I knew little about or hardly ever heard of all of the "Poirier" relatives she had had, although I had later met one of them who sold RALEIGH PRODUCTS, and came to the house, whereupon he and mom talked about everything but the products, except that she would purchase something, maybe baking soda, of which she always had plenty of because she loved to bake cookies.

The above is to say that, actually, I have known next to nothing about my mom's relatives, or, let us say, from the beginning, and as I should have gotten to know over the year of living in mother's home, and from later when we moved out of my grandparent's home, I got to know even less about my mother and her relatives, other than aunt Eugenie who had married and lived in town, almost out in the country, or so it looked like to me with the farm animals she and my uncle had in all. There was also the fact that we actually visited none other than

my aunt Eugenie's country home, which it no longer is, because it's been years, and it is owned, still, nowadays by relatives of ours, mine, in that it is now, the home, part of a residential area and it is march larger I noticed than originally.

Furthermore, and curiously, the house is still in the Chabot family, my aunt, Eugenie Coutu, having married, I almost captured his first name, my uncle, Chabot, who with his brother who lived across the street from them at the time, engaged themselves as lumber jacks at the time, and we, I had fun with the two brothers as they entertained us kids on Sunday, walking there, visits, with the game of "HOW MANY FINGERS HAVE I GOT?" Each flashed a hand in turn and had us guess first, before showing us, "How many fingers?"

As I recollect it seemed as if each time we saw them, my uncle and his brother, each had fewer fingers than the last time they had had us play the game. I felt it as good as watching how they got to kill the chicken, which was either to wring its neck or more adroitly to slam its head against the chopping block and swinging an short handled ax to cut the neck off and hold it by the legs, neck down, to let them bleed. I was a demonstration that both shocked us and taught a lesson on how to prepare a live chicken or turkey for the pot .

Every Sunday, my aunt Eugenie Chabot prepared two, as she never knew how many members of the family would come for Sunday dinner. I know that my mom never called, as we didn't have a telephone, landline type, in those days.

Back at my maternal grandparents' house. I was the only one to sit at the table to eat with my grandfather, and, this was mostly for lunch, as I have indicated earlier.

It was while we lived in my grandfather's house, it was never too keenly aware that it was half of a duplex.. As we lived on the left side, and on the right, there was a neighborhood market which I did not at all take in, maybe it was because the market was opened after we left my grandparents' house, in any case, at three years of age, I was still allowed to wander down the street. I rarely if ever crossed the street, because there was a car dealership there and automobiles all over the place, but I did meet a boy my age who occasionally played there but who lived, most probably on South Street there. His last name was Parenteau, I think, his firs, might have been Robert or Robert in French which sounds a lot better as a first
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name. Robert!

Further down, at the corner of Cutts and Bradbury Street was an escarpment of big rocks. It's still there. The lot never sold, I guess. And I do not know who owns it. But it was there that I had fun playing as a small kid. I do not recall meeting any other kids who might have gathered there to play all kinds of imaginary games because I thought of the place as mightily fanciful and someplace that I always enjoyed returning to that, the last of the years that I was to live in my grandfather's house, on the second or third floor, I do not recall, and I was allowed the freedom that I was, probably because my mother was busy with the two girls, my sisters, who were younger, and needed more care and watching than I did, at the time, because then, there was not the worry that exists, today.

Of course, the church bells tolled regularly, in addition to the times when a member of the parish died, and that was quite regularly itself, although, most times, for me, it went unnoted. But my mother kept track. And, I as I write this, I recall that what I'm saying here is that I was, at the same time, unaware that I had sisters, that they existed in my life, but they were not part, as of yet of my upbringing.

My sisters were unwelcomed in the house below, my grandparents', where I was welcomed by our aunt Eva, who always favored me, as I've expressed before, and not my sisters because she once saw them pulling at the heads of the flowers that grew alongside the walkway to the side entrance and the barn doors. That one time, when she saw them pull at them and do what children do when they pulled a beautiful head off. My sisters peeled away at the parts of the flower, starting with the petals and watched

them spiral to the ground.

This infuriated my aunt so, that in a loud, tremulous voice, she was heard by my mother who came out to see her scolding the girls, and my mother would have knocked her ouch with a solid punch of her folded hand had she thought she could have gotten away with it. But she didn't. Instead, she stopped talking to my aunt, her sister, for almost all or fourteen years. I recall when she first allowed my aunt to be welcomed into our home, I was fourteen, and I still held images of my aunt's pudgy face with glasses. I thought of it as awful. I guess I sided with mom, although my aunt had continued favoring me, and, all the while, I had benefitted from the relationship while my sister never did.

On the other hand, my mom's older brother wasn't allowed to visit. Such was my mother's way of practicing her religion. Had she seen a priest about it, [Maybe she did, but I never knew it.] re relationship with her brother might have been a lot smoother. As it was, she would not allow him to cross the threshold. Once she saw him at the door, she, having opened it to his knocking. This would be the backdoor, he, having come into the shed, and, once inside, having turned right to face the entrance door into the kitchen, knocked upon it. As, during the day, for the most part, she stayed in the kitchen, as there were always chores to do, like meals to prepare and some cooking on the side, maybe cookies, she would have known who it was knocking at the door because she would have heard the person on porch or coming up the wooden steps of the stairs, and then she would have, first seen the top of the visitors head who would either be going up further the stairs to the third or fourth floor. But, then, she would have recognized her own brother and would have walked toward the kitchen door, and she would have waited for

a knock. And, then, she would have waited for a second, to suggest she hadn't been waiting, and upon opening the door, there were the greetings, but her brother would never come in, he would never enter without an invitation, and he probably knew that he wasn't going to get one, because his sister, to clear, my mother was not going to let him in based upon an old history or his. He had been a married man. Well, his wife had died, and she was gone, but now, her brother was still dating that woman, the one who owned that beauty shop, the one where you had your hair done, and he hadn't married her after all these years, and they were still seeing each other. That to my mother, Clara, Fabiola, Coutu, Coulombe, was not about to let her brother, this sinner in the eyes of God and, mind you, shed was not about to let her brother into her apartment, not now or ever. And, she did not.

I recall my mother hearing him out. The conversation, whatever it was about, was brief, I never knew why or what had brought him to the backdoor, or really why she would not let him in. I had never clearly understood that part, as she never explained just why it was that she would not allow my uncle walk over the threshold or to say, Hi! There...how are you? It never happened. And as Dad was never home whenever this visit of my uncle's occurred, and I never asked until much, much later, and I do not recall that it was she, mom, who explained why it was that her brother was not allowed in the house.

When my father finished working for the W.P.A., The Works Progress Administration, if I recall, correctly, we moved, of a sudden, from the apartment on Cutt's Street to an apartment around the corner on Bradbury Street, in a house nearer to South Street. It was there that life took another turn. [To be continued.]

True Story

By Sandra Vick

My grandfather, who was born in Van Buren, in 1900, was working in the woods in 1918, "yes, at 18 years old". He had to come home because he took ill. He had no phone to call home to his mom and dad, or any way of knowing how things were at home or anywhere else for that matter. He had caught the "Spanish Flu". This Spanish Flu epidemic took many lives, but his life was spared and he survived it. My mother told me this story. I asked her what they

did with all the dead. She didn't have an answer, but I can just imagine. How scared families must have been. There is no moral to this story. The government did not create this pandemic 118 years ago, and the Lord did not cause it either. The government did not choose who lived or died, and whether you prayed or not, the outcome was still the same. It was what it was, and today, it is what it is. We as a people of this "WORLD WIDE EPIDEMIC" have to believe that not everyone is out for evil, and there are many good, honest, people on the front lines, who are working tirelessly to solve this. Be nice and hold you loved ones dear.



Fred Levesque

CUTTS STREET: Biddeford, Maine, 1931-1934

By
Gerard Coulombe

The move from our grandparents' home on Cutts Street, the half-duplex to the side of Saint Joseph's Roman Catholic Church, to an apartment on Bradbury Street, around its corner-intersection with Cutts occurred following the death of my blind grandmother, my mom's mother.

I was with grandmother Coutu when she died; I was kneeling by her bedside, in prayer, by myself, when she died. I had watched her die, or, so I recall; I say this now because this is exactly what I recall, not what others said. Besides, there is nobody left to contradict my recollections, as the people who would know this are all dead, dead a long time. I want to stress that I was the only grandson who lived with my parents and two younger sisters in a second-floor apartment, that could be accessed through the front door of my grandparents' home or through the barn and up backstairs.

So, what I recall about my blind grandmother's dying is this: I recall her dying, because I was a constant and her only three-year-old grandson who watched it all happen, her dying. I saw every movement of her passing from where I was kneeling by her bedside because the other side of her bed was so close against the wall in her small bedroom. It was located on the first floor, really, opposite the sitting room where she sat by the window and looked, in her blindness, out of doors by her rocking chair, where she spent all of her daytime.

I could see her very well in the dim light, as an overhead bulb was dim, in those days; I think that, as I saw her still breathing, I could see her struggling while her breathing was, at times, rheumy and noisy. Although someone, maybe my Aunt, Eva, had put her mother's rosary into her hands, it had been a while since I had seen my grandmother's fingers move down whatever rosary decade she had been on when she left off to move onto another chapter in her mental review of her life.

My grandmother had given birth to more children than I knew about when she died; I reminds me now, how little I knew

about her, about such a question, as "How any babies did you have, Grandma?" Of course, that would have been in French, as that was the only language I could speak at the time. But it never occurred to me to ask, as I only knew of my "Ma Tante" Eva" who cared for her parents. Come to think, I do not recall what my grandmother's first name was, or if I ever learned it.

If anyone doubts my recollection, I can appreciate, but as to such a thing as my having seen my grandmother die, nobody ever told me to get off my knees, get up, and leave her room as she lay in her bed dying in the quietude of her room, not my aunt, not my grandfather.

...simply kneeling down by my dying grandmother's bedside, watching an old lady, my blind grandmother, gradually ease through her passing; I was not scared watching her die.

As my grandmother lay dying in her bedroom, all by herself, I would sneak-in, and spend long periods with her unobserved, as she was there breathing her last. Slowly but slowly, her blind eyes opened, but sometimes they were shut, and it seemed to me, that either way, she had really nothing to say.

All that I was doing was simply kneeling down by my dying grandmother's bedside, watching an old lady, my blind grandmother, gradually ease through her passing; I was not scared watching her die. I was very curious. [Today, would a child be allowed such a privilege?] I knew this much, that she was already dead or if she weren't, she was well on the way. Even as I had no experience with death, I was determined to watch. Nobody in the household, not my grandfather not my aunt would deter me. She was set in the process of her leaving, going, forever; I had little or no idea what that meant, but even then, I stuck to the fact that I had an inkling that it meant that she

was either dead or that she soon would be or that, even, like the unknowing child that adults in the room might have thought I was, if they or whatever they were thinking, my grandmother was transitioning to the other side in some manner, and I was watching.

And, curiously, my aunt, who would have been the only one to remove me from the "dying room," did not remove me from the room. Neither my Aunt Eva, nor my grandfather, the deceased's husband, said a word to me. No one interrupted my presence by my grandmother's bedside. It hardly mattered to my grandmother as, remember, she was blind. Meanwhile, in retrospect, my mom might not have been made aware of the likelihood that grandmother was dying; I only knew because I was the only one in the room. Oh! Some people who are alive might try to contradict me, but none who might say that are here today. I suppose, there might be some doubters who would say that, after having read this, my assertion, my contention.

Having witnessed my grandmother's passing, I can truly say that at my age, she was my first and only, and it would be for a long time before I would see another die, firsthand, as I had witnessed it myself, firsthand. I cannot say enough about this. Many would deny my report now, on my grandmother's passing. As my mother would have put it, if she were to hear me say this, mother would have called it all, "baloney." Well, not in those words; I would beg to differ with her; It was just as I described it in great detail because of the impression of watching her die made upon me. It is what had happened.

Her bedroom was dismal itself, and her covers were in disarray; she wore a nightshirt, and I supposed that she had had my aunt's help getting it on. I seem to recall that it was not the winter months but how the weather looked then, as it does outside my own window now, dismal, really. The sky was a greyish blue in the absence of a sun. Although, at this moment, I recall also, that all the light she had was not from a window, as there were none, as hers was an inside bedroom; there were no other kind in their duplex, as large as it was. The windows along the outside walls, ran from the front corner and along the left side of my grandparents' half-duplex.

Fortunately for my blind grandmother, it was knowing precisely where it was in the household that she could sit to "see her

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(CUTTS STREET: Biddeford, Maine,
1931-1934 continued from page 17)

flowers and the trees in her small orchard—which reminds me why it was that sitting in the rocker by the window was so good for grandmere to spend the whole of her days when she was up; as blind as she was, it was important for her to know that she was sitting by the window by the warmth of the sun, during the summertime, and in the coolness of the house in winter.

In the summer, just outside the window where she sat were her flowers; it was my grandfather, her husband who took care of the flowerbeds in season. She would have known that.

Although I do not recall, I am sure a priest had visited as she lay dying. She would not have been Catholic if a priest hadn't visited, given her the last rites and all. The rectory and church were so close; the church building itself had been literally in her own backyard all this time, wherein she had knelt in God's shadow to say her prayers every time the sun went down.

I do not recall visitors, but perhaps there were members of her own family who visited in those final days. It does not make sense that they wouldn't have, but how would I know or even recall? I was only three, and things happened mightily fast, as far as I was concerned. I was told, but, I do recall seeing a black crepe at the door, as it was customary; one signified that a household member had died.

After she died, I do not recall that her daughters, the two nuns, visited from the Montreal schools where they served. What I would later learn, when we visited them with my mother, their school was a very large orphanage, and, in particular, even at the age of whatever I was, how impressed I was by the orphanage. I would learn, years later, that it was not such a good idea to have been in an orphanage.

With our move from our apartment in our grandfather's house on Cutts Street to a rent on Bradbury Street, life changed altogether. Our playground was extended; mine was the greatest of all. At first, it was to play in the neighborhood, which was in the street in the front of our apartment on the second floor, right-hand side of our flat, with porches fronting on the street and each had a balcony, fronting the street. The

building had two apartments per floor, and each had a balcony facing the street.

Mostly, it was the back of the house that was important to me, where, I seem to recall, there was sand in a narrow courtyard for us kids to play in. I had tin, toy soldiers and forts of the kind which I created from boxes from a shoe shop that was nearby, and the trash bins were accessible to kids like me; and from these we were able to extract treasures, like pieces of leather, shoe nails, and cardboard.

We kids also had access to all kinds of materials that were practical for a kid. There was a "Box Shop" nearby that made wooden boxes and I suppose other things. What I knew, because my dad knew how to pick odds and ends, wood pieces out of the waste pile, is that we could do the same. The box shop was along the riverside of Saco, Island. That much of their waste wood was useful to us kids just couldn't be believed.

Dad and I found all kinds of waste pieces of wood that we picked up and saved for our home use. There were even some whole pieces that my dad and I used them in making games; we turned whole, squared pieces into board games, using nails. I recall that my dad knew how to hammer nails in distinct patterns, and, then, we kids used marbles with in these board games that resembled simple pinball machines with a nail acting as a pin, a pinball machine that my father made, that I used to win marbles with, from kids who gambled and lost their marbles to us who owned the board games.

Other kids tried playing our games in those days to win marbles for themselves; and, of course, we lost our marbles to kids who had their own games that that they or their dads or others had made, all with the intent of winning all of the marbles that friends, neighboring kids and strangers might have been willing to risk winning more or losing all of theirs on these, our hand-made games. I think that, eventually, toy companies converted our ideas into profitable games of their own to sell in the toy market

As kids, we carried our cans and bags of marbles around for the myriad games invented by then for us to play at or with. Looe or win. These games were a great money maker for those companies that manufactured "agates" or marbles, as we kids called them. We prized agates, their variety in colors, and those marbles that we regarded as "collectibles."

"Dixie" cup lids were the same. I

recall a series of these with the pictures of Hollywood stars from the movie westerns that we went to see at the movies to see, or if not at the movies, or at the church hall on Saturday afternoons. Those were motion pictures that the Roman Catholic Church had figured would keep us children out of the movie theatre in town or across the river in Saco that were promoting "filth and debauchery." Dixie cups were small ice cream cups sold to kids that were half chocolate and half vanilla, and to make them last, we waited some till the ice cream melted and with the two inch, round at each end, wooden spoon we mixed the two colors until it melted some before eating it.

While I cannot recall the exact terms used by the "religious," our teachers, to "criminalize" some motion pictures, we were pretty much well aware of the terminology used to indoctrinate us into the belief that some motion picture films were so vile that seeing one would damn us to hell for all of eternity. I believe the campaign was mightily successful, as I recall. But all in retrospect, we had absolutely no idea as to the meaning of anything "vile," so repugnant it all had to be, as we came to learn later.

Church basements, where many of these movies were shown, were turned into Legion of Decency Halls, and Monday mornings started with an exploration of conscience, wherein an invitation to self-report having violated a pledge of not to attend a local movie house presentation of a Legion of Decency banned film was the vogue.

The lines in grammar school were pretty long outside the principal's office and afterward, wherein a confession of having done so [gone to the movies on a weekend] and so, broken our pledge by seeing a banned film, was made to Reverend, Brother So & So, the Headmaster. This was followed by an affirmation from us miscreants who had attended a banned film, a promise to never do so again. I extended my arm outward, presented the opened hand, palm up, and was given the cautionary slap, or slam, depending on who was administering the punishment that Monday morning. We pledged, before returning to homeroom, not to repeat the sin of going to a movie theatre again. After which the passing bell sounded, and we were on our way to start our studies for the day. Those were the early grammar school years, before there developed an appreciation that a good many of us boys were growing into big, strong boys, big enough

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LA PIE BAVARDE

(N.D.L.R. Reprinted from *Le Club Français Newsletter, Le Fanal*.
Publié par Marie-Anne Gauvin dans *Le Fanal (Le Club Français)*
en avril 2008. Soumis par Jacqueline Blesso)



À tous et à chacun:

Un envoi qui mérite d'être lu vient de mon amie qui habite dans une banlieue de Chicago et qui a joué un rôle innocent dans l'enchaînement des événements menant aux fonds en fidéicommi Mikesell. L'article semble avoir été écrit en 2001 et la copie sur America on Line est daté de 2004. L'auteur m'est inconnu. Je l'ai traduit en français parce que c'est écrit en anglais.

LE TITRE:

Moment propice, Endroit favorable

(The Right Time, The Right Place) Le sujet: Amitié

Il s'appelait Flemming ce pauvre fermier écossais. Un jour, en travaillant pour faire vivre sa famille, il entend un appel, "Au secours," venant d'un marais tout près. Il mit ses outils de côté et courut au marais. Là, il trouva un garçon pris dans la boue jusqu'à la ceinture. Le fermier Fleming sauva le jeune d'une mort lente et terrifiante.

Le lendemain, une diligence grand luxe arriva à la maison du pauvre Écossais. Un noble en vêtement élégant descendit et se présenta comme le père du garçon que le fermier Fleming avait secouru. "Je veux vous payer," dit l'aristocrate. "Vous avez sauvé la vie de mon fils." "Non, je ne peux pas accepter de paiement pour ce que j'ai

fait," répondit le fermier écossais en refusant cet offre. À cet instant le fils du fermier vint à la porte du taudis familial. "Est-ce votre fils?" demanda le noble. "Oui," répondit fièrement le fermier. Je vais vous faire un marché. Permettez que je fasse instruire votre fils du même niveau que mon fils. Si le jeune retient quelque chose de son père, sans doute il deviendra l'homme dont nous serons fiers tous les deux." Ce fut ce qu'il a fait.

Le fils du fermier Fleming fut instruit dans les meilleures écoles en finissant ses études à St. Mary's Hospital Medical School à Londres. Par la suite il se fit connaître à travers le monde entier comme le célèbre Sir Alexander Fleming qui a découvert la pénicilline.

Deux ans plus tard, le fils du même noble qui fut sauvé du marais fit une pneumonie. Comment lui a-t-on sauvé la vie cette fois. La pénicilline! Le nom du noble? Lord Randolph Churchill. Le nom du fils? Sir Winston Churchill.

Rendre un service en attire un autre. Autrement dit, on ne sait jamais comment un service peut nous revenir.

Votre pie bavarde,

Marie-Anne



Marie-Anne Gauvin



(CUTTS STREET: Biddeford, Maine,
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so that a few of us, by the time we got to sixth grade, were capable of wrestling our teacher to the ground, as much as the teacher was capable of doing the same.

A few of my classmates were not kidding when they threatened the teacher, for a threat was a threat in those days, and a few accepted the teacher's challenge to come on and give it a try, and those who did were expelled for their affront. But, by then, those boys had become old enough at fifteen or so to work the farm or succeed in getting themselves employment in one of the two textile mills. Some had parents who approved of their boys staying home and getting jobs as truck drivers or laborers, or shop keepers, or milkmen.

So, my grandmother died. It was time for us to move. More to the point, it was time for my mom to be on her own. She needed her own space with her family by her side. She hated my aunt, I think. She never outright said so, but she needed to be on her own, away from where she had grown, and, if I'm right, away from her memories of what it had been like growing up in her parents' home. Now, being married with three children, still with her elderly parent living downstairs, it being their house, with my aunt, her sister, in charge, it was depressing for her. I had no idea what depression meant. But I knew enough that even at three, there could be kids I did not like already. I might not or could not explain, but I knew there was danger around them, both for myself and for anyone else who might stand up for me. And so it was for my mother. We moved. Maybe my father was ready to move after the WPA—The Works Progress Administration for whom he worked building bridges. Things were getting better, I heard. Maybe they shared the need to move. I couldn't have known.

The time came shortly after my grandmother died, and we moved, not all that far away. But thereafter, it was as if we had moved far away, far enough not to go back, and even if it were a small town, we had.



Fear, Prejudice, and Vaccinations

May 1, 2019 Augusta, Health, Lewiston-Auburn, Maine,

Politics, Quebec

By James Myall

Maine's public health officials scrambled to respond to the threat of an epidemic. They were contending with a misinformation over the effectiveness of vaccinations, and xenophobic sentiment which blamed immigrants for the threat. The year was 1885, and the threat was coming from Canada.

In the spring of 1885, a smallpox epidemic had broken out in Montreal, then a city of around 200,000 people. Ironically, the disease came to the city from the United States, via a worker on the Grand Trunk Railway on the Montreal-Chicago line. Conductor George Longley had been diagnosed with smallpox at Montreal General Hospital but the facility refused to admit him, fearing the disease would spread to other patients. So Longley turned to the French hospital, the Hôtel-Dieu, took him in. From there, the disease, sometimes known as the "red death," spread rapidly among the poorer French Canadian population of the city.

Despite its virulence, smallpox was preventable. A vaccine (the first vaccine to be discovered) had been developed by British scientist Edward Jenner in 1796. The invention of the smallpox vaccine had been

a great advance in public health that saved countless lives.

But in Montreal in 1885, large numbers of French Canadian families had not been vaccinated. Eventually, 3,000 people, overwhelmingly French-Canadian, would die during the city's epidemic.

As word of the outbreak reached the American press, officials were worried. In states like Maine, large numbers of French Canadians were immigrating to work in the state's industrial cities or crossing the border to work in the logging industry contemporary accounts describe new trainloads of immigrants arriving in Lewiston every day. It seemed quite possible that the disease would find its way into Maine.

Officials sprang into action. The State Board of Health had been newly created in 1885, and coordinating the response to smallpox became its first major task. Larger cities employed their own physicians and health boards to oversee efforts, while in rural areas, the state sought assistance from the US Marine Hospital.

The primary initiative was a massive vaccination campaign, particularly in towns

with sizable Franco-American populations:

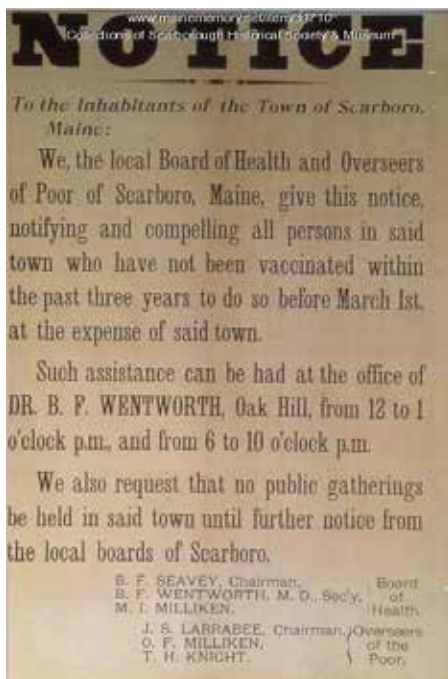
In Bangor, the City Doctor visited all 69 schools in the city during October and September, vaccinating 1,180 children.

In Augusta, Dr Brickett went from house to house in the Sand Hill neighborhood, with the assistance of an interpreter, vaccinating 515 people at the expense of the city. He noted that he was "treated with great politeness" and that the houses were "in a neat and clean...and [good] general sanitary condition"

In Westbrook, the Board of Health offered free vaccinations to inhabitants over the age of two, citing the "presence of so large a number of Canadians in our midst" and the "humanitarian" and "commercial" consequences an outbreak would have.

These vaccinations were generally given at the city's expense, and particularly targeted children, who were most vulnerable to the disease.

Maine authorities also targeted lumber camps which employed large numbers of French Canadian workers. The state set up an inspection station at Moose River, on the major overland route from Quebec into Maine. All travelers were required to be vaccinated unless they had recently had one. However, there were reports that some
(Continued on page 21)



Notice of Vaccinations, Scarborough, 1902. Image: Scarborough Historical Society & Museum / Maine Memory Network



"Sanitary Precautions against a Smallpox Epidemic – An Inspector of the Board of Health Vaccinating Tramps in a Station House," Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper, April 19, 1874. Image: New York Public Library

(Fear, Prejudice, and Vaccinations continued from page 20)

immigrants were “escap[ing] by passing in the night.”

The vaccination campaign seems to have been largely successful. Just a handful cases of smallpox were reported in Maine that year.

On the other hand, it’s possible that the public health scare was overblown. *Le Messenger* of Lewiston complained in an October 14 editorial that the outbreak of smallpox had given the English language press in Canada the “the eagerly-sought-after occasion to spew its hateful bile against the French Canadian race which it resents.” The American press, they contended, was “no longer hide what they really think of our race, from whom they are perhaps already thinking of relinquishing their hospitality in this country.” They also accused the Maine press of repeating “hateful slander” without questioning the source.

The prejudice of the disease-carrying immigrant is a long one, and one that’s been repeated in our own times. Additionally, French Canadians had long been characterized as ignorant peasants held back by Catholic “superstition.” On September 30, the *Portland Daily Press* said that French Canadians were “paying dearly” for their “superstitious prejudice” in its coverage of the outbreak.

Another example comes from the *Gardiner Home Journal* of September 16, 1885, which wrote:

“There is some advantage in us not having cotton mills, with the accompanying French Canadian population: we are not liable to have the small pox imported so soon.”

There certainly was opposition to vaccination among Montreal’s French Canadians. Not only was a large portion of the population unvaccinated when the disease broke out in the Spring, but when the city authorities tried to mandate vaccination, a riot broke out, and a mob stormed city hall.

The report of the Maine State Board of Health for 1885 cited a “strange fatality of ignorance of race” among Montreal’s French Canadians, but also said that the “superstitious error” was due largely to the “demagogism of charlatans” – advocates who argued that vaccination itself was dangerous. The board scathingly called the death of the 3,164 people in Montreal – mostly children – an “experiment on a gigantic scale” by “the anti-vaccinations.”

However, accounts of the trouble in Montreal (then and now) also often leave out important historical context. Anglo-French relations in Canada were particularly tense in the summer and fall of 1885. The Anglo authorities had arrested Franco-Métis resistance leader Louis Riel in May, and would execute him in November, prompting widespread protests. The French Canadians of Montreal were in no mood to have government mandated vaccination imposed on them.

The outbreak was also largely localized to Montreal, as Dr Louis Martel of Lewiston explained. Originally of St-Hyacinthe, QC, Dr Martel had practiced in Montreal before coming to Lewiston. Martel gave an interview to the *Lewiston Gazette* which was reprinted in *Le Messenger* (where Martel was one of the editors). In addition to a misinformation campaign spread by proponents of homeopathic medicine, Montreal’s French Canadians had some reasons

to distrust vaccines:

“I witnessed the smallpox epidemic which hit Montreal in 1872. There was some opposition to vaccination, for two reasons. Firstly, because two reputable doctors, one of whom was a university professor, were themselves opposed; also because the virus used was bad; so bad that in some cases arms had to be amputated.”

Doctor Martel also pointed to another reason that smallpox didn’t take hold in Maine. Because very few of Maine’s Francos came from Montreal, the state’s exposure to the disease was limited. In fact, the efforts at vaccination were somewhat duplicative:

“During the year I was City Physician in St-Hyacinthe, it was my duty to vaccinate all children over six months, by going from house to house. I don’t remember any objections or discontent. I hesitate to believe that I would be received with anything other than open arms in presenting myself to Lewiston homes with the same mission. I vaccinated more than 2,000 French Canadians in this city, and of that number, I don’t remember a single adult who had not been vaccinated at least once in their life.”

The 1885 smallpox scare is both similar and different to our current conversation about vaccinations. Then, as now, immigrants faced prejudice and were unfairly maligned as vectors of disease. Then, as now, public health was threatened by a mistrust of vaccinations, fueled by a misinformation campaign. The public health response in *(Continued on page 22)*



“An Incident of the Small Pox Epidemic in Montreal,” Harper’s Weekly, Nov 28, 1885. Image: New York Public Library



“Immigrant Inspection Service.” Image: National Library of Medicine

The Haunting of French Louis

October 31, 2019 Acadians, Agriculture, Education, Home, Language, Maine

By James Myall

You can't always believe everything you read. That adage is equally applicable in our modern internet age and when reading 19th century newspapers. So the following story, which appeared in the Ellsworth American, January 18, 1899, is offered with the caution that it hasn't been corroborated with any other sources. Whether or not it's inspired by true events, this ghost story from Maine's St John Valley can teach us something.

The story was submitted to the American by Harry L. Crabtree, a young Ellsworth lawyer (he was born in 1877) and future judge. Crabtree claimed to have heard the story directly from a man he calls only "French Louey" (Louis). Crabtree says he spoke to Louis as well as his friends and neighbors living somewhere along the St John River in northern Aroostook County. He describes Louis as:

"A typical French Canadian, short, broadfaced, with a growth of light, curly whiskers covering his face clear to his eyes."

Crabtree related the story in his imagining of Louis' accented English, which Crabtree said sounded "not unlike broken Dutch or Negro, perhaps." You can read that version at this link, but since Crabtree's

dialect is hard to read, potentially offensive, and probably inaccurate, I've provided a standard English version:

"You want to know about that fellow in gray who gave me the beating? Why it's just like this: You see, I live over there by the schoolhouse, and one fall about five years ago we had a young fellow come teach the school. I think perhaps he was smart, but you



see he tried to teach my little boy something foolish. He called it "algebra" and it's all about letters and x's and things, but it didn't teach him a thing about selling buckwheat and potatoes.

"Well, that made me mad to have my little boy waste his time in that way, and

I told the teacher to stop that foolishness. He said, "Louis, I'll teach this school just as I please."

"Now I can't read and write myself, and I wanted my little Petey to learn those things. The teacher said he was learning those things, but I didn't believe it, with Petey bringing home those X's and things every night. So I got Baptiste and Lazarre and Joe, and we had him turned out of the school. Well, he had to go, but when he was on his way home, he passed my house and said, "Louis, I'll be back next year, and give you and awful beating for this!" I laughed at him, but I wish I hadn't.

"He wasn't very well, and the next spring I heard that he was dead, and I said to myself, 'you needn't worry about that beating, Louis.'

"Well, one night, that fall after he died I started down after the cows. It was just after supper, and as light as day. I went to the bars, and let them down, so I could drive the cows through. I went down in the pasture and found the cows, and started them home. Well, we got most of the way back to the bars, and I was behind the cows, thinking about nothing in particular, when those cows gave a bellow and turned and ran another way, and I looked up, and there was those

bars, put back up, and on the top one sat a fellow all dressed in grey. I started to ask him what he scared my cows for, when he said, 'Louis, I told you I would come back in a year, and here I am, and you're going to take a beating.' Then I saw it was that teacher who had died six months before.

(Continued on page 23)

(Fear, Prejudice, and Vaccinations continued from page 21)

1885 was quite different to today's. While the question of mandatory vaccination for school children has divided Mainers, there was a consensus among the politicians of 1885 not only that vaccination was a public good, but that it was worth spending taxpayers' money to improve the health of immigrants – quite the opposite of some of the hostile rhetoric we've seen today.



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About James Myall

While I currently work for an Augusta-based non-profit, I spent four years as the Coordinator of the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine. In 2015, I co-authored "The Franco-Americans of Lewiston-Auburn," a general history of that population from 1850 to the present. I was also a consultant for the State Legislative Task Force on Franco-Americans in 2012. I live in Topsham with my wife and two young daughters.

(The Haunting of French Louis continued from page 22)

“I started to run, but he caught me, and threw me down behind a stump and then he gave me the worst beating that anybody every got. I tried to fight be he was as strong as the devil, and he beat me like he would a baby. Then he let me up and told me to go, and I went a little way and picked up a rock to throw at him, but he was nowhere around. Then I thought I’d had enough of ghosts and I cut for home as fast as I could. I didn’t dare get the cows that night, but the next day I went down and milked the cows, and didn’t see the fellow in grey.

“He didn’t bother me any more until just a year from that day, when I went after the cows same as usual, and when I cam back, there he was, and he caught me, and gave me a worse beating than he did before. And every year on that same night, I don’t dare go after the cows, but after a while I go down towards the bars, and there he is, sitting on the top bar, waiting for me.”

Crabtree made it clear that he was included to believe the story. He said that he had confirmed it with Louis’ family, who confirmed that Louis had come back from the fields one night bloodied and bruised, and that some of his neighbors had even seen the grey spook waiting for Louis on the anniversary of the night in future years. Setting aside the supernatural parts of the tale, the events of the story are plausible enough. Crabtree implies that Louis and his friends chased off the school teacher because they didn’t understand what he was teaching

their children, and that the ignorant farmers distrusted education (in his introduction he called the Acadians “in many respects, as simple and innocent of the ways of the world as when they first left the shores of Nova Scotia.”

But the farmers’ anger at the school teacher may have had other roots. The state

www.maine-memory.net/vnm/9667
Collections of L’Heritage Vivant Living Heritage



Schoolhouse, Hamlin, built in 1919. Image: L’Heritage Vivant Living Heritage/Maine Memory Network

of Maine had only exercised loose control over public education in the St John Valley until 1872, when local school districts were established there. As part of the 1872 law, instruction was to be given primarily in English. The state also begun sending Yankee teachers into the St John Valley to teach in the local public schools, as well as training local residents to teach in English at the new Madawaska Normal School (now the University of Maine at Fort Kent). The state’s efforts to assimilate the Acadians made public schools a source of tension in the community.

Added to this was the reality that when children were at school, they couldn’t help with work on the farm. In 1887, Maine had passed a strict school attendance law, which established town truant officers to compel children aged 8-15 to attend schools. Families could be fined up to \$25 (roughly \$700 in today’s terms) for absences. Boys between 10 and 15 could be sent to the state reform school if they were “found to be wandering about the streets...during the school hours.” This law was irregularly enforced, but it sent a strong message to Mainers about the legislature’s intent. In this context, it’s more understandable why Louis and his neighbors resented the teacher.

If the ghostly school master represented the forces of assimilation arrayed against the Acadians, then his return year after year, even after death, is a fitting metaphor. Just as the ghost in the story haunted Louis relentlessly, so the specter of assimilation returned repeatedly to injure Maine’s Acadians. By 1919 the state passed a law outlawing the use of French in public schools entirely, relegating it to foreign language classes only. The intent was to impose English-only education on the St John Valley (and elsewhere) In many ways, the law, which was not repealed until 1969, had its desired effect. Today Valley schools are all Anglophone, and today children in the region are less likely than ever to speak French. But even among the generation who don’t speak the language, many still retain a strong sense of cultural identity and tradition – elements that are most often passed along in stories and folklore.

“Doing Our Best” is good advice from Susan Poulin

May 29, 2020 Franco-American News and Culturepandemic

By Juliana L’Heureux

In my opinion, the talented Franco-American writer Susan Poulin represents the virtual image of the proverb about making lemonade out of lemons. Her talent has been recognized by the fans who follow her performances and entertaining blogs. In recognition of her writing and popular monologues, Portland Magazine named Poulin as being among “Ten Most Intriguing People in Maine”. She and I were inducted

into the Franco-American Hall of Fame, by the Maine Legislature, at the same time.

That’s why I am thrilled to welcome her guest blog! Writing in her “Just Ask Ida” blog, Poulin gives us permission to lighten up a bit during a time when stress seems to be as epidemic as the COVID-19 virus.

Susan Poulin is a leader in bringing a female voice to New England storytelling and humor. Be sure to check the website



Susan Poulin is the author of the “Just Ask Ida” blog. She and her husband Gordon Carlisle live in Eliot Maine.

(Continued on page 24)

“Doing Our Best” is good advice from Susan Poulin continued from 23)

<https://www.poolyle.com/> to access her excellent TEDx Portsmouth Talk, a meaningful autobiography about being Franco-American, titled, “Can you find your identity through a heritage language?” Susan lives in Eliot, ME with her husband, artist (and Charlie poem writer), Gordon Carlisle.

Also, she is the co-presenter in the upcoming University of Maine Franco-American Centre, free on-line program, on June 11, from 7-8 p.m., titled “Around the Kitchen Table: Family Heirlooms. What do we do with them?”, with Maureen Perry, a member of the Franco-American Collection board at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College (USM LAC) and the campus librarian. Visit the website for more information here.

It’s my pleasure to post this guest blog by the always entertaining Franco-American writer Susan Poulin! She has generously given permission to share her timely creativity with the Franco-Americans and followers of this blog. The title is “Doing our Best” published in Just Ask Ida.

Doing Our Best!

Most of us are doing are best right now. Sure, there are those yahoos at the Corner Mart that don’t wear a mask, even though there are signs everywhere saying you have to. These are the same folks who think “14 Items or Less” is there to make the express lane faster for them and their 24 items or more. But for the most part, people seem to be hanging in there, trying to go by the rules.

But sometimes, you forget. Like yesterday on my walk ‘round the neighborhood with Scamp, I saw my elderly neighbor, Paul, sitting on his front porch. He’d been failing over the winter with pneumonia and a fall and I hadn’t seen him in a dogs age. He struggled to his feet to say hi, and I was so concerned about him falling, I completely lost my head, went up onto the porch and hugged him! And I wasn’t even wearing a mask! Then I thought, Oh my God, I hope I didn’t kill Paul. I’ve been worried about it ever since.

One of the hardest things for people is standing behind the line when they’re waiting to cash out. They intend to, but get distracted or just naturally wander forward. Happens to my friend Charlie all the time.

Stand Behind the Line

Joyce, down to Agway
Always greets me with a smile
But with that mask she wears
I haven’t seen it for a while
Now she’s strictly business
It’s not that she’s unkind
She just would like it better
If I stood behind the line,

“Stand behind that line, now Charlie
Stand behind the line
Come this way when it’s your turn
I’ll tell you when it’s time
Then you’ll stand upon that dot
And for that stuff you’ll sign
I’ll say when, but until then
Stand behind the line”

Some guys I know don’t wear the mask
They say it’s all just hooley
They’re still fond of burning rubber
When they turn a U-ey
You cannot talk to guys like that
They’re always blowing steam
For them, there’s nothing to discuss
They just wanna scream

Lois at Town Hall’s the one
Who registers my truck
But this spring it was Gladys
And I was out of luck
To try to share a joke with her
Would be a waste of time
When all she wants to tell me
Is to stand behind the line

“Stand behind that line, now Charlie
Stand behind the line
Come this way when it’s your turn
I’ll tell you when it’s time
Then you’ll stand upon that dot
And for that stuff you’ll sign
I’ll say when, but until then
Just stand behind the line, OK?
Stand behind the line.”

“Thank you.”

That’s it for now. Stay safe and catch you on the flip side!

Merci beaucoup to Susan and Gordon, for putting our stressful surreal pandemic experiences into a real life perspective!

Franco-Americans living at home with kindness

April 11, 2020, Franco-American News and Culture
Cathie Pelletier, Julia Childs, Lewiston, Merci beaucoup, The Memory Network, University of Maine, University of Southern Maine

By
Juliana L'Heureux

“Something good will come of all things yet.”
- Jack Kerouac (1922-1969)

We can share kindness by keeping each other safe, and participating in many free and enriching at home programs.

Although the coronavirus pandemic has impacted all of us, the quote by Kerouac is evident in all those who are dedicated to caring for our communities, in spite of the risks of exposure to disease. We salute the kindness of the health care workers, the physicians, nurses, respiratory therapists, hospital technicians, sanitation workers, the clerks who service our grocery stores and our restaurant workers. We are all in this together and they are the courageous matrix that supports our ability to rise above the coronavirus crises. They give purposeful evidence to Kerouac’s wise quote. Merci beaucoup to all of us who are doing what we can to help others at this time. We create good will by acknowledging the heroes who are serving on the front lines to help others during this unprecedented pandemic. God bless them and us because we are all in this together.

Merci beaucoup!

We are grateful for the care givers and the helpers!

Following are some stories and
(Continued on page 25)

(Franco-Americans living at home with kindness continued from page 24)

social media sites to follow while we are caring for ourselves and others by sheltering in place.

Friends From Northern Maine follow up by Cathie Pelletier (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2226802954281142/>):

“Today we ordered 500 yards of 1/4 inch elastic for ear loops, and also 1,440 yards of cotton twill for ties. It all shipped today. Our donated fabric from Old Town arrived in Fort Kent, amazing fabric. And we just learned another donor will give more! Sheets arrived in Fort Kent too, donated for the gowns. So many amazing people are working long hours and driving to deliver things!”



UPDATE from Cathie: “We still need people to sew health care cover GOWNS for Northern Maine Medical Center in Fort Kent. Cathie Pelletier, the organizer, says on the group’s social media page that they have a small group forming, including an amazing woman in Pittsfield (west of Bangor) who wants to help northern Maine for family connections. DROP OFF for used sheets for the gowns (or 100% cotton for masks) is Shop N Save in FORT KENT and SHOP N SAVE in PRESQUE ISLE. Remember, material for gowns can be blended cotton/polyester. GOWNS are desperately needed (we have their pattern) and also MASKS for all local hospitals/health facilities. We can use the elastic from fitted sheets then for masks ear loops.”

Meanwhile!- Look for the free learning resources we can share at home (chez nous!):

Governor Janet Mills’ Executive Order to Stay Healthy at Home directive, during the coronavirus pandemic, requires that Maine people stay at home, unless to leave for an essential job or an essential activity.

During the Governor’s “Stay Healthy at Home” directive, the University of Southern Maine’s Franco-American Collection, located at the Lewiston Auburn College (USM LAC), is closed. Although physical access to the building and the archives is not allowed at this time, the FAC Board is supporting opportunities where our community and membership can continue to participate with the archives while at home. Helpful on-

line links are offered to view free to movies and to join the memoir writing seminars with Denis Ledoux on his YouTube channel, from The Memory Network.

There are several links to vintage photographs and free web programs on the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine social media page: Link here.

Be sure to watch the excellent and free Susan Poulin’s TedxPortsmouth talk. Link here (be sure to click “skip ads”, although you may want to watch the promo about learning to be a chef).

Speaking about being a chef, you can watch all of the classic Julia Child French cooking television programs, available on line. Link to Julia Childs here.

To learn more about where to locate information about Franco-Americans, check out the Franco-American Portal Project at the University of Maine Franco-American Centre website. Link to portal here. (francoamericanportal.org)

A virtual tour of Franco-American Lewiston is available on the Franco-American Collection USM website – check “Franco-American Lewiston scavenger hunt” Link to tour here.

More interesting free programs and movies will be made available, so please continue to check the University of Maine Franco-American Centre and the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine websites.

S’il vous plaît! Of course, continue to stay safe and be well!



St. Mary’s Hospital- Check out the Facebook page for information and educational links. https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=franco-american%20collection%20at%20the%20university%20of%20southern%20maine&epa=SEARCH_BOX



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.

(N.D.L.R. The following articles are reprinted with permission and are part of a series the French-Canadian Legacy is running, and may be accessed through the French-Canadian Legacy at fclpodcast.com.)

Jesse Martineau



French-Canadian Legacy Podcast

Today, there are more than 2 million descendants of French-Canadian immigrants living in New England. These are Our Stories.

Why do I tell the Franco-American story?

by Susan Pinette

University of Maine – Franco American Programs

Am I a Franco American? Yes, of course I am. My mother is a Bouchard, my grandmothers were Clavettes, Bosses, and Michauds. I have lived the paradigmatic story of generational language loss. I grew up surrounded by cousins, uncles and aunts, and grandparents as my parents maintained and cultivated extended familial networks. I can trace my family's genealogy and have visited the churches in France where my ancestors were baptized and married in the 1600s before they moved to North America. I have gone with my family to pray in the Basilica of St. Anne de Beupré. I come from a family that values work of the hands and spends its free time together doing manual labor on "projects." Yet despite this identifiable ethnic life, perhaps Jacques Derrida articulates my experience of this "French fact" best, "there is no right of property over inheritance. That's the paradox. I am always the tenant of an inheritance" (Derrida, *Echographies of Television*, 112). I live this ethnic identity, though it is not mine alone to own. Maybe it is this sense of being a tenant — of "inhabiting" rather than "owning" — that draws me to listening to the Franco-American story rather than to telling it. Or, perhaps as a Franco-American woman, my reluctance to "tell the Franco-American story" in public is itself a deeply ethnic and gendered stance. I find I am much more comfortable behind the scenes, and I see this in others as well. Or, possibly my preference for listening is motivated by the deafness of so many others. Despite constituting one of the largest concentrations of French speakers in the United States and one of the largest French-Canadian heritage communities

outside of Québec, Franco Americans could be defined by their lack of recognition. Franco Americans have been referred to as the *Quiet Presence* (Dyke Hendrickson) and one of the *Hidden Minorities* (Joan H. Rollins). Franco Americans are rarely included in literature dedicated to the teaching of white ethnicity or in studies of white ethnic communities in the United States. Not a single Franco-American text, for example, is included in Werner Sollors' *The Multilingual Anthology of American Literature* even though the first Franco American text *Jeanne la fileuse* was published in French in 1878 in Fall River, Massachusetts. And because many Franco Americans are no longer fluently francophone and now reside outside Canada, Franco Americans are often absent from work on the "francophones hors-Québec." Whatever the cause, I find I am called to listen to the Franco-American story rather than tell it.

At University of Maine in Orono where I work with Lisa Michaud and Jacob Albert, we have sought to make the Franco American Centre into a place where people are heard and seen as *Franco Americans*. I watch my aunts and uncles; I see how different they are with their family than the way they are public. We want to make the Franco American Centre into a place where Franco Americans can come and feel at home even though it is a public space. Lisa organizes events, is developing a genealogical library, and edits *Le Forum*, and we work together to organize each year a gathering for Franco American writers and artists. Jacob Albert and I are working with a team of scholars (Continued on page 27)



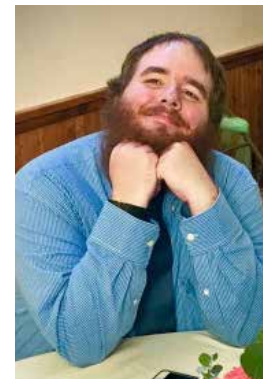
Jesse, like his parents, grew up in Manchester, NH. Jesse's parents attended L'École Saint-Georges which was a bilingual school with instruction received in both

English and French. Jesse has traced all branches of his family tree back to towns in Québec. He is on the Board of Trustees of the Franco-American Centre of Manchester.

Jesse is a product of Manchester's Catholic school system, having attended St. Anthony Elementary School, St. Joseph Junior High School and Trinity High School. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in History from the George Washington University in DC and a Juris Doctor Degree from Temple University in Philadelphia. At Temple, Jesse was a member of the Temple Law Review.

Jesse has served two terms as a State Representative in the New Hampshire General Court. He currently works as an Academic Advisor at Southern New Hampshire University.

Mike Campbell



Mike grew up in Laconia, NH. His Memere would make Pork Pie for the holidays but that was about all he knew about his French-Canadian heritage. His Mom and Memere would speak

French when they didn't want him or his dad to know what they were talking about.

Mike went to Lyndon State College and earned a A.S. in Television Production and a B.A. in Literature and Cultural studies. He married the love of his life in 2010 and lives in Hudson, NH with his partner and their son Bryce.

Mike was honored that Jesse asked him to be a part of this project. It's a great way to learn more about part of his past he knows very little about and he's excited to get back to editing audio and maybe even video in the future.

(French-Canadian Legacy Podcast continued from page 26)

and archivists from Assumption College, St. Anselm's, USM, and UMFK to develop a portal to Franco American documents and sources. As we build this web-based tool, we want to make sure that Franco Americans can access this information in culturally appropriate ways. We all recognize the unique ways Franco Americans organize information and want to make sure that items in the portal are accessible via the categories that are important to Franco Americans, like family surnames or places. We all strive in our work to recognize the unique ways of being of Franco Americans and provide spaces where those ways of being are recognized and heard. We strive to make the Franco American Centre a place where we can be our ethnic selves together.

In my scholarly work, I study Franco American writers. I read all that I can by Franco Americans — from the classics like *Canuck* by Camille Lessard-Bissonette and *Jeanne la Fileuse* by Honoré Beaugrande to the more contemporary writings written in English. I think that seeing these writings

as Franco American — even if it is written in English — is key to understanding them. Sometimes, writers make it easy to see how they are writing a Franco-American story. They not only take Franco-American experience as the content but they also write either in Franco American French or include it in their dialogues. Other writers, even though write in English, still take as their subject matter Franco American lives. Still others, though not necessarily concentrating on the Franco American story, make space for it in various ways. In the United States, for example, Franco-American ethnicity is conceptualized within a narrative of assimilation that places the relevance of ethnic identity into a past gone by. I think that Franco-American writers interact with this narrative by signifying their ethnic identity in class terms. Alan Bérubé in his autobiographical essay, “Intellectual Desire” finds his father’s ethnic agency in the active identification with a working class status: “my father was offered a low-level management position at work, which he turned down... But there was more to his refusal than class panic over becoming ‘one of

them.’ The distance he had traveled — away from his French working-class family, their farm, their land — was now so far from where he’d started that he began to lose the ground beneath his feet. He wanted to go home” (54). In many Franco-American texts, ethnic identity is signified through the intentional identification with a working class status; the refusal of upward mobility signifies an active embrace of an ethnic past and creation of an ethnic present. As a literary scholar, I focus on the way these issues are explored in literature, and I believe that literature offers insight into the interplay between the social and the personal not available through other means.

Susan Pinette a Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures and Director of Franco American Programs at The University of Maine. She was born and raised in Maine and received her doctorate in French at the University of California, Irvine. Her research examines contemporary Franco American literature.

Why Do I Tell the Franco-American Story?

by *Paul Marion*

I believe it is important to know your roots. I believe that you have a better chance to know who you are if you know where you come from, if you know how you got to where you are today. Why is it important to know who you are? I believe you will lead a more fulfilling life if you have a sense of how you fit in the larger flow of humanity. It’s about what I call coherence, which I take to mean having a unified sense of being, a feeling of being whole in body and soul and mind. It’s the opposite of being alienated, the feeling of being disconnected from society. Knowing who you are and knowing something about where you are gives a person a better chance of feeling a sense of community, a sense of belonging to something larger than your individual self.

Who am I? has the simplicity of the old Baltimore Catechism question, Who made me? In Catholic elementary school

a lot of answers were provided. Just memorize what’s in the book. Just listen to the priest at Mass. Just do what Sister Therese de L’Enfant de Jesus says. They offered a lot of answers after providing the questions as well. But in all those school days in a French Catholic school, I don’t recall any of the authorities telling us how the French Canadians wound up in Dracut, Mass. There was no local history in school. They customs, yes, like singing the Canadian national anthem in French, and the flag of Quebec in the classroom next to the red, white, and blue U.S. flag. Sometimes the Mass was in French. Early on it was in Latin in my day. Then it was English with the priest facing the faithful in the pews. “Pray, pay, and obey,” was the unspoken game plan. We had a few “French” items in the school cafeteria like Chinese Pie or Pâté Chinois, the regional concoction that is a twist on Shepherd’s Pie from Ireland and Britain. Until the canon-



Paul Marion

ical law changed, we were not served any meat on Fridays. Goopy mac and cheese, tomato-rice soup, fish sticks. We had French language day on Thursdays and French courses, grammar and conversation, all the time. At home my parents spoke French to my grandparents and their siblings (not all the time). We visited relatives on New Year’s Day, which is special for the French Canadian-Americans. The older generations told stories about the immigrants and subsequent generations. My ancestors on both sides came to Lowell, Mass., in 1880. Despite all this, my generation turned out to be highly American in identity.

(Continued on page 28)

(French-Canadian Legacy Podcast continued from page 27)

As someone interested in history, I always had a sense of my past and was curious but not in any extraordinary way. I had lost my ability to speak French fluently, even semi-fluently, after high school or likely before public high school. One of my brothers attended a French Catholic high school, but I chose not to. As the years went on, I began to think more about my family's origins. When my son was born in 1995, the sixth generation of our line in Lowell, he came to my wife and I with her 100 percent Irish roots stretching back to 1870 in the city and my 100 percent French background. I realized that he would be far from his ethnic origins. It would be up to me to give him some grounding so that he would have an understanding of where he comes from. His arrival heightened my commitment to tell the French Canadian-American story in my writing, both the Lowell French story and my family's place in it. I'm still reconstructing the family experience. Fortunately, two of my aunts had researched the genealogy of the Marion and Roy lines as far back as the mid-1600s in Normandy, France. The paper trail doesn't go back farther, so far.

I'll keep at it.

And so, as a writer, I have a way to tell the story of my family, my community, my people. The knowledge has added texture to my experience. Embracing the identity has opened up connections to other people in New England, in Quebec, around the U.S., and abroad. I'm part of a larger effort to remember. There's a transcript of an interview with a French Canadian-American woman from Lowell from the 1980s, I think. In it, she tells stories about the Lowell French in her time, early 20th century, and she sings songs. The lyrics are reproduced. Speaking to the interviewer, she says at one point, "I'm a memory worker." That captures what's going on in this telling of the French story in America. Those of us who write, speak, sing, research, and more are all memory workers in the big Memory Bank.

Paul Marion was born in Lowell, Mass., in 1954. He grew up in French Canadian-American parishes in Lowell (St. Louis de France) and next door in Dracut (St. Therese). His ancestors left Quebec in 1880 to settle in Lowell where they could earn a living as carpenters, textile mill operatives, and grocers. After Catholic elementary

school and public high school, he graduated from the University of Massachusetts in Lowell (political science) and then studied in the master of fine arts program in writing at the University of California in Irvine.

He worked as an administrator for the U.S. Dept. of the Interior in the development of a national park in Lowell and also managed community relations and cultural affairs for UMass Lowell. In 1978, he established a small publishing company, Loom Press, which still publishes work by authors in his region.

*He is the author of several books of poetry including *Union River: Poems and Sketches* (Bootstrap Press, 2017) and editor of Jack Kerouac's early writing, *Atop an Underwood* (Viking/Penguin, 1999). His book *Mill Power* chronicles the renaissance of Lowell in the late 20th century, a case study of a post-industrial city reviving itself. His poems and essays been published widely in journals and anthologies. For more information, see www.paulmarion.com for more information.*

He lives in Amesbury, Mass., with his wife, Rosemary, an art historian and former community and campus program manager. Their son, Joseph, lives in New York City.

Why I Tell the Franco-American History

by Patrick Lacroix

We've only scratched the surface.

With six syntheses in as many decades, hundreds of academic articles, a vast field of memoirs and oral interviews, documentary films, a number of thought-provoking blogs, and now multiple podcasts, one would think that the Franco-American past has given all of its secrets.

I wouldn't claim perfect originality in all of my research; I am refining and incrementally adding to the body of research as much as I am unearthing long-forgotten stories. Still, I know of archival collections and published sources that have hardly been touched by contemporary scholars. Vast digitization projects have revolutionized research and now highlight just how little of the past we have explored.

For history nerds like me, that's pretty darn exciting.

But will these sources substantially change how we view the Franco-American past? Naturally, time will tell—the answer you would expect from a historian. At the very least, the last half-century has shown that this past is infinitely more complex than certain early histories indicated.

Standard narratives organized around *survivance* and mill work, as in the aptly-titled [Steeple and Smokestacks](#), remain. Yet, we are now more aware of women's essential role in the household economy, more attuned to the gendered aspects of everyday life in Little Canadas. We have begun to look beyond Woonsocket, Fall River, Lowell, Manchester, and Lewiston in order to understand the variety of Franco experiences from Putnam to Salem, Barre to Brunswick. We are recognizing that there was more to these experiences than food and

fight over pew rents. (Don't get me wrong: I do like my meat pie and *altar-cations* as much as the next person.)

Older histories often portrayed the Little Canadas in terms that echoed their nativist detractors. Clerical authorities depicted the Little Canadas as small citadels, insulated from American materialism, where Francos followed their priests in all things and preserved a "clannish" spirit. More recently, we have come to appreciate the many points of connection between immigrant communities and mainstream U.S. society (whatever that may mean).

We can now study diverse Franco experiences and honor those different journeys without alleging treason—whether this woman fell for an Irishman or that man spoke English to feed his children.

We can now question *les vaches sacrées*.

As we open up all of these definitions, the field of Franco-American history becomes even wider. This is an incredible time for all things Franco—in research as well as in the realm of cultural programming.

My own foray in this field began at the *(Continued on page 29)*

(French-Canadian Legacy Podcast continued from page 28)

University of New Hampshire, when I decided to pursue something I vaguely recalled from classes taken in Quebec—something about nineteenth-century emigration. Vague indeed: outside of academic works, the diaspora receives little attention, even less now that a generation with personal ties to Franco-Americans is passing from the scene.

Of course, this is an American story: Franco-Americans' experiences tell us a great deal about religious conflict, nativism, immigration policy, labor activism, political mobilization, and economic development in the United States. But, still today, theirs is also a Canadian story. The few sentences we find about *la grande saignée* in Quebec textbooks fail to do justice to nineteenth-century economic woes, repatriation efforts, half-baked colonization schemes, continuing attention to Franco communities in newspapers into the 1950s, the influence of the

sovereignty movement, and the availability of [Quebec funds for Franco initiatives](#).

I have sought to emphasize French-Canadian immigrants' place in both of these national sagas by contributing articles to academic journals. From upstate New York in the 1780s to Fall River and Barre more than a century later, I have followed compelling stories with little regard to time or place. This, after all, is not a story that begins in industrial New England in 1865 only to end there three generations later. The story must be so broad as to include Revolutionary War soldiers and those who disregard doctors' orders and travel to [Manchester every June](#).

Although this whole business of academic journals may seem like the stuff of ivory towers, they are an important medium for reaching the next generation of researchers, communicating with teachers, and influencing textbooks-in-the-making. I have no grand illusions about the value of my research, but I do believe in the

significance of the Franco-American story stories. Every avenue ought to be explored in making that case.

It is in that spirit that I launched my blog, which offers a taste of my findings with less jargon and without the unwelcome paywalls. Perhaps yet more people, Franco-American or not, will join the conversation and the effort as a result.

After all, we've only scratched the surface.

Patrick Lacroix is a native of Cowansville, Quebec, and spent many years in New Hampshire, where he earned a doctoral degree in history. He now teaches in Nova Scotia. You can follow his research on Franco-Americans at querythepast.com/franco-americans/.

NH PoutineFest Won't Let "2020" Slow down our Momentum

This pandemic has pretty much cancelled everything. The 5th edition of NH PoutineFest is no different. We were forced to cancel our June event back in mid-May.

However, sometimes opportunity can come out of defeat. Instead of simply cancelling the event we are going to host an NH PoutineFest Roadshow from July 11th, 2020 to August 31st, 2020.

The Roadshow offers participants the opportunity to visit our vendors at the leisure with a special coupon over the summer. One really unique component of the Roadshow is it allows us to invite some vendors who are unable to participate in our regular in-person

event that takes place annually around St. Jean Baptiste Day. Maine will be represented for the first time since 2016!

There is no denying that poutine will be an important part of Franco-American culture going forward. The Québécois created a really amazing food. It's only logical that their family in the United States ensure Americans view poutine as a French-Canadian delicacy. Keeping that flame lit during this whole COVID thing will help keep that spirit alive.

For more information visit www.nhpoutinefest.com or our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/nhpoutinefest.



WHAT DID YOU DO DURING THE COVID 2019 - QUARANTINE?



submitted by Margaret Langford

You asked us what we've all been doing during the current pandemic. Here's my contribution: excerpts from my late husband's paternal grandmother's diary for 1918. As I've been preparing them to share with family and friends, I'll gladly share them with you.

The last entry in her diary, probably written by her husband Frank, is for Saturday, October 19, 1918. It reads "Estella died 9:14 AM." The diary does not give her birth year; it does provide her birthday: March 4.

With the exception of correcting her spelling of Fort Devens, I have transcribed all her original spellings and punctuation.

This information precedes the diary entries:

My Name:

Estella B. Langford
237 Elm Street
Manchester, NH

My Home Telephone: 4074-W

My Office Telephone: 3774-R

Estella's diary entries show she had worked for a man named Joe in the past. On August 19 he calls inviting her to come back ". . . for the rest of the season." She doesn't accept the offer. The entries don't show what the job was.

In case of accident or serious illness please notify:

F.P. Langford Frankie.
Frt Bkm B & M R.R.
or my father C G Rhinehart
130 Walker St City

The excerpts noted here record the

last days of her life during the Spanish Influenza pandemic. They reveal how freely people interacted at this time. No sheltering in place. Estella, her friends and family go about their daily routines, visit, dine out, go to the movies. Ralph, a young soldier friend of the family, frequently visits from Fort Devens in New Jersey. He has a room of his own so he can stay for a while. Sometimes Howard, a relative, stays overnight also.

In the fall, funerals become more and more frequent. On Thursday, October 3, 16 days before her own death, Estella notes: ". . . saw eight funerals go by in one hour. Influenza is raging. . ."

Her last entries mention her ten-year-old boy, Lorin, (my husband's father), Howard (a relative), her husband Frank, and the doctors who come to visit her and her boy. Sick as she is, she's the one who pays for the doctor. Her diary shows she's a can-do woman from the beginning of the year until the last hours of her life. She, Ralph, {the baby?}, and Aunt Laura "watched the old year out." On Tuesday, January 1st she notes "...I clean pantry and change stoves. . ."

In the following entries, Estella records the last days of her life.

SAT. OCT. 12, 1918

I am very sick have to keep Frank home he has Dr. Hoitt for me.
{Dr.} Christopher calls.

SUNDAY 13

I am sick Dr. Hoitt calls. I have the Influenza Dr. Christopher calls to see Lorin

MON. OCT. 14, 1918

still sick Dr. Hewitt (calls?) {Dr} Christopher calls baby Catherine funeral today



Estella B. Langford

TUESDAY 15

Dr. Christopher last visit paid influenza visits Dr. Hewitt calls I have near Phenumonia am very sick Howard is sick to

WED. OCT. 16, 1918

{NO ENTRY}

THURSDAY 17

{NO ENTRY}

FR. OCT. 18, 1918

Had Dr. Hoitt five times.

SATURDAY 19

Someone else—perhaps Estella's husband Frank—makes the final entry: "Estella died 9:14 AM"



The Spanish flu of 1918

The Spanish flu, also known as the 1918 flu pandemic, was an unusually deadly influenza pandemic caused by the H1N1 influenza A virus. Lasting for more than 12 months from spring 1918 (northern hemisphere) to early summer 1919, it infected 500 million people – about a third of the world's population at the time.





Staying Franco — Is French the Key?

by Suzanne Beebe

Is Franco-American culture dying? Is speaking French the key to its *survivance*, as so many Franco-Americans were taught by nuns, priests, parents, grandparents, and other cultural heavyweights?

Pull any self-identifying group of Franco-Americans together and the conversation quickly turns to whether Franco culture can exist if Francos are no longer speaking French. So many of us in our 60's, 70's, and above never spoke it, perhaps never heard it being spoken at home, and perhaps never even learned it in school. Or maybe we heard it, understood it, but responded in the English we heard almost everywhere we lived and worked. Or maybe we did grow up speaking it, but over the years have gotten so rusty — because we have so little reason to speak it — that we can't remember words, phrases, or how to put our sentences together, and we give up because it's just too much work. And the younger crowd? Forget it! Too many of them don't even know their families were ever French!



Can Any Culture Survive Without Its Own Language?

It's instructive to look at cultures that maintain an identity even when few to none of their members are speaking the culture's original language — or whatever the language evolved into over time.

Take the Irish, for instance. Ireland was dominated for centuries by England, a larger, more powerful neighbor speaking a different language, practicing a different brand of Christianity, embracing a different worldview, formed by a different history and cultural mix, and characterized by different governmental structures. Mired in poverty and severely restricted avenues for growth, and devastated by the Great Famine of the 1800's, Ireland sent its children all over the world in search of a better life. And wherever their descendants reside, many still identify as Irish in the nations they now call home. (Where is St. Patrick's Day not celebrated, and where are there no Irish pubs or music?)

But given their centuries of English rule, with their native language discouraged or outright forbidden, not all diaspora Irish were speaking Irish when they left, and few, if any, are speaking it now. And even in Ireland a sustained attempt to resurrect the language within the schools has yielded limited results, with a vast majority of Irish citizens speaking English as their first and often their only language.

But has Ireland ceased to be Irish? Hardly! Its people's long history, rich culture, and sustained experience of themselves as different from the English have worked to overcome their linguistic loss. And the English spoken in Ireland is distinctively Irish in its various pronunciations, intonations, and quirks of vocabulary and phraseology — much of it stemming from the Irish language.

(Continued on page 32)

(N.D.L.R. The following was written by my 12 year old daughter, 20 years ago. Thought I would share it during these trying times and sadly it's still pertinent today)

Why do we judge?

by

Holly Michaud (2008)

Why do we judge people on the color of their skin, their voice, religious beliefs, or in any other way they may be different? I remember watching this movie once, it was called "The Color of Friends" and I remember a guy saying that a family of African Americans having a foreign exchange student from South Africa who was white staying in their house, was like the Jews inviting the Gestapo in for tea. Why? Why do people hate people who are different so much? What did they do to deserve this? I know from watching these movies about racism, or my speech/report about the holocaust may not change your minds about your opinions but just think about it, watching these movies made a big impact on my life and in many other children's lives as well. "I have a dream..." said Martin Luther King Jr. this man was a remarkable man, he helped set African Americans free. You may not think of him as a heroic figure, but I certainly do, thinking about brings tears to my eyes. Why? Why could anyone be so cruel? Rosa Parks, another remarkable human being, she would not give up her front seat on the bus to a white person, she is definitely a hero through my eyes. She was taken by the police and beaten for not giving up her front bus seat to a white, and that to me means this woman had a lot of courage. I am writing this in the middle of the night but it's something that has been on my mind lately. I've been thinking a lot about the wars around the world, wars that unnecessary, wars that are killing innocent people because of their beliefs. I also have a dream just like Martin Luther King Jr. that throughout my lifetime I will live in a world with no hate, that may sound like a lot for a little girl to do, but hey we can do anything we set our minds to, can't we? I fear wars happening in my state, my city, my town, just because I may be different from another person. That is wrong. No individual should be hated and killed because of that. And anyone who stands up to that is most definitely a hero in my eyes. Well this is all I have to say, I hope you take this seriously, because this is an issue, in my belief anyway, that if we work together, we can change.

(Staying Franco — Is French the Key? continued from page 31)

But how do we account for a sustained Irish identity among so many Irish descendants across the globe, immersed as they've been for several generations in the language and culture of their adopted nations? And what about Jews, speaking the languages of surrounding cultures and even developing hybrid languages of their own like Yiddish or Ladino in nations throughout Europe, the Middle East, and the Americas? Or indigenous peoples everywhere who may have lost their native languages but still experience themselves as different from their conquerors? Or the descendants of enslaved Africans throughout the Americas who lost their languages along with their freedom but are distinctly Afro-American or Afro-Hispanic or Afro-Caribbean in ways (even apart from skin color!) that influence their surrounding cultures?



What Keeps Cultures Going?

If we look at Irish emigrants, we see people who departed from their country with a cultural deposit of song, dance, myth, legend, history, music, art, religious practice, and belief. To the extent that they have transmitted enough of that mix to their descendants in ways that the descendants find worth handing on, the sense and experience of being “Irish” continues — more powerfully in some than others and despite the absence of spoken Irish. Obviously, it helps to have some degree of “Irish” community in which to discover and explore one’s Irish-ness. And it helps to have a homeland, however distant, where Irish-ness is the norm, or at least a substantial presence. And it definitely helps to have powerful stories — of St. Patrick, the Irish kings and queens, the English conquest, the Great Famine — that explain how one’s own life in one’s own place came to be. But a native language, however influential, is not the be-all nor end-all of cultural survival.

We see that same reality — perhaps even more so — with the Jews, many of whom weren’t speaking Hebrew in Palestine or throughout the Mediterranean world even during Jesus’s lifetime and certainly weren’t speaking it for almost two millennia of exile afterwards. Religious faith played a powerful role for them — consider the annual Passover celebration with its retelling and reliving of the Jewish movement from slavery to freedom in the Exodus. (And consider the whole of Hebrew scripture in which the Exodus is only one, however monumental, event.) But again, the sustained experience of themselves as different from those around them, nourished in life-giving ways through music, literature, religious faith, and artistic expression contributed mightily.

So there are factors at work in cultural survival that I would list as follows:

- 1) Deeply felt and formative experiences, ideas, stories, and worldview
- 2) Shared to some degree by more than individuals and their nuclear families
- 3) Remembered, renewed, perpetuated, and communicated
- 4) Through reenactment and retelling
- 5) In more or less ritualized ways

And these factors have to do with:

- 1) The web of relationships one is born into
- 2) The environment in which those relationships exist

3) The extent to which those relationships and environment are formative

4) The degree of good or ill experienced within them

5) How much an individual or community values the good and/or detests the ill

6) How many and which group memories are passed on — good or bad

7) How much and what knowledge of the group is passed on or acquired

8) And how a particular individual reacts to and internalizes it all, given his or her genetic make-up, personality, talents, family history, and personal history

In other words, do individuals and communities experience enough of value in a culture that they want it to continue in some way? And do they have the wherewithal and dedication to help do so?



In the case of Franco-Americans, how many of us know enough, remember enough, and care enough to tell others, especially our children and grandchildren, that our forebears were French, that we think of ourselves as being at least a bit French, and that we experience this French-ness as a good thing? That, I think, is the key, both to Franco survival and wanting to — or at least wishing we could — speak French.

(All Beau-Frog drawings in this article are by Peter Archambault. Mr. Peter Archambault was an artist at the University of Maine who was in the Faculty of Education in the audio-visual department. His cartoons of Beau Frog started in 1976 and follows the political and cultural history of Franco-Americans in Maine and elsewhere in the United States.)

Henry Prunier

Franco-American Veteran

by Michael Guignard
Alexandria, VA

This summer marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. Henry Prunier, a Franco-American from Worcester, Massachusetts, was a veteran of that war and in 2011 was awarded the Bronze Star for his service.

Growing up in Worcester, Prunier attended a French-speaking Catholic grammar school, then the Assumption Preparatory School, where he was taught by French priests. Not wanting to get drafted because he would not be able to choose where he would be assigned, he enlisted in the army in 1942. The army allowed him to complete his junior year at Assumption College, an institution founded by and for Franco-Americans. His background, fluency in French and affinity with languages got him assigned to the Army Specialized Training Program at the University of California Berkeley to study Vietnamese. To better acclimate the soldiers with their intended assignments, in addition

to the language study, the course of study also included Vietnamese history, geography, society and culture.

Completing school at Berkeley in 1944, Prunier was sent to cryptology school in Missouri, where he was initially assigned to join an infantry division prior to D-Day. Just before he was to ship out, however, Prunier was ordered to go to Washington instead—to join the Office of Strategic Services (the OSS), which was the precursor of the CIA.

After successfully completing a battery of psychological exams and rigorous OSS training, Prunier was sent to Catalina Island for survival training. His training complete, Prunier sailed in April 1945 with 3,000 other servicemen for Calcutta. From there, he flew over “the Hump”—the Hima-

layas—to the OSS regional headquarters in Kunming, China.

In Kunming, the team that Prunier would become a part of, called the Deer Team, took shape in May and June 1945. Their mission was to make contact with Vietnamese guerillas to help disrupt Japanese communications and aid the U.S. war effort.

Before the Deer Team parachuted into



Vietnam, no one knew the mission, other than that a ‘Mr. Hoo’ was at Tan Trau and that they were to give training to his forces. The Deer Team was to harass the Japanese and help “Mr. Hoo” in taking out railroads and communications. “Mr. Hoo” had agreed to help the Deer Team in exchange for U.S. assistance for his nationalist forces in Vietnam.

On the morning of July 16, 1945, Prunier and the five other members of the Deer Team parachuted into Tan Trau and made contact with “Mr. Hoo,” “Mr. Van” and their band of 80 guerillas. Only later did the team find out “Mr. Hoo” was Ho Chi Minh and that “Mr. Van” was Vo Nguyen Giap.

When Prunier and the team first met Ho Chi Minh, he was “nothing but skin and bones,” suffering from tropical diseases

such as dysentery and malaria. Though Ho spoke fluent French, he refused to speak it and instead conversed with Prunier alternatively in English and Vietnamese. Prunier remembered talking with “Mr. Hoo” about Boston where a cruise ship on which Ho was working had once docked. The Americans treated “Mr. Hoo” with their ample supply of medicines. He survived and regained his strength rapidly.

In contrast to Ho, Giap was far more involved with the combat training the Americans were giving, and was intent on learning the capability and effectiveness of the weaponry. When the Deer Team began training Ho’s nascent Viet Minh army, according to Prunier, the only weapons the insurgents had were muskets similar to shotguns and a few

confiscated French guns. “They were not armed well or able to handle weapons,” said Prunier. The OSS dropped in canisters containing M-1 rifles, bazookas, 60mm mortars and light machine guns, just enough to equip the 80 men. “The Vietnamese were eager and learned how to take an M-1 apart in a couple of hours,” Prunier remembered.

Although the Deer Team was a military training unit and not a political training force, it became clear to Prunier through his conversations with Giap and the other

Vietnamese that they had a purpose—to get Indochina back as an independent country. “We didn’t know until then that Ho’s primary aim was to get rid of the French,” he said. After World War II, the British left Burma and India, the Dutch left Indonesia, the Philippines gained its independence from us but, unfortunately for the U.S., the French stayed in Indochina.

The Deer Team celebrated with their Vietnamese allies when they learned of the U.S. atomic bomb attacks, knowing that the end of World War II was near. On August 15, Japanese Emperor Hirohito addressed his nation and announced that they would surrender, essentially ending the OSS mission in Vietnam. The Deer Team made its way back to Hanoi on September 9, one week af-
(Continued on page 34)

(Henry Prunier Franco-American Veteran continued from page 33)

ter the Japanese officially had surrendered on the deck of the U.S.S. Missouri and Ho Chi Minh had declared Vietnam's independence, citing the Declaration of Independence in his address to his countrymen.

Before leaving Hanoi on September 16, Prunier only saw Ho and Giap briefly. At this meeting, Ho presented a silk tapestry to Prunier in gratitude for his service.

Prunier then flew back to Kunming and was temporarily assigned to an intelligence unit there. A month later, he was back in Hanoi to help set up an OSS detachment headquarters, from where he was to work on cases of Japanese war crimes against the Vietnamese and the French. Because there was little organization to the effort, he found plenty of free time to explore the city and located some of the soldiers he had helped train, including Thai Buc, a fellow translator in Tan Trau. "He was like a brother," Prunier recalled. The OSS was disbanded in October, 1945, and in November Prunier was given his orders to return home to be discharged. He was discharged from the army in January 1946

and joined the family business in Worcester.

Henry Prunier was never debriefed by the U.S. government about his mission or about the insurgents he had helped to train in Vietnam. It had been a secret mission. He did receive several invitations to join the Central Intelligence Agency, which was formed in 1947, but he did not accept the offer.

For the next 20 years, Prunier's mission in Indochina was largely forgotten as the nation dealt with global tensions of the Cold War. In the early 1960s, as U.S. involvement in Vietnam escalated, the old OSS training grounds were rediscovered, and stories of the Deer Team re-emerged. Even then, with Ho and Giap on the world stage as America's archenemies, Prunier's experience with the leaders went untapped. Then, in March 1968, two months after TET, with more than 500,000 U.S. troops in Vietnam and while the battle for Hue was

still raging, some of the Deer Team's photos were published in a Life magazine profile of Ho. "A couple of people recognized me, so they contacted the local news organizations," Prunier said. In short order, he was interviewed by Worcester TV station WTAG and the Worcester Gazette.

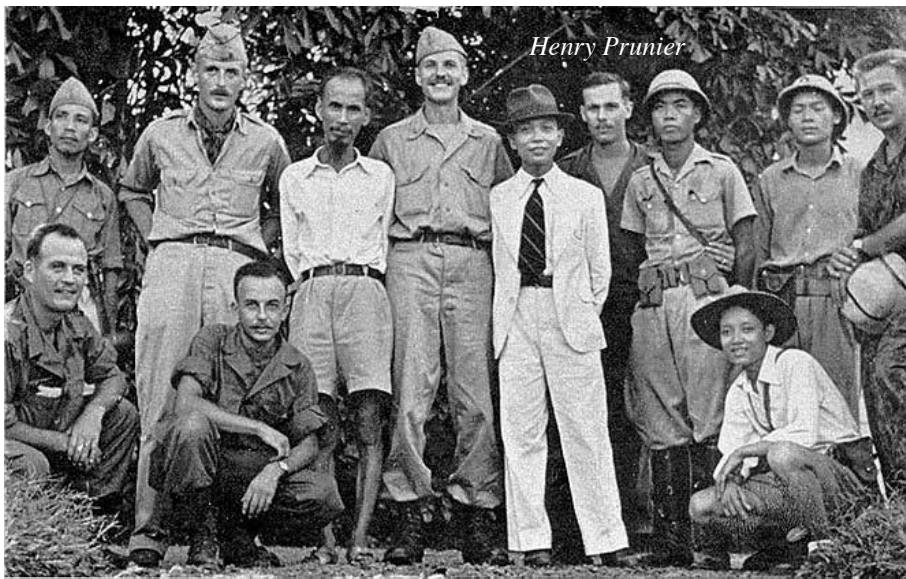
It was during those interviews 52 years ago that Prunier offered what few people, if any, in the U.S. government could provide—firsthand insights into the Vietnamese leaders when they were formulating their movement's direction and goals. "When Ho spoke, it was about bettering the lot of his people," Prunier said. "He wanted independence for them" Prunier pointed out that Ho believed the United States "would

countries in the former Indochina, offered an opportunity for the original Deer Team members to travel to Hanoi, visit the Tan Trao camp and meet the men they had trained half a century before. Prunier made the voyage. It was during his trip to Hanoi that Giap recognized Prunier by displaying the grenade lobbing technique (with an orange) that Prunier had taught him. "I taught Giap. I was floored that he remembered me," Prunier recalled. Another Vietnamese soldier from 1945 grabbed him happily by the arm and cried, "Prunier! Prunier!" over and over. It was the first time that Prunier realized the Vietnamese held him and the Deer Team in such high esteem.

In 2009 Prunier offered all of his papers, photographs, sketches, reports and, perhaps most important, his U.S. Army uniform to the Museum of Military History in Hanoi. Upon receiving his contribution, the museum Director called Prunier's donation "one of the most significant historical contributions that the museum had ever received."

On February 23, 2011, when he received the Bronze Star Medal, Prunier recalled the camaraderie between the Vietnamese nationalists and the Deer Team.

"Perhaps six decades after Henry Prunier's work with the OSS, the respect for the last living member of the Deer Team that is shared by the Vietnamese and Americans alike will symbolize a new understanding between two former enemies" wrote Claude Bérubé, a professor at the U.S. Naval Academy. Vietnam today is an important ally in our efforts to contain Chinese expansionism. The Vietnamese have been historical enemies of the Chinese. The border war they fought in 1979 basically ended in a draw but there have been no more Chinese incursions into Vietnamese territory. In 2016, after a 41-year hiatus, two U.S. warships visited Cam Rahn Bay on a courtesy call and good will visit. The Chinese were watching, I am sure. The ties between the two countries continue to increase. As a point of fact, my wife's high school, Thornton Academy, boasts international students from Vietnam. *(Continued on page 35)*



Henry Prunier

help him in throwing out the French and in establishing an independent country." When it was suggested to Prunier that he contact Life about his story, true to his typical Franco-American humble nature, he preferred to stay out of the national spotlight.

As U.S. involvement in Vietnam went from quagmire to retreat, Prunier's story—and that of the entire Deer Team—faded further in the American consciousness. But that was not the case in Vietnam, where the assistance given to Ho and Giap in 1945 by the American team is hailed as a turning point in the country's history.

In 1995, the U.S. recognized the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and Pete Peterson, a former prisoner of war in Hanoi, became our Ambassador there. That same year, the U. S. Indochina Reconciliation Project, which had been established a decade earlier as a nonprofit group to help facilitate relations between the United States and

Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History

by Michael Guignard
Alexandria, VA

I always read with interest Gérard Coulombe's articles in *Le Forum* on growing up in Biddeford, my hometown. Mr. Coulombe mentions many of the Franco-American institutions in the city including St. Andre's Healthcare on Pool Street, a skilled nursing and rehabilitation facility since 1976. I would like to add more history of that building.

The building that houses the health care facility opened in 1940 and served until 1973 as a home for a clientele that was not elderly. *Le Forum* has carried many articles in its more than forty-five year history on Franco-American churches, schools, societies, clubs, newspapers, religious orders and other French ethnic institutions and associations. This article will deal with



what was a Franco-American home..... for unwed mothers. The article is timely as St. Andre's Home marks its 80th year of operation. The Home accepted patients of all ethnic groups and religions but, especially in its early years, it was primarily a Franco-American institution. A big change occurred in March 1967. For the first time, on March 15, the entry in the archives on which much of this article is based appears in English. Sister Joanne Roy, in a February 2019 e-mail to me, explained that the U.S. province of the Good Shepherd Sisters, had decided that because of an increasing number of new sisters who did not speak French well or at all, the sisters would conduct the home's affairs in English. The Canadian sisters who were at St. Andre's at that time, and who had possibly worked in homes for unwed mothers that the Good Shepherd Sisters ministered to in Canada, had to decide either to go back to Canada or to learn

English. Some went back.

Although I had always known that I was adopted, I did not find out who my birth mother was until February 2003 when I was 57, four months before she died of cancer. She had gone to a home for unwed mothers in the Jamaica Plain section of Boston called the Talitha Cumi home, almost 400 miles from where she lived with her parents in Fort Kent, Maine, on the Canadian border. We never got a chance to speak at length about her stay there but she had fond memories of the place and the care she had received.

My birth mother told me that her maid of honor, Claire, had been the young lady whom she had roomed with at the home. I have had a chance to meet this now-elderly lady and she too remembered the good, kind care extended to her at the Talitha Cumi home.

Given the circumstances of my birth, I became interested in what life had been like in a home for unwed mothers in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's. I read books by Rickie Solinger and a gripping memoir by Janet Mason Ellerby called *Intimate Reading: the Contemporary Women's Memoir*. In 2006, another excellent book called *The Girls Who Went Away: The Hidden History of Women who Surrendered Children for Adoption in the Decades before Roe v. Wade* was published. The author, Ann Fessler, interviewed 100 women for her book. One of her interviewees, Lynne, had her baby at St. Andre's Home in 1967. Through Ms. Fessler, I made contact with Lynne and will quote extensively from our correspondence.

Having written my Ph.D. dissertation on the Franco-Americans of Biddeford, (Continued on page 36)

Henry Prunier died in March 2013 in Webster, Massachusetts at the age of 91 but not before completing his degree at Assumption College. He was survived by his wife of 62 years, Mariette Lague, 4 children, 12 grandchildren and 4 great-grandchildren. His old comrade-in-arms, Vo Nguyen Giap, died 7 months later at the age of 102.

All the quotations for this article were taken from Claude G. Berube's work. He teaches at the United States Naval Academy and has researched the role of the OSS Deer Team extensively. His work can be found on the internet. The internet also boasts many other articles on Mr. Prunier, including an obituary in *The New York Times*.



Henry Prunier

WEBSTER/WORCESTER - Henry A. Prunier, 91, died peacefully on Sunday, March 17, 2013, at Beverly Hospital, after a short illness.

He is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mariette "Marie" L. (Lague) Prunier of Webster; four children, Joanne M. Green and her husband John of Hampton, NH, Raymond H. Prunier and his wife Gloria of Merrimack, NH, Dianne M. Behnke and her husband Corey of Brillion, WI, and Donald A. Prunier of Coral Springs, FL; 12 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren. He was predeceased by two daughters, Suzanne P. Leonard and Marianne E. Ciociolo; a sister, Lucille B. LeBlanc; and a granddaughter.

He was born in Worcester, the son of the late Henry E. and Winifred (Suprenault) Prunier, and lived most of his life in Webster. He graduated from Assumption Preparatory School in Worcester, Assumption College in Worcester, and the University of Massachusetts. He was a U.S. Army veteran of World War II, and received the bronze star for his service with the O.S.S.

Mr. Prunier owned and operated his family's business, J.S. Prunier and Sons in Worcester, for many years. He was a member of the Harmony Club in Worcester. He was a member of the Knights of Columbus in Worcester and was a 4th degree knight in the John Cardinal Wright Assembly.

(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 35)

Maine, I knew about St. Andre's Home and the French Canadian order of sisters who operated the facility, the Good Shepherd Sisters. The official name of the Sisters is Servants of the Immaculate Heart of Mary. The initials of the order, SCIM, stand for "Servantes du Coeur Immaculé de Marie." We knew them as the Good Shepherd Sisters (Soeurs du Bon Pasteur) and I have chosen to refer to them by this moniker in this article. Since the St. Andre's Home is still in operation, albeit with a different apostolate, I knew that records would be available.

What I found was a weekly (and sometimes daily) log of events and happenings over the course of 33 years, from 1940 until 1973 before the home moved from its Pool Street address. After the home moved, the log continued but with fewer entries and more administrative news rather than a day-to-day account of life inside the home. In addition, I found a number of secondary sources that described the home and its work, including correspondence at the diocesan library in Portland.

One short housekeeping note. When I discuss homes for unwed mothers with young people, they are puzzled by the concept. Why leave home and surrender your child? But in the 1950s and 1960s, unwed pregnancy was considered very shameful especially for economically-mobile families in the period after World War II. Ann Fessler writes that "the postwar economic boom brought millions of families into the middle class, along with intense social pressure to conform to a model of family perfection.....single women who became pregnant were shunned by family and friends, evicted from school, and sent away to maternity homes." (jacket of the hardcover edition of The Girls Who Went Away. Janet Ellerby was shipped to an aunt in Ohio, two thousand miles from home, by her parents the day after they found out she was pregnant. One woman interviewed by Fessler explains "This was a period of time when there wasn't much worse that a girl could do. They almost treated you like you had committed murder or something." (Fessler, page 9). As we will see, not all homes were the same. St. Andre's Home treated its residents with dignity and tender loving care.

St. Andre's Home was a brand-new, three-story building when it was dedicated on March 3, 1940 in a ceremony officiated

by the Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Portland. On Easter Sunday, March 24, the first patient entered the home – a 16 year-old girl who was still in school and who kept her baby. By April 2, the home had 5 patients. By the end of October, 19 patients had entered the home. To better protect the patients' privacy, initially the girls were identified sequentially rather than given pseudonyms. Unlike most homes for unwed mothers, St. Andre's also served as a maternity hospital with labor and delivery rooms right on the premises, as well as its own nursery. When it opened, four doctors had hospital privileges – Drs. Larochelle, Levesque, Roussin and Perreault – and they regularly worked there, sometimes as volunteers.

...sociology psychology and women's studies describe the trauma and guilt of the young, unwed mother, often with no other choices...

The Home was located in a very tranquil spot on the banks of the Saco River on property that had been a farm. In fact, there continued to be a working farm at St. Andre's Home under the supervision of Sister St. Armand. In the archives one can find a photo of Sister riding a tractor. They had a large garden and horses and cows. The girls worked in the garden and helped the sisters can vegetables for the winter. When Sister St. Armand died in 1962, farming operations were discontinued.

The original farm and homestead had been purchased by the pastor of Biddeford's St. Andre's parish, Monseigneur Arthur Décary, his brother Zenon, who also served as a priest in the parish, and another brother priest in Canada. Prior to 1940, according to summary accounts of the home that I found in the archives, some young, pregnant, unmarried Franco-American girls went to La Crèche de St. Vincent de Paul, a home for unwed mothers in Quebec also ministered to by the Good Shepherd Sisters. Others, however, went to homes administered by Protestants like Talitha Cumi or homes not religiously affiliated. Monseigneur Décary thought it more appropriate to care for the unwed mothers, who in some cases were being literally thrown out of their homes, closer to home to better assure that adoptive parents whose mothers were Catholic



Sister Viola Lausier

would be adopted by a Catholic family. St. Andre's, however, accepted patients of all religions; Protestant babies would be adopted by Protestants and Jewish babies by Jewish parents (March 13, 1940 entry in archives). Père Décary invited the Good Shepherd Sisters to minister at the Home and they accepted. Anonymity was guaranteed and to this day that pledge is adhered to, so to speak, religiously.

A May 14, 1940 entry noted the baptism of the first child at St. Andre's. "The child is doing fine as is the poor mother (pauvre mère)". That reference is made clearer in a May 22, 1940 entry "We see young Marie Marguerite Viviane being separated from the arms of her poor mother". The books cited above by Janet Ellerby and Ann Fessler, as well as almost all the literature in this field of social history, sociology psychology and women's studies describe the trauma and guilt of the young, unwed mother, often with no other choices, constrained by her family into giving up her baby for adoption. Dr. Andre Fortier, who delivered babies at St. Andre's home for many years, recounted how he remembered the nuns staying up over half the night consoling young mothers before their trip to Alfred, Maine, seat of the York County Courthouse, where adoption papers were to be signed. Sister Viola Lausier, who worked at the Home for over 45 years, remembers one young lady who was brought to Alfred 3 times before she could finally bring herself to sign the surrender papers and give up her child. These were the days before open adoptions and the surrender was irrevocable. Dr. Fortier who befriended many of his

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(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 36) patients at St. Andre's sometimes received letters from his former patients begging him to help them find their children. He could not since he had no idea who the adoptive parents were. The Home and Hospital were entirely separate from the person at St. Andre's who facilitated adoptions. Only that person and perhaps a trusted staff member knew the birth mother's real name and the identity of the adoptive parents. Today, St. Andre's Home has facilitated the reunions of over 133 birth mothers and the children they have surrendered when both parties sought a reunion.

There are many citations in the archives that refer to St. Andre's Home as a refuge. In a 2007 local journal article, St. Andre's was again referred to as a refuge in its early years. In effect, the mostly young unmarried patients were brought to the Home by parents who were afraid of the abuse that an unforgiving community would heap on their daughters and what their neighbors would think if it were discovered that their daughter was pregnant. It was indeed a refuge.

Nevertheless, while some girls faced incredible amount of pressure from parents, their families, their boyfriends, their fiancés, social workers and society in general to give up their child, not all were forced to do so, although their choices were very limited in the immediate post World War II era. The best source that I uncovered in which residents were interviewed at length before 1973 was a Portland Maine Sunday Telegram article of April 30, 1967, four months before Lynne had her baby at St. Andre's. The author, Hazel Loveitt, interviewed seven girls and describes how 'the residents are on a first name basis, with even these names fictional. On rare occasions, a patient may know another's real identity.....The knowledge makes little difference. The philosophy in these cases is, 'We have something in common to conceal so we won't give each other away.'" At the time Ms. Loveitt visited, there were 15 girls in residence, 8 Catholics, 6 Protestants and one Jewish girl:

Lena who was 25 years old and a secretary, planned to give her child up for adoption and "intends to make a fresh start elsewhere afterwards" Her parents did not even "know about the pregnancy but a sympathetic older sister, in compliance with house rules that some relative or close friend must know, has been told."

Nancy (no age given but she was a ju-

nior in college) in her eighth month of pregnancy, "still can't make up her mind what to do about the baby." Although the baby's father did not know where she was, "he's paid all the expenses for her confinement, through her father's lawyer.....Nancy's concern about whether to place her child in a foster home or to have it adopted equaled her concern about her career."

"Alice (age 20) planned to leave St. Andre's for a new life in the Midwest two days before the adoptive parents arrived to take home her new baby"

Rachael, 17, a high school junior, planned to keep her baby and marry the child's father, an employed twenty-year old. "the couple must wait to be married



Sister Elizabeth Cyr

after Rachael is 18 in August and the boy reaches 21, or his parents grant permission. The young man has visited several times since she's been in the Biddeford Home".

Because Marie, a high school freshman, "believes that she and George will 'eventually' be married, she has decided to keep the baby, although it may have to be temporarily placed in a foster home. Marie and George will continue to date, a plan sanctioned by both sets of parents"

Louise, 25, is a college graduate and businesswoman in a nearby state who told her co-workers she had found a new job in Maine. She and Joe were engaged but did not marry because "I'd insisted there would be no marriage unless our children could be brought up in my (Catholic) Church..... She's never heard from Joe -he has her address and knows that he may visit her at St. Andre's - even though he was against giving up the child. So Louise will release her baby for adoption before she leaves for

a new job and a new life in another state."

Ruth 19 was a Jewish girl from a small town near Philadelphia. Pressured by her boyfriend to prove her love, she relented but he kept right on dating an old girlfriend. Her baby "will be adopted by a couple of the Jewish faith."

"Ruth and the other unwed mothers interviewed insist that they'll tell the men they may someday marry about their illegitimate babies....before the ceremony. 'if he couldn't accept it, he couldn't accept me. I think it would be a real test of his love for me,' says Ruth." I should add here that Lynne's husband and three other children always knew about her birth daughter. In fact, before she died from an incurable illness in 1994, Lynne's younger daughter told her Mom in an ironic comment (Lynne always sees the irony in lots of situations) "You gave away the wrong baby girl." (They were only two years and 3 days apart in age). Lynne's husband and children were also always very supportive of her, especially when she finally made contact with her birth daughter.

In my short talk with my birth Mom in February, 2003 she told me that her husband, my uncle, (yes, I was adopted by my birth mother's sister!), had always known about me. And I think back about how nice he always had been to me even though we were usually together at family gatherings where his brothers and sisters-in-law all knew "the secret."

I noted one sentence in the Loveitt article that stuck with me during my research: "Mothers who relinquish their babies to adoption may see and hold the infant before they leave the home" It is interesting, however, that Sister Elizabeth Cyr, the director and resident social worker at St. Andre's Home, emphasized that she encouraged the girls who refused this contact to at least look at their babies reminding them that "You will surely want to know your baby is healthy and that God gave him ten perfect little fingers and ten tiny toes. You will never be really sure unless you look with your own eyes". But given the fact that in 1965 only 7 of 118 women and girls kept their babies at St. Andre and only 7 out of 124 kept them in 1966, extensive contact was not encouraged. The national surrender rate was 80% according to Loveitt. Consequently, homes for Unwed Mothers in the 40's 50's and 60's did not encourage days-long contact between mother and child. In sharp contrast, today only about one percent of unmarried

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(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 37) mothers give their babies up for adoption. Sister Theresa Therrien who was associated with St. Andre's Home for over 22 years, having retired in 2009, was quoted to the effect that 50 years ago parents did not allow their daughters to come back home with their baby but that today they are told not to come home without the baby. Society changed a great deal in those 50 years.

The November 2, 1967 issue of the Biddeford-Saco Journal also carried a front page article by Peg Hendrick entitled "Sisters Help Girls Over a Difficult Point of Life." The article begins this way: "Linda, 20, had been President of her sorority at college. An honor student, she had always been shy with boys until she met Bob, a 21 year old student at a nearby university. They had been dating for two years when Linda realized she was pregnant." Bob did not want to get married and Linda was not ready to raise a child. "St. Andre's has been a second home to me" said Linda who added "my biggest regret is that I'll never know my baby. It is better this way, I guess."

Another resident, Doris, a tiny dark-haired 17 year old, recounted that "My parents were wild when they found out I was going to have a baby. They never told me about sex but I had read enough and heard enough to know what I was doing. There's no excuse. I thank God I am here where people understand and help. My boyfriend is only 16 but he wanted to marry me. My father wouldn't hear of it. I'd about given up when my mother heard about St. Andre's. I'll probably give my baby for adoption where I know he'll have a good home. We're so darn young for all this"

It was great to read in Ms. Loveitt's article that there was at least one father, Nancy's boyfriend, who had to bear some financial responsibility for his actions. There were other boyfriends who also paid the costs of a stay at St Andre's, according to the nuns I have interviewed. But they were few and far between. The father of Lynne's baby disappeared. "When I told him I was pregnant, he asked me what the heck I thought he should do. And the next thing I knew, he was gone..... I never heard from him again except for when I had the baby. I wrote him a note and he called me and said 'you sound so bitter, Lynne, you were never bitter.'" (Fessler, page 68). This last quote made it into a review of Ann Fessler's book in The Atlantic magazine because of its poignancy. (The Atlantic, May 2007, page 112).

One young girl interviewed by Ann Fessler told her that when she told her boyfriend she was pregnant, he said he would get affidavits from several of his fraternity brothers saying she had slept with all of them. Another could not help financially because he had gotten 3 girls pregnant at about the same time. When Janet Ellerby told the father of her child of her Dickensian experiences in her home for unwed mothers, he accused her of making the story up. The injustice of these situation is mind-boggling as most of the boys simply carried on with their lives without a care while many of the girls had their lives altered forever. It was the double standard at work, with a vengeance.

Nevertheless, typical of the Christian charity of the Good Shepherd sisters, Sister Elizabeth told Hazel Loveitt that "the fathers need help and understanding too, and wishes she had the staff to allow the home to include the fathers in its counseling ses-

...some homes for unwed mothers operated as baby mills using the girls as human incubators for greedy adoptive parents eager to pay large sums for a baby.

sions." I hope the unwed fathers received their counseling. They certainly needed it.

Lena, Nancy, Alice, Rachael, Marie, Louise, and Ruth were all interviewed before they had their babies. Ann Fessler conducted her interviews decades after her contacts had given birth; the regret, shame and sense of loss the abandonment of their child was still a powerful emotion in their lives. I hope that those mothers who surrendered their children at St. Andre's have been reunited happily with their birth children if that was the mothers' and children's wish, or that they have successfully put that episode of their lives behind them and moved on. Parents, families, social workers, and society certainly believed that the girls who were surrendering their babies could put their experiences behind them. For many girls, it did not work out that way.

It is clear from Loveitt's article that at least for the older women, Lena and Louise, who were both 25, the decision to relinquish their child was their own, although given society's attitude toward unwed motherhood, choices were limited. In an undated and unsigned article, entitled St. Andre's Home, written in about 1967, the author wrote "The

mother, of her own accord, must make the decision; is she to keep her child or surrender it for adoption." At St. Andre's, the decision at least for the younger girls appears to have been made before they entered the home – by their parents.

I was not been able to determine the average length of stay of the patients at St Andre's Home interviewed by Loveitt. Marie Marguerite Viviane's mother was there less than two months. Another girl, however, entered the Home in October 1940 and left in May 1941 "to go back to her family." (She was gone quite a while so it would be interesting to know what kind of story her parents concocted to explain her absence). The Home had received a check for \$700 (a princely sum in 1940) on behalf of this young lady for her care and to place her child for adoption. She gave birth to a young girl on March 22, 1941 and it was noted that female infants were more easily placed than boys. A careful reading of the daily log indicates that most of the girls whose entry and departure dates are recorded stayed about 3 months. Lynne, who had her baby in August, 1967 stayed a little over two months.

In some of the literature I have read it is implied that some homes for unwed mothers operated as baby mills using the girls as human incubators for greedy adoptive parents eager to pay large sums for a baby. This was definitely not the case at St. Andre's. In its first decade of existence, St. Andre's struggled to find homes for babies left in their care. Prayers were constantly offered to God to help the home find parents for newborn infants. Adoptive parents were highly praised for their sacrifice and Christian love in accepting another child in their family (I could not determine what percentage of adoptive parents were childless but most of the ones referred to in the archives had other children) There were numerous visits by staff to parishes around the state (St. Andre's was the only home for unwed mothers in the entire state) seeking prospective adoptive parents. There were also references to Attorney Henry Hamel (whose wife became the Home's greatest benefactor) for his work in helping place babies for adoption. The first notice that I ran across in the archives that all the babies at the home had been placed was on April 1, 1945. The Sisters welcomed the short period of time they could rest.

During its first year of operation the facilities at the home were underutilized. (*Continued on page 39*)

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Consequently, in October 1941, married women started coming to the home to have their babies. Some of the more prominent Franco American women in the city, such as Mrs. Lucien Lessard, (November 16, 1941) Mrs. Maurice Roux (January 29, 1942) and Mrs. André Fortier (October 19, 1949) gave birth at St. Andre's, which I believe is a testament to the care provided there. The married women, however, were housed on a different floor than the unmarried girls. Married women continued to deliver babies at St. Andre's Home until 1952 when, as the Home's patient population increased, the Sisters decided they had to concentrate on their primary mission, their ministry to the unwed mothers ("les filles mères", as they were called in French). Soon after married women were accepted, we start seeing names of mothers: Mrs. Alcide Nolet, Mrs. Jerome Gagne, and we start seeing reports of visits of adoptive parents and their "little treasures." Unfortunately, there are no references to single birth mothers coming back to the Home with their babies since most infants were surrendered. Some of the girls did come back to visit the nuns but without the children they had given up. And, of course, some of the girls who kept their babies came back to visit also (Interview with Sister Gertrude Champoux)

On Christmas Day 1940, the sister who was compiling the archives wrote: "the snow, the river deep in its coat of blue, the trees peaceful. It is so beautiful". Although less than 3 miles from the center of the city, St. Andre's Home was rather isolated in 1940, as was the intent of its founders.

On January 19, 1941 the home received a visit from a woman from Manchester who referred unwed mothers from New Hampshire to the home since "there were no Catholic homes in her area." Lynne was from New Hampshire in 1967 when she was referred to St. Andre's by Catholic Charities in the Granite state. Those arrangements were all made by her parents even though she was 20 years old at the time she gave birth.

Another notation in 1941 refers to these "unfortunate ones" (the young girls). "Even if the number of patients is small, their quality consoles us. A very good spirit animates them. They are happy with our system, like their teachers and give thanks to God for this refuge in this time of their distress. The parents of these unfortunate ones are busy arranging placements (adop-

tions) of the babies" (their grandchildren). (May 14, 1941).

January 23, 1942 - departure of another patient who had arrived on October 8, 1941 - "her prolonged stay led to a great attachment for the sisters and their work."

September 2, 1942 - Sister Superior and an assistant go to Portland "dans le but de trouver une voie pour placer les bébés. Nos appels au ciel restent sans réponse et quatre bébés tendent les bras vers un père et une mère qui les adopteront" ("with the goal of finding a voice that will help us place the babies. Our appeals to heaven have not yet received a response and 4 babies extend their arms to a father and mother who will adopt them") Until the mid-sixties, entries like these were common at St. Andre's as there were more babies available that adop-



Dr. Andre P. Fortier, M.D.

tive parents.

July 17, 1944 - "departure of a young Protestant girl. Very well educated. She greatly edified us. In her difficult situation, she went right into housekeeping work as if she was well acquainted with it. This pious, petite Anglican puts fresh flowers at the feet of the blessed Virgin that her mother would bring her every week."

On November 13, 1945, the 200th girl "brebis" (young lambs, as they were often referred to), entered St. Andre's Home. The home had been opened a little over five and one half years, for an average of 3 unmarried patients a month, or 36 per year. On November 23, 1947, St. Andre's delivered its 1,000th baby. Not one mother had died. Assuming that about 50 unmarried girls entered St. Andre's between 1945 and 1947, in its first seven years of existence, 70% of the births there were to married mothers. St. Andre's did have a close call on June 26, 1946 when a patient hemorrhaged and was taken to the Webber Hospital, the city's larger non-denominational hospital. The sisters' prayers were answered and by June 30, the

mother was out of danger. In an interview, Dr. Fortier, whose twins were born at St. Andre's in October, 1949, was proud of St. Andre's record of no maternal deaths when he started volunteering there.

The year 1946 saw a steady stream of unmarried patients to the home. World War II was over the baby boom was on. On April 13, 1946, the Home set a new record with 16 girls in residence. To give the reader a better idea of how the girls were perceived by the sisters at the home I will simply quote from passages in the archives.

August 19, 1946, "our girls in general show good will and are docile and hard working. Some leave out of a yearning to be home or in more familiar surroundings but all appreciate their stay with us"

On December 26, 1946 a young girl entered the home at 1:00 a.m. This "poor girl" was given the pseudonym, Marie. "From now on, our girls will be given names" instead of identified by the sequence of entry, wrote the sister, stating that the new practice was much more welcoming. One can easily surmise the details of this strange arrival time. The parents probably relented and let their daughter, whom they considered errant in her ways and having brought shame on the family by her pregnancy, celebrate Christmas at home; she was brought to the home immediately after the family festivities were over, however, and not a minute later. Lynne was allowed to attend her brother's college graduation but her mother made her wear a rather large, heavy raincoat even though it was warm and sunny. Lynne was almost 7 months pregnant. Her parents drove her to Biddeford the next day and dropped her off to a place she had never seen. She had never felt so lonely and abandoned in her life. At least they brought her all the way to the home. One participant in an internet group about St. Andre's whose father was a cab driver recounted how one father could not bring himself to drive an extra three miles but simply dropped his daughter in downtown Biddeford and hailed a cab to bring her to the home.

In January 1947 Nellie, Gilberte, Josephine, Anna and Florence arrive at the home. "It seems more human to give them names", writes the sister who is chronicling the history of the home. An entry later that month gives the reader an idea of how some of the girls and their families came to know of St. Andre's Home. "Bishop McCarthy calls to ask us to take another girl" (January 27, 1947) That same day the
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doctors at St. Andre's Home hospital ask Bishop McCarthy for permission to open a Catholic hospital in Biddeford. He consents although backers are not ready to staff the hospital yet. The cornerstone of the hospital was laid on August 13, 1950. That hospital called Notre Dame was finally completely opened in 1952 and was conveniently situated adjacent St. Andre's Home on Pool Street. This allowed St. Andre's hospital to service only unmarried girls while the married women started having their babies at Notre Dame. By 1963, the girls at St. Andre started giving birth at Notre Dame Hospital also, to avoid the added expense of duplicating facilities and equipment and finding qualified lay medical staff. By 1967 the girls were discharged directly from Notre Dame Hospital after recuperating from childbirth rather than returning to St. Andre's Home for rest and recuperation. In 1969, Notre Dame merged with the Webber Hospital and all deliveries occurred at the Webber after the merger. Soon the Webber moved to a new larger facility and was called the Southern Maine Medical Center. After the merger, the girls at St. Andre's had their babies at this regional hospital.

On August 17, 1947, Sister St. Ferdinand de Jesus - (Sister Gertrude Champoux, - Sisters began using their real names in 1967) - arrived at St. Andre to work for two weeks before beginning her course of nursing at the Mercy Hospital School of Nursing in Portland. She received her nurse's certificate on July 6, 1951 and joined the full-time nursing staff at St. Andre's.

Sister Gertrude, in one of her many letters to me, explained that she had some contact with the Home while in high school in the early 1940's because the Good Shepherd Sisters were her teachers at St. Joseph's High School. Some of these teachers lived at St. Andre's Home, augmenting the staff that was on call twenty-four hours a day. But Sister Gertrude was quick to add that I "never met any of the girls. Confidentiality! The sisters felt that they owed this to the girls who wished to keep their own secret." (Letter from Sister Gertrude, June 14, 2008)

Because of the difficulty that the Home had in placing for adoption the babies born there, the director of the home, Sister Elizabeth Cyr, contacted representatives of Maine's Division of Child Welfare (Dec. 4, 1947) and Catholic Charities of Boston (Dec. 12, 1947) in an effort to find adoptive

parents. By January 1948, the Home's wider geographic outreach efforts appear to have been working as it is noted that the happy adoptive parents of one young infant were returning home by plane. (January 1, 1948)

On October 18, 1948, the Sisters of St. Joseph's (Religieuses Hospitalières de St. Joseph) who would staff Notre Dame Hospital arrived to prepare for Notre Dame hospital's opening. Their presence increased religious staff with hospital experience in the city.

Throughout its first decade of existence, St. Andre's received literally hundreds of gifts and donations. Within a month of opening, the Red Cross brought 12 dozen eggs. (April 11, 1940) Dr. Larochelle who was Biddeford's most prominent obstetrician bought two radios for the home in June 1940, one for the recreation hall and one for the hospital area. Prominent Franco Americans donated baby furniture, clothes and hospital equipment. In 1943, the St. Andre's Home Ladies Auxiliary was founded for the primary purpose of fundraising. Over its 50 years of existence, this group held hundreds of fundraising events. The Ladies Auxiliary had been organized by Miss Hélène Thivierge a prominent Franco-American who was recognized by the French government for her efforts to promote the French language and culture in the city.

Later in 1947, new sewing machines were donated to St. Andre's Home and some of the nuns taught the girls how to sew, a handy skill especially for those girls who would keep their babies. Some of the patients gave gifts to the home upon departure. In November, 1948, for instance, one young Protestant girl Clara gave a green chasuble for the chapel to express her thanks to the sisters. (November 9, 1948). In later years, the Christ Child Guild (a parent group whose adopted children were born at St. Andre's) also helped raise funds for the institution. In reading the daily log of St. Andre's, I recognized as benefactors many parents and grandparents of my own classmates. In 1949 at the initiative of two of the girls, Eva and Nathalie, a small gift shop was set up in the reception area of the home. These girls knitted various articles of clothing that were sold, the proceeds of which went to an elevator fund. And, of course, they knitted for their babies.

The following decade saw a more concerted effort by the pastors of Catholic parishes to find good homes for the St. Andre's babies. A March 1950 entry mentions

that 6 couples had been recommended by the pastors as potential adoptive parents. Another notation mentions Mr. & Mrs. Omer Fortier of Falls Church, VA. (formerly of Lewiston, Maine) adopting a baby. (May 29, 1950). Later that year the Breton family of St. Joseph's parish adopted a child and the relieved Sisters marveled at "the real charity in this world." (July 3, 1950). Mrs. Sanford Waters gave \$100 for the elevator fund thanking the Sisters for their prayers in helping her to find a child to adopt elsewhere when she could not adopt at St. Andre's. (August 16, 1950). Another local family, the Lauziers, was praised for having adopted their 4th child from the home although they had children of their own. (Nov 3, 1951). Gerry Plante, a noted Franco American from Old Orchard Beach, who adopted a child from St. Andre's, told me that he discussed adoption with the pastor, the pastor talked to Sister Elizabeth Cyr and the adoption proceeded forthwith. It was an informal system. One factor that complicated adoptions was the health of the infant. One sick child Andrea was returned to the home in March 1953 from foster care because of illness. Andrea was adopted, however, as the sisters asked the Lord to "bless these good parents" who had agreed to adopt the sick child.

By 1950, the number of girls entering the home continued to increase. By October 15 of that year, 1500 babies had been born at St. Andre's. An October 21, 1951 entry in the archives announced the arrival of two unmarried patients this way: "deux brebis arrivés au bercail" (two young lambs enter the fold) as the home prepared to accommodate only unwed mothers. The last married patient left on Feb 5, 1952. Five days later there were 20 girls and 18 Sisters in residence. The home still had sufficient space, however, to accept Mrs. Helen Hamel as a patient in March 1952. Her diabetic condition was serious enough for her to receive the last rites but she recovered under the watchful eye of the Sisters. "what a charming woman, so polite, so pious, so dignified" wrote the Sister about Mrs. Hamel in the archive entry for March 25, 1952 when Mrs. Hamel was discharged.

Piety was not an uncommon attribute in the home. The Home had its own chaplain and daily mass was offered in the chapel. Many of the girls sang in the choir, along with the nuns, at the many religious observances held at the Home. It was usually noted when a non-Catholic entered the (Continued on page 41)

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home and wanted to convert (Nov. 24, 1951). Non-Catholics, however, were driven to a place of worship of their choice, if they chose. (Loveitt, page D3)

Stuck between the pages of the archives for 1953 was a thank you note from "Rachel" to the Mother Superior: "I want to thank you very much for being so very wonderful to me while I was there. Even though I am not a Catholic, my religion is much stronger because of the lectures and opportunities I was given while there. I lost a great deal by the mistake I made of having to come there. But in so many other ways I have gained and know that now I will have a much happier and more thoughtful life. Thank you so very much for all you people have done for me. I hope if ever I can be of help you will let me know. I enjoyed playing bridge with you very much. I miss it already because no one at home here plays. When I come to visit some time perhaps we can have a game."

In early 1954, St. Andre's Home received its license to become an adoption agency. Sister Elizabeth Cyr, who held her Master's degree in Social Work from Boston College, would conduct the home studies. Becoming an official, licensed and registered child placement agency gave St. Andre's Home a wider geographic range from which to find prospective adoptive parents. In later years, as society's views toward unwed mothers became much more tolerant with fewer patients entering the Home and fewer and fewer of its patients surrendering their child, an increasing amount of St. Andre's work revolved around performing home studies for other adoption agencies and for international adoptions.

Later in 1954, with donations to the Home, St. Andre's bought a television set for the girls, which was a big hit. Since pregnancy is traditionally reputed to induce cravings, Sister St. Armand would bring pails full of strawberries, some picked by the girls, to the kitchen to be eaten by the girls and staff. ("God spoils us", wrote the chronicler). Sister Gertrude stressed that medical and kitchen staff made sure the girls ate healthy foods since they "were eating for two." But there were notations that on holidays – July 4, for instance – the girls were treated to a "pétard sucré" (literal translation – sugared, sweet firecracker). No one seems to remember what these were but I bet they were delicious. By October 1954,

it was noted for a second time that all St. Andre's infants had been adopted and the nursery was empty. The sisters could rest for a little while and care for the remaining mothers-to-be.

On October 23, 1954, a study group from Portland, Maine came to visit St. Andre's "to see how we do our work." They asked Sister Ste. Elizabeth if the girls were bad "méchantes." "No, we have no bad girls" answered the Sister. Given the fact that many of these girls had been abandoned by the father of their child and sometimes thrown out of their homes by their parents, the Sister continued "we have to try to penetrate the walls that they have put around themselves, understand them, love them. After that our work of helping them is easy." At the end of the visit, the head of the delegation, a Mrs. Sullivan, the wife of a judge, gave the Home a \$50 donation.

At a November 28, 1954 General Assembly of the Ladies Auxiliary, 75 members, almost all of whom had French surnames, were in attendance. The sister superior described the St. Andre's mission as: "Providing a home for those who need to hide their difficulties and hearts. We must be good and strong to help them back on the right road. We must help those in need. It is a Catholic duty. Some of our girls come from broken homes and from homes where love was lacking and who fell for the first guy who said 'I love you.'" The chronicler wrote that the Dames had tears in their eyes after that address. This same theme was again reiterated in the archive entry of December 4, 1955 at another assembly of the Ladies Auxiliary. (The December 5, 1953 issue of the Biddeford Daily Journal has a photo of 48 members of the Ladies Auxiliary with two sisters attending an open house at the Home. There is no indication of the topic of discussion that day but any formal program probably focused on the same theme as the 1954 and 1955 assemblies. Forty-five of the forty-eight lay attendees had French surnames.)

The May 20, 1960 issue of the Biddeford Daily Journal carried a front-page photo of Sister Ste. Elizabeth and an article marking its 20th anniversary of service. The general public was invited to this open house and the event was hosted by 13 Sisters, including "Rev. Sister St. Fernand de Jesus, R.N., obstetrical supervisor." (Sister Gertrude). Over 225 attendees, more than 75% of whom sported French surnames, were also listed individually. Attendance was free but I surmise that the Sisters made

an appeal for funds to help carry out their mission.

There is very little information about the family background of the patients in the archives. Confidentiality was sacrosanct. There were a few entries that indicated visits from representatives of Maine's Department of Social Welfare (DSW) to girls who were in the care of that government agency. The number increased over the years and in its later years, many of the patients were sent to St. Andre's by Maine's Department of Human Services. The four former residents whom I have contacted, however, were private patients.

In February 1960, Helen Hamel died and left an estate of over \$300,000 to St. Andre's Home. The sisters decided to enlarge the Home. By 1965, the new wing of the St. Andre's named for Mrs. Hamel was opened. The new wing "afforded 24 private and semi-private rooms, a chapel, an auditorium, a cafeteria, a few small parlors, smokers on each floor, a spacious lounge, a library, an arts and crafts room, a sundeck and a sun porch. The rooms left vacant in the first building by the transfer of the girls to the new quarters were made into offices for the social workers and staff members." (A Brief History of Saint Andre's Home Biddeford, Maine written by Mrs. Ann Meyers, Director of Education at the home in the late 1960's) In the meantime, the entire third floor of the old building was renovated into individual rooms for the Sisters. Prior to that time, they had slept on cots in their offices. (Loveitt). The open house with the 200+ attendees mentioned earlier featured a tour of the new, third floor bedrooms.

In 1966 the staff at St. Andre made arrangements with the faculty at Biddeford High School to start teaching classes that would lead to a high school diploma. Prior to that time, classes were more informal and did not provide high school credit. The girls had been given pre-natal instruction, taught to sew and cook, and received instruction in math, English and science from the nuns resident at St. Andre's who taught school during the day. There are a number of photos in the archives which were always taken from the back of the classroom with all the girls facing away from the camera. The girls and their families had been promised confidentiality and St. Andre's always made good on that promise. The high school at St. Andre's Home was called Hope High School. Every year, a small graduation ceremony was held even if only one patient (*Continued on page 42*)

(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 41) was receiving her diploma. Some of the girls who had been forced to drop out of school in their senior year were able to graduate from Hope High School not long after they would have graduated with their public or private school classmates.

The typical day at St. Andre's home was a busy one. Some of the girls worked in the laundry which after 1962, when married women were no longer admitted, had scaled back its operations. The number of girls who worked in the garden also declined after 1962 after farm operations were discontinued. Others worked in the kitchen. One of Lynne's duties was to read stories to a blind nun who lived at the Sister's convent.

And I was struck from reading the archives at the number of parties and celebrations held at the home. Dozens of religious feast days, including "St. Patrice", who had entered the Franco-American pantheon of saints, got his party every March 17. There were Halloween parties, parties on the 4th of July and the girls even organized events to mark the 25th or 50th anniversaries of sisterhood among the staff (see archives, July 26, 1966 for instance) or surprise parties for religious staff entering college (January 22, 1967)

Life at St. Andre's was still isolated even in the mid-1960s but not without diversions:

The Halloween party planned for October, 1966, for instance, is described this way by mother-to-be Serena:

"Halloween comes but once a year and we, the girls at St. Andre's, decided it was to be a memorable occasion and one never to be forgotten by the Sisters or the girls. The party took about four days to plan and two solid days of 'active labor' (if you will pardon the expression) devoted to decorating and the making of prizes. Our first objective was secrecy and was executed beautifully through the cooperation of the girls. When the bewitching hour of 7:30 P.M. arrived on Halloween night the Sisters were escorted to the basement by Jane, the kooky clown, and Terry as the intoxicating gypsy. To greet them when they assembled in the hall was Rachel, known to one and all now as 'the Little Pumpkin'. We so kindly gave the anticipating nuns an outline of the program and briefly explained what those selected for the 'House of Horror' were in store for. Awaiting the Sisters in the auditorium was Susan who adorned each and every sister and guest with a paper carnation, also giving

them the opportunity to guess the amount of beans in the pumpkin. They were left free to wander about the auditorium to participate in the different games we had set up in a carnival type fashion. Oh, but the festivities did not end there. While there was fun and laughter in the one room, screams of terror could be heard echoing from within our 'House of Horror' We then assembled in the auditorium where we awarded the prizes to the most proficient in the games. We were then entertained with a piano selection from Sister St. Lucille and the 'Indian Love Call' harmonized beautifully by Sister St. Elizabeth and Sister St. Cyril. While the cider and cookies were being served in trots Sister St. Priscilla disguised as 'Snoopy' to haunt Sister St. Cyril. This put the finishing touches on what was a really amusing evening. I'll never forget it. Will you"

Serena

Halloween, 1966

Sister Gertrude Champoux has written to me about what life was like for the girls at St. Andre's during the years that Ann Fessler writes about in her book, the 1950's and 1960's. An octogenarian at the time I interviewed her, Sister Gertrude had an excellent memory. Her penmanship was flawless as was the penmanship of the sisters who kept the St. Andre's logs. I never had any trouble reading their writing.

"1950-1970 Daily Schedule at St. Andre's Home. (as I remember it).

6:30 Mass – Our residents were free to attend. There were always some in attendance.

7:30 Breakfast

--followed by approx. an hour of light cleaning or assistance in the different departments of the Home & Hosp. (The heavy & seasonal cleaning was done by the sisters).

--free time followed – often interrupted by the weekly medical clinic on the Hospital Floor or by Doctors' visits.

--craft lessons were given by the House mother or other Srs.

--lunch at noon followed by a mile-walk of the group around the grounds with the House Mother.

--Rest period – Residents would read or write letters but were encouraged to rest in bed.

-- pre natal classes or pre natal exer-

cise classes

--shorter walk or free time.

5:30 evening meal

--free time in lounge: games, cards, T.V. etc.

-- 7:30 Conference (psychology, religion, sociology, etc. The house mother & girls would share on different topics. Sex education was always popular)

--followed by night prayer

--after night prayer, residents would either retired or stay up in the lounge doing their thing. Many took advantage of this time to speak privately to the House Mother. Such talks could last hours at a time.

--Lights out at 10:00 o'clock in the dorm

*When official classes started at St. Andre's, the teaching would be held at a time most convenient for the instructors – who often came from another school"

I never had the opportunity to speak with my own birth mother about her daily routine at the Talitha Cumi home. She did mention in our talk together in February 2003 that the girls would knit little booties and mittens for their babies. Claire, my mom's roommate, mentioned that the Jamaica Plain Home was adjacent to the Franklin Park Zoo and the girls would go visit the zoo and walk in the park. There were also pre-natal classes, chores in the kitchen or in housekeeping and free time to listen to the radio and write letters home.

At St. Andre's home one slowly sees the carefully constructed safeguards for total anonymity slowly begin to be relaxed, although the 1965 Biddeford Directory still described the Home saying "There the girls are assured of absolute discretion as to their identity." (page 72). A note in the archives in 1960 mentions that for the first time the girls were allowed to help with the decoration of the crèche in the front of the building. (Dec 24, 1960) Lynne mentions that when she lived at the Home in 1967, the girls were not allowed to take walks on the spacious grounds between the front entrance of the building and Pool Street. Perhaps one of the reasons was to avoid any additional incidents such as those that sometimes occurred when they did stroll behind the building along the river; that is, unidentified boaters (Sister Gertrude said they were college students) who hollered obscenities at the girls.

In 1966, lay volunteers were accepted for the first time at the home as long as they were skilled and deemed to be discreet. (Continued on page 43)

(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 42)

While there was no contact between St. Joseph High School students who picnicked at St. Andre in its early years and the patients there, that changed at least in the 1960s. Several members of the St. Joseph's (girls) high school class of 1965 went to St. Andre's Home to hear some of the girls, who were seated behind a screen, speak to their contemporaries. One of my fellow class of 1965 graduates remember feeling very sad for the girls who had been forced to leave home and school and found themselves in a strange town without their families.

By the mid-1960s there is also increasing contact between the staff at St. Andre's and the diocese of Portland. Neil Michaud, who was the diocesan director of Human Resources, visited St. Andre's with increasing frequency. The Home also hosted noted state legislators such as Lucia Cormier who gave talks to the staff at the home on how to lobby in Augusta. Her strategies bore fruit apparently when the State of Maine increased its stipends to St. Andre's for indigent girls from Maine from \$3,000 per year to \$8,500 per year. The payment from the state had been \$3,000 "for some time" (July 31, 1967). A diocesan fund drive in 1967 had also earmarked money for St. Andre's Home to be used, among other needs, "for follow-up services after discharge, especially for the mother who decides to keep her child." (Catholic Charities Newsletter, Vol 1, No.2, March-April, 1967) In 1965, the Bishop of Portland, Daniel Feeney, made an anonymous gift of \$10,000 to the Sisters to help retire the debt for construction of the new wing costs of which had run over budget. (thank you letter from Sister St. Elizabeth to Bishop Feeney dated January 27, 1965 at the Chancery Library in Portland). In 1968, the diocese donated another \$20,000 to the Sisters to help retire the same debt. (memo dated July, 1969 from the diocesan bureau of human relations services central office in chancery library files). While very appreciative of the Diocese's help, the Sisters also approached the Bishop about relinquishing control of the Home because of the increasing costs of lay staff and a declining number of patients that had begun in the late 1960s. The sisters simply could not afford to fund the home without diocesan help, as they had done since 1940. There is no hint of any of those negotiations in the home's archives but there exists many letters in the Chancery Library. Multipage letters and memos went

back and forth between Portland and Biddeford discussing the most mundane details of such a change in ownership. Finally, in February, 1973, Sister Anita Therrien, the provincial supervisor at the time, wrote Bishop Gerety saying that the Sisters had decided to continue sponsoring and funding the Home themselves. I wrote Sister Gertrude to see if she remembered any of the issues involved. She did not but did check with Sister Anita who was residing at the St. Joseph infirmary at the time. Sister Anita did not remember the exchange of letters but Sister Gertrude added "evidently, this offer was never accepted since we retained the ownership of S.A."

Most Franco-Americans in Biddeford were well aware of the Portland Irish hierarchy's traditional reluctance in helping struggling Franco institutions. St. Louis High School in Biddeford had closed in June, 1970 and St. Ignatius in Sanford had closed in 1967 when little financial help was forthcoming from the diocese to help the schools survive. The Sisters' efforts to have the diocese take over the operation of the Home were never made public. If they had, refusal to commit would have been ascribed by some Francos to Irish-American diocesan leaders' traditional high-handed treatment of almost 80% of Catholics in the Pine Tree State. Gil Domingue summarized the entire outcome by tersely saying that without the Good Shepherd Sisters, St. Andre's Home would have closed in the early 1970s.

According to Mr. Domingue, a lay director at the Home for a decade and a half from 1971 to 1987, Sister Elizabeth Cyr had also written to Bishop Peter Gerety in Portland for help in staffing and financing the work of the Home. The diocese finally assigned Mrs. Katherine Cronin to the Home in mid-October 1967 as a counselor. A new unwed mother's handbook was published that same month at the home. Entries such as the one on March 9, 1968 "girls prepare breakfast with the sisters. All eat together and sign and play cards after the meal" become more common. On July 4, 1968 the girls are praised in the archives for their clever, original and patriotic plays and parties they organized and put on. Lynne has mentioned to me that she was vocally against the war in Vietnam as were some of the other girls. Father Matthew Audibert, who was vociferous in his opposition to the Vietnam War, was the chaplain at St. Andre's home in the late 1960s. On October 15, 1969, on the day of the nationwide anti-Vietnam war moratorium, a mass for peace was said at

St. Andre's home and the girls made posters and banners for the occasion. A few years later, prayers were being said at St. Andre's so that Father Audibert would remain in the priesthood. The Vietnam War itself is seldom mentioned in the archives but the sisters did pray for peace. Father Audibert returned to Canada and did leave the priesthood.

In late summer 1968, Sister Elizabeth Cyr, the Director of Social Work at St. Andre since 1952, left the Home for a year to return to Quebec due to ill health. Katherine Cronin was named to replace her and took over as acting Director on September 3, 1968. Soon there were more open house events for parents and other relatives of the girls. There were roundtable discussions for the parents and relatives and sometimes films that had been recommended by the girls were shown. Other sessions involved talks by psychologists. The home economics students prepared lunch for the guests. On December 20, 1968, Juanita entered St. Andre's Home. She was the 2,000th unwed mother welcomed by the Good Shepherd Sisters.

On January 9, 1972, 9 girls were admitted to the home, a new one-day record. The Dames, who since 1943 had been fundraising for St. Andre's, now began to take a more active role in interacting with the residents. On January 26, 1972 13 Dames met with 17 prospective residents who had been referred to the Home by the State of Maine. Dames took the girls shopping and hosted them at home for meals during the Christmas holidays. Sunday nights became bowling night at Roll Away lanes in town. The owner, Al Huot, whose sister was a nun, was a well-known benefactor in town. I am sure the girls bowled for free.

There were as many changes administratively as there were in policy. Sister Elizabeth Cyr who had returned to Biddeford to assume the position of Coordinator for Planning of Services to Unwed Parents and Adoption left the city again for Caribou in November 1970. (Sister Elizabeth died in 1977 at the age of 57 - The St. Andre's Home endowment fund is named for Sister Elizabeth). In September 1971, Gil Domingue, a professional administrator, took over as executive director of the home. By June 30, 1972, Katherine Cronin had retired. A skillful fundraiser, Mr. Domingue, with the help of Finance Director Sister Viola Lausier, used his skills to obtain in July 1973 \$260,000 from the State of Maine to fund St. Andre's Home for a two-year period. (Continued on page 44)

(Saint Andre's Home of Biddeford, Maine: A History continued from page 43)

St. Andre's Home Inc. would soon operate 3 group homes, two of which were more centrally located in the state – in Bangor, Lewiston and Biddeford. Since the girls no longer gave birth at the home, no longer returned to the home after giving birth and were more likely to keep their babies, it would actually be less expensive to run three group homes than one large institution that required maintenance, upkeep and landscaping. The old St Andre's Home was converted to an assisted care facility for the elderly which is still operating today.

Amid, these changes, the press started reporting about St Andre's Home's imminent demise. (Portland Press Herald, February 11, 1973). On March 4, Gil Domingue wrote to the editors: "St. Andre's is shifting, (not closing) its home from its present somewhat isolated (that was an understatement although in 1973 St. Andre's was not as isolated at it had been in 1940) institutional-like building to a smaller house located closer to routine community activities". With the shift in societal attitudes toward the unwed mother, there was no need to be isolated any longer.

True to their word, the Sisters bought a home on Prospect St. in Biddeford on October 2, 1973. The process was expedited since the home that was purchased belonged to the mother of one of the Good Shepherd Sisters. There was some trepidation in the neighborhood (the "not in my backyard" sentiment) but the new group home was in operation for over 40 years with only one incident that required police intervention. The Good Shepherd Sisters had been ministering in Biddeford as teachers since 1882. They were given the benefit of the doubt by a respectful public when they wished to expand their ministry or adapt it to more current societal standards. While the group home was much less isolated than its predecessor on Pool Street, it was set back from the street and bordered on one side by Waterhouse

Field, where Biddeford High School played its football games. Society had changed a great deal since 1940, and frankly the girls did not need to be hidden anymore due to the greater acceptance of the unwed mother. In 2009, the old family homestead was torn down and a new one-story modern facility was built in its stead and was designed specifically to care for young mothers and their babies.

The move from Pool Street to Prospect Street in 1973 was not without some nostalgia. The girls planned an elaborate last Christmas party that would be held in the building that had been home for abandoned unwed mothers for 33 years. (Dec. 20, 1973). A few days before, the home had placed two babies for adoption with "two charming young overjoyed couples." Despite the complicated logistics of the move, the work of the home continued unabated.

On December 23, the girls began moving to Prospect Street. The girls who were able to go home went home. Two mothers-to-be who could not go home or had no home to return to moved to the group home. That first night, one girl went into labor and delivered at the Webber Hospital soon after. The hospital was actually closer to the new group home than the Pool Street building had been. A new era had begun at St. Andre's Home. (Interview with Sister Madeleine d'Anjou on November 6, 2018 by Nicole Morin Scribner). By February, 1974, another group home in Bangor had been purchased and was being prepared to accommodate unwed mothers who lived in central Maine. The home opened its doors on November 1974.

To encourage more lay support for the institution, St. Andre's Home supporters also organized the Friends of St. Andre Home to supplement the work and fund-raising activities done by the Ladies Auxiliary. The group, which was made up primarily of adoptive parents and increasingly of adopted children who had been born at St. Andre, held its first meeting at the home on February

3, 1973. The Sisters had always solicited funds and help from adoptive parents. This group, however, became a more formal organization with a statewide presence. Its first five officers came from Lewiston, Saco, South Portland, and two from Waterville. By 1970 adopted children also took a more active role in the Ladies auxiliary. Some were approaching 30 years old by then and they greatly appreciated the existence of the home and its work. (See Friends of St. Andre's Home Newsletter March 1973) The Friends are "an association of people with a common interest in St. Andre Home and who have a desire to see the Home continue to serve the needs of unmarried mothers and their child." (Newsletter July 1973). Executive Director Gil Domingue cited the Friends' behind-the-scenes lobbying efforts in Augusta for the \$260,000 appropriation in 1973. (Newsletter, July 1973)

I was continually amazed at how seldom current events were ever mentioned in the archives at St. Andre's home. There was no mention of the attack on Pearl Harbor although there were a couple of entries about local civil defense personnel being on the alert for German submarines on the Biddeford coast. There was a detailed description of VE day but no mention of VJ day 4 months later. The election of John F. Kennedy is noted. On January 1973 mention is made of LBJ's death and the Paris Peace Accords ending the Vietnam War. The Roe v. Wade Supreme Court decision was not mentioned, however.

The Sisters simply continued their ministry to unwed mothers as they had for 33 years in Biddeford and for 123 years since the order's founding. As was written anonymously in an undated summary of the home "in 1973, in response to the needs of the time, to changing attitudes toward illegitimate pregnancy, and to trends toward de-institutionalization, the services of St. Andre's Home Inc., were relocated to group homes in Biddeford and Bangor."

(See Fall Issue for 2nd Installment)

***The mission of Saint Andre Home is to:
Serve women & children in need;
Strengthen & restore child and family life;
Promote the individual dignity of each person
approaching the Agency with a need.***

POETRY/POÉSIE...



Pépère Arthur Loiselle stands with Mémère Eva Loiselle behind one of his beloved horses.



Tablier

Mon tablier est joli, n'est-ce pas?
Je suis prête à vous servir:
Du café au lait,
Du thé épîcé,
Du chocolat--Pourquoi pas?
Je suis prête à vous servir
En beauté,
En charité.

My apron is pretty, isn't it?
I'm ready to serve you:
Coffee with milk,
Spiced tea,
Chocolate--Why not?
I'm ready to serve you
In beauty,
In charity.

—Maureen Perry

Pépère Was a Teamster

Pépère was a teamster, not a textile worker
Like so many Québécois who came to Lowell.
No indoor work for him: he stands beside his horses
In a photo of the long flatbed wagon
Loaded with logs that he would haul to some construction
Site within the ever-growing mill city.

He loved horses. On a farm acquired later
In Chelmsford, where he raised his brood of nine,
Putting his in-house labor force to work as each
Child arrived, thus adding another pair of hands,
He kept horses, at first to pull the farm machines
And wagons of the early 1900's, then,

When engines disenfranchised equine laborers,
They served as recreation for his sons and daughters,
Who rode them through the woods and pastures of the farm,
Enjoying rural pleasures on the dirt roads
Of the old Yankee town that once had sent
Militia men to help start a revolution.

I never knew him, since he died at 63
Before I, a Lowell girl, was born two years later
And grew up in the little house my other Pépère
Built in 1927, close to Chelmsford's
Border near where An Wang would build his towers
Across from where Lowell's poor farm once had stood.

He smoked hard, my mother's father, as so many
Did then, and died of cancer that would eat
Through his chest and back to put him in his grave.
And not long after, my father's father died too
(From hardening of the arteries my parents said)
And soon his wife — three grandparents I never knew.

French-Canadians all: not greatly schooled, but
Trained to toil, poor rural people of Québec,
Building the only life they knew how — not aiming
High, since high had never been within their sight
Back in Québec, la belle province, with its rolling hills
And winding roads and long, long winter nights.

But in their labor and insistence that their children
Labor, too, they paved a road to other work
And opportunities their children's children then might
Use to gain a foothold in society that
They themselves weren't dreaming of when living better
Simply meant the money for more clothes and food.

Chers pères inconnus, chère mémère jamais vue,
Je prie, souvenez-vous de moi, votre petite fille,
Jusqu'à ce qu'on se rencontrera à la patrie
Où tout est bien, et tout compris, et tout oublié,
Et tout rempli, parce qu'on se réjouit de se reconnaître,
Et on désire seulement la joie de vivre.

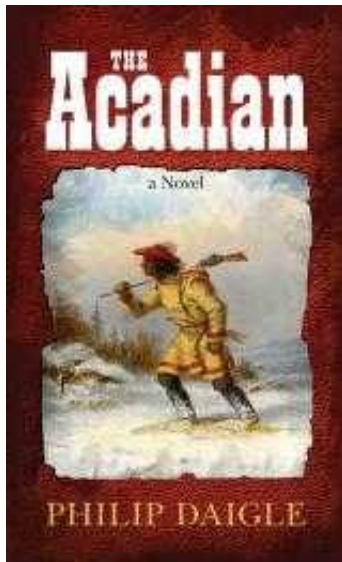
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BOOKS/LIVRES

The Acadian

by Phillip Daigle



The Acadian is the story of an underdog who thrives by never giving up.

In 1660, Acadia lies between Boston and Quebec, and both France and England claim it. The vast area of old-growth forest and pristine waterways is home to the Mi'kmaw people. The French colonists in Acadia have established a friendly alliance with their Native hosts, but Massachusetts Militiamen currently occupy the four Acadian forts.

Olivier arrives from France as an indentured servant and runs away from his employer for the fur trade's adventurous life. When he witnesses an atrocity committed by rogue English soldiers, he's drawn into the resulting conflict by Atahocam, a Mi'kmaw warrior who fights to avenge his family's murder. Olivier dreams of his own land, a wife, and a family, but every winter, he's drawn back to the woods, and its dangerous adventures, jeopardizing his family.

If you enjoy historical fiction and Native American literature like Barkskins, you'll enjoy The Acadian: Olivier.

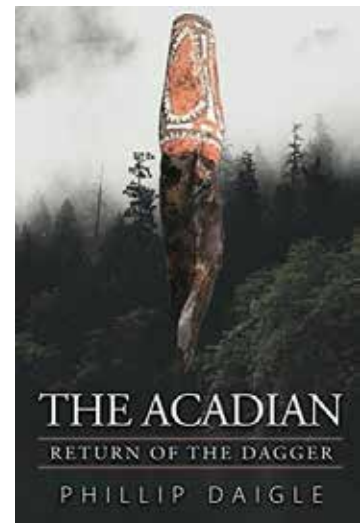
The Acadian: Return of the Dagger

by Phillip Daigle

What did it take to be a hero in the New World?

It's 1661 in Eastern Canada where a handful of French colonists hang on to a piece of paradise called Acadia. Deep in the woods, an orphaned eighteen-year-old enters a man's world in a remote logging camp where he witnesses an atrocity that changes the course his life. A Port Royal businessman plays a dangerous game of both sides against the middle while he tries to save his beloved homeland. A Mi'kmaw warlord raises an army to challenge the English and avenge the massacre of his clan. A Catholic priest, has his faith turned inside out through his relationship with a Mi'kmaw healer and shaman, who must recover an ancient obsidian dagger that cuts through the curtain to the spirit world.

The brilliantly researched and rendered historical setting creates a unique slice of time and place full of significance. The action is fast moving and the characters rich in nuance and emotion.



About Phillip Daigle:

Phillip was born and grew up in an Acadian community in Northern Maine. Like most of his Acadian neighbors, he had never heard of Acadia and knew nothing of the history of his early ancestors. Half a century later, Phil's interest in genealogy uncovered the history of Acadia which climaxed with the expulsion and diaspora of the Acadians from the colony they established and occupied for one hundred years. Phil's stories seek to bring the early years of the colony of Acadia to life.

<https://phillipdaigle.com/about-phillip-daigle/>

Anglo-Normans - Bilingual French Canadians of Norman Descent

by *Denise R. Larson*

Genealogists of non-Catholic French Canadian descent whose ancestors lived on the Gaspésie, the long paw of a peninsula that stretches into the Atlantic Ocean north of New Brunswick, might do well to examine Church of England and United Empire Loyalists records for traces of their family name.

While researching the Ramier and Bebee families, I cast a line in the direction of the Gaspésie and the people who settled there. My interest snagged on the history of the Channel Islands, which are off the coast of Normandy.

The Ramier ancestor who I was tracing had been born on Jersey, the largest of the Channel Islands. His heritage was Norman, so his family's French connection might go back before 1204, when the population voted to remain with the English crown rather than revert back to Normandy and France.

In time, a robust fishing industry enticed men and their families to leave Jersey and follow the cod to North American fishing grounds. Many settled in the English colonies of British North America, aided by the fishing companies of Jersey and Guernsey that needed large numbers of fishermen and helpers to meet the demand for fish.

During the eighteenth century, the Anglo-Normans from Jersey and Guernsey, Aurtigny, and Sercq who settled on the

Gaspésie, especially in Bonaventure County around Port Daniel and Paspébiac, spoke French at home but English at church and school. They developed the fishing industry during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Port Daniel became world renown for the quality of its catch.

In 1783, British ships transported more than thirty thousand Loyalist troops and civilians from New York City to ports in Nova Scotia (and present day New Brunswick) and Quebec. This group of emigrés are called United Empire Loyalists. They were given two hundred acres as compensation for their losses in the newly formed United States and to reward their loyalty to the Crown. (Some of the land given to these displaced persons had been seized from French Acadians who refused to swear allegiance to England.) The records of the marriages between the new landowners and the locals, many of whom spoke English and belonged to the Anglican or Church of England, can reveal names of Anglo-Norman families and perhaps their origin in the Channel Islands.

According to Abbot J.P. Ferland in his lecture on the Gaspésie, first published in 1861 by Emmanuel Brasseur, the Church-of-England Paspébiacs adopted the French of the Catholic Acadians but did not go so far as to intermarry with them. There was a mission in Bonaventure and Casapédiac for the Acadians, and one in Port Daniel for

the Paspébiacs.

The fishermen were also farmers, but the abbot wrote that the habitants of Paspébiac were heavily dependent on the "House of Robin." Mr. Charles Robin, who was from Jersey, was said to rule with absolute power. He persuaded the fishermen that there were advantages to having no more than ten arpents (about 10 acres) of land to cultivate. This gave the men more time to fish but also made them dependent on and often in debt to the company store.

Charles Robin and Company grew so large that there was a shipyard at its headquarters in Paspébiac that built nearly three dozen ships to transport the catch to Europe and South America. On the return trip, the cargo was salt, supplies, and goods for the company stores.

The drying and salting of cod lasted into the 1930s. Refrigeration of food stuffs, improved transportation methods, and the diminishment of religious meatless fast days all contributed to the decline of the fishing industry on the Gaspésie.

Denise R. Larson lives in the greater Bangor metropolitan area. She is the author of Companions of Champlain and several works of fiction that are available from Apple's iTunes bookstore.

Helpful websites: <https://www.societe-jersiaise.org>

<https://www.gov.je/Leisure/Jersey/Pages/History.aspx>

Jersey Family History Research: <http://www.jerseyancestry.com>



Photographe inconnu, Dépeçage de la Morue à Percée, non daté | Don de Sylvio Gauthier, Collection du Musée régional de Rimouski, NAC SG-40. <https://quoivivrerimouski.ca/evenements/rimouski/bas-saint-laurent-gaspesie-parcours-et-cartes-postales>



Map of Channel Islands courtesy of wikipedia.org



Our Acadian Roots

by
Jim Bélanger
Hollis, NH

Acadia had been, until this time, mostly left alone. The Acadians had been forced, several times, to take oaths of allegiance to Great Britain. Those who took this oath were allowed freedom of religion and were guaranteed protection so that they did not have to bear arms. That made them less of a threat and they were largely ignored by both the French and the English. They did not have to serve in military service, paid no taxes and were left to their own rule. With the settlement of Halifax and the influx of English settlers, mostly military, this changed the makeup of Acadia. You can imagine what happened to Nova Scotia when it exploded from about 250 settlers to over eight thousand.¹

ACADIAN HISTORY

In 1603 a small group of French merchants formed a company to which the King of France granted a monopoly for all the fur trade in the Gulf of St Lawrence region. As soon as winter broke, they left France on a three month crossing to the new world. In early summer of 1604, their vessels approached the southern end of Nova Scotia (this was called Acadia by the French) and established a settlement on an island at the mouth of the St Croix River. Many did not survive the tremendous chore of building homes and growing enough food to endure the coming winter. The first winter claimed many lives from scurvy because food, good drinking water² and shelter were scarce. In the Spring of 1605 these settlers moved across the Bay of Fundy and established a permanent community called Port Royal. Port Royal was the beginning of Canadian Acadian history. The settlers built a mill and planted gardens with the seeds and plants brought in from France. One must realize the sacrifice these people made by saving these seeds and plant through the winter famine.

Samuel de Champlain was the community's first leader and he established "The Order of Good Cheer". This was a way of life where everyone in the community worked together as one big family (possibly the first "Canadian commune") and took turns at preparing the food. When it came to be your turn to gather and prepare the food, you wore a golden chain. Meals were eaten as one huge family and were accompanied by song, stories and ceremony. In this way, the new settlers practiced their heritage and handed down their homeland customs to their children. This practice not only made for very efficient use of time and material but made the community very close knit with little room for dissension.

The main purpose for making the ocean voyage, in the first place, was to trap and export furs. Since Port Royal was really not in the deep woods and not conducive to the trapping of furs, Champlain went further inland. In 1608 he established a settlement in what is today Quebec City. This location was not only ideal for the "Rendezvous" that the trappers needed but was a good location for a strong defense because of the narrowing of the river with its high bluffs.

In 1613, Port Royal was attacked by a raiding party from Virginia and destroyed. Thus Port Royal passed into the hands of the British. In 1621, a Scottish nobleman reestablished Port Royal and changed the name from Acadia to Nova Scotia, which meant New Scotland. The French regained the territory in 1632 and for the next three hundred and fifty years the Acadian French participated in the establishment and expansion of Canadian history. Acadia switched between French and British rule many times during the period following 1632.

In 1629 war broke out between the French and English and this lasted until 1632. Every time France and England went to war in Europe, the English in the American colonies would send contingents of

men to attack the Acadian population. The peace minded Acadians endured many of these unprovoked attacks from the English colonists. That explains the old adage that, "if you were a Catholic in Boston you could be shot without cause" and the reverse was also true about noncatholics in Canada. Although carried off by the British, Champlain returned to Quebec after peace had been restored and remained there until his death in 1635. When Champlain returned to Quebec, he found that the wars had decimated the population which now was only about one hundred.

NEUTRAL ACADIANS

The Acadians had always resisted taking oaths of allegiance to England and this made them known as the "neutral French". Because many of them had taken this oath, it made them unpopular with the French. So, these neutral peoples were not thought of as a threat by either side but, at the same time, were not considered loyal by either. It put the Acadians in the middle of the struggle that developed. New France kept trying to instigate the Acadians and the Indians against the English and the English were always fearful that the Acadians would declare their loyalty to the French. Without the English government's knowledge, the governor of Nova Scotia, Gabriel Dangeac, decided to solve the problem by removing the Acadians from their homes and force them from the colony.

1755

The expulsion of the Acadians began in the summer of 1755. Troops marched into the villages and the people were called to be told of their fate. They were asked to assemble in the churches and other places of assembly on the ruse that they were to receive special instruction. No weapons were allowed in the churches and in the assembly halls so they were left outside. Once inside, the villagers were unarmed and defenseless. Ships had been prepared and hundreds were forced onto them without warning. Families were destroyed and no attention was paid to whether one was loyal or not. The Acadians were scattered from Salem Massachusetts
(Continued on page 49)

¹ About 1,000 more were scattered in Cape Breton and Prince Edward Island and in present day New Brunswick

² Even the fresh water rivers were salty due to the tides and the tremendous ocean backup into fresh water outlets

(Our Acadian Roots continued from page 48)

to Savannah Georgia and to France and England. There were about 7,000 Acadians deported by the order of Colonel Charles Lawrence and between

1755 and 1762 several thousand more were deported each year. It is odd to find that such good records of the numbers³ deported were kept.

It is odd to find that such good records of the numbers⁴ deported were kept.

1. 1500 were deported to Virginia
2. 450 were deported to Pennsylvania
3. 2000 sent to Massachusetts
4. 1027 bound for South Carolina but some departed in Boston
5. 900 to Connecticut
6. 250 to Maryland
7. 450 to Georgia

No Acadians were deported from Acadia directly to Louisiana. The old story of Evangeline which relates an exile to New Orleans is fictional but based on facts of the deportation. Any Acadians who ended up in Louisiana got there after having been deported to the French Indies, France or England and then found their way to New Orleans.

Upon their arrival at the ports where they were "dumped" off, they quickly assembled in small groups to attempt at recapturing their lives and regrouping their families. They were not wanted by the people among which they were deposited and they were forbidden to form large groups. This forced them into small clusters among which an information pipeline was formed to pass word along as to who was where and what was happening. This news highway soon became highly developed with information being passed among the colonies and by ship's sailors to other parts of the continent. It can be said, with a high degree of reliability, that, from the day of deposit on strange shores, the Acadians continually attempted at regrouping and going back to the homeland they had been exiled from.

By Spring of 1756 an underground highway leading north (perhaps the model for the Negro underground railroad during the American civil war) had been established with Acadians skirting the coastline of the

Carolinas, Virginia, Maryland, Delaware and New Jersey. Some were intercepted in New York and Massachusetts where their goods and water craft were confiscated and they were sent to the interior of those states. This did not dissuade them as they continued to migrate North toward a homeland that no longer wanted them. These activities resulted in the State of Massachusetts passing a law which said that French Neutrals living in large groups was a danger to the colony and, when that happened, they were to be dispersed into small clusters among many communities. A second law made it illegal for Acadians to cross the town lines of the communities they were sent to which did not allow them to leave those towns and therefore restricted their movements. Even these laws did not discourage the constant attempts to go North.

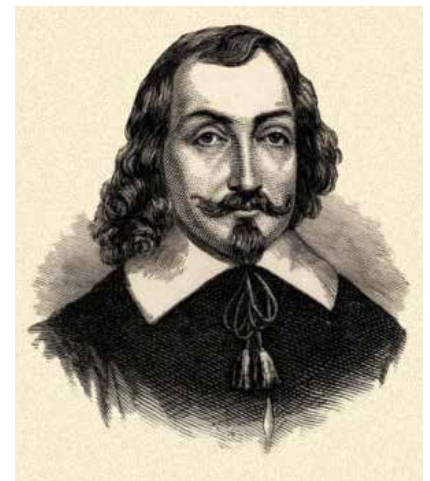
By 1763 the King of France had been informed of the fate that had been dealt to the Acadian population. During the negotiations of the Treaty of Paris, the French King claimed the Acadians as his loyal subjects. As a result, an announcement was made that he would send boats to gather the Acadians and bring them to France. The highly developed information highway spread this news like lightning and this was the reason Acadians disregarded any laws restricting their movement. They left their temporary homes and traveled toward Acadia.

A group of Acadians, led by Jacques Vigneault, hired a ship and departed from Boston and, on October 1, 1763, they landed on the shores of Miquelon Island. These Acadians had the surnames of Vigneault, Hebert, Cyr, Cormier, Bourgeois, Theriault and Leblanc. This group was followed by another with the names of Arsenault, Bertrand, Blanchard, Boudreau, Bourgeois, Chiasson, Comeau and Cormier. More groups followed carrying back the names of Beliveau, Blanchard, Boudreau, Chiasson, Comeau, Deveau, Doucet, Lapierre, Bonnevie, Brault, Bourg, Hebert, Gaudet, Gousman, Nuirat, Onel, Poirier, Damours, Dugas, Landry, Gaudet, Gauthier, Guedry, Goguen, Guibault, Moise, Pitre, Richard and Renaud dit Provençal.

All of this history of the Acadians should give the reader the feeling of community and togetherness that the Acadians developed. One does not miss something nearly enough until one has suffered the

loss of it. These terrible ordeals and times that Acadians lived through forced them to suffer the loss of family, family records, their heritage and homeland. The survivors and all who finally came back to Acadia, and later settled further West in Maine and New Brunswick, had an inbred instinct for family and closeness of community never before shared by anyone. This can be seen even in the 20th century in settlements in New Hampshire, Connecticut and other states. One after another, families joined those who ventured to establish themselves in other territories until, more often than not, the entire family was again reunited at the new location.

This Acadian heritage is important as it plays a great part in the lives of those who settled Van Buren, Maine, Grand Falls, New Brunswick and the entire St John Valley. The Belanger family, being researched here, is very rooted in the Acadian heritage. Although the Belangers themselves connect directly to Quebec, the more recent generations married in Acadian country and to Acadian women. The Acadian history is our history.



Samuel de Champlain



³*The Acadian Miracle by Dudley J LeBlanc, published by Evangeline Publishing Co., Lafayette, Louisiana*

⁴*The Acadian Miracle by Dudley J LeBlanc, published by Evangeline Publishing Co., Lafayette, Louisiana*



Coin desjeunes...

Can you write the name of each fruit under the correct picture ?

la fraise

l'ananas

la cerise

la banane

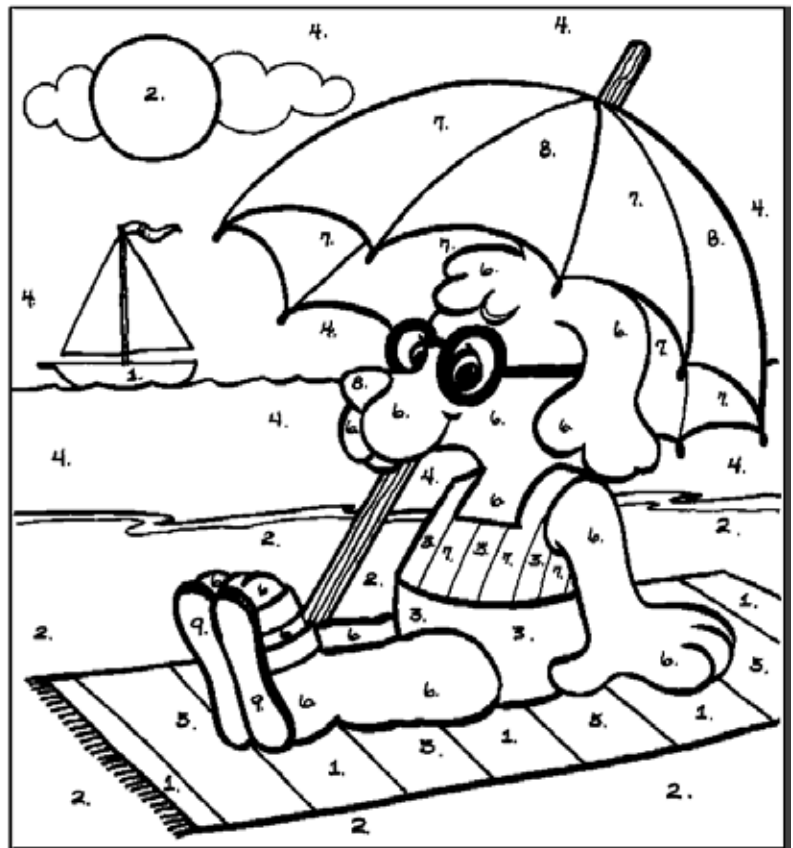
le citron

l'orange

le raisin

la pomme

la poire



Colorier par Numéro

- 1. Rouge
- 2. Jaune
- 3. Vert
- 4. Bleu
- 5. Orange
- 6. Brun
- 7. Mauve
- 8. Rose
- 9. Gris

Draw a line to match the picture on the left and the number on the right.



cinq

trois

quatre

un

deux

Voici la famille

Here's the family





Lettres/ Letters

March 23, 2020

Bonjour Lisa,

You are incredible! Your finding and adding the information about “Batiste” at the end of my “Graniteville” essay answered a lot of questions. “Batiste” was a fictional character created by Daniel T. Trombley. He would write short poems and place copies on the ferries and rail cars. Eventually in 1915 he published a rare volume entitled, “Batiste of Isle LaMotte, His Trubbles”. Online I was able to find a rare copy and I ordered it. For some strange reason, this copy is from India, so it is taking some time. Daniel Trombley was born in 1849 and died in 1940 at the age of 91. Building and embellishing on “Batiste”, this famed fictional Vermonter with a French-Canadian heritage, is Lawrence Earl. Mr. Earl, who lives in Morrisville, found one of Mr. Trombley’s rare books which he says he treasures. He started reading the adventures of “Batiste” to groups with a lot of success. He in turn has written and embellished the legend of “Batiste”. In 2008 Mr. Earl recorded a CD entitled, “An Evening with Batiste”. Now, you and I know the rest of the story.

Amitiés,
Xavier de la Prade
Petaluma, CA

Hi Lisa,

Congratulations on the Winter/Hiver 2019-20 issue of the *FORUM*. I just finished reading it, and must say that it is one the best issues that you, your team and the Franco-American Centre have ever published. I speak from extensive experience since I was present at the founding of the Centre and of “Fanal” (The *FORUM*’S precursor) in the early 1970s and have read just about every issue since. What specifically impressed me was:

1. The overall quality of the writing
2. The wide range of age groups represented by the authors. I was especially pleased to note that a number of students’ works were included. Daniel Moreau’s “Tourtière and cul de sacs” deserves special praise as does Meaghan Murphy’s “international Language Acquisition Compared to National Practice and Averages.” Hard to believe that they are both undergrads.
3. The range of genres represented – from poetry to novels to history / other non-fiction. As you know, my mother was a Michaud from Ste. Agathe, so I was totally thrilled to follow Richard Michaud’s “Maine Trip” as he went in search of Michaud origins and eventual destinations. It was quite a trip for me, in many different ways. I was also touched by seeing the notice of a translation of Normand Dubé’s poetry. He was a good friend and an excellent poet. I am very happy to see that his poetry continues to find readers.
4. The status of writers the *FORUM* regularly attracts – James Myall, Normand Beaupré, Juliana L’Heureux, Susanne Pelletier, Don Leveesque
5. The ability of the *FORUM* to attract articles from an ever-expanding geography

I must also single out Kerri Arsenaault’s article as extremely well—written and touching.

Under your editorial leadership, the *FORUM* has become a unique resource for writers who are looking to express their Franco-American experience, as well as for the growing number of readers who seek and find a reflection of who they are in your pages. It is a wonderful service you are providing – one which reflects very positively on the Centre and the University of Maine. Please be assured that I will continue to support this valuable publication in any way I can.

Congratulations again on your outstanding work. I very much look forward to the next issue.

Sincerely,
Greg Chabot, South Hampton, NH 03827

French-Canadian descendants & Familial hypercholesterolemia (FH), an inherited disorder

submitted by Reed Mszar

Familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) is an inherited disorder characterized by chronically elevated low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels and an increased risk of premature atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease. FH has been shown to disproportionately affect French Canadians and other ethnic populations due to the presence of a founder effect characterized by reduced genetic diversity resulting from relatively few individuals with FH-causing genetic mutations establishing self-contained populations. Beginning in the mid-1800s, approximately 1 million French Canadians immigrated to the Northeastern United States and largely remained in these

small, tight-knit communities. Despite extensive genetic- and population-based research involving the French-Canadian founder population, primarily in the Province of Quebec, little is

known regarding Franco-Americans in the United States. Concurrent with addressing the underdiagnosis rate of FH in the general population, we propose the following steps to leverage this founder effect and meet the cardiovascular needs of Franco-Americans: (1) increase cascade screening in regions of the United States with a high proportion of individuals of French-Canadian descent; (2) promote registry-based, epidemiological research

to elucidate accurate prevalence estimates as well as diagnostic and treatment gaps in Franco-Americans; and (3) validate contemporary risk stratification strategies such as the Montreal-FH-SCORE to enable optimal lipid management and prevention of premature atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease among French-Canadian descendants.

See full text here:

[https://www.cjcopen.ca/article/S2589-790X\(20\)30005-6/fulltext](https://www.cjcopen.ca/article/S2589-790X(20)30005-6/fulltext)



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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