



chez nous

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La société canadienne-française

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L'ANNÉE DES GRANDES EAUX

What better time to review the history of the French and the St. Louis MO area than now, after the great flood of 1993?

Back in 1785, the residents of the Mississippi River town of Ste. Genevieve, about 60 miles south of St. Louis, experienced another flood of the century.

This year they called "l'anne des grandes eaux" or "the year of the great flood". After that flood the town was relocated three miles north.

This year was also "l'anne des grandes eaux", the Mississippi still in control of many of those who attempted unsuccessfully to control her. When last we checked the old part of Ste. Genevieve, as well as nearby French historic sites across the river in Illinois, were saved.

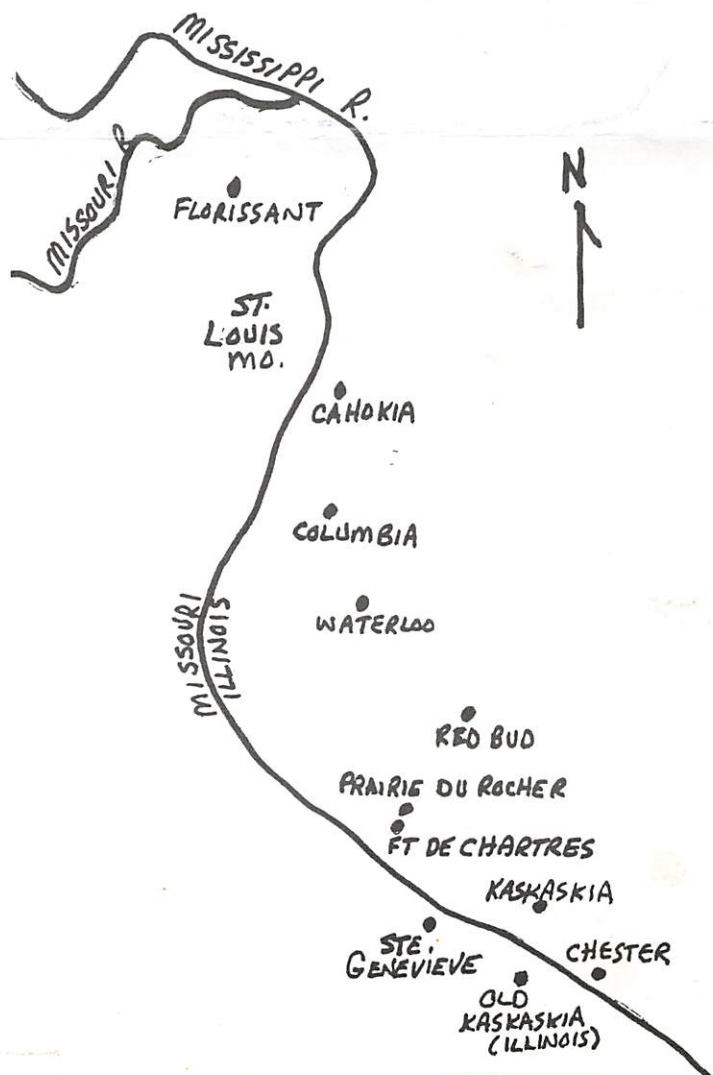
The following articles bring the historic St. Louis area a bit more into focus. For those interested in historic reference points, note that it was in 1759 at the Plains of Abraham that the French lost Quebec City to the English (in 1763 the final treaty ending conflict was signed); Ft. Snelling (Minneapolis MN) was established about 1820; Louis and Clark made their famous expedition in 1803; Prairie du Chien WI got its start in 1685.

Quote of the day

Minneapolis
Tribune 1/23/93

Included on a list of French phrases for the Clinton family cat, Socks, as provided by Henry Beard, author of "Advanced French for Exceptional Cats":

**"Oui, j'ai eprouve de l'herbe aux chats, mais je ne m'ai jamais en rouler."
(Translation: "Yes, I tried catnip, but I didn't roll around in it.")**



PROPERTY OF
AMERICAN-CANADIAN
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

from the book
ST. LOUIS: A CONCISE HISTORY
by William Barnaby Faherty S.J.

(published by St. Louis Convention &
Visitors Bureau, 1990)

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FRENCH DAYS AND FRENCH WAYS

When Jean Jacques Blaise d'Abbadie became governor of French Louisiana in 1763, he granted to Gilbert Antoine Maxent, a well-known merchant of New Orleans, the exclusive right to trade with the Indians on the Missouri River and the west bank of the Mississippi. Maxent commissioned Pierre Laclède, the son of a French lawyer who had crossed the Atlantic to New Orleans eight years before, to set up a trading post in Upper Louisiana.

As junior partner of the firm Maxent, Laclède and Company, the well-educated young Frenchman went upriver with twenty-four hired men in August of that same year. In November, he chose a terraced spot for his post on the west bank of the Mississippi River, about twelve miles south of the confluence of the Missouri. He received permission to store his supplies over the winter at Fort Chartres, one of the two most powerful fortifications of the French Empire in North America, situated on the east bank of the Mississippi, about fifty miles to the south. He set up winter quarters at the neighboring village of Ste. Anne. Many of those villagers were planning to move to Lower Louisiana and escape from imminent English domination. Laclède prevailed on the residents of a neighboring settlement, St. Phillippe, to move to his new post on the other side of the river.

Laclède's men from New Orleans with several recruits from Fort Chartres, Ste. Genevieve and Cahokia, began building log structures at the chosen place in mid-February of the following year (1764). Mrs. Margaret Blondeau Guion, presumably the first woman to come to St. Louis, crossed the river from Cahokia in late May to join her husband, Amable, who had signed up with Laclède. By that time, she recalled many years later, the crew had erected only two or three huts, one of them belonging to Laclède. Later the men built a substantial rock house that served as Laclède's home and office and other log houses.

Laclède sent a team of men up the Missouri to trade with the tribes, while he, as director and organizer, remained in St. Louis, as he called his trading post, named for King Louis IX of France. British traders from Montreal and other places

soon came to see him as a formidable rival. A Scots officer spoke of Laclède as "sensible, clever and well-educated." Eventually, he would be able to buy out his senior partner Maxent.

St. Louis would have remained a small but prosperous trading post for many years had it not been that King Louis XV ceded the land east of the Mississippi to his enemy England. British soldiers had already expelled French-Canadian residents on the Acadian peninsula, later Nova Scotia. The French in Illinois faced a major decision.

During an entire generation, these people had lived on that rich bottomland mainly in an area fifty miles below the site of St. Louis near the French Fort Chartres. They did not want to give up their rich farms and abandon their small houses. But they would have no part of English rule. Those who wanted to become traders went to St. Louis. Those who wished to farm crossed the Mississippi River to Ste. Genevieve and others later started farming villages near St. Louis. St. Louis' first settlers, then, were not pioneers carving homes in the wilderness like the Virginia frontiersmen pushing into Kentucky at the same time. They were, instead, chiefly established villagers of the region who moved to new homes west of the river, Whites and Blacks, some slave some free.

Although he had no civil capacity, Laclède tentatively laid out the village as new residents arrived. Rectangled blocks stretched for a half mile north and south, but went back from the river only to the third street. The blocks were longer east and west (340 feet) than north and south (240 feet) and stood in contrast to the village itself that stretched ten blocks north and south along the river, but was only three blocks deep to the west. The central block at the river bank served as the Place d'Armes, the parade ground. The block west of this housed Laclède's headquarters. The third block Laclède reserved for a church. Beyond the first ridge stretched valuable land for the settlers, divided eventually, according to French custom, in long narrow strips stretching west from the town. The common fields lay to the southwest.

Some of the French settlers brought slaves with them from Illinois. The French Code that forbade immoderate punishment, separation of families, and molesting of female slaves softened a bit the derogation inherent in slavery. The Code also required the master to teach his people the Christian religion. Owners and slaves worshipped in the same church and the same priest baptized them. It was a common practice among the French to free their slaves and remember them in their wills.

In the fall of 1765, when the trading post turned village had not yet celebrated its second birthday,

Louis St. Ange de Bellerive, Commandant of the Illinois Country—as the French called the middle Mississippi region—turned over Fort Chartres to the British and made St. Louis his headquarters, according to instructions from New Orleans. Many more east bank French went with him.

His father, an earlier commandant, had guided historian F. X. Charlevoix on his western journey in 1721 and led 1,400 French and Indians in 1730 to northern Illinois to break the power of the Fox Indians who had menaced the entire region.

Even before that, the son had accompanied his father on the Bourgmont expedition to western Missouri in 1723 and gone on to Comanche country the following year. During his 28 years as commandant at Vincennes on the Wabash River, Louis St. Ange de Bellerive had won the confidence of his fellow French and the Indians of the region. He would hold both civil and military control in St. Louis until the Spanish officials arrived to take charge.

Few men in the years ahead would ever take leadership in St. Louis with the experience and background that this French-Canadian frontiersman possessed. He set up the "Custom of Paris," the most liberal of all French codes that created a climate of popular participation in local government. He gave title to the home sites that Laclede had allotted to the inhabitants. He welcomed the visit of an old friend, Chief Pontiac, to St. Louis. A few years before, St. Ange had urged the Ottawa warrior to stay at peace with the British. When a renegade Indian, bribed by a Scots trader, murdered Pontiac at Cahokia a short time later, St. Ange had the chief's body brought back across the river to be buried on its banks with full military honors as an ally of the French. It was the first significant funeral in early St. Louis history. During St. Ange's term, Joseph Taillon built a dam and a mill on the little creek just south of the village. A large pond gradually developed to the west.

When the first Spanish lieutenant-governor, Pedro Piernas, arrived in 1770, St. Ange welcomed him, and accepted his offer of a captaincy in the Spanish service. Piernas sought St. Ange's advice on Indian affairs and ratified what he had done in his four years. The Spaniard renewed the privileges of the traders on the Missouri, and generally let the townsfolk run their own village. He did order them to build a church in the block set aside for it, and invited the pastor of Kaskaskia, Father Pierre Gibault, to come up the river to bless it in June of that same year (1770). The first resident pastor, a Capuchin Franciscan from the Rhineland, Father Bernard de Limpach, arrived in May six

years later just in time to bless a more substantial church on the same site. During his twelve years he was to serve all the people, baptizing 410 Whites, 106 Blacks and 92 Indians.

The presence of Indians in slavery had distressed early lieutenant governors. The Spanish code forbade enslaving native Americans. Sixty-nine Indians were in bondage when Piernas arrived. He was not able to move immediately against this practice; but gradually the practice of enslaving Indians lessened. In the 1770s, the village was home for 339 Whites, 33 free Blacks and 274 Indian and black slaves.

While St. Louis continued to lure the Illinois and Canadian French who wanted to trade, those who wanted to farm settled on the rich acres not far away. The first group came in 1767 and chose a spot to the south of the village, eventually called Carondelet. In the early days of rivalry between the two settlements, St. Louisans chided their southern neighbors for being short of cash. The Carondelet residents, in turn, ridiculed St. Louisans for lacking food.

A second group of rural settlers chose a spot twenty miles northwest of St. Louis in one of the richer upland farm areas in the state, called Florissant Valley. There they began the village of St. Ferdinand, the name the Spanish authorities gave to the church. In spite of their rich farms, many of the villagers were to move west into the mountain trade in the years ahead.

The Spanish authorities kept a token garrison in St. Louis. It consisted of two sergeants, five corporals, one drummer and 25 soldiers. These soldiers would not be enough to defend the city against a major attack. The townsfolk had militia companies of 151 infantrymen and nine officers under Captain Jean Baptiste Martigny and of 47 cavalrymen and three officers under Captain Ernest Pourre.

In 1780, Spain joined France in alliance with the American colonies in their war for independence. St. Louis had to be ready for trouble. It came soon. The British planned a pincer movement against the Mississippi Valley. In the South, Spanish Governor Bernardo de Galvez checkmated British efforts. In the North, no one checked General Patrick Sinclair at Mackinac. He induced a thousand Indians to move on St. Louis and Cahokia. The American frontiersman, George Rogers Clark, who had conquered the Illinois country two years before, had conferred with Fernando de Leyba, second lieutenant-governor after Piernas, on mutual defense.

Though he was so ill he would die before the summer was over, De Leyba summoned regulars and militia from Ste. Genevieve, called in the hunters from the Meramec and Cuivre Rivers and had the townsfolk build a tower and dig a trench around the city. The attacking Indians killed 14 Whites and seven Blacks, wounded six Blacks and one White, and captured 12 Whites and 13 Blacks in or near the village. But the village withstood its first siege. The Spanish and American authorities soon counter-attacked and freed the prisoners. St. Louis had sustained its only siege. Over the next two hundred years it was never again attacked by hostile forces. By way of contrast, in that same period, Paris, the city whose laws St. Louis lived by at the time, would face seven sieges and be captured four times by enemy troops.

During January 1781, Lt. Gov. Francisco De Leyba's successor, Cruzat, sent the St. Louis militia, assisted by Cahokia troops and Potawatomi allies, on a preventive foray to the south-eastern tip of Lake Michigan. They destroyed a cache of supplies the British intended to use in a spring offensive, and returned safely to St. Louis without the loss of one man. This was St. Louis' one positive contribution to the success of the American Revolution. In October of that same year (1781), Cornwallis surrendered to the Americans and French at Yorktown.

In the meantime, Laclede had died in 1778, deeply in debt. Auguste Chouteau, the son of a New Orleans pastry cook, who, as a boy of fourteen, had come up the river with Laclede in 1764, gradually took over the latter's business position. Chouteau purchased Laclede's trading house and block. He also secured the mill and dam. The "pond" behind the dam, where Union Station now stands, soon bore Chouteau's name. In 1786, he married the daughter of Gabriel Cerre, the wealthiest merchant of the area, who had recently moved to St. Louis from Kaskaskia. Chouteau's sister Victoire married a well-educated and prosperous merchant, Charles Gratiot. Gradually, the interlocking Chouteaus became a financial power. Auguste's brother, Pierre Chouteau, solidified the Osage trade with the support of the Spanish authorities. The Chouteaus did \$200,000 business annually in the fur trade of the 1790s.

Lt. Gov. Zenon Trudeau, an able Louisiana-born administrator (1792-99), urged local merchants to explore the Upper Mississippi River. The governor-general, Baron de Carondelet, offered a prize to anyone who might find a way to the Pacific. A group of merchants accepted the challenge. Under the leadership of Jacques Clamorgan, a capitalist

adventurer, they sent two unsuccessful expeditions upriver. A third reached a Mandan village, but failed also. When St. Louis merchants purchased goods from the British in violation of the mercantile laws of both empires, Trudeau did not enforce the regulations. But he did strengthen the town defenses with a stockade and four stone towers.

The lieutenant-governor generously granted land to individuals in the village and the surrounding area. Even after Illinois became American territory, immigration continued. The old Northwest Territory, that comprised the future states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan and Wisconsin, had a poor government; land titles were unclear, slavery was forbidden and raiding Indians regularly swooped down from the Great Lakes. The Spanish government worked to attract settlers. Trudeau welcomed Anglo-American newcomers, including Daniel Boone, who lived his late years in St. Charles County, twenty five miles west of St. Louis. Trudeau did not enforce the religious restrictions common to all colonial empires. As a result, the district of St. Louis grew from 1,316 in 1795 to 2,447 people in 1800.

As in all frontier towns, the children of St. Louis had few opportunities for formal schooling. Father Bernard de Limpach, the Capuchin pastor for twelve years (1776-1788), taught the basics of the Christian faith. After 1774, Jean-Baptiste Trudeau combined periods of operating a small school with forays into the fur country. Madame Marie Rigauche opened a school for girls in 1797. Surprisingly in such a milieu, the private libraries of the village contained over 2,000 titles by the end of the colonial period. They ranged from Jean Jacques Rousseau's latest essay to Bourdaloue's sermons of the previous century. Laclede, the post's founder, had brought a library of 200 books when he came up from New Orleans. Few Anglo-Americans crossing the Alleghenies brought any books with them besides the King James version of the Bible.

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Historic battle

Belleville (IL) News-Democrat
late July or early August 1993

Rescuers from 26 states, 3 foreign countries help Ste. Genevieve survive

Associated Press

STE. GENEVIEVE, Mo. — It took a lot of sweat and sandbags to save history in this French settlement town. It will take much, much more to build a future.

Like many Mississippi River towns, the quaint hamlet of Ste. Genevieve, located 60 miles south of St. Louis, waged a do-or-die fight against the flood. At stake were buildings as old as this nation. They survived, but at a price: The battle cost about \$2 million, more than the town's annual budget.

"We have mortgaged our future to save our past," said Bernard Schram, who shares a 199-year-old home with his wife, Vion. "We're going to be in hock for the rest of our lives. It would be a tragedy if we saved the historic district and ended up with a non-viable community."

Welcome to Round II of the Flood Wars: The water is going down. The bills are piling up. And though the river was kept away from the famous French colonial buildings, it's too soon to celebrate.

"We won the battle, but we haven't won the war until it's all cleaned up and everyone is back to a normal life and that could be another two to three years," said Mayor Bill Anderson.

Parts of Ste. Genevieve outside its historic district remain swamped by 10 feet of water. Homes are evacuated. There's no safe drinking water. Businesses are closed; the annual Jour de Fete, a festival that attracts tens of thousands to the town, was canceled for this weekend.

Some of the flood's impact already is apparent.

"The heavy trucks have just torn up our streets," Schram said. "The water system is under water. We're going to have to flush out all the sewers. In a sense, we're going to have to rebuild the whole infrastructure."

Anderson estimated that damages to bridges, streets, sewer lines and other city property is about \$16 million.



FLOOD MESSAGE: Sign in front of Ann Hadel's Lucretia's Restaurant tells its own story

That doesn't include about 300 damaged or destroyed homes and the cost of hiring contractors, buying sandbags and other expenses to fend off the flood waters.

Ste. Genevieve, population 4,400, has an annual budget of \$1.7 million; Anderson is counting on government aid to bail out the town. A fund-raising drive also has collected \$72,000.

Ironically, Ste. Genevieve's troubles came weeks after the National Trust for Historic Preservation listed the town as one of America's 11 most endangered historic places, citing inadequate flood protection.

Ste. Genevieve, founded in 1735, was once home to French noblemen, merchants and, briefly, ornithologist John James Audubon. It has the nation's largest collection of French colonial buildings — 33, some dating to

the 1770s, with distinctive vertical logs.

For years, Ste. Genevieve has been trying to get a federal flood wall, but it can't afford the local 25 percent share for the \$40 million protection.

"We don't have \$10 million," said Vern Bauman, levee district president. "There's no way we can do it."

Ste. Genevieve has three levees; one was breached in the flood.

During the flood, thousands of volunteers, many of them captivated by the town's struggle, flocked here from 26 states, France, Canada and Sweden to join the sandbagging brigade. The river hit a record 49.6 feet before dropping.

"We feel a sense of accomplishment we've managed this long," said Sandy Koller, planning and zoning administrator. "There's a sense of relief. At

least we're talking cleanup. A week ago, we weren't even doing that."

"We feel we have been spared," said Ann Hadel, owner of Lucretia's restaurant, where a sign outside proclaims: Ste. Genevieve Levee: Eighth Wonder of the World.

Hadel wasn't as lucky. She estimates a 90 percent drop in her business.

But Ste. Genevieve has rebounded before.

The town was wiped out in 1785, the l'anne des grandes eaux — the year of the great flood. It relocated about three miles north.

Some early settlers, including Louis Bolduc, moved their houses to higher ground before the flood. His still stands today.



At left: Les Canadiens Errants perform at the Minnesota Historical Society on March 7. The group has been busy, including performing at the Chatauqua at Red Lake Falls August 28-29. Great job!

EDITORS NOTE: In the Mai-Juin, 1993, issue of Chez Nous we quoted some material about Pierre Bottineau without knowing who to attribute. The source is: A Genealogy of the Ancestors and Descendants of Pierre Bottineau. . . . by James W. Chesebro, June 24, 1989.



America's French colonial days are remembered at Fort de Chartres.

In Southern Missouri & Illinois they say Vive la French heritage

Story and photo
by John Robert Miller

In the early 18th century it was the French, not the British, that dominated the largest portion of what would some day become the United States. The colonies of King Louis XV occupied nearly 10 times the area of their fierce English rivals, though with a much smaller population. Major French cities such as Quebec and New Orleans were the equal of any in the world and there was already a major network of transportation in place with that mightiest of rivers, the Mississippi, as the chief conveyor.

In the heart of this French new world lay a very vital stretch of rural countryside known as the French Colonial

District. Extending roughly from what is now Cahokia, Ill. down to Chester and then across the river into St. Genevieve, Mo., this fertile land served as not only the major supplier of food to the whole of the French territory but was also the primary connector between its two largest areas of population.

The common people of the region were generally poor and their mere survival was a monumental task, but they worked hard and banded together to stave off both the natural elements and their British adversaries, who had hired several tribes of Indians to fight for them.

Today a drive through this beautiful area evokes a sense of history that not even the finest textbooks can supply.

As you walk the trails, explore the towns and visit homes and museums, the overall sense of time and trial, of courage and endurance, and of life and death is overwhelming.

As Illinois Route 3 winds its way southeast of St. Louis, you will discover statues and cemeteries (some with markers dating back to the early 1700s), quaint towns with either a French or German flair, dozens of historic buildings, as well as restaurants, shops and inns.

Birthplace of the Midwest

Begin your journey in Cahokia, immediately southeast of downtown St. Louis. Missionaries from Quebec arrived in Cahokia in the late 17th century bringing a gospel of comfort and hope to starving and weary Indians. Soon a small trading village grew up around the mission the Jesuit order had established, and civilization on the mid-Mississippi began.

Today, at this birthplace of the Midwest, there are several reminders of yesterday set amid the smokestacks of modern industry.

The Church of the Holy Family, at the intersection of Route 3 and Illinois Highway 157, is the oldest church building west of the Alleghenies. Built almost entirely of walnut logs on the original mission site, it was dedicated in September 1799 as a parish of the diocese of Baltimore, which comprised all territory within the original limits of the United States. It served as a house of worship during French, British and American rule and in 1971 was named a national historic landmark. Around back you will find a cemetery whose tombstones clearly reveal the hardships of those days. Young lives were cut short by nature and disease.

The Nicholas Jarrot Mansion, located next door to the church, is the oldest brick house in Illinois. A couple of blocks west (112 Main St., just off Route 3) explore the Cahokia courthouse. Built in 1737, this is the oldest surviving building in the Midwest and is an excellent example of French pioneer-style construction. Inside a small museum explains what life was like in the days of the French Colonial District.

A wurst adventure

From Cahokia, Route 3 transports us back through time and into the quaint German heritage towns of Columbia and Waterloo. These both have the look and feel of old-fashioned German hard work and values. In Columbia, the famous Eberhard's Restaurant, serving traditional German fare, is a sure hit for

Turn page.

dinner. After dinner, you might feel like browsing through the many antique shops and the Gundlach-Grosse House, a Greek-style home built in 1867.

In Waterloo be sure to have your camera ready for the lovely historic district, including the Monroe County Courthouse and the nearly 200 other 19th-century buildings.

Vive la French influence

Next you will enter Red Bud, a charming little town featuring architecture with a heavy French influence. The wrought iron balconies on some of the buildings along Main Street might remind you of those in another charming little French town to the south, New Orleans, La.

A short distance out of Red Bud you will temporarily leave Route 3 and head west on Illinois Highway 155 for seven miles to a historic treasure chest.

The tiny village of Prairie du Rocher, founded in 1722, is the oldest town in Illinois. Its population is still just about 700 and the flavor remains decidedly French. Here you can visit La Maison Creole, the Creole House, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and offers a perfect example of French colonial architecture. Constructed in the long, low French Mississippi style, it dates back to the late 1750s. Also be sure to stop at the Prairie du Rocher church and cemetery.

They still celebrate the New Year the old French style in Prairie du Rocher with traditional "La Guianne" a festival in which the townspeople dress up in costumes for singing and dancing. If your idea of holiday fun includes fine French food and pastries, then this is the place to be.

Another four miles west on Highway 155 brings you to the impressive Fort de Chartres. This stone-walled compound was completed in 1753 when the French flag still flew proudly over the entire area. It fell 12 years later to the British infantry.

As you enter its gates today, you get an idea of what life must have been like for the soldier of those days. Step inside the original powder room, climb the old wooden steps to the sentry lookout and visit the Peithman Museum which

houses exhibits that explain the social, religious, and cultural life of native Americans. And don't forget to visit La Pelleterie, a gift shop that offers more than just the usual souvenirs. Daily hours are from 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Return to Route 3, drive for another 20 minutes or so until you arrive at the Fort Kaskaskia historic site. If your schedule permits, this would be the perfect place for a picnic lunch. Located on a bluff overlooking the confluence of the Mississippi and Kaskaskia Rivers, this beautiful place is as breathtaking as the views.

The original town of Kaskaskia was located just across the river from this imposing bluff. During the French and Indian War, its residents, fearing an imminent attack by the British, petitioned for a fort and offered to supply the materials. Their petition was granted and in 1761 the garrison, built of heavy palisades, was completed. But the same villagers who had labored in construction of Fort Kaskaskia ultimately destroyed it when, in 1766, they vowed to never let the victorious British occupy a fort which had been built to fight them. Today all that remain are the earthworks which supported the dream.

Down the road from the Fort Kaskaskia site is one of the trip's highlights, the Pierre Menard Home. Known as the "Mount Vernon of the West," this is the Mississippi Valley's finest example of southern French colonial architecture. Start with the slide show on the history of the area and visit the small museum, both in the basement of the house, then tour the house. During the holidays the home is decorated and there are special events such as candlelight tours and open house. Call (618) 859-3031 for more information.

I yam what I yam

Soon Route 3 brings you to Chester, a town which is perhaps more famous for a history of a different kind; it is the birthplace of Popeye the Sailor. The famous spinach-eating matie was created by Chester cartoonist Elzie C. Segar from his recollections of a local scrapper. As you approach the Missis-

siippi, you will find a six-foot statue of Popeye in the heart of Segar Memorial Park.

It's time to leave Illinois now by crossing the old Chester toll bridge into Missouri. Drive north on County Road H to St. Mary's, and if you have time, visit Kaskaskia Island which is actually the only part of Illinois west of the Mississippi. This is the home of the "Liberty Bell of the West," a gift from King Louis XV in 1741 to the church of the Immaculate Conception in old Kaskaskia. Tradition says that inhabitants of the now vanished town rang the bell on July 4, 1778 after receiving word that France had joined the War of Independence.

From Kaskaskia Island return to St. Mary's and continue on County Road H to Highway 67 and into Ste. Genevieve, the oldest settlement in Missouri. You might want to spend the night here so you can take in all this lovely little town has to offer. There are several bed-and-breakfast inns in the enchanting historic district and plenty of motels along Highway 67.

The Tourist Center at Third and Merchant Streets (314) 883-5750, can give you all the information you need to make your visit complete, but some of the sites you will definitely want to see and admire are the Ste. Genevieve Museum, the Felix Valle historic site, the Green Tree Tavern and, sitting beautifully in the middle of town, the Ste. Genevieve Catholic Church.

If you feel like dining in history, try the Old Brick House built in 1790. It is believed to be the oldest brick building west of the Mississippi. On Sundays you can feast on their famous chicken dinner. From there you might stop in one of the half dozen antique shops that dot the historical district.

Your journey through this little bit of France in the Midwest ends here, but the images of people and places of long ago will linger on in your mind long after you arrive home. ■

(John Robert Miller is a contributor from Eureka, Mo.)

LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE / FRENCH IN AMERICA - 1994

The 10th edition ! of the calendar (8-1/2 x 11 inches) is now available.

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Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

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Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

LSCF PICNIC JULY 25
by Justa Cardinal

You missed a great picnic (if you weren't there) at our annual summer event at Spooner Centennial Park in Little Canada on July 25.

There were about forty present - better than our regular monthly meetings. We had the usual excellent selection of foods. John England had his "special Pea Soup"; of course, it ran short too soon!

Vocal renditions by "Les Errants" filled the air. We played "join in" when we heard a few words of the tete a tetes or when some word or name caught our ears.

Leroy Dubois displayed his lineage "en ronde" - which was the topic to pick up. We have a little idea for you and for Chez Nous about genealogy. Make a list from you present names, working back if possible to the original ancestor. It won't be easy, but well rewarding. Generations can be numbered on completion.

1. Your name
2. Your parent's names
3. Your grandparents
etc.

Make family sheets for each generation. Start with what you know. Don't panic - don't give up.

We'll spend some time at each meeting - with perhaps four or five names, and see where they appear in our respective sheets. I'm sure there will be surprises - and fun. Let's extend our reaches for the unknown.

The next meeting will be October 4th at St. Louis Church 7:30 PM.



Leo Gouette, Twin Cities LSCF President, talks about future plans at the picnic in Little Canada, July 25.

CANADIANS GIVEN ABSENTEE VOTE OPTION

For the first time in history, Canadian citizens residing outside Canada may vote in Canadian federal elections following amendments to the Canada Elections Act in June of this year.

Applications for inclusion on the international registry of voters are now being received by the chief electoral officer of Canada. Canadian citizens aged 18 years or older must have resided outside Canada for five consecutive years or less and must register as soon as possible to vote in the next federal election, expected to be called for a date in fall 1993.

Printed guides containing an application for the international vote registry may be obtained from Elections Canada in Ottawa, Ontario or from the Canadian Consulate General in Minneapolis. Details may be obtained by calling 1-800-267-VOTE (267-8683).



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NEWSLETTER OF Janvier - Février, 1994 VOL. 15 NO. 4

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

THE GIFT

Five little kids giggling in the kitchen.

"Parlez français a la table ou vous ne mangerez pas" (Speak French at the table or you can't eat).

"Yes, right here, this is where my dad would make me get down and kiss the floor, "Baise le plancher!" if I spoke English in the house!"

My aunts uncles and cousins "making the rounds" from home to home at Christmas time. . . "en bonne sante", "prendre un petit coup".

We didn't eat pea soup. We had "soup aux pois".

"They came from Sainte Ursule in Maskinonge, Quebec."

"They would play cards on Aunt Annie's back porch until after dark, speaking only in French."

"They all got up early and went to Mass every morning."

"None of us spoke English when we started school."

The stories and memories I have from that wonderful, big, old, brick house I grew up in, built by my grandfather, Joseph Girard, as a wedding gift for my grandmother, Virginia LaMathe. This was a legacy given to me by my French Canadian family. It would be on a historical committee trip in 1984 that 65 members of La Societe would come to this same big, old, brick house and dine with me and members of my family as they shared the French Canadian heritage of Chippewa Falls WI.

But let's back track a little. It started with a trip to Quebec in 1967, an introduction to Quebecoise Yvonne Girard Lessard, my cousin. the interest started to grow. In 1979 my father, Clarence Girard, passed away. The questions begin and the answerer is gone. The interest continued to grow. A letter in French from Canada, Sainte Anne's in North Minneapolis, "Try Our Lady of Lourdes." "No, but call Evelyn Lund at . . ." "Mr. Girard, you should join our group, I'll send you information. Now call Lucille Ingram, she lives by you, she can translate for you."

1981 - Evelyn - "Mr. Girard, you've been a member for over a year. Don't you think you should come to a meeting? I came to the potluck Christmas party, I came empty handed. "I heard you singing the Christmas caroles, come and join Les Canadiennes Errants, our singing group." Evenings at Carmelle's with everyone speaking in French (except me), the trip to Chisholm with the singing group. Carmelle arguing in French with Francine. What a delight!

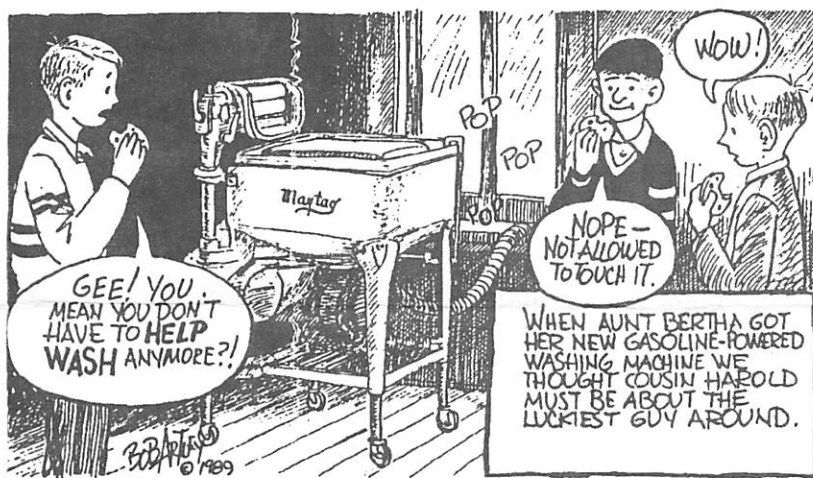
Merci Beaucoup to Pierre Girard, reprinted from NVJ, Spring, 1988

TWO COMMENTARIES ON LIVING BEFORE MODERN CONVENIENCES

by Marvin Campbell
Brainerd MN

We take for granted these days simple things that were, in times past, not so simple. In the following writings, Marvin Campbell, whose ancestors were from Quebec, and who also shares French-Canadian roots with us (even though his surname is Scotch!) talks about how life was before fancy-dandy washing machines and refrigerators. Read on, and enjoy. And consider sending us some of your own recollections.

WASH DAY



Memories Of A 'Former Kid Distributed by Extra Newspaper Features

The cartoon brings back very pleasant memories.

Mother did the washing in an antiquated hand operated machine until Dad bought her first Maytag. It was a great day for Mother and the entire family. This wonderful new machine was purchased when I was about 11 years of age when we lived on the Torkelson farm. We had no electricity, but we did enjoy the gas stove and lamps. The addition of a gas powered washer was a small miracle!

Obtaining decent water and heating it for the huge wash was always a chore as the salt water well was altogether too "hard" for household use, and the cistern¹ water often ran out, so water had

¹ For those who don't know, a cistern was usually an underground catch basin for rain water collected as run off from the roof of the house.

to be hauled in from inconvenient sources on many occasions.

Winter time in North Dakota posed challenging problems for "wash day". Snow was collected for two days prior and melted in the reservoir attached to the kitchen stove. Large copper boilers were filled with snow and placed on top of the coal fired stove. Planning the day was a chore in itself. Providing and heating the water was coordinated with preparing the noon meal - usually macaroni and tomatoes accompanied by homemade bread and butter.

Drying the washed clothes was another "experience". Outdoor lines and wooden racks were used. The extreme cold which prevailed for much of the winter instantly froze the squeaky clean sheets, pillow cases, towels and the family clothing. The process would remove much of the moisture, but the frozen results of the drying efforts necessitated moving the clothes into the kitchen and other rooms in the house. Underwear and other wear took on all sorts of grotesque shapes as a result of the quick freeze process providing more entertainment for the whole family.

Ironing followed, all completed with heavy flat-irons heated on the kitchen range. The heat retained by this primitive method was short-lived, so it was necessary to change irons often as Mother pushed and pulled the irons over the padded ironing board which was placed near the kitchen table where the sorting of the clothes took place.

Maytag machines graced our home until the Rural Electrification program provided the farm areas with electrical conveniences in and around Minto, North Dakota, in 1944!

FOOD PRESERVATION BEFORE REFRIGERATION

The whole family was thrilled when we learned that the farmstead purchased near Minto, North Dakota, from John Chapiewski in 1934 boasted an ice shed. Anxiously, we awaited the frigid temperatures of winter so that we could cut and haul ice from the Red River. The ice was placed in the shed which held an abundance of sawdust to be used in the preserving process. Cutting and hauling the ice was tedious, but

rewarding. The large chunks which first were removed from horse-drawn sleighs weighed hundreds of pounds. Moving these clumsy chunks of "future delight" called for special skills, we quickly learned. Ice picks, heavy tongs and long stout ice chisels were used for proper placement of the blocks. A two to three inch covering of sawdust was packed around each block to insure effective insulation during the warm weather months.

The ice was harvested from potable water and was used for cooling in our "Gibson" ice box, for cooking, and for assuring summertime drinks of lemonade and a host of "Watkins" drink mixtures. Being able to extend the shelf life of fresh meats, eggs and vegetables was a source of satisfaction for all the family and yes, for many friends and relatives.

The ice would melt in the 90 degree heat of the summer and trickle down a tube into a pan where mother saved the precious fresh water to assure verdant plant growth throughout our home.

I left home in 1940, before electricity came to our farm, and despite the nostalgic and pleasant memories of ice refrigeration, a new modern "fridge" graced mother's kitchen soon after the yard light was installed.

Nature provided our basic refrigeration during most of my life on the farm - below freezing temperatures in the winter and deep artesian wells during the summer. It was not until the late forties that electricity was enjoyed on the farm, made possible by the government sponsored Rural Electrification Program.

Preserving meats and other perishables during most of the year was made possible by cooling such staples as butter, fresh cream, milk and limited meat products by submerging them in a trough through which cold running water from the artesian well flowed continuously, the overflow escaping through the pipe on the opposite end. All the farms benefitted from these wells despite the brackish and salt laden water which was, because it came from deep wells of over 150 feet, constantly at about 48 degrees fahrenheit.

Although we were far from affluent during these times, the hard work of our father coupled with mother's cooking magic assured all of us of a

cuisine which in many ways is still unmatched today - thick whipped cream, sweet fresh butter, volumes of cold refreshing milk, rich cool cream for salad dressing, puddings, sauces and desserts of all kinds.

The falling leaves of October with accompanying nightly frosts signaled the coming of winter. Plans were made to take advantage of the cold months ahead for butchering both hogs and cattle. The entire animal was utilized - the hog's blood and brains to the very tip of his curly tail. Dad was expert at meat cutting and processing, and storing the products of his labors in several ways. Tender and special cuts were canned by mother for consumption during the hot summer months. Hams and bacon were smoked and cured and hung in the cellar to be used later for special events; and often for large gatherings of relatives and friends.

The rest of the meat was wrapped and marked and placed in a large container, a barrel or tub, covered and placed in a shady spot near the house. This was our winter deepfreeze providing the very best of pork and beef during the long hard months of winter. This process was not implemented until the snow "squeaked" under the weight of our black four buckle overshoes.

Mother and Dad used many other proven methods for food preservation - eggs in water glass, a solution that extended their edibility for two to three months, sauerkraut, canned gooseberries, garden corn and many other products grown and nurtured in mother's garden. Times were often difficult, but the entire family always enjoyed good nourishing food prepared with love and care.

A PROJECT FOR A COLD WINTERS NIGHT

From the Editor: "I remember. . ." means one thing when you're my granddaughters' age (7); when you're my age (53); when you're my Dad's age (86). We all have in common that we can remember, and pass on those memories to others.

Those who came before us perhaps told stories. Some perhaps even wrote their memories, or kept photos (which they labelled with who and when information). If we're real lucky they recorded their memories on audio or videotape.

A future generation wants your memories. Why not begin the project this winter? They'll love it.

LEGEND HAS IT that every February, in St. Boniface, Manitoba (Winnipeg is a suburb of St. Boniface), there is a Festival du Voyageur. This year the Festival is February 11-20. Some say the people who go to this Festival are even hardier (some say even more foolish) than those brave souls who march in parade in St. Paul's Winter Carnival.

COME TO YOUR OWN CONCLUSIONS. Festival du Voyageur is a wonderful event. For more information call 204-237-7692 (or ask someone at the Fete on January 29 - see article elsewhere in this issue).

A RECIPE FOR QUEBEC TOURTIERE (and another for Ragout de Boulettes)

I apologize to the source of these recipes - I forgot to write down who gave it to me. Suzanne Rooney? Was it you (I think it was), or someone else? Let me know who you are, so I can give you proper credit in the next issue! The Editor.

TOURTIERE Tourtiere is traditional in French Canadian families. This traditional meat pie is eaten hot after midnight Mass on Christmas eve. The original recipe comes from the Harrowsmith Cookbook, Vol 1 edited by Pamela Cross, Camden House Publishing, 1981.

Use a lard pastry for double crust 9" pie.

1 1/2 pounds lean ground pork or pork and ground beef or ground turkey (The original recipe calls for 1 pound of pork, but I prefer 1 1/2 pounds of meat half and half, so you can add more spices if you wish, but the taste should be mild).

1/2 tsp savory
pinch of ground cloves
1/4 cup boiling water
1 large potato, cooked and washed
1 small onion, chopped
salt and pepper

Mix meat, onion and spices in a saucepan. Add boiling water. Simmer, uncovered, for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Skim off any fat. Add the mashed potato and mix well.

Roll out half the pastry to line a 9" pie plate. Place fillings in pie plate and cover with the remaining pastry. Prick with a fork. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes or until golden.

Serve piping hot topped with homemade tomato ketchup or chili sauce.

RAGOUT DE BOULETTES. Recipe from The Canadian Living Cookbook by Carol Ferguson, Random House/Madison Press 1987.

"Meatball stew" doesn't convey the spicy goodness of these lean pork meatballs simmered in broth. They are perfectly delicious with a sprinkle of parsley and a bowl of fluffy mashed potatoes or buttered noodles. This dish reheats beautifully and travels well to chalet or potluck suppers.

2 slices good-quality white bread
1/2 cup milk
2 tbsp butter
3/4 cup very finely chopped onion
2 lb finely ground lean pork [or turkey]
3 tbsp very finely chopped parsley
2 tsp salt
1/2 tsp pepper
1/4 tsp each cloves, ginger and freshly
grated nutmeg
1/2 tsp cinnamon
1 tsp dry mustard
4 cups lightly salted stock (beef or chicken)
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
3/4 cup cold water
Finely chopped parsley (optional)

Crumb or cube bread very finely and soak in milk for 5 minutes. In large skillet, melt 1 tbsp butter and saute onion until tender. Transfer to large bowl and add pork, bread and milk, parsley and seasonings. Mix thoroughly with hands; form into balls about 2 inches in diameter.

Melt remaining butter in skillet and, over medium heat, brown meatballs, one layer at a time, on all sides. Place meatballs in medium size saucepan.

Pour 1 cup stock into skillet and heat, scraping up browned bits from bottom of pan; pour this and remaining stock over meatballs. Simmer, partially covered, for 1 to 1 1/2 hours. Taste stock and adjust seasoning.

Sprinkle flour into skillet over medium heat, stirring frequently until flour becomes an even mid-caramel color; cool. In jar with tight-fitting lid, shake flour with cold water to make a smooth creamy liquid. Pour this slowly into simmering stock, stirring constantly, so stock will thicken without lumps.

Simmer stew another 10 minutes. Sprinkle generously with parsley if desired and serve. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

MAKING TOURTIERE IN THE OLD DAYS

by Henry Bernard,
Belleville IL

This story first appeared in the Novembre-December, 1986, issue of Chez Nous. Henry was a "town kid" who grew up in Grafton ND. This story is about part of his life in Grafton.

For a number of years (about 1920) Dad would buy a couple of piglets in the spring to raise. He had a pen in the back of the barn and kept them until late fall when they were butchered. They usually weighed 200 pounds or better.

He fed them by-products of wheat from the mill, they were called middlings and shorts. Then he would get buttermilk from the creamery. It was a waste product from churning cream so he could get as much as he wanted. It made rather powerful feed and the hogs grew very well.

When it came time to butcher, Dad would have somebody to help. They stuck the hogs and my mother would catch the blood to make blood sausage. Then the hogs would be scalded and the hair shaved off. Then the animal would be butchered. Salt pork would be put into the brine and into large crocks we had. Roasts were prepared and some of the meat was brought to the butcher shop to be ground for sausage. We had pork feet, headcheese and other cuts of meat.

Then mother would make meat pies. She had the lard that came from the hogs and made the pie shells and prepared the sausage and potatoes for the pies. She would make many of them at one time and stored them on the front porch which was like a deep freeze in the winter. Whenever she needed one she put it in the oven to thaw out. She did the same with the mince pies only they were made with beef. The pie shells were made of pig

lard, though. The blood sausage would be cooked and kept in the deep freeze like the other meats.

They could get the natural casings from the butcher shop (cleaned out intestines from hogs), to use to make blood sausage.

I don't know what spices were used but I do know the salt was liberally used in preserving the salt pork. Mother was always careful to use large amounts of salt. Each piece was covered with salt so there was a liberal amount between each piece of meat as she packed it. They felt that if the pieces of meat touched, the meat would spoil. Salt pork was good but when the barrel was nearly empty the bottom pieces would be so salty mother would have to boil the salt out of it before she could cook it.

Those were the days. Most everyone did some canning of meat in that fashion and it stayed until spring in the "deep freeze".

From the editor: In my Christmas mail came a wonderful poem from Sr. Ellen Murphy. CSJ. It is reprinted below. Sr. Ellen provided us with the "The Living Snowman of Grindstone Island" which appeared in the last issue of Chez Nous. Her mother was French-Canadian, and she grew up in Bachelors Grove ND.

Snowdrift

When my father swept me
in one almighty sweep
from the blue cold of the snowdrift
to his woolen shoulder, my numb cheeks
comforted against his beaver cap,
my snow-caked leggings limbered
chapped knuckles kissed, he imbued
thenceforward to this day, the drifts
of every winter snow
with feelings soft as fur
and warmed them with the smoulder of his
pipe -

his love - a sense of home.
The heart's vocabulary builds like this:
a list of meanings rubbed
from love at hand as personal as touch.

Sister Ellen adds a postscript to her poem:
"This was a North Dakota snowdrift, of course!"

AMERICAN NOTEBOOK

More Quebecers turning backs on tradition of embracing winter

Montreal, Quebec

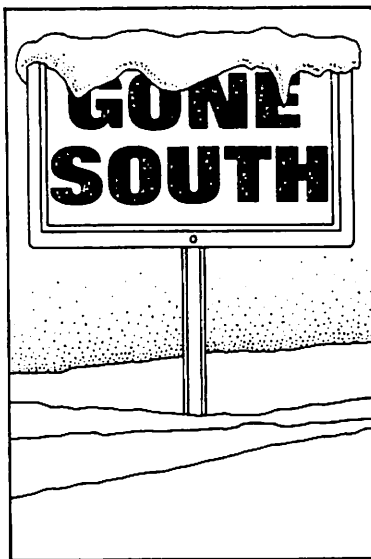
From the earliest days of French settlement in the 17th century, Quebec has taken a stubborn pride in its winters. Even Voltaire, dismissing Quebec as "a few acres of snow" after France lost the territory to British conquest in 1759, inadvertently contributed to the legend Quebecers have built of themselves as a people who have thrived in the face of bitter chills and blizzards.

But if the Quebecer of yore was a climate-hardened backwoodsman, his descendants have changed. Among Quebecers who study winter, there is rueful acknowledgment that in the era of central heating, subterranean shopping mazes and charter flights to southern climes, *l'hiverniste* of French Canadian folklore — the winterist, the Quebecer who took the snow and ice and cheerfully built a life around it — has gone soft.

The latest evidence comes from Florida. With a mixture of good humor and chagrin, Montreal newspapers reported recently on the unflattering reputations Quebecers have developed in the Florida communities where they sojourn each winter. A column in the Miami Herald and then an article in XS, a weekly paper in Fort Lauderdale, depicted the Quebecers as pallid, overweight and inclined, at least among the men, to wearing skimpy swimsuits that do little to disguise their girth.

While the Montreal newspaper *Le Devoir* suggested that vacationing Quebecers should take care not to become still less welcome in their "promised land," what attracted attention as much as the Florida articles themselves was the scale of the exodus. The Quebec government estimates that as many as 700,000 of the province's residents, about one in 10, spend part or all of their winters in the southern United States. Some in Quebec see the migration as a symptom of enfeeblement.

While their compatriots were at-



tracting criticism in Florida, Quebec's winter experts were gathering at a "winter cities" conference in Montreal that drew delegates from more than 60 cities in 20 countries, including the United States. The United Nations-sponsored conference was dedicated to "improving the quality of life of city dwellers by making the most of winter," the official program said.

For Quebecers, at least, this looks like an uphill struggle. Claude Bouchard, a physical fitness expert at Laval University in Quebec City, told conference delegates that the problem was as much one for Canada as for Quebec, with national surveys showing that levels of physical exercise dropped by 50 percent in the winter. "Residents of northern cities are more likely to be characterized by a couch-potato lifestyle," he said.

Outside the conference, it was not hard to see why. Montreal's mid-January weather set records, with nighttime temperatures sinking to 25 degrees below zero and gusts of 40 miles per hour sending pedestrians fleeing into the 14 miles of downtown subterranean passageways.

Bouchard suggested that relief from Quebecers' moroseness in winter lay mostly in more indoor recreation, away from what he called the irritants of cold, snow, bad roads and slippery sidewalks. He suggested borrowing an idea from Texas, where, he said, shopping malls are available off-hours to joggers and walkers seeking respite from the heat. "We must eliminate the myth that being active in winter means being active outside," he said.

To other Quebecers, this was heresy. Therese Dumesnil, a freelance writer from Ste.-Adele-des-Monts, a Laurentian Mountains resort, protested that Quebec should be promoting a return to outdoor activities such as skiing, skating, ice-climbing and mountain hiking, all of which she said she still enjoyed at the age of 59. "Granted, a certain amount of people just hate the winter, and others just abdicate and drive south," she said. "But I'll take you up north, anywhere in Quebec, and you'll see the beauty of it. God knows, the winter air is wonderful."

Louis-Edmond Hamelin, a Quebec geographer who spent 30 years specializing in northern studies, said that what was needed was not so much new ways of escaping "the dead season," but a new, or rather old, psychology about it. "We have to relearn that winter is a normal season; it's not a season of aversion," said Hamelin, 69. "These days, Quebecers simply don't like the winter at all. They dream of going south, of staying indoors, of getting a good meal."

— John F. Burns
New York Times



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

JANUARY 29 SOIREE & CELEBRATION

A fun evening of French celebration will be held on January 29, 1994 at the Civic Center Inn in downtown St. Paul. This event is sponsored by French organizations from Winnipeg to St. Paul. They include La Societe Canadienne francaise, les Canadiens errants, l'Alliance francaise, l'Association des Francais du Nord from Red Lake Falls, and le Festival du Voyageur of Winnipeg.

The purpose of the celebration is to bring together Minnesota and Manitoba residents who want to be part of an annual French celebration.

There will be entertainers from all along the old ox cart trail from Winnipeg to St. Paul. A brunch type buffet will be served along with coffee, hot chocolate and soft drinks. Bar service will be available at your own discretion.

Dress up in a colorful outfit, bring a friend, and some to the Civic Center Inn to be part of this fun French celebration. Please don't forget the spirit of it all. Besides the fun, we will be planning for a greater French Celebration of French Canadian and French cultures in the years to come.

Time: 7:00 PM to 10:30 PM
Saturday, January 29

Place: Day's Inn (Civic Center Inn)
7th & Kellogg near Old 7
Corners, St. Paul

Reservation: Not necessary

Questions?: Al Girard 227-7368

MARDI GRAS EVENING

from President Leo Gouette

Saturday evening February 12 LSCF will hold a Mardi Gras social evening. Plan to arrive about 6:30 p.m. Leo is asking any of you who have a favorite Canadian dish (appetizer, casserole, main course, dessert, etc.) to share your recipe with us. You can mail recipes to Leo at 880 W. Nebraska Ave., St. Paul MN 55117. We would like to have a large selection of various Canadian dishes to offer that night. This is not a potluck. There will be a reasonable charge for the meal. We hope that this will be a fundraiser for LaSociete as well. Invite your friends. Location of this festive event will be at Our Lady of Mt Carmel Catholic Church in northeast Minneapolis (701 Fillmore NE, just east of Broadway and Central at Fillmore and Summer. Call Leo Gouette (489-8306) if you need help with directions. We ask also that you let Leo know if you plan to attend, and we could use volunteers to help with the food preparation.

1994 DUES, s'il vous plait.

'Nuff said.

EVENEMENTS A VENIR

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Jan. 29 | Multi-group Reception (see story). |
| Feb. 12 | LSCF Mardi Gras Evening. |
| Mar. 7 | LSCF Meeting. Bonnie Fournier will present her very interesting slide presentation on the Yellowstone National Park Picture Postcard Project. |
| Mar. 12 | Alliance Francaise Program (see story). |

ALLIANCE FRANCAISE PROGRAM

On Saturday, March 12, Alliance Francaise will host an all day event, La Journee Quebecoise.

As of newsletter deadline no place has been set for this event, nor has a cost been established. The time will be from 10:30-4 PM. Call Alliance Francaise closer to March 12 to get location information. Their number is (612) 644-5769.

This event will include videos, talks, and live performances, all focusing on Quebec.

There will be a display of items made in, or by people from, Quebec. This display will hopefully include heirlooms and crafts from Quebec that you might loan to Alliance for the day. If you think you have some items that might be of interest call Nelly Hewitt at 222-2965 for more information.

BONJOUR MINNESOTA CHANGES TIME

We have great news from Georgette Pfannkuch. Her very entertaining radio program "Bonjour Minnesota" is moving from the morning hours to 8:00 PM every Wednesday evening on KFAI, 90.3 FM. "Bonjour Minnesota" was voted the best program of the year on KFAI.

CANADIAN ERRANTS 1993

Another year has passed with quite a few performances under our belt. We didn't have as many events, but they were somewhat different than 1992.

Mar. 7 - We put on a singing performance in conjunction with the Alliance Francaise at the Minnesota Historical Building.

Apr. 24 - We combined a performance with the youngsters from Red Lake Falls. We hope

this is the start of an exchange program each year from now on.

July 7 - Most of the group went to Menomonie, Wisconsin for a family reunion. Pierre Girard's family (Ryder Reunion) treated everyone exceptionally well.

July 18 - Quail-on-the-Hill was our next outing. As usual we were well received and we all had a good time. Christian was an excellent host (as usual).

Aug. 8 - We participated in the Little Canada Parade again. We built a float on a donated trailer and again used the canoe and other articles from the Little Canada Historical Society.

Aug. 28 - Up to Red Lake Falls for a
29 two day Chauauqua. We put on several performances and had a session with the musicians from Winnipeg. It was quite educational and we all learned a lot from the trip. We especially enjoyed the breakfast hosted by Virgil Benoit at his farm. Merci beaucoup, Virgil!

Several more performances are planned for the rest of this year. On December 11 we will be singing most of the afternoon at Murphy's Landing. That will be followed by the annual Fete Noel (Societe Christmas Party at St. Louis Church at 6:30 p.m.

We are always looking for more singers and musicians. If you would like to join us, contact Pierre Girard; 588-5465; or Al Girard: 484-5757.

To all who participated as singers, musicians, drivers, and spouses, who came and watched us practice and learn new songs, we extend our heartfelt thanks.



chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mars - Avril, 1994 VOL. 15 NO. 5

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

On becoming an "American"

Elsewhere in this issue of *Chez Nous*, Sister Ann Thomasine Sampson writes about the challenges of tracking assorted spellings of her family names. And Henry Bernard writes of his father's "loss" of the French language of his youth in Quebec.

Back in 1897, the Quebec physician and popular story teller W.H. Drummond wrote a book, *The Habitant and other French-Canadian Poems*. To some, the book seemed to ridicule the dialect of French-Canadians. Indeed, Drummond was identified as a British Imperialist in his politics. The feeling was such, apparently, that in his Preface Drummond felt it necessary to state "I feel that my friends who are already, more or less, familiar with the work, understand that I have not written the verses as examples of a dialect, or with any thought of ridicule." He went on to state further that, "[h]aving lived, practically, all my life, side by side with the French-Canadian people, I have grown to admire and love them. . . ." We accept his comments as genuine.

In the following extract from this book the narrator - an ordinary man - talks about his friend going to the States, and years later coming back for a visit, and then coming back for good. I would be surprised if this reading does not excite diverse emotions in you, the readers. I personally was tempted to change (but did not) one word that I found offensive! I invite your comments. Those interested in reading this entire book, can check with your public library. When last we checked, in 1986, it was still available on inter-library loan from the St. Paul (MN) Public Library. The Editor.

from the chapter "How Bateese Came Home"

W'en I was young boy on de farm, dat's
twenty year ago
I have wan frien' he's leev near me, call Jean
Bateese Trudeau
An offen w'en we are alone, we lak for spik
about
De tam w'en we was come beeg man, wit'
moustache on our mout'.

Bateese is get it on hees head, he's too moche
educate
For mak' de habitant farmerre - he better go
on State -

An' so wan summer evening we're drivin'
home de cow
He's tole me all de whole beez-ness - jus' lak
you hear me now.

"W'at's use mak' foolish on de farm ? dere's
no good chances lef

An' all de tam you be poor man - you know
dat's true you'se'f,

We never get no fun at all - don't never go on
spree

Unless we pass on noder place, an' mak' it
some monee.

"I go on Les Etats Unis, I go dere right away
An' den mebbe on ten-twelve year, I be riche
man some day,
An w'en I mak' de large fortune, I come back
I s'pose
Wit' Yankee famme from off de de State, an'
monee on my clothes.

"I tole you somet'ing else also - mon cher
Napoleon
I get de grande majorite, for go on parliament
Den buil' fine house on borde l'eau - near w'ere
de church is stand
More finer dan de Presbytere, w'en I am come
riche man!"

I say "for w'at you spik lak dat ? you must
be gone crazee
Dere's plaintee feller on de State, more
smarter dan you be,
Beside she's not so healtee place, an' if you
mak' l'argent,
You spen' it jus' lak Yankee man, an' not lak
habitant.

"For me Batees! I tole you dis: I'm very
satisfy -
De bes' man don't leev too long tam, some
day Ba Gosh! he die -
An' s'pose you got good trotter horse, an' nice
famme Canadienne
Wit' plaintee on de house for eat - W'at more
you want ma frien'?"

But Bateese have it all mak' up, I can't stop
him at all
He's buy de seconde classe tiquette, for go on
Central Fall -
An' wit' two-t'ree some more de boy, - w'at
t'ink de sam' he do
Pass on de train de very nex' wick, was lef'
Riviere du Loup.

Wall! mebbe fifteen year or more, since Bateese
go away
I fin' mesef Riviere du Loup, wan cole, cole
winter day
De quick express she come hooraw! but stop
de soon she can

An' beeg swell feller jomp off car, dat's boss
by nigger man.

He's dressim on de première classe, an' got
new suit of clothes
Wit' long moustache dat's stickim out, de
'noder side hees nose
Fine gol' watch chain - nice portmanteau - an'
long, long overcoat
Wit' beaver hat - dat's Yankee style - an' red
tie on hees t'roat -

I say "Hello Bateese! Hello! Comment ça va
mon vieux?"
He say "Excuse to me, ma frien' I t'ink I
don't know you."
I say, "She's very curis t'ing, you are Bateese
Trudeau,
Was raise on just' sam' place wit' me, dat's
fifteen year ago?"

He say, "Oh yass dat's sure enough - I know
you now firs' rate,
But I forget mos' all ma French since I go on
de State.
Dere's 'noder t'ing kip on your head, ma frien'
dey mus' be tole
Ma name's Bateese Trudeau no more, but
John B. Waterhole!"

"Hole on de water's" fonny name for man
w'at's call Trudeau
Ma frien's dey all was spik lak dat, an' I am
tole heem so -
He say "Trudeau an' Waterhole she's jus'
about de sam'
An' if you go for leev on State, you must have
Yankee nam'."

Den we invite heem come wit' us, "Hotel du
Canadaw"
W'ere he was treat mos' ev'ry tam, but can't
tak' w'isky blanc,
He say dat's leetle strong for man jus' come
off Central Fall
An' "tabac Canayen" bedamme! he won't
smoke dat at all! -

But fancy drink lak "Collings John" de way
he put it down

Was long tam since I don't see dat - I t'ink
he's goin' drown! -
An' fine cigar cos' five cent each, an' mak' on
Trois-Rivieres
L'enfant! he smoke beeg pile of dem - for
monee he don't care! -

I s'pose meseff it's t'ree o'clock w'en we are
t'roo dat night
Batees, hees fader come for heem, an' tak'
heem home all right
De ole man say Bateese spik French, w'en he
is place on bed -
An' say bad word - but w'en he wake - forget
it on hees head -

Wall! all de winter w'en we have soir e dat's
grande affaire
Bateese Trudeau, dit Waterhole, he be de boss
man dere -
You bet he have beeg tam, but w'en de spring
is come encore
He's buy de premiere classe tiquette for go on
State some more.

You 'member w'en de hard tam come on Les
Etats Unis
An' plaintee Canayens go back for stay deir
own contree?
Wall! jus' about 'dat tam again I go Riviere
du Loup
For sole me two t'ree load of hay - mak' leetle
visit too -

De freight train she is jus' arrive - only ten
hour delay -
She's never carry passengaire - dat's w'at dey
always say -
I see poor man on char caboose - he's got
heem small valise
Begosh! I nearly tak' de fit, - It is - it is
Bateese!

He know me very well dis tam, an' say "Bon
jour, mon vieux
I hope you know Bateese Trudeau was educate
wit' you
I'm just' come off de State to see ma familee

encore
I bus' mesef on Central Fall - I don't go dere
no more."

"I got no monee - not at all - I'm broke it up
for sure -
Dat's locky t'ing, Napoleon, de brakeman
Joe Latour
He's cousin of wan frien' of me call Camille
Valiquette,
Conductor too's good Canayen - don't ax me
no tiquette."

I tak' Bateese wit' me once more "Hotel du
Canadaw"
An' he was glad for get de chance drink some
good w'isky blanc!
Dat's warm heem up, an den he eat mos'
ev'ryt'ing he see,
I watch de w'ole beez-nesse mese'f - Monjee!
he was hongree!

Madame Charette wat's kip de place get very
much excite
For see de many pork an' bean Bateese put out
of sight
Du pain dor  - potate pie - an' 'noder t'ing be
dere
But w'en Bateese is get heem t'roo - dey go I
don't know w'ere.

It don't tak' long for tole de news "Bateese
come off de State"
An' purty soon we have beeg crowd, lak vil-
lage she's en f te
Bonhomme Maxime Trudeau hese'f, he a
comin' wit' de pries'
An' pass' heem on de "Room for eat" w'ere
he is see Bateese.

Den ev'rybody feel it glad, for watch de em-
brasser
An' bimeby de ole man spik "Bateese you
here for stay?"
Bateese he's cry lak beeg beb , "Ba j'eux
rester ici.
An if I never see de State, I'm sure I don't
care - me."

Wall! w'en de ole man an' Bateese came off de
 Magasin
 Batees is los' hees Yankee clothes - he's dress
 lak Canayen
 Wit' bottes sauvages - ceinture fléché - an'
 coat wit' capauchon
 An' spik Français au naturel, de sam' as habi-
 tant.

I see Bateese de oder day, he' work hees
 fader's place
 I t'ink mese'f he's satisfy - I see dat on hees
 face
 He say "I got no use for State, mon cher Na-
 poleon
 Kebeck she's good enough for me - Hooraw
 pour Canadaw.

"WHAT'S IN A NAME?"

by Sister Ann Thomasine Sampson, CSJ
 St. Paul MN

Note from the Editor: This instructive and very interesting article was published in the Urbain Baudreau Graveline family periodical, The Descendants, in the Fall of 1993. Sister Ann is a member of the Baudreau Graveline family, and has deep roots in the French-Canadian heritage of St. Paul and Minneapolis. She resides at Bethany Convent on the ground of the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul.

"The pursuit of genealogical research can be exciting, adventuresome and sometimes downright frustrating. For example, consider the problem of names -- how they are changed, misspelled or translated.

I had been working on my family genealogy for many years and was mystified about the names of Baudreau and Graveline which occurred in a number of documents and lists. One of my cousins who had given me his research shortly before he died, wrote about a Joseph Graveline who was a blacksmith and who lived on the site of what later became the Golden Rule Department Store in St. Paul, Minnesota. He also wrote about a Basilese Boudreau whose father was Joseph Graveline. Later on as I read J. Fletcher Williams' HISTORY OF

THE CITY OF ST. PAUL TO 1875, I came across a list of residents of St. Paul in 1850. Among them were Joseph Boudreau and Joseph B. Graveline. Ruth Charest, famous for her sleuthing methods of ferreting out genealogical information, unfolded the mystery by unearthing the fact that the two Josephs were one and the same person. Further research, discussion and reading revealed the fact that many people of French-Canadian descent had two last names -- and for a variety of reasons which I will not discuss at this time.

Joseph was the descendant of Urbain Baudreau dit Graveline, a soldier thought to come from a town called Graveline, France, who emigrated to Ville Marie, now Montreal, Quebec, in



Sister Ann Thomasine visited with Dick Bernard and Pierre Bottinneau dit Virgil Benoit in St. Paul, January 29, 1994

1653. He later married Mathurine Juillet and had eight children. Some of his descendants kept both names while others preferred one. Later when the Urbain Baudreau Graveline Genealogical Society was formed and contacts were made with the descendants, an astounding number of spellings of both names showed up. I attended three conventions of descendants in Montreal and Biloxi, Mississippi, and had an interesting time reading name tags with all the varieties of spellings.

Now that I knew what had happened to the original name as found in the official records/documents in Montreal, I began to look for variations among ancestors who settled in St. Paul about 1846. I secured a copy of the marriage certificate of Joseph's daughter who was married in

the Cathedral. Joseph's last name was spelled Bawdry. The Calvary Cemetery office recorded his name as Joseph Baudreau while his wife who died several years later, was listed as Josette Graveline. The St. Paul City Directories recorded his name three different ways: Joseph Gravelin in 1863, Joseph Graveline in 1864 and Joseph Grevelin in 1869.

Joseph and Josette (originally Josephte) had ten children -- eight daughters and two sons. One of them, Basilis (the feminine for Basil) was my great grandmother. All of the children were baptized in Sorel, Quebec. Later on, when the family moved to St. Paul, census takers wrote down variations of this name. They spelled it as they heard it sound: Bazilis/ Basilise/ Basile/ Bsoalis/ Bolia/ Buzialize/ Lizzy! The church records in Dayton, Minnesota, where she was married, listed her name as Bauzelise Baudert while her death certificate recorded her as Bazille, daughter of Joseph Bourdreau. The name Bozelic is engraved on her tombstone at St. Mary's Cemetery, Minneapolis. My mother told me that I was supposed to be named after her. I wonder what version I would have had if this had come true.

Basilis married Daniel Lavallee and lived on a farm near French Lake, Minnesota. They had thirteen daughters, one of whom became my grandmother, Helene/ Helen/ Ellen. The latter married Zepherin Samson; however, the latter name underwent some changes. Zepherin's Civil War Pension lists him as Sampson despite the fact that he signed his name without the p. Many years later, when their son, James, my father, needed some proof of USA citizenship during World War II, he sent for a copy of his baptismal record in Rockland, Michigan. James' record showed that he was baptized Jacob (Latin for James) Sansone whose parents were Seraphine Sansone and Helen Lavallier. The parents Minnesota marriage license lists them as Zepherin Sampson and Ellen Lavallee while the certificate of one of their sons baptized at Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Minneapolis, lists them as Zepherin Samson and Helen Lavallee. For example: o could become a; i could become e; m could become n, etc. I know about the latter problem because I have also made the same mistakes when I copied records:

Another View of the Language Game

In the Jan-Mars 1986 *Chez Nous* my father submitted an article, reprinted in part below. His father had come to the states about 1894, so he is recounting an event that occurred perhaps about 1920. The Editor

"[My] Dad so often repeated [this story]:

It happened that, after 25 years in North Dakota, Dad wanted to visit his only living brother who still lived in the Quebec area. This brother had been born, raised and spent all his life there.

When my Dad greeted his brother, in French, upon his arrival in Quebec, the brother turned to his wife and said "Cet homme n'est pas mon frere. Il ne parle pas Francaise!" [This man is not my brother. He does not talk French!]

Dad had been using the French that he had used for many years in North Dakota. This was full of English words. It was not the pure French that the natives of Quebec used in the early part of the twentieth century. Yes, and even now it is hard to communicate with these natives of Quebec unless you use the pure French.

The same thing happens here in Texas along the border with Mexico. Many of the people are of Latin descent and they speak a "border lingo" which is referred to as Spanish. They find it hard to communicate with Mexicans from Mexico City or people from Spain. Too many words of other languages have crept in."

Finally, I have to add that I have become a source of mistaken identity when I became a Sister

I have many other names (Lavallee, for example) that have been mutilated, changed throughout the years, and have come to three very basic conclusions as a result of my own investigations: 1) people taking census records, jotted down what they heard because they did not know French; 2) my ancestors did not speak English and the majority of them could not read or write; 3) many writers were careless about forming letters, of St. Joseph. To some of my immediate family, I am known as Frances-Anne, my baptismal name, and to many others who only know me as a religious, I am Sister Ann Thomasine, the name I received when I was accepted into the novitiate.

And what happened to the name Baudreau dit Graveline in Minnesota? It died out because of

the great number of girls who were born. The same happened to the descendants of Helene and Daniel Lavallee."

And, a final thought from Sister Ann: "My advice to those who are in a dilemma about names is to sound out the name, change the vowels, see if the name can be translated into another language and if the names becomes a nickname, And if you find all of this confusing, think what is going to happen within the next few years as people fill in genealogical charts where wives keep their maiden names, children have different names because of frequent divorces and annulments and many couples who have children, do not marry. So keep sleuthing away and enjoy the adventure of it all."

HISTOIRE

On a hill just outside Mankato MN, one can find a rock containing the following inscription:

NEAR THIS SPOT STOOD

FORT LEHILLIER

THIS FORT WAS ERECTED BY

PIERRE CHARLES LESEUER

WHO WITH TWENTY-SEVEN MEN HERE

SPENT THE WINTER OF 1700.

The immediate inclination is to say "1700 must be a misprint." No so, according to Professor Armand Renaud, who provided some biographical notes on some famous explorers of French ancestry. He says this about Pierre-Charles LeSueur (1657-1705): "Ambitious and tireless, he explored the Lake Superior- Mississippi basin region before petitioning the king for a ten-year monopoly on the fur trade of the Upper Mississippi. It was granted in 1699, providing he enter the river from the delta in Louisiana. Sailing from France to America in April 1700 with Iberville, he embarked with 19 men on a journey that brought them to the Falls of St. Anthony, then nearly to the river's source. His maps brought still more knowledge about Minnesota."

THE ORIGIN OF THE ROBIN

From Anoka-Hennepin Title IV Newsletter - 1991
Submitted by Priscilla Buffalohead

The following Ojibway legend was collected at Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan, by Henry Rowe Schoolcraft in the 1830's. This means that the story is at least 150 years old and probably older. The legend contains a moral about parenting skills. Read the story and see if you can find the moral.

Long ago there was an old man who had a very handsome son. The old man had great

ambitions for his son, and so, according to the custom of the day, he urged his son to go out into the woods and fast. Guardian spirits took pity on young people who fasted and sometimes granted them special abilities.

Filled with ambition for his son, the old man asked the boy to try and fast longer than anyone else had ever done. When the time for the fast had arrived, the two proceeded into the woods where they built a small lodge. The old man directed his son to lay down on the mat at the center of the lodge. Here the boy was to fast for 12 days. The young man listened to his father and began his fast.

The old man came every morning to the little lodge to encourage his son. On one of the visits, the son pleaded with his father: "my father, my dreams suggest I should not continue now. May I break the fast and make a new fast another time?" Instead the old man said "wait patiently a little longer. In three days you will have accomplished what you set out to do. I want you to continue; it is for your own good."

And so the handsome young man lay down again. But on the eleventh day, he repeated his request. Again the old man told him to continue saying that he would bring his son food the next day. On the last morning, the old man joyfully prepared a meal to take to his son. When he arrived at the fasting lodge, he peeked through the door. He found his son painted with a red color all over his breast; and his son was saying, "my father would not listen to my request, he will be the loser. I will always be happy in my new form. My guardian spirit has shown me pity and given me a new appearance. Now I will go."

Upon hearing these remarks, the old man rushed into the lodge, "my son" he begged, "please don't go". But the son flew out the top of the lodge for he had been changed into a robin. Upon leaving he said to his father, "don't worry about me. I am happy now. I am sorry I could not be a great warrior as you wanted. Instead I will be a sign of peace and joy to our people. I will cheer you with my songs." Then he stretched his wings and flew to the tree tops.

MORAL: Don't push your ambitions on your children. Let them go with their own dreams. If you push too hard you may lose your children in the end.

Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

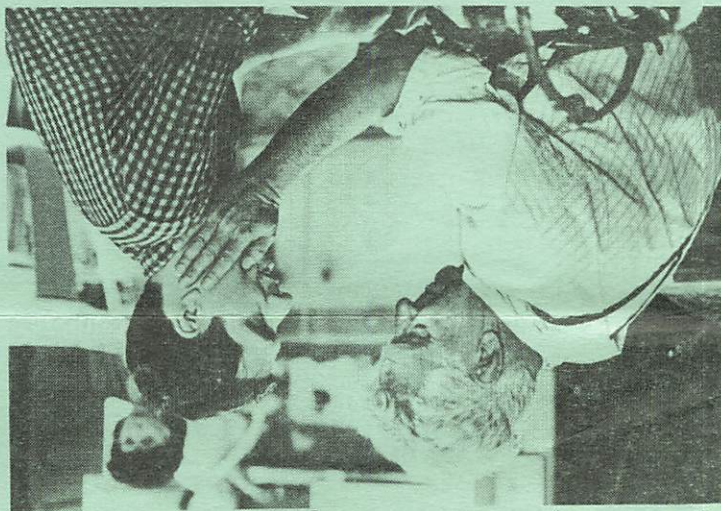
Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota



UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, March 7, 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Church Hall, St. Paul. Regular meeting. Bonnie Fournier and Wendy Lane will present a slide program on their very well received 1993 Yellowstone National Park Picture Postcard project. You will enjoy this program. Invite others to attend.

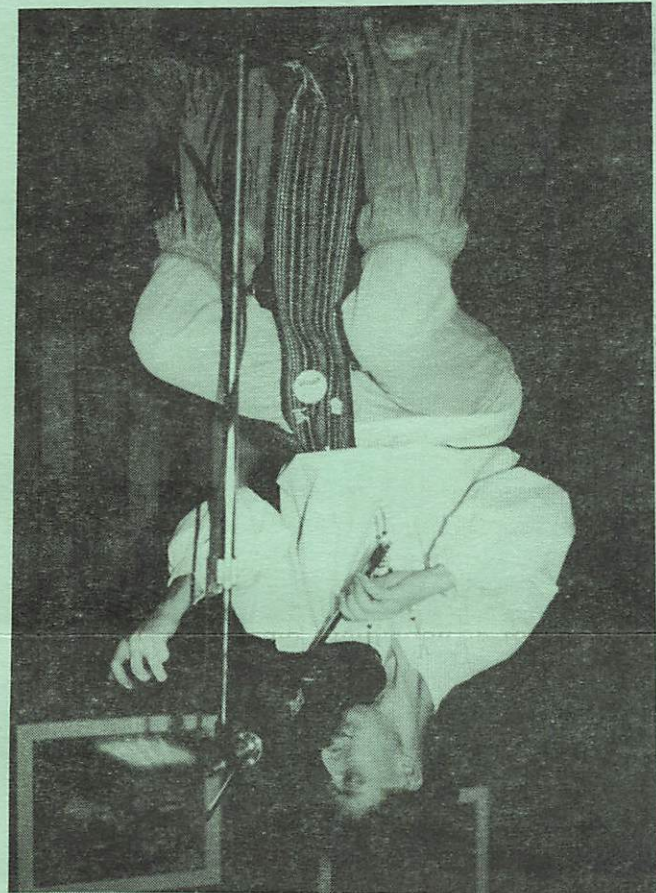
Saturday, March 12, La Journée Québécoise (see reverse). Reservations requested.



Les Plouffe/The Plouffe Family

Sunday, March 13, at the Bell Museum Theatre at the University of Minnesota, the acclaimed Canadian film, *The Plouffe Family*, will be shown at 2 p.m. Ticket cost \$3.50 general, \$2.50 seniors. This is described as a rich, warm and insightful look at Catholic family values in blue collar Quebec City during World War II years. In color with subtitles in English. Parking is available not far from the theatre, and often is free on Sunday.

Monday, April 4, 7:30 p.m. at the St. Louis Church hall, the regular monthly meeting of La Societe will take place. This evening the program will be primarily as an evening to socialize with friends. Bring something of interest to you!



Winnipeg area fiddler Christian Perron entertained an appreciative audience of 70 friends in St. Paul January 29. Christian, and a delegation from L'Festival du Voyageur, were in town for Winter Carnival.

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!! Send your news for *Chez Nous* to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. This is your organization . . . and your newsletter too!

ARCHDIOCESEAN ARCHIVES AWAIT YOU. Pat Anzic, assistant archivist for the archdiocese of Minneapolis-St. Paul advises us that all parish records (save for two holdouts) are now on microfilm and available for use. Give him a call at 291-4400 if interested. His office is at the Chancery, 226 Summit Avenue (directly across the street from the Cathedral).

LA JOURNÉE QUÉBÉCOISE



Saturday, March 12, 1994
10:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



HOTEL SOFITEL
Hwy 484, & 100, Bloomington

- 10:30 a.m. Registration and Coffee
Québec fiddle music by Mr. James Gans.
- 11:00 a.m. Greetings from the Canadian Consulate General, Minneapolis
Video Overview of "Québec"
- 11:30 a.m. Presentation and Discussion:
"Québec: Cultural Themes in Literature and Film"
A society's values are revealed through its stories. A few outstanding works of literature and film will be discussed to illustrate traditional cultural themes and some more recent dialogue with the tradition.
- Dr. Marianna Forde, College of St. Catherine's
- 12:15 - 1:45 p.m. Lunch and cash bar
(Tourtière * Salade de Saison * Blueberry Pie)
Music by Mr. James Gans
- 2:00 p.m. Presentation and Discussion:
"The Speech of Québec in Perspective"
The wellspring of "le québécois" was the language of the Parisian region as it was recast before the Revolution by the Académie Française. The speech of "l'hexagone" in time merged into another vision.
- Dr. Armand Renaud, University of Minnesota
- 2:30 p.m. **"Les Filles de Caleb"**
An episode from a Québec television series will be shown.
- 4:00 p.m. Program ends

Product displays will be open throughout the program.

To reserve a place, please detach and mail with a check by **March 5, 1994** to the Alliance Française, 821 Raymond Avenue, St. Paul, Minnesota 55114. No refunds. If you cannot attend, your check will be considered a tax-deductible donation.

COST PER PERSON: \$15.00 for program and lunch; \$7.00 for program only.

Name: _____ No. Attending: _____ Telephone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____



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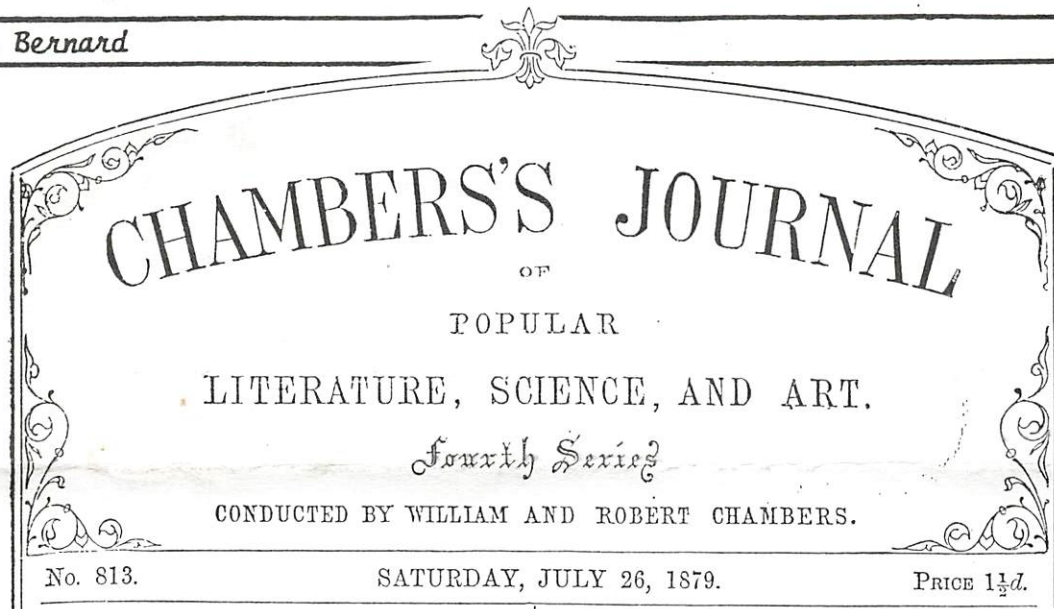


chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mai - Juin, 1994 VOL. 15 NO. 6

La société canadienne-française *V*
R

Editor: Dick Bernard



A VIEW OF FRENCH-CANADIANS IN 1879

A note from the Editor: Enroute to other things at the University of Minnesota Library, LaSociete member and officer Treffle Daniels discovered a fascinating article written in the British periodical, Chamber's Journal, in 1879. It is reprinted in full beginning on page two of this issue of Chez Nous.

The article outlines how the writer, a visitor, saw our country cousins in Quebec over 200 years after their descendants had first begun to arrive in Quebec, and over 100 years after the British conquest. The writer seems to make reasonable observations, and in the very last paragraph offers an opinion about the habitants.

The article attracted my own special interest for a couple of reasons: 1) When it was written my grandfather Bernard was a youth of seven years old who was living in rural French-Canada, not far south of the St. Lawrence River and Quebec City. He perhaps lived in the kind of environment described. 2) A year previous, in 1878, my grandmothers family, the Collette's, walked from the Minneapolis area to homestead in northeastern North Dakota near what was to become Grafton. They had migrated from rural Quebec to then-St. Anthony (now northeast Minneapolis) in the 1860s, and perhaps they also lived a life similar to those described in the article. As always, your comments are welcome. Enjoy. Dick Bernard

This section is invisible! It contains a subliminal message for all readers. If you like **Chez Nous** (and we hear often that you do), we'd ask your active participation in its production. If you're reading it for free, consider joining us - or sending an additional contribution by making a check to La Societe C-F. As you might expect, it costs money to print and distribute this newsletter. Also, please contribute your memories and discoveries about French-Canadians. **Send to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.**

THE FRENCH CANADIANS OF TODAY
(as appearing in Chamber's Journal
of Popular Literature, Science and Art,
Saturday, July 26, 1879.)

Sailing up the great St. Lawrence from the mighty gulf which bears its name, as the rolling plane of water narrows and the banks appear on each side, the traveller is struck by the appearance of dreary lifelessness which characterizes the groups of houses or sparsely settled villages which at intervals gleam whitely through the sombre shadow of dense pine-woods. Remote from towns or any centres of civilisation, simple and peaceful as the inhabitants of Acadia, but alas! minus their practical prosperity - where there is nothing to be bought, even if they possessed the money necessary for purchasing, which they do not - these people may be said to live almost entirely within themselves. The houses of the peasantry are as a rule built of wood; sometimes of logs laid upon each other, having their interstices filled with mortar, which renders them almost impervious to the cold of winter; though more frequently they are composed of a shell of boards upon which is nailed in sheets the inner bark of the birch-tree. This again is covered with clapboards or planks lapping one over the other from the ground to the eaves. The main idea in building is warmth, on account of the severity of winter; and this double wall as it were, lined with the closely fibred birch-bark, renders the houses much more comfortable than might at first be supposed.

As a rule, the French-Canadian village is more picturesque, as are also the inhabitants, than those of the English-speaking populations of Western Canada and the United States. The houses, though low-roofed, have an air of comfort and a long-settled appearance which is conspicuous from its absence in the hamlets of the west. The curved roofs project several feet beyond the walls, and this of itself is to the eye a great improvement on the square, box-like structure which usually satisfies the methodical mind of the rustic of English or Scottish descent. Instead of innumerable black tree-stumps which by their ugliness deform more newly settled districts, trees and shrubs lend a beauty to the landscape; which, moreover, has the advantage over Western scenery of being diversified by hill and valley. The houses are generally whitewashed or painted; and thus a French-Canadian village, or

even farm-steading with out-buildings, has a charming air of cleanliness and neatness.

Nor do the interiors belie the exteriors. There everything is characterized by an exquisite purity. Floor, tables, wooden benches and chairs, in the kitchen or common living-room - all have arrived at a state of brilliant whiteness which hearty scouring alone can command. The great cooking-stove, supported on legs nearly a foot high, is half through the partition into the next room, for a square opening to admit it has been made. This has been polished, until it has likewise arrived at a condition of brightness very nearly resembling perfection. Upon the floor, at intervals, thus lending an air of comfort to the room, are placed oval mats and strips of rag-carpet. This carpet is quite an institution among the *habitants*, and is made by the women of the household after their other work is finished. It is composed of narrow strips of all colours, which are sewn together, and then woven in a rude sort of loom. Against the walls hang gaudy pictures of the Madonna and Child, the favourite or patron saints of the family, and generally a representation of the reigning Pope, for whom, as in duty bound, they entertain feelings of profound veneration. About the frames of those pictures is twined the graceful ground-pine; while in the corners of the room branches of pine and spruce are fastened against the wall. These, to the uninitiated, might appear to be solely for ornament; but such is not the case - they have a much deeper significance. The common house-fly, though harmless enough in itself, becomes to the householder throughout the summer, when augmented by millions of its kind, a source of great nuisance. This troublesome insect entertains, it would seem, a strong repugnance to the odour of these trees and hence the custom, which at first appears singular to the traveller. The culture of home-plants enters largely into the economy of the French-Canadians. In the windows of almost every house, no matter how mean, are to be seen throughout the long and bitter winter, such flowers as monthly roses, fuchsias, carnations, begonias, in full bloom.

The bedrooms of the houses exhibit as a rule no less careful attention than those into which visitors are ushered. Here is to be found more rag-carpet, more highly coloured saints, and generally a little common crucifix and holy water font hanging

against the wall. Upon the bed is spread a patched counterpane, formed of wonderful combinations of calico in every shade and pattern. These are replaced on extraordinary occasions, in the houses of well-to-do *habitants*, by counterpanes of white cotton, upon which are sewn in crimson, green, and orange the most impossible figures, selected apparently from the animal and vegetable kingdoms. It is a curious feature with many of the poorer French, even in the cities, that the gaudily caparisoned beds are kept only for ornament, and that members of the family leave these much and gorgeously adorned articles of furniture entirely unoccupied, invariably sleeping on the hard floor, and covered only by a blanket or buffalo robe. In winter-time the stove oven, in the absence of fire-places, affords a comfortable retreat for the feet. Small as the houses are - and among their various economics that of room is not the least - these householders manage to stow away a considerable number of people. Marrying as they do often when little more than children, it is not surprising that they have very numerous families, eighteen and even twenty not being considered anything very unusual.

In all parts of the country where Indians are to be found they are on the most amicable terms with the French-Canadians, and many intermarriages occur between them. Almost all the tribes which have become Christianised have embraced the Roman Catholic faith, but this is of course rather an effect than cause of their intimacy. At the present time the guides, trappers, and buffalo-hunters of forest and prairie, half Indian, half French-Canadian, are the true descendant of those hardy men who were the pioneers of the fur-trade in that wide stretch of country which is washed by northern seas and hemmed in by a vast mountain-range. They possess extraordinary powers of endurance, and are able to undergo any amount of fatigue. But as civilisation advances towards the great North-west, this class, like the game they hunt, must gradually disappear, for they are of too volatile a nature ever to settle down in farm or workshop. As a picturesque figure - as a gay rover of forest and river and prairie, the half-breed, or *metis* of the Red River, of the Assiniboine, and of the Saskatchewan must soon fade away into history and romance, like his old prototype, the *coureur du bois*.

Since the occupation of hunting fur-bearing animals has in a great measure gone from them, the French-Canadians have turned their attention to that of timber-felling, or 'lumbering' as it is called in America. In the autumn the lumberers are collected in the great centres for this work - the Gatineau, the Desert, the St Maurice, and the Ottawa; and there for six or seven months during the long and bitter winter, they labour, felling the mighty pines with dexterous arms. Working together in such numbers for such a length of time, with no women or other softening influences, the men have rough times. Their houses are built of great unsquared logs, often with the bark left upon them, and have holes cut in the roofs for chimneys. Their rations, provided by the employers, are cooked by different individuals in turn, and consist of salt pork, bread, and molasses with diluted high wines and tea by way of beverage. During the evenings they amuse themselves with reading, singing, or playing cards; but the life is monotonous, and has not even the spice of danger as formerly, for the work is now conducted with care. In the spring, the 'shanties' (from *chantier*, a log-house) are deserted, and as the streams and rivers thaw, the great 'drive' of logs commences. As long as the lakes and rivers are smooth, this is not difficult to manage; but there are many impetuous falls and foaming rapids to pass ere the great rafts reach their destination, and men of keen eye, skilful arm, and daring heart are needed to guide them aright. It is a fine sight to see one of these great rafts sweeping down the Ottawa on its course to the St. Lawrence, with the men grasping their long oars, ready for any emergency. Log-houses are built upon the rafts for the accommodations of the drivers, and the smoke issuing from their chimneys, and the clothes-lines on which red flannel shirts and other articles are capering in the wind, look very picturesque - from the shore. Of course all nationalities of the people of Canada are employed in the lumber-trade, but the majority is made up of French-Canadians.

The greatest possible contrast exists between those who cannot be induced to stay at home and those who remain from choice on the farms, and cultivate the land to the best of their ability. They possess few modern agricultural implements, and cling tenaciously to the old-fashioned methods of farming. Men, women, and children through out the summer months are busily

employed sowing, reaping, and garnering their scanty crops and stocks of vegetables. Tobacco also is cultivated by almost all the *habitants* for home consumption, and the plant may be seen rearing its broad leaves and delicate pink flowers beside almost every cottage; for the male portion of the community are from childhood, inveterate smokers. During the long winter days, when the dark river is fast bound in ice, when bitter winds howl about their dwellings, and roads are rendered impassable by immense drifts of snow, the women employ themselves in spinning, dyeing, and weaving the wool from which their garments are made.

Farmers who live in the vicinity of towns and cities devote their time to the cultivation of vegetables and fruits necessary for market supplies. These on market-days are frequently intrusted to the women, who sit enthroned among their farm-produce, and guide the rickety wagons to the nearest town. Arrived there they either quickly dispose of their goods to the stall-keepers, or, which is more profitable, hobble their horses, and themselves await customers, who find it more economical to purchase direct from the country-people. These market-days without exception comprise the happiest moments of a French-Canadian woman's life, for at no time is she more in her element. Everywhere are evidences of bounteous harvest - vegetables of every kind in abundance, huge golden pumpkins, and melons with delicate gray tracery over a pale green rind. Great baskets of ruddy tomatoes, and piles of Indian corn with its shaded brown and green silk tassels. Apples of many kinds, pears, peaches, regal plums, rosy and pale golden crab-apples, and huge baskets of small purple wild-grapes. Besides the foregoing produce, and surrounded by great blocks of clear blue ice, there are bottles of thick rich cream for sale; and yellow butter, which is well and carefully made, in dainty pats. Nor are these by any means all the articles which French-Canadian farmers and their wives send to market. All sorts of home-made clothing, woolen comforters and socks, sausages and wooden shoes, maple-sugar, wild-fruit in its season, hats with queer conical or broad crowns and immense spreading brims, made of coarse straw plaited by the women and children - all these and many more things have their part in the conglomeration. Chattering, laughing, scolding,

haggling, so passes the day, until stock is sold out, or the westering sun begins to cast lengthening shadows. Then nosebags are removed from horses' mouths, unsold vegetables gathered up and replaced in the wagons, and the busy scene becomes deserted.

Both men and women of the French-Canadians are as a rule short of stature, and have swarthy complexions, and black eyes and hair; though in some parts of the country the traveller finds families and even whole villages of persons with fair skin, blue eyes, and light brown or red hair. The women are seldom pretty, though almost always bright and animated looking. They age rapidly, and though slight in youth, become in middle age stout and shapeless. As young people, both sexes are fond of wearing gay clothing; the young men confining their attention to bright neckties, silver finger-rings and other jewellery, and being greatly addicted to high taper-heeled boots; while the women endeavour to follow the goddess Fashion as closely as possible, in cheap and gaudy materials.

It is difficult to say in what manner they amuse themselves, unless it be simply in dancing, singing, and talking. Strange to say, the French-Canadians have lost much of the wit and *espieglerie* of their ancestors; though that, in their opinion, does not constitute a sufficient reason for preserving silence. On the contrary, they are always chattering, and do not, apparently, have any false delicacy about private concerns; for their opinions are delivered in the street, in the market, wherever they may be, with great loudness and volubility, accompanied with unlimited shrugs and other gesticulations. The *habitants* delight in singing ballads or chansons, which have long been in vogue among them. These ballads are essentially characteristic of people conservative of old customs and traditions, and are the same in spirit, and often in words, as those their ancestors bought from Bretagne and Normandy, and which were sung in the days of the first settlers. Some have been adapted to Canadian life and scenery; but the majority are European in sentiment and expression. The French-Canadian lumberer, as he swings his axe in the depths of the pine-woods, still sings snatches of songs, which even now can be heard at Norman, Breton, and Provencal festivals. Among many others which are sung by all classes of people,

one of the most popular from Gaspé to the Red River is *En roulant ma Boule*. It is particularly adapted to be sung during rapid motion, as that of the sleigh with its chime of bells, or the light birch-bark canoe shooting over rapid rivers. There are many versions of this gay and lively melody, showing clearly that there is no doubt as to its popularity in all parts of the country. There is however, in all the French-Canadian songs, much repetition, which cannot be properly translated into English.

Frugal, industrious, hospitable, light of heart, these people are also imbued with deep religious feeling. Nor is this confined to the women alone, as is often the case in France; on the contrary, the men are assiduous in rendering obedience to the many rules of their Church. So much so indeed, that those spiritual fathers who in the course of missionary tours have made Canada a field of labour, express much satisfaction at the condition of religious affairs.

Thus in an imperfect and unfinished manner has the writer endeavoured to give his observations of the manners and customs, in public and in private life, of the French-Canadian people. Immigrants originally from *La belle France*, and spreading as they are throughout the great Dominion of Canada, it is a pity that in spite of many excellent qualities, they, with certain brilliant exceptions, do not possess more independent habits. Much could be written upon this subject which would doubtless interest the reader, and yet comparatively little can be accomplished in the way of improvement so long as they calmly submit to being thought for instead of thinking, and being led, in place of valiantly striking out in a new path for themselves. Without doubt, the French-Canadian peasantry might be much worse, as they might also be better, citizens than they now are; but to what nation might not such words be truthfully applied! It is more than probable that as educational institutions spring up in a country whose magnificent resources are yearly becoming more developed, this class of people cannot fail to improve, and may ultimately achieve great success in all branches of mercantile labour.

AFTER MASS IN A FRENCH-CANADIAN VILLAGE

From the Fergus Falls MN Daily Journal, November 13, 1883, reprinted in Chez Nous Decembre-Janvier 1988-89. Merci to Lorraine DeMillo, Hibbing MN.

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.



Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

MARDI GRAS FETE - FEBRUARY 12, 1994

by Justa Cardinal

C'est si bon! - was the chorus after the Mardi Gras dinner on February 12 at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Hall in northeast Minneapolis. Fifteen members of La Societe Canadienne-Francaise prepared the Food Extravaganza.

The theme was "Foods of my childhood memory".

President Leo Gouette orchestrated these specialties, provided by the members.

Tourtiere
Ragout de porc et de boeuf
Pate de Chinois in 3 varieties
Pain
Tete de Fromage en gelee
Soupe des pois
Potage St. Germain (pea puree)
Soupe d'oignon
Patate aux oignon
Salade verte
Salade de chou (cabbage)
Vin blanc et vin rose

The desserts numbered eight with three gateaux, biscuit "de mamere" and Gateau de Rois, a Louisiana Mardi Gras tradition sent to us by Anna Himel of Houma, Louisiana.

Those preparing the food were: Leo Gouette, Dorothy Landry, Helene Peltier, John and Judy England, Leroy and Pat Dubois, Mary Dick, Renee Juare, Evelyn Lund, Sera Byrne, Pauline Cadieux, Al Girard and Justa Cardinal.

After the meal folk dancing instructor Jane Peck led members and guests in an hour of folk dancing.

FRENCH SUMMER CAMP JULY 17-23, 1994

Fifteen lucky 9 to 12 year olds will attend the 1994 University of North Dakota Woodland

Trails French Summer Camp, a camp that travels to a new place every day - from Red Lake Falls, MN to Winnipeg, Manitoba. Kids will have fun and learn a lot of French.

No previous knowledge of French is required. The camp will also benefit those who have had one year of French. The cost of \$318 includes instruction, meals, admission fees, transportation and lodging.

For more information contact Woodland Trails Institute, P.O. Box 457, Red Lake Falls MN 56750.

THE BOTTINEAU EXPEDITION IN ART

L'Association Des Francais Du Nord (AFRAN) is seeking eight dancers and six singers for this project, which will use song, dance and music to illustrate the history of the French in Minnesota.

A 40-minute production is being prepared for AFRAN's Annual Chautauqua near Red Lake Falls MN on August 27 and 28.

If you are interested in this project, or know of someone who might be interested, contact Virgil Benoit at 701-777-4659.

CONGRES MONDIAL ACADIEN

The Congres Mondial Acadien will take place from August 12 to August 22, 1994. Families of Acadian descent from all over the world will meet in the southeastern region of New Brunswick, Canada. The "Grand Rassemblement des Thibodeau" organized by the Famille Thibodeau will take place August 19-20, 1994, in the town of Dieppe, New Brunswick.

For more information on these events send a SASE to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.

BRIEFLY from the President of LaSociete:

THANKYOU to all of the people who helped with our booth at the Festival of Nations. All your help and input was greatly appreciated.

We are looking for more members to join us in the Little Canada Days Parade later this summer. Please consider joining us as we march in the parade. For further and more updated information join us at the May meeting.

And note all of the upcoming events. We have an interesting spring and summer ahead.

LEO GOUETTE (612) 489-8306

MELODIES FRANÇAISES



Jean-Louis Sanscartier, Tenor
Conté de Prévost, Québec

**JOIE DE VIVRE
SOUS L'ETOILE DU NORD**
*Joy of Living
Under the North Star*

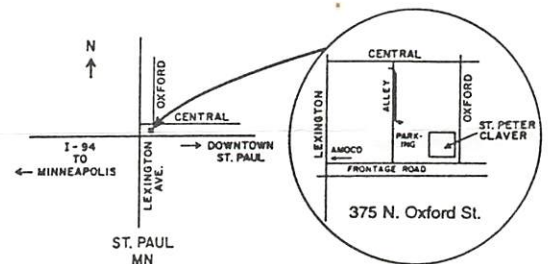
Présente/Presents

Mélo-dies Française-s

Saturday, May 14, 1994
le samedi 14 mai, 1994

St. Peter Claver Church, St. Paul, MN
(See map/Voir le plan)

Admission/Entrée: \$5.00
Time/Heure: 7:30 p.m./19:30



FOR YOUR CALENDAR

- May 2 Regular meeting at St. Louis Church, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m.
- May 14 Melodies Francaises (See notice at right) 7:30 p.m. at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church in St. Paul. \$5.00.
- June 6 Regular meeting at St. Louis Church, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m. Election of Board members for 1994-95. The following members have agreed to stand for reelection to two year terms:
 - Leroy Dubois
 - Leo Gouette
 - Treffe Daniels
- July 17 LSCF goes to see the St. Paul Saints play baseball. This is THE game in town. Leo Gouette has tickets. First come, first served. Call Leo at 489-8306. \$5.00.
- July 24 LaSociete C-F picnic at Spooner Park in Little Canada. This is where the event has been the last couple of years. Potluck as usual. We'll begin around noon. Mark your calendar.

Puisé dans le répertoire des mélodies françaises et québécoises, fin du 19e siècle, début du 20e, ce concert/spectacle mettra les spectateurs dans l'ambiance qui régnait dans les salons à l'époque où les gens se réunissaient autour du piano pour savourer des pièces, telles que "Le Mariage des roses" de César Franck; "Elégie", et "Ouvres tes yeux bleus" de Jules Massenet. Toutes les pièces du répertoire pour *Mélo-dies Française-s* sont empreintes d'une très belle poésie, entre autre "Offrande" de Reynaldo Hahn, musique composée sur une poésie de Verlaine.

The repertoire for *Mélo-dies Française-s* is drawn from French and Québécois music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. It is the music that was relished in the salons of the time where spectators gathered to savor such pieces as "Le Mariage des roses"/The Marriage of Roses by César Franck; "Elégie"/Elegy, and "Ouvres tes yeux bleus"/Open Your Blue Eyes by Jules Massenet. All the pieces of *Mélo-dies Française-s* are characterized by a lyric poetry, such as "Offrande"/Offering by Reynaldo Hahn, in which the music is inspired by the poetry of Verlaine.

LES CANADIENNE ERRANTS

The months upcoming will again be busy ones for the Wandering Canadians!

The group gave four performances at the St. Paul Festival of Nations in April. On May 10, they will be singing for the Little Sisters of the Poor. Later this summer, the singers will be part of the Rice Street Parade, and the Little Canada Parade, not to mention Bastille Day performances. The group hopes to make a trip to Winnipeg next February.

Anyone wishing to join us should contact Al Girard at 484-5757.

LETTRES

*In our mail, from **Marie-Reine Mikesell**, came copies of the two posters reproduced at right. She conveyed a request from **Jean-Francois Leclerc**, Historien et musicologue, 6774 des Erables, Montreal H2G 2N3 Quebec Canada. "[Jean-Francois] wants to know if Canadians in the Midwest have any information on Louis Cyr and his life or deeds in the United States, or archive documents or objects regarding his life." Readers? (The Minnesota Historical Society does not have any entries on this apparently remarkable strongman.)

* **Beth Brousseau**, loyal member of LaSociete from Long Beach CA (whose roots are in the Brainerd MN area) wrote recently. "The [recent LA earthquake] woke us up (but not my 2-year old) but we felt only one of the aftershocks. We had no damage. I had brief thoughts that it might not be too bright living here, but I still say "no thank you" to Minnesota winters. I found the article about wash day insightful [CN Jan-Fev 1994]. The author mentioned that wash day supper was stewed tomatoes and macaroni. This has always been a favorite dish of my fathers but I had not realized its "heritage"."

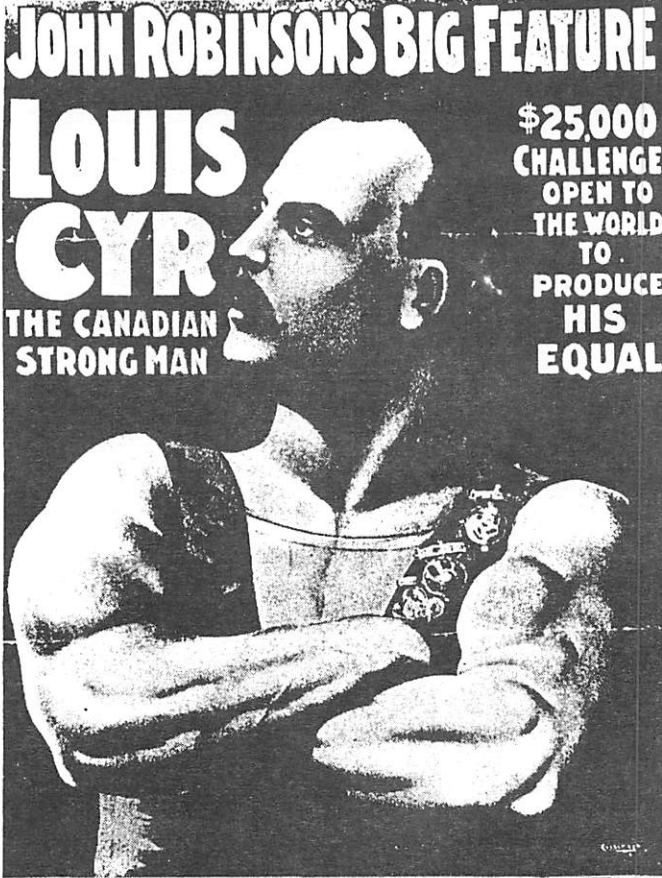
* New members **Jerome and Cheryl Jurek** of Duluth write "We have all thoroughly enjoyed [Chez Nous]. Our family has passed them on to the sixth or seventh household. My Polish husband has especially enjoyed all the historical portions. I'm trying to talk my mother into submitting an article."

* From great friend, historian, (and relative) **John Cote**, Brooklyn CT, comes an issue of American-French Genealogical Society News. Those of you with roots "back east" might want to inquire about this apparently very active group: **AFGS, PO Box 2113, Pawtucket RI 02861.**

LaPorte or St.-Georges? Write your Association, 4870 Cote des Neiges Suite 1510 Montreal H3V 1H3. Tele or Fax 1-514-340-1387.

AFGS has a wonderful cookbook, written in English, called **Je Me Souviens La Cuisine de la Grandmere**. It is available for \$5.95 plus \$1.50 for postage and handling (two for \$10 plus \$3). Send to AFGS at above listed address.

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!! Send your news for Chez Nous to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. This is your organization . . . and your newsletter too!



JOHN ROBINSON'S BIG FEATURE

LOUIS CYR

THE CANADIAN STRONG MAN

\$25,000 CHALLENGE OPEN TO THE WORLD TO PRODUCE HIS EQUAL

CYR'S SALARY \$2,000 PER WEEK FIRST TIME WITH ANY CIRCUS IN THE WORLD LIFTING RECORD 4,300 LBS. EQUAL DOES NOT EXIST.

Grande Exhibition Athlétique!
A la salle JACKSON
RUE HERRINACK, LOWELL, MASS.
SAMEDI, 30 AVRIL 1887



Une affiche d'époque en français annonçant Louis Cyr à Lowell, aux Etats-Unis.