



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF OCTOBRE-NOVEMBRE 1989

LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE

EDITOR-Dick Bernard

VOL. 11 NO. 2

CO-EDITOR-Jerry Forchette

DANS LE JARDIN
By John England

Emile Joseph England had a thumb that was the envy of every Irishman in Rice County. It was green-kelly green. This stout, ruddy-faced Canadian could make just about anything grow. He adored gardening in the same manner that Romeo loved Juliet. And Joe's garden received as much attention as a kid on a crying jag.

Large, by local standards, papère's garden covered ninety-nine percent of the back yard at 722 Francis Street. It was without a doubt a spectacle for the eye to behold. Indeed, it was one of the seven wonders of Faribault's Frogtown neighborhood; a multi-ethnic area of good solid working cliffs like grandpa and Nick Mertes, his neighbor. Well Nick the Luxenbourger, had an even bigger garden on his vacant lot

between their houses. It was bad enough that Mertes' kid called Grandma a fat old bag; but to outdo Joe on a garden was inviting a border conflict of great proportions. He was as green as his thumb with envy.

The border conflict came to a screeching halt when Northern States Power, grandpa's employer, for forty years, offered garden space to their employees on land near their substations. Joe got a gigantic plot near the Stroight River that put Nick Mertes to shame. The smell of victory was as sweet as the dew on squash blossoms.

Now, mes amis, this garden could compete with a farmer's market in regard to the variety of vegetables. Included in the fertile acreage were swiss chard, yellow peas for soup (green for those foolish enough to eat them), egg plant for M. le Curé Domestici, and even a hardy variety of peanuts. Grandpa raised the eggplant as a peace offering to M.le Curé because he teased and tormented the man to the point of raising his blood pressure to a reading we usually associate with earthquakes and the Richter Scale.

I asked my aunt the reason for grandpa's steadfast devotion to the gardens. It seems that grandma was allergic to all sorts of plants, so when she'd go on a nagging binge, Joe would bail out the back door, get on the working end of the hoe, and enjoy some solitude. Grandma didn't dare follow him because she'd be too close to those nasty legumes that fired up her allergies!

There is a bit of genius in every French-Canadian, wouldn't you agree?

hockey Did you know?

In the old language called Middle French, a shepherd's crook was called hoquet. That word looks like our word hockey from this week's lesson. Can you guess how hockey might have come from hoquet?

journey Did you know?

The Old French word jour meant daily. Today, our word journey means a course of travel from one place to another. Can you imagine a connection between the Old French word and our word? Can you take it a step further and connect jour with our word journal?

TRY YOUR FRENCH, FIRST

FROM THE EDITOR: The below letter and accompanying commentary about the Ft. Michilimackinac Flag is self-explanatory.

Elsewhere in this issue we have included the translation of the letter. Try your hand at the French, first.

GOOD LUCK!

September 15, 1989

Dear Dick,

Enclosed for the Chez Nous is an explanation of the white flag on Fort Michilimackinac (the April photograph in the 1990 calendar). (Ed. see accompanying article in French with translation in English)...Some people do not understand why it is white. Someone told me "I thought the three gold fleur de lys had fallen from the flag." Someone else asked if it was the day the English came!

The text from Quebec is in French, but French is easy enough to read for English speakers. Sixty percent of the English language vocabulary came from the French language! - Compliments of William the Conqueror and the Plantagenets.

Also, I read in Chez Nous that there are fifty members in the Range Chapter, I wish to let your members know that for a minimum order of fifty calendars, the price per calendar is \$3.75, a savings of \$1.25 to \$2.25 per calendar. Thanks again for the publicity. It is very much appreciated.

Marie-Reine Mikesell
1155 E. 56th Street
Chicago, IL 60637

EXPLICATION DU DRAPEAU BLANC SUR LE FORT MICHILIMACKINAC

Il n'y avait rien de tel qu'un drapeau national dans la France de l'Ancien régime. Le souverain déployait des étendards hérités de ses prédécesseurs et ses successeurs, à leur tour, en arboraient d'autres à leurs propres couleurs.

Toutefois, on remarque tout au long des siècles de la monarchie, que les couleurs dominantes flottant aux armées furent toujours le bleu, le blanc et le rouge, depuis la célèbre chape de saint Martin de Tours (bleue), en passant par la bannière de Char-

lemagne et l'oriflamme de Saint-Denis (toutes deux rouges) et l'étendard de Jeanne d'Arc (blanc).

L'enseigne rouge à croix blanche devint le drapeau du régiment de Picardie, le premier créé en 1557.

La croix blanche, quant à elle, fut attribué aux drapeaux de tous les régiments de l'infanterie qui la gardèrent jusqu'en 1792. Ceux-ci avaient chacun deux drapeaux (1643). La première compagnie ou compagnie colonelle portait drapeau blanc, symbole de l'autorité du colonel général; les autres compagnies avaient les couleurs particulières du régiment. Or, Louis XIV étant resté seul chef de l'infanterie après avoir supprimé la charge de colonel général, le drapeau blanc dint l'apanage du roi. Avec la suppression de la personne du roi en 1793, la Convention créa le premier drapeau national (tricolore).

EN NOUVELLE-FRANCE

Sous les règnes de Louis XIV et de Louis XV particulièrement, dans toutes les colonies de l'Amérique française, le drapeau blanc et l'écu d'azur à trois fleurs de lys d'or sont les principaux emblèmes de la présence et de l'action du royaume de France. De l'Acadie à la Baie d'Hudson, de la vallée du Saint Laurent et des Grands lacs à la Louisiane, on les voit soit séparément, soit ensemble-l'écu figurant au centre du pavillon. Des centaines de documents l'attestent, depuis Verrazano (1524) et Cartier jusqu'en 1760.

Le pavillon blanc figure en effet sur les cartes de Verrazano. En octobre 1661, une ordonnance de Louis XIV prescrit le déploiement du pavillon blanc sur les vaisseaux de la marine royale. La flotte en certaines occasions sur les forts et même au centre des bourgades indiennes, auxquelles les explorateurs, dont La Verendrye, l'offrent en présent. Le chevalier de Beau-chêne, capitaine de flibustiers né à Montréal en 1686, raconte que mis aux fers avec son équipage en Jamaïque, le gouverneur de l'île anglaise lui offre de changer d'allégeance: "Nous lui répondimes tous que nous étions nés sous le pavillon blanc et que nous voulions y mourir".

Tiré de: *Le drapeau québécois*, Collection
Connaissance du Québec, Ministère des
Communications, Québec, 1978.

CHAUTAUQUA - 1989
by Pat Poirier Ciochetto

The weekend of August 25/26, 1989 was a memorable one! I had the privilege of being invited by Dr. Virgil Benoit, to participate in the 1989 Chautauqua at Old Crossing and Treaty Park at Huot, Minnesota near Red Lake Falls.

The Chautauqua was a reenactment of events in the development of the upper Red River Valley. Local people researched the lives of the early settlers of the area, and portrayed these colorful characters throughout the weekend. The hours of study and the amount of dedication which went into this event were truly phenomenal. Each presentation was a piece of living history, interspersed with music, singing, dancing, demonstrations of spinning, tating, basketweaving and countless other arts and crafts of the pioneers.

Covered wagons and oxcarts rolled along the lovely riverbank, voyageurs, michifs and coureurs de bois gathered by the campfires along the river under the huge elms and elders.

The climax of the weekend took place on Saturday evening, when Virgil Benoit was made a Knight of the Order of "les palmes academiques" of France, and was awarded their medal of honor by the cultural attache of France. The decoration was first established in 1808 and became an Order in 1955. The medal is two palm fronds suspended from a violet ribbon, and is awarded to writers, artists, teachers etc., for extraordinary achievement in their field. **CONGRATULATIONS, SIR VIRGIL!**

If I could describe the total event in one word, I would choose the word love. It was prepared with love, it was presented with love, and I think that every person present during the whole weekend felt some measure of that love!

I felt I had come home!

SPEAKING OF FRENCH

"What do those funny accent marks on some French letters mean?"

Answer from Colette Saidane of Alliance Francaise, St. Paul MN:

"We have mainly three types of accents on the letter "E" which modify the sound of the letter which is otherwise mute except in front of a double consonant such as in

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As part of the centennial commemoration, the Herald is printing significant events from North Dakota's history. Here are highlights from September 28:

■ In 1797, Canadian fur trader Charles Jean Baptiste Chaboillez began construction of a trading post in Pembina, the third such post to be built at the junction of the Pembina and Red rivers.

from the 9/28/89 Grand Forks Herald (N.D.)
Keep your eyes open for bits like this, and send on to Chez Nous. Our next deadline is November 18. To Jerry Forchette, 4655 University Ave NE Minneapolis 55421 or Dick Bernard, 2014 1st Ave #6 Hibbing MN 55746.

my first name, Colette. (The first /E/ is pronounced like the /E/ in "bed", but the last is mute.

The three accent marks are the following:
/é/ is pronounced like the English /a/,
/è/ and /ê/ are pronounced like the /e/ in bed,
/ç/ transforms the sound /k/ of a normal /c/ into a SS sound."

DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS FOR COLETTE?
Let us know.

The last (hopefully) words ON PEAS and PEA SOUP!!!!

LETTERS-LETTERS-LETTERS

Dick,

I got a bang out of your editorial in the last Chez Nous. I had no idea that pea soup would arouse so much debate. Naturally, being somewhat tenacious, I would rather kiss the Queen of England than to use green peas in soup.

A friend of mine, Bill Oldenkamp, had no idea that the French-Canadian used yellow peas in soup. He is of Dutch descent, and told me that his grandfather brought yellow peas from Holland for use in soup. I had no idea that the Hollanders had an affection for pea soup. Bill also maintains that the yellow peas have a far superior flavor over the green. The man who said that the French and the Dutch don't amount to much was obviously a chronic liar!

Sincerely,

John England

(If this pea soup thing comes to a vote, I am with you John, not only do yellow peas have a superior flavor it is a completely different flavor. Soup made with green peas tastes as tho you just opened a can of Jolly Green Giant peas, tasteless. (Jerry F.)

RECETTE

by Pat Ciochetto

JOHNNYCAKE

1 C. cornmeal
1 C. flour
1/4 C. sugar
4 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1 egg
1 C. milk
1/4 C. soft shortening or oil

Sift cornmeal, sugar, flour, baking powder and salt, add egg, milk and shortening. Beat til smooth.

Bake 425 degrees, 20-25 Min. in greased 8 inch square pan or 12 muffin tin.

HAVE YOU HEARD THIS OLD SAYING?

"Pea soup and johnny cake
make a Frenchman's
belly ache!"

YELLOW PEAS, GREEN PEAS

by Pat Ciochetto

Yellow Peas, Green Peas
Mellow Peas, mean peas
Whole peas, split peas
Big, peas, small peas
In other words, all peas!

Peas brother!

Having cut my teeth, so to speak on pea soup and johnny cake, and having sampled a goodly number of varieties through the years, I am willing to wager that a blindfolded French Canadian could not tell the difference between green pea soup and yellow pea soup in a million slurps!.

Every cook and chef has his or her preferences. Some swear that a ham bone is essential, others claim that salt pork is a must ! Does one add a couple cloves or will a pinch do in a pinch. And I say poppycock and balderdash! You make do with what is on hand, and like any "bonne maitresse de maison", you come up with a gourmet dish every time.

Anyway, the original French settlers did eat other things besides peas and pig's feet. One would think that they never seen a cow or a chicken, let alone some exotic fish, but that is not the case. If they were anything, the French-Canadians were inventive in cookery, and they managed to develop superb dishes from what was available.

Since game was plentiful, they used it well and with variety. Fish was a favorite, and I remember grandmother's salmon pie with delight. I still make it, but unfortunately I can't get fresh salmon, so I have to use the canned variety. Since fresh fruit was not to be had in the wintertime, they made pies with dried fruit, such as "tarte a la ferlouche", raisin pie. (I have seen it spelled 'farlouche', also. I don't know which is right, Experts?)

ED. NOTE: I will cast my vote with Pat Ciochetto. I can recall no debate about yellow or green peas - pea soup was. . . pea soup! Dare I say we might be entering a little class "war" here? Like for another ethnic group I know, who were divided into "lace curtain" and "shanty"? JUST KIDDING. The debate has been entertaining. Next time I'll notice.

Mashed potatoes
1 or 2 cans salmon
Chopped onion
parsley
Salt and pepper
Butter

This can be served
with white sauce
or with grated
cheese.

Make pie crust, fill with salmon and potatoes, cover with crust and bake until top is beginning to brown.

If you wish to use as a casserole, butter a deep dish, put in the salmon, mashed and add a can of green peas or a can of creamed corn, cover with mashed potatoes and onions and bake at 400 degrees for 25-30 min. or until top is brown.

Tarte a la Ferlouché

2 cup seedless raisins
2 cup boiling water
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 teas. salt
2 tbl. cornstarch
1/3 cup orange juice
1 tbl. grated orange rind
1 tbl. butter

Wash and drain raisins. Place in saucepan with boiling water, sugar and salt and heat to boiling. Mix cornstarch with orange juice, stir into raisins, cook and stir til thick and smooth. Remove from heat and add lemon juice, orange rind and butter. Stir well and fill pie and bake.

Have fun.

Ref: Nouvelles Villes Jumelles, August 1989

TRANSLATION OF
LES COULEURS DE LA FRANCE (from page two)
MERCi to Pat Ciochetto, Side Lake MN

Note from Pat: "Voici the translation. As usual you get more than you bargained for. Notice how many words the French have for "flag" - par. 1 "drapeau" "e'tandard", "couleurs", par. 2 "banniere", "oriflamme". par. 3 "ensiegne", par. 5 "pavillon"!

Prior to the French Revolution, France had no national flag. The sovereign used symbols inherited from his predecessors, and his successors flew colors of their own.

continued on page six

Recently the Canadian Consulate in Minneapolis sent me an issue of Macleans for which I am very grateful. Maclean's is the Canadian equivalent of Time or Newsweek. The whole issue was dedicated to Canada Day (July 1) and our Fourth of July observing the two nations on their holidays, by comparing and contrasting them.

One point that emerges very strongly in the magazine is American ignorance about Canada's politics, history, and sentiments toward it's big southern neighbor.

Canadians have a fear of being swallowed up by the United States, if not politically, then economically and to a large extent culturally. Canadians recall that the last foreign government to invade Canada was the United States during the war of 1812. Now the invasion continues in the form of American dollars flowing north to buy up Canada's natural resources, television, and radio waves that deluge southern Canada with a mish-mash of American culture, and now air pollution floating northeastward on the winds.

Most Americans respond with a mixture of ignorance and apathy. We seem too preoccupied in our own national affairs to give foreign nations our attention, even if it's our closest neighbor. A good example is the Free Trade Agreement. This agreement between the U.S. and Canada would lower all tariffs and trade restrictions between two nations. While the Free Trade Agreement aroused a national debate in Canada, Americans barely noticed the trade negotiations.

As Americans with a great interest in French Canada, we must make the effort to be aware of Canada's problems and concerns. Reading Canadian publications like Macleans or the Winnipeg newspaper which are both available at the St. Paul and Minneapolis downtown libraries (or L'Actualité or LeDevoir of Montreal at the University of Minnesota library) can help keep us in touch with the situation in Canada and make us a better neighbor.

by Jim Chouanard

Ref: Nouvelles Villes Jumelles, August, 1989

HAVE YOU ASKED YOUR FRIEND TO JOIN LA SOCIETE? IT'S THE BEST DEAL IN TOWN. YOU ARE OUR MAIN MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE.

Nevertheless, throughout the pre-revolutionary period, we note that the predominant colors were always blue, white and red, representing the cloak of St. Martin of Tours (blue), Charlemagne's banner and that of St. Dennis (both red)* and the standard of St. Joan of Arc (white).

The red ensign with a white cross became the flag of the Picardy Regiment in 1557. It was the first one to be created.

The white cross was associated with the flags of all of the infantry regiments, who used it until 1792. Each of these regiments had two flags. The chief company used a white flag, which represented the authority of the colonel general; the other regiments had each their own colors. When Louis XIV abolished the post of colonel general and became commander in chief of the infantry, he assumed the white flag, which remained a symbol of the royal house thereafter. When the monarchy was abolished in 1793, the first national tricolor flag was created.

IN NEW FRANCE

During the reigns of Kings Louis XIV and XV, the principal emblem of French influence in the colonies was the presence of the white flag with blue shield and gold fleurs de lys (lily). The flag was seen from Acadia to Hudson Bay, from the valley of the St. Lawrence to the Great Lakes, and even in Louisiana, the blue shield centered on the white banner. Hundreds of documents attest to it -

since Verrazano and Cartier in 1529 up until 1760.

In fact, the white flag shown on Verrazano's maps

In fact, the white flag is shown on Verrazano's maps and charts. In October of 1661, an order from Louis XIV prohibited flying the white flag on ships of the royal navy, but it was flown on certain occasions over forts, and even at some Indian Villages, to whom some of the explorers gave it as a gift. (La Verendrye). The Chevalier (Knight) of Beauchene, a pirate captain born in Montreal in 1686, tells of having been hard pressed in Jamaica, when the governor of the English ruled Island offered him a change of allegiance, "We answered him that we had been born under the white flag, and it was our intention to die under it."

* - (translator's note): St. Dennis' flag, the oriflamme, was a rectangular banner with the right edge finished in points, like tongues of flame. It was adopted as the royal flag of the Kings of France between the XII and XV centuries.

FROM THE EDITOR. Now that the mystery of the flag is cleared up, to see the real thing you need either to go to Michilimackinac or purchase the 1990 calendar! See the order blank elsewhere for the 1990 edition, which again is a beautiful one!

THE 1990 EDITION OF THE CALENDAR "LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE / FRENCH IN AMERICA " IS NOW AVAILABLE !

13 photographs--12 in color, about 50 historical anniversaries, places and dates of national and international cultural meetings and, for the first time, great events in French America illustrate this well made and timely calendar. The last page offers a list of the schools in the United States that have Immersion programs in French.

PRICE 1990: \$6 each (postage included)
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(postage included)

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NEWSLETTER OF DECEMBRE-JANVIER 1989

LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE

EDITOR-Dick Bernard

VOL. 11 NO. 3

CO-EDITOR-Jerry Forchette

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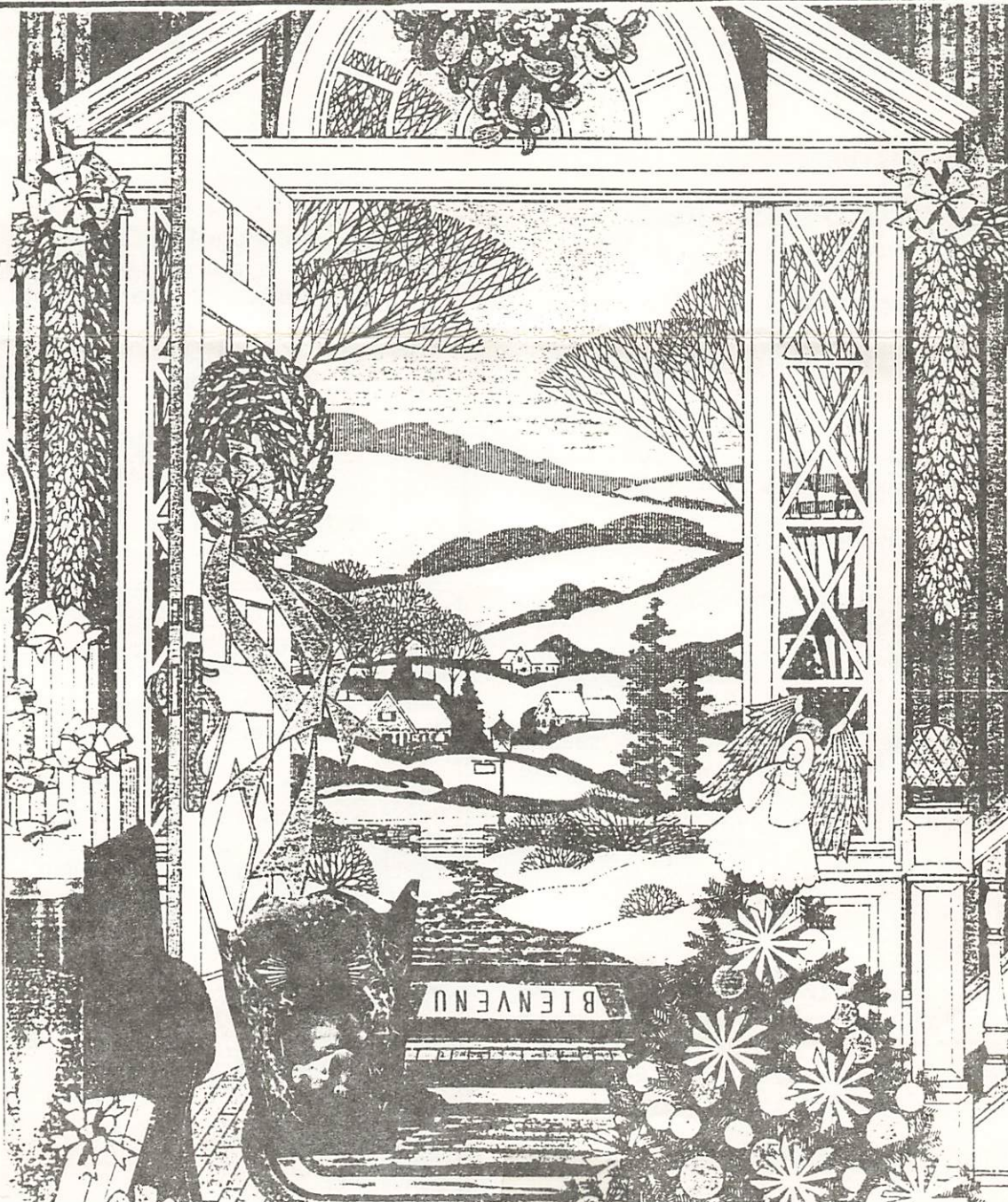
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NOEL

The answers to the below questions are found on page six of this newsletter. TRY YOUR FRENCH, FIRST.

VOIRE QUOTIENT CULTUREL FRANCOPHONE: NOËL

par Yvon Labbé avec l'assistance de la communautaire franco-américaine.

Direction: Rattacher chaque mot ou phrase, précédé d'un chiffre au mot ou phrase de votre choix précédé d'un lettre

1. venite adoremus
 - a. j'adore la vanité
 - b. ma mère adore la mousse
 - c. v'nez tout le monde, y est arrivé
2. regarde la crèche, maman
 - a. celui qui a été conçu sans péché
 - b. il y a de la salive sur le trottoir
 - c. se rapporte à la conception immatriculée
3. le borleau
 - a. ramasse toé les runneurs
 - b. se rapporte aux gorleaux
 - c. voiture dans laquelle voyageait le nouveau né
4. le bonhomme sept heures
 - a. il a la poche au dos
 - b. il est si fin lui, il est toujours à temps
 - c. il est agé de sept heures
5. on va revenir apres les Rois
 - a. à la fin décembre
 - b. on est pas si important qu'on pensait
 - c. à la fin de janvier
6. les Mages
 - a. ils étaient si fou qu'ils suivaient les étoiles
 - b. le boeuf, l'ane et la vache qui ont assisté à la naissance dans cet étable
 - c. hôtel de Bethléem qui avait "no vacancy" à sa porte
7. j'ai hâte d'avoir mes étrennes
 - a. j'ai envie d'aller à la toilette
 - b. résultats de neuvaines
 - c. j'ai hâte qu'y s'couchent
8. j'entends encore les gorleaux
 - a. souvenir nostalgique des Noëls d'antan
 - b. y a trop ramassé de patates
 - c. bruit d'hiver mystérieux
9. la bénédiction
 - a. se donne le soir de la Dindes-giving
 - b. je m'agenouille devant toi mon père qui est plus sage que moi
 - c. remède populaire contre les malédictionns
10. bonne et heureuse année
 - a. et la paradis à la fin de vos jours
 - b. et tout ce que vou désirez
 - c. et que bos rêves soient réalisés

L'HIVER, PARADIS DES CANADIENS

by John England

Winter is a season of many facets. It can be beautiful, rugged; and in many cases eternal.

It is a season of remembering and reflection. And for the French-Canadian, winter or l'hiver, is the tool that tempers him like fine steel. L'hiver is no season for sissies and whiners of any sort. These unfortunate souls deserve a warmer climate in preparation for their eternity. We who remain in the north like the ancient hiverants have already been through hell and our worries are over.

It is an historical rule of thumb that tough climates produce a hardy race of people. The lumberjack, à la Canadian was no exception to this. They worked all winter in the woods from day break to the sunset, ate like bears, and slept like babes from a hard days work.

My great grandfather, Georges England was, by

CONTINUED, page six

This issue of CHEZ NOUS consists entirely of contributions from folks like you. That is exactly the way we like the newsletter to be.

SHARE this issue with others. Reassure them that membership in La Societe is not restricted to those who can speak French. (You know that most of us cannot speak French!)

Most of all, send us YOUR reminiscence, your photo, the article you found, your idea. . . . NEXT DEADLINE: Feb. 1 To Dick Bernard, 2014 1st Ave #6 Hibbing MN 55746 or Jerry Forchette 4655 University Ave NE Minneapolis MN 55421.

MERCI BEAUCOUP.



MERRY CHRISTMAS

CHRISTMAS 1930
by Lowell Mercil, Mentor MN

The School Pageant

There was no question, Christmas was the greatest time of the year! It started at school. We went to The Little Brick School House that was located four miles east of Crookston on Highway Two. It was 1930. I was six years old and about the smallest runt in school. There were eight grades in the one room and about fifteen students, including my brother Jerry who was two years older than I. We had the prettiest teacher I had ever seen. Her name was Diana Dufault and I had a crush on her but there was no future for us

because, as a student teacher she would remain only a short time, and worse, she was my second cousin.

All the students were farm kids, just a few of them were of French descent, others had names like Strum, Benson and Bradley.

Many of the French who lived nearby were of the prior generation and too old to be going to school or they had left to find their fortune beyond the mountains in the Yakima Valley of Washington.

To set the mood for the coming of Christmas we had to have a pageant to show our families how smart we all were. The room was so small and the pot-bellied stove, wood box and cloak area took so much space that it is amazing that anyone other than the students could attend.

It sure was fun to trim the tree which must have been supplied by the teacher. (Evergreens are not indigenous to the area.)

The fragrance of the tree alone would have been sufficient to set the holiday mood. We made paper chains, bells, stars, santa clauses

ALL ABOUT CHRISTMAS, THANKSGIVING, AND FAMILY

Merci to Rose Van Hoorn of Yuma AZ

Dad worked at the Brunswick factory in Dubuque, Iowa. His job was a furniture refinisher for radio cabinets, that may have been the reason they moved from North Dakota to Iowa. Mother also wanted us to be able to go to a Catholic school, plus this, our home in North Dakota was two and a quarter miles from school, winters were tough, so Dad had to take the kids to school on a sled, across the fields.

We went back to Dakota during the depression, probably 1931. Brunswick had cut their staff and Dad was out of work. The city had part time work for family heads, but it wasn't steady work and Dad was very depressed. Mother again decided we'd go back on the farm, at least Dad would be busy and we could raise our own food.

The neighbors were kind, when Franklin D. Roosevelt said to destroy calves, lambs, etc. to bring prices up, they brought them and left them for Dad. We were never really sure who brought them, but it was an early Christmas!

reindeer, etc. by cutting from colored paper and pasting where needed (at home we used crayons and white paper.) We improvised costumes which would today be the envy of Hollywood designers and ingenuity was demonstrated in creating a stage area with sheet curtains.

The great night came and the show did go on. There were many candles on the tree which were lit during the performance. (I still sweat at the thought of what would have happened if the tree had caught fire in those tight quarters with only one exit.) The pageant was a great success and Christmas carols were sung by all.

Christmas Preparations.

The Christmas of 1930, for our family, was probably comparable to those of the earlier time for others. Because of our isolated location and economic level we were about twenty or thirty years behind the

(continued next page)

Christmas Preparations (continued)

times. We didn't have a car, electricity, indoor plumbing or toilet facilities. Papa farmed eighty acres and was never able to make it. Since he grew and butchered cattle, pigs and poultry and Mama preserved the meat and vegetables from the garden and we all gathered wild berries and honey we never went hungry. Poor Papa had the fortune of the biblical character Job. First came the hail, then the depression, then the drought, then the grasshoppers, then no money to buy seeds. Since he did not believe in extended credit, Papa later sold the farm before foreclosure. He retained his great reputation as an honest gentleman and always held his head high.

Preparations for Christmas had begun right after Thanksgiving. Mama made mincemeat, cooked donuts and baked cookies. We were especially fond of the "rocks", oatmeal and raisins, but decorating the lemon cookies was much more fun. All the cooking was done on the wood range. One of the Sundays had been set aside to make divinity, fudge and to pull taffy. What a sticky mess! And a number of fights broke out to determine who would get to lick which pan. Our family was like two families. Nora, Al and Lorraine were the older kids and Jerry, myself and Ray were the younger. I was in the middle of the second family and had a persecution complex: Jerry could get by whopping me but when I tried to get even by taking it out on Ray I got cuffed. It wasn't fair! The goodies were stored in that great outdoor freezer along with the boudin (blood sausage) and tete-a-framage (head cheese).

Santa Claus Day

The Saturday before Christmas was really a day to look forward to, as that was the day that Santa Claus and his Eskimo helpers came to Crookston - sometimes he even had reindeer. Wow! We could see the parade, sleigh and all, and then go to the Grand Theatre and see those great cartoons. That was not all! We would get a bag of that delicious Widmen hard candy, a bag of nuts and caramelled apples. Those were real treats for us as we very seldom had store bought goodies. One can't imagine the effect of about five hundred kids screaming and yelling when Santa showed up.

For our family the trip was a major expedition since our transportation was limited to Papa's huge bobsled which was generally used for such farm work as haul-

ing wood and manure. Of course it had to be cleaned thoroughly before we used it and when the temperature is below freezing you can't smell much anyway. Funny, when you lived on a farm the pungent aroma of manure was not offensive. In fact in later years the odor, when entering a stable or barn during cold weather, always caused a flashback to those early days.

Just preparing for the four mile trip was a project. It was necessary to harness, hitchup and put the horse blankets and sleigh bells on Baldy and old Maude, put the old bear rug and heavy blankets in the sleigh, remove the hot bricks from the stove and place them in the black felt covered foot warmer, and bundle-up as warm as we could with our buckle overshoes and Mama-made wool socks, toques, scarves and overcoats.

On this, the 1930 Santa day, we had to take special care because there was a stiff wind and the temperature was well below zero. The snow really crunched beneath our overshoes and under the runners of the bobsled. The sound of the sleigh bells seemed to reverberate over the frozen snow. The yellowish sun-dogs contrasted with the blue tint of the cold, cold snow. We rode on the snow packed highway or on the shoulder when cars passed us. We generally kept our heads under the blankets not only because of the cold, but because we were embarrassed. All our sophisticated friends and neighbors had automobiles and here we were riding in an old sleigh. Now we realize that we were the fortunate ones.

The first thing we did after arriving in Crookston was to go to St. Anns church to get clean for the holidays. I dreaded going to confession but finally got up the nerve to go stand in line and kept getting closer and closer to that little room. I guess I thought that there was a guillotine in there. By the time I had memorized what I was going to say, used all my fingers to count the number of horrible deeds, tried to shut my ears when the mumbling got too loud, heard the inner panel slide and the release door open I realized that my number was up. It was my turn and I entered the inner sanctum. The panel slid open and I realized I had drawn Father DuFault. He looked right at me through the screen and said in his strong French accent "Lowell, what did you do this time?" I was devastated! He had blown my anonymity. My mind went blank but somehow with the help of my fingers I managed to make some utterances and reeled off my solemn act of contrition. What a relief to

(continued next page)

Santa Claus Day (continued)

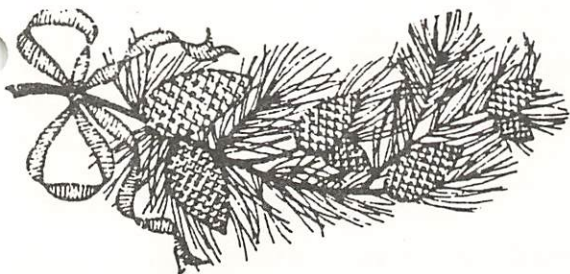
get out of there! But I did feel better! I went up front by the empty creche and fervently said my three Our Fathers and three Hail Marys - repeating those parts when my mind would wander. I had gotten off easy! I never could figure out whether I felt better because I was at peace or because I had survived the trying ordeal.

We went to the theater for one of the thrills of our life. After seeing Santa Claus we walked the two blocks to grandpa Sauve's house and just about froze while waiting on the screened in porch. Anyone from a climate like Minnesota will remember the tingling ears and fingers and beating the feet together or against some object to try and warm them. We waited on the porch. Finally, our old maid Aunt Bertha came and we went into the hot air heated house and warmed up for the trip home. Whenever my fingers get white because of poor circulation I blame it onto the many times I froze my fingers when I was young.

We had a great trip back but had all those hard decisions to make as to which goodies we should stuff ourselves with on the way home and which to keep to savor later.

Christmas Eve

Although we thought it would never come, Christmas eve finally arrived. The stove lids were removed and pails of water were placed directly over the flames. The copper boiler was brought in from the cold entryway and Mama's homemade soap was read-



ied for use - not the strong type which could clean anything but the milder one that didn't burn. Since I was in the middle of the three youngest boys, I always was the second to use the water no matter if we went from youngest to oldest, or oldest to youngest. We hauled the water up the hill from the well, so were conservation minded and didn't mind three taking their bath in the same water. We had our bath where it was warm next to the kitchen stove and we tried to stay in the center so as not to touch the cold rim. At other times the water was heated in the boiler but we still had to keep in the center to avoid burning ourselves.

Christmas Eve was the time for Santa Claus to come to our house. He came after we had gone to bed, set up and decorated the tree, stuffed our socks which had been hung by the pot-bellied stove, left christmas candy and nuts around and some presents. Most of the presents were home-made such as knit stockings, mitts, wood rocking horse for the youngest, etc. The tree usually came from Mr. Verity who now lived in Blackduck but had once worked with Papa in the sawmill and had been a cheese maker in Gentilly. They said he was a half-breed. I don't know, but I do know that he had a powerful distinct odor because of the snuff he chewed, and that he was a kind man. One year he was unable to get a tree to us so a deciduous tree was brought in from the woods and trimmed with bows, popcorn strings, etc.

I still had faith in Santa Claus - but just barely. Some of the older kids at school had scoffed at my belief but it wasn't going to completely spoil my Christmas. I would put it off and think that question out later in the spring when the truth wouldn't hurt so much. Maybe I did think of it some as I tossed and turned till about three in the morning, or was it just the expectation?

Christmas Morning

When I awoke at the sound of sleigh bells fading out the kitchen door I was plenty excited. We ran down the stairs and found that, sure enough, Santa Claus had been there. In addition to the tree and the usual goodies, he left me a little blue knife which was not only a treasure but, to me, a sign of coming of age. Think of it! My own knife. Well, unfortunately my joy was not to last long. In all the confusion, I lost it that same morning. It was not found until spring when the thirty gallon crock that sat behind the kitchen stove was moved for spring cleaning.

There was a large box of apples, individually wrapped in light brown tissue paper, that we received from uncle Onesime Mercil who ran a grocery store. Did they ever smell good! We had received fifteen dollars, an enormous sum, from our uncle Clem Sauve of Yakima. The money was used to purchase a second hand Victor phonograph and, since we didn't have a radio, was our introduction to the modern age of luxury entertainment. As I recall this was one of the few times we could eat candy and nuts without having them divvied out to us on an individual basis. We did manage enough to spoil our special breakfast.

L'HIVER, from page two

choice, a member of the lumber trades fraternity. He was born in Saint Ursula, Quebec and raised in Saint Gabriel de Broudon, along the Mosking-Onge River. And he cut alot of wood there and in the States. My dad said that his pépère was six feet tall and straight as an arrow. Census records in Rice County, Minnesota indicate that the man

AFTER MASS IN A FRENCH-CANADIAN VILLAGE

Merci to Lorraine DeMillo of Hibbing, MN
Article from the Fergus Falls, MN Daily Journal - November 13, 1883

After Mass we gathered again in groups in front of the church. The parents are now triumphant in the strength of their opposition to emigration and the young people were quite ashamed and subdued. But the Sunday business was not done. The town-crier gathered everybody about him while he made his weekly announcements. He is still the county newspaper of Canada. But, so far from being a literary emporium, he frequently cannot read or write. He has however, sufficient tongue, memory and assurance to deliver quite a column of public and private matter. He is often unwittingly comical, his pompous air being a ludicrous contrast to the simple facts he has to tell, and the illiterate blunders of his speech. First come the official announcements, legal advertisements, Sheriff's sales, police regulations, roadmaster's notices, new laws, etc.; then private announcements are cried out - auctions, things lost and found, opening of new stores, new professional offices etc. Sometimes he sells a pig or a calf "for the Infant Jesus," the product of the sale being given to a collection for the poor. Not long ago horse races were advertised by him to take place on the road right after Mass. The crier this day closed his list by announcing that the parish had an insurance policy to pay to one of it's citizens. It seems that a parish generally insures itself. When anyone loses his buildings by fire, someone solicits subscriptions to restore them. Each neighbor hauls a stick or two; the people ask permission of the priest to work on Sunday and after Mass they assemble and erect the building. If the loser is very poor, carpenters are hired to finish the work for him. A portion of the congregation went away up the northern mountain that day, and spent the afternoon raising a log house and barn. All sorts of public assemblies are held in front of the church after Mass. Indeed, Sunday is the most animated day of the week in social, industrial and political matters as well as religious.

was illiterate, but dad remembers him writing to his brothers in Quebec. He spoke English quite well, but with the Canadian accent of somebody weaned on French. He was the only son of Guillaume England and Marie Belland emigrate.

Georges came to the states with a friend from St. Gabriel called Charles Boucher, another boomer in the lumber industry. They often worked partners in camps in Wisconsin and in the upper peninsula of Michigan back in the days when men were men and the only good cooks in the camps were French-Canadian.

Boucher was anything but the straight man of this team. In fact many of the French around Faribault made up Charlie Boucher stories because he was a natural comic. One old pea soup noted that Boucher could even get a tombstone to smile. And, for that matter, he made old Georges grin from ear to ear too.

On one occasion, Georges and Charlie were working a camp outside of the infamous Hurley, Wisconsin a place filled with liquor laden saloons and other naughty occasions of sin too numerous to elaborate upon. And when payday rolled around, the jacks, including the England and Boucher partners made a hasty trip to Hurley to wet the parched throats. As the evening wore on Georges turned towards Charlie to ask him if he'd like another belt of Hurley's finest whiskey, but much to his surprise, Charlie was gone. Georges paid the tab and went out into the dark, snowy night looking for his pal and found him deep in the woods. He asked Boucher, "what in hell are you doing out here?" "Well, mon amie," answered Charlie, "I went out for some air, and I got myself lost."

And Georges asked, "what did you do then"?

I started to beller said Boucher, like an old bull moose. I said "one big Frenchmans lost in the wood and the owl up in the tree, he said who, who. So, I tol' 'im - Charlie Boucher from Faribault."

And Georges told charlie he should never ask an owl for help in the woods again. They have a poor sense of direction!

ANSWERS:

- (1) C, (2) A, (3) A, (4) A, (5) C,
(6) A, (7) C, (8) A, (9) B, (10) ABC

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NEWSLETTER OF FEVRIER-MARS

1990

LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE-FRANÇAISE

EDITOR-Dick Bernard

VOL. 11 NO. 4

CO-EDITOR-Jerry Forchette

LIFE ON THE FRONTIER FOR A MISSIONARY BISHOP

While the Church in the United States would remain strongly identified with the cities of the east, many Catholics headed west to take on the arduous life of the farmer. Missionaries would follow, as well as bishops. The westward movement of the Church in America can be traced on a map through the growing number of new dioceses-through Ohio, Indiana, Missouri and on to Iowa; up north through St. Paul, St. Cloud and Duluth.

The early bishops in these dioceses were as sturdy as the farmers they followed. They were hard-nosed missionaries who would become familiar with the land and rough work. In the first half of the 19th century, many were Frenchmen uprooted by the French Revolution, who came to America to convert the "noble savages" and ended up ministering to Irish and German farmers.

Jean Loras, the first bishop of Dubuque, was born in Lyon, France, in 1792. From an industrious family of good means, his father suffered the fate of many loyal Catholics in those turbulent times by being guillotined during the French Revolution. In the seminary Loras became a close friend of Jean Vianney, whom the world would come to know as the "Curé of Ars." Ordained in 1815 from the Archdiocese of Lyon, he was lured to America in 1829.

Father Joseph Cretin, who became Bishop Loras' vicar general would eventually become the first bishop of St. Paul, MN., described the tribulations shared by so many of these missionaries who had been born to a more



Bishop Joseph Cretin

comfortable way of life. Father Marvin O'Connell's brilliant biography of John Ireland quotes Father Cretin:

"In the summer (Father Cretin) walked in perpetual fear of rattlesnakes particularly near the rivers...where at every step one hears the rattling of the tail of this frightful lizard and even worse mosquitoes, myriads of them maddening the horses and blackening the sky. I am devoured by them he said, without having a moment's rest day or night, I wear silk gloves, I put on my boots, I cover my face with gauze to avoid the sting of this troublesome insect, but during Mass it settles on my crown, which is then defenseless and my head swells immediately half an inch at least for half of the day."

see BISHOP p. 2

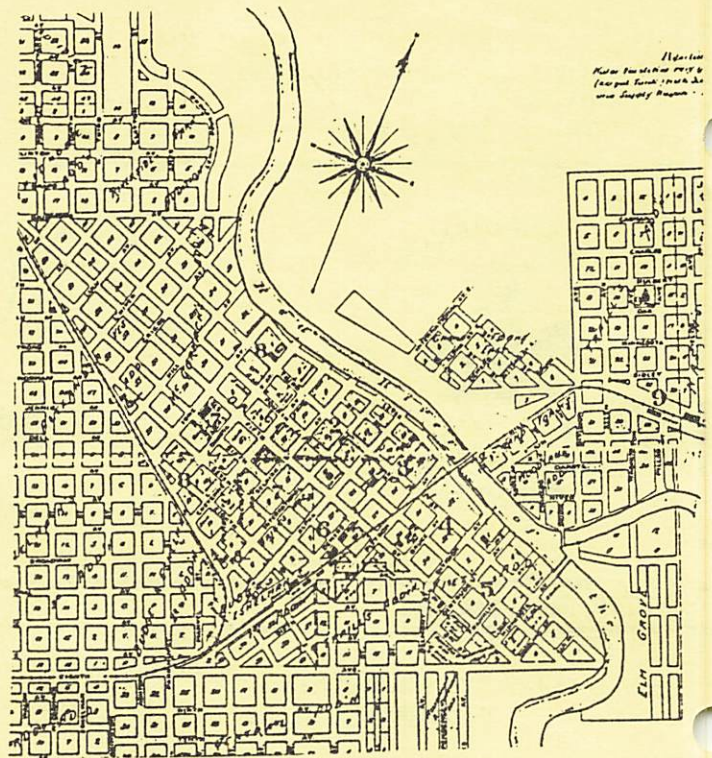
MERCI TO LORIA COLLETTE KELLY
OF EAST GRAND FORKS, MN.

Regarding your request for a little newsy item - I do have a bit of interesting information that I would like to share.

According to a local historian, the first improvement built within the now city limits of Grand Forks, N.D. was a shack used by two pony express riders. It was built along the Red River about 1869. One of these riders was my Dad's great uncle, Augustus Huard. We don't know exactly how it came about but he actually was called Gus Loon - perhaps in trying to say his name - Huard - it sounded like "loon". In 1950 my dad, Ernest Collette developed a tract of land in the south end of Grand Forks and eventually built a home on a parcel of that land. When the abstract was examined there was Gus' name as the original landowner. My mother used to say whenever the property presented a problem, Gus was exerting his ownership.

Ed. Note: Grand Forks was first recognized by French fur traders who traveled by canoe up and down the Red River of the North and the Red Lake River. The city is at the fork of these two rivers, and was named La Grandes Fourches by the French. The first permanent settlement was established at Grand Forks in 1869. In 1880 the railroad from Minneapolis-St Paul reached Grand Forks and the town was permanently established.

Ed. Note: after receiving the above letter we received the Winter 1989 issue of Minnesota History, published by the Minnesota Historical Society. Therein was an interesting article by Stephen Sylvester entitled "Avenues for Ladies Only, The Soiled Doves of East Grand Forks, 1887-1915." Early in this article Sylvester refers to Gustav Loon and Nicholas Hoffman who were hired to help carry the mail along the lonely and oftentimes dangerous trail to Ft. Garry (present day Winnipeg). How ironic! Our cousin, Augustus Huard has now become a Scandinavian!!! This vignette reminds us to not take anything for granted in researching our own ancestors. What we thought makes sense, might not.



Map of portion of Grand Forks-East Grand Forks (N.D.-MN) as the town appeared in 1884. Merci to Dr. Virgil Benoit

BISHOP contd from page one

Nothing could have prepared one born and raised in France for the long Midwestern winters of numbing cold, impassable heaps of snow and, with the Mississippi frozen solid for five months, even more pronounced isolation and loneliness. Travel attempted during the winter was particularly hazardous. On one occasion a priest riding cross country with Cretin fell and broke his arm while his horse shied on the slippery ground; with no medical help available for scores of miles in every direction, Cretin had to set the bone, and it took him five attempts before he succeeded, while the injured man lay in a snowbank, shrieking with pain. (John Ireland, Minnesota Historical Society Press, St. Paul, MN). Every missionary bishop had a similar story to tell.-Robert P Lockwood

Ref: Our Sunday Visitor
Nov. 12, 1989

Vernon Sell of Madison, Wisconsin is of French-Canadian ancestry and poses the following question:

"Why have the French never established an ethnic identity such as the Norwegian, Irish, German, Etc?"

Send your opinion or any other article, etc, to Dick Bernard, 2014 First Ave. #6, Hibbing, MN 55746 or to Jerry Forchette, 4655 University Ave. N.E., Minneapolis, MN 55421. Chez Nous is published every two months. Next deadline: April 1, 1990.

Reader?

Daniel Gresolon, Sieur duLuht

French explorer lays path of peace for the Northland

STARTING IN 1665, two Jesuit missionaries carried the Gospel as far west as the mouth of the Gichigamisibing (St. Louis River). They were Claude Allouez (1622-1689) and Jacques Marquette (1637-1675). Their mission, La Pointe du Saint Esprit, stood near Bono Creek (between present Ashland and Washburn, Wisconsin). In 1671, warfare between the Hurons, Ottawa and Dakota closed the mission. From then, no clergyman would preach the Gospel around Lake Superior until the coming in 1835 of Father Frederic Baraga, later the first bishop of Marquette, Michigan.

However, in 1679 a doughty Frenchman, in his own way, brought the Good News to the Head of the Lake. He was Daniel Gresolon, Sieur duLuht (we spell it "Duluth"). He came as an explorer, and left as a peacemaker.

Duluth was born into a wealthy merchant family at Saint-Germain-en-Lay in 1639. Like other men of his class, he chose the military for his career. As a "*Gendarme de la Garde du Roi*" he could well have followed a career among the courtiers of Louis XIV. But frontier life attracted him, and we find him in Montreal in 1672, where he made his first Holy Communion.

Many people in New France speculated about a "Northwest Passage" that was supposed to lead to the riches of the East. Duluth wanted to find it. Its discovery would bring great benefit to his nation, and fame if not fortune to himself.

One big problem stood in his way. Warfare among the various tribes threatened to block, if not wipe out, any party of European explorers that attempted to cross from the territory of one Indian nation into that of its enemy.

Fortunately for Duluth, this same problem faced the French fur traders. Although the regions northwest of Lake Superior swarmed with beaver, neither the Dakota nor the Ojibwe were willing to hunt them for fear of each other. When these tribes did hunt, they were more willing to do business with the Hudson's Bay Company, (British rivals of France) because its northern routes presented less danger of ambush.

With Duluth died one of the most colorful eras in the exploration of New France.

Even his contemporaries remembered him as an exceptional explorer and soldier.

Duluth's vocation emerged from the convergence of these two interests: finding the Northwest Passage required that he become a peacemaker.

In the fall of 1678, Duluth set out to make peace among the tribes, and thus reopen the traditional trade route connecting the fur company beyond Lake Superior with Montreal. While wintering at the Bawiting (Sault Ste. Marie), he revealed his plans in a letter to Governor Frontenac in Quebec.

He would divide his expedition into two groups. His group would head west to meet the Dakota. Meanwhile, the other group "would leave for the North to tell the Assiniboels and other Nations in that area that the French had gone to the Nadouesioux to make peace, and that they should therefore beware what they did, for killing any Nadouesioux would be tantamount to killing us."



This statue of Daniel Gresolon, Sieur duLuht, by sculptor Jacques Lipchitz, is located at the University of Minnesota. Duluth.

Duluth would prevent the Dakota from attacking the other tribes "for the same reason." He added good news from his scouts: "The Ojibwe and the Nadouesioux agreed to meet." Duluth vowed to "march day and night" on his mission.

As soon as the ice was out, Duluth proceeded west along the south shore of Gichigaming (Lake Superior) until he arrived at the tip of the Keweenaw. From here a day's paddle carried him to Gichiminising (Isle Royale), with another day to the north shore and its protection from the prevailing wind.

He and his party landed at Anigamisig (Little Portage on Park Point in present-day Duluth) toward the end of June, 1679. True to his plan for peace among the tribes, he marched ninety miles southwest into the heart of Dakota country. His route probably took him over the seven-mile portage of the St. Louis River and through the river systems leading into Gichimitawango Sagaigan (Big Sandy Lake) and the waterway and portages linking this with Missisagaigan (Mille Lacs Lake).

Here, in the Dakota village of Izatys, on July 2, 1679, Duluth planted the standard of Louis XIV.

After exploring east of the Missisibing (Mississippi), he returned to Nahgahchiwanong (Fond du Lac) for the historic meeting of the Nations. It took place among the representatives of sixteen tribes on September 15, 1679.

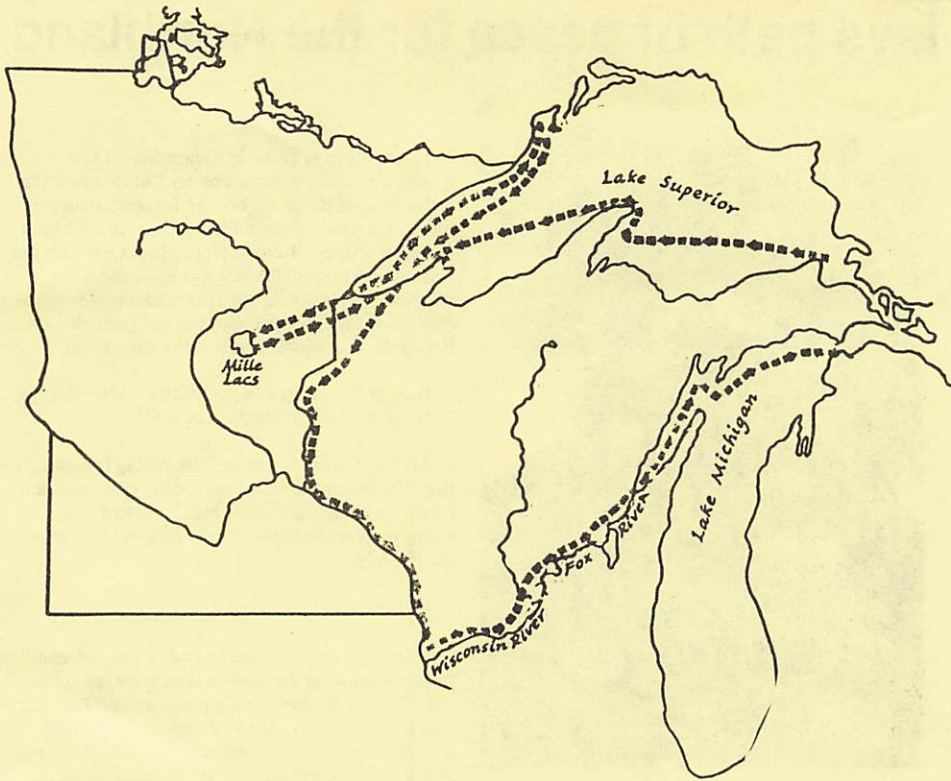
Here is this event in his own words:

...Having arranged for the Asseniboins as well as all the other nations of the North to meet at the head of Lake Superior in order to make peace with the Dakotas, their common enemy, they all did come, and I had the good fortune of gaining their esteem and friendship; and, so that peace among them would last longer, I thought I could not cement it better than by arranging reciprocal marriages between the nations, which I could not accomplish without much expense. The following winter, I had them get together in the woods, where I was staying, so that they could hunt and feast together, and thus establish closer bonds of friendship.

Duluth also took other measures to foster peace. His canoes rode deep in the water with the presents that he brought: rifles, powder, knives and hatchets for bartering; mirrors, beads, blankets and tobacco for gifts. But, because of the violence it introduced into tribal life, no alcohol.



DuLuht, his voyageurs and Indian guides are shown landing at Fond du Lac during the summer expedition of 1679, in this 1920 oil painting by Francis Lee Jaques.



The expeditions of Daniel Gresolon, Sieur duLuht, 1679-80

At considerable personal expense, he also arranged for a delegation of tribesmen to return to Montreal to meet Frontenac. The governor's "authority and presence," wrote Duluth flatteringly, would consolidate the peace. Duluth remained as a hostage in the Lake Superior area to guarantee the safe return of these emissaries.

With peace enthroned, Duluth could now devote himself to his second goal, finding the Northwest Passage to the Indies. In June of 1680, he paddled east along the south shore of Lake Superior, entered the Newissakodisibi (Brule River), and confirmed its connection with the Mississippi through the Manomineshisibi (St. Croix River).

However, his search for the route west ended abruptly. First, he learned that the Dakota had kidnapped his former regimental chaplain, Father Louis Hennepin, and two others. He had to rescue them. Then he had to return to France to defend himself against lies claiming that his peace mission was a front for illegal fur trading.

Finally, his superiors assigned him to build forts to supply and protect traders.

These he built over the next two decades at Nipigoni Sagaigan (Lake Nipigon), the Kaministiquia River (near present-day Fort William and Thunder Bay) and at Niiz' Gichi-Gamiin (the straits between Lakes Erie and Huron).

Any records that praise Duluth as a 'religious' man have not come down to us. Those we have reveal him as a layman constructively engaged in important matters.

Duluth could feel good about his peacemaking and peacekeeping efforts. Records filed in Quebec showed that more and more furs were coming France's way.

Daniel duLuht and the Gospel of Peace

Catholic Faith requires Peacemaking

IN 1983 the Archbishop of St. Paul-Minneapolis, John R. Roach, headed an episcopal committee that drafted a pastoral letter called *The Challenge of Peace*. The newly appointed Bishop of Duluth, Robert H. Brom, attended the final debates leading to its adoption. It is fitting the diocese which bears Daniel Gresolon Sieur duLuht's name enjoyed representation at such a meeting.

The U.S. bishops wrote: "Peacemaking is not an optional commitment. It is a requirement of our faith."

The historical record shows that Duluth sought peace to restore to France some of the fur trade that England had captured. It would be difficult to argue that he was fulfilling a "requirement of our faith." But peace is the indispensable condition for any kind of good life in this world.

Whether sought after in order to break up an economic monopoly in the 17th century, or to save human civilization from nuclear chaos in the 20th, peace is closer to the Kingdom of God than its opposite. The Sermon on the Mount names those who seek it: "Sons of God."

For a while he also commanded Fort Michilimackinac (near present-day Mackinaw City, Michigan). Here his evenhanded treatment of three Ojibwe who murdered two Frenchmen probably prevented an uprising.

By now the marches, portages, battles, procurement and supervision of men and supplies, and negotiations with the tribes were taking their toll. In 1707 he retired at his own request, returned to Montreal, and rented a small room. Death found him there on the evening of February 25, 1710.

With Duluth died one of the most colorful eras in the exploration of New France. Even his contemporaries remembered him as an exceptional explorer and soldier. His opposition to the whiskey trade was extraordinary for one in his position. So also was his refusal to be a profiteer. His concern for the welfare of the young men under his command went beyond the limits of mere duty. The ease and respect with which he walked among tribesmen and courtiers astonished his peers. His patience under chronic illness (several decades with the gout), his courage, his patriotism, his mastery of technical matters, his leadership—all won praise from those who knew him.

Any records that praise Duluth as a "religious" man have not come down to us. Those we have reveal him as a layman constructively engaged in important matters. Does it seem too far afield to suggest that the words of the Second Vatican Council on the role of the Catholic laity apply to Duluth? They read: "It is proper to the layman's state in life for him to spend his days in the midst of the world and of secular transactions...as a kind of leaven."

In this sense, Daniel de Gresolon, Sieur duLuht, peacemaker, belongs in the ranks of other missionaries who brought the Gospel to Lake Superior.

Father Whitney Evans is associate professor of history at the College of St. Scholastica, and holds a doctorate in history from the University of Minnesota.

LETTRES LETTRES LETTRES

Dear Dick:

Talk about a surprise reading that article written by Lowell Mercil (Decembre-Janvier Chez Nous). I happen to be a friend of his sister Lorraine. We went to school together all four years at St. Joseph's Academy in Crookston MN. It was a French school run by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Medille from France. All girls who entered went to France for their novitiate.

I also helped his brother Jerry with his violin.

Claire Faue
Minneapolis MN

HYSTERIA ON RYE?

BREAD FUNGUS MAY HAVE FUELED THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

by Malcolm Gladwell

Washington Post
Washington, DC

For three strange weeks 200 years ago this past summer, the countryside of France was gripped by an inexplicable terror.

Rumors swept through towns and villages that bandits were about to seize the year's grain harvest. Peasants, weeping and shouting, took to the woods with pitchforks and muskets. Others crisscrossed the countryside in a blind panic looting and burning, terrifying the French aristocracy and they took steps to abolish what was left of the ancien regime, France's prerevolution social order.

La Grande Peur (the Great Fear) of 1789 is considered a pivotal event in the history of the French Revolution. But, like so many of the outbreaks of panic and bizarre behavior of medieval and early modern Europe, how and why it happened remains a puzzle to historians.

Why did it occur in some parts of France and not others? Why did the hysteria appear to affect entire communities simultaneously instead of spreading from house to house and town to town as panic ordinarily would? And what possible explanation, psychological or otherwise, could there be for spontaneous mass psychosis?

According to a study by University of Maryland historian Mary Kilbourne Matossian, the mystery of La Grande Peur can be explained by rye bread, which constituted most of the diet of French peasants of the period. Drawing on historical records, Matossian argues that the French countryside was in the grip of a massive outbreak of food poisoning brought on by a fungus that grows on rye grain and produces a natural form of hallucinogen LSD.

Matossian's arguments appear in her recently published book, "Poisons of the Past: Molds, Epidemics, and History," a sweeping reinterpretation of European and U.S. history in light of what people ate.

In everything from the Black Plague of the 14th century to the witch trials of Salem Mass., the religious revivals of the 18th century and the population explosion of the early industrial revolution, Matossian maintains that serious outbreaks of

microbiological contamination of the food supply played a large role in shaping social behavior and population patterns.

"Some of her conclusions may be exaggerated," said William McNeill, professor of history at the University of Chicago. It is almost always the case that when you find something new and write about it, the result is a rather lopsided picture. But she is on to a very significant point. This is something historians simply have not thought about.

Matossian's focus is on a fungus known as ergot, a highly toxic mold which under certain climatic conditions-cold winters and wet warm summers, in particular-can grow and infect rye. Ergot is the fungus from which LSD originally was extracted. When consumed even in minute quantities in flour made from infected rye, ergot can cause an astonishing range of symptoms, including gangrene, fertility suppression, loss of motor control and severe hallucinations, delusions and even death.

Ergot poisoning was a risk in premodern Europe, because until the potato became the dietary staple of the lower classes in the late 18th century, peasants north of the Alps and Pyrenees and those in Russia were heavily dependent on rye, a hardy crop that can grow in extreme climates and poor soils. By some estimates, peasants in the region ate as much as two or three pounds of rye bread a day, making them particularly susceptible to ergot poisoning when conditions favored its development.

Matossian's approach is to try to account for outbreaks of bizarre behavior in a given area by looking at local food consumption patterns and climatic conditions over the previous growing season.

In 1789, for example, the year of La Grande Peur, "France had not seen weather conditions so favorable to the growth of ergot on rye...since 1697, when reasonable complete records were first kept," Matossian writes.

First an unusually cold winter weakened the rye, which is planted in the fall for harvest the following spring. A cold humid spring then allowed the fungus to grow on the plants, a warm dry May promoted the spread of fungal spores, and the warm wet summer that followed was ideal for the formation of toxic alkaloids.

LES CANADIENS ERRANTS
by Al Girard, St. Paul, MN

The Twin Cities French-Canadian singing group, Les Canadiens Errants, celebrated the 1989 Christmas season by performances at the Société's annual party and an afternoon of singing at Murphy's Landing, Shakopee, MN.

The Christmas party was the usual good time with plenty of great food and fellowship. We thank those in attendance for the warm reception accorded us.

Murphy's Landing was not a "warm" event, we were there during the cold spell. By dressing warm and moving from house to house, we managed to keep spirits and circulation up. Everyone appeared to receive the songs, both Christmas and French, with enthusiasm. Many of the audience participated in both singing and dancing.

Murphy's Landing is a restored village from the 1700's and 1800's with each house representing an ethnic theme for a specific time period. Authentic furniture, dress, and even cooking is stressed. The houses and buildings have been moved in from various parts of Minnesota and have been restored to their original state. If anyone has not seen Murphy's Landing as yet, plan to put it on your list of things to do in the coming year.

Thanks to the participants for taking time for practices and the events. Your dedication is very much appreciated. The following have been regulars during the past year and we look forward to seeing them all again next year: Ray Ayotte, Marie Bouley, Feraidoon Bourbour, Seraphine Byrne, Alan Ciesielczyk, Leroy

LA GRANDE PEUR contd from page five

Matossian uses the same analysis to explain the peculiar phenomenon of witch trials that periodically gripped different parts of Europe in the Middle Ages. The symptoms associated with bewitchment, she says are strikingly similar to the central nervous system disorders caused by ergotism: tremors parasthesias (sensations or pricking, biting ants, crawling on the skin), spasm, seizures, contractions of the face and eyes, hallucinations and panic attacks.

The parts of Europe where witch trials were most common were cold wet areas where rye was the staple. By contrast, in Ireland where the peasant diet consisted mainly of dairy products and oats, witch trials were rare.

Matrossian is not the first to link witch persecution with food poisoning. At least one other researcher has suggested that ergotism played a role in the Salem witch trials of colonial Massachusetts, a conclusion Mastossian supports with evidence of the unusual amount of rye eating in Salem at the time of the outbreak and ideal climatic conditions in the previous year for ergot growth.

Ref: Mpls. Tribune - Minneapolis, MN
November 21, 1989

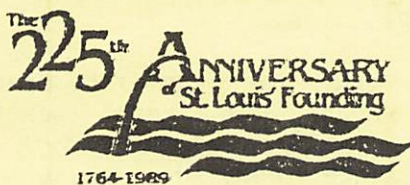
Dubois, Dan Gendreau, Ralph Germain, Shirley and Al Girard, Pierre Girard, Renee Juare, George LaBrosse, Pat Stegbauer and Marie Trepanier.

Anyone wishing to join the group can contact any of the above people for information.

A LETTER TO A FRIEND
FROM:

25 USA

TO:



On Dec. 23, 1804, At Fort Mandan [North Dakota], Capt. William Clark wrote: "A fine day. . .we were visited again by crowds of Indians. . .[An Indian woman] entertained us with a favorite Mandan dish, a mixture of pumpkins, beans, corn and chokeberries with the stones, all boiled together in a kettle, and forming a composition by no means unpalatable."

From The St. Louis Ambassadors
Source: Missouri Historical Society

St. Louis Post-Dispatch 12/23/89



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF AVRIL-MAI, 1990 VOL. 11 NO. 5

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Co-Editor: Jerry Marie Forchette

MIGRATING TO MINNESOTA

The following account of a French-Canadian family is provided by Gloria Teller, Hibbing. The account, written in 1937, paints a vivid and fascinating photo of the moves, activities trials, triumphs and tribulations of a common family. Each of our families has a similar story. We'd like to see yours. To Jerry Forchette, 4655 University Ave NE Mpls 55421 or Dick Bernard, 3030 45th Ave S Minneapolis 55406.

Ezra LeDoux was born on a farm in Ripley township (MN) Jan. 25 1880. He is the son of Michel LeDoux, Jr. and Eliza Brousseau LeDoux.

Michel LeDoux Jr was born in Kankakee IL Apr 14, 1846. He came to Belle Prairie MN with his parents in 1856. Michel LeDoux Sr was born in eastern Canada, Jan 22, 1823. * He came to Illinois in 1846. He married there and came to Minnesota with his family in 1855. *

Telling of those early days Ezra LeDoux said, "my grandparents came west with the King family. Each family travelled in a covered wagon drawn by oxen. Starting in the spring they arrived at Belle Prairie in the fall. They stopped along the way for the men to work and earn money to continue the journey. While the men worked the women did the washings. After reaching Belle Prairie my grandfather worked at farming for about three years then purchased a farm of 180 acres northeast of Belle Prairie station. (This farm is now owned by Henry Chelling and farmed by Hector LeDoux.) Grandfather cut the trees, built a log cabin, hunted to secure food for the family, broke the land, raised corn and wheat which they cut with a cradle and threshed with flails. At this

time they had to sell their produce in St. Cloud and tote most of their supplies from there."

"When the Civil War broke out, grandfather enlisted in St. Cloud and was gone two years. There was very little to do with. Grandmother had a hard time to care for her five children. She used to break corn with a hammer to make the johnnycake. They lived near Fletcher Creek which was two and a half miles from Belle Prairie. At night the Indians would come and peek in the windows, but she would not put curtains up lest the Indians think she was afraid. For a light she sometimes used a cloth soaked with tallow and lit like a candle. Her broom was made by cutting hazel brush, when the leaves were green and tying them together. She twisted hay hard and made it into a scrub brush. Pouring water on the ashes she made lye for scrubbing, by skimming off the top."

"When the wheat was harvested they gathered the best wheat straws they could find and put them away to make straw hats. These they made by braiding the straw during the winter months."

"At the time of the spring house cleaning grandmother Brousseau, who lived near the river, used to wash her carpets and heavy clothes by tacking them on logs in the river and leaving them there all day for the current to wash them."

Eliza Brousseau LeDoux and her brother Oliver Brousseau, were fine dancers. Once they won a prize for dancing a jig at the hall at Fort Ripley. After their marriage Mr. and Mrs. Michel LeDoux Jr settled on a

homestead in Ripley township about a mile and a half northeast of Michel LeDoux sr's home.

During the Indian trouble (1862), Michel LeDoux Jr (father of Ezra) served as a soldier and drew a pension for this service. The family was among those who took refuge in the old courthouse at that time. Mrs. LeDoux died in Hibbing Aug, 1935, at the home of her daughter, Mrs. Elmer Hilde. Michel LeDoux died in Little Falls in 1914.

Ezra LeDoux was born and reared on the old homestead, in the log house his father built. The old log house is still occupied. Fred Fish lives there. The logs have been covered with siding and it no longer looks like a log cabin.

Ezra LeDoux tells the following story of one of his childhood adventures. "When I was about eight years old my father took me to Brainerd with him when he went up to sell his produce. As we drove up Front Street in Brainerd, father showed me the stump of a tree where two Indians were hung for killing the McArthur girl. For years father had a tintype of the Indians hanging there. The hanging took place at night and the bodies were left hanging until the next morning when the picture was taken." The hanging took place in August, 1871.

Ezra attended the rural school at Ripley. After leaving school he worked at farming until he was 19 (1899) then went to Hibbing. There was only one business block in Hibbing then. From Hibbing he went to Chisholm, when the town was first surveyed. He helped cut timber and clear streets. While Ezra LeDoux was in Hibbing, a forest fire swept over the town of Chisholm and threatened Hibbing. They were taking the women and children out of Hibbing when the wind changed and saved the town. On the following Sunday they ran excursions from Hibbing taking the people down in box and flat cars.

From Chisholm, Mr. LeDoux returned to Little Falls and worked for J.F. Murphy on the river and at the sorting works. The following winter he spent in the Pequot Lumber Camp working for the Rum River Lumber Co.

He returned to Little Falls in Sep 1902. October 14 of that year he started in the barber trade. He was employed by Philip Germaine as a barber until 1903 when he went into partnership with Frank Dufort. They opened a barber shop on First Street and

continued the partnership until the death of Mr. Dufort in 1933. In 1934 he sold out the barber shop to Chet Nove and Joe Girtz. After selling out downtown Mr. LeDoux opened a shop at 515 2nd street NE where he is still (Sept, 1937) in business.

PETIT CANADA

by John England

Historical works on the French-Canadians in Minnesota are like the treasured truffles of France; they are always good and always scarce. Little Canada A Voyageurs Dream edited by Gareth Hiebert and published by the Little Canada Historical Society is one of the rare literary truffles to be savored and cherished.

Indeed the book is very comprehensive covering many aspects of Little Canada's heritage which ranges from Benjamin Gervais to Monsignor Arthur Durand. Also, included is the influence of Italian, German and Luxembourgers who settled there too. You will discover some excellent research on Father Goiffon, the peg-legged priest who was more intrepid than the voyageurs and Coureurs de Bois, and definitely more holy! This humble Frenchman had more charisma in his wooden leg than most people have in their hearts. The section on Father Goiffon is worth the price of the book itself.

You will find in Little Canada many personal accounts written by descendants of the early settlers. Included among them are stories by LaSociete members Huberta Auger Bennett and Rose La Lancette. There is a nice section on the Little Canada School written by Edgar Belland who had a memory like a cast iron safe. And there is the article by Ella Langevin in which she describes her Uncle Joe Belland, a gentleman I met at one of our local celebrations, who had a sense of humor that would warm the coldest of hearts. Many of these vignettes are written from the heart and written well like Lowell Mercil's Christmas memories in the December Chez Nous. And they are more interesting than Montcalm at the Plains of Abraham.

Speaking of heroes, I especially enjoyed the section about Mgrs. Durand, a native of Faribault, a priest who left an indelible mark on Petit Canada. He was one of Christ's happy warriors who did everything from forming a credit union to plowing snow before 5:30 Mass at St. Johns. He was never too busy to answer a letter, to be a friend. It was himself who rekindled my interest

PETIT CANADA

in French-Canadian heritage which he treasured so dearly. He gave a special Franco-American flavor to the Catholic Church in Minnesota as did his predecessor, Father Goiffon.

Folks with the good qualities that all men should have like Benjamin Gervais, Father Goiffon, Edgar and Joe Belland, Joseph "the carpenter" Ducharme and Father Durand gave to us customs and values that have been deposited in a high-yield savings account called Little Canada A Voyageurs Dream. It will cost you \$35.00 to buy into this historical bank and it will be worth it.

The book is available at the Little Canada City Hall, 515 E. Little Canada Rd, St. Paul MN 55117, phone 612-484-2177.

ENJOY this years edition of
FESTIVAL OF NATIONS

April 27-28-29
at the
St. Paul Civic Center

Student hours:
Friday 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

General admission:
Friday 4:00 - 11:00 p.m.
Saturday 11:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m.
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Cost:
\$6.50 per person at the door
\$5.00 in advance - Tickets from
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THE QUESTION OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

In the last issue of Chez Nous Vernon Sell of Madison WI posed a question: why do we French-Canadians suffer from a lack of ethnic identity unlike some other ethnic groups?

To the rescue came member Treffle Daniels, who offers this opinion:

"Most of us are French-Canadians whose ancestors came to Quebec before a strong sense of French national spirit was instilled in all people of France. Many were Normans and Bretons, people who didn't always consider themselves as truly French. So, from that angle, we might say we're Canadians firstly, French, secondly. In other words unlike Germans, Irish, Swedes, etc., we didn't come directly to the USA, but stopped off in Quebec for a century or two before coming to the USA.

Also, the French never seemed to settle in large numbers in an area. Note the numbers of Norwegians in Minnesota. This example could be expanded to include the Swedes, Danes, Germans, Irish, etc., etc. Where there was a large settlement of French-Canadians as in Upper Michigan, areas of Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, etc., I'd bet there is a strong ethnic sense there. An example nearby would be the French influence in Little Canada (near St. Paul MN) as well as St. Paul, and the West End of Duluth (my youthful neighborhood).

Maybe the great amount of ethnic activities is boring to us children of France. Many Frenchmen of France are individualistic

to the highest degree. That's very apparent when one visits France . . . so they don't worry or flaunt their ethnic differences. What I'm saying is perhaps the greatest outpouring of ethnic activities is just overkill on the part of certain groups - St. Pat's Day is a splendid example of this. One can easily discover others.

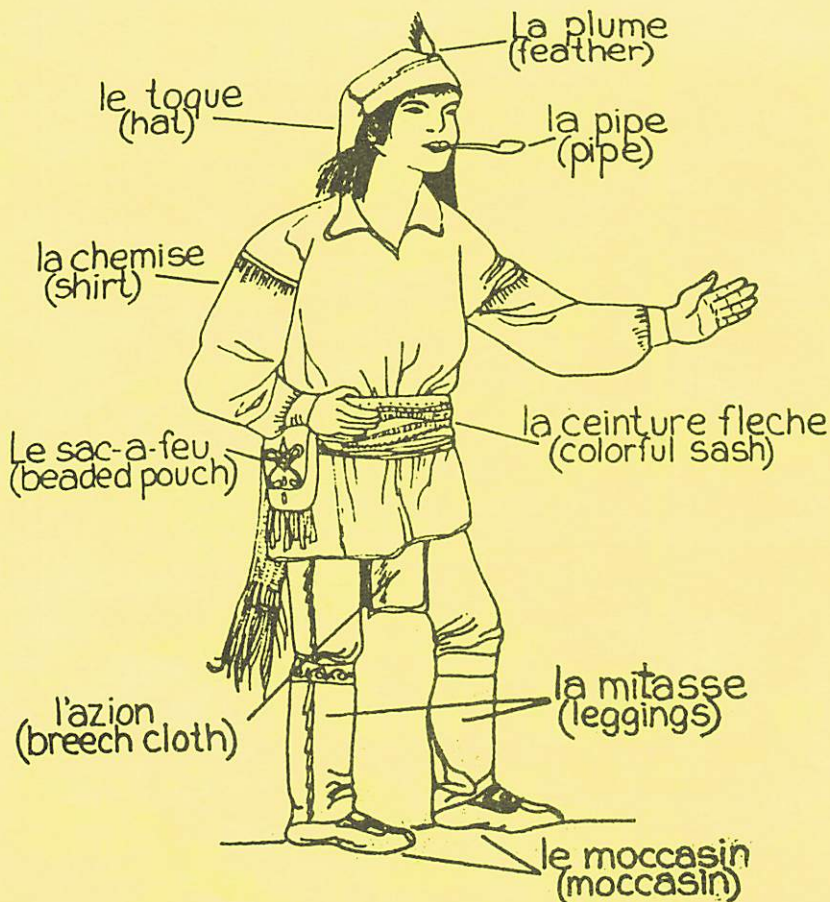
Perhaps we want to say to other groups "Heh! we're all Americans. Try to put our ethnic backgrounds behind us and go on to be citizens of the USA".

Which brings up this example: at St. Jean's school in Duluth (a French-Canadian school) a big highlight in the 1940's and 1950's was a St. Pat's Day musical, organized by those good Sisters of the Holy Name, a French-Canadian order. Did they ever do anything for St. Jean Baptiste Day on that scale? No, that wasn't during the school year. Also, we couldn't celebrate Bastille Day, as France had lost Canada in 1763, 26 years before the storming of the Bastille.

Also, you'll find people of all groups who want to forget their backgrounds. Why did so many French-Canadians Englishize their names?

Finally, many of us know that the British, upon taking over Canada, really ignored the French there and our poor ancestors were treated as unequals in many aspects of Canadian political, social and economic life and wanted to leave that intolerance behind once and for all."

Treffle Daniels
Minneapolis MN



TRAVELLING TO CANADA?

Here are some numbers you may wish to make note of:

(All #'s have 1-800 prefix unless otherwise indicated)

QUEBEC	363-7777
ONTARIO	ONTARIO
MANITOBA	665-0040
ALBERTA	661-8888
BRIT COLUMBIA	663-6000
SASKATCHEWAN	667-7191
NOVA SCOTIA	341-6096
NEW BRUNSWICK	561-0123
NW TERRITORIES	661-0788
PRINCE EDW IS	565-9060
NEWFOUNDLAND	563-6353
YUKON	403-667-5340

CANADIAN

CONSULATE 612-333-4641
 Rec'd mes'qe 612-332-4314

MORE ON THE VOYAGEURS

CUSTOMS, TRADITIONS AND HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION

In August of 1988,, Dr. Virgil Benoit of Red Lake Falls presented the following comments about Voyageurs at a meeting sponsored by the Minnesota Humanities Commission in cooperation with the Association of the French of the North (AFRAN) and the Red Lake band of Chippewa Indians.

What does representation mean?

When we look at history we can interpret it in many ways. Good historians have always known that history is not the problem. The problem is how to write about history, how to present it, what to choose and what to say. Just like we have memories, we will always think about our history. Our topic deals with the ways we choose to represent our histories. What do we keep in our memories and what does it mean?

What we call up from the past, what we choose to remember, or what we represent publicly indicates a lot about how we see ourselves. Here we focus on how the voyageurs, the men who transported the trade goods during the fur trade era (1650-1850) have been, 1) discussed, 2) painted and sketched, and 3) portrayed in public places.

1. 'Written ideas on the voyageurs calling to mind intercultural issues based on class, race and work: "After the conquest of New France in 1760, most French in the fur trade received the jobs of '...the transportation and the lower range of services in the new British enterprises' (Golden, p.4). The class of men known as the voyageurs who signed a contract with the fur companies to transport

merchandise and furs has been interpreted in basically two ways by historians; there are those who tell of the voyageur's legendary hardiness and experience, his unquestioning obedience to his superiors and his libertine attitude as noted in his songs, tales, and public conduct. Some historians have looked beyond the stereotype facade of harmony and legendary gaiety into the actual experience and living conditions of the voyageur class. They have found that the voyageurs were taken advantage of in many ways. They received little money and were often paid in goods. Many became indebted to the company (Innis). 'En 1791 il y le produit de dix a quinze annees de leurs gages a venir' (La Roche-foucault-Liancourt, Vol. II, p. 225 in Giraud). The employers of the fur companies manipulated the voyageurs as well as the employees of the posts paying them nearly nothing while saying the men worked for the love of being in the country. When Governor Simpson of the Hudson Bay Company wrote to Duncan Finlayson at the Peace River district in 1830, he revealed a great deal about how the French Canadians in the fur trade were perceived. He wrote, "You will bear in mind that it is Canadians you have now to deal with...if humoured in trifles, anything may be done with them, but if treated with uniform harshness and severity they will mutiny to a certainty."

"It was common knowledge that these men did not take severe orders well nor accept many long term contracts (Giraud). In the eyes of some Anglo-Saxons, French Canadians in the fur trade were often obedient but not faithful because they held something in reserve." (From page 124-125 of L'Heritage Tranquille: The quiet Heritage, Concordia College, 1985.

A. The work done by the voyageurs

"From the early 1600's until nearly 1850 this work was done by men called voyageurs. The word is from the French that means TRAVELER. The voyageurs were French Canadians, and all spoke French. Because of this, many words used in the fur trade were French."

"The way to the west was through lakes and rivers. The voyageurs traveled over these waterways in birch-bark canoes. As the business grew, thousands of canoemen were hired by the trading companies. These voyageurs were a special class of men who had their own kind of clothes, their own food, customs and way of life" (p.2 The Voyageurs MHS).

B. How the voyageur looked

"He usually wore a long-sleeved shirt, and sometimes a tie. From his belt hung a beaded pouch in which he carried his clay pipe and tobacco. When paddling the canoe, he often had on a breechcloth, like the Indians. With it, he wore leggings that reached from his ankles to above the knees, leaving his upper legs bare. Sometimes the voyageur wore loose pants; then he tied a little sash below each knee. When he dressed up, he tied a long, bright sash around his waist. On his feet the canoeman wore moccasins, sometimes brightly decorated with beads...his black hair hung to his shoulders. Dressed in his best, the voyageur looked very colorful."

"They could paddle all day and carry heavy loads, then dance by the campfire at night. Above all, the voyageurs were happy, they loved to sing as they paddled along." (pp. 2-3 The Voyageurs).

C. The canoe is an important part of voyageur history and representation.

D. Presenters often talk about how the trips were prepared and all the lakes and streams that the voyageur saw.

"His voice ringing and resounding over the waters, the French Canadian voyageur

paddled his birch-bark canoe over all the rivers and lakes of North America from the 1600's to the middle of the 1800's. The voyageurs opened the entire continent to the white people. As a result, two great countries were born—Canada and the United States." p. 29 of *l'Heritage tranquille/ The Quiet Heritage*.

- E. Food is usually mentioned when talking about the voyageurs.
- F. Singing always seems to be a necessary part of voyageur history.
- G. Dangers and adventures of voyageurs are mentioned often.
- H. The voyageurs were also seen as part of an eco-historical system.

Bob Treuer in Voyageur Country makes a link between the voyageur and the existence of a wilderness. In a mixing of the present with the past Treuer makes it clear that to him the Voyageurs National Park in the Minnesota-Ontario border region still allows the modern voyageur to appreciate the wilderness.

On page 67 Treuer writes, "The fur trade and the life of the voyageurs continued...dwindling and fading, past the American Civil War, and no one knows with certainty when the last canoe du nord traversed the border lakes, the men chanting en rouland ma boule with it's endless verses, perhaps in the 1870 or 1880's. At the beginning of the twentieth century old men in the border country who had paddled in the fur trade still lived there and recalled their life with wistfulness, and lob pines still stood after the old men had died.."

II. What do you think of this final description?

"A prominent American fur trader of the 1830's, Henry H. Sibley found the French Canadians hardy, cheerful and courageous, strong, merry, good natured and unrivaled in their mastery of canoes. Miss Nute quotes a seventy-year old voyageur who bragged that he could paddle, walk and sing with any man he had ever seen. For him no portage was ever too long. He said that he knew fifty songs, had saved ten lives, had had twelve wives and six running dogs, and had spent all his money in pleasure. There is no life he said as happy as a voyageur's life." p.5 The Voyageur and Their Songs

Sometimes the voyageur is confused with the coureur du bois. The coureur du bois did not have a license to trade. He is depicted differently. About the coureur du bois we can read, "Very few amassed any great wealth but a unique class of individuals evolved—the independent, free trapper and trader known to the the French as the coureur du bois or ranger of the woods. It was these hardy, venturesome characters who opened the first paths to the wilds of Canada and the American West and were the first to treat the Indian on an equal basis.

As soon as the ice cleared from the rivers the coureur du bois departed for unknown regions in his birch-bark canoe. Such a man would go for months, even years, without seeing the slightest vestige of civilization.

"Historically the coureur du bois belongs within the French period of Canadian history. He was the forerunner of the voyageurs. He consorted freely with the Indian, often taking an (Indian) for a wife, thus fathering the (metis) who joined the services of the rival fur companies in the next era." p. 94 of Frederic Remington.



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF JUIN-JUILLET, 1990 VOL. 11 NO. 6

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

Co-Editor: Jerry Marie Forchette

A TRIP TO PEMBINA

by Fr. Joseph Goiffon*

ED. NOTE: Sometime after 1881 Father Joseph Goiffon sat down to write his memories, probably at the Parish house at either Centerville or Little Canada MN (both communities are now St. Paul suburbs; then they would have been distinctly rural communities).

Born and raised and trained to the Priesthood in France. Fr. Goiffon had arrived in St. Paul on November 7, 1857, to serve the Diocese which then "was two or three or four times larger than all of France, and had no more than 15 Priests" (p. 2).

St. Paul and Minnesota were then still in their infancy.

Fr. Goiffon's memoirs talk about numerous events. Here we reprint exactly as translated, his recollections about his first trip from St. Paul to Pembina (now N.D.) in August, 1858.

In this article he talks about the famed Red River Ox Carts, the "charrettes of the Red River", which were for years the standard of transport on the prairies and woodlands between present day Winnipeg and St. Paul. While these carts travelled many different routes it is probable that the trip here described crossed the Red Lake River at Huot, near present day Red Lake Falls.

Read on and enjoy the reminiscences of a marvelous person.

* * * * *

"We were leaving St. Paul about August 8th 1858. Our caravan was composed of a brother of the Holy Family of Belley, brother Timothy, who had spent a year or two with Mr. Belcours in order to act as his servant; of the sister Superior from a new religious community that Mr. Belcours was trying to establish among the Metis of these countries. She was coming back from Montreal

A Note from the Editor: In his outline on the voyageurs, Dr. Virgil Benoit commented on history: "What we call up from the past, what we choose to remember, or what we represent publicly indicates a lot about how we see ourselves." Avril-Mai 1990 Chez Nous

In this issue we have two perceptions of history of relations with the American Indian - from Father Goiffon, and from the American Indian Movement.

Father Goiffon comments in his memoirs about the American Indians with whom he lived in the 1850's. In the accompanying article the comments are brief. There will be further comments in upcoming issues. His comments are doubtless based on what he had learned about Indians before he began his pioneer adventure.

The latter representation, from the program of the May 25-27, 1990, Heart of the Earth Contest Pow Wow in Minneapolis, presents a distinctly different view of colonizing than that presented by Father Goiffon.

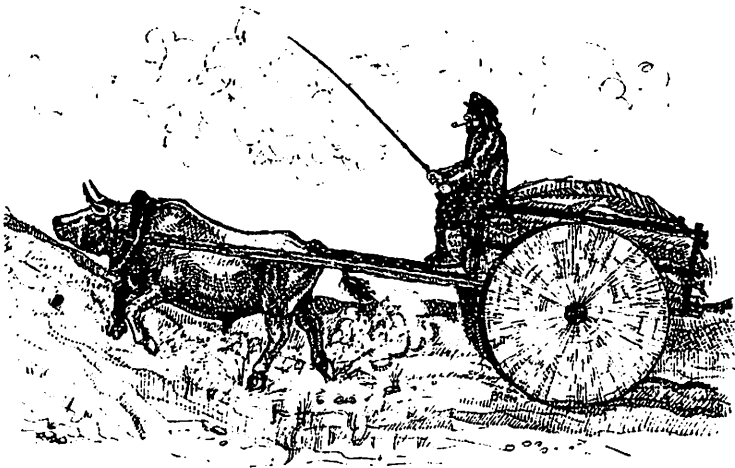
We hope the opinions expressed are of interest and serve to spark some debate amongst our readers.

bringing with her two novices who had been sent to Montreal to be instructed and also to form themselves to the real religious life. There was also a Metis, French Cree, a very honorable man named Louis Marion of St. Boniface, who was also the step father of Mr. Kittson. I have forgotten the names of the others who composed our little caravan. The Rev. Mr. Ravoux had given me, for my journey, the old buggy of Monsignor Cretin. But as I happened to have fairly good legs, I thought more suitable to give the use of the buggy to the sister superior and her two novices, and I travelled on foot during the entire journey of about 500 miles. This journey was to be

continued next page

FATHER GOIFFON from page one

made with oxen or with horses who very often could not follow the oxen without making them trot to keep up with them.



As the country of the Red River was only inhabited by savages and a few Metis hunters, who had no more industries than the savages, it was necessary to come to St. Paul for provisions of clothing and food as it was the nearest place where they could sell fur pelts and provide themselves with the necessary things for the year. This voyage, in which a horse could draw about a thousand pounds, lasted ordinarily about two months and $\frac{1}{2}$: a month to come down to St. Paul, and a month to return to Pembina with 12 to 15 days rest for the animals in St. Paul and to sell their pelts and buy their merchandise and above all to patch up their carts which had been made in a wild country only with the help of a hatchet and a draw knife and some time, of a plane, and made of green wood, and consequently could not always be very solid, especially after 5 or 6 years of service, having nothing in summer and winter but the sky as protection. These carts well known under the name of "Charrettes of the Red River" were very high so they could cross the rivers which had no bridges, the lakes and the large muddy marshes. They were always made with two wheels. The hubs were ordinarily made of white elm and the spokes and rims of oak as well as the axle. The iron did not enter in the fabrication of these charrettes. The bolts and the nails were replaced by wooden pins.

The harnesses of the horses and the oxen were not less simple. They were made of buffalo hides which, not being cured, were strong enough when it was nice weather, but when these hides were wet, by the rain, they became soft and stretched, and that obliged our voyageurs to stop and to put their harness under cover. The oxen were harnessed single file like the horses and

with collars, only the collars of the oxen were made differently. One had only to pull out two little wooden pins to release them; it was quickly done.

Happy the time when man knew how to get along without many things and be satisfied with just necessities.

Amongst the nations who believe themselves to have become civilized one is obliged to announce their approach by the use of bells; the Savages and our good Metis knew better. Not greasing the hubs of their wheels, their carts were heard at 2 or 3 miles distance.

During the travel the simplicity was not less admirable. To make the journey of 500 or 600 miles, our animals, used to frugality, knew how to content themselves with the grass of the prairies. Oats or corn were not known to them.

Their drivers did not nourish themselves any better; a cup of black tea with a few pieces of dried meat, or a piece of dried buffalo, was sufficient to them. Bread was unknown to them. When they had a little flour, they mixed it with the buffalo meat and a little water, which we called Rababou.

The kitchen utensils were not much in the way. Ordinarily a tea pot to make tea, a frying pan and a knife were all that was needed. To eat the meat we used ordinarily Adam and Eve forks - - the fingers, or a piece of pointed wood.

When bed time arrives, the bed is soon made. Each person wraps himself in a blanket or in a buffalo hide, to protect himself from the cold in winter, or to defend himself from the mosquitoes in summer. Each person's arm served as a pillow. In the morning, spending no time at their toilet, they start en route. And so passed happily the days of the week.

When Sunday arrived, we were in the plain. The second and third commandments of the Church tell us to hear Mass. The founder of the new religious community, two novices, all filled with the love of God, a brother who was to be the living model for the poor Metis, a priest sent from the Cathedral of St. Paul, not only to preach religion but also to give to his companions and parishioners the means to practice it, could they be indifferent and pass up a Sunday traveling the same as any other day of the week?

We all wished to sanctify the Lord's day by hearing the Holy Mass. But what were to do in the middle of a large prairie, resembling a vast ocean, no altar, no

continued next page

FATHER GOIFFON from page two church. A moment of reflection was sufficient to bring us to a decision. We looked above us, all around us, and we were surprised to find ourselves in a more beautiful, richer and better made temple than that which Solomon had, in olden days, constructed. The vault seemed to reach the sky, the pillars were innumerable, the temple was a beautiful rug of grass, ornamented by thousand of different flowers. The church was found, the sun was bright, and the day could not have been more calm. Nothing but an altar was lacking. The difficulty was nothing. The Priest, having served as sacristan and master of ceremonies in several seminaries in France, had learned to improvise altars. He had with him everything he needed to say the mass, and also some beautiful ornaments. Quickly he erected a pretty little altar behind a wagon, and there he is, saying the mass, served by another Timothy of the Holy Family of the brothers of the diocese of Belley, in France. The mass ended, we all thanked the Grand Master of the universe for having done us the favor of being able to adore Him in person, in that grand prairie, a master piece of His hands.

What we did that first Sunday served as a model for the other Sundays until we reach St. Joseph de Pimbina. . end of our journey.

After having taken a little nourishment, we started on our journey, counting on the protection of God who had blessed us at mass. We were not mistaken in our hope, for we had a very happy journey; no sickness, no accident.

It was not the same for a caravan of Metis who preceded us by a few days. I walked always ahead of the wagons with my companion, Mr. Louis Marion, thinking of no danger whatever, when, all at once, at a turning in the woods, we find a hat of a Metis covered with blood. It was the hat of one of the men of the caravan that preceded us. They had been attacked by a band of savage Sioux who had killed this poor fellow and raised his scalp. At that time the Sauteux** and the Metis were at open war and had been for a long time. It was against the Sioux. It was to the one who could take the other by surprise, and kill him and scalp him (that is to say remove all the skin of the hair) a sign of triumph.

In this long journey of 500 miles we had to cross, without bridges, many rivers, with wagons loaded, but arriving on the shore of the great river of Red Lake, we found it running full banks: what to do? It was large and too deep to cross the wagons; the

current would have taken everything: wagons, merchandises, horses, engulfed all. New travelers, like myself, would have been very much embarrassed. Our Metis, our drivers, were not. Quickly they unharnessed the horses and the oxen and made them swim across; then one of them took a long rope, attaching it to his waist, and swam across following the horses; arriving on the other side, he acts as ferry man. Those who remain on the opposite side take the other end of the cord and attach it to one of the wagons, which being completely made of wood and not having even the weight of an iron nail, floated on the water like ordinary wood, attach to it another cord and throw the wagon in the water. He who had crossed to the other side of the river, pulls the rope and those who remained on the opposite side ??? their rope ? the wagon, supported by these two ropes, arrives easily across the river. The two ropes are detached from the wagon, fastened together and drawn back across the river to be attach to another wagon, and a third and fourth until all the wagon have been cross. The wagons across, the question is now how to transport the merchandizes and the voyagers, and especially the voyagers who ordinarily knew little about swimming. Having neither boat, nor canoe, nor ferry boat the Metis find a way: they go and cut four branches, make them in a long square by fastening them at each end, taking a buffalo hide not tanned, or a thick cotton cloth they attach it solidly at the four corners and thus make a bark in which they cross all their merchandize with the aid of cords the same as they did with their wagon. The merchandize across to the other side, now come the turn of the voyagers who can not swim. It was thus that these dames and your servant crossed the Red Lake river for the first time.

PLEASE NOTE LAST PAGES OF THIS ISSUE FOR DETAILS ON THE HUOT CROSSING CHAUTAQUA. Perhaps you can relive with Father Goiffon the crossing of the Red Lake River.

When we arrived at another river of which I do not remember the name, and of which the shores were too muddy, our men were obliged to unharness the horses, make them swim across, and then take their place and draw the wagons themselves. (That reminds me of what Monseignor Tacher told me, that returning from Rome, after having been made Bishop was obliged to attach himself to the wagon with the other voyagers and drag

continued next page

FATHER GOIFFON from page three

them for miles in the mud with the water up to his waist.)

At last I arrived at St. Joseph of Pimbina, which was the capital city of Dakota. It was a town about a mile long, spread on the left bank of the Pimbina river, about 35 to 40 miles from its mouth and dotted, from place to place, with tiny homes of logs of a single story and covered with hay mixed with clay."

Fr. Goiffon's story to be continued in subsequent issues of Chez Nous.

* - Fr. Goiffon's memoirs were apparently written in French, and the typewritten version quoted here notes that the translation was done by Mrs. Charlotte Huot of St. Paul. This story comes to us courtesy of Lois Tuckner of Woodbury MN. The oxcart illustration on page two is from *Sous La Pleine Lune D'automne* of l'Association des Francais du Nord (AFRAN-Red Lake Falls MN) Vol 2 #1 October, 1986.


** - presumably Fr. Goiffon is referring here to the tribe we now know as Chippewa or Ojibway

LA FETE DE ST. JEAN-BAPTISTE by John England

All nations have a patron saint, thanks be to God, who is their special protector and intercessor. Our Belgian cousins have St. Joseph, the Italians have St. Catherine of Siena and St. Francis, and France, of course, has the intrepid Ste Jeanne D'arc. But we French Canadians have a special patron, St. Jean-Baptiste, a prophet and martyr. He is also our Lords' cousin, and the French Canadians seem to have a deep affection for Jesus' relatives in much the same way that we love our own family members. It goes with the territory: it's part of our culture. Saints such as St. Jean-Baptiste, La Sainte Vierge Marie, Joseph and Anne are among the most venerated. Shrines in Quebec to Sts Joseph and Anne are witness to this intense devotion. The largest church in the world dedicated to St. Joseph is located in Montreal, along with a lot of Frenchies who answer to "Jean-Baptiste."

He has left an indelible mark on the Quebecois: there are countless towns, churches, sons and societies named in his honor. Just about every parish had a statue of him (when statues were popular). And who among us is not related to at least one Canadian with the name Jean-Baptiste? He is, indeed, a saint with whom the French Canadians can identify, a saint who breeches no nonsense, a saint who zeroes in on reality and keeps us on the right

ANNUAL FRENCH CANADIAN PICNIC BOOM ISLAND PARK, MINNEAPOLIS, MN NOON TO 6:00 P.M., SUNDAY JULY 15, 1990

Pot luck from noon to 1:30 p.m, with  along and games. There will be a 1½ hour cruise on the Anson Northrup Sidewheeler with boarding at 1:45 from Boom Island Park. Snacks and drinks not included but available on board.


TICKETS:

Adults, \$7.50 - Seniors
Seniors \$6.50
Children under 12, \$5.00

Advance tickets - 789-2214

Day of picnic if available - same price

Pot luck - phone 776-5087

track. Jean-Baptiste tells us to mend our ways, a fact we don't always want to hear.  But his name and feast day, 24 Juin, are heard often.

It seems that the origins of the feast are rooted in ancient Gaul. The pagan Celts, Franks and Romans used to light bonfires to thank their gods for the summer solstice. Our primitive cousins associated fire with the origin of life.

After Gaul became a Christian nation, the Church used the feast day of St. Jean-Baptiste to coincide with the local customs. This was a way of swaying the locals, the man on the street, away from the heathen practices. And the French adopted dear St. Jean with great fervor while retaining the tradition of the bonfire. It was pagan in origin, but it became very Christian in scope. Indeed, during the middle ages cats were burned in these bonfires because they were thought to be agents of the devil and damnation. Knowing the religious vigor of our ancestors I wonder if there were enough mousers left in France to make the smallest of meows on the 25th! Why, back in 1572, the burning of these demonic felines was done to honor his royal highness Henri IV. And as with all feasts, preparations began well in advance. Young lads from the villages would go from house to house to gather kindling for the fires called feux de joie.

The feast of St. Jean-Baptiste emigrated to Quebec with our ancestors and it has been celebrated since the founding of the colony in the early 1600's, according to Benjamin Sulte an historian and writer. Another writer, E. Burnouf, stated that in order to grasp the magnitude of the feast one should travel through the villages and see the grandiose bonfires, the dancing and shouts of joy on 24

continued next page

St. Jean-Baptiste, continued

June. The fires actually formed a chain of lights along the St. Lawrence River from village to village. As recently as 1978 there were more than 15,000 feux de joie in honor of St. Jean-Baptiste between Hull and Sept-Iles, Gaspé and Malartic and from Chibougamau and Lac Mégantic.

The fires of St. Jean are a symbol of light and they have become a tradition firmly entrenched in the hearts of French Canadians. Often a song is chanted after the fires are lit "feu, feu, joli feu, ton ardeur nous rejouit...", that is, fire, fire, beautiful fire, your heat delights us. But along with the fires, dancing and singing were celebrations religious in nature.

As early as 1636, the Jesuits Vimont and LeJeune and Governor Montmagny assembled around a feu de joie. They had the soldiers fire cannons and muskets while the priests chanted Te Deum. Early in the 19th century, the priest would bless the wood before setting it afire. And in 1924, Mgr. Deschamps, vicar general of the diocese of Montreal, led a procession up Mont Royal while carrying the Blessed Sacrament in a monstrance. He chanted the benediction hymn Tantum Ergo while the crowds responded with the Latin Genitori, Genitoque at the foot of Mont Royal.

Another tradition associated with our patrons is petits pains bénits (blessed loaves of bread, not to be confused with the Eucharist.) They're called, on 24 Juin, pain de la St. Jean, and they're blessed by the priest at Mass. The custom goes back to 1645 when Bishop Laval encouraged their use at midnight Mass. Often the loaves would be in the shape of a star or a heart which would be given to the priest. This beautiful custom has been revived in Quebec where it had not been used for many years. Bread has always been sacred to the French, and the use of petits pains was a method to symbolize the Holy Eucharist and to increase devotion to this great sacrament.

Despite these ancient and faithful traditions, St. Jean-Baptiste did not become the official patron of Quebec until 1908. The archbishop, knowing that many of his flock had spread out to many other areas of Canada and the United States requested Pope Pius X to make St. Jean-Baptiste the patron of French-Canadians no matter where they lived. La Societe St. Jean-Baptiste was, of course, instrumental in influencing the archbishop.

The celebration of our patrons birthday has become a national holiday in Quebec. It is a display of faith and patriotism, and in some cases, political action. But in Minnesota, 24 Juin is a display of no action at all which, I suppose, is the result of our own doing.

St. Jean-Baptiste, priez pour nous.

CHEZ NOUS is your newsletter. Whether it succeeds or fails depends on your interest and involvement. If you have any items of interest please send them to us. Mail to Dick Bernard, 3030 45th Avenue South, Minneapolis MN 55406. Deadline for the next issue is July 25, 1990.

Nos Ancetres

Our French Canadian ancestors by Thomas J. Forest

by Dick Bernard

Thomas J. LaForest has just issued Vol X in a series of 12 volumes. If you have any interest in the French Canadian forebearers in early Canada you will be fascinated by these books.

Volume X, for example discusses the early roots of 19 families in it's 283 pages. If your surname starts with H-I-J-K you will find an appendix which shows common derivations of that surname. (There is only a single "I" listed -Iesoir, which sometimes appears as Isoire, Hisoire and Exoir.)

The writing is entertaining; for instance, in the chapter on Andre Patry the authors write on daily life in the Patry household about 1675 at Quebec. "After more than three centuries, we can imagine that the Patry pair resembled some couples of today, where there is one spouse reduced to silence and another who speaks for both. It would seem that Henriette Cartois handled verbal combat very well." (P. 153)

I have all 10 volumes.

Is your family included in any? To answer this and other questions, I would suggest a self addressed stamped envelope to The Lisi Press, Palm Harbor FL 34682-1063.

(Personal note to Marshall: Brouillet dit Laviolette, your famille, is one of the families in Vol. XI - next on the list.)

SOME SUMMER RENDEZVOUSs

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| June 22-24 | Ft Ridgley (near New Ulm) |
| July 14-15 | Old Ft William Thunder Bay ONT |
| July 27-29 | Fort Snelling - Minneapolis |
| Aug 10-12 | Grand Portage MN |
| Sep 1-3 | Madeline Island WI |
| Sep 22-23 | Pine City MN - NW Fur Post |
| Other Events | |
| Aug 13-19 | 150th Anniversary of
Faribault House |
| Aug 25-26 | Kelley Farm Red River Ox Cart
Days (between Anoka&Elk River) |

500 years after Columbus: The Legacy of Genocide

The year 1992 will be a time of governments, corporations and religious institutions attempting to celebrate the voyage of Christopher Columbus to the Caribbean. The gala events surrounding the Columbus Quincentennial (1492-1992) will serve to reinforce the epidemic historical amnesia in this country. Any party honoring the Columbus expedition only will obscure the true history of the genocidal era which began in 1492.

At a time when numerous Indian nations in this hemisphere are engaged in a desperate final stand to defend their land, resources and culture, the dominant society appears intent on losing itself in a frivolous attempt to mystify the history of the clash between Indians nations and the Europeans plunderers.

Simply, there is nothing to celebrate in the 500th year since the Columbus slave trading expedition sailed into the Western Hemisphere.

Jack Weatherford, an anthropology professor at Macalester College in St. Paul who has written about the contributions Indians have made to civilization, discussed the legacy of the Columbus voyage in an opinion piece published last year. He pointed out that the Spanish monarchy loaned Columbus venture capital on the condition that the debt be repaid with riches from the "New World."

"This pressing need to repay his debt underlies the frantic tone of Columbus' diaries as he raced from one Caribbean island to the next, stealing anything of value," according to Weatherford.

"After he failed to contact the emperor of China, the traders of India or the merchants of Japan, Columbus decided to pay for his voyage in the one important commodity he had found in ample supply — human lives. He seized 1,200 Taino Indians from the island of Hispaniola, crammed as many onto his ships as would fit and sent them to Spain, where they were paraded naked through the streets of Seville and sold as slaves in

1495. Columbus tore children from their parents, husbands from wives. On board Columbus' slave ships, hundreds died; the sailors tossed the Indian bodies into the Atlantic.

"Because Columbus captured more Indian slaves than he could transport to Spain in his small ships, he put them to work in mines and plantations which he, his family and followers created throughout the Caribbean. His marauding band hunted Indians for sport and profit — beating, raping, torturing, killing and then using the Indian bodies as food for their hunting dogs. Within four years of Columbus' arrival on Hispaniola, his men had killed or exported one-third of the original Indian population of 300,000. Within another 50 years, the Taino people had been made extinct — the first casualties of the holocaust of American Indians. The plantation owners then turned to the American mainland and to Africa for new slaves to follow the tragic path of the Taino.

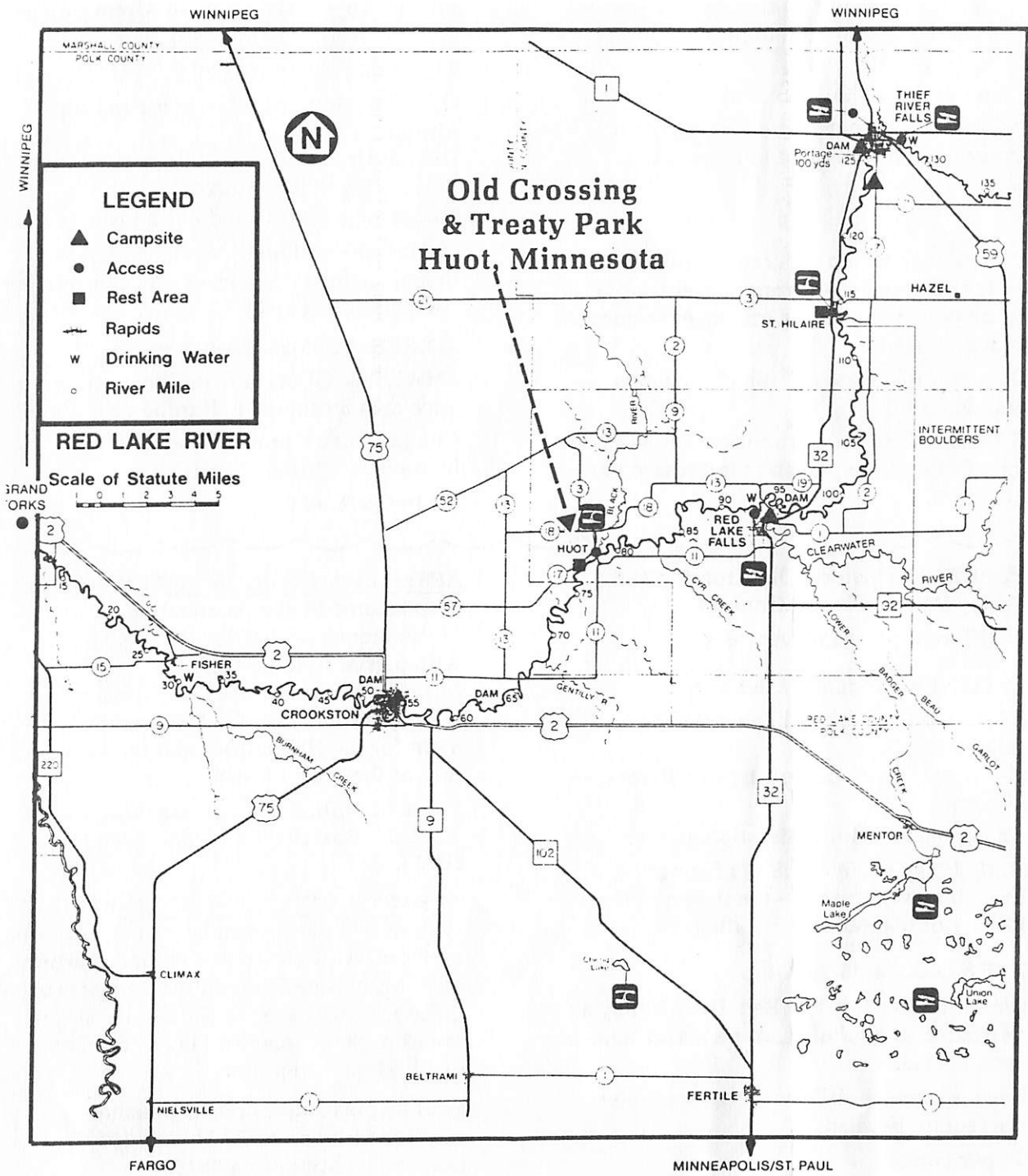
"This was the great cultural encounter initiated by Christopher Columbus. This is the event we celebrate each year on Columbus Day."

Weatherford's summary gives proper credit to Columbus: He "opened the Atlantic slave trade and launched one of the greatest waves of genocide known in history."

Within a society that glorifies historical malefactors like Columbus, it is left to teachers like Weatherford, and those at Heart of the Earth Survival School, to tell the truth in the hope that we can learn from the past and heal the wounds caused by injustice.

We should be mindful of what lies ahead in 1992, and join those groups already organizing to spoil the big party being planned to honor Columbus.

— *Mordecai Specktor*



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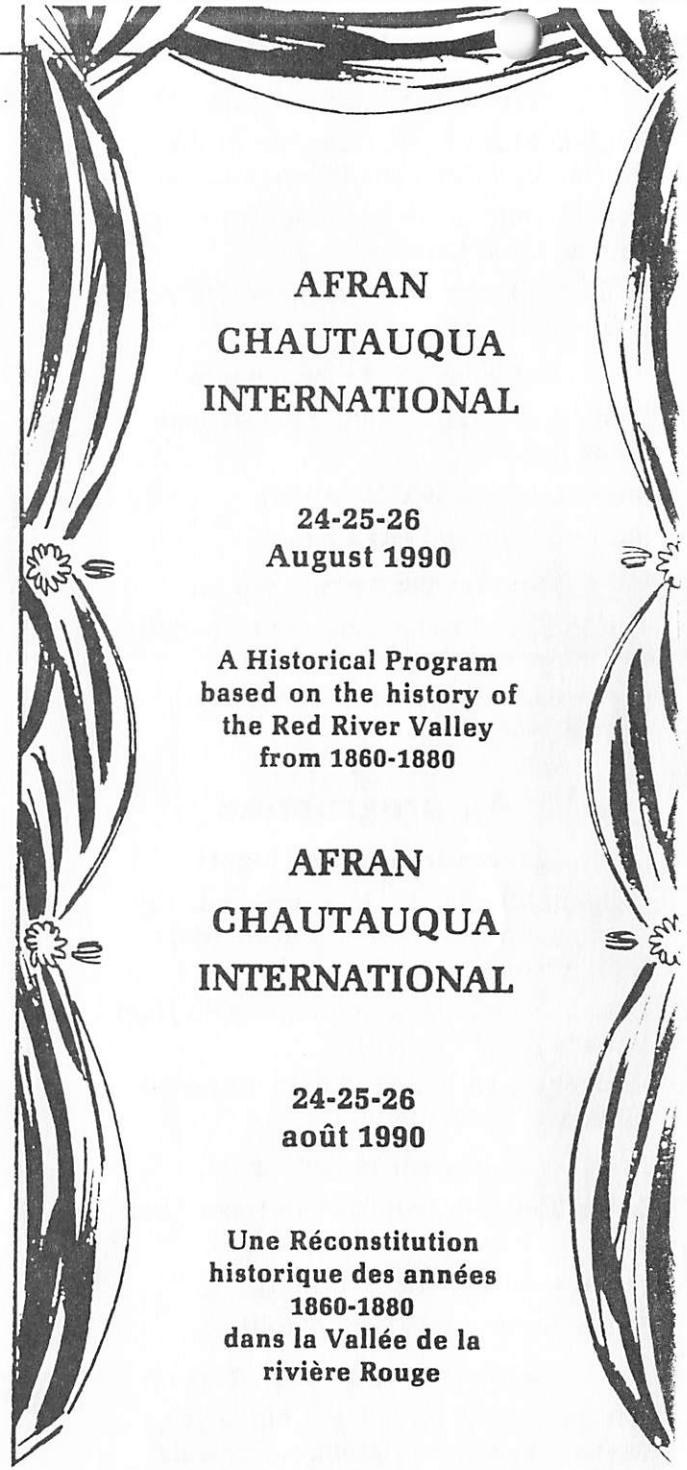
**24-25-26
August 1990**

A Historical Program
based on the history of
the Red River Valley
from 1860-1880

**AFRAN
CHAUTAUQUA
INTERNATIONAL**

**24-25-26
août 1990**

Une Réconstitution
historique des années
1860-1880
dans la Vallée de la
rivière Rouge



List of Presenters

Friday 24: 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

William MacTavish, Governor of the Hudson Bay Company (Barry McPherson)
Donald Smith, Commissioner from Upper Canada (Fred Carsted)
Bridget O'Leary, Irish immigrant (Sherry O'Donnell)

Saturday 25: 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Louis Riel and the Métis people (Jean-Louis Hébert)
James J. Hill (David B. Miller)
Pierre Bottineau (Virgil Benoit)

Sunday 26: 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

The Valley Mosaic: a group presentation by Chippewas, Métis, Canadians, Germans, Irish, Scots, Norwegians, Swedes and others.

Au programme

Le vendredi 24: 19H.-21H.

William MacTavish, gouverneur de la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson (Barry McPherson)
Donald Smith, commissionnaire du Haut Canada (Fred Carsted)
Bridget O'Leary, immigrante irlandaise (Sherry O'Donnell)

Le samedi 25: 19H.-21H.

Louis Riel et le peuple Métis (Jean-Louis Hébert)
James J. Hill (David B. Miller)
Pierre Bottineau (Virgil Benoit)

Le dimanche 26: 19H.-21H.

Les peuples de la Vallée: Chippewas, Métis, Canadiens, Irlandais, Ecossais, Allemands, Norvégiens, Suédois et autres

Chautauqua is a historical program where characters reappear on the stage to present their views about what happened during their lives.

Chautauqua takes place under a large tent. AFRAN Chautauqua is a program that every person interested in history will want to see.

Chautauqua est un programme historique où les personnages réapparaissent sur la scène pour raconter les grands événements de leurs vies.

Chautauqua, c'est de l'histoire sous la grande tente.

AFRAN Chautauqua: un programme sans pareil pour toute personne intéressée par l'histoire.

PLACE: The historic Old Crossing and Treaty Park at Huot, Minnesota

A different program every day

MATINEE: August 25 and 26

(12-1:30 p.m.) Folk Dance workshop with folk stories

(2-4 p.m.) "Daily Life of the Red River Cart Drivers"

Encampment with Indian tipis to visit

(4:30-6:00 p.m.) Workshop of songs (in French and English) on the theme of the history of the Red River Valley

EVENING: 24-25-26 (7-9 p.m.)

CHAUTAUQUA: The Red River Valley as a frontier, area of development and a cultural mosaic

Each evening a different program under the tent (in English)

\$2 per person

LIEU: Au parc historique (Old Crossing and Treaty Park) à Huot au Minnesota

Un programme différent chaque jour

MATINEE: le 25 et le 26

(12H:00-1H:30) Atelier de danse folklorique

(14H-16H) "La Vie quotidienne des charretiers de la rivière Rouge"

Campement de tipis indiens à visiter

(16H30-18H) Atelier de chansons sur le thème de l'histoire à travers la chanson (en français et anglaise)

SOIREE: 24-25-26 (19H-21H)

CHAUTAUQUA: la frontière, la croissance et la mosaïque culturelle de la Vallée

Chaque soir un programme différent sous la grande tente (en anglais)

2 \$ par personne

AFRAN CHAUTAUQUA INTERNATIONAL

is sponsored by the Association of the French of the North (AFRAN) with partial funding from the Minnesota Humanities Commission in cooperation with the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Legislature of the State of Minnesota.

For more information please write to: AFRAN Box 101 Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

AFRAN CHAUTAUQUA INTERNATIONAL est parrainé par l'Association des Français du Nord (AFRAN) avec des fonds partiels de la Minnesota Humanities Commission en coopération avec le National Endowment for the Humanities et la Législature de l'Etat du Minnesota.

Pour de plus amples renseignements veuillez écrire à: AFRAN Box 101 Red Lake Falls, Minnesota 56750.