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Le FORUM



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

VOLUME 43, #2

SUMMER/ÉTÉ 2021

Ce numéro de Le Forum est dédié à la douce mémoire de Grégoire Chabot / This issue of Le Forum is Dedicated in Loving Memory of Grégoire Chabot. (Voir pages 4-19)



*Osithé (Michaud)
Chabot & Grégoire*



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Calendar Photos and Texts from 1985 to 2002

http://www.johnfishersr.net/french_in_america_calendar.html

Franco-American Women’s Institute: <http://www.fawi.net>

Franco-Americans of Maine, Then and Now:

<https://francomainestories.net>





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

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Le FORUM

**(Ce numéro de Le Forum est dédié à la douce mémoire de Grégoire R. Chabot
This issue of Le Forum is dedicated in loving memory of Grégoire R. Chabot)**



Grégoire R. Chabot
Aug. 23, 1944-April 26, 2021

Franco-American playwright, actor, and prominent cultural advocate Grégoire R. Chabot died at home in South Hampton, N.H. on Monday, April 26, surrounded by his daughters, granddaughters, and four cats. He was 76.

Chabot, an award-winning and prolific author of dozens of plays, essays, and short stories examining Franco-American life and language, began writing and performing in the 1970s and was a key figure in the Franco-American renaissance that began around the turn of the century.

Born in Waterville, Maine to Marcel and Osithe (Michaud) Chabot, Grégoire spoke only French until the age of five. The dialect – a version derided by the French teachers he encountered in school but prominent among his relatives in the mill towns of Lewiston, Auburn and Waterville – became central to his writing and cultural advocacy.

Writing in Franco-American French was not only the most accurate reflection of his characters, Chabot argued, but a vital part of living and breathing the New England francophone experience. In the tradition of Moliere, one of his favorite authors, humor and satire also played prominent roles in his work.

Chabot graduated from Colby College with a degree in French language and literature, and received his master's degree in French from the University of Maine at Orono, remaining active at the university's Franco-American Center and writing for the bilingual *Farog Forum/Le Forum*.

He directed a federally-funded bilingual children's program that aired on Maine's Public Broadcasting Network in 1974, and worked to train bilingual teachers at Boston University until 1980.

As the Franco-American renaissance grew in the 1990s and 2000s, Chabot was invited--along with the theater company he founded called *Du monde d'à côté/People Next Door*--to perform his plays in France, Quebec, Louisiana and throughout New England and Canada.

He has worked as a teacher, editor, copywriter and communications consultant while continuing to write and perform pieces about Franco-American life and thought. His works include a collection of three plays and their English translations titled *Un Jacques Cartier Errant/Jacques Cartier Discovers America*; a series of essays called "Between Mania and Phobia," and an ongoing column in *Le Forum* called "We Are so Screwed/V'la du sort," among many others.

Chabot spoke about his work and Franco-American experience at a dizzying number of classes, conventions and forums, and he was always eager to help new writers or enthusiasts. He served on the board of directors of the Quebec-based Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques from 2008 to 2010 focused on promoting and encouraging the voice of New England Franco-Americans. He remained active in the organization for the rest of his life.

He loved spending time with his granddaughters, daughters and extended family; staying up well into the morning hours singing; and acting – often combining all of the above. He had a decades-long relationship with community theater in Newburyport.

Chabot leaves his daughters, Michelle and Hillary; granddaughters Gwen Chabot and Claire Renales; son in law Peter Ryan; and many cousins.

In lieu of flowers, please donate to the Grégoire Chabot scholarship, which was established in his honor at the Franco-American Centre at the University of Maine at Orono.

Grégoire CHABOT **(1944-2021)**

Dans la pièce de théâtre de Grégoire Chabot intitulée *Un Jacques Cartier errant*, l'explorateur revient sur terre vers les dernières décennies du XX^e siècle pour évaluer l'état du peuple français d'Amérique dont les origines remontent à son arrivée au Nouveau Monde en 1534. D'une certaine manière, on pourrait dire que le dramaturge français Molière, lui aussi, est revenu parmi nous, car son esprit comique et satirique à travers lequel il remet tout en question est bien vivant dans la personne et l'œuvre du dramaturge-acteur franco-américain Grégoire Chabot.

Né à Waterville, Maine le 23 août 1944, Grégoire Chabot est le fils de Marcel Chabot, propriétaire d'une entreprise de nettoyage à sec, et de Osithé Michaud, ancienne

institutrice qui travaillera aux côtés de son époux pendant une trentaine d'années. De 1945 à 1949, la famille habite la ville natale du père, Auburn, Maine, où Grégoire Chabot parle français exclusivement jusqu'à l'âge de cinq ans. Tout en continuant cette pratique au foyer—ce qu'il fera, d'ailleurs, avec sa mère pendant la vie entière de celle-ci—il commence ses études bilingues françaises-anglaises à l'école Saint-Louis en 1949. À peine deux mois plus tard, il se retrouve chez les Ursulines à l'école paroissiale Notre-Dame de Waterville, Maine, les Chabot étant rentrés à la ville natale de leur fils. En 1954, toujours dans la paroisse Notre-Dame, il entre à l'école des garçons de celle-ci, Saint-Joseph, sous la direction des Frères de l'instruction chrétienne.

Dès l'âge de dix ans, l'esprit critique s'éveille chez Grégoire Chabot lorsqu'il

regarde une émission de télévision, *Disneyland*, durant laquelle l'ingénieur allemand de fusée Werner von Braun affirme, en prédisant la conquête éventuelle de l'espace par les États-Unis, que l'avenir du monde entier appartient aux Anglo-Américains. Pour le jeune garçon impressionnable, cette notion va à l'encontre de la pensée des Franco-Américains, qui s'occupent plutôt du passé, c'est-à-dire du maintien de leur langue, de leur culture et de leurs traditions. Pendant une vingtaine d'années à partir de ce moment, Chabot s'efforcera de s'américaniser tout en s'éloignant de l'idéologie de la survivance franco-américaine.

Ayant terminé son cours primaire en 1958, il entre à l'école préparatoire de l'Assomption à Worcester, Massachusetts, où il passe des heures au laboratoire de langues, tentant de se débarrasser de son accent fran-
(suite page 4)

(Grégoire CHABOT (1944-2021) suite de page 3)

co-américain en faveur du français standard, plus respecté par les Anglo-Américains. Après avoir reçu son diplôme d'études secondaires en 1962, il se spécialise en anglais au Boston College. Toutefois, au bout d'une année scolaire, il change d'avis, convaincu de l'importance du français standard. Par conséquent, il rentre à Waterville pour se concentrer sur la langue et la littérature françaises au Colby College, d'où il obtient son baccalauréat en 1966.

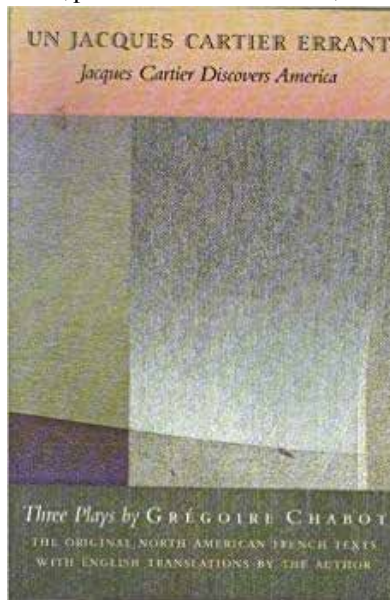
De 1967 à 1969, Grégoire Chabot enseigne le français à la Sanborn Regional High School à Kingston, New Hampshire. Par la suite, il poursuit une maîtrise ès arts à l'Université du Maine à Orono, travaillant en même temps comme assistant auprès du département de français. Diplômé de cette université en 1971, il suit des cours au niveau du doctorat à l'Université du Massachusetts à Amherst, où il devient à nouveau assistant de français jusqu'en 1975.

C'est durant ces années 1970 que ses opinions négatives à l'égard de la situation des Franco-Américains, qu'il tente de tempérer depuis quelque temps, vont plutôt se renforcer, surtout lorsqu'il assiste au congrès du Comité de Vie Franco-Américaine à Manchester, New Hampshire. Là, il entend des discours qui lui rappellent « le pessimisme noir, le fatalisme paralysant, l'obsession avec le passé » qu'il avait jadis observés dans les milieux franco-américains. Tirailé entre les deux côtés de son identité franco et américaine, il décide de se façonner une nouvelle identité par la voie d'une attitude plus positive, car il reconnaît la possibilité chez les siens d'un esprit créateur. D'ailleurs, il constate que si les Québécois, ayant vécu la Révolution tranquille, peuvent projeter une image moderne en français, cette possibilité existe aussi au sein de la Franco-Américanie.

Grégoire Chabot va donc commencer à écrire en français dans l'espoir de démontrer à ses compatriotes, ainsi qu'au public francophone en général, qu'un Franco-Américain est capable de créer des ouvrages littéraires dans sa langue maternelle. Pour lui, « langue maternelle » ne signifie pas le français standard, mais plutôt le parler populaire des Franco-Américains, car il veut peindre de ceux-ci un portrait plus fidèle, authentique et réaliste. De plus, il désire que les Franco-Américains, dont plusieurs croient que leur français est mauvais, reconnaissent la validité de cette langue. Comme thèmes, il traitera non seulement de ce qui touche

de près les Franco-Américains, mais aussi de sujets plus universels capables d'attirer l'intérêt des Québécois, des Acadiens et des francophones du monde entier. S'il traduit par la suite certains ouvrages en anglais, ce ne sera que pour rejoindre les Franco-Américains anglicisés et les Anglo-Américains qui s'intéressent à la culture franco-américaine. Enfin, il choisira le théâtre comme genre d'expression artistique puisque, selon lui, les Franco-Américains se sentent plus en harmonie avec la tradition orale.

En 1975, il fait ses premiers pas littéraires en composant une série de saynètes comiques-satiriques, entre autres, « Mathias Barnabé, poète franco-américain », « Philias



Berthiaume, Ph.D. » et « Super Grenouille au supermarché », pour l'émission radiophonique *Tout en français* au poste WFCR FM de l'Université du Massachusetts à Amherst. Dans la tradition de Molière, son héros, Grégoire Chabot, monte souvent sur scène dans ses propres œuvres.

Toujours en 1975, il rentre dans le Maine où il devient rédacteur et réalisateur d'une émission bilingue française-anglaise pour enfants produite par le réseau de télévision publique de l'État et subventionnée par le gouvernement fédéral des États-Unis. L'année suivante, il se retrouve dans le Massachusetts comme directeur exécutif du Boston University Resource and Training Center. Dans ce cadre, il est responsable d'une équipe qui entraîne des instituteurs destinés à des programmes locaux d'éducation bilingue à travers la Nouvelle-Angleterre. Il y travaillera jusqu'en 1980. C'est aussi à cette époque, en 1978, qu'il s'installe à Newburyport, Massachusetts.

S'inspirant d'un mélange d'auteurs

classiques et modernes provenant de divers pays dont, bien sûr, Molière, mais aussi l'Américain James Thurber, l'Irlandais vivant à Paris Samuel Beckett ainsi que des Québécois : Yvon Deschamps et surtout Michel Tremblay — qui, selon Grégoire Chabot, « nous a donné la permission d'écrire notre langue » — il se lance pour de bon dans le monde théâtral avec *Un Jacques Cartier errant*. Cette pièce en un acte, dans laquelle l'auteur joue également le rôle principal, aura sa première au colloque organisé par le National Materials Development Center for French and Portuguese de Bedford, New Hampshire en 1976. Cet organisme développera une version de la pièce qui sera publiée sous forme de plaquette en 1977. Ce sera de même pour *Chère maman*, une pièce en trois actes écrite en 1978 et publiée en 1979. Celle-ci est un portrait des rapports familiaux chez des Franco-Américains qui habitent le Petit Canada d'une ville industrielle typique en Nouvelle-Angleterre. Une autre pièce en trois actes, *Sans atout*, écrite en 1979, explore l'influence de la société anglo-américaine sur une famille petite bourgeoise franco-américaine à travers un téléviseur d'émissions en anglais que le dramaturge lui-même compte parmi les personnages. Ces trois pièces et leurs traductions anglaises paraîtront ensemble sous forme livresque en 1996 aux Éditions Réveil d'Orono, Maine sous le titre *Un Jacques Cartier errant / Jacques Cartier Discovers America. Trois pièces / Three Plays*.

À part ses pièces de théâtre, Grégoire Chabot continue à écrire de temps à autre pour la télévision. Par exemple, il imagine une boisson magique, « Assimilo », que consomment certains Franco-Américains pour mieux s'intégrer à la société linguistique et culturelle anglo-américaine. Ce sera le sujet de deux saynètes bilingues intitulées « Assimilo, c'est bon pour vous » (1976) et « Assimilo, miracle de la science moderne » (1979). Cette dernière fera son début sur le réseau de la télévision publique du Maine en 1980, tout comme le fera l'année suivante un scénario bilingue de trente minutes, « Si on est arrivé, pourquoi qu'on a encore si loin à aller ? »

Depuis 1980 et jusqu'à sa mort en 2021, soit à titre indépendant, soit comme employé, Grégoire Chabot est rédacteur publicitaire, directeur de rédaction créatrice ou consultant en communications de marketing pour une variété de clients, entre autres, General Electric, Trapp Family Lodge, Allied

(suite page 5)

(Grégoire CHABOT (1944-2021) suite de page 4)

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Toutefois, il n'arrête pas d'écrire et de jouer sur la scène. *Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum* [devenu *Le Forum* en 1994], journal bilingue du Centre franco-américain de l'Université du Maine à Orono, publie sa série de réflexions en vingt-six essais au sujet de la vie et de la pensée franco-américaines. Elle s'intitule « Entre la manie et la phobie » (1994-1995). L'année suivante, Grégoire Chabot fonde Du monde d'à côté, sa propre troupe de théâtre, qui joue des pièces originales en langue française à travers la Nouvelle-Angleterre ainsi qu'au Québec, en Louisiane et en France. En l'an 2000, l'association France-Louisiane-Franco-Américanie de Paris lui décerne le premier prix d'un concours littéraire pour sa nouvelle, « À perte de vue », qui paraîtra en 2009 dans *Voix francophones de chez nous, contes et histoires. Une anthologie franco-américaine*, compilée par le romancier franco-américain Normand Beaupré. Cette collection contient également « Crache ou meurs », le deuxième chapitre d'un roman inédit de Grégoire Chabot intitulé « La vie allant vers ».

D'autres représentations théâtrales suivront, par exemple, « Qui perd sa langue... » (1999), une pièce en deux actes qui aura sa première au congrès annuel du Conseil international des études francophones en 2001, et « Tout comme au bon vieux temps » (2003) dont une sélection parmi les six scènes sera présentée en 2004, d'abord au Collège de l'Assomption à Worcester, Massachusetts et plus tard au Conseil de la vie française en Amérique à Québec.

En 2003, Grégoire Chabot déménage de Newburyport, Massachusetts à South Hampton, New Hampshire, où il continue à produire un texte après l'autre. Par exemple, il écrit « Les sacrés monologues / The Lost Monologues », une série de douze monologues, en français et en anglais, axés sur des individus franco-américains et acadiens. Cette œuvre, dont la première a lieu à l'Université du Maine à Orono en 2006, sera jouée dans plusieurs villes, villages et universités en Nouvelle-Angleterre ainsi qu'à Montréal, à Québec et à Lafayette en Louisiane.

De 2008 à 2010, Grégoire Chabot est membre du conseil d'administration du Centre de la francophonie des Amériques, avec lequel il collabore afin d'assurer l'in-

clusion des Franco-Américains et des francophones de la Nouvelle-Angleterre dans les projets et les activités de cet organisme québécois.

De 2012 à 2014, *Le Forum* du Centre franco-américain de l'Université du Maine publie « We Are So Screwed / V'là du sort », sa série d'articles à propos de l'état actuel et de la nature précaire de la réalité franco-américaine. En 2014, Grégoire Chabot collabore avec Jean-Claude Redonnet sur une pièce en trois tableaux, « Jeanne et Osithée : parallèles croisés ». Il s'agit d'une rencontre qui se passe en 1930 entre deux femmes francophones, l'une du nord de l'État du Maine et l'autre du Midi de la France. Malgré les 5 000 kilomètres qui les séparent, elles découvrent qu'elles ont beaucoup en commun. Toujours en 2014, Grégoire Chabot réalise une série de monologues humoristiques, « Les aventures de Jean Arrache », dont le personnage principal est le bedeau d'une petite église catholique située dans un petit village. Cinq monologues de « Jean Arrache » ainsi que la pièce « Jeanne et Osithée » font partie du programme du Congrès mondial acadien de 2014.

Après 2014, Grégoire Chabot continue à collaborer au Centre franco-américain de l'Université du Maine. Il contribue plusieurs articles au *Forum* en 2017 et 2018 et donne une conférence virtuelle intitulé « My hometown and me, then and now », en avril 2020. Il s'éteint le 26 avril 2021.

Robert-B. PERREAULT

OEUVRE

- « À perte de vue, nouvelle ». Dans Beaupré, Normand, dir. *Voix francophones de chez nous, contes et histoires. Une anthologie franco-américaine*. Coral Springs, FL : Llumina Press, 2009. p. 62-74.

- *Chère Maman*. Cambridge, MA : National Assessment and Dissemination Center for Bilingual-Bicultural Education, 1979. 70 p.

- « Chez Dean : An amazing gourmet kitchen, PLUS meals on wheels ». Éloge du professeur Dean Louder dans *Le Forum*, vol. 39, no. 2 (été 2017), p. 3, 27.

- « Crache ou meurs », extrait d'un roman inédit. Dans Beaupré, Normand dir. *Voix francophones de chez nous, contes et histoires. Une anthologie franco-américaine*. Coral Springs, FL : Llumina Press, 2009. p. 51-61.

- « Entre la manie et la phobie », série de 26 essais. *Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum*, Orono, Maine, 1994-1995. Certains extraits paraissent également dans la revue *Québec Studies*, vol. 33 (2002).

- « Focus on Men », *Le F.A.R.O.G. Forum*, vol. 3, no. 7 (avril 1976), p. 6.

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- « Mathias Barnabé, pièce en un acte ». Dans Albert, Renaud S., dir. *À tour de rôle. Neuf pièces en un acte*. Bedford, NH : National Materials Development Center for French, 1980. p. 195-204.

- « Mathias Barnabé, poète franco-américain, saynète ». *Les Franco-Américains : la promesse du passé et les réalités du présent*. Actes du colloque de 1976. Bedford, NH : National Materials Development Center for French and Portuguese, 1976. p. 166-170.

- « Philius Berthiaume, Ph.D., saynète ». *Les Franco-Américains : la promesse du passé et les réalités du présent*. Actes du colloque de 1976. Bedford, NH : National Materials Development Center for French and Portuguese, 1976. p. 160-164.

- « R'garde-moué donc ça », *Le Forum*, vol. 40, no. 1 (printemps 2018), p. 23.

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Remembering Greg Chabot

by Leslie Choquette

One year ago, we mourned the loss of two Franco-American giants: Gerry Brault and Claire Quintal. Now we have lost another in the person of Greg Chabot: gifted actor and writer and impassioned activist. Born in 1944, Greg belonged to the generation that followed Gerry's and Claire's. Referred to by the elders as *les jeunes Turcs*, Greg's cohort was the first to challenge the hegemony of *survivance* ideology, while remaining intensely committed to the Franco-American cause. Inspired by Québec's *Révolution tranquille* as well as racial and ethnic activism in the United States, they worked to create a newer, more modern identity for Franco-Americans.

I got to know Greg personally back in 2002, when Paul Dubé, then editor-in-chief of *Francophonies d'Amérique*, asked me to interview a Franco-American writer for the journal's series on francophone authors outside Québec. I knew right away that Greg

was my first choice. After a wonderful series of exchanges via phone and email, I wrote up the interview, which I also translated into English for *Québec Studies*. We remained friends ever after.

In 2004, when the French Institute marked its 25th anniversary during Assumption's centennial year, I knew I had to invite Greg, who also happened to be a graduate of Assumption Prep. Without a doubt, the highlight of our celebration was the French theatrical performance he directed and starred in entitled "*Vies franco-américaines*," a medley drawn from his plays. Over the years, *Du monde d'à côté* (Folks Next Door), the Franco-American theater troupe Greg founded in 1996, brought his work to audiences across New England and as far afield as Louisiana, Canada, and France. Those of us fortunate enough to have seen them in action will always treasure the memory.

When I think of Greg, the first things that come to my mind are his enthusiasm, his generosity, his intelligence, and his sense of humor. *Merci de tout ce que tu as fait pour nous, cher ami. Tu nous manqueras.*



Legend for photo: Grégoire Chabot and Marie Cormier of *Du monde d'à côté* in the first act of Chabot's play *Sans atout*, performed at Assumption's French Institute in September 2004.

Grégoire Chabot, mon héros!

By Louise Tanguay-Ricker

Once in a while for those perhaps more fortunate, someone walks into your life and changes it forever, and for the better.

Meeting Greg Chabot was one of those instances for me. And here's the background that led to it... Having immigrated from Québec in 1979 soon after turning 21, I left everything behind and moved "aux États-Unis" with an overwhelming need to get away from it all (family, friends, the French-Canadian curse... Or so it felt at the time.) I lived in California for 25+ years, twelve of which were spent working in research administration at Stanford U. I assimilated well into the Californian culture and had fascinating experiences working with brilliant minds in a multicultural environment. But somehow, something was missing. People often asked about my accent, and the reactions were varied. Surprisingly (or not), many had no idea where Québec was located, and others thought that I was from France. On occasion, while at Stanford, I would be asked to translate correspondence from a French organization. More often than not in everyday life, people would look at me funny when they heard the

accent. I would occasionally notice a "tone" when interacting with strangers, as though my accent was an annoyance, or perhaps to them it meant I wasn't smart or didn't understand what was being said. Very subtle, but always there.... That look. Who are you? Where are you from? Why are you here? I admit that I did have a heavy accent and many words were confusing. Like the time I told my boss I had written in my diarrhea the night before. Moving on...

Over the years, a strong need for a sense of belonging took over my life. I had married an American, but my in-laws did not appreciate their son marrying a foreigner. To them, I was an outsider. No matter how much I tried to assimilate and fit in, I was still an outsider. When I decided to put my career on hold to raise our daughters speaking French, their reaction was that their grandchildren would end up behind in school, possibly with permanent brain damage. Needing to reassure them and prove them wrong, I read everything I found on raising children bilingually and connected with a language expert at UPenn who validated everything I thought. He strongly encouraged me to

trust my instincts, stating that I was doing my children a huge favor by allowing them to connect with their heritage and learn the language.

Growing up in Québec during the days of René Lévesque, with parents who were strong activists in support of the independence movement, I had experienced discrimination first hand, been spat on a few times by our "enemies" because we were French, and called French pea soup on a few occasions (by the way, I love pea soup so who cares!) Those were dark days, although I know it pales in comparison to what was going on south of the border. And perhaps that feeling of being suffocated is what made me want to get away. Little did I know that it would follow me beyond borders.

I tried to connect with French-speaking groups in the Silicon Valley, so I would occasionally join European-French gatherings, always to be met with reluctance because I was Québécoise. Not really French. I would find myself speaking a "cleaner" French, or as some like to say a "Parisian" French, hoping no one would notice my French-Canadian accent. The curse was following me and there was no getting away. Unless perhaps I kept my mouth shut. But being French Canadian and keeping quiet is *(Continued on page 7)*

(Grégoire Chabot, mon héros! continued from page 6)

basically an impossibility.

After 9/11, the need for belonging intensified. I wanted to return closer to my roots (but not too close.) And so, I chose Maine and dragged my Californian husband and kids along. An American History buff, he was very eager to experience life on the East Coast. I had visited Maine every summer during my childhood and moving to Maine was a dream come true. It was almost as if I had known all along that it would be my next destination. I knew there were French Canadian “people” because I remembered going to Biddeford while vacationing in Ogunquit to buy fabric in a leather factory in the 70s and hearing people speak French. I also knew we had relatives from my father’s side of the family somewhere in Lewiston. So, my husband and I had purchased an Inn in Lincolnville Beach (big mistake) and enrolled our daughters in a Waldorf School because of the emphasis on music, art, and language. When the French teacher abruptly resigned, I volunteered to take over while the Inn was closed for the season. I took classes through the UMaine System to get my teacher certification and began participating in various Franco-American gatherings as part of my training.

That’s when I met Greg Chabot. And everything changed. So many emotions, so much validation, and a completely different way of looking at my heritage and realizing the discrimination that French Canadians who had left Canada generations before had to endure, and in many instances were still enduring. I began noticing that my family, and the majority of my Québécois relatives, knew very little about the Franco-Americans of Maine and other states. Hearing my mother tongue being spoken by Greg, without that stigma that our French is not the right French, that in fact, it is something to cherish, to embrace, and explore, was music to my ears. Through him I also began to understand that language is just part of a culture, and for those who do not speak the language, it does not take away the heritage. It’s just one piece of a much larger and rich construct.

Greg’s energy was contagious. He was brilliant, witty and so creative. He had compassion for the difficulty that especially the first and second Franco-American generations had endured. Through his various creative projects, he invited the Franco com-

munity to relive some of those experiences, often through humor and hilarious theatrical productions, other times through deep and meaningful conversations, touching upon some of the most sensitive subjects. Whether he spoke about religion or the reality of what it meant for a woman to be pregnant with her 16th child in the early 1900s, he always made us think and consider different points of view. Greg was also a realist. He knew that by hanging on to the past, there was a risk of jeopardizing not only our own future but the ability for younger generations of Franco-Americans to relate to their heritage in a meaningful and empowering way. He always felt that if the culture is going to thrive, we must look ahead and continue to create while still showing reverence for our heritage. However, we cannot let the past define our future.

At the forefront of Greg’s multiyear crusade to help the culture survive and encourage young generations to explore their heritage, was the importance for Franco-Americans to build connections with French minorities from various Canadian provinces and Louisiana, recognizing that Québec has done very little to keep its ties with the thousands of French Canadian who left the province in order to “make it big” in the U.S. and eventually return home to save the family farm. Most never returned, and the few who did found themselves poorer than before, often shunned by their relatives for having left in the first place. Greg was a pioneer at forging ties with Québec cultural organizations to bring awareness to the Franco-American reality of yesterday and today.

Growing up, I always loved to write and make people laugh. It was a survival mechanism for me to cover deep pain from childhood abuse caused by the paternal side of my family. I had come to terms with my past and tried to hang on to the good times I had with my mother’s side of the family. It was a large family where almost everyone was a musician, including many educators and storytellers. Greg encouraged me to write. He would provide me with the beginning of a sentence and I would take off with it as though I had done this all my life. My character Florence Laffleur is a direct result of Greg’s encouragement. That one sentence “Everything started with a batch of crotons that was too salty” - “Ça toute commencé avec un batch de crotons qu’y était trop salé” was written in the French-Canadian oral language that was so familiar to me and not the “perfect” “Parisian” French (by the way,

there is no such thing). I started laughing and the words just poured out of me as memories returned of quirky events from family reunions that I could infiltrate into my work. Greg was thrilled and, on many occasions when we met at different events, he would ask me to read my latest work and would point out his favorite parts, always through his oh so familiar contagious giggle. I felt on top of the world and so inspired when I had the good fortune to get this kind of reaction out of Greg Chabot.

That unconditional support and encouragement were probably some of the best things that ever happened to me in my life. And the fact that it was directly connected to my heritage, as a first-generation Franco-American, having left my country in search of better opportunities and hoping to find a purpose, was truly a gift from heaven. Greg continued to inspire me for over a decade after our initial

“rencontre” and how I regret not having met him sooner. I was a bit of a groupie, a silent admirer, always hoping to catch a glimpse of his next project, that I might be included in his next conversation, hoping I might make him laugh again with my corny jokes and anecdotes.

Gone too soon is an understatement. Greg, you will be dearly missed by all who had the privilege to call you a friend.

And frankly, maudite marde! Pourquoi t’es parti si vite? Ben voueyons donc! Ça aucun bon sens mon cher Greg. Aucun maudit bon sens. T’avais pas d’affaire à partir comme ça. Qu’est-ce qu’on est supposé faire sans toi?

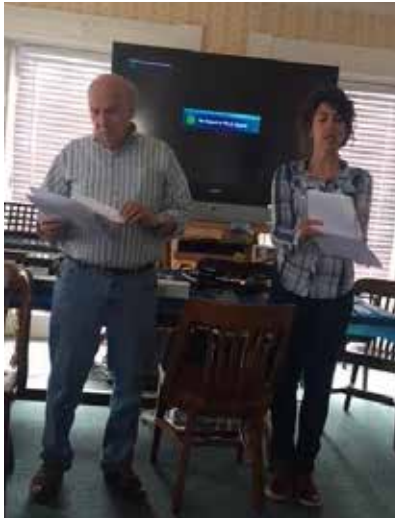
Calme-toé, calme-toé. C’est pas grave. J’t’aime quand même. Pis j’t’oublierai jamais. M’entends-tu? Jamais. T’es mon héros. Merci.

Louise



Merci mon cher Grégoire,

La première fois que j'ai lu votre monologue de *Évangeline*, je me suis aussitôt attaché à toi, un grand homme de théâtre. J'ai compris que nous parlions la même francophonie et que mon chiac n'allait pas offenser ton franco-américain, au contraire, nous avons trouvé finalement notre match. Grâce à Grégoire Chabot, cette acadienne a eu la chance de participer au Forum au Maine à quelques reprises et surtout eu la chance de jouer sa belle *Évangeline* sur les planches en Louisiane, en Acadie, à Montréal et au Congrès mondial acadien. Sa plume et sa vision ont joué et ont résonné dans l'imaginaire de plusieurs personnes. L'important était de pouvoir le jouer et de se donner la confiance de parler comme on parle. Ce peuple franco-américain vit une grande résilience. Grégoire était un passionné et un militant stratégique dans sa force créative. On faisait souvent à croire qu'on



était marié, car le théâtre nous permettait de tout faire et de rêver. La francophonie est au pluriel et on s'est retrouvé parmi nos similitudes. On a eu du fun et je vais m'ennuyer bien gros. Grégoire donnait droit à créer et à jouer dans les mots que l'on voulait et dans

la façon qu'on voulait le faire. La confiance d'être qui nous sommes, voilà le plus grand legs de notre cher Grégoire.

Greg, vous étiez un créateur, un visionnaire et un passionné. Nos histoires ne seront pas perdues, car elles sont encrées dans la mémoire.

Voici un petit peu de Greg sur vidéo lors d'un entretien que j'ai eu la chance de faire avec lui avec le Centre de la francophonie: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sonqPZtr6W4>

On va s'ennuyer mon amour.

Évangeline restera avec moi dans mon cœur, elle vivra.

Anika Lirette

Artiste acadienne

Jeune ambassadrice du Centre de la francophonie

I met Greg when he presented to a class I was taking at UMaine 20 years ago. His writing spoke to me, and helped me answer questions about my identity that had been swirling about within me. Reading his work, and later performing in his plays, had a profound effect on my sense of self as a young Franco. Greg helped me reconcile some complicated feelings I had as a young Franco-American who spoke French, but not "the right kind of French". I learned French in school, because I wanted desperately to connect with my family, with my roots. But I didn't speak the language of my family and my ancestors-I spoke the language of my professors-so I still felt disconnected. But reading Greg's plays, I heard the voice of my mémère, and later, when I joined his bilingual theatre troupe, I got to perform monologues written in the language of my family, and it felt so good to have those words, that accent come out of MY mouth. Greg helped me find my place between 2 very different generations of francos, and I am forever grateful to him for that.

I feel incredibly lucky to have shared the stage with Greg (and the other members of the troupe at the time). It was all at once amusing, thrilling, and heart breaking to embody one of his characters, that of the modern day *Évangeline*. He had a way of distilling the essence of a character down into one short monologue that said so much. About Franco American culture, about humankind, about love, about suffering. There

are lines I still hear in my head, spoken in his voice. I can still feel them. I'll always remember the shiver that came over me every time I heard him end his monologue "Lou" with the words "maudites cigarettes".

I'll remember rides in his car, all of

my friend Nicole that he had passed, I was home alone, so I put on "je ne regrette rien" and sang along, remembering that night in Québec. So many car rides, so many songs, so many jokes, so many laughs. So many life lessons.



Erica (Brown)Shipman, Marie Cormier, Brooke Dupuy & Greg Chabot. Performance at the Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques in Quebec 2009. I believe it was all from his Sacres monologues.

us singing at the top of our lungs. And there was the time in Québec, when we took a taxi after a show. Greg and Marie started singing along to the radio: "Je ne regrette rien". We even got the cab driver to join in, and he didn't want to drop us off, he said it was the most fun he had in awhile. I think a lot of people felt like that after spending time with Greg. His colorful jokes and his singing just lit people up. When I heard from

Adieu, mon ami.

Tu nous manqueras.

Brooke Dupuy

I was terribly saddened to hear the news of Grégoire Chabot's death, because he was one of the most inspiring people I knew. Grégoire visited my classes on Franco-American culture at UMA, and students just loved to be near him. They saw his passion for theater, his joy of teaching and sharing, and his belief that the next generation would need to create their own vision of Franco-American culture for the future. Grégoire also led a theater workshop for the weekend immersion "Le français au bord de la mer" to help students write their own skits (in French) about French-Canadians coming to New England. His ability to inspire others to discover their own creativity was just part of who he was.

His literary works helped to convey the reality of the Franco-American experience by validating spoken French in New England and creating a new literary language. His translations of his own works show the depth of his talent and his ability to draw the audience into a world of his



Grégoire Chabot and Chelsea Ray at the American Council of Quebec Studies conference in November 2016

making. When he was on stage, the audience was transfixed. There was an immediacy to his presence on stage that made you care so much for the characters and believe in them.

His comedic timing was impeccable, and his humor came through both in his literary works and his performances.

My favorite work of his is *Jacques Cartier Comes to America*. One passage in particular speaks volumes about the difficulties of preserving French in New England:

Ti Jean (To Cartier): [...] Well, Mister Cartier, I may be stupid. But I'm not quite as stupid as I seem. After a while, I realized that if I spoke the French I learned at home—OUR French—teachers were going to laugh at me. And if I spoke the French I learned in school—THEIR French—my family and friends were going to laugh at me. But if I didn't speak French at all...

Grégoire could convey so much in so few words. I can still hear and see him on stage, captivating us all. He will be missed: by students, by the community, and by the world. What a great loss.

Chelsea Ray

In memory of Grégoire

I think one of the things I will miss most about Greg is the way he could make any space feel like home. He would sweep into the Franco American Centre, his bag hanging off his shoulder and glasses perched on his forehead after the long drive from Massachusetts or his camp. When he arrived, the space where I work every day became Franco in a deep, fundamental way. Whoever was around would gravitate to him. We'd laugh, hug, and start to tell stories. It would get loud. The energy was palpable, and I could feel it transform the Centre into a place that felt as if I were with family, surrounded by aunts, uncles and cousins. What is so remarkable to me about this gift of his was its radical inclusivity. Greg spoke a type of French that I only hear in my family. I love hearing it; it addresses me in a deep, fundamental way. But I don't speak that French. I learned my French in school, from Anglophone teachers. Greg didn't care. He didn't even remark on it. Oftentimes, he'd speak in French, and I'd codeswitch to English. He didn't blink an eye. He was a generous, welcoming elder. He established a cultural ground for us to stand on, and he accepted me for who I was in that moment and in that space. He did the same for the

students who take Franco Studies classes or work at the Franco American Centre. He established a tradition of taking them out to dinner to Bangor's nicest restaurant. I still see him, sitting at the table with them, leaning back and smiling, listening to their banter. Like "un monocle," he made them proud of who they were, just as they were. No strings attached.



Greg Chabot, Claire Bolduc, Susan Pinette, Raymond Pelletier, Feb. 2020

And as I think about it now, I see in his writings too that inclusive generosity. Franco French needs to be spoken. Its essence is in its orality. For many people, they only know French in this way – spoken, not writ-

ten, and in dialogue. Greg realized this. He wrote plays and monologues – words written to be spoken – and he always provided English translations. I have seen so many people light up when they read the English side of *Un Jacques Cartier Errant*, recognize the French on the facing page (which they have never seen written before) and then begin to laugh, saying, "My mother used to say that," or "I haven't heard that in years!" He opened doors and invited everyone in.

Since I have learned of Greg's passing, I have been exploring his writings again. I read *Manias et phobias* yesterday and ended up laughing, all alone in front of my computer. He was so insightful about our cultural quirks. And he loved poking fun at them, especially those conservative aspects (and I mean conservative in that which looks to conserve), the parts of us that don't want to accept change and that look only to the past. And that too, I realize now, is related to his willingness to accept us all – whether we speak French or not, whether we were Catholic, whether we grew up eating *tourtière* or not. He trusted that change had to happen and he made himself open to it. I will miss him terribly -- his big bear hugs, his laughter, his Waterville French, and I will miss the cultural home that he tended and invited all of us to enter and be a part of.

Susan Pinette

« Il parle comme nous-autres »

By Katharine Harrington

It was a shock to learn of the passing of Grégoire Chabot, a writer, actor, and activist who I admired and enjoyed so much. He taught me about the Franco-American experience in Maine and always made himself available to teachers and students. His work has a profound impact on his readers, particularly those who see themselves or family members in his characters. It is hard to comprehend what it means to have lost the singular voice that was Greg Chabot.

I was first introduced to Greg at a conference in 2004 by my colleague Gil Albert. Listening to them talk about the history of French in Maine opened up a whole new world to me. I had landed my first teaching job at the University of Maine at Fort Kent and had so much to learn about Franco-America.

I immediately fell in love with Greg's play *Un Jacques Cartier errant* and decided to incorporate it into my French for Heritage Speakers class. My students were just as

enchanted by *Cartier* as I was. One student announced excitedly during our first discussion that, in the play, "Ils parlent comme nous-autres!" She had never seen French written the way that she spoke it. The play resonated with her as no other French text ever had.

Several years later, I invited Greg and his troupe to perform at UMFK. At the time, I was part of a local cycling group where I got to know Valley residents from all backgrounds. Many were French speakers. One friend, Dean, was a logger who spent his weeks in the woods. I told him about Greg's performance of his *Monologues* and invited him to attend. He responded: "Au collège?!? Je vais pas au collège, moi!" It had never occurred to me before that some lifelong Fort Kent residents never stepped foot on campus as the university represented a cultural barrier. I was so sure that Dean would enjoy Greg's work so I gave him a flyer and urged him to come. That evening, just before the start of the performance, I saw Dean slip into the back of the theater where he sat by himself. At one point, during an especially moving monologue, I snuck a glimpse at Dean and saw tears streaming down his face.

After the play, I asked Dean what he thought. He gushed about the performance. It was his first play, and his first event *au collège*. He told me he regretted that he hadn't thought to bring his parents. He was sure they would have loved it. The play spoke to his own family's experience: "Il parle comme nous-autres!"

As an educator and a reader, I will always treasure Greg's work and will continue to teach it as I have seen the impact it has on readers Franco and non-Franco alike. Most of all, I will miss our conversations, his brilliant observations, and incomparable humor.

Repose-toi en paix Grégoire.



Monique Roy, Katharine Harrington, Greg, Ray Pelletier

Résonance

One significant if behind-the-scenes chunk of Grégoire Chabot's legacy is the pivotal role he played in the founding of the Franco-American literary e-journal *Résonance*. Not once but twice at the end of a *Rassemblement des artistes franco-américains*, I found myself sitting around a table discussing the possibilities of starting such a journal as well as the obstacles that would have to be overcome. Without being pushy, Greg catalyzed these discussions and led them towards fruitful outcomes. To help realize his vision, he encouraged those younger than himself to take leadership roles while at the same time offering help. He believed in the importance of creating a space—in this case, a virtual one—where Franco-American writers and artists could share their work with each other and with a larger community, cross-pollinating and inspiring one another across genres and across different regions of our country.

Most especially, Greg advocated for a journal that would allow and encourage today's Franco-American writers and artists of all ages and backgrounds to make something vital and authentic about our current-day

realities instead of simply celebrating and mourning an irretrievable past. He clearly hoped that we'd explore as an aspect of our creative journeys how our Franco-American identities color our visions of ourselves and understanding of the world. However, my sense is that Greg would never have advocated that a writer or artist in our community remain limited to such investigations if our creative obsessions led us elsewhere. His only program seemed to be to foster strong creative work in our community, not to proscribe its content.

After I learned of Greg's death, I began re-reading his collection of three plays published under the title of one of them, *Un Jacques Cartier Errant*. In the book's introduction, the playwright describes how in 1974 he began setting about creating "a new Franco-American identity" for himself—one that was fashioned in opposition to what he saw as the stultifying influence of "the Congrès du Comité de Vie and all other events sponsored by the Franco elite." He envisioned an alternative generated by writers and musicians:

...if others began writing and composing and singing on a regular basis, we could perhaps contemplate the future of the Fran-

co-American group with some optimism. A future isn't maintained, or conserved, or protected. It must be actively created day after day, even if we must face the frightening thought that the results might be impossible to calculate and foresee.¹

It is only after Greg's passing that I truly appreciate the through-line from these perceptions and aspirations that formed inside of his mind almost a half-century ago to the impetus behind the journal I now help to edit. In addition to everything else Greg brought to any room he entered—wit, intelligence, tolerance, curiosity, generosity—he brought a vision. It is profoundly inspiring to me, as a Franco-American writer and editor, to begin to perceive how much my own trajectory and projects have been unobtrusively but powerfully influenced by his vision.

Steven Riel

¹ Chabot, Grégoire. *Un Jacques Cartier Errant: Trois Pièces* (Orono, Me.: University of Maine Press/Le Centre Franco-Américain, 1996), p. viii.

Grégoire Chabot's work contains much of his spirit. His humor and compassion, and an honesty that manages to be both defiant and tender, are all discernible in his characters. But the primary place I find Greg's energy in his plays and monologues is in their forward momentum. Greg was restless, full of curiosity about the future, and, while capable of deep reverence, resistant to sentimentality. This is evident in his work — and in every conversation I ever had with him. His glasses perched on his forehead as though they helped him to think rather than to see, he was always proposing a new project, devising a plan, and especially in Franco-American spaces, he wanted to talk about what was going to happen next.

I was introduced to Greg before I read his work, ten years ago at the Franco Center at the University of Maine in Orono, where I had been invited to perform my show, *Piecework: When We Were French*, for the 2011 Rassemblement. Despite the graciousness of the invitation, I felt like a fish out of water, not Franco enough for the room, self-conscious about my French — a classic case of Franco-American imposter syndrome. At lunch, a woman from Quebec laughed when I told her about my “pi-asse de theatre” instead of my “pi-esse de theatre,” and the shame stung for the rest of the weekend. But after I performed, Greg took me aside and encouraged me in his unique way — without a hint of condescension, in a tone that indicated he expected me to know how smart and worthy I was, that I didn't need

him to tell me. *You are always welcomed back here with your work*, he said. *You're a Franco-American artist, and this is a place where you'll always have an audience.*

It was one of Greg's unique talents to peg you in a way that made you feel at once flattered and as though you had been enlisted in a cause. No one had ever called me a Franco-American artist before — least of all me — and the impact of that statement is still unfolding. I did not realize how un-welcome I had felt until Greg welcomed me, and, in gathering me into the community to which he belonged, I felt he had endowed me with a kind of responsibility that I am still working to understand.

During the past couple of years, I have been fortunate to work closely with Greg on translations of my plays, from English and my own thrift store French, into the marvelous, deep-rooted French that he grew up speaking in Waterville, Maine, and in which he wrote his own work. To collaborate with him this way was the greatest professional honor I've received, and a great personal pleasure, because it gave us occasion to really spend some time together. We shared meals and car rides and long conversations. A generation older than I, his connection to his culture was more alive than mine, but that was just a fact, not a point of pride or a source of superiority. Greg never took issue with my very English name, my mixed ancestry, or the French I had cobbled together through adult-ed classes, conversation groups, osmosis, and trial by fire. Sitting

together, reading through my work and his translations, we sat in that rich no-man's-land between languages. He reached deep into my words to give me ways to express myself more fully and to lead me toward a French that I might have spoken, if my ancestors had been able to pass down their language to their children and grandchildren. In that way, he was an elder to me in the most complete and traditional sense of the word: he connected me to my own history. He fed my little fire so that I, in turn, could lend a light to others.

Greg believed deeply in the power of an individual voice, speaking its truth, and wanted to create worlds where people, and Francos in particular, could see that it is possible to speak in our regular voices and be appreciated and understood. The faith that he had in my voice has been transformative for me, and I know the same is true for many of the students he worked with over the years, other artists with whom he collaborated, and many of us who encountered him in Franco-American spaces. The forward momentum with which he walked through the world provides a current for us to ride upon even in his absence. That is his legacy, I think: a current of energy, of thought, that can pull us into a future, that demands that we go on, because something wonderful is ahead.

Abby Paige

A Heartfelt Tribute to you Greg...

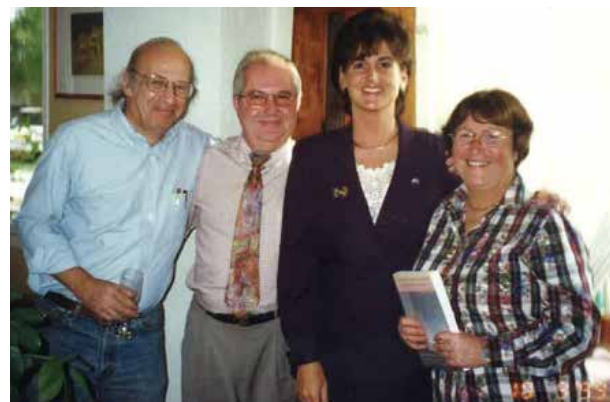
by Lisa Desjardins Michaud

As I write this, there is a sense of great loss, sadness, heart ache, but at the same time there is great gratitude, appreciation and love. Yes, I will miss you, but the richness of what you have left behind for us and those to come is priceless!

Your plays, your writings, your humor, I am so much richer for having had you in my life, thank you!

Your generosity and financial donations to the Franco-American Programs and *Le Forum* will forever be indebted to you. Our students and readership appreciative of your support throughout the many years!

I can remember sending an email,



Greg Chabot, Gérard Fayolle, Lisa Desjardins Michaud, Annie Fayolle. France, Oct. 1999.

looking for submissions for our publication, *Le Forum*. The response was immediate, how about this? I could always count on you...and you always had an encouraging word, kind accolades for the publication. (See page 19)

Your passing is a great loss, but you left behind a tremendous legacy! Thank you for believing in me!

Merci Greg! RIP mon ami!

(Continued on page 16)

ADIEU À GRÉGOIRE CHABOT, NOTRE MOLIÈRE FRANCO-AMÉRICAIN

par
Robert B. Perreault

Mathias Barnabé, un poète avec la tête perdue dans les nuages, écrit des vers qui ne sont que des conjugaisons variées du verbe être.

Philius Berthiaume, Ph.D., un critique littéraire avec la tête bien plantée dans le sol, est l'auteur d'une biographie intitulée *Les racines de Jean Racine*, dans laquelle il confond le dramaturge français du XVIIe siècle avec un érable à sucre.

Jacques Cartier, fondateur de la Nouvelle-France au XVIe siècle, est mystifié de se retrouver « entre les mains de [s]es ennemis » dans une taverne franco-américaine en Nouvelle-Angleterre au XXe siècle.

Jamais des personnages littéraires et leurs drôles histoires ne m'avaient tellement causé de rire aux éclats comme ceux-ci. Telle fut mon introduction à Grégoire Chabot et ses œuvres de la première heure, lors d'une soirée théâtrale dans le cadre du colloque « Les Franco-Américains : La promesse du passé, les réalités du présent » organisé par le National Materials Development Center à Bedford, New Hampshire, en juin 1976.

À mon avis, Grégoire Chabot, dramaturge, acteur et metteur en scène de pièces comiques, qui a passé sa carrière à promener sa troupe théâtrale ici et là en Nouvelle-Angleterre, en Louisiane, au Québec, en Acadie et même jusqu'en France, pourrait bien porter le titre de « notre Molière franco-américain ».

J'ai dit « pièces comiques », mais de fait, tout comme son héros et modèle, Molière, Grégoire s'attaquait toujours à des sujets sérieux, mais de façon comique et souvent satirique, toujours en vue de faire rire—mais surtout de faire *réfléchir*—ses auditoires.

Justement, à l'époque où j'ai assisté à cette première de la pièce de Grégoire intitulée *Un Jacques Cartier errant*, je travaillais comme bibliothécaire-archiviste de l'Association Canado-Américaine (ACA) à Manchester depuis un an et demi. Alors âgé de vingt-cinq ans, j'étais « le jeune » tel qu'on m'appelait, entouré de mes supérieurs qui, eux, étaient pour la plupart dans leur cinquantaine ou soixantaine. À quelques exceptions près, ils appartenaient à la génération de la « survivance française ». En d'autres termes, afin de pouvoir s'appeler

un *bon* Franco-Américain, il leur fallait demeurer fidèle au passé, à la langue française, à la religion catholique et aux traditions ethniques—soit une règle que l'on ne devait jamais remettre en question.

Par conséquent, ma première rencontre avec Grégoire Chabot et ses œuvres m'avait touché comme une vraie bouffée de fraîcheur. J'aurais bien voulu que mes supérieurs de l'ACA aient été là avec moi pour assister aux pièces de Grégoire. Ils auraient vu qu'un de mes contemporains un peu moins « jeune »—Grégoire avait sept ans de plus que moi—pouvait créer des œuvres d'art littéraire valables qui remettaient en question certaines idéologies dépassées et qui visaient plutôt le présent et l'avenir du peuple franco-américain.

Au cours des années, à part avoir assisté à des représentations de ses pièces de théâtre, j'ai eu des rencontres diverses avec Grégoire dont chacune était à la fois instructive et amusante, grâce à la profondeur de ses connaissances, à son sens de l'humour particulier et à sa gentillesse et générosité humaines.

Dans le cadre du festival « C'est si bon » à Lewiston en juillet 1977, Grégoire a dirigé une discussion sur le thème de « En quelle langue doit-on écrire ? ». Il m'avait invité à y participer, moi, toujours le « jeune ». Au début, le débat parmi les autres invités, tous beaucoup plus âgés que moi, semblait tourner uniquement autour du français standard vis-à-vis le parler populaire franco-américain comme langues d'expression littéraire chez nous. Vers le milieu du débat, j'ai osé proposer une autre langue : l'anglais ! Je pensais surtout aux ouvrages d'auteurs comme Jacques Ducharme, Albéric Archambault, Jack Kerouac, Grace (née DeRepentigny) Metalious, Robert Cormier et Gérard Robichaud, que les Franco-Américains unilingues anglophones et les Anglo-Américains qui s'intéressaient à notre culture, pouvaient apprécier. Quoique, à ce point dans sa carrière, Grégoire n'avait publié qu'en français standard et/ou dans le parler populaire franco-américain, il m'a appuyé à 100%, ce qui a sans doute choqué certains partisans de la survivance française dans l'auditoire.

Durant le printemps de 1979, j'ai eu

des rencontres intéressantes avec Grégoire à quelques reprises.

Lorsque j'étais dans un programme d'études pour la maîtrise qui n'allait pas bien, Grégoire m'avait invité chez lui pour m'offrir l'occasion de participer à un programme qu'il dirigeait à la Boston University (BU). À l'époque, il habitait une maison construite en 1710 à Newburyport, en face de l'embouchure de la rivière Merrimack. Pour moi, traverser le seuil de l'entrée à cette demeure avec son décor évoquant l'Amérique coloniale me donnait l'impression d'avoir quitté le XXe siècle pour le XVIIIe. De plus, la brillante fille aînée de Grégoire, âgée d'environ dix ans, m'a raconté des bribes d'histoire de Newburyport comme une petite adulte fort renseignée. J'ai tout de suite constaté que d'avoir Grégoire Chabot pour son papa lui avait été assez avantageux.

En fin de compte, après avoir discuté du programme de maîtrise à BU, Grégoire et moi étions tous les deux d'accord que ce n'était pas pour moi. Toutefois, notre conversation jusqu'à ce point avait été tellement passionnante et agréable que nous avons continué, discutant de nos propres écrits, de la littérature et de l'histoire franco-américaines, de la langue française et ainsi de suite, à partir de 7h du soir jusqu'à 3h du matin !

Une autre rencontre chez Grégoire, cette fois avec une douzaine de Franco-Américains provenant d'un peu partout en Nouvelle-Angleterre, a eu lieu un samedi, le jour de la Saint-Patrice 1979. Grégoire nous avait invités pour partager nos idées à propos d'organisations franco-américaines dans diverses régions et comment établir un meilleur système de communication parmi elles. Certaines gens ont aussi parlé de leurs projets individuels. De nouveau, la rencontre avait été tellement intéressante que la séance a duré à partir de 9h30 de la matinée jusqu'à 2h le lendemain matin !

Au mois d'avril de la même année, Grégoire et moi avons été tous les deux invités à l'université du Maine à Orono pour y donner des présentations—lui sur l'évolution du peuple franco-américain depuis les années 1930 jusqu'au présent, et moi, sur la collection franco-américaine de la bibliothèque de l'ACA. Puisque l'université payait notre voyage en avion de Boston à Bangor, nous avons décidé d'y aller ensemble. Cependant, lorsqu'est venu le temps de prendre nos places, je me suis rendu compte que nous

(suite page 13)

(ADIEU À GRÉGOIRE CHABOT, NOTRE MOLIÈRE FRANCO-AMÉRICAIN suite de page 12)

devions nous séparer, car Grégoire avait demandé un siège dans la section des fumeurs ! Par conséquent, étant seul, j'ai passé le vol entier à lire quelques chapitres d'un livre que j'avais apporté pour des moments libres tels que celui-ci. Il s'agissait donc du volume intitulé *Les Franco-Américains peints par eux-mêmes* (1936), soit une collection d'essais sur divers sujets par plusieurs auteurs. C'était justement un parfait exemple, dans les années 1930, de l'idéologie des partisans de la survivance française. De plus, mon grand-père maternel, Adolphe Robert, élu président général de l'ACA cette année même, 1936, y avait contribué l'avant-propos ainsi que trois essais.

La conférence de Grégoire, qu'il a présentée devant une classe d'étudiants—des Franco-Américains pour la plupart—ainsi que quelques professeurs et invités de la communauté locale, portait plus précisément sur le débat entre l'idéologie de la survivance française vis-à-vis les idées modernes de la génération contemporaine de « jeunes ». À ma grande surprise et par une pure coïncidence, Grégoire a révélé à l'auditoire qu'il s'était servi du livre *Les Franco-Américains peints par eux-mêmes*

comme source des notions dépassées ! En revanche, il a dit qu'il ne fallait pas rejeter à 100% les idées des partisans de la survivance française, car il y en avait quelques bonnes qui pouvaient fonctionner dans le présent et à l'avenir. Alors, il fallait plutôt combiner celles-ci avec les meilleurs parmi les solutions qu'offrait la génération contemporaine de « jeunes » pour effectuer une synthèse capable de mener le peuple franco-américain vers l'avenir.

C'était ma toute première visite à Orono, et grâce à Grégoire et sa merveilleuse conférence, ainsi qu'à la chaleureuse réception de nos hôtes du *FAROG Forum*, j'en suis revenu très enchanté.

En raccourci, j'ai eu plusieurs autres rencontres de divers genres avec Grégoire au cours des décennies, trop nombreuses pour inclure en totalité dans cet éloge. En voici donc quelques-unes.

Nous avons tous les deux participé au concours littéraire de l'organisation France-Louisiane-Franco-Américanie de Paris en l'an 2000. Grégoire a gagné le grand prix pour son conte « À perte de vue », tandis que mon conte, « Les mains du père et du fils » a reçu le prix spécial du jury, c'est-à-dire, une mention honorable. Nos deux contes sont inclus dans l'anthologie intitulée *Voix francophones de chez nous : Contes et histoires* (2009) compilée par Normand

Beaupré. Aussi, en 2014, mon amie regrettée, Claire Quintal, m'avait invité à rédiger une douzaine de biobibliographies pour le *Dictionnaire des auteurs franco-américains de langue française* publié en ligne par l'Institut français du collège de l'Assomption à Worcester. Parmi la douzaine figure celle de Grégoire, avec qui j'ai collaboré afin de compiler les faits et gestes de sa vie et de sa carrière.

La dernière fois que nous étions ensemble, soit en juin 2018, Grégoire m'avait invité à son chalet au fond des bois à Belgrade, Maine. C'était pour y être filmé par Keith Chevalier, archiviste de la Geisel Library au Saint Anselm Collège de Manchester, avec les écrivains Normand Beaupré, Paul Paré et lui-même. Grégoire, dans une discussion portant sur une série de thèmes franco-américains.

C'est avec beaucoup de regret et de tristesse que j'ai appris la mauvaise nouvelle du décès récent de Grégoire. Il m'avait toujours fait rire, mais au moins pour le moment, je n'en ai pas envie.

Toutefois, de temps en temps, je vais relire les œuvres de Grégoire, certain que le sourire me reviendra sur les lèvres.

Adieu, Grégoire, notre Molière franco-américain.

FAREWELL TO GRÉGOIRE CHABOT, OUR FRANCO-AMERICAN MOLIÈRE by Robert B. Perreault

Mathias Barnabé, a poet with his head in the clouds, writes lines of poetry in French that are nothing more than various conjugations of the verb to be.

Philius Berthiaume, Ph.D., a literary critic with his head well planted in the ground, is the author of a biography entitled *Les racines de Jean Racine*,¹ in which he mistakes the 17th-century French playwright for a sugar maple.

Jacques Cartier, the founder of New France in the 16th century, is mystified at finding himself “in the hands of [his]

enemies” in a Franco-American tavern in 20th-century New England.

Never before had literary characters and their funny stories caused me to burst out laughing as much as these. Such was my introduction to Grégoire Chabot and his early works during a theatrical soirée within the framework of a colloquium entitled “Les Franco-Américains : La promesse du passé, les réalités du présent,” organized by the National Materials Development Center in Bedford, New Hampshire, in June 1976.

In my opinion, Grégoire Chabot, playwright, actor, and director of comedies, who spent his career bringing his theatrical troupe here and there in New England, in Louisiana, in Québec, in Acadia, and even all the way to France, could very well go by the title “our Franco-American Molière.”²

I said “comedies,” however, just as did his hero and model, Molière, Grégoire al-

ways tackled serious issues, but in a comical, often satirical manner, to make his audiences laugh, but especially to make them *think*.

At the time I attended the above-mentioned premiere of Grégoire's play entitled *Un Jacques Cartier errant*,³ I had been working as librarian-archivist of the Association Canado-Américaine (ACA) in Manchester for a year and a half. At age twenty-five, I was “the young one,” as they referred to me, surrounded by my superiors who, for the most part, were in their fifties and sixties. But for a few exceptions, they belonged to the *survivance française* generation. In other words, to call oneself a *good* Franco-American, one had to remain faithful to the past, to the French language, to the Catholic faith, and to ethnic traditions—a rule that one must never question.

Consequently, my initial encounter
(Continued on page 14)

¹ Racine, the French word for root, is also a family name, in this case, that of the playwright. Here, it is a play on words, the title of his imaginary biography meaning “the roots of Jean Racine.”

² Molière was the pen name of 17th-century French playwright, actor, and director Jean-Baptiste Poquelin, author of many comical and satirical plays.

³ Literally, “a wandering Jacques Cartier.” Twenty years later, Grégoire translated his play, as well as others, and compiled them in a bilingual volume entitled *Un Jacques Cartier errant. Jacques Cartier Discovers America*. Orono, Maine: Éditions Réveil, The University of Maine Press/Le Centre Franco-Américain, 1996.

**(FAREWELL TO GRÉGOIRE CHABOT,
OUR FRANCO-AMERICAN MOLIERE
continued from page 13)**

with Grégoire Chabot and his works was for me like a breath of fresh air. I had truly wished that my superiors at the ACA had been there with me in attendance at Grégoire's plays. They would have seen that one of my contemporaries who was a bit less "young"—Grégoire was seven years older than I—could create valid works of literary art that challenged certain outdated ideologies and that looked more toward the present and the future of the Franco-American population.

Over the years, other than having attended his plays, I had a variety of get-togethers with Grégoire, each one being both informative and entertaining, thanks to his deep knowledge, his particular sense of humor, and his human kindness and generosity.

Within the framework of Lewiston's Franco-American Festival "C'est si bon" in July 1977, Grégoire led a panel discussion in French whose theme was "In what language should we write?" He had invited me on the panel, I, always the "young one." At first, the debate among the other panelists, all of whom were much older than I, seemed to revolve solely around standard French versus everyday Franco-American French as languages of literary expression. Toward the middle of the debate, I dared to propose another language: English! I was thinking especially of the works of authors such as Jacques Ducharme, Albéric Archambault, Jack Kerouac, Grace (née DeRepentigny) Metalious, Robert Cormier, and Gérard Robichaud, that monolingual anglophone Franco-Americans, as well as Anglo-Americans who had an interest in Franco-American culture, could appreciate. Although, at that point in his career, Grégoire had published only in standard French and/or everyday Franco-American French, he supported me 100%, which undoubtedly shocked certain proponents of *survivance française* in the audience.

During the spring of 1979, I had some interesting meetings with Grégoire on a few occasions.

While I was in a master's degree program that wasn't going well, Grégoire invited me to his home to offer me an opportunity to participate in a program at Boston

University (BU) that he was directing. At the time, he was living in a house built in 1710 that faced the mouth of the Merrimack River in Newburyport. For me, crossing the threshold of the home's entrance, with its décor that evoked colonial America, gave me the impression of having left the 20th century for the 18th. Moreover, Grégoire's brilliant older daughter, roughly ten years of age, recounted bits and pieces of Newburyport history as a well-informed little adult. I immediately determined that having Grégoire Chabot as her papa was quite advantageous.

In the end, after having discussed the master's program at BU, Grégoire and I agreed that it wasn't for me. Nevertheless, our conversation up to this point had been so absorbing and agreeable that we continued—discussing our own writings, Franco-American literature and history, and much more, from 7 in the evening till 3 in the morning!

Another meeting at Grégoire's, this time with a dozen Franco-Americans coming from here and there in New England, occurred on a Saturday, Saint Patrick's Day 1979. Grégoire had invited us to share our ideas about Franco-American organizations in various regions and how to establish a better system of communication among them. Certain attendees also spoke of their individual projects. Again, the meeting had been so interesting that it lasted from 9:30 in the morning until 2 o'clock the following morning!

In April of the same year, Grégoire and I were both invited to give presentations at the University of Maine in Orono—he on the evolution of the Franco-American population from the 1930s up to the present, and I, on the ACA library's Franco-American collection. Since the university was paying our trip by airplane from Boston to Bangor, we decided to go together. However, when the time arrived to board the plane, I came to the realization that we would need to separate, as Grégoire had requested a seat in the smoking section! Consequently, being alone, I spent the entire flight reading a few chapters of a book that I had brought along for free moments such as this one. The volume in question was *Les Franco-Américains peints par eux-mêmes* (1936), a collection of essays on various topics by several authors. It was, in fact, a perfect example, in the

1930s, of the ideology of the proponents of *survivance française*. In addition, my maternal grandfather, Adolphe Robert, who had been elected ACA's president general that same year, 1936, wrote the book's foreword as well as three of its essays.

Grégoire's lecture, which he presented before a class of students—Franco-Americans for the most part—and invited guests from the local community, dealt more precisely with the debate between the *survivance française* ideology versus the modern ideas of the contemporary younger generation. To my great surprise and by pure coincidence, Grégoire revealed to the audience that he had used the book, *Les Franco-Américains peints par eux-mêmes*, as a source for outdated notions! On the other hand, he said that one should not reject 100% of the ideas of the *survivance française* proponents, as there were a few good ones that could work in the present and in the future. Rather, one must combine these with the best among the solutions that the contemporary generation of young people offered, to bring about a synthesis capable of leading the Franco-American people toward the future.

It was my first visit to Orono, and thanks to Grégoire and his marvelous lecture, as well as the warm reception of our hosts from *Le FAROG Forum*,⁴ I returned home quite enchanted.

In short, I had many other meetings of various types with Grégoire over the decades, too numerous to include in their totality in this tribute. Here are but a few.

In the year 2000, we both participated in the literary contest of the Parisian organization called France-Louisiane-Franco-Américaine. Grégoire won the grand prize for his short story, "À perte de vue," while my short story, "Les mains du père et du fils," won an honorable mention. Both stories are included in an anthology entitled *Voix francophones de chez nous* (2009)⁵ compiled by Normand Beaupré. Also, in 2014, my late friend, Claire Quintal, had asked me to write a dozen or so biobibliographies for the *Dictionnaire des auteurs franco-américains de langue française*, published online by Assumption College's Institut français in Worcester. Among them is one about Grégoire, with whom I collaborated. (Continued on page 15)

⁴The title of the present publication, *Le Forum*, prior to 1994.

⁵Normand Beaupré, *Voix francophones de chez nous: Contes et histoires. Une anthologie franco-américaine*. Coral Springs, Florida: Llumina Press, 2009. Grégoire's grand-prize-winning short story, "À perte de vue" (as far as the eye can see), appears on pp. 62-74, along with another of his entitled "Crache ou meurs" (spit or die), on pp. 51-61.

“COMMENTARY BY GRÉGOIRE CHABOT IN 1976 ON THE RENAISSANCE OF THE FRANCO-AMERICAN CULTURE”

Our well remembered and passionate Franco American, Grégoire Chabot, addressed a group of Franco Americans leaders and educators (along with a few invited guests from France and Québec) in Bedford, NH 10-12 June 1976 during a Colloquium entitled "LES FRANCO-AMÉRICAINS: La Promesse du Passé et les Réalités du Présent". Since some of Mr. Chabot's comments are as apropos today as when he spoke them in French almost 50 years ago, I thought I would include a few thoughtful excerpts from his commentary in French followed by an English translation.

To put his comments in perspective, Mr. Chabot spoke in reply to an address made by Ms Claire Bolduc titled "Les Franco-Américains Eux-Mêmes Veulent-Ils D'Une Renaissance Culturelle?" ("Do Franco Americans Themselves Want a Cultural Renaissance?")

“La question de la langue a été soulevé souvent au cours de ce colloque. On a peur que si la langue française se perd, la Franco-Américanie va par conséquent, disparaître. Ceci est peut-être vrai. Mais la relation cause-effet qu'on établit entre ces deux événements n'est pas aussi valable qu'elle le semble au premier abord. La langue ne crée pas un groupe ethnique. Elle ne justifie pas son existence. Mise à part, c'est l'aspect le moins profond de l'ethnicité. En revanche, la culture du groupe ethnique, les modèles de conduite qu'il a établis et la façon dont ses modèles agissent et réagissent avec les modèles d'autres collectivités, sont son aspect le plus fort. C'est cet aspect qui justifie l'existence du groupe et qui par conséquent, justifie et valorise sa langue. Si la Franco-Américanie disparaît, ce sera plutôt par ignorance de sa culture que par ignorance de sa langue.

Or, nous ne pouvons pas nier que la culture franco-américaine n'est pas connue aujourd'hui. C'est pourquoi nous parlons ici de “renaissance”. Mais tandis que beaucoup d'autres groupes ethniques ont su revendiquer leurs droits, ont su s'unir et participer à une évolution culturelle ethnique, nous, les Franco-Américains, et je parle surtout de ceux qui ne sont pas ici aujourd'hui, nous ne savons même pas qu'il y a possibilité de renaissance. En commentant la présentation de Claire Bolduc, je voudrais d'abord montrer comment nous pourrions arriver à cette renaissance et ensuite pourquoi je vois cette renaissance comme étant essentielle non seulement pour notre groupe ethnique, mais pour la société nord-américaine en général.

Claire Bolduc dit que cette renaissance culturelle doit se passer surtout au niveau personnel, que chaque Franco doit renaître lui-même pour commencer. Je suis tout à fait

d'accord. Autrefois, le Franco-Américain laissait souvent définir son ethnicité par les grandes institutions qui l'entouraient.... ces institutions et leurs définitions perdent actuellement beaucoup de leur vigueur et souvent de leur valeur....je voudrais en ajouter deux autres....La première serait la réalisation de l'aspect très positif de l'ethnicité. Ceci se manifesterait surtout après le reniement et la colère....On verrait toutes les bonnes qualités du groupe....La deuxième étape que je voudrais ajouter comprend donc la réalisation de l'aspect négatif du groupe. C'est ici qu'il faut avoir devant soi l'histoire non-romancée du groupe si l'évolution va continuer d'une façon efficace.

La force d'un groupe vient de la réalisations et de ses vertues, et de ses défauts. L'individu qui participe à l'évolution culturelle et ethnique doit connaître les deux côtés pour pouvoir juger de la valeur du groupe....Une histoire non-romancée des Franco-Américains est essentielle à ce processus. La renaissance parmi nous ne peut pas se passer sans prise de conscience individuelle et collective. Et cette prise de conscience ne peut pas se faire sans une connaissance approfondie de la totalité de notre être ethnique....

Mais nous avons aussi besoin du sien...pour remettre la société franco-américaine en marche vers l'avenir, pour guérir la paralysie, la peur, la manque de confiance qui nous afflige...pour éliminer notre penchant à l'autodestruction.

Comme Franco-Américains...nous occupons une place privilégiée dans le développement de la société nord-américaine....Ce n'est qu'après avoir passé par toutes les étapes, après avoir compris notre identité personnelle et ethnique, que nous serons prêts à jouer le rôle que la société américaine veut nous donner et qu'il nous

est essentiel d'accepter.”

Ron Héroux

(frannie542@aol.com)



(F.A.R.O.G. FORUM Vol. 3 No. 7
avril 1976)

(Voir page 16 pour
l'article en anglais)

**(FAREWELL TO GRÉGOIRE CHABOT,
OUR FRANCO-AMERICAN MOLIERE
continued from page 14)**

rated in order to compile facts and activities of his life and career.

The last time we were together, in June 2018, Grégoire had invited me to his country home in the woods of Belgrade, Maine. It was to be filmed by Keith Chevalier, archivist of the Geisel Library at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, along with writers Normand Beaupré, Paul Paré, and Grégoire himself, in a discussion dealing with a series of Franco-American themes.

It is with much regret and sadness that I learned the bad news of Grégoire's recent death. He had always made me laugh, but at least for the moment, I don't feel like doing so.

Then again, from time to time, I'll reread Grégoire's works, assured that the smile on my lips will return.

**Farewell, Grégoire, our
Franco-American Molière.**

"The issue of language was often raised during this colloquium. We are afraid that if the French language is lost, Franco-Américanie will therefore disappear. This may be true. But the cause-effect relationship between these two events is not as valid as it seems at first glance. Language does not create an ethnic group. It does not justify its existence. Aside from that, it is the least profound aspect of ethnicity. On the other hand, the culture of the ethnic group, the driving patterns it has established and the way in which its models act and react with the models of other communities, are its strongest features. It is this aspect that justifies the existence of the group and therefore justifies and values its language. If Franco-Américanie disappears, it will be more out of ignorance of its culture than ignorance of its language.

However, we cannot deny that Franco-American culture is not known today. That's why we're talking about "renaissance" here. But while many other ethnic groups have known how to claim their rights, have known how to unite and participate in an ethnic cultural evolution, we Franco-Americans, and I speak especially

of those who are not here today, we don't even know there is a possibility of renaissance. In commenting on Claire Bolduc's presentation, I would first like to show how we might come to this renaissance and then why I see this renaissance as essential not only for our ethnic group, but for North American society in general.

Claire Bolduc says that this cultural renaissance must happen above all on a personal level, that each Franco must be reborn to begin with. I completely agree. Formerly, the Franco-American often allowed his ethnicity to be defined by the large institutions that surrounded him...these institutions and their definitions are currently losing much of their vigor and often of their value...I would like to add two more...The first would be realizing the very positive aspect of ethnicity. This would manifest itself especially after denial and anger...We would see all the good qualities of the group....The second step that I would like to add therefore includes the realization of the negative aspect of the group. This is where you have to have the un-romanticized history of the group if the evolution is to continue in an effective way.

The strength of a group comes from

its achievements and its virtues, and its flaws. The individual who participates in cultural and ethnic evolution must know both sides in order to be able to judge the value of the group.... An un-fictionalized history of Franco-Americans is essential to this process. Renaissance among us cannot happen without individual and collective awareness. And this awareness cannot be done without a thorough knowledge of the state of our ethnic being....

But we also need self-awareness...to put Franco-American society back on track for the future, to heal the paralysis, the fear, the lack of confidence that afflicts us...to eliminate our inclination to self-destruct.

As Franco-Americans... we occupy a privileged place in the development of the North American society.... It is only after having gone through all the stages, after having understood our personal and ethnic identity, that we will be ready to play the role that American society wants to give us and which is essential for us to accept."

Ron Héroux
(frannie542@aol.com)

(Tribute to Greg, by Lisa Desjardins Michaud, continued from page 11)



Dear Mr. Chabou:

I am writing this letter to thank you for your donation to FAROG this semester. During the craziness of the semester, our club meetings give us the chance to relax, eat real food and enjoy the comfort of community which you know is one of the most important parts of Franco culture. Without the generosity of people like you, we wouldn't be able to enjoy such times together. It means so much to us what we are able to have these meetings as an effort to keep our culture and traditions alive.

On the behalf of our club and students here, Thank you!

I hope you visit soon!

Meghan Murphy
Karoo President



Left to Right: Hadley White, Lisa Michaud, Daniel Moreau, Meghan Murphy, Maggie Somers, Alex Torno (behind Maggie), Shah Akhtar, Deb Roberge (Full-time volunteer)

Every year Greg gave a monetary donation so that the Franco-American Programs could take our student employees out for a fun filled evening.

Our students were ever so grateful for Greg's generosity.

Here is but one of those years!

Generations leave their amazing legacies and lives well lived

By *Juliana L'Heureux*

Maine is sadly and slowly experiencing the loss of a generation who dedicated their lives to create pride in the state's Franco-American history, language, religion and culture. This unhappy reality became evident after attending the rare occasion of a dual funeral on May 18, 2021, to celebrate the lives of Ronald and Alette Couturier, at the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Lewiston.



Stained glass window in the Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul in Lewiston, ME. (L'Heureux photo)

As a cultural and religious tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Couturier, the celebrant, Father Patrick Finn, requested the congregation who attended the funeral Mass to say the Our Father in French. Indeed, Father Finn is fluent in French and he led the recitation of the prayer.

It occurred to me to extend the tribute for Ronald and Alette Couturier to friends, Gregoire Chabot, originally from Waterville, ME., and to Norman and Doris Faucher, of Biddeford. I was fortunate to call the Faucher's family friends. They dedicated their lives to supporting Franco-American history, religion and culture in Biddeford, Maine. The deaths of these five Franco-American creative heroes leaves behind a legacy of cultural pride. This blog is a memorial to the Couturier and Faucher families, to Gregoire Chabot and to others in their generation who are leaving us. Summaries of their obituaries highlights describe a life of dedication to their Franco-American heritage.



Lewiston, Me
– [Ronald M. Couturier, 77 of Lewiston.](#) "He was involved with French organizations as a member of La Survivance Française..."

Died on Nov. 29, 2020, at Central Maine Medical Center from complications with Covid-19. Ronald was born on Sept. 30, 1943, the son of Lorenzo Couturier and Germaine Therriault Couturier. He attended St. Peter's School and spent two years with the Brothers of the Sacred heart in Pascoag, R.I. Upon his return to Lewiston he spent one year at St. Dominic High School and then graduated from Lewiston High School in 1962. He later earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Maine in Portland graduating in 1967. He then spent two years studying in France after which he spent the summer touring Europe with his brother Roger. He went on to earn a master's degree from Middlebury College in 1974. In 1965, Ronald served one term as Alderman of Lewiston's Ward 5 during the time his brother Robert served as mayor of the city. He started his teaching career at St. Peter's Grammar School and then moved on to completing his years of teaching at Lewiston High School retiring as head of the language department. Ronald married Alette Beland on April 19, 1976. Sadly, she also died of the Covid-19 virus on Dec. 2, 2020, three days after his death.



Lewiston, Me
– [Alette Y. Béland Couturier, 84, of Lewiston:](#) "Alette was involved in many local French organizations. She was a member of La Survivance Française, as well as its president for well over 20 years. She was also a member of l'Association Canado-Americaine. Alette died on December 2, 2020, at Central Maine Health Center from complications with Covid-19 and was predeceased by her husband Ronald who also succumbed from the coronavirus.. Alette was born in Augusta, Maine, on December 14, 1935, the daughter of Antonio Béland and Irène Bisson Béland. She attended St. Augustine Grammar School and graduated from Cony High School in Augusta, in 1955. She joined the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary in 1956, in Hudson, NH. She obtained her B.A. degree

from Rivier College in Nashua, NH. Alette taught primary and elementary grades in Willimansette, North Hampton and South Billingham, MA, as well as in Caribou and Lewiston, Maine. She left the community and worked one year in the office at Knapp Shoe then taught in the Lewiston School System from 1971 until her retirement in 1995. Alette married Ronald M. Couturier on April 19, 1976. He predeceased her by 3 days from the same illness. She sang with the Silvertones in nursing homes, Christmas parties and festivals. Her wooden "gigueurs" and "spoons" were always a hit with the audience. She also loved line dancing. Alette led French Sing-A-Long groups at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston Auburn College. In 2012, Alette was inducted into the Franco-American Hall of Fame in Augusta. She volunteered at D'Youville Pavilion in Lewiston and she was a Eucharistic minister in her parish.



Biddeford, Me
– [Norman R. Faucher, 86, died on Oct. 4, 2020, at his home in Biddeford.](#) He was born Feb. 11, 1934, he was the son of Eddy and Jeanne (Pelletier) Faucher.

A Maine baseball star, Mr. Faucher told me a personal story about how he was a bat boy in the York County, Maine collegiate leagues when George Herbert Walker Bush, the future president of the United States (41), was playing baseball during his summers in Kennebunkport. He also founded the Franco-American Writers and Publishers group with his talented wife, Doris.

Norm graduated from the former St. Louis High School in 1951 and from St. Michael's College in Vermont in 1955, with a Business Administration degree. He was an athlete in high school and was selected for the Maine Baseball Hall of Fame in 2003, for the record 467 hits he made during his senior year on the Telegram League and he continues to hold the record of nine triples in one season.

Norm was a communicant of the Good Shepard Parish in Biddeford and charter member of the former St. Joseph's Credit Union in 1963. He served as the past-president of the St. Joseph's Parish Council and Biddeford-Saco Rotary Club. He also participated as a board member for

(Continued on page 18)

(Generations leave their amazing legacies and lives well lived continued from page 17) the Southern Maine Medical Center for 12 years, he was a corporator for the Biddeford Savings Bank and a lifelong member of the St. Louis Alumni Association.

Norm served his country in the U.S. Army and was stationed in France.

Norm married the love of his life, Doris Provencher in 1956. She accompanied him to France during his military duties. Doris passed away in July of 2015, after 58 years of marriage.

Mr. Faucher is to be buried alongside Doris at the Saint Joseph's Cemetery in Biddeford.

Norm played baseball for the Benoit's Contractors in the Portland Twilight League for two years, during this time he was contacted by pro-league scouts and was coached by former Boston Red Sox shortstop, Freddie Parent. He also played at St. Michael's College for four years.



Biddeford, Me- Doris [P. Faucher, 81, of Biddeford died](#) in Biddeford after a brief illness. She was a personal friend of mine. Moreover, I am proud to be among the fans and supporters of her Franco-American

semi-autobiographical novels. Doris was born in Biddeford on April 27, 1934 the daughter of Omer and Alice DesRoberts Provencher. She was educated in Biddeford schools graduating from Biddeford High School with the class of 1952. She graduated from the University of Maine in Orono with a Bachelors Degree in Education in 1956 and later received a Masters Degree in Education from the University of Maine in Gorham. She became a Certified Medical Technologist and was a member of ASCP, American Society for Clinical Pathology. On Nov. 24, 1956 she married Norman R. Faucher in St. Joseph Church in Biddeford. She and her husband moved to Poitiers, France where he was stationed in the military. Mrs. Faucher worked as a teacher at Biddeford Regional Vocational School retiring in 1988. She was a member of the Franco American Writers & Composers Association, and a member of the Alpha Omicron PI sorority at the University of Maine in Orono, a member of the Franco-American Genealogy Society in Biddeford and the American Canadian Genealogy Society in

Manchester, N.H.

With her husband being stationed in France for military service, she became very interested and absorbed in her genealogical history, which lead her to writing a series of historical novels entitled "*Le Quebecois*." She became nationally recognized for the series, having sold books in all 50 states.



Waterville, Me. and South Hampton, N.H.- [Grégoire R. Chabot, a Franco-American who delighted everyone who knew him with his compassionate creativity, died at the age](#)

[of 76](#), at his home in South Hampton, New Hampshire. He was a Franco-American playwright and actor who was a prominent cultural advocate.

Grégoire R. Chabot died on Monday, April 26, surrounded by his daughters, granddaughters, and four cats. He was 76.

Mr. Chabot was an award-winning, and prolific author of dozens of plays, essays and short stories examining Franco-American life and language. He began his writing and performing career in the 1970s and was a key figure in the Franco-American renaissance that began around the turn of the 21st century.

Born in Waterville, Maine to Marcel and Osithe (Michaud) Chabot, Grégoire spoke only French until the age of five. The dialect – a version derided by the French teachers he encountered in school but prominent among his relatives in the mill towns of Lewiston, Auburn and Waterville – became central to his writing and cultural advocacy.

Writing in Franco-American French was not only the most accurate reflection of his characters, Mr. Chabot argued, but it was a vital part of living and breathing the New England francophone experience. In the tradition of Moliere, one of his favorite authors, humor and satire also played prominent roles in his work.

Mr. Chabot graduated from Colby College with a degree in French language and literature, and received his master's degree in French from the University of Maine at Orono, remaining active at the university's Franco-American Center and writing for the bilingual publication *Farog* Forum/Le Forum. Additionally, he directed a federally-funded bilingual children's program that aired on Maine's Public Broadcasting Network in 1974, and, until 1980, he worked to

train bilingual teachers at Boston University.

He founded the theater company named *Du monde d'à côté* /People Next Door--to perform his plays in France, Quebec, Louisiana, and throughout New England and Canada.

He worked as a teacher, editor, copywriter and communications consultant while continuing to write, and perform about Franco-Americans. His works include a collection of three plays and their English translations titled *Un Jacques Cartier Errant/Jacques Cartier Discovers America*; a series of essays called "*Between Mania and Phobia*," and an ongoing column in *Le Forum* called "*We Are so Screwed/V'la du sort*".

Chabot spoke about his work and Franco-American experience at a dizzying number of classes, conventions, and forums, and he was always eager to help new writers or enthusiasts. He served on the board of directors of the Quebec-based Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques from 2008 to 2010 focused on promoting and encouraging the voice of New England Franco-

Americans. He remained active in the organization for the rest of his life.

It's never too late to express cultural gratitude to the lives well lived by these Franco-American leaders.

Merci!



About Juliana

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

<https://francoamerican.bangordailynews.com/author/jlheureux/>

Gregoire Chabot Memorial

In my few years as a student at the Franco-American Programs, I had only a handful of interactions with Gregoire Chabot. But each interaction was more pleasant than the previous. I first had the pleasure of meeting Gregoire at my first Rassemblement. I was a freshman who was still understanding the ropes of academia. For the brief encounter I had with Gregoire, he made a big impression on me. This was someone who could walk into a room of sadness and misery, and in a fraction of a second, there would be only joy and happiness. I also recall one evening he took out all of the students at the Franco-American Programs to dinner at a high-end restaurant. As someone raised in the working class of Lewiston, such an environment was new and shiny to me. That night, many stories were shared, and so too were many laughs.

The most recent and most vibrant memory I have of Gregoire was when he and Abby Paige came to the Franco-American Programs to translate a theatre-piece. As evening cast over the windows of the Centre, they were trying their hardest to get as much done on the theatre-piece as they could, while I, sitting a few feet away, tried to figure out differential equations. The night got older, and we eventually forgot about time. Once we all became exhausted enough, we decided the best thing to do for ourselves was have dinner. And so, we all jumped into my compact Focus (I'm certain Gregoire's head was almost touching the ceiling), and I drove as smoothly as an Uber to Governor's. Though when we got there, we found the restaurant to be closed. And so, with all of us feeling somewhat defeated, I tried to think of any restaurants that would be open at that hour. We ended up at a Thai restaurant in downtown Orono, and sat down with several others at the restaurant. Over the night, laughs were shared once again, "oohs" and "ahhs" were exclaimed

at the sight of neon-vibrant beverages, and rice molded into the shape of a teddy bear. As the night got even older and the smiles became moulded onto our faces like clay, we noticed we were the only ones left in the restaurant, save the waitress and the cook. We decided we were keeping them long enough, and got the check. The drive back to the center, I was thinking about how that was the most fun I've had in a long while. During the pandemic, fond memories of socializing with human beings were upfront in my mind, and so too was the dinner I had with Gregoire, and I was ready to make a reservation for a sequel to the dinner with Gregoire and Abby. However, the morning I got the message that he had passed, those wishes for a future dinner, became overridden with the memories of the past dinners. The few moments I've with Gregoire are more valuable to me than gold. He leaves an impression of me, as I know he did with many others, that will last for an eternity.

by Daniel Moreau



Lettres/ Letters

(N.D.L.R. The following email was received from Greg Chabot, March 2020)

Hi Lisa,

Congratulations on the Winter/Hiver 2019-20 issue of the FORUM (https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/francoamericain_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 Morneau'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 Levesque
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 leadership, the FORUM has become a unique resource for writers who are looking to express their Franco-American experience AND 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*

Dear Lisa,

I think UMAINE Orono and the Franco-American Programs along with its publications and virtual programs do more than any other NE state in keeping our FA culture and heritage alive. As my dear friend Claire Quintal would say,

« BRAVO » to you Lisa and others who work with you in this worthwhile endeavor.

The numerous virtual programs offered throughout the pandemic along with the recent Rassemblement have rekindled my FA spirit and has inspired me to do more to promote our FA culture.

Continue SVP.

I have offered the US history prof at Salve Univ in Npt to address his classes on the legacy of the French and French Canadians in R.I. I will endeavor to do the same at URI and R.I. College, maybe even at Brown, Bryant, Prov Coll and Roger Williams Univ.

I will endeavor to reach out to the state high schools as well.

*Amicalement
Ron Héroux
frannie542@aol.com*



Lettres/ Letters

Dear Le Forum;

I regret that my unclear prose in “A Legacy as Plain as the Nose on My Face” (published in volume 42, #3 of *Le Forum*) may have caused misunderstanding about what I was attempting to say about Rhea Côté Robbins’ *Wednesday’s Child*. I was trying to praise how the book’s protagonist acknowledges the truth of the past, rather than pretending it never happened or had no impact on the present. Using far-too-cryptic shorthand, I was attempting to contrast Côté

Robbins’ approach with other voices heard in our community that encourage us to focus only on happy stories about our past—to prettify or ignore difficult legacies we struggle to understand and overcome. Those who urge community members to falsify the past may hope to protect us from having our histories reduced to their darker aspects by non-Franco-Americans. I argue that such an approach does not serve us. I am distressed that I did not make it clear that my argument was with those voices, not with Côté Robbins’ inspiring book.

Steven Riel

Chère Le Forum;

Thanks again for another great edition of the “Forum”. We are so lucky that you are there to keep the flame burning in our Franco culture.

Enclosed you will see a check for two gift subscriptions. “Merci mille fois”. Très Amicalement,

*Xavier de la Prade
Petaluma, CA*

Chère Le Forum;

Voici \$US pour renouveler notre abonnement à la revue Le Forum.

Je lis d’une page à l’autre et j’apprécie toujours!

*Jeannine et Alphée Cyr
Saint-Basile, N.B. Canada*



December 23, 2020

Lisa Michaud

Le Centre Franco-Américain

University of Maine

Orono, Maine 04469-5719

Dear Lisa,

On behalf of the Franco-American Collection at the University of Southern Maine Lewiston-Auburn College, I was to extend my appreciation to you for the excellent publication you coordinate and layout in the quarterly, *Le Forum*. The articles are interesting and they report on all the many facets about Franco-American culture.

In particular, I want to acknowledge agreement with *Le Forum*’s Mission bullet, “To provide vehicles for the effective and cognitive expression of a collective, authentic, diversified and effective voice for Franco-Americans.”

It has been my privilege to work with you during the years when news items I have written were among the published articles. Moreover, please feel free to publish any of my future articles.

At the FAC, we look forward to receiving *Le Forum*, where hard copies are retained for the archives.

Let us know how we can continue to assist you and *Le Forum*’s Publishing Board, whenever you need information.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Juliana L. Heureux
Chair

*Julie Heureux
Please share with your colleagues!*

51 Westminster St., Lewiston, ME 04240 207-753-6545 <http://usm.maine.edu/franco/>

Dear Le Forum;

Enclosed please find my renewal for my subscription to *Le Forum*. I am so grateful to you and Le Centre Franco-Américain for all that you do for our community!

I hope this finds you and your family well during these interesting times. All is fine here in Orr’s Island. I continue most diligently with my PhD studies, delving into how one’s heritage and faith and women’s intuition relate to a woman’s health. I have limited this work to women’s health for that has been my career experience. It is ever so insightful, fun, and of course, challenging! It is all great stuff, though, especially in keep-

ing one’s mind off all that is ever-present in the world.

May your seasons of 2021 be peaceful and well, Fondly,

*Lorinda Fontaine-Farris
Orr’s Island, ME*

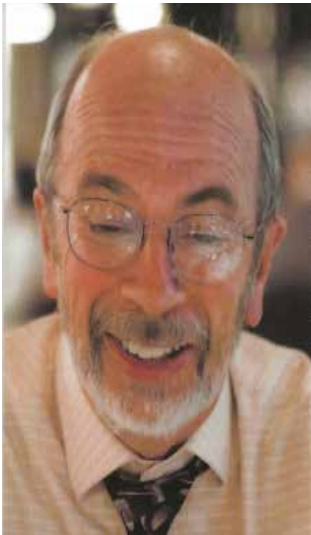


Lettres/ Letters

In the last issue of *Le Forum*, Juliana L'Heureux cites Richard Sorrell and his article "Sports and Franco-Americans in Woonsocket, 1870-1930". As mentioned in his obituary, Dr. Sorrell is often cited by authors writing about Franco-Americans.

Professor Sorrell was a friend of mine. Given the custom of *Le Forum* of publishing articles about prominent Franco-Americans and scholars who have studied the group, I am writing this article about my friend, who passed away in 2018, and his work on the Franco-Americans.

Professor Sorrell obtained his Ph.D. in 1975 with a study entitled "The Sentinelle Affair (1924-1929) and militant *survivance*: The Franco-American Experience in Woonsocket, Rhode Island". We met a year later while our paths crossed while doing research. He was very helpful to me as I did my research on Maine's Corporation Sole Controversy. He had already begun to teach American history at Brookdale



**Richard Sorrell
1944-2018**

Richard Sorrell, age 74, passed away on November 24, 2018 at Riverview Medical Center. Richard was born in Massena, NY in 1944 to the late Sherman Sorrell and Mary Margaret Ladd. He was predeceased by his cousin, Susan Andrew Sweet who grew up in the same house and was like a sister to him, and her parents, Russell Andrew and Elisabeth Andrew Schoeffel.

Richard was a wonderfully loving husband, father, and friend. Everyone who

encountered Richard was touched by his kind and gentle manner; he would go out of his way to do anything and everything for both family and friends. Richard often remarked on how lucky he was.

Richard taught American History at Brookdale Community College in New Jersey, where he taught literally thousands of students for over 45 years. I attended one of his classes in 1977 and he spoke on immigration. Franco scholars often remark that when immigration history is taught, the focus is on Anglo-Saxons (WASPS), German-Americans, Irish-Americans, Italian-Americans, Greek-Americans, Polish-Americans, Jewish-Americans from Eastern Europe. In his lecture that day, Richard gave a prominent place to Francos. After class, I jovially said that he had done that for my benefit but he stated emphatically that what I had heard was his standard lesson on immigration.

Teaching at a community college, Richard's teaching load was heavy and so he was not a regular participant on the Franco-American "circuit," so to speak. But he did participate in a number of Claire Quintal's symposiums at Assumption College. I always enjoyed his talks, as did the other attendees. Whether talking about Jack Kerouac, Grace Metalious or Freddy Parent, (born in Biddeford) who lived in Sanford when playing for the Boston Red Sox when they won the first World Series, Professor

encountered Richard was touched by his kind and gentle manner; he would go out of his way to do anything and everything for both family and friends. Richard often remarked on how lucky he was.

Richard was the devoted husband of Sally Sorrell since 1968. He is survived by two sons and daughters-in-law, Peter Sorrell and Melanie Holm, and John Sorrell and Elaine Driscoll. Richard is also survived by his two adoring grandchildren, Willow and Heath.

"Historian Richard Sorrell was among those few who sensed that 'Kerouac's life and literature can best be understood in terms of his ethno-religious background, which was heavily Franco-Catholic."

Richard taught American History at Brookdale Community College for over 45 years after completing a dissertation on French-Canadian immigration history at the University of Buffalo and publishing

Sorrell always brought new, recently-researched material to his presentations.

When planning for a visit from him and his wife Sally to D.C., I wondered what he would like to see. We skipped the usual tourist sights because he had seen these previously. I took him to Lincoln's summer white house at the site of the Old Soldiers Home, about 3 miles from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, and to nearby Fort Stevens where Jubal Early had come within several hundred yards of D.C. Legend has it that Oliver Wendell Holmes had to warn President Lincoln to duck behind the fort's parapets to avoid Early's sharpshooters. Professor Sorrell was animated as he explained more history of these two sites to his wife and engaged our guide in conversation at the Old Soldiers Home. He raved about the summer white house tour and Fort Stevens for the rest of his visit. Professor Sorrell was an historian who loved the discipline. Franco-Americans were fortunate to have been a focus of his research. I encourage readers of *Le Forum* to read the articles cited in the bibliography accompanying this article.

By Michael Guignard

pioneering demographic research on the French-Canadian immigrant experience in Rhode Island and in the works of Jack Kerouac and Grace Metalious. As the author of *The Catholic Counterculture in America, 1933-1962*, wrote in 2001: "Historian Richard Sorrell was among those few who sensed that 'Kerouac's life and literature can best be understood in terms of his ethno-religious background, which was heavily Franco-Catholic.'" Despite his protestations to the contrary, Richard was a meticulous thinker who is still cited in dissertations defended as recently as 2013 and corresponded with academics working in the field when they asked questions about his original research—he often remarked on the glory of being "immortalized in a footnote." Brookdale was his second home, a place he truly loved, and, in the words of one of his favorite television characters, "a place where he knew he was loved." Richard's great joy as an educator was team-teaching with his closest friend, Carl Francese, who passed away in March 2017. Richard and Carl co-authored a textbook for their popular class on the history of rock and roll at Brookdale: *From Tupelo to Woodstock: Youth, Race and Rock and Roll in America, 1954-1969*.

(Continued on page 4)

(Richard Sorrell by Michael Guignard continued from page 17)

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Lettres/ Letters

In the last issue of *Le Forum*, Louis B. Lausier was mentioned in an article as a prominent Franco-American public servant "with a long and distinguished political career." I have seen many mentions in *Le Forum* of Louis Jalbert of Lewiston. Lausier was Biddeford's equivalent of Jalbert.

Louis B. Lausier was born in Biddeford in 1879. Both his parents were natives of Canada. He received his elementary education in Biddeford parochial schools and graduated from Collège de Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière in Quebec. He then returned to Biddeford to study law with Judge George F. Haley, chief justice of the Maine Supreme Court. This was a common method of being admitted to the Bar, requiring great self-discipline and drive, working for the attorney "sponsoring" you while "reading" the law. Attorney Lausier passed the bar exam in 1906 and went into private practice that same year. As early as 1915, a book on prominent Franco-Americans in the State of Maine cited Lausier gaining "a successful standing and pronounced recognition throughout York County" in the practice of law. He was a member of Catholic Order of Foresters, and Franco-American organizations such as the Artisans and the Cercle Frontenac. Early in his career, he served as the attorney for the Pepperell Trust Company then served on its Board of Directors eventually becoming President of the bank. But as was stated in the Biddeford Journal at the time of his death, however, that Lausier may have been a lawyer, a banker and a businessman, but his true love was politics. In 1919-1920 and again in 1925-1926, Lausier served in the state legislature representing Biddeford. Locally, he served three years as a city alderman, one term as city auditor and one term as city solicitor. Statewide he was part of the delegation that represented Maine at the 1940 and 1948 Democratic National Convention and in 1948 captured the Democratic nomination for Governor, one of the first Franco-Americans to run for statewide office in Maine. Politically, however, he is best known for serving 15 consecutive terms as mayor of Biddeford, from 1941 to 1955 inclusively.

Biddeford, from 1941 to 1955 inclusively.

His obituary mentions that Lausier's "personality and conduct won him friends and enemies." Who might some of those enemies have been? Well, he became mayor a mere 17 years after the KKK marched in Saco in 1924 and tried to cross the bridges to parade its campaign of exclusion and hate on Biddeford streets. Twenty-two years before he became mayor in 1941, the legislature in Augusta passed a law making it illegal to speak French in public schools other than in French language classes, even on the playgrounds during recess and schoolyards before and after school. Patrick Lacroix has written that "historians must struggle to find evidence" that the six Francos (with one exception) in the Maine House in Augusta in 1919, including Lausier, publicly opposed the legislation. I would submit that by the age of 40 and a life-long resident of Biddeford, Lausier knew his city and was certain that such a law would never be enforced in Biddeford. When he was



benevolence." For the Franco American students attending public schools in Biddeford, that paternalism meant that they could speak their mother tongue in the schoolyard. For me and the hundreds of parochial school students in the city during his administration, that paternalism meant we could ride to school on a city school bus for free, despite the doctrine of separation of church and state. "Lausier knew his people" wrote the Daily Journal reflecting the sentiment shared by all of those who had known him. A January 30, 1962 letter to the editor summed up the long tenure of Mayor Lausier as "the alpha and omega of a traditional Franco-American personality" and political stewardship. In an age in which the national debt approaches \$27 trillion, one of Mayor "Papa" (as he was affectionately known) Lausier's noted achievements is that he left the city debt free, one of the few cities in Maine that could make that claim in 1955.

A lifetime communicant of St. Joseph's parish, his funeral mass was celebrated by 3 of the 4 priests in the parish and attended by notables from across southern Maine. It is not coincidental that during his last year in office, Biddeford hosted the largest parade in its history to mark its centennial as a city. As a nine-year old scheduled to be in the parade, I remember the excitement of parading down Main Street with spectators lined 6 or 7 deep on both sides of the quarter-mile parade route. We kids had competed to be chosen to be in that parade. I do not remember if the mayor joined the parade participants or simply watched from his law office at 148 Main Street or City hall, but, either way, I am sure he felt the same pride as all the other spectators that day.

By Michael Guignard



Mayor Louis B. Lausier kicks off the Salvation Army's Christmas collection in Biddeford, 1941. Lausier, a democrat, served for 15 consecutive years as mayor, from 1941-1955. He sought a 16th term, but was defeated in a primary election. Nicknamed "Papa" Lausier by some, he was a well-known and sometimes controversial figure in Biddeford politics and a lifelong resident of the city.

mayor, he certainly did not enforce that law, making more enemies. He lost that race for Governor badly in 1948.

Biddeford Franco-Americans who went to Biddeford High, Emery School, Washington Street School and the other public elementary schools in the city did not suffer that fate because there was no way Mayor Lausier would allow that law to ever be enforced in his city. An editorial writer in the *Biddeford Daily Journal* condescendingly wrote a few days after the Mayor's passing that he ruled with "paternalistic

politics. In 1919-1920 and again in 1925-1926, Lausier served in the state legislature representing Biddeford. Locally, he served three years as a city alderman, one term as city auditor and one term as city solicitor. Statewide he was part of the delegation that represented Maine at the 1940 and 1948 Democratic National Convention and in 1948 captured the Democratic nomination for Governor, one of the first Franco-Americans to run for statewide office in Maine. Politically, however, he is best known for serving 15 consecutive terms as mayor of



My Mother-in-Law

By
Gerard Coulombe

My mother-in-law, from the beginning of my visits to her house, thinking that I ought to introduce myself as her soon-to-be son-in-law, because her youngest daughter and I were to marry, would have none of it. She made this clear to me from the outset. Although, I could sit in her parlor all I wanted to with her daughter on the couch, beyond her view, or so I thought; in fact, she had other means of seeing us via a series of reflective views from bouncing images involving a series of discreetly placed mirrors that did not appear to me as if she could see us, cuddling on the couch, but she could, which was no small matter to her. As for all appearances, in her view, we were well on our way to some matrimonial detente if she did not put her foot down. But, as she died a long time ago, after fooling everyone else into passing, I mean, dying, before she did, including her husband, the beau-vivant that he thought himself to have been, throughout his years, but far short of the years that he might have had, except that the men in those days were sure to pass long before their wives, and that was no less true of my own father, whom, my mother outlived, if for no other reason than to prove a point. As hard as my mother had worked all of her life, she was by far the healthier of the two by a long shot when my father died, and so had been my mother-in-law when her husband, my father-in-law, died.

[Allow me a short interjection, here, as I must say that my mother-in-law had no power over me as an outsider, and, as of yet, I was not a member of the family, and, as such, she could not boss me around. No, sirree! She, my girl friend's mother, was off limits by all accounts as far as deciding who was marrying whom. That was to be between her daughter and me, or is it, I. Of course, her daughter had had, and might have had, other choices that I hadn't known about, and so, let bygones be bygones. I won out, and, I hope, so did she, but the reader would have to ask her, as she, my wife, like every other wife is entitled to her side of matrimonials, or, of our own marital story.]

Both women had had a hard life, my

mother and my mother-in-law. But as hard as my mother's life had to have been throughout her life with a husband who worked second shift for all of fifty-five years, and as hard as it was to comprehend my mom's experiences, my mother-in-law lived several lives wrapped into one; her own mother had died when she and her siblings were younger than she; her father had re-married, his sister-in-law, her husband having died and who had been left with a daughter; in which case, my future mother-in-law, the oldest of the children, became the mother of her three younger sisters and her two younger brothers, and had to have mothered her younger, sibling, cousin as well, her "new mother's" child, her dad having remarried was working the farm. The story is that my intended's mother, had been mother to

There was no "badinage" where he was concerned. Never heard him utter a word. I do not know if he was a veteran or not, although he belonged to a club of a kind.

her younger siblings and her step-mother's daughter. The point being, here, is that the woman, my future mother-in-law, had had ample experience dealing with lots of kids and, therefore, lots of people. Mind, all of these people had grown and had had children of their own, or not, by the telling of this story: One brother had none while the other's wife had had over twenty live births; in the interim, his brother never married, and was boarding with my future mother-in-law when I met him. There was no "badinage" where he was concerned. Never heard him utter a word. I do not know if he was a veteran or not, although he belonged to a club of a kind. As for the rest of my mother-in-law's siblings, one was a nun, another had married a Yankee, and another had been a rather successful [I hate the word] old maid, all of her life, with a secret lover, and all that which it entails. I wish I knew more, for the telling; were there one; It would be astonishing, this, from the tidbits related to me or from those that I picked up from other people, relatives, telling.

In fact, as far as I can patch things together, my in-law's had had five children. Four girls and a boy [more about them,

later]. Of my mother-in-laws siblings, there was one at the time, a brother, who lived in her home as her guest. She had a second brother who was married and they had had in the neighborhood of twenty-some, live births. I understand that she, his wife, divorced him after all was said and done. And there were others, a nun, and two others whose husbands were "English." Each couple had one child. Each child grew up with intriguing personalities and, therefore, lives; one was single, the other, married. [If I do not have this right, my wife will punish me.]

Once, when we were out for a drive. My wife, Juliette, and I were staying at the time with a cousin of hers, a great lady whom I got to know very well, over time, because she was the daughter of one of her mother's siblings. Once, when out on a drive, we passed what my wife, Juliette, told me had been her grandfather's farm. I had to have turned around, having just learned this, to have a better look at what, I had been told, had been her grandfather's farm. Driving by, I saw a long, tall tree-lined drive to an "L" shaped farm. I do not recall the color of either home or barn, but I re-imagined them as having been white, naturally, although, they could have been red, as so many farm buildings customarily are. Nowadays, though, I couldn't say that the farm is still there, as the whole of that area has been overbuilt with new homes, so many of them that one can no longer tell anything of the character of what once had been, "the country."

To say that my mother-in-law was a tough woman for her size, she could not have been any taller than my wife, who is not tall, at all it is no more of an exaggeration than to say that superman or, more likely, superwoman could leap tall buildings in his or her day; I can well imagine that my mother-in-law would not have shrunk from trying had she had to leap a few, as, no matter the task, she had the makings of a superwoman if there ever was one. She was already a small woman, as is my wife, compared to my size, I've said, but being small neither stopped my mother-in-law from doing everything, masterfully, nor, I must add, has it stopped my wife, and, all this, energetically, vitally.

There's another thing, an oddity concerning my mother-in-law. Although she was married for a long time to a man of business, he sold insurance, and he was a Realtor. It was she who, as strong women must, who was able to hold this immense family of "individualists" together. While

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her husband could have bragged about selling the biggest pieces of city real estate by sheer volume; one of which might have been as big as City Hall, my father-in-law never owned his own home,* and, to me, that has always been incomprehensible. I never talked about this with others in the family, but, if my father-in-law never amassed the financial wherewithal to purchase his own home, while, it seems to me, everyone else of means, was doing so, he certainly had to have had the mechanisms to purchase his own home, down pat, but, still, he did not own his own home. Instead, he had to have paid rent on a half-duplex, albeit a large one, like my mother did, and lived in it for a long time, as far as I know, although, my in-laws had lived elsewhere as the "kids" had grown, but the address that I had gotten to know, alone, perhaps, gave them some prestige, but, I would not have known, why. I recall, it was off of Elm Street, near the Five Points, that they lived, and it was close to the hospital.

Following her husband's passing, my mother-in-law moved out of her home, the half duplex that the family had lived in for a long time. The move was not without some personal baggage which was her sister-in-law who had friends in the neighborhood and could have stayed with one of them, for I, myself, only, supposed. It was to be that my mother-in-law either felt responsible for her sister-in-law, her husband's sister, for some reason, who, as far as I know, had lived in the same household with her sister-in-law, who was, obviously, her husband's sister who, for some reason, had lived in the same household, with her brother, that is, and with her sister-in-law in charge, one supposes, but that could not have been so. Furthermore, and, for a long time, too, did one of my mother-in-law's own brothers have a room in the house. I know that in addition to her having had her son in the house when he came back from WWII, and, for a long time after that, his wife and sons lived in his mother's home. Used to, as she was, with adults and children staying, living with her, too, her own having left, married with children but, naturally, visiting on weekends. It had been that after the war, she had added to the household the returned from the war, the son she had who, much later, married, and the couple had had children, and they all got to live with their grandmother, and then son, a WWII Vet, passed, after his father had. And then that family, dispersed

throughout the outskirts of town, except for one who went away having declared that he was bisexual. And, so, in a nutshell, one can see the arrangements made necessary, by happenstance, the work that fell upon a very "sturdy," tough, and good hearted woman my mother-in-law.

[Allow me to interject, here, and this has nothing to do with the story of my in-laws, but more about my own schooling in a Catholic high school in Biddeford, Maine. I do not recall, for the life of me, who it was that taught English at Saint Louis High School, but the religious, I don't recall the order, made sure that we all knew the possibility of, and understood, the means of constructing sentences in English. To

...that dresser might have been as good as a bank for my mother-in-law, and what useful antiques or reliquaries might someone have found in such a solid, and, to some, beautiful piece of furniture.

review, briefly: There are simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences. That is, it was so until Ernest Hemingway, the infamous writer came along. Hemingway, we were told, stressed the use of simple sentences. Now, we might know this, but it is important to me because when I entered college, my advanced composition teacher was stressing simple sentences, and my style offended my teacher, until I went on to another. His name was Dr. Wence, who stressed diversity in style, and so, he encouraged mine by not criticizing it.]

Personally, as a son-in-law, if I have to fault my mother-in-law for anything, it is that, whenever we were guests, she frequently took out of a dresser drawer a box of chocolates to share, and it took me a long time to realize that it was no accident that the chocolates were bad; they were stale. The boxed chocolates were just old, and old tasting chocolates; they had a "so-so" or rare taste to them; what was a kid to do with one in his or her mouth? Spit it out, of course. Say, the sweetness had gone out of each piece of boxed chocolates. It was the kind of box of chocolates that she passed around each time we gathered that did not have me or anyone else going for another

piece of chocolate whenever the box was passed around a second or third time. After a while, and many visits, I knew that when it came to a box of chocolates that my mother-in-law, "granny" took out of the dresser drawer, it was best to either politely skip having a piece, your choice, of course, and whenever the box was passed around a second or third time, too, until granny put the box back in the drawer. After a while of this tradition of passing the box around, I knew the tradition to be a stale one, and it was best to either politely skip having a piece, or take one, and secretly pocket your choice, having picked one, or make believe you were abstaining as a penance for something, it was any body's pick.

I seem to recall, one time, after her husband my father-in-law had passed, that my mother-in-law put the dresser, drawers with everything in them, at the curb for either a trash pick-up or, more than likely, for anyone who wanted it, the dresser and its contents, to have it and all there was in it. And, I, for one, had I known sooner, I would have been interested in going through the drawers of that particular piece of furniture, for no other reason than to satisfy my curiosity as to the quality of the curios that my mother-in-law might have had stashed in a piece of furniture put at the curb, with or without the box or boxes of "gift" chocolates that she had left, forgotten over years of getting and forgetting a box in those drawers, that dresser might have been as good as a bank for my mother-in-law, and what useful antiques or reliquaries might someone have found in such a solid, and, to some, beautiful piece of furniture. Somebody had to come along to pick it up; it might have been, had she only recalled to remove the chocolate and the stashed "gift" cash that "memere" had left in the drawers for "safe" keeping, over all the years, before. Her having had the piece and, likely, some others out at the curb because she was moving after generations, and there was no place for old pieces of furniture, and for whatever was in them; and there was no need for this or that piece, as she was downsizing, and over the ensuing years, there were at least three moves involved.

The last was to the hospital, for God or someone knew, her doctor, say, and while there she asked the eldest of the sons-in-law, Buster, Rose's husband who catered to such things, as he had more savoir-faire than most, to get her a lobster dinner. Which he

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did. And, following her dinner, she died, a contented woman.

In retrospect my mother-in-law had to have been an extremely tolerant woman; not only did she have her sister-in-law living with her, she had her own room, upstairs, which meant that the four girls might have had to double-up if the boy was to have had his own room in the large family's half-duplex, the right side of the house, the front door on the long porch facing the street; the woman had meals with the family; she was a live-in. And although my mother-in-law was used to, or maybe it was because she was used to extending cordiality and being unselfishly supportive of others; she, whose residence it was, in which she had continued to raise the family of five, four girls and a boy, my wife being the youngest, she, my mother-in-law, and her husband had the modest bedroom on the first floor, adjacent to the dining room, with the entrance in the first parlor of the two parlors, the first parlor being at the front with windows overlooking the front porch. It, the first parlor, had an entrance from the front porch into the hallway from the front door; there was a stairway to the second floor bedrooms; going up the stairs, from there, from the upstairs landing one had access, down a hall, to the separate bedrooms overlooking the driveway and to the back of the house and the outside garage, over the kitchen there was a bathroom and tub, plus a steep, up-down-stairway, and at the back, at the end of the hall, with a bedroom overlooking the backyard, and an enclosed side porch. From the side porch, there was an entrance to the kitchen, and, I recall, rather steep stairway to the second floor, and, another, a steep access to the attic which I recall having a rope swing hung from its ceiling. The cellar had an earthen floor, with a coal bin and coal burning stove to heat the house. There had to have been a hot water heater, for the kitchen and sink, and the upstairs bathtub had running that, I recall, having had to take a bath while at the house, once, and I remember, distinctly, how the tap water filling the tub was so slow running.

When the time came to downsize, or, more appropriately when the time came to move out, after her husband passed, my mother-in-law took her sister-in-law along with her. I have no idea how that was resolved, what discussion over this might have taken place between the two women. It was not as if my sister-in-law was not

independent, could not have taken her own apartment. After all, the woman was not without friends, and she had held a good job as a manager of sorts of a woman's-goods store. She had a fine reputation there, although, I might have mentioned, my mom and she did not get along, or, was it that my mom, simply did not like her. I know this because my mother, often, said so, whenever, between the two of us, the woman's name came up.

In any case, I was saying that the two women, my mother-in-law, a talented tolerant woman took her sister-in-law along with her when she took an apartment on Cutts Street, just a couple tenement houses not far from my grandfather's half duplex, where I and my sisters had been born, on the second floor, barn side, of my grandparents' half duplex on the Elm Street end of Cutts. I don't recall what floor it was that the two women lived on. It might have been the second, in which case, the two could have attended church at Saint Joseph's around the corner, as the two were still up to walking and the church doors were, really, a short distance away.

Meanwhile, my mother-in-law still had the furniture that had been left over from the move, having downsized, and that was stored in her eldest daughter, Rose and, her husband, Buster's barn was in back of where Buster and Rose lived in Saco, Maine, across the Saco River on a road, still Route 9, continuing from Biddeford, our home town and our side of the River, which, Route 9, continues on its way to Biddeford Pool, and then, along the coast, to Kennebunk Port.

Fernand, "Buster," Cote was a man of some means. He owned the Seal Rock Bottling Company which had a good business in our part of the State of Maine. They made and sold their own brand of soft beverages and handled Moxie and Orange Crush. Buster and Rose had six children, in pairs, sort of, two by twos, single births, of course, but with a pause in ages between the six children, a boy was the oldest, a sister, followed, and then two more girls, followed by two more, each, a single birth. They were well spaced.

His children might well be better able to account for his nickname, "Buster." I simply surmise that he might not always have been an even-tempered man. While I saw what his demeanor might have been only upon our social visits to his home, it was clear to me, as, surely, it had been to my wife, Julie, that Buster was always in charge.

The time that I really saw him let go, except for his social politeness, was those few times that we were invited for a social get together and a meal at his home. Then, he might dispense from the brusqueness that was his style, for the simple act of enjoying himself. There were to exemplaries that I witnessed. They were both at formal or semi-formal soirées when he showed a skill that he enjoyed, one that he was excellent at, one that brought out the showmanship that was in him, for he loved to dance, and in this way, on a dance floor, I realize that, boy! Could he dance. He not only showed-off his style, but I could see, as everyone else could see, he was good; he was in this, dancing, a show-off; and It was because he was good at it. Otherwise, Buster could be a sullen man. Direct. Very demanding. But on that dance floor, twirling, a daughter around or, simply, leg-booting right and left as he, himself shimmied to the floor and up again to the delight of everyone and the cheers of all his friends, especially those who knew him well, and, off course, those who, as members of the celebration party, were just able to recognize talent.

After my mother-law-passed, the family was celebrating her life, when Buster showed up, and called her children together, the four girls and their brother, to tell them of a surprise. He, Buster, had gone through every piece of some of her furniture that had been stored in his barn, the first time that she had moved and on two succeeding, other occasions when she had moved. And the result of a thorough search, he had found that she had left a small fortune in cash, small bills, stored here in there in some of the drawers of those pieces that she had owned. Low and behold, there was a sharing of this unexpected bonanza when grandma died. While I do not know what the shares amounted to in cash, I can report that my wife, the youngest, was an equal beneficiary...this from a woman, a mother and grandmother, who, at gatherings in her home on Beacon Avenue, Biddeford Maine, had shared stale chocolates from lovely boxes, from a big and lonely bureau, for Sunday after Sunday, for God only knew how long, until it, this and that piece, was transported by someone into storage and not left out on the street for neighbors or diverse-passers-by to have at it, if they wanted. Perhaps only then were some relatives to learn that grandma who had always been frugal, perhaps for a lack

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(*My Mother-in-Law continued from page 27*) of money, had been more so than anyone had every thought grandma to have been so generous. Who knew?

In any event, there had been four girls and a boy born to the couple. The first to marry, Rose, became Fernand, Buster Cote's wife. Angenette, whose husband's last name was Denoncourt, was the second oldest to marry; and then came Marguerite, Peggy, who was third of the girls; her husband's name was Raymond Morin, they had one child, a daughter, named, Janice, who, after college, married, and as an army nurse, served in Iraq or some place like that, and, single, retired from a long nursing career in hospitals, lives in, Washington State. And, there was a brother, named Joseph or Joe, Jr., a W.W.II Vet.

And last, there was my wife, a fourth sister. Juliette whom I had married as we two were the youngest, having graduated from the same high school, but on different, [meaning], opposite sides of the same Catholic High School, in Biddeford, Maine, Saint Joseph/Saint Louis. We boys had the Louis half, and the girls had the Joseph one. Occasionally, the boys crossed over to a classroom on the girl's side, not to debate, girl vs. boy, but to allow we boys to showcase our debating styles and qualities over the resolution of the year. And I recall that with the end of WWII, surviving hometown boys who had left high school, having come of age, allowing them to be drafted, now, returned to high school if they wished to complete their secondary school education, and, subsequently, graduate. I recall this because as a young teen, I remember this occurring, clearly, I do not recall that it was unsettling or remarkable. In any case, their

were none, no vets, in my graduating class, 1950. As for the girl's graduating class, I knew little of that; although I had been born in the Parish of Saint Joseph's, we had moved to Saint Andre's parish, on the other side of town, where few of my classmates went on to attend high school, which was, for boys, held at Saint Louis which was the high school for the children of high school age in the Parish of Saint Joseph's. That's where I went to high school, and, as far as I know, at no cost to us, our parents, really, although, I can't say that our parish did not pay Saint Joseph's parish for the cost of our education. This, I have never known how it worked between parishes, as a few, maybe very few, came from Saint Mary's, the Irish Parish, which, all in all, might have been within the confines of Saint Joseph's, as some Franco-Americans attended the public high school in Biddeford, Biddeford High School. Saint Louis High and Biddeford High athletes were highly competitive in football, especially, and, of course, basketball and baseball. But, back then, in my day, these teams played to full stands, in highly competitive games, football was Friday nights, under the lights games, or on Saturday afternoon games with lots of cheers and, or, jeers in a mockingly bizarre theatre of the sport, all this in the recalled actuality of it and it, all this in retrospect. Then, for every game, the stands were full and the competition was feverish.

At the end of my senior year, having graduated, with no college prospect, as my parents could not afford to send me, and my teachers had not approached me or other classmates like me with similar issues. I assumed it was because they knew that our parents could not afford to send their

graduating boys to college. As far as I know, none of the girls attended, which does not mean that none had successful, extraordinary careers.

My father having been just a mill worker, and my mother just a housewife; as there was no money for college, my father had expected that I would be joining him at the Pepperell textile mill. A classmate near the end of summer, the year of our graduation proposed that we visit the recruiting stations in Portland. So, we boarded a bus in Biddeford, and, late, in the afternoon, our mothers had signed, and we were gone, and, interestingly, I never saw my classmate with whom I had enlisted after boot-camp. I did learn, almost a lifetime later that he had died in France on a business trip, after the Korean War, and that he had left a wife and children in Illinois, I believe. A sister who by chance, years later, I met as she exited her condo, which just happened to be adjacent to my brother-in-law's, whom I was visiting, and she made a special effort to see me and tell me what had happened to her brother.

Long ago, her brother and I were returning to Portland, Maine, where we were to board a bus along with some other recruits that day, and we were off on another kind of adventure, having enlisted, for a long train ride to Texas. Shortly after arriving in Texas, I was to turn eighteen, and we were all to learn that the USA was at war with Korea. The good thing is that out of my enlistment, I got the Korean War G.I. Bill. it paid for a college education and helped support a family, I, having married Juliette Salvias, who had, by then, graduated from Saint Mary's School of Nursing in Lewiston, Maine.

The Franco-American Passion

An exploration of misery in Franco-American culture

by *Daniel Moreau*

Death is a natural thing. Yet when we lose someone so close to us, we can feel the worst pain we have ever felt. Not only from the reasoning that may never speak to this person again, but it also reminds us of our own mortality. Mortals who can build cathedrals, yet fail to build anything bigger than our own selves. Who can create technology never comprehended by the human mind and go past the heavens, yet fail to create technology that challenges mortality itself.

Many find solace from this in religion, even though death is often a focus of it. Casting a shadow of death and never failing to remind it's followers of their own mortality. An emphasis on death.

I grew up with the Roman Catholic Church, as many Franco-Americans did, where there is an emphasis on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Death and resurrection are so tightly intertwined within Catholic art and culture. It can be seen in the visual

arts such as Michelangelo's Pietà, the image of the crucifixion, and countless others exploring the death of Jesus, Mary's sadness, and other morbid Christian themes. Other sources of the image of misery in Catholic/Christian art is in ecclesiastical music, such as the seemingly abundant supply of "Stabat Mater" (meaning Sorrowful Mother), "Dies Irae," and "Requiem." All of which revolve around misery.

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(The Franco-American Passion continued from page 27)

On the music platform Spotify, I have a playlist dedicated to Franco-American music with decidedly Franco-American music such as Quebecois by Schooner Fare, and The Shuttle by Chanterelle, to modern French-Canadian music such as You Look Like Trouble by Lisa LeBlanc and Parle-Moi by Canailles. I began watching a music video for a song I have on this playlist: *Dégénération* by Mes Aïeux, which may not be a Franco-American band (as they are Quebecois), however the theme of this song resonates with the Franco-American culture. The music video starts in a monochrome sepia world under a cloudy gray sky where the trees have no leaves. The only color is of an older gentleman's red flannel coat and his red wheelbarrow. This gentleman fills his wheelbarrow with dirt and calmly pushes it through a field to meet with a middle-aged woman. Evolving into a relay race, the middle-aged woman rushes to fill a bucket with the dirt from the older man's wheelbarrow, though she is only able to take a fraction of the dirt in the wheelbarrow. After running across part of the field, the middle-aged woman meets with a young-adult woman who rushes to fill her backpack with the dirt. After running across part of the field, dropping the backpack and losing dirt along the way, she meets with a child who discovers a photograph of the older man within the dirt, "plants" the photograph, and a plant grows as if the photograph was a seed, bringing a vibrant splash of green into the monochrome world. The imagery of the monochrome and cloudy world, and passing of the dirt through the generations is especially vibrant imagery for Franco-American culture as it is partially descendant of Quebecois culture.

After noticing the imagery highlighted with *Dégénération*, I went through my Franco-American music playlist and began noticing more misery. For instance, a signature song by the New Brunswick Acadian musician Lisa LeBlanc, has the title «Aujourd'hui ma vie c'est d'la m—de» which translates to "Today my life is sh—." The song is in essence about exactly what it sounds like. In the playlist, I've even noticed unique themes within the specifically non-Canadian Franco-American music. One of these aspects is the misery of mill work and immigrant life over a hundred years ago. The following are examples from songs within the playlist. The first is a sample from the first verse of Schooner Fare's Quebecois:

"But now I'm a weaver in some rich man's mill;
Making blankets to earn a week's pay;
And it's six days a week, dawn to dark,
in this hell;
But I'm goin' back home come some-day"

This is a sample from *The Shuttle* by Chanterelle:

"You'll find all ages in the mill, 'tit enfants et grandpères;
Their wages are a pittance, not enough to pay their share;
All of us must labor here or else we do not eat;
Our home is in a tenement with no water and no heat."

This is a sample from *French in America* by Josée Vachon:

"Today our fathers look at us and sigh with despair;
To think that everything they love we simply do not share;
The spirit never dies, our culture will survive;
Each of us must choose how much to keep alive."

Bringing all of these examples together, the theme of misery returns in different ways. It can be about intergenerational misery, disdain about working and living conditions, misery about fading hope, or just plain misery in and of itself. One may argue that I am cherry-picking examples. However, I've noticed either these or similar themes in disproportionately many Franco-American music with lyrics. In addition to this, during my interviewing process for this exploration piece, I came across a new term; "Misère Noire." Which translates roughly to dark misery; the worst possible misery one can experience. This is a Franco-American term, as I came across it through Northern Maine Acadian culture, though it's possible this phrase may occur in other parts of French-Canada or Franco-America. In addition, I recently discussed this concept with an individual who mentioned that their mother and siblings had this obsession with misery. Once their mother would wake in the morning, she would spread her misery to the other family members.

When looking at this concept, there are questions that must be asked. For in-

stance, do Franco-Americans show this aspect more than other cultures? The answer for this I cannot say because I have not lived in other cultures, and comparing cultures would not be a fair thing for me to do as an outsider. Though, if I dare to compare as an outsider, I think Irish Catholics may be the closest to Franco-Americans in terms of misery, though Irish Catholic misery does not meet the same frequency as Franco-American misery. Even so, I can only speculate that the Irish Catholic misery comes from the same root as Franco-American misery; the Catholic church. Another question is if this is generational. A theory from someone close to me mentions the older generations carry quite a bit of baggage and heaviness, which can be a reason for this. Though that does not explain how the younger generations still obsess in misery. Perhaps the older generations echoed their misery so loud, that it was passed onto the younger generations.

Suffice to say, I believe there is an obsession with misery within Franco-American culture. This is not to say that it's a bad or good thing, but rather an observation. As the Roman Catholic church was a major part of Franco-American and French-Canadian culture prior to the 21st century, this may stem (either partially or completely) from the obsession with misery, passion, and death within the Roman Catholic church. Misery is an important aspect of life, and it is not a bad aspect of our culture. With happiness comes sadness, with love comes loss, and with day comes night. The balance of the universe and human experience requires misery, and so too does the balance of culture. Sometimes, we need music like «Aujourd'hui ma vie c'est d'la m—de» to keep us company on those Mondays of our lives.





The Political World of Franco-Americans

Patrick Lacroix

The Franco-American past is rich, complex, diverse, and geographically broad. Historians are constantly trying to do justice to that richness—to build upon what we know and reconstruct as finely as possible the world of French-Canadian and Acadian immigrants and their descendants. Despite decades of research on the subject, questions still abound.

The *survivance* campaign and the experience of urban mill workers continue to dominate the historical narrative—perhaps fairly, but we shouldn't let these areas of focus eclipse other dimensions, lest our historical subjects become two-dimensional cartoons of themselves. Some researchers have produced impressive historical scholarship on the experience of Franco-American women, but this remains a relatively neglected subfield. In regard to geography, much of the U.S. Northeast lies in the shadow of a handful of manufacturing cities. The Second World War and suburbanization are recognized as an important turning point *identitaire*, but few people have studied acculturation through sports and mass entertainment like Hollywood cinema.

We should acknowledge and admire the historical research that has come before; we should also be inspired to keep investigating and to challenge preconceptions sometimes based on anecdotal information.

It is in that spirit—a very small step, granted—that I have authored a monograph on the political involvement of Franco-Americans in New England and New York State. This is not a pioneering study *per se*. The ground has been broken by Norman Sepenuk, Madeleine Giguère, Ronald Petrin, J.-André

Sénécal, Christian Potholm, and others. But questions still abound.

What explains strong Franco support for the Democrats in northern New England cities, in the early twentieth century, when their compatriots in the southern half of the region consistently preferred the Republicans? To what extent could Franco-Americans expect political power and influence in the GOP-dominated states of Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine? At the regional level, did they seek to align the ideology of *survivance* with their political aspirations? Were they a cohesive voting bloc at the local



Réunion des maires franco-américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre tenue sous les auspices de l'Association Canado-Américaine, à Manchester, le 4 avril dernier. Assis, de gauche à droite: Mr. Felix-A. Toupin, maire, Woonsocket, R.I., Jérôme-A. Morin, maire, Biddeford, Me., Me E.-J. Daignault, président, Association Canado-Américaine, Woonsocket, R.I., Me Ovide-J. Coulombe, maire, Berlin, N.H. Debout: Arthur-E. Moreau, ex-maire, Manchester, N.H., Damase Caron, M.D., maire, Manchester, N.H., Dr J.-N. Carrière, maire, Fitchburg, Mass., Georges-E. Trudel, ex-maire, Manchester N.H. Cette réunion fut convoquée à l'occasion de l'avènement du Dr Damase Caron à la mairie de Manchester, N.H. Le nouveau maire est depuis 1905 le médecin général de l'Association Canado-Américaine. Les maires Pierre-M. Gagné, de Somersworth, N.H., Henry-N. Paradis de Lewiston, Me., et F.-Harold Dubord, de Waterville, Me., s'étaient excusés de ne pouvoir assister, à cause d'engagements antérieurs.

level, and what issues drove them to the polls—or to a certain political party?

From contemporary accounts, I have identified eight major factors that help ex-

Lowell, Manchester et Nashua élisent des maires franco-américains

M. le Dr Damase Caron réélu à Manchester — Majorité de 5,800 voix pour M. Dewey Archambault à Lowell — M. Arthur Burelle élu à Nashua

plain Franco participation and preferences in electoral politics in my period of study (1874-1945):

- the ethnic makeup of a town or city and the demographic presence of Franco-Americans, which determined their *potential* influence at the polls;
- Yankee nativism and Irish gate-keeping, with Franco-Irish tensions at times nourished by religious disagreements;
- the economic interests of the working class and the conflict that erupted between Franco-Americans and workers of other ethnic origins (especially in regard to strikes);
- the presence of a Franco commercial and professional class willing to promote naturalization and help mobilize members of the community;
- the specific ambitions of this class, for instance access to patronage positions or licenses for the sale of alcohol;
- a general desire to take advantage of opportunities to advance the Franco-American community's collective influence and visibility;
- the existing balance between Democrats and Republicans, which could prompt the leaders of one or both parties to actively court Franco-American voters to gain an electoral edge;
- and, not least, substantive issues facing all American voters, including prohibition (local or national), commercial tariffs, and the overall economic cycle.

These points do not make for a precise formula. Rather, they serve as an analytical grid that helps us sort how communities across the region resembled or differed from one another. It also serves to remind us that prior generations of voters were not

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unthinking pawns in an American political chess match or utterly lacking in leverage.

An important chapter in this political saga takes place in the 1890s. Though their naturalization was gradual and uneven, at century's end people of French-Canadian descent were asserting themselves in politics and finding ethnic representation across the region. During the presidential campaign of 1892, editor Benjamin Lenthier built a newspaper empire in support of Democratic candidate Grover Cleveland. Cleveland won and rewarded Lenthier with a consular appointment. Another federal civil servant, Edmond Mallet, had become a symbolic figurehead to the Franco-American community. In 1893, Louis J. Martel launched his first bid for the mayoralty of Lewiston, Maine. He lost, but compatriot Aram Pothier, a future governor of Rhode Island, won in Woonsocket. In Worcester, Massachusetts, the Democratic Party nominated two Franco-Americans for common council seats, including a brother of the editor of *L'Opinion publique*.

Then there was Fall River, Massachusetts. By the 1890s, French Canadians were a well-established and essential part of the spindle city's labor force. With growth came conflict. The Irish working class—the Democratic Party's base—resented French Canadians for their reluctance to support strikes. Attorney Hugo Dubuque explained that Canadians refused to take part in the “insurrection” of labor against capital. Instances of strikers pelting Canadians with rocks came to symbolize not only Franco-Irish conflict, but, in the immigrant imagination, the disorder that attended industrial walkouts. The Irish also resisted efforts to establish separate Catholic parishes—which would draw resources away from their own established churches. At the same time, the world of Lent and company tenements could hardly be farther, socially and economically, from the English-speaking citizens likely to support the GOP.

Already, in the 1890s, Fall River's Franco-Americans had the reputation of preferring the Republican Party. But, as one local journalist noted, many Franco-Americans were happy to make an exception when Democrat John W. Coughlin—mayor starting in 1891—was running for office. Coughlin, it should be noted, was born to Irish immigrants. He showed that political

narratives aren't immutable.

We can debate the sincerity of Coughlin's outreach to residents of French descent. That he was reaching out was nevertheless a major step forward. We might think of a musical *soirée* held in the local Franco community in 1893. The night's main feature was an address on the Patriotes by L. O. David, the president of Montreal's Saint-Jean-Baptiste society. Coughlin attended and was invited to offer a few words.

He stated how proud he was to be present and expressed admiration for the Patriotes in their struggle against tyranny. During the mayoral campaign, he held events in



the halls of the Union canadienne and the Ligue des Patriotes—thus recognizing Franco-Americans' electoral significance and bringing the world of mainstream U.S. politics to them.

What about those Franco-American professionals and businessmen who helped give shape to the community? Well, Coughlin had a not-so-secret weapon in the person of Hugo Dubuque, who had served in the state legislature. Dubuque was an avowed Republican; he also happened to be Coughlin's brother-in-law. They campaigned together. Journalist Rémi Tremblay also lent his support to Coughlin, such that the latter could brag about being accompanied by “[t]he leaders of the French people.” (He also claimed that Dubuque had given more to the GOP than he had received in return,



which must have made for a sharp exchange at Thanksgiving.)

The 1893 race between Coughlin and his adversary, former Republican mayor William Greene, revolved around alcohol licenses, the religious issue, and the willingness of each party to appoint Franco-Americans to public offices. At a rally presided by Alfred Plante in Globe Village, Greene offered the same assurances and cordial feelings as Coughlin. He highlighted the French element's contributions to the city and stated he wished he could address the audience in their own tongue. He claimed he had appointed a number of Franco-Americans to office during his previous time in office. On the other hand, Coughlin's administration had witnessed an uneven and preferential enforcement of the licensing law. Further, the GOP's high-tariff policy was cited as being more favorable to mill workers.

Questions about Republican xenophobia dogged Greene through the campaign. Anglo-American nativists were certainly more likely to support the GOP. At the local level, however, Republicans were practical. This was a party that had nominated Dubuque for a seat in the legislature and Aram Pothier for the mayoralty of nearby Woonsocket. In Fall River, Greene could count on editor Misaël Authier, a Central Falls resident, who joined him on the campaign trail and helped refute allegations of anti-immigrant views.

Greene's bid ended disastrously. A GOP rally at the Saint-Jean-Baptiste hall—in the infamous Flint Village—was disrupted by the guerrilla tactics of Coughlin supporters. Greene was put on the defensive; so was editor Adélard Lafond, who spoke up but had to admit that he was not a registered voter. One Joseph Amiot stated that it was Irish Democrats who had pelted Canadians with stones; he then expressed reservations (Continued on page 31)

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about the religious sentiments of his political rivals.

Amiot was booed, Greene struggled to salvage his campaign, and, in the end, Coughlin was returned to office—thanks in no small part to the Franco-American electorate.

A new Democratic dawn in Fall River was not to be. Within months of Cleveland's inauguration, the country entered one of its worst-ever economic crises—a deep industrial depression that would last through to the next presidential contest. The downturn brought economic issues like monetary policy and tariffs back to the fore. Democratic trade policies were blamed for the crisis and Fall River's swing vote returned to its first home. In 1894, Dubuque campaigned for Greene, who reprised his role at city hall.

Faring poorly, the Democratic Party failed to recruit candidates—former mayor Coughlin, for instance—who might bring it back to life. That opened a momentary opportunity for Franco-Americans.

One month before the mayoral election of 1900, the Democrats had yet to pick their standard bearer. When the local nominating convention opened in November, the organizers struggled to confirm that all attendees were members in good standing. After four ballots—during which organizers

left the convention hall for a late-night, last-ditch appeal to prominent Democrats across the city—piano manufacturer Edmond Côté won the nomination. The first Franco to earn such a nomination in Fall River, Côté might seal a new Franco-Irish coalition that would resurrect the party. But there was a catch. Côté was a Republican. Facing strong backlash from dedicated Democrats, he withdrew his candidacy days later. His political career was, at least, launched. A few years later, he sought his own party's nomination. After a long career in business, he would again be a Franco pioneer by finding a seat on the Massachusetts Executive Council in the 1930s.

So what mattered to the rapidly Franco-American electorate? It is very telling that in 1892, the local French-language newspaper, *L'Indépendant*, offered its readers some math. Under Republican president Benjamin Harrison, 386 Franco-Americans had been appointed as civil servants. By contrast, the Democrats had only appointed 265 during the first Cleveland administration. The larger point is unmistakable: ethnic recognition—the visibility and influence of the group—mattered a great deal.

The world of late nineteenth-century politics was transactional and collective representation was a form of currency that could be exchanged for support at the ballot box. Americanization changed that: it exposed Franco-Americans' own wide and divergent

interests. Politics, we find out, was a key dimension of their acculturation.

In the early twentieth century, class dynamics asserted themselves and the Franco-American community splintered politically. Across the U.S. Northeast, the working class embraced organized labor on its way to becoming a pillar of the (Democratic) New Deal coalition. The middle class remained more firmly attached to the Republicans and suspicious of labor and government intervention.

Without denying marginalization, my study shows that Franco-Americans of this era were not quite as invisible and unimportant as we've come to think. It also highlights the geographical breadth of French-Canadian culture and Franco political activity; it carries the narrative far beyond the "Crown Jewels" of Woonsocket, Fall River, Lowell, Manchester, and Lewiston. Talented researchers have drawn our attention to places like Worcester, Salem, and Brunswick in recent years. One can only do so much in 300 pages, but I hope that my exploration of small, regional centers like Plattsburgh, Rutland, Berlin, and Old Town will spark interest in the wider Franco-American world.

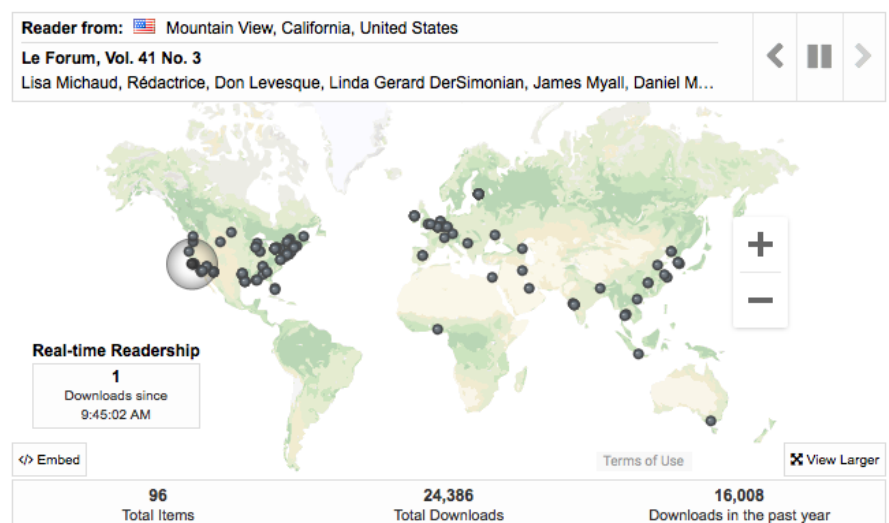
"Tout nous serait possible": Une histoire politique des Franco-Américains, 1874-1945 is slated to appear in September 2021 (Presses de l'Université Laval).

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J. Normand Martin

January 10, 1926 - May 14, 2021

BANGOR - On Friday, May 14, 2021, J. Normand Martin of Bangor, Maine, peacefully passed into eternity surrounded by members of his loving family. Born January 10, 1926, as the eleventh of fifteen children raised in Madawaska by their loving parents, Denis and Alphonsine (Raymond), he and his siblings embraced and celebrated their proud French cultural tradition. Like many, the family endured scarcity through the 1930s, yet persevered with a thriving woolen mill and farm, where they learned their lifelong, determined work ethic.

A talented artist since youth, Normand enrolled in the Boston School of Practical Art in 1944 and diligently worked to establish a successful career in the commercial advertising field, ultimately establishing his successful agency, Martin Ad Productions, in Bangor. His signature designs continue to capture attention across our region. He applied his skills to fulfill the promotional aspirations of many local businesses, including Northeastern Log Homes and Pilot's Grill Restaurant.

In 1946, Normand met and later married the love of his life, Ann Patricia Morris of Falmouth, Maine. After moving to Bangor, he accepted a private commission to design Bangor's famous Paul Bunyan Statue, which was completed in 1958. He sculpted the 22-inch scale model in clay over a week on their kitchen table, then presented and collaborated with a New York City company to fabricate and erect the city's iconic image in fiberglass and steel. Mr. Martin and other community-minded volunteers have seen to its maintenance ever since.

Normand and Ann raised five boys on Bangor's Forest Avenue in whom they instilled their devotion to God, family, friends, and community. With help from his wife, boys and brothers, he renovated their home from top to bottom over forty years there.

He fulfilled his youth-time pledge to provide his children the toys he imagined but was unable to fashion during the Great Depression. Among the favorites is a six-foot long WWII replica Jeep ("The Jeep"), also built in 1958, that the Martin children, their friends, and cousins rode with delight around Chapin Park for many summers. His great-grandchildren ride it to this day. Normand crafted an iron-framed swing set and slide that in winter propelled saucer riders through multiple bobsled-style curves around their backyard.

A devoted Catholic, Normand dedicated his talents and energy to Bangor's St. John's Catholic Church as a steady volunteer and visionary who in the 1990s co-chaired its expansive Renovation Committee. A daily communicant, he expertly photographed St. John's renowned stained-glass windows, published alongside academic commentary in "Meditations in Glass."

In 1966, he accepted a commission from the state of Maine to design and fabricate a large-scale model of the Bangor and Aroostook Railroad train engine and cars to promote Maine industry at the World's Fair in Montreal, known as "Expo '67." The train ran on track he designed to loop in and outside the Maine Pavilion, and became an enormous attraction for the millions who attended that summer.

His quiet contributions to the Bangor community include years of service to the Bangor Lions Club, where he established its popular Gourmet Club restaurant fundraising promotion, and leadership of the Downtown Bangor Association, where he led its celebrated Bangor Sidewalk Arts Festival. In formal recognition of his generous endeavors, he received the Key to the City of Bangor, the Lions' Club's highest honors, and proclamations from the Maine Legislature.

Normand's family and friends treasure his hundreds of remarkable pencil, pastel, and oil portraits. Some are on display at places like Geaghan's Restaurant, Labree's Bakery, Fairmount Hardware, and Furbish-Roberts Printing. Normand drew numerous local landmarks, including the Bangor Public Library and Leonard's Mills in Bradley, that he donated in support of their fundraising campaigns.

In 2004, Normand married Patricia Quinn of Rutland, MA. They enjoyed participating in the Lions Club, celebrating Mass, and visiting family, friends, and religious sites in Europe, especially Ann's family in Ireland, Normand's brother Onias' war memorial monument in France, and St. Mary's religious shrine in Medjugorje.

When fully considering J. Normand Martin's long life of accomplishment and devotion, the word that best expresses his boundless motivation is "love." Love of God and church, love of family, love of friendships, and love of community.

Normand and his family deeply appreciate the care and kindness offered by the staff of St. Joseph Healthcare and Hospice, Phillips Strickland House and Ross Manor in Bangor. His sole remaining sibling, Raynald, father of four beautiful daughters raised in Brewer with his wife, Jennie, of Farmington, is currently under the tender care of Westgate Manor in Bangor.

Normand is survived by his wife, Patricia Martin; brother, Raynald; sons, John D. Martin and wife, Tracy Martin, of King George, Virginia; son, Gregory G. Martin of Brewer, Maine; son, J. Normand Martin Jr. and wife, Karen L. Martin, of Stillwater, Maine; son, Konrad M. Martin and wife, Jeanne M. Martin, of Lantana, Florida; son, Kevin M. Martin and wife, Jennifer A. Martin, of Medfield, Massachusetts; grandchildren, Emily E. Jones and husband, Eric C. Jones, John "Mac" Martin and wife, Nancy L. Martin, Patrick K. Martin and Anna R. Martin, Adam G. Brown, Nathan J. Falger, Rebecca N. Schwier and Frederick "Fritz" J. Rolle; and great-grandchildren, Keller H. Jones, Isla M. Jones, Colin G. Martin, and Clara F. Martin.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests donations in his memory be dedicated to the J. Normand Martin Art Foundation, Bangor High School, 885 Broadway, Bangor, ME 04401.

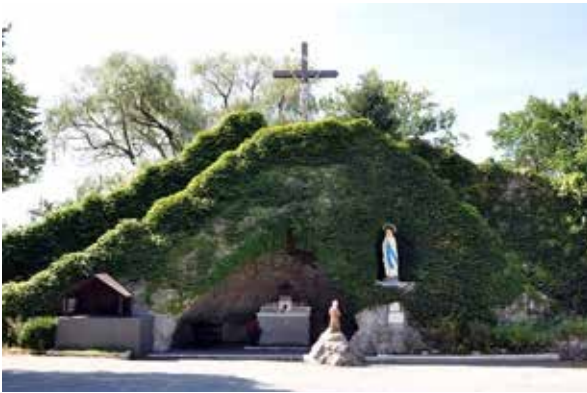
A Grotto Created, A Grotto Restored

Part I: Genesis and Fruition

Photo captions and text in italics by Suzanne Beebe

Body text translated from an anonymous account in the 1916 booklet, *Album Souvenir et Historique de la Paroisse St. Joseph de Lowell, MA*

Photos from that booklet and the Oblate of Mary Immaculate archives selected and scanned by Br. Richard Coté, OMI



Late 20th century photo of the Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes in Lowell, much as it would have looked in the earlier part of the century after addition of the elevated crucifix, which was reached by steps on either side and hidden by simulated rock facing not yet present in 1911. From the OMI archives, courtesy of Br. Richard Coté, OMI.

The Marian apparitions at a grotto in the French Pyrenees town of Lourdes took place in 1858. In 1862, the apparitions received formal church approval from the local bishop of Tarbes. In 1870, Pope Pius IX approved the veneration of Mary as Our Lady of Lourdes and contributed money to the building of a cathedral at Lourdes to accommodate the liturgies and devotions already being held for pilgrims from around the globe. In 1907, Pope Pius X introduced the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes into the church calendar. In the same year he issued an encyclical in which he reiterated Pius IX's approval of veneration of Our Lady of Lourdes.

But veneration of Our Lady of Lourdes was already an international phenomenon, with parishes being named for her, Masses being celebrated in her honor, rosaries being prayed to her, and replicas of the Grotto in which she was believed to have appeared being built at shrines, churches, and church-related facilities throughout the Catholic world.

One of these church-related facilities was the Franco-American orphanage at Lowell, Massachusetts, founded in 1907 by the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMIs) and staffed by the Sisters of Charity of Québec (the Grey Nuns of Québec). What follows is a 1916 account of the 1911 dedication of a near-life-size replica of the Grotto at the orphanage. The account is

translated from a French-language booklet printed after the 1915 re-dedication of St. Jean Baptiste Church in Lowell following its restoration in the wake of a devastating 1912 fire.

The account describes an event remarkable for a city of Lowell's size at the time — remarkable as well in the fervor of the Franco-Americans who planned, financed, and built the Grotto. Subsequent years would find the Grotto used as a site for numerous Franco and non-Franco religious gatherings, as well as for private prayer and devotion including that of Jack Kerouac's mother, as described in the Kerouac novel Dr. Sax. To this day, the Grotto remains a place of prayer and pilgrimage for Greater-Lowell natives, tourists, and Kerouac aficionados, whether Catholic, non-Catholic, or non-religious in a traditional sense.



Photo of a large November 1, 1919 gathering at the Lowell Grotto for ceremonies honoring Franco-American veterans of World War I. From the OMI archives, courtesy of Br. Richard Coté, OMI.

After over 100 years of existence, the Grotto — with its accompanying Stations of the Cross and near-life-size elevated crucifix — is undergoing major restoration and renovation following the sale of the Franco-American School (formerly the Orphanage) in recent years. The work is nearing completion and a major re-dedication is hoped for. Part II of this article will describe the restoration, the re-dedication of the Grotto (if it takes place this year), and the Grotto's impact on the cityscape surrounding it.

* * * *

Lourdes in Lowell

Lourdes in Lowell — there is no other way to describe the wonderful day of September 4, 1911; it was without a doubt the most beautiful religious event the city has ever seen. This spontaneous event turned out to be comparable to the most superb processions of Lourdes itself. It's possible that those who will read this account may find it exaggerated, but not so for those who experienced this wonderful day.

Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes

It's barely one year since the idea was presented in a very vague manner and with some hesitation, only a feeler, to see if the

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*(A Grotto Created, A Grotto Restored
continued from page 33)*

parishioners of St. Joseph's Parish would support the idea. The parish bulletin had quietly introduced the project with an article entitled, "Is this dream possible?" The dream was to construct a grotto in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes on the grounds of the orphanage; it would be a monumental work comparable in size and detail to the one in Lourdes, France. The goal was to give the poor orphans an idea of their heavenly mother, while forgetting as much as possible that they no longer had one here on earth.

As it turns out this dream was taken to heart and the majority of the people wanted to see it become reality. In the mind of its promoters this dream could be realized in five to six years at best. Thanks to everyone's generosity, it came to pass in less than six months. Now it stands, with a strong frame of iron and cement, and the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, a gift from two generous sisters, illuminates this monument with its white light and celestial smile. Oh! How dreams, even the most audacious ones, quickly find their way to Lowell.

Preparations

It was toward the end of June that the thought of making the occasion of the Grotto's blessing a major event was proposed. It seemed a good idea, and Father Watelle sent a letter to all parish organizations requesting their opinion – all were in agreement, and a committee was formed. The project immediately took off in a wise and solid fashion.

It's impossible to describe all the efforts made in preparation for the procession for this occasion. Be it known that all these were unanimous and spontaneous. Most admirable are the facts that this was accomplished with a shortage of workers and a lack of funds. (We would be at fault in failing to mention the capabilities of the general committee and the zeal exhibited by the parishioners of Pawtucketville.)

The Grand Day

All the week before it had rained. The outlook was not good for the procession. We were quite anxious, fearing the bad weather would ruin everything. The thought that foul weather would ruin the results of all our efforts was discouraging.

Monday morning the sky was perfect;

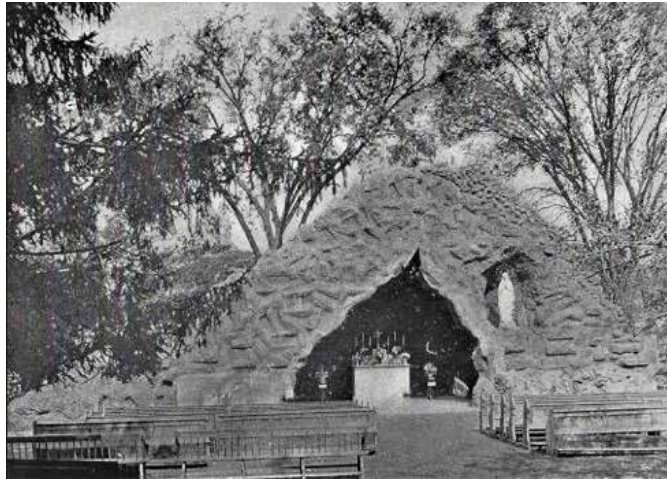


Photo of the Grotto after arrival of Our Lady of Lourdes statue on September 4, 1911. Scanned by Br. Richard Coté, OMI from the 1916 *Album Souvenir et Historique de la Paroisse St. Joseph de Lowell, MA.*

not one cloud – we breathe a little easier. It was going to be a beautiful day. From three or four o'clock forward, the streets came to life. Hammers were banging away and houses on the procession route were being tastefully decorated. A festive feeling of joy permeated the air – everyone was at ease – and happy. Today would be an absolute success.

Throughout the day extraordinary activities were seen in all the streets. The crowd was punctuated by the colorful costumes of various bugle corps. Closer to the orphanage there was even more activity – the crowd was like a human river – people had trouble making their way through it. The orphanage itself was being transformed as we looked at it. Its decorations were numerous, rich and elegant as compared to the bland and trite ones used for legal holidays.

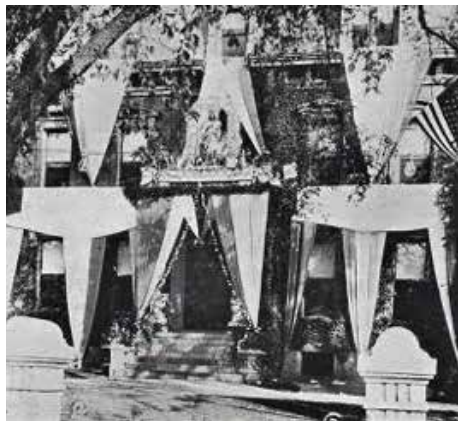


Photo of the Franco-American Orphanage convent decorated for the Grotto dedication on September 4, 1911. Scanned by Br. Richard Coté, OMI from the 1916 *Album Souvenir et Historique de la Paroisse St. Joseph de Lowell, MA.*

Inside the building it was like a beehive with everyone gaily coming and going; the children were dressed as pages in costumes that were the result of hard work

by the good sisters. On the grounds visitors are fed. In the distance the orphans' float is being decorated. In one corner of the yard a group of young girls is preparing ribbons and bouquets to decorate theirs. And way in the back, still unadorned, the grotto stands like a strong, black mass.

The Procession

At about 1:30 the streets neighboring the general area of the Procession Committee were crammed to the point that it was nearly impossible to move. The floats and participating organizations took their assigned position. The captains of the various corps reviewed their group. A long, multi-colored ribbon makes its way through the crowd like a serpent. Everyone murmurs, "It's the orphans, what a beautiful sight." Suddenly the bugle sounds. The bells of the City Hall ring through the air with a solemnity befitting a momentous occasion – that's the signal. The procession, in an admirable display of precision, begins, led by the Chief Marshall and two assistants, all three on horseback.

We are at the present time near the City Hall. We look around and behold an amazing spectacle. Every window is crowded with onlookers. The sidewalks can hold no more spectators, and the street, as wide as it is, is completely filled, almost as far as the eye can see, with the 2nd regiment of the Brigade of Franco-American Volunteers and other bugle corps from all around. It's a panoramic sight of rifles, sabers and flags resembling the activities of an ant colony.

At the City Hall, the Mayor, surrounded by his counselors and other dignitaries, waited to review the procession. His Honor was most affable and welcoming when the
(Continued on page 35)

(A Grotto Created, A Grotto Restored continued from page 34)

car carrying Fathers Watelle, OMI, Lefebvre, OMI, and Paquette, OMI, arrived. All of them were seated in the front row of the reviewing stand.

The long and picturesque line of the four divisions of the procession arrives at the City Hall. First is the 2nd Regiment of the Franco-American Volunteers Brigade that advances in perfect order, and as they pass by the religious and civil authorities, they execute a right face and raise their swords.

The second division is composed of our national organizations. This is where we begin to see floats that reflect the history of Canada, especially as it relates to the Blessed Virgin. We were asked which float was the best — impossible to say. They were all tastefully done, especially the one depicting the virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity; the one representing Jacques Cartier erecting a cross on the shores of the St-Lawrence river; another of Champlain consecrating Québec to the Blessed Virgin; the one of Lafayette and Washington.

How graceful were the ones representing Jeanne Mance, and the 15 mysteries of the rosary, and the one of the Catholic Association, and “les Dames du Bon Secours.” Due to a lack of space we regret that we can only mention without comments the floats of “France et Canada,” “les Enfants de Marie,” “les Demoiselles de Notre-Dame de Lourdes,” “les Reverendes Soeurs Grises de la rue Moody.” All of these were simple yet inspirational and beautiful. How we would

like to forget nothing and mention all the names. It’s impossible to do, space will not permit it. In fact, we can only mention “La Sainte-Famille” without further comment in order to touch upon the floats devoted to the little orphan girls, not elaborate but artistically decorated.

Finally, the float carrying the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, pulled by six white horses led by six men in medieval costumes appeared. She was surrounded by a group of orphans dressed as pages. From her hands, ribbons stretched out to little orphan girls holding bouquets.

Arrival of the Procession

It was the most solemn moment of all. We saw many people in tears. Nearly 1,500 young girls, “Congréganistes” and “Enfants de Marie” lined up, loudly singing a Marian hymn and one by one the bugle corps ceased playing as they arrived. The guardsmen stood at attention and presented their swords. Eighty orphans dressed in blue and in groups of four filled the center aisle. As soon as the float carrying the statue arrived (the only one admitted on the grounds), the orphan boys intone the “Magnificat” and the girls offer crowns of flowers. It takes about a half hour to reach the grotto while maneuvering through the immense crowd. Once arrived, the orphans come stand in front of the altar, the statue is positioned in the grotto and the float leaves. The grotto is now complete and the statue seems to smile at the throng.

Rev. Father Watelle, visibly exhausted, speaks from the pulpit. “Oh, how often,” says he,



Photo of the parade float carrying the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes and drawn by six white horses attended by six men in medieval costume, preceded by an automobile carrying dignitaries along Merrimack St in Lowell. Note the large flag of Quebec hanging from a building lining the street. Scanned by Br. Richard Coté, OMI from the 1916 *Album Souvenir et Historique de la Paroisse St. Joseph de Lowell, MA.*

“has my heart been overcome with sadness as I stand at the foot of the bed of a dying mother. I can never control my emotions. With hands turned cold by the approaching death, eyes filled with their last tears, lips already pale, these mothers would say to me: ‘Oh, Father, I’m not

Below is a clipping of the headlines and photo leading the Lowell Sun’s September 5, 1911 front-page coverage of the Grotto’s dedication the previous day. Following the clipping is the article’s keyed-in lead paragraph.



One of the largest and most successful celebrations organized by the French speaking people of this city was held yesterday, the event being the dedication of the grotto erected in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes on the grounds of the French American orphanage in Pawtucket Street. The celebration started with a parade in which several thousand men and children were in line, and was followed by religious exercises at the altar in the grotto, the latter being witnessed by fully 10,000 people, while at night a torch light procession was held around the grounds.

afraid of death; but these poor children, what will become of them without their mother?’ I wanted to give these orphans that you see here before you a picture of their heavenly mother. It seemed to me they would not be so sad when each day they could see the image of their Mother of Heaven. This is why, with your generosity, I undertook the construction of this grotto.”

After his short allocution, the throng again takes up the hymn to Mary. In the meantime a short procession is organized to go to the orphanage chapel and return with the Blessed Sacrament. When it returns, the faithful fall to their knees as the canopy, escorted by 40 orphans passes by. The benediction is performed by Bishop Provost of Fall River. Following the blessing, Fr. (Continued on page 36)

(A Grotto Created, A Grotto Restored
continued from page 35)



Photo of orphans, lay assistants, and Grey Nuns at the Grotto sometime between 1911 and 1916. A statue of Bernadette now knelt below the statue of Our Lady of Lourdes, and a simulated stone wall masking the stairs leading to the elevated crucifix above can now be seen. Scanned by Br. Richard Coté, OMI from the 1916 *Album Souvenir et Historique de la Paroisse St. Joseph de Lowell, MA.*

Wattle pronounces some invocations and this concludes the ceremony. Slowly the crowd disperses, but with the promise to return later for the candlelight procession.

The Candlelight Procession

This procession had been slated for 8 P.M. At that time the seemingly immense area of the orphanage grounds was so populated it was impossible to even approximate the number of people gathered. Les Enfants

de Marie and Les Demoiselles de Notre Dame de Lourdes, each young girl carrying a lit candle, work their way toward the Grotto. Soon the orphans, also with lit candles, join them. Following the praying of the Rosary, the procession begins. It was a procession that defies description. It began at 8 o'clock and marched around the property. When the start of this religious spectacle returned to the starting point one hour and fifteen minutes later, the last ones had barely left. For more than two hours it was a religious

lated it was impossible to even approximate the number of people gathered. Les Enfants de Marie and Les Demoiselles de Notre Dame de Lourdes, each young girl carrying a lit candle, work their way toward the Grotto. Soon the orphans, also with lit candles, join them. Following the praying of the Rosary, the procession begins. It was a procession that defies description. It began at 8 o'clock and marched around the property. When the start of this religious spectacle returned to the starting point one hour and fifteen minutes later, the last ones had barely left. For more than two hours it was a religious spectacle of candlelight, hymns and Hail Marys throughout the grounds. The streets in the area of the orphanage were mobbed – nothing like this had ever been seen in Lowell. As the procession winds down, the orphans meet at the foot of the grotto to pray for their benefactors, a practice they will continue on a daily basis. When the hymns and prayers cease, the children begin chanting the “De Profundis.”

The ceremony is over. For many it is hard to leave this holy place. They remain, singing and praying. By eleven o'clock most people have left. The lights go out. Silence reigns. But around the grotto the burning candles illumine the statue of the Blessed Virgin. She seems more beautiful than ever. The orphans are asleep in their big dormitories. They can sleep peacefully, these poor children. Henceforth Our Lady of Lourdes watches over them and blesses them.

The French-Canadians; The Franco-Americans

by Dick Bernard, Woodbury, MN

Years ago I signed up for a workshop – I think it was titled “Family of Origin” – and the first assignment was to find out what we could about our ancestors, something which I had never explored before.

I was 40 at the time.

My parents took the bait; I found that my Dad was 100% French-Canadian, with very deep roots in Quebec, though near lifelong North Dakotan.

There are millions upon millions of people with French-Canadian ancestry today; hundreds of thousands of them in my own state.

“Quebec” (name first established in 1608) long pre-dates use of the name “United States of America (1776)” and “Canada” (1867). Here’s a National Geographic map

from my copy of the Historical Atlas of the United States, Centennial Edition, 1988 (p. 96). Note the extent of “Quebec”. This was before the naming of “Canada”



My first French-Canadian ancestor was in North America in 1618, and French-Canadians have had a very rich subsequent history all across North America.

I stay active in the quest to keep this rich culture alive, and yesterday prepared a reintroduction to be sent to our local mailing list. The 9-page mailing is here: French-Canadian001

If you wish, open and just scroll through the link. I’d especially recommend the last four pages, an essay entitled “Why Are Franco-Americans So Invisible?” by David Vermette, which appears in the Winter (Hiver)

(Continued on page 43)

REMINISCING: BACK IN THE 50'S AGAIN

by *Xavier de la Prade*

The 1940s was a turbulent decade for my parents. They were married in 1940, bought their first house in 1942 for \$900, had six children in eight years, and then lost their house that they had remodeled in a fire in 1949. In addition to that, my mother underwent a hysterectomy and my father suffered from a stomach ulcer. Thanks to their deep faith and love for each other, they overcame these hardships and our family was on its way through the next decade. A year after the house burned down, we moved back into a partially rebuilt structure. The plaster was drying on the walls when we moved in. Over the course of the next two years, our mom painted the walls and our dad finished the trim.

THE GRANITE STRIKE

Then came the next challenge. The granite worker's union declared a strike. Our dad was quick to find a job working on a road expansion in Barton, VT during that summer. He had worked with President Roosevelt's WPA work crews during the Depression. Maybe one of the reasons he found a job so quickly is that he had experience handling dynamite. The job required a forty-mile commute and the 1936 LaSalle was on its last leg. The vacuum fuel pump was used and our dad would have to drive the car backwards up steep hills relying on gravity to get gas to the engine. Parts were difficult to find since the last of the LaSalle's were manufactured in 1939. Dad then bought a beautiful 1939 Buick that turned out to be a lemon. Once the granite strike was over, he exchanged it for a 1951 Chevrolet station wagon with three row seating for the gang. After the LaSalle, this car was reliable but not as much fun to drive with its six-cylinder engine and Powerglide transmission.

One of the benefits to his road job would be the bags of fish he brought home. When they would dynamite near a stream, the suckers, a bottom feeding, rather lethargic fish, would get stunned. The local children would pitchfork them and sell them for a dollar a bag. These fish were not really in demand because they were so bony, but we managed and they also make great fish soup.



*Xavier, brother Vic and Sister Jeanne,
Xmas program*

OUR NIGHTLY ROUTINES

After school, I would peddle the "Barre Times". It was our local newspaper. I picked up about 75 newspapers at the post office about a mile from home and serviced about 45 customers. When I got home, my brothers and sisters finished the route. Then it was off to the accordion for 30 or 40 minutes of practice before supper. Up until 1955, during supper we conversed and talked about our activities. 1955 is when my dad bought our first TV. The TV was in the kitchen and he loved the 6 o'clock news with Walter Cronkite. TV changed the dynamic of our family life. After supper we listened to TV for an hour before our school work. Around 8:30, it was time for the rosary. We all had to find a chair to use as a kneeler, arms over the backs of the chair, no slouching. We would pray in French and at the end my mother recited a litany of about a dozen saints, always finishing with "Bon St. Joseph, priez pour nous," three times. After all, St. Joseph was our patron Saint. Then came the tablespoon of "Father John's" medicine. Basically, it was a mixture of cod liver oil and molasses. However, it was concocted by a priest, so

it must have been good. Fortunately, I was in the Junior Seminary when the family medicine became "Geritol", thanks to the Lawrence Welk Show.

DETROIT

It was with this boring Chevy station wagon that we finally saw a bit of the world. In the summer of 1955, my parents decided to visit my mother's sister Aunt Monica and her hubby Uncle Oscar. Uncle Oscar had left Vermont to find his dream job working for the Dodge Motor Company. It was an unfortunate incident that brought this trip about. The year before my poor brother Norbert had lost his eyesight in one eye. I was the one aiming at bottles with my BB gun, when one ricocheted and hit him in the eye. Uncle Oscar told us about the Wayne University Eye Clinic in Detroit and its great reputation. So off we went. Unfortunately, even their great doctors could do nothing for Norby.

During the trip, my brother and I sat up front and we were our Dad's GPS, using MAPS. My mother sat in the middle seat to keep us all in line. On this trip, Dad was so impressed by the New York Thruway. It was new at the time and predated the interstate highways. He kept boasting to his friends that he had gone 140 miles in two hours. It used to take us five hours to go 180 miles to visit our grandparents in Worcester, MA, and that was when we did not have car troubles. Our Detroit adventure was great. We toured the Dodge factory, visited Deerfield Village, visited the Ford Rotunda, etc., etc. It was there that I saw my first Corvette, a memorable experience after reading what great cars they were supposed to be in "Popular Mechanics". Uncle Oscar even brought us to the airport for our first ride in a Piper Cub. Never underestimate the influence of a great family vacation. As children we were left with many wonderful memories of this time together.

THE HOLY GHOST CONVENT

For some reason, the school we attended was called a convent rather than an elementary school. It could be that the eight nuns lived in the same building. These nuns were wonderful women who had been obliged to leave their families in France in the early 1900s when the French government secularized the schools and seized all

(Continued on page 38)

(REMINISCING: BACK IN THE 50'S AGAIN *continued from page 37)*

church property. Their loss was our gain. Supposedly when they were sent to Graniteville, they had to deal with not one, but two alcoholic priests. They were the ones who taught us how to hold pencils, shape our letters, teach us phonics, a little French (about 15 minutes a day) and to love God. To this end, they were very successful in my case. That is to say Sister Joseph helped me find my vocation in the priesthood. We had Maryknoll magazines in the classroom and I was fascinated by reading about the missionaries in foreign lands. As a class project my mother helped me dress a plastic doll as a missionary priest along with a cactus made of clay. My mother was very proud of my choice. Wasn't a successful Franco family one that offered at least one child to God? Consequently, I attended a Junior Seminary and studied with these wonderful Maryknoll priests who probably would have been happier out in the missions. They were happy times and as a result, I received an excellent private school education there for two and a half years before the next big event.

BOARDERS

Our mother being from Quebec, always associated the English schools there as Protestant schools and the French schools as Catholic ones. Consequently, it was important for us to attend Catholic schools. Other Francos thought likewise but they lived too far to send their children to the Catholic ones. What they did want though is that their children get the Sacrament of Confirmation. To satisfy this goal they would have their children board during the eighth grade with relatives or acquaintances. So twice my parents agreed to do just that. Our first boarder was Huguette, our second cousin. She was very pretty and I always thought she could have been a Hollywood star. We hardly knew she was at the house. She was reserved and shy and spent most of her time in her room.

Our second boarder was Yvon. Yvon was heavy set, had a great smile and was

very outgoing. He was also quite a good guitar player and whenever we had visitors my dad would get Yvon, my brother on his violin and yours truly on the accordion to play "Your Cheating Heart". Yvon who also had a great voice would sing. Another of my dad's delights would be to have us wrestle when he and Uncle Guy were having a beer. Yvon was a worthy challenger. It was all in fun. Both of these boarders enriched our lives, maybe that is why it was so easy for my parents to adopt a seventh child.



Holy Ghost class of 1955, Xavier, second from left in the top row

ADOPTION

In the summer of 1958, we were off as a family to visit my dad's cousin in Drummondville, PQ. Gelase and Florence had a beautiful family of four, all about our ages, and we loved to visit and practice our French with them. That summer Florence's brother and wife were divorcing. They did not have the means to take care of their four-year-old Carolle and their two-year-old Diane. Uncle Ted and Aunt Pat decided to adopt Diane and our parents adopted Carolle. My father's philosophy was that there was always an extra potato in the pot. So, on that trip, a beautiful four-year-old girl joined our family as a sister and a blessing.

SUMMER JOBS

When I was home from the seminary in the summers, I worked at a restaurant and the following summer at the granite quarries.

At the restaurant I prepped in the morning and washed pots and pans in the afternoon. I was taught how to make egg salad as one of my duties. What was memorable about this, is that one day a customer ordered an egg salad sandwich and a short time after walking back to her office she died. I always wondered if it was my egg salad sandwich that killed her. When I was 17, my job at the quarries was to paint air and gas pipes on dry days, and fill sand bags on rainy ones. These thin bags of sand were placed in the small drill holes after the black blasting powder was put in place. They kept the powder

from blowing out of the drill holes when a charge was sent.

THE DRIVE-IN

Summers were fun doing all the crazy things kids do, like swimming in the quarry holes, helping around the house and going to the drive-in theaters. One summer, my brother and his girlfriend needed a date for her friend. Well, I was recruited and I had such a great time; Bea was a great kisser. After a few more dates with Bea, I

forgot about the "ah-men" and opted out of the seminary for the "ah women". Thank God Bea was disciplined or I would have ended up being a "dad" rather than a "padre". Suffice it to say, that was the end of my vocation.

THE ACCORDION

When I was ten, my parents took us to visit "mon oncle Théodore et tante Yvonne" in St-Hyacinthe, PQ. Their son George played a button box accordion and I was fascinated. I wanted to play one of those. Unfortunately, in Barre, Vermont there were no teachers who taught the button-box, but there was one teacher who taught students the piano accordion. I began my studies with Joseph Zampecini. A thirty-minute lesson was five dollars. He came by once a week in his flashy yellow and brown Nash. I loved the way I would struggle to play, "Down in the Valley" one note at the time, and he would play 3 or 4 at the same time. *(Continued on page 39)*

(REMINISCING: BACK IN THE 50'S AGAIN *continued from page 38)*

His music sounded so good and he was an inspiration. After six months, Joe told my parents I had musical talent and convinced them to buy me an Acme accordion. The accordion was \$350 which was a lot in 1952 when you made \$2.00 an hour. However, my parents, thought it was worth making the sacrifice. A year later, "Accordion Joe" tells my parents he is moving to San Jose, CA. He told my parents that during the Italian campaign in WW II, he was being driven to battle with other GIs, when their army truck flipped down an embankment at night. He suffered multiple broken bones and the Vermont winters were too severe for his arthritis. My parents were livid. I was kind of indifferent at the time, after all practicing became a chore and just another responsibility. My parents did not agree. They had spent \$350 and they were determined that I was going to pursue my lessons. A piano teacher was hired but it was not quite the same inspirational feeling. This very qualified teacher loved classical music but that was not my interest. I wanted to learn the Canadian reels and jigs that would play on our record player. Going to the seminary brought an end to my lessons. However, today I am so thankful my parents persisted with my musical training because the accordion is a happy instrument. Over the years, I have used the accordion to teach French songs in class, as well as playing at retirement homes, restaurants and wineries throughout the San Francisco Bay area.

SENIOR YEAR

After the seminary, I received my diploma at St. Michael's High School in Montpelier, VT. The school was 12 miles from home so I quickly got my driver's license. My dad found a 1950 Chevrolet with a broken piston for \$100 and being very resourceful, rebuilt the motor and redid the brakes to make it road worthy. My brother and I were responsible for holding the spotlight during the repair jobs so he could see what he was doing. A black 1950 Chevy four-door was probably the most unexciting car on the road. It definitely was not a chick magnet. How could I compete and impress

my classmates who had new Ford and Chevy convertibles? One day at the Chevy dealer there was a gorgeous black 1955 Chevrolet convertible. I wanted it so badly. My dad gave me a life changing decision. He said,



The Rock of Ages guide crew, 1959, Xavier, far right

you get the car but then we can't help you with your college tuition. It was one of those moments of "two paths diverging in the woods". Today, I am so happy I chose the latter.

DREAM JOB

The summer after high school I started



Xavier & Vic, off to the Mardi Gras

my dream job. I always wanted to be a guide showing tourists the huge "Rock of Ages" granite quarries in central Vermont. The guides on duty would take groups of tourists every twenty minutes to an observation plat-

form and explain how granite was extracted from the earth. One day, the owner of a quarry from St. Brieux, France and his wife were guests of the president of the corporation. The couple knew very little English so

I was elected as their guide. They enjoyed my old French as much as I did their perfect French. For example, a simple sentence like, "J'ai besoin de l'essence. Mon réservoir est vide. Où est-ce que je peux faire le plein?", impressed me, rather than, "Ma tank est vide, j'ai besoin du gaz". They invited me to lunch and later wrote a nice letter to the president of the company singing my praises. Needless to say, I felt like a big shot. It was probably this job that inspired me to be a teacher.

COLLEGE

September of 1959, the end of the decade saw me enrolling at St. Michael's College in Winooski Park, Vt. St. Michael's was another institution started by exiled priests from France. St. Michael's was a good fit, and I spent four wonderful years there. What was remarkable was that the tuition was \$900 and room and board was \$600. Even so, thank God for government loans. I began as a Business Major hoping to make a fortune when I graduated. How we all dream big. So that is how the Fifties ended and it was on to the Sixties.



Jamming on Xmas day 1955 with "nos amis, les Péloquin"

Xavier is a retired French teacher from Vermont. He spent the last 26 years of his career teaching at the College of Marin, a few miles north of the Golden Gate Bridge. He often used his accordion to teach and was often hired by French restaurants and wineries to play his specialty, French music.

Daniel Moreau

by Kate Gagliardi



As we closed our second into our second year of the COVID-19 Pandemic, students have started to adapt to this new way of learning, remotely. Online learning has caused an array of challenges, as well as some positives. Our students at the Franco-American Centre shared their experienc-

es as we wrapped up the second year of the Pandemic. I was pleased to interview two students who have been part of the Franco-American Centre here at the University of Maine for quite some time now. Daniel Moreau and Donna Morin. Daniel, a senior with an electrical engineering major, has been a beloved member of the centre. He recalls the centre as a place of tranquility. “We are like a family” (Moreau). Moreau became involved with the Centre his first semester at the University of Maine, as he received a Franco American scholarship to fulfill an ethics general education requirement. He recalled his college experience being even better because of his time in the center. Moreau was a part of the student group and would spend his time creating videos for the Centre. He recalls chatting and relaxing “as francos do” (Moreau). He found the change to remote learning to be physically demanding... “it felt like spring break forever. I’d slowly come to the realization that ‘oh we have to sit in bed all day’ that became physically demanding. Sitting all day, being

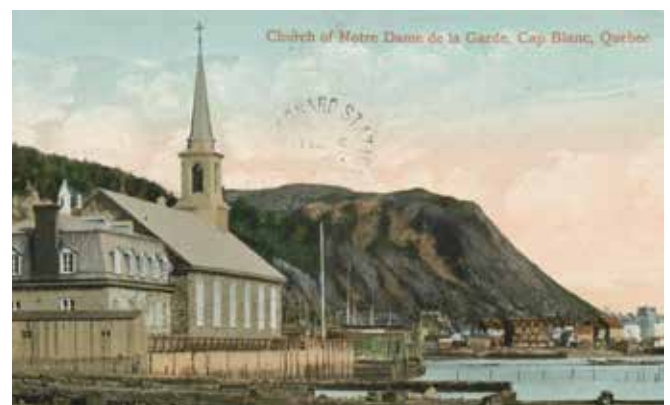
cooped up in one singular location. It was around the spring and summer, I was also working at home. I think about almost daily I would go out just to go out, soak in the sun, and get out of the house” (Moreau).

In the engineering program at the University, a senior project paper is due when graduation hits. It is completed in a three semester sequence. Moreau completed it in what he claimed was “the most exhausting time of my academic career”. He was in a vicious cycle of work and projects, with no time to stop. Moreau believes a moment of zen is crucial when working. It is so easy to not stop and take a breath, especially this day in age, where the mindset is “go, go, go”. The COVID-19 Pandemic has even enhanced this mentality of never stopping. But, there’s a light at the end of the tunnel, and Moreau has neared it, completing his Bachelor degree in Electrical engineering.

“I don’t know if it’s me maturing in a way, or the pandemic”, he laughs, “surprisingly I’m ready for adulthood, and mentally ready to pay taxes (*not actually*) (Moreau).

FORTUNAT MICHAUD POSTCARD COLLECTION

Fortunat Michaud was born in Québec and moved to Fort Kent, ME and later to Van Buren, ME. On February 4, 1902 he married Emily Farrell the daughter of John Farrell. They had 3 children, Elmer, John & Constance. After the death of Emily he later married Marie Keegan on July 18, 1927. Mrs. Keegan was a widow with three children, Evelyn, Audrey and Jimmy. Fortunat was a dealer in shoes and boots and started the F.O. Michaud family store in Van Buren. Which was later run by his children. John ran a men’s clothing store next door to F.O. Michaud, where Elmer, his wife Irene and Constance continued management of the family store. Fortunat held a seat during Maine’s first Workers Comp Law in 1915. He served in the State Legislature two terms, 1915-16 & 1941-42. He was a prominent business man. They lived in the Farrell-Michaud house that is on the Historic Register.



https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/fmichaud_postcards/



GHOSTS OF THE PAST

by *Claude Milot*

My mother gave birth to me in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, on July 24th, 1940. A small village to the south called Manville is where I grew up. My family left Manville permanently in 1956 when Dad joined the Foreign Service. Our lives were never the same after that, but Woonsocket and Manville will always give me a nostalgic tug.

In 1987 I gave in to the impulse and went back to Rhode Island to see if things had changed. The occasion was provided by baseball, of all things.

I've always loved baseball, from the earliest days when I could toss a ball up in the air and experience the thrill of catching it on the way down. On my family room wall there's a picture of me in my very first baseball uniform. My mother made it for me when I was seven so I could be a batboy for the Manville town team. As soon as school let out every June, I headed for the ball field. I played baseball every day, sometimes all day. I even played after supper in the yard in front of our house. Beginning with Little League, I played organized ball until my limited talents told me it was time to be a full-time spectator. That was no problem because I had my Red Sox.

I started following the Red Sox in 1948, and, like a modern Prometheus, I endured the Curse of the Bambino for the next 55 years. For those who don't know, the Curse of the Bambino is the penalty the Red Sox paid for selling Babe Ruth to the hated Yankees after the 1919 season. At the time, the Red Sox had won more World Series than any other club. After that they went 86 years before winning another one. In spite of the yearly anguish for 55 of those years, I continued to be a fan. I still am. To this day I always go to the box scores before the paper's other news. A man's first love never leaves his heart.

In the early days of the summer of '88 I took my oldest son David to the Baseball Hall of Fame in Cooperstown. David was enjoying a few days of freedom before starting his final year at Annapolis, and he didn't remember much of Cooperstown from

the time we visited it in 1972. And of all the kids David was always the one who enjoyed going places and seeing things the most. So, he was eager to go.

I had received permission from the folks at the Hall of Fame to do some research in their archives on a story idea. I already had a title: "*They Played Baseball in French.*" It was to be a story about how French-Canadian ballplayers in New England played the game while talking to each other in French.



Woonsocket Hospital

I had witnessed it with the Manville town team, and I myself grew up playing ball with kids who knew little English or at least felt a lot more comfortable with French. I assumed, therefore, that the practice had to have been even more common in places like Lowell and Woonsocket where years ago entire communities spoke nothing but French. To prove my point, I thought I would begin with the great French-Canadian ballplayers in the Hall of Fame: Napoleon Lajoie, Goose Gossett, Lou Boudreau, Rabbit Maranville. I figured that if anyone would have evidence that these giants had played ball in French, the Hall of Fame surely would.

My research turned up nothing. At least nothing I could use. Lajoie's file was surprisingly thin and said nothing about his having played for French teams, although he had acquired the nickname "Frenchy" in his early days. Boudreau's file was very thick, but I couldn't even find evidence that he, like Gossett, even spoke French. And the biggest disappointment was Maranville: he wasn't even French. He was Irish.

The research wasn't a total bust, however. As I read through the file on Lajoie, I discovered some interesting stuff. Of course, I already knew that he had been born in Woonsocket, like me. And I had learned many years earlier how great a ballplayer he had been from my uncle Nap, Lajoie's namesake and my godfather. But I had not known that Lajoie had been a catcher before becoming the game's greatest second baseman, that he had earned his living driving hacks in Woonsocket, and that he had not been born in 1875, like it says in the record books, but in 1874. The author of the article I found in Lajoie's file claimed to have uncovered the error when checking Lajoie's birth date in the baptismal records

kept in the rectory of Precious Blood Church in Woonsocket. How about that! That's when I decided to put aside my story idea and concentrate on Napoleon Lajoie. And that's when I vowed that if I ever got the chance, I would double-check those records myself.

The chance came soon enough. In July, my wife Yvonne, David, and I drove from our home in New Jersey to Cape Cod to visit friends Paul and Marie Bilik who had invited us to share a few days with them at their rented cottage in Chatham. We spent much of our time doing touristy things like seeing the local sights and shopping at the over-priced boutiques. But the best part was the night Paul took David and me to Fenway Park to see a Red Sox game. I had been there many times when I was a kid and going back was a special treat. For David it was a first. He was thrilled to death. I had taken him to Shea Stadium and Yankee Stadium, but Fenway is like no other park in the country. Small, intimate, and so green. A very special place.

From Chatham we called family friend Nell Lambert in Woonsocket to say hello. When she heard we were on Cape Cod, she insisted that we stop by to see her on our way back to New Jersey. And she offered to put us up for the night, too. I wanted very much to do that, because it would give me the opportunity to visit old haunts and maybe even take a ride down to Manville to see if the place had changed. So, we accepted.

On the way we ran into a violent
(Continued on page 42)

(GHOSTS OF THE PAST continued from page 41)

thunderstorm. The radio issued repeated warnings of tornadoes. The downpour was the heaviest I have ever seen. Cars massed under highway overpasses because they just couldn't go on. When the worst of it passed, there was debris all over the place. We had not seen a funnel cloud, but we learned that a twister had touched down only a few miles from where we had been. It gave us a lot to talk about when we got to Nell's place.

We had expected to find Nell all by herself. We were surprised and happy to find that Simone Fontaine was staying with her. Simone, Nell, and my mother were the best of friends, going back to the days before my mother was married. Simone was Dr. Auray Fontaine's sister and assistant when Mom worked as Dr. Fontaine's secretary. Nell succeeded her in that job after Mom married Dad.

Strange how friendships are forged. Who knows why some last and some do not. My mother and "The Girls," as my father called them, were as close as three people could be. Best friends for over fifty years. They were with



Textile Mill

my father on that return trip from New Orleans to Seminole when he suffered a fatal heart attack. And they stayed with Mom for weeks after the funeral when she needed them most. And now they were delighted to see us under much happier circumstances.

That night we went with Simone to see her nephew Paul, Dr. Fontaine's son. I had played Little League ball against him in 1951. We talked about the old days while watching the Red Sox on television.

Before turning in that night, I took Yvonne for a walk down Cass Avenue past Woonsocket Hospital where I drew my first breath. It brought back memories of a broken arm, an emergency appendectomy, and a rhinoplasty to repair a nose crushed by a baseball bat.

Before breakfast the next morning, I took David with me for a little tour of Woonsocket. It was Saturday and the city was sleeping late. I hadn't driven through the streets of Woonsocket in over twenty years, but there are some things you never forget. Like how to find your way around the town where you were born. Besides, I was

on a mission of sorts. I wanted to go to the Precious Blood Church rectory to check out Nap Lajoie's baptismal record.

We knocked on the door of the rectory, and a little gray-haired lady answered. She couldn't understand why we wanted to look at 19th century baptismal records, but after a while she led us to the unlocked safe that contained the ancient documents bound in red leather. We found what we were looking for in one of the oldest books. There it was: 1874, not 1875. That meant that Lajoie was born in the same year as Honus Wagner, the greatest shortstop of all time. That coincidence would be of no particular importance, except that Lajoie's career stats have always invited comparison to Wagner's. The two are surprisingly similar. Lajoie is superior in lifetime batting average and doubles, Wagner in power and speed. The two were acknowledged to be the best glove men of



*Precious Blood
(Precieux Sang)
church*

complex long ago converted to apartments. I have memories of that place, but for now I must complete the day's journey.

Dave and I got back in the car, and I decided to take him downtown for a tour, not so much for his benefit, but for mine. For old times' sake.

When I was growing up, downtown Woonsocket was a thriving place. The massive red-brick textile mills, most of them anyway, were still there, providing thousands of jobs for sons of Canadian immigrants who still spoke French in their homes and on the street. In 1950 Woonsocket boasted the honor of having been voted an All-American city.

The city we saw in 1988 was a shell of its former self, giving silent testimony to an era gone by. McCarthy's great department store once stood right there at the corner of Main Street just across the bridge—gone. The Stadium theater and the Bijou where I first saw King Kong—boarded up. The railroad station—unvisited in years. The great mills—all gone.

We drove across Main Street and up High Street, so called because it curves left and runs parallel to Main Street, but on a higher level. With no particular destination in mind, we kept going, with David taking in the flavor of the place and me trying to remember it as it had been. After a while we found ourselves heading away from the center of town, going north along the Blackstone River. Suddenly, I got this strange feeling, like I had been there long ago. We stopped. On our right stood an old factory whose name meant nothing to me. But there was something eerily familiar about that spot.

We turned around and went back to Nell's. By that time, we had worked up quite an appetite. Hungry or not, I couldn't shake the haunting feeling, as if I had seen a ghost
(Continued on page 43)

(The French-Canadians; The Franco-Americans continued from page 36)

2017 edition of *Le Forum* from the state of Maine. https://digitalcommons.library.umaine.edu/francoamericain_forum/

I dedicate this post to my great-grandparents, Clotilde Blondeau and Octave Collette, who married at what was then called St. Anthony, soon to become Minneapolis MN, in 1868; thence 1875 to the Dayton MN area, thence to Oakwood (near Grafton) North Dakota in 1878.

To the right is the tintype photo of them about the time of their marriage. Clotilde would have been about 5 when they arrived in Minnesota Territory from eastern Ontario in the early 1850s; Octave was about 17 when most of the Collette family moved from St. Lambert QC to St. Anthony (later, Minneapolis) in about 1864.

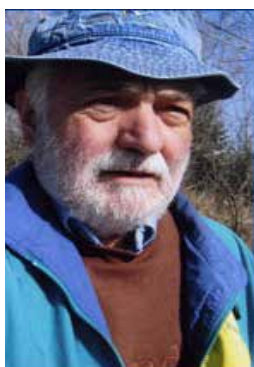


Clotilde Blondeau and Octave Collette at St. Anthony MN ca July 1868

I also dedicate this to my grandparents: Henry Bernard, born 1872 and raised in rural Ste. Sylvestre Quebec, coming to North Dakota in the 1890s; and Josephine Collette, born 1881 at the now disappeared Red River town of St. Andrews, where the Park River enters the Red. They married in 1901 at Oakwood ND.



Henry Bernards of Grafton ND about 1920, with visitors from Winnipeg. Henry, Josephine, Henry Jr, Josie, and Frank Peter are center part of photo. Their home was on the bank of the Park River, then 115 Wakeman Avenue.



MODERATOR/AUTHOR

Dick Bernard is a moderate pragmatic Democrat who speaks from his heart in matters of family, justice and peace.

<https://outsidethewalls.org/blog/the-french-canadians-the-franco-americans/>

(GHOSTS OF THE PAST continued from page 42)

by the river.

“Nell,” I said. “If you go up High Street and keep going until you find yourself along the river...” Then it struck me! “By any chance would that factory there on the right be the old Goodyear plant?”

Yes, of course. Nell confirmed it, but she didn’t have to. I just knew it. Somewhere in the deepest recesses of my brain was the memory of the Goodyear plant my father had worked in during the war. Dad had wanted to do his share and even tried to enlist. But the Navy wouldn’t take him, because at 34 he was too old and he had two kids with a third one on the way. Instead, he went to work for Goodyear. Before the war, Goodyear was making sneakers in that plant. In fact, they had been invented right there. But once the war started, the plant began making rubber rafts for the troops. And then it was converted to a top-secret project making rubber decoys of tanks and planes that were deployed near Dover to fool the Germans into thinking that the invasion would be launched at Calais instead of Normandy. Dad worked at Goodyear as a bookkeeper, one of the few who knew what was going on. When the decoys were no longer needed, the workers were dismissed. My father stayed on for another year to close the books on that piece of history.

And my memory of that time was of riding with my mother to pick up my father after work on those days when she needed the car. It couldn’t have been often. And I had to have been less than five years old. I remembered...more than forty years later.

What is it about those ghosts of the past that haunt our memory? How does the brain bring them to life after being buried for forty years? And what is this fascination we all have for our past? Some people even claim to be able to regress to previous lifetimes. Have we really lived before? Will we live again? Can we look forward to being reborn in more than just the spiritual sense? There’s so much we don’t know. But even in our ignorance we can respond to Alfie’s question “Is That All There Is?” with a resounding NO! And I think that in searching the past and in summoning the ghosts, we begin to know ourselves. And what we find of value within us we try to pass on. We want to live on in our descendants as part of their past. We make our mark and hope that it lasts longer than the flowers on our grave.

“Where are the Franco-Americans in Maine”-Wall Panel Text for “Begin Again” Exhibit

by
Rhea Côté Robbins

Where are the French heritage, Franco-Americans in Maine? Lewiston could be anywhere in the state of Maine because the French came not only to work, but also to live and thrive. *Petite Canada*, French-language enclaves, are located in many towns and cities, often by the river bank, and beyond, on the geography throughout the entire state. The idea of chain migration came after the immigration event to describe the phenomenon of one million people leaving Québec who came to live in the Northeast. (Except for the French heritage people living in Northern Maine, who were already on the land before the border was drawn.) All classes of people immigrated between 1820 and 1920—the elite, professional class and the workers destined for the mills—textiles, shoes, cloth, and more. The film, *Tisserands du Pouvoir*, tells the story of the classes of people who immigrated.

What can be said about the large group of people coming to the U.S. seeking their livelihood and opportunity? Living in Little Canadas meant a city-within-a-city. The French language, one of the three pillars of survivance—*Notre foi, notre langue, nos institutions* [our faith, our language, our institutions] was the credo of surviving in a foreign land and holding onto identity—for eternity.

How to survive and express identity? *Le Messenger*, the French language newspaper that was located in Lewiston, 1880-1966, one of many French newspapers throughout New England, whose editor in the 1960s won a Congressional Medal, kept the Franco-American population connected. Camille Lessard Bissonnette, a correspondent for the newspaper and a suffragist wrote the French-Canadian immigrant experience in her book, *Canuck*. She wrote about the complexities of the already arrived and the newly arriving immigrant.

What does it mean to be French and living in Maine? Commerce and belong-

ing—defining the landscape by the particular culture of the French—their rituals, artifacts, and relationships—of the moments or eras alongside the other immigrant groups. The reality of Maine has always been the diversity of many groups coming together—the perception presented defied the reality. “Yankee” was the cover story.

How were the French received by the communities they immigrated to? The prejudices were expressed through English-only, Maine state legislation in 1916 and 1919 (1925, for Native American language/culture) prohibiting French be taught in schools other than in a classroom of high school instruction. And then national legislation, 1959, signed into law by President Eisenhower due to Sputnik, the NDEA, National Defense Education Act, changed the focus by stating language learning was a top priority to national security.

The KKK’s, also a product of the Nativist politics of the 1920s, Maine membership in the group was 150,141 members by 1925. Without a significant Black population, the KKK exercised white-on-white prejudice against the French, Jews and other “undesirables.” Also, a forced sterilization policy was practiced against the French-Canadians and Native Americans. It was not a good time to be French in the state of Maine—and some things still need to be changed.

How did the French heritage population get through it all? Survivance held its ground even with the Corporation Sole Controversy crisis in the Catholic Church hierarchy—an Irish bishop against the French-Canadian parishioners—deeming the bishop as the sole owner of the properties of the church and he, alone, would decide what happened to the holdings overseen by Irish clergy put in charge.

What are the outcomes of these events? The French of Maine are a tenacious group that even FDR complained about in a letter to Prime minister of Canada, Lyon Mackenzie-King, 5/18/1942, “... this is a new element which will never be assimilated. ... these Quebec people won’t even speak English.” A hard fight has been fought and partially won. The French heritage immigrants are a part of the community fabric—deeply woven—as an entity with all the immigrants, including the English-speaking immigrants who came to live in Maine, and then, which group saw themselves as superior marked by the times of their arrivals and claims of nativism, when in reality, unless



one is Native American, you are forever “from away”—an immigrant.

I will be giving a talk September 9th, 6-7 PM online, “Who Gets to Tell Story”.

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<https://www.mainememory.net/my-mainestory/Franco>

POETRY/POÉSIE...

What Grandmother Did

My grandmother hears the bed creaking downstairs
and gets up careful not to wake Rebecca.
She puts on her broken slippers.
She dresses under her nightie,
taking the nightie off to reveal herself completely dressed.
She glances at the light coming from the window.
She hears my grandfather cough from the bedroom downstairs.
She says a prayer as she climbs down the stairs
clutching the rail.
She takes her apron from the nail and ties it on.
She rekindles the stove from the bright ashes.
She puts on the coffee pot.
She hears Michael let the barn door bang,
enter the cooling room.
She hears the milk from his pails pour into the separator.
She takes the bread from the breadbox.
She finds the knife.
She goes to the cooling room to get the butter
and picks up the pails to wash.
She notices the muddy floor.
She goes to the cellar for a new jar of jam.
She climbs the cellar stairs thinking of laundry,
holding the rail,
the jar in her other hand.
She sets the table for one,
flips the buttered bread on the hot stove,
hits the jam on the corner of the table to break the seal.

“Gilbert,” she calls, “Come sit down now.
Your breakfast is ready.”

She notices he looks poorly.
He sits not looking at her but touching everything to check
if anything is missing.
Is anything missing?

She pours coffee, filling his cup.

— *by Rachel Michaud*

SURROGATE

Though your shoes
Are by the door
I cannot tell
Where you have been__
The present
No hound to where you are.

Space
More visible than time
As much the make-believe
That you were there
As the illusion__
You are here.

But for this,
I should love the shoes
For you.

DESTINATION

Locomotive's whistle ricochets down-valley
as hot pistons melt itinerant sleet.
Quinebaug Willimantic Shetucket.
Slashed train-fares brought us here.
In lean years. A farmer's fifth *films*,
with the sire's lot already sliced thin.

Pendant les années grasses,
canals scam rivers round rapids
to turn wheels to crank gears to twist rods,
rolling out a sluice of muslin,
a calculated torrent of trendy worsted,
paying out a steady 55 cents a day.

Falling water becomes layaway plan
becomes spillway froth becomes Easter shoes
becomes scarlet chunk of thumb rinsed away,
in leanest years becomes *puissance*
no boss up North cares to employ.
Quaboag Housatonic Connecticut.

Steven Riel

sriel@msn.com

IT MAY BE SO

Never be so confused by a word
That you would not learn
To spell it.
Sow is not sew
But to compound it,
It may be so.

Never be so distracted by rules
That you would not search
For meaning.
Love may be love,
Yet, to self-destruct under construction
May be so.

Never be so blinded by illusions
That you would not look
For connotations.
Understanding is a two-sided surrender
Of give and take __ for a love-affair
To be so.

Spelling, definition and context
Are some of the trusts
In a lover's world.
Sow love to reap;
Sew it when in need of mending,
Then maybe,
It may be so.

— *by Normand Dubé*

POETRY/POÉSIE...

Searching for my other self /
A la recherche de moi même

(2021/RG Héroux)

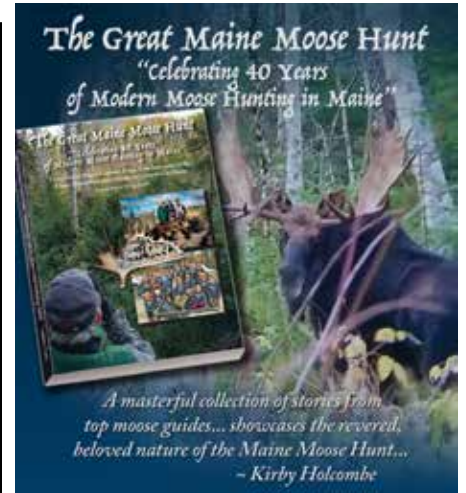
As I grow old
 I seem to be searching
 Yearning
 More and more
 For my other half
 The part of me
 Which is Canadien Français
 The Franco side
 Of my Franco Americanism.
 (My American
 My English-speaking half
 Secure in a life
 Of harmony and joyful times
 With my wife, my dearest friend,
 With my children and grandchildren
 And other English-speaking friends.)

I see a shadow however
 Of my Franco self
 Yet I want more
 To belong
 And live more fully
 As I did
 When I was young
 Comme un pur Franco Américain
 Interchanging easily and freely
 Between French and English
 Between Rhode Island and Québec
 Entre "St. Trel" (Central Falls) et Wotton
 Ah oui Wotton
 Petit village
 Nestled in La Belle Province
 Je me souviens...trop bien
 Souvent
 De mes jeunes étés.

I have hope
 Un peu d'espoir

That I will live
 My other half
 More fully
 In a Rassemblement
 In a Colloque
 In a rendez-vous
 In person or on zoom
 Somewhere quelque part
 In a journey
 Dans un voyage
 A Québec
 Dans les Cantons de l'Est
 In discussing mon héritage
 Mon histoire d'enfance
 With anyone and everyone
 Who will listen
 To ce vieux placoteux
 Gregarious, zealous and sentimental
 Dans mes rêves
 In my dreams
 Of yesterday et d'hier
 And in the longings
 And searching
 For my tomorrows
 De mes demains
 Sur mon chemin
 Of my other half
 Du côté de ma langue natale
 Of my mother's tongue.

En avant forward
 A demain...espérons
 Searching to be whole again
 While swimming in
 And promoting
 Mon héritage
 Franco-Américain.



About the Great Maine Moose Hunt

By Roger Lambert

James and I have endeavored through these tales and pictures to give a true representation of the "phenomenon" on the woods and waters of Maine that is the "Great Maine Moose Hunt". We are not lost on the coincidence that not only is this the 40th anniversary of the "modern" moose hunt but also the Bicentennial of our beloved state of Maine.

From all the contributing authors we hope you enjoy and find happy nostalgia in these stories and continue to promote and pass on one of Maine's most iconic heritage sports.

Paperback copy out now!
\$28.50 (includes shipping)

<https://greatmainemoosehunt.com>

Franco-Americans of Maine, Then and Now

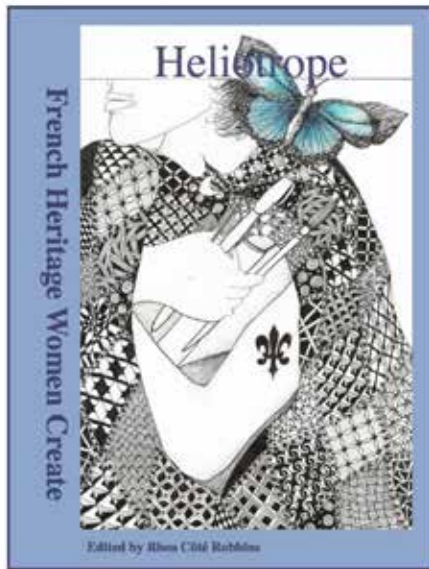
The story of Franco-American immigration to Maine is complex and fascinating—but not a short story to tell. *Where We Were* is a compendium of interactive maps and visualizations that investigate the history and genealogy of the Franco-American community in Maine.

The Lumberman Bartender— The Story of George Poulin

Susan Poulin brings us to Jackman, Maine for a story about her grandfather—a man who tried to straddle the border during prohibition with varying degrees of success. Continue reading: <https://francomainestories.com>.



BOOKS/LIVRES



The Franco-American Women's Institute, FAWI, is celebrating its 25th Anniversary in 2021. FAWI has promoted the creativity of the French heritage women both online and in print. The Franco-American Women's Institute is an organization of women who gather together as a force for the specific purpose of promoting Fran-

co-American, ethnic women's voices. The Franco-American Women's Institute is also an archival place or a recording place. The women come together in many forms of presentation, body, soul and creative spirit, as Franco-American women--Québécois, Acadian, Métis, Mixed Blood, French Canadian, 'Cajun, Creole and Huguenot--in a way which encourages them to be voiced while collecting a record of their own and their maman's existence. Daughters, mamans, and mémères.

In celebration of this occasion, as founder and director of FAWI, I am offering a copy, free of charge, of the 20th Anniversary anthology of 130+ women's creativity, *Heliotrope: French Heritage Women Create* to any library, museum, non-profit organization as a way to promote the voices of this diverse group. Annie Proulx donated a chapter of her memoir, *Bird Cloud—A Memoir*, in solidarity of the work that FAWI has done over the years.

If you wish to have a copy for your organization, library or other non-profit, please email me at rhea.robbs@maine.edu with contact information and an address. I will mail you a copy for your shelves. This book will be donated to your non-profit organization by the Franco-American Women's Institute.

I believe it is important that this anthology, a finalist in the 2017 Maine Writers and Publishers Anthology category book award, be broadly distributed and the community is given access to this collection of women of the French heritage culture.

For more information on this anthology: <http://www.womencrossingborders.com/HeliotropeFrenchHeritageWomen-Crete.html>

Heliotrope—French Heritage Women Create is an anthology of written works and visual arts published to mark the present, active, creative lives of the women of the French heritage culture. This anthology presents a snapshot of the French heritage women's lives as they exist in the present. This anthology incorporates the lives of the women who make up this cultural heritage and it offers to the present and future generations a vivid compilation of voices and visuals that builds bridges of insight and understanding for all who read and view the works. Annie Proulx is featured as well as one-hundred and thirty other women of French heritage.

***Rhea Côté Robbins,
Director, FAWI***

Out of Time (*The Great Library Series Book 3*)

One Girl and her Team go to a Realm Where Magic Rules

After traveling across the universe, Maya lands on a sidewalk in New York City. She has gone back in time to her own past, where she catches a glimpse of her younger self and her mother going into a corner store. But Maya is too busy to worry about disturbing the space-time continuum.

She must find someone called the Accumulator, who will help her defeat her adversary Cinnial. Find the Accumulator she does, and with her new team—Will, Jay, and Lexie—Maya travels to a place called Elferterre, a dimension ruled by Magic rather than by Time. In Elferterre, Maya and her team go on a quest to steal a key and a lock from a powerful elf named Galli. The key is for the Accumulator, and the lock will help Maya trap Cinnial.

In Elferterre, Maya, Will, Jay, and Lexie encounter allies and foes—a talking cat, a witch, sprites, ogres, imps, elves, and a mechanical horse. All the while, Magic swirls around Elferterre, enhancing the good and bad in every creature that Maya and her team meet.

Maya falls in love, travels yet again across the universe, and encounters her biggest challenge yet. Will Maya have the courage to face this challenge? Or will she falter?

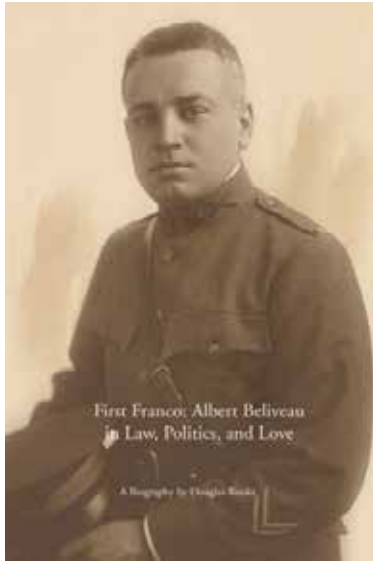


About Laurie Graves: Laurie Graves likes to say she was born in County Tolkien, but really she was born in Kennebec County--in Waterville, Maine--and is a fifth-generation Mainer and a Franco-American. Nevertheless, from the time she was young, she loved fantasy, fairy tales, and other folderol. When she was eleven, her father gave her *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and that is when she discovered her true county of origin.

Laurie Graves writes essays and fiction from her home in the Maine hinterlands. For seven years, she and her husband, Clif, published and edited *Wolf Moon Journal: A Maine Magazine of Art and Opinion*. She has a blog called *Notes from the Hinterland*--www.hinterlands.me--which features posts about nature, rural life, food, books, and people.

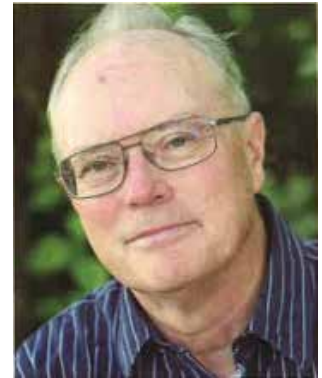
Maya and the Book of Everything is her first book. You can follow Laurie's fiction writing and get information about upcoming books at her author website www.lauriegraves.me.

hinterlandspress.com



First Franco: Albert Beliveau in Law, Politics, and Love *A Biography by Douglas Rooks*

“Few biographies exist of first- or second-generation French-Canadian descendants in the United States. First Franco shares the life story of a prominent Maine jurist of French-Canadian descent. This richly detailed book adds to our understanding of the migration experience in the United States, particularly about the integration of French speakers into U. S. society. In its portrayal of Albert Beliveau as a first-generation Franco-American, this biography teaches us a great deal about such themes as acculturation, the rise from the working class, and the development of political consciousness among Maine’s largest ethnic group.” – Mark Paul Richard, State University of New York at Plattsburgh.



About the Author:

Douglas Rooks is the author of two previous books, *Statesman: George Mitchell and the Art of Possible* (Down East Books, 2016) and *Rise, Decline and Renewal: The Deomcratic Party in Maine* (Hamilton Books, 2018). He has served as editorial page editor for the *Kennebec Journal* as well as editor and publisher of *Maine Times*, and has covered state government and politics for 36 years, currently as State House correspondent for the *Portland Phoenix*. His political columns appear in four daily newspapers, including the *Times Record* and *Portsmouth Herald*, and he is the recipient of numerous national and regional awards. A graduate magna cum laude of Colby College, he lives with his wife, Labrador retriever and Maine coon cat in a 215-year-old farmnoouse in West Gardiner.

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15. Superior Court Justice Albert Beliveau on the bench. He is wearing the robe bequethed to him by William Pattangall.

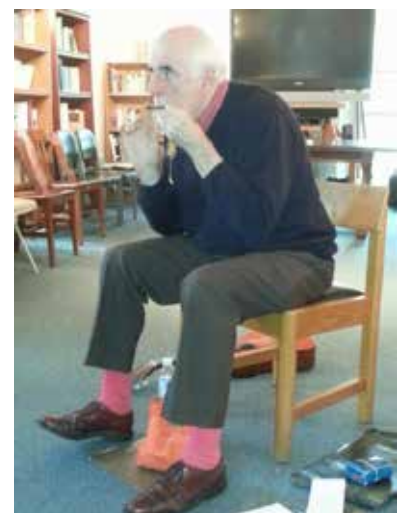
Please help!



Michael Parent

Many of us grew up listening to Michael Parent's CD's of Franco music and attended his storytelling performances. He was also our trusty time keeper at the Writers gatherings/Rassemblements. We just learned this morning that Michael is in need of financial help. He needs to move into an assisted living and cannot afford it. Some of his friends have set up this nonprofit to help him. <https://michaelmedicalcare.wordpress.com/>

Please help if you can and spread the word!



A Pandemic Easter and Palms

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At the Albert Family's home (Chez Albert), Easter 2021 was coming without Grandma (mémé) and Grandpa (pépé). "The flu is still here this year," Mama told her three girls (Tina, Beverly and Ginny), "and it would be safer for mémé and pépé to stay home this Easter. This coronavirus flu is everywhere in the world and many people are still dying from it."

It was now Palm Sunday, one week before Easter Sunday, and the Albert Family brought home palms after attending mass wearing protective masks. That same evening after supper, Mama and her three daughters began weaving the blessed palms into pinecone-like clusters, while conversing:

Ginny: Mama, I feel sad that mémé and pépé won't be joining us for our family Easter ham dinner this year. Plus, we'll miss mémé's famous Graham Cracker Cream Pie and pépé's surprise Easter baskets. Nobody makes pies like mémé and nobody makes Easter baskets like pépé.

Tina: Why don't we weave our prayers into the palms while we continue weaving the palms? Then we can send over a cluster of palms to mémé and pépé to protect them from the flu.

Mama: Tina, that's a brilliant idea, since the palms are blessed by the church.

Beverly: We can send the blessed woven palms to mémé and pépé with the beautiful Easter card and candy we bought for them.

Mama: That's another great idea, Bev!

Ginny: Mama, I'll sing the holy song, "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel," in the background while you, Bev and Tina recite prayers.

Mama: Ginny, isn't "Emmanuel" an Advent song?

Ginny: Yes, Mama, but I've adapted it for Lent (Ginny displayed a big smile).

Mama: Wonderful, Ginny, I love the hymn, "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel." You three girls are filled with God's inspiration. I am so blessed to have you in my life.

Tina: We feel the same about you, Mama.

Beverly: Yes Mama, we are so thankful that you're our mother.

Ginny: I'll sing to that (wearing a big smile)! Mama, what do the blessed palms symbolize?

Mama: That's a good question, my dear. In ancient times, palm branches symbolized goodness and victory. Palm Sunday commemorates the entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, when palm branches were placed in his path, before his arrest on Holy Thursday and his crucifixion on Good Friday.

Tina: Well, Jesus was certainly victorious over death, Mama.

Mama: Very true, Tina, so we celebrate Christ's Resurrection at Eastertide. He showed us that our souls continue on after death.

Beverly: Okay everyone, I'll begin reciting the Lord's Prayer and Hail Mary as we continue to weave these palms and while Ginny sings.

Ginny began singing "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel" while Bev, Tina and Mama offered prayers and intentions:

Tina: Dear Jesus, thank you for your suffering and sacrifice for us. God, please keep mémé and pépé healthy and safe during the pandemic as they display these blessed palm clusters in their home.

Mama: God, thank you so much for each other and for all of our blessings and abundance. Dear Jesus, thank you for your teachings. God, please protect our family and loved ones during the pandemic and please bring an end to this pandemic soon. Keep us all happy and healthy during this



Easter season and beyond. (Mama then joined Beverly and Tina in reciting prayers. Afterward, they joined Ginny in singing "Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel.")

Many palm clusters were woven throughout this Palm Sunday evening as Mama and her three daughters prayed and sang. Some of the woven palms were hung throughout the house at Chez Albert and a cluster of woven palms found its way to mémé and pépé's house with an Easter card and candy by Good Friday.

Easter Sunday finally arrived. After attending Easter Sunday mass wearing protective masks, the Albert family (Mama, Papa, Tina, Ginny and Beverly) returned home and found a huge Easter surprise waiting for them. Pépé had made and displayed his homemade wooden signs to lead the family into their heated daylight basement and then out into the backyard gardens at Chez Albert. The family followed the signs into the basement and discovered something very special:

Ginny: Look, everyone, a real rabbit!

Tina: A beautiful white Easter bunny with tall, pink ears!

Beverly: Hopping around inside a huge, spacious wooden pen. I bet pépé built the rabbit pen in his wood shop.

Ginny: Look, the bunny's name is "Chloé." Pépé made a sign with the rabbit's name on it and hung it on the pen.

Papa: You're absolutely right! Your pépé Albert made the bunny pen and your
(Continued on page 50)

(A Pandemic Easter and Palms continued from page 49)

mémé Albert found Chloé at the local animal shelter, hoping to find a good home.

Mama: Yes, and your mémé had the local veterinarian give Chloé a “bunny wellness exam” to make sure Chloé is healthy. Chloé has also been spayed. Every year we’ll take Chloé to the veterinarian for a wellness exam.

Ginny: I already love Chloé. She’s so friendly and lovable.

(The three girls enter the bunny pen to meet and pet Chloé.)

Papa: I think there are more of your pépé’s wooden signs leading us to the backyard. Shall we all follow them?

The signs led the family out the back door from the basement into the backyard gardens:

Tina: Look, I see more of pépé’s signs throughout the gardens.

Beverly: Our names are on the signs.

Each daughter excitedly ran over to her personalized sign. Ginny’s sign stood in the pumpkin patch. Beverly’s sign stood in the flower garden and Tina’s sign stood in the root vegetable garden:

Ginny: Mama and Papa, I found one of pépé’s homemade wooden Easter baskets by my sign. In the basket there’s a House Rabbit Guidebook, a large chocolate edible

rabbit, a plate of mémé’s famous graham cracker pie and “Seeds-of-Hope.”

Mama: “Seeds-of-Hope?”

Ginny: Yes, Mama. There’s a packet of pumpkin seeds inside of an envelope. The words, “Seeds-of-Hope,” are written on the envelope.

Mama: Well, Ginny, I guess you’ll be planting your pumpkin Seeds-of-Hope in the pumpkin patch later this spring. You’ll grow and harvest plenty of pumpkins for Halloween and Thanksgiving.

Beverly: I also found an Easter basket by my sign, Mama and Papa, except that my Seeds-of-Hope are sunflower seeds. I also found a plate of mémé’s delicious graham cracker pie, a white chocolate edible rabbit and a Rabbit-Keeping Guidebook in my Easter basket.

Tina: My Easter basket has all those things too, except that my Seeds-of-Hope are carrot seeds.

Papa: Well, that will come in handy for Chloé. You’ll have to grow lots of carrots for her during this year’s gardening season. (Papa was chuckling.)

Mama: Ginny, Beverly and Tina, bring your Easter baskets into the house and get ready for Easter dinner! Put your plates of mémé’s pie in the refrigerator for now!

As everyone entered the house, the telephone rang. Tina ran across the kitchen to answer it:



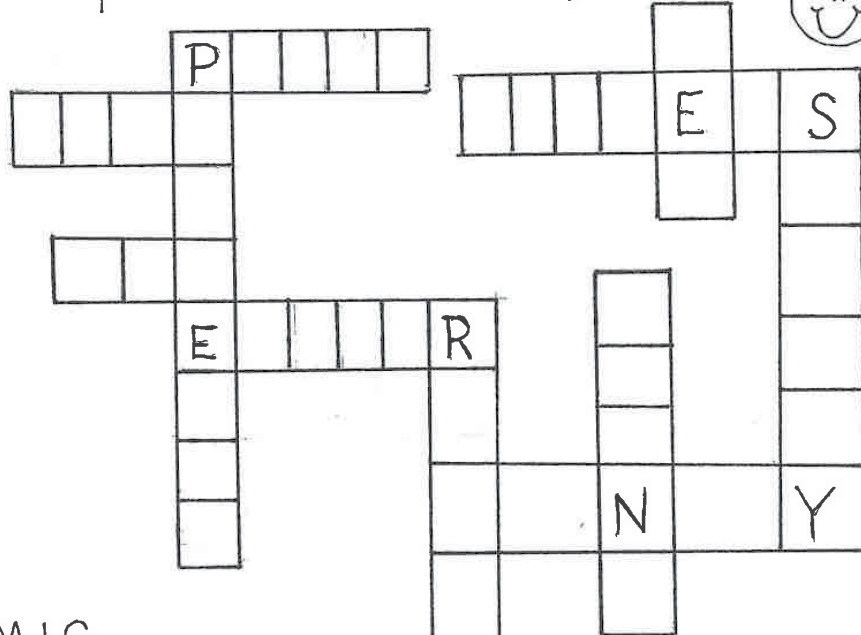
Chloé

Tina: Hey everyone, it’s mémé and pépé on the phone wishing us all a happy Easter and thanking us for the woven palms, Easter card and candy. Happy Easter to both of you from all of us, mémé and pépé. Thank you so much for bringing Chloé into our lives and for the magical Easter baskets. We’ll surely share our Harvest-of-Hope with you during this year’s gardening season, just as we always do. Thank you for all of the Seeds-of-Hope you’ve given us during this pandemic Easter. We love you so much, mémé and pépé. Thank you for making our Easter so special even though you couldn’t join us this year.

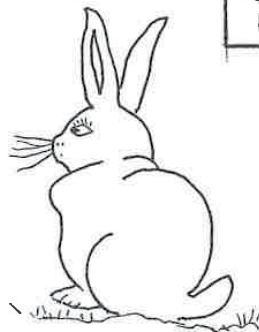
That night, during prayer time, everyone at Chez Albert thanked God for all of their blessings during this Pandemic Easter. This would be a very memorable Easter week for the Albert family; Easter 2021, a Pandemic Easter.



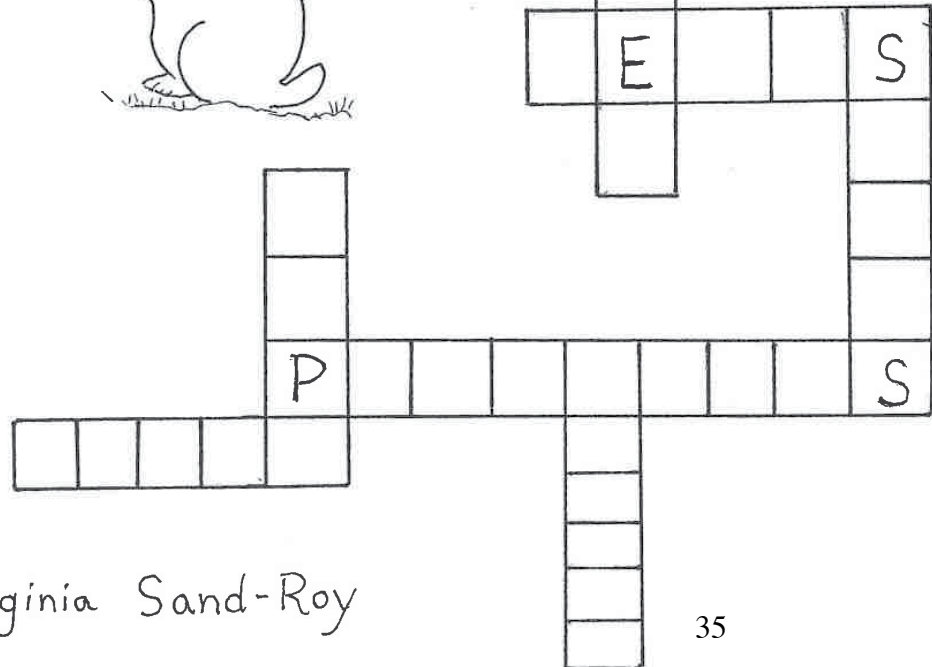
Can you find where the words go from the list below? Complete the crossword puzzle.



1. PANDEMIC
2. EASTER
3. PRAYERS
4. PALMS
5. HOPE
6. SEEDS
7. GARDEN
8. PINECONES
9. BUNNY
10. JESUS
11. MAMA
12. GINNY
13. TINA
14. BEV
15. RABBIT
16. GOD
17. SUNDAY
18. CHRIST
19. CHLOÉ



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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