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LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE FRANÇAISE DU MINNESOTA

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Editor: Dick Bernard

The French in America

Counting Those Whose French Descent Is Not More Than Twice Removed From Native-Born Emigrants, There Are Now Only 80,000 in the United States.

(BY FREDERIC J. HASKIN.)

THE FRENCH IN AMERICA
by Frederic J. Haskin

This article appeared in the March 6, 1907, Minneapolis MN Tribune. (The original headline is reprinted above.) It was one of a series of articles written by the author about various ethnic groups in the United States. While there is some discussion of our Quebec cousins, Haskin's article appears to concentrate on those he feels came to the United States directly from France, rather than on the hundreds of thousands who emigrated from Quebec ("lower Canada") to the northeast. We invite your comments. We are particularly interested in errors of fact or context. The Editor.

There are no great kings of commerce or finance among the French in America today, because France has practically no emigrant class. Her sunny fields are abundant for her peasant population, and whoever heard of a present-day Parisian who would leave Paris?

During the days of religious persecution in France thousands of Huguenots were driven from the country, and they flocked in large numbers to the American colonies during the formative period before the Revolution. But since 1820 less than 450,000 Frenchmen have landed on our shores. Counting those whose French descent is not more than twice removed from the native-born emigrants, there are now only 80,000 in the United States.

Among the men prominent in present day American life there are only 58 of immediate French extraction.

EARLY FRENCH SETTLERS.

Although the early French settlers merged their identity with the American people until all trace of many of their achievements was lost, it is

to the infusion of their blood that we owe many of our boasted national characteristics.

The first doctor in Manhattan was Johannes La Montagne, who arrived in 1637. The first white people ever in the state of Pennsylvania were four young French couples who went out from New York in 1625.

French explorers made a brilliant record in the discovery and settlement of the west and south. The first two white men in Minnesota were Pierre d'Esprit and Medard Chanaut, two Huguenot fur traders.[1] Cadillac, afterwards governor of Louisiana, founded Detroit, Mich. Pittsburg, originally Fort Duquesne, was founded by Marquis Duquesne de Menneville. Auguste and Pierre Chouteau founded St. Louis and named it for the last French king.

Many of the Huguenots of colonial days were people of much influence. The immortal Priscilla was the daughter of Guillaume Molines, the only Frenchman on the Mayflower. Judith Bayard, daughter of Thomas Francis Bayard, became the wife of Peter Stuyvesant. Richard Dana was the people's champion in the fight against the Stamp Act. James Delancey was the richest man in America before the Revolution. Stephen Delancey gave New York its first town clock, which was put in the tower of Trinity church. He also gave the city its first fire engine. Peter Faneuil of Boston gave to that city Faneuil Hall, afterwards called "The Cradle of American Liberty." There was a Huguenot in the Boston Tea Party, and the famous Mecklenburg Declaration was drafted by Dr. Ephraim Brevard, a Frenchman of North Carolina.

PAUL REVERE-LAFAYETTE

Paul Revere was a Frenchman who needs no introduction to even the smallest American school boy. What the continental army owes to Lafayette has never been adequately told, although our orators have been trying for century.

The brilliant services rendered by John Laurens earned for him the honor of receiving the sword of Cornwallis.

The first city treasurer of Philadelphia was John Stephen Denezett. Beauregard, the confederate leader who fired the first shot of the civil war, was a Frenchman, as were Admiral Dupont and Rear-Admiral William Reynolds of the federal navy, and Major-General John F. Reynolds and General John C. Fremont of the army. Hannibal Hamlin was vice president with Abraham Lincoln.

One of the most unique personages on the American continent is the rural French Canadian of the province of Quebec. The habitant type is one that all students of human nature have found worthy of study. Springing from one race and dwelling among another, the character of this frugal farmer and sturdy backwoodsman seems to present a mass of contradictions. His language is either degraded French or mongrel English; he is nearly always poor, yet invariably happy; his patriotism is of a peculiar sort, in that it does not savor of allegiance to France nor concern for the welfare of Canada, but is measured by the mere ambition to preserve French dominance in the province of Quebec.

LOVE OF HOME STRONG.

The one mark of the habitant is his love of home. The Grand Trunk railway for several hundred miles east of Montreal has a large local patronage which is designated as the "mocassin trade." The French-Canadian who is employed away from his birthplace will spend his last cent to visit the home folks. The reluctance to sever home ties is shown in the character of the farms which are merely long lanes with rows of houses at the ends. When the eldest son marries, the father splits the home place and give the youth a slice of land. The sons often become so numerous and the slices so thin that in order to continue the multiplication a quartering process is necessary.

Matrimony is an honored institution among the habitant folk and they preserve the European custom according to which parents settle a sum of money on children when they marry.

Illustrative of this point there is a story about a Yankee farmer who had married a French girl, and settled in one of the back districts of Quebec. Although he had lived there for years, and his children had grown up among his French neighbors, this man retained enough of his American spirit to refuse to offer a cash bonus to get his girls married off. Consequently they threatened to become a drug on the market. Finally he relented and offered $500 with each one.

At once came Pierre, a big, lumbering lout, who said: " I 'ear you give fi' 'undred dollar wid

[1] In our contemporary history these men are generally referred to as Pierre Radisson and his brother-in-law Medard Chouart, sieur des Groseilliers.

Marie?" He was reluctantly told that such was the offer. "I 'ear you give fi' 'undred dollar with Julie?" He was told the same amount went with Julie. "Well, Monsieur," said Pierre, "I tink I'll take be bot' o' 'em." The Yankee was so indignant at this attempt to joke about such a serious matter that he withdrew his offer at once, and his girls were forced to wait until they could find husbands who were willing to take them for themselves alone.

A POPULAR TRADITION

A popular tradition among the French-Canadians is that relating to "LaChasse-Galerie." This tells how the shanty men snowbound in the northern woods, used to make a contract with the devil to take them home in the night for a brief visit to their wives and sweethearts. Those trips were made in the air in bark canoes. The arrangement was a desperate one, such as no pious shantyman would enter into. Only profane and sacrilegious characters would venture to take such a risk.

The devil gave them the power to navigate the air for that one night, with the understanding that if the name of God was mentioned, or a church steeple was touched during the flight, that he should have their souls for torture. There is many an old-timer who will solemnly affirm that he has seen the canoes passing overhead, and that he has heard the reckless dare-devils bandying each other as they plied their paddles in the air.

The Louisiana Purchase gave New Orleans to America, the quaint city which even modern commerce and progress cannot rob of its French atmosphere. The southern metropolis is twelfth in size among the cities of the United States and as a seaport is second only to New York. One-fourth of the Crescent City is still French. Its main thoroughfare, Canal street, cuts in twain a municipality which is Amercan and modern on one side, and Franco-Spanish and care-free on the other. In 1836 the controversies between the French and American elements became so violent that the city was divided into three municipalities with separate governments, but they were brought together again in 1852. At that time it was the second city in the United States in population and first in commerce.

IMMENSE TERRITORY

When the immense territory of Louisiana was ceded to the United States in 1803, New Orleans had a population of 11,856. It was all under French control and was made up of people from France, refugees and exiles from Canada, and Spanish peoples from the West Indies. Even at that time it was a city of high social standing and the capital of an empire of untold riches. French architecture is seen in the older portions of New Orleans in buildings over a century old, in fact some of them have stood for nearly 200 years. Although its French-speaking people are many generations removed from La Belle France, they cling to the mother tongue, follow the ancient customs, and their influence is felt throughout the whole state.

The only royal love affairs in which America has been involved were those in which the French figured. Jerome Bonaparte married Mistress Betsy Patterson. His brother, Joseph, married Mistress Annette Savage, and established a miniature French court at Watertown NY. Jerome Bonaparte's grandson, Charles Jerome Bonaparte, is now attorney general of the United States. France is represented in the present senate by Rober Marion LaFollette of Wisconsin and Chauncey M. Depew of New York. Her two representatives in the house are A.P. Pujo and Henry Broussard, the representatives from Louisiana.

GREAT FRENCH INVENTOR

The greatest French inventor was Thomas Blanchard, who discovered a new principle of motion called the "Eccentric." His first invention was a machine for heading tacks, and it was so successful that it turned them out faster than the tick of a watch. John James Audubon, whose tireless labors in behalf of birds inspired all Americans to emulate his kindness was a Huguenot, and both Henry W. Longfellow, and John Greenleaf Whittier had French blood. Major Charles Pierre

TO OUR READERS: In an upcoming issue we will be reporting on a visit to an old Connecticut mill town where the workers were largely of Canadian-French origin. You will learn, among other things, of a mill owner named Tiffany from Rhode Island. If you have recollections of parents or relatives (or your own memories) about growing up in a New England mill town, we'd like to hear from you. Send to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.)

L'Enfant designed the city of Washington, and a portion of his plans are still to be carried out.

General Felix Angus, the veteran editor of the Baltimore American, has won honors in war as well as journalism. He was the youngest brigadier general of volunteers in the Federal Army. Tiffany, the jewelry king of New York, is a descendant of a Huguenot named Tiphaine. Octave Chanute of Chicago is the foremost French engineer of today. Constant Despradelle is an architect of Boston, Phillip Martiny is a distinguished sculptor, and Victor B. Perard is one of the most successful illustrators.

WORDS BORROWED FROM THE FRENCH

from Chamber's Journal #102, December 13, 1845, pp 373-376 and #103, December 20, 1845. Merci to Treffle Daniels, Minneapolis MN. A note from Treffle: "Remember these terms were as defined in 1845! How meanings do change, all at once in a few articles, etc. Chambers is a British journal which usually has a very English tone to it - i.e. the rest of the world is not up to their standard! This attitude isn't quite so in this article."

The English language is a curious compound of tongues blended together with more or less harmony. We point to the Norman conquest for the infusion of many French words into the Anglo-Saxon vernacular; but this infusion did not take place at once; it was the work of centuries. So has it been with every new element in the composition. The change from rude to polished styles of speech and writing, has been exceedingly gradual, and no one can say that the language is yet by any means perfect, or that it ever will be complete. This is a fact quite in accordance with the national character, which is one of advancement and improvement. Unlike some of the continental nations, the English do not set themselves to prevent the intrusion of new or foreign words into their ordinary speech. **[Editors Note: WE WONDER HOW CHAMBER'S WOULD VIEW THE CURRENT FRENCH GOVERNMENT RESISTANCE TO THE CREEPING PROBLEM OF ANGLICIZED WORDS GAINING CURRENCY IN FRANCE?]** They pick up, naturalise, and make good use of any form of expression, as they would of any fact in science which suits their taste or necessities. Liberal and compromising, their language increases in richness and variety of terms, in the same manner as the nation and individuals increase their general resources. And thus has the English language continually extended its boundaries, and still is beneficially extending them.

It is interesting to observe how a word makes its way into our language. The people are too conservative to receive the new expression till it has run through a preliminary course, and been, we might say, rendered respectable by familiar use. Many words commence as a kind of slang, and are not for half a century perhaps found in any dictionary. Of this class *mob* and *bore* are fair examples. Mob (an abbreviation of *mobile vulgus* 'the easily-moved vulgar' - a phrase which took its rise in Charles II's time) has gained a lodgment, and is now an accepted expression, which it once was not; while bore is only in the way of gaining a footing, and may not get into dictionaries for a quarter of a century. That it will gain admission into them, nobody can doubt, for it expresses an idea, and it is the genius of the people to abandon no idea that is really natural. On the same grounds many French phrases cannot escape naturalisation, especially those which express ideas for which we happen to possess no English word of an old date. A few of these it is our purpose to instance and explain. **[Editor's note: I notice, from personal usage, that all of these words, to this day, seem to be pronounced as they would be if used in France. Scholars, am I correct?]**

Aide-de-Camp: From the military use by the French's army...literally a camp assistant. "The duty...is chiefly to act as sort of messenger in conveying the orders of his principal to inferior officers, and to report what is going on in the various parts of the field to which his duties have sent him."

Attache: "Part of a train of an ambassador with duties that are not very clearly defined...translates documents, sends invitations, goes to diplomatic balls and parties to pick up news, waltzes ladies whose fathers or husbands are in the cabinet, plays cards. He is neither a secretary, a clerk or a courier; he is simply attached to the embassy - an ornamental appendage."

Beau: "A man of dress - a man whose great care is to deck his person. An elegant dandy."

Blase: From the verb blaser (to surfeit) and is applied to a person who has lost all relish for pleasure, or even for existence.

Bon-mot': "A good word in the sense of clever. It could be used as a smart saying with a dash of satire...." In the scale of meaning between the puerility of a pun, and the brightness of a piece of wit."

Brusque: The French employ it when we should say of a man that he is "blunt" and of a woman that she is "pert".

Chaperon: Chaperon is a hood. Many uses of the word are found. It is an elderly person who accompanies a young female for decency's sake. "A fashionable female character whose business or pleasure is to take a young timed ladies into society; to act, in short, as a hood; to hide their blushes, and to conceal their little defects from admirers by a species of clever hoodwinking. The old fashioned term for these useful ladies was 'match-makers'."

Coup: The primary signification is a "blow". But this is meant to be a sudden action, especially when compounded into another word: **Coup-d'etat**, a piece of state policy, **coup-de-maitre**, a master-stroke, **coup-de-grace**, the finishing stroke, **coup-de-theatre**, a clap trap (a showy act to get applause or notice).

Debut: An entrance or first appearance as when a young girl is permitted to be introduced into adult society, etc.

Distingue (Distinguished). "A person who has a natural nobleness or intellectual superiority either by dress or circumstances."

Elite: Chosen or taken by preference but now means the best or highest especially in social classes.

Ennui: Being weary in the sense of tedium.

Ensemble: Union of parts as in musical terms or groups.

Gauche: Left. People who make errors in social areas exhibit "gauchery behavior".

Gourmet: "A connoisseur of wine."

Naivete: "Expression of frankness, simplicity, or of ignorance, and often of all at once.

Nonchalance: "A French term for indolence, an indifference as to taking trouble with anything.

Par excellence: "by excellence...meaning with regard to a special quality or attendant circumstances."

Passe: Participle of the verb "to pass". "To say that a lady is passe, it describes a faded beauty and beginning decay, and to pronounce a judgment of old maidenhood."

Programme: "Printed synopses of the performances at concerts, or the proceedings or public meetings...originally meant a preface."

Rapport: "Affinity or similarity of thought."

Rendezvous: "A place of appointment."

Soiree: "An entire evening...passed in social enjoyment."

LETTRES

March 26, 1994

As I read the newsletter of Mars-Avril 1994 names that mean much to me appear in the article by Sister Ann Thomasine Sampson CSJ.

My father's mother's maiden name was Marie-Julie LaVallee, born in Little Canada MN on October 25, 1861, died December 25, 1880 in Centerville MN. She was daughter of Felix-Pierre LaVallee and Marguerite Parenteau. My father, Albert LaPlante, was a year old [when Marie-Julie died], born March 3, 1879. I would like to learn if there is any family connection.

I am also interested in the Benoit family. My mother's mother was Julia Benoit, aunt to Morrice (sic) Benoit of Red Lake Falls MN.

I would like to learn more about the family history.

As to my maiden name, LaPlante, I have the genealogy all the way back to France. This was received from a cousin (LaPlante) who lives in Florida. She and her husband are very interested in genealogy.

Now I'm interested in trying to learn more about my grandmother's family, the LaVallees of Little Canada MN. She married my grandfather Mederic Isadore LaPlante, born in St. Constant Parish, PQ, and died in Crookston MN 2 December 1915.

Sincerely,
Florence Contas
2122 West 3rd St
Duluth MN 55806

Rec'd June3, 1994

If there are members of LSCF who have the surname MORIN, let them know that a grand

reunion will take place 12-14 August 1994 in the University Laval in Quebec."

Marie-Reine Mikesell

(ED. NOTE: Marie-Reine sent along a copy of the required registration form. If you wish the form send a SASE to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124 or call Dick at 891-5791. There is an early deadline for registration, so don't tarry.)

(ED. NOTE: The following letter came from Paul Campbell of Grafton ND. Mr. Campbell is a new member, invited to join by his second cousin, and LaSociete member, Marvin Campbell, of Brainerd MN. In Paul's letter we see a connection between the French-Canadian communities of Somerset WI and Oakwood ND. There were numerous "connections" between places like these. Note also the reference to Felicite Bessette. There was a farmer named Charles Bessette at Oakwood (note Chez Nous Jan-Feb 1993.) Charlie was related to the Campbell's as well as to Blessed Brother Andre Bassette, whose life work resulted in the famed shrine, the Oratory of St. Joseph in Montreal. A direct relation to Brother Andre is Sr. Monica DuCharme, who grew up in Little Canada area and is a Sister of St. Joseph in St. Paul. Another is Lorraine Bassette Weber of Brainerd.

THANKS PAUL.

May 28, 1994

Dear Dick:

Even though the name Campbell is definetely Scottish all our forefathers spoke French.

Our forefather William Campbell joined the Scottish Regiment of the English Army and came to Canada for the French and Indian War. When the French ceded all of Canada to the English in 1763, the soldiers were given a choice either to remain in Canada and given a strip of land, or a trip back to England.

William Campbell married Josephte Chartier between 1760 and 1764 at a place then called Acadia about 39 miles south of Montreal. It is most likely that she couldn't speak English and he couldn't speak French but it seems that from then on everyone spoke only French.

Their son Alexander married Josephte Bisaillon at Acadia November 17, 1788.

Their son Joseph married Felicite Bessette at Acadia February 6, 1815. He died at St. Remi in July, 1871. Two of their children were Vital born November 3, 1821, and Nicholas born in 1825. Vital emigrated to Somerset, WI, and Nicholas married Frances Gauthier at St. Remi June 30, 1846.

Nicholas and Frances had nine sons and no daughters: Marcel, Cyril, Arsene, Camille, Severe, Aime, Domina, Joseph, and Wilfrid.

The first four remained in the Montreal area. Severe and Aime went to Columbus Ohio. Domina (Marvin Campbell's granddad) went to his uncle Vital in Somerset. Joseph (my grandfather) homesteaded east of Grafton ND near Oakwood in April of 1880. Wilfrid, the youngest, travelled between Somerset and Grafton his entire life; he worked in the woods in Minnesota in the winter and helped with the farming at Oakwood in the summer.

My mother was a LaBerge. Robert delaBerge was born at Columb-su-thon Normandy France May 24, 1638, and came to Chateau-Richer in 1658. He went back to France in 1663 and immediately returned to Chateau-Richer where he married Francoise Gausse (widow of Nicholas Durand) on May 28, 1663.

Guillaume LaBerge married Marie Quentin on February 14 at Ange-Gardien.

Timothee LaBerge married M-Anne Amelot November 4, 1727, at Ange-Gardien.

Joseph LaBerge married Anne Boursier at Chateauquay, November 10, 1769.

Pierre LaBerge married Claire Brault at Chateauquay October 27, 1793.

Jean-Baptiste LaBerge married Marie Jeanne Grould at Chateauquay January 16, 1826. He fought in the revolution or insurrection of 1837. He was captured by the British and sent to Australia for life but returned in 1845. Edward LaBerge married Josephte Suprenant at St. Martine, November 7, 1854. He migrated to Oakwood with his four sons and three daughters in 1879.

Thanks,

Another Scotch Frenchman

Paul E Campbell
211 W 16th St
Grafton ND 58237

Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

Jean-Louis Sanscartier performing at St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, St. Paul, May 14, 1994

QUEBEC TENOR SINGS IN THE CITIES

Those who love fine music with a French flair were treated to a unique experience whlen Quebec tenor Jean-Louis Sanscartier sang in St. Paul on May 14.

Jean-Louis sang from a repertoire of French and French-Canadian music by composers such as Franck and Massenet. he was very entertaining, and is a very accomplished musician. He has sung in many venues in French Canada. May 14 was his first appearance in this area.

Those who missed his first concert will likely have a future opportunity to see him again. Watch for the announcement in Chez Nous, and when you see it make his appearance a "must see" event. You will be happy you did.

NAUGHTY MARIETTA TO BE PERFORMED

"Naughty Marietta", Victor Herbert's most enduring popular work, is scheduled for performance by the North Star Opera at St. Paul's World Theatre, September 30, October 2, 7 and 9, 1994. The September 30 and October 7 performances are at 8 p.m. and the October 2 & 9 performances at 3 p.m.

Naughty Marietta is set in 18th Century New Orleans, when the city belonged to France. It is a romantic musical comedy that found fame in the enormously successful 1930s film starring Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. It has not been performed in the Twin Cities for many years.

The story centers on a young countess who runs away from her French home to escape an arranged, unwelcome marriage. In disguise she joins a boat load of "Casquette" girls. They are young ladies who come from France at government expense to marry and make homes in the New World. According to the custom of the time, the frontiersman of the girl's choice pays a French official the passage money for his bride.

The musical includes many of Herbert's best known songs, including: "Falling in Love with Someone", "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life", "Italian Street Song", and many more.

Adult tickets are $25, $21.50, $18, $15. There is a $1 senior citizen discount on all but the $15 seats. Student price is $12. Ticket orders can be sent to North Star Opera, 1863 Eleanor Avenue, St. Paul 55116. Please include a self-addressed stamped envelope. You are urged to order early, since the North Star performances are very popular.

North Star Opera is a Twin Cities company whose productions are always well reviewed. It's mission is to showcase young operatic talent in the midwest.

FOR YOUR CALENDAR

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 held the last couple of years. Potluck as usual. We'll begin around noon. Mark your calendar. See you there.

July 27 - Rice Street Parade. Join us on Parade. Wear your costume. Details: Al Girard 484-5757.

August 1 - Regular meeting at St. Louis Church, St. Paul, 7:30 p.m.

August 14 - Little Canada Canadian Days parade at noon. Wear your costume. Details: Al Girard 484-5757.

September - no meeting.

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!

Canada fights war of, and over, words

Washington Post

Toronto, Ontario

Canadian English and French speakers are often called the "two solitudes" because they so seldom speak, at least amicably, to each other.

But the newly serious possibility that French-speaking Quebec may vote to secede from Canada as early as next year has widened the gulf between the linguistic groups, provoking a level of anger and resentment not heard in nearly a generation. Rhetoric has grown testy and emotional — striking, considering the first round of elections is months away and an independent Quebec is a distant prospect.

The most vociferous attacks on Quebec separatists have come from the traditional locus of English-speaking hostility, the Canadian west. Provincial leaders there have expressed their outrage over recent overseas missions of separatist leader Lucien Bouchard, whose pro-independence party, the Bloc Quebecois, is the official opposition to the Liberal Party government in the Canadian House of Commons.

As opposition leader, Bouchard was received with modest respect on official visits to Washington in March and Paris in May, where he sought to explain the separatist agenda. Although Bouchard, a former ambassador to Paris, comported himself discreetly there, Canada's Western premiers sputtered with indignation. Alberta's leader called Bouchard's Paris mission "reprehensible," and Saskatchewan's premier described it as "a con job. Edmonton Sun columnist Neil Waugh characterized the Paris trip as a "one-finger salute to the country."

Quebec separatists have used some harsh language, too. Jacques Parizeau, chief of the separatist Parti Quebecois and the likely next premier of Quebec, all but called for a boycott of the Bank of Montreal after its chief economist predicted "a great deal of fear" in financial markets if the party took power in Quebec.

Just a few days before, a prominent Parti Quebecois candidate threatened major Canadian brokerage houses with reprisals if they continued to assert what most analysts believe to be true: that the separatism debate weakens the Canadian dollar and pushes up interest rates. "We could be in power within three months, and we're the ones who will be sending out the checks," said Daniel Paille, the candidate, in an interview with the Montreal newspaper La Presse.

Provincial elections this fall will pit the separatist Parti Quebecois against Quebec's incumbent Liberals, unpopular after holding power for a decade. Polls indicate the Parti Quebecois, with its slate of fresh faces and elaborate plans for an independent state, is likely to win the elections and take power in Quebec City, the provincial capital.

The victory would put the issue of separation before the Canadian people in earnest. Parizeau has said his new government would make a "solemn declaration" interpreting the party's election as a mandate for a provincial referendum on sovereignty. The referendum could come midway through 1995, and the battle that precedes it could make today's acrimony seem tame, analysts say.

Prime Minister Jean Chretien has been trying to avoid the issue. He has said repeatedly that he was elected "not to talk about the constitution" — Canadian code for the Quebec issue. Some of his advisers reportedly want him to keep his rhetorical powder dry for the tougher battles ahead. But some are telling Chretien that it's time to confront the separatist scourge squarely.

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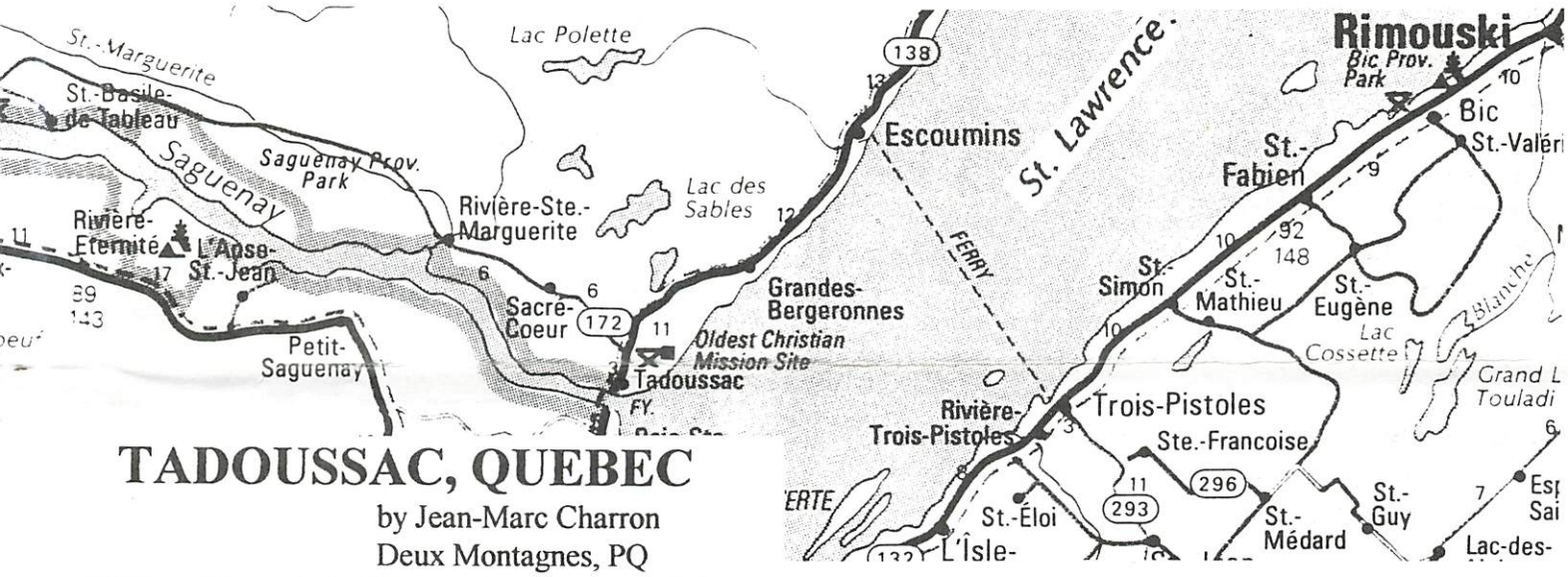
Editor: Dick Bernard



TADOUSSAC, QUEBEC

by Jean-Marc Charron
Deux Montagnes, PQ

(Editors Note: Mr. Charron is truly one of those "blessings" that we all receive at some point, and don't know the reason why! He was introduced to me by another wonderful friend (and relative) John Cote, of Brooklyn, Connecticut, who I had met while inquiring about the Cote line of my family some years ago. John, and now Jean-Marc, have both contributed to **Chez Nous**. We certainly hope that there will be more forthcoming from both of them!

In this article, actually part of a recent letter, Jean-Marc talks about Tadoussac, Quebec. To find Tadoussac, find Quebec City and then follow the St. Lawrence River about as far north and east of the City, as Montreal is to the south and west. At Tadoussac, the St. Lawrence River is actually an immense estuary of the Atlantic Ocean, and salt water. (The St. Lawrence actually begins to get brackish - salty - not far east of Ile d'Orleans.)

Jean-Marc: "[In mid-September we go to Tadoussac] "where we have gone on our whale watching trip for some 15 years now. I call that trip *"mon pelerinage aux baleines"*, my pilgrimage to the whales.

Tadoussac is such a nice, peaceful place, where nature is in command and where we rub shoulders with the locals, i.e. belugas and other two legged specimens of the native and not-so-native variety. And whales who come from down south to "bouffe", to pig-out as it were. Great show. (An average size blue might eat four, yes four, tons of krill a day and mixes it with shell fish - probably just for taste.)

Montreal is one thing. Myself, I think that one day out of Montreal is one day lost. Quebec City is just charming, as you probably know first hand. But of all the places in Quebec, Tadoussac has kept that simple, non-pretentious, light, just so shy and friendly kind of mentality. And a good easy

laugh, and a deep sharing of the moment. It is like going back in time. I easily imagine our ancestors being pretty close to what you can see and live in Tadoussac. The people there are somewhat isolated as you have to cross the mighty and legendary Saguenay by free ferry if coming from Quebec City. So if you walk the town (good for the legs!) every half an hour or so you hear a soft and short passage of traffic, *"les passants"*, mostly on their way farther north and east. And then that soothing quiet again. And the air.

If you go there, don't miss the people. Don't miss the *"bouffe"*, like at Monsieur Tremblay's (or maybe it's Monsieur Patates), he calls everybody "Monsieur Tremblay" or "Madame Tremblay" - on top of the hill at the right where they come from all over the world to eat his *"patates"*, to confess to him and be given the strongest dose of light talk this side of Startrek...and complete absolution.... He has newspaper clippings from as far away as Toronto, imagine...and a visitors' book...full of sweet words spreading the goodness of Monsieur Patates' delicacies. But I know his secret. It lies mainly in the AIR. And the whales...And oh yes you have to see Monsieur Patates' *"becosse"* (outhouse, backhouse...) in the back...no, no, with running water and paper towels if you please. Cleaner than you've ever seen (no offense) and a little museum in itself with photographs and a profusion of local dried plants arranged in bouquets.

And the whales. Last year, 51 "Bleues" weighing in at 145 tonnes or 30 elephants each or three times the weight of the biggest dinosaur, visited the area...and that's only the Blue....

And the air. When you breathe in you keep inhaling because it feels so good. And the ocean-side trails (with depths down to 400 metres or 1300 feet), the quiet, the white-whales (beluga, *canari des mers, marsouin blanc*, white whale, delphinapterus leucas) 500 of them make Tadoussac their year round home.

And the stars-so-bright-it-makes-you-squint kind of a sky.

And the birth of clouds.... Stand at Pointe Noire, across from Tadoussac, on the west shore of the Saguenay, and if the conditions of tide and wind are right, you will witness the birth of clouds. Look up the Saguenay, on the east shore, in the first bays just north of where the ferry touches Tadoussac. "It's a forest fire for sure" says Joan. We look and look. It's no forest fire. It starts just above shore, a wisp of mist or fog coming from down below, racing up the walls of the fjord, up to the "Tatoushaks". A seemingly never ending phenomenon. The sheer volume of deep glacial waters of the gigantic Saguenay, the play of the current and wind, the sudden meeting with warmer air...the birth of clouds. THAT's why we ALWAYS have observed isolated clouds in the immediate vicinity of the Saguenay when at the same time, for miles around, all you we could see was a deep blue sky. For FIFTEEN YEARS we have been talking and wondering about those clouds...now we know. If only I was a poet....

And the whales, that you spot when someone yells *"la cheminee"*, the blow of the whales you can see and hear for miles around.

And the closest you'll ever come to meeting the ways of your ancestors...and of the whales...the beluga, because of the last glaciation, has been around Tadoussac for a mere 12,000 years. *"La baleine bleue"* appeared on stage much after the dinosaurs had all vanished. Give it 50 million years, give or take one or two.

From one genealogist to an historian, I just think there is a close connection between *"les baleines"* and *"les ancestres"*. The blue whale living to 80 years old and coming to Tadoussac year after year from generations immemorial...*depuis le plus profond de la nuit des temps.*

Tatoushak, an important trading and pow-wow center in the land of the Montagnais-Naskapi. Visited by Basque fishermen and other Europeans longer than our history has been able or willing to remember. The archeaological exhibition at Bergeronnes, between Tadoussac and *Les Escoumins (Escoumins* meaning "there are a lot of berries here), are up to 6000 years old with their newly found artifacts, and they only started to "open up the books" in 1986! Then a fur-trading post in 1600, eight years before the foundation of Quebec. The oldest white settlement north of Mexico. And we have only begun to be willing to learn of the area's BEFORE history, that is before OUR history, THEIR history. Go and see first hand, at Essipit (the Escoumin "reserve" as we say in our funny ways!). And shake hands with a descendant or two of the original owners of the land. By touching their hands and looking into their beautiful eyes, you will experience a not so subliminal touch with

the reality of living genes, genes you will have no doubt whatsoever about their origins. What we have been taught at school is the European version. THEIR version is starting to be told, and understood, and accepted. The Indian and European, cultures in conflict.

The French named the *Tetons* (breasts) for the shape of the mountains in the Wyoming wilderness. The Montaignais Natives named *Tatoushak* (=mammelons=nipples) after the shape of the local mountains.

The whales....Like humans, they breath the air, are warmblooded and feed their young ones with the milk of the mother. The blue whale newly born is given 200 pounds of milk a day to feed it's 20 foot long, two ton body. When you see one from up close and see one act around humans you realise that they have an intelligence. You also realise, sadly, that you are simply not on the same wavelength. Perhaps not intelligent enough? If only we could swim hundreds of feet under water..... If only we could sing the "wright" way!.... What tales could be shared. Tales of the old ways. And for us to learn how we could all get along better....

Jean-Marc Charron
Deux Montagnes PQ

A postscript: For serious whale watchers, Jean-Marc suggests Cap-de-Bon-Desir, Tadoussac and Pointe Noire - all in the "neighborhood. He further says "Bring WARM CLOTHES, small folding seat, WARM CLOTHES, camera, WARM CLOTHES, binoculars, WARM CLOTHES, lunch, and WARM CLOTHES and WARM BOOTS and WARM MITS, especially past September 1st. It is not a "winter cold". It is a "comfortable cool". Last year, Joan and I, on our way down to "the rocks" at Cap-de-Bon-Desir, met a New Jersey couple, in their middle sixties, weearing loafers, shorts and short sleeve shirts. Just right for downtown New York. "Oh, we've been down there for a few hours. Didn't see any whales...." We both had our winter hiking boots, our winter parkas, and "the works" if you know what I mean. They were two tough cookies if they survived their stay at Bon-Desir....!"

THE NAMING OF BUTTE DE MORALE

by Forrest Daniel
Bismarck, ND

Editors Note: This article, and the one following, discuss in differing ways the impact of violence (and conflict of cultures) on the frontier. While both articles talk about violence by the American Indian against others, this should not be construed as any attempt to paint the Indian as being any more prone to violence than any other peoples. The frontier was a place of frequent competition for resources, and most often the encroaching white man (and the Indians with whom he allied) gained the upper hand because of superior numbers and technology of war.

Concerning the following article: Forrest Daniel is former librarian of the North Dakota State Historical Society in Bismarck. He grew up in Wells County ND, which is roughly in the geographic center of the state. We appreciate very much his commentary on the naming of Butte de Morale.

The story of the naming of the Butte de Morale, in North Dakota, given by Governor Isaac I. Stevens (Narrative and Final Report of Explorations for a Route for a Pacific Railroad, Near the Forty-seventh and Forty-ninth Parallels of North Latitude from St. Paul to Puget Sound, 1855), is that a hunter named Morale had been killed by Sioux near there. This story has been accepted at face value by later historians, but it may be just a little shy of fact.

The butte itself has received some description in justification of its name. Bob Corey, historian of the Minot (ND) Daily News, said: "At the top it is 1,725 feet above sea level by Geological Survey reckoning. It is not a steep-sided butte, but a hill that rises more or less gradually. It is far from being the highest point in the county. For in the southeast corner of Wells County is Hawks Nest, a really large hill, with an elevation of 2,115 feet.

MY THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

"Dublier ses ancetres, c'est etre un ruisseau sans source, un arbre sans racines." Proverbe chinois.

("To forget our ancestors is like being a stream without a source, a tree without roots." Chinese proverb.)

Merci to Jean-Marc Charron

Butte de Morale is a minor topological feature in a county noted for geographic variety...."

Walter E. Spokesfield in **History of Wells County and its Pioneers** (1929) wrote: "Butte de Morale . . . was in the heart of the great buffalo country and is a relic of the "Bunch Grass Acres" as the old time bunch or buffalo grass is still found growing there. Butte de Morale is seven miles northeast of Harvey and south of Selz. It was a prominent land mark and was known to the Hudson Bay Company's hunters, the Red River Buffalo hunters and trappers from the Missouri River. Governor Steven's Expedition passed by it on the south in July, 1852; Captain James L. Fisk's wagon train of gold seekers passed to the north of it in 1862, and again in 1863; General A.H. Sully's army of Indian fighters marched to the east of it in 1865. It is a flat topped hill rising some three hundred feet above the level prairie and affords an excellent view for several miles in all directions. Lake Stevens (Goose Lake), a narrow canal-shaped lake some four and one-half miles long extends to the west of the butte."

The probable incident which gave its name to Butte de Morale is related in **"The Red River Settlement"** by Alexander Ross (1856). Ross, who was a leading police and court official at Red River Settlement (Winnipeg), accompanied the summer hunt of 1840; leader of the 1,630 people on the hunt was Jean Baptiste Wilkie, an English half-breed.

Ross: ". . . It was the ninth day from Pembina before we reached the Chienne [Sheyenne] river, distant only about 150 miles and as yet we had seen not a single band of buffalo. On the third of July, our nineteenth day from the settlement, and at distance of a little more than 250 miles, we came in sight of our destined hunting ground; and on the day following, as if to celebrate the anniversary of American independence, we had our first buffalo race. . . ."

Some four hundred hunters took part in the chase but not more than fifty got the first chance at the fat cows. "A good horse and experienced rider will select and kill from ten to twelve animals at one heat, while inferior horses are contented with two or three; but much depends on the nature of the ground. On this occasion the surface was rocky and full of badget holes. Twenty-three horses and riders were at one moment sprawling on the ground." Several riders were injured but no less than 1,375 tongues were brought into camp.

"The hunter's work is now retrograde; the last animal killed is the first skinned, and night, not infrequently, surprises him at his work; what then remains is lost. . . . It was while ocupied on this duty, in an unfortunate moment, that Louison Valle lost his life by some lurking Sioux, who had concealed themselves among the long grass. Valle had his son, a young boy, with him, who at the time happened to be on his father's horse keeping a lookout. At the critical moment, he had shifted his ground a few yards, and the enemy rushing in upon him suddenly, he had just time to call out to the boy, 'Make for the camp, make for the camp!' and instantly fell under a shower of arrows. The boy got to the camp, the alarm was given, and ten half-breeds overtook the murderers in less than an hour. The Sioux were 12 in number; four got into the bushes, but the other eight were overtaken and shot down like beasts of prey."

It appears that the individual whose death the butte commemorates was not named Morale, but rather Louison Valle, and the name Morale is an English contraction of the French phrase Butte de Mort de Valle, or Butte of the Death of Valle, or Where Valle Died.

ACCOUNT OF THE MASSACRE LED BY CHIEF RED BIRD JUNE 11, 1827

The account which follows was taken from the lips of Mary Louisa Cherrier, nee Gagnier, wife of Coasm Cherrier. What Mrs. Cherrier relates is the story often told by her mother Theresa Gagnier, wife of Regeste Gagnier. Mrs. Cherrier was great-/-/-Aunt to a number of present and former LaSociete members, including Pierre Girard, Ann O'Brien, Frank O'Brien, Bunny Ryder and Joanne Francis. She was also related to several people still living in the Prairie du Chien and Chippewa Falls WI areas.

"My father was born in St. Louis, he came from [to?] Prairie du Chien about the time of the last war with England.

"I was born in this place (now called Frenchtown) August 15, 1826. The following spring my father moved his family to a house a short distance below the limits of Lower Town. The house had only one room. It was there that the

murders of my father and the terrible mutilation of myself occurred. I will tell the story as learned from my mother.

"June 10, 1827, my father visited the village of Prairie du Chien. The afternoon of that day mother noticed skulking Indians on the bluff east of the house but being accustomed to seeing Indians was not alarmed. Father did not return home until about noon of the next day. After dinner, the family, consisting of father, mother, Lipcap (an old man living with us), my brother Frank, three years old, myself, nearly ten years old, and Paschal Menior (a visitor) were having an after dinner chat.

"Four Indians who had reached the door unnoticed entered the room. Mother, placing four chairs, bade them to be seated. They complied. Mother asked them to have dinner. They replied 'we are not hungry, but thirsty.' She satisfied their wants and watching them closely she said to father in French 'these Indians mean to do us harm." Father made no reply. My fathers gun was hanging in fastenings to a joist directly over him. Three of the Indians had guns. The fourth, a chief who Indian name signifieid 'Little Sun'. was seated nearest to my father with his side toward him. This Indian had, unknown to the family, a shorter gun concealed under his blanket and it was held in such a position as to bring my father in range. One of the other Indians left his chair and took down my fathers gun from him and stood it near by them.

Both were seated again. At a signal from one of the other Indians 'Little Sun' fired his concealed gun, the bullet entering the right breast of my father, who had not changed his position. The house was filled with powder smoke; my little brother was crying. Mother picked him up and ran out of the house. The Indians had preceded her and leaped over the fence near the house. Mother made her way over the fence and dropped directly in front of one of the Indians who was crouching unnoticed by her on tht side. Dropping the child she seized his gun and with unnatural strength wrenched it away from him. She threw the gun after the Indians who had started to kill Lipcap.

My mother then returned to the house. I had creeped under the bed. Father was not dead but could not speak or move but made motions with his eyes which she clearly understood as saying 'make your escape.' She then ran out and through a picket fence which divided their grounds from those of a man she named Joseph Lambein. She hurriedly told him what had occurred and asked him to help her. He mounted his horse and rode cowardly away without a word.

She then returned to the house. Father who still lived, again with expressive look plainly signalled 'get away', Mother then with my little brother made her way into the timber close to the house. In her flight she noticed a large soft maple tree which had been blown down and that the place where it had stood was surrounded by a dense growth of brush. She crept into this and into the cavity made by uprooting the tree, placed Frank and crouching over him remained almost breathless, until within 12 feet of her hiding place the Indians killed Lipcap with their knives, mutilating him and taking his scalp. My mother was not discovered.

"The Indians then returned to the house. Paschal Menoir, who from a place of concealment, took this opportunity [and made] his way to the village. He reached, exhausted, the house of Julian Lariviere. He then found Frank Dechuquette who mounted his horse and [raised an alarm to] people who turned out to the rescue. My mother in the meantime was searching for the road to the village when she saw the people coming to the relief. I had creeped from under the bed to the door when the Indians returned to the house. "Little Sun', in his testimony given at the trial of himself and the chief 'Red Bird', for these murders said, 'that he first gave the child a kick on the left hip and then with the gun barrel in his hands struck her with the breech of the gun on the right shoulder and with his knife struck her in the back of the neck, intending to behead her and carry the head away with him'. At this moment the other Indians outside the house shouted that 'people are coming.'

"He said 'I then took her scalp and with it part of the skull '. He then scalped my father, down whose dying face, he said, the tears were flowing at witnessing the horrid butchery of myself.

"When the rescue party reached the house, my father was dead. I was lying in a pool of my own blood and supposed to be dead. Julian, son of Julian Lariviere, wrapped me in his handkerchief, and carried me to his fathers house where some hours later when being washed preparatory to burial I was first discovered to be alive. By careful nursing and tender care, under kind Providence, I was restored to health.

"My first husband's name was Moreaux. He died in 1855. By that marriage, we had 10 children. I was married to Mr. Cherrier, March 1, 1862. We have 3 children by this marriage.

"My mother married again in 1831. Her second husband's name was St. Germain. My mother died in 1836 with the smallpox. My stepfather died in January, 1882."

Mrs. Mary Louisa Cherrier, who gave this account in the year 1884, died at Prairie du Chien WI February 10, 1893 at age 66 years, 5 months, 25 days."

LETTRES

Jean-Marc Charron, whose commentary about Tadoussac appears elsewhere in this issue, sent along a Montreal newspaper article about the French-Canadian strong-man Louis Cyr (Mai-Juin, 1994). He also said that "Louis Cyr was born of Acadian descent and baptised on 11 Oct 1863 and raised in Napierville."

He also commented about Paul Campbell's letter in the Juillet-Aout issue as follows: "The town Paul Campbell refers to as "Acadia" is actually called "L'Acadie". Look on the map about 6 miles west of St-Jean. It was first called Petite-Riviere-de-Montreal, Petite Cadie, Blairfindie and finally L'Acadie. The name of the parish is "Sainte-Marguerite-de-Blairfindie". After the cruel "deportation des Acadiens" (mostly in 1755), about 500 of them made their way from Boston to the area just west of Fort Saint-Jean (around 1767). Governor Francis Bernard of Boston (a relative through European connections?) was particularly sensitive to the plight of the Acadians and was very human in their regards and so allowed them their wishes to seek a new home. Some 890 left the Boston area and by 1768, 500 of them made their new home at "la Petite Cadie". By 1882, the descendants of these 500 had spread along both shores of the Richelieu River, down to the U.S. border, and counted for some 12 to 15 thousands. Their descendants easily number four times that amount today. Todays population of L'Acadie: 4,450.

June Larson, dedicated Francophile and Francophone, took an active interest in Words Borrowed From the French (Chambers Journal Dec 13 and 20, 1845 and Chez Nous Juillet-Aout 1994), and offers some comments on French definitions as used by the present day French. During 1993-94 June lived in France, and expects to live there again. Merci, June!

(Please refer to the last Chez Nous for the 1845 definitions. If June offered no change in the definitions, they are not cited here.)

June updates the 1845 statement in Chambers: "Unlike some of the continental nations, the English do not set themselves to prevent the intrusion of new or foreign words into their ordinary speech." She says: "WRONG! They are making a fuss over this as we speak...." She adds an additional general comment: "It's interesting how words creep into a language, remain, and oftentimes keep their original meanings or sometimes have totally different meanings. This is true of many English words in the French language."

French definitions of today:

Beau: handsome, beautiful (adj)

Blase: not used much in todays French

Bon-mot: not used much in todays French

Coup: in addition, has dozens of currently used meanings such as *payer un coup* = to buy a drink; *passer un coup de l'aspirateur* = give the rug a quick vacuum; *un coup de rouge* = a glass of red wine; plus many others

Debut: the beginning

Distingue: different (adj)

Elite: I haven't heard it used

Ennui: a problem

Ensemble: simply, "together"

Gauche: is not used to describe people who make errors in social areas

Gourmet: A connoisseur of fine dining, includes wine, of course

Nonchalance: not used

Passe: other definition means usually, to spend time or to pass by

Rendezvous: an appointment

Soiree: "An entire evening...passed in social enjoyment" - can in today's France be a crummy evening as well!

94-6-1

Louis Cyr: strong man from the past

He is said to have lifted 552½ pounds with one finger

Among the public statues the city of Montreal has been cleaning and refurbishing is the one raised in memory of the historic strongman, Louis Cyr.

One day in the 1880s, while Louis Cyr was a constable in Ste. Cunegonde, he brought three men into the local police station. Though outnumbered, he had no difficulty.

He carried one of these law-breakers under each arm; the third was gripped between the other two; and all were held clear off the ground. They were dumped on the station's floor.

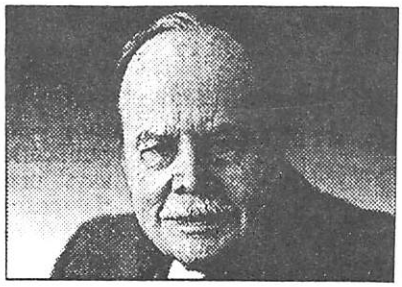
Some years later, Cyr was to be declared the strongest man in all North America and in all Europe. After these achievements, he was unofficially declared the strongest man in the world.

Yet Cyr was not a particularly tall man, and therefore scarcely a giant. He was no more than five feet, 10½ inches. There were those who towered over him, such as the eight-foot Giant of Beauport. But in competitions, Cyr's weight told. It varied but was claimed to be about 300 pounds.

Cyr's fame spread. He went on tour in England in 1892. He broke previous records, establishing seven new ones. His demonstrations of strength became more and more spectacular.

Edward, Prince of Wales, Queen Victoria's son and heir, had been astounded by Cyr's feats of strength. He told him that he could appear under royal patronage for the remainder of his tour of England and for his subsequent tours of Scotland, Ireland and Europe.

Cyr returned from his triumphs abroad with a brilliant fame. It removed all difficulty in booking new tours in North America. For the next five years, he travelled under the auspices of two of the century's most successful promoters – Ringling Brothers and Barnum and Bailey.



EDGAR ANDREW COLLARD

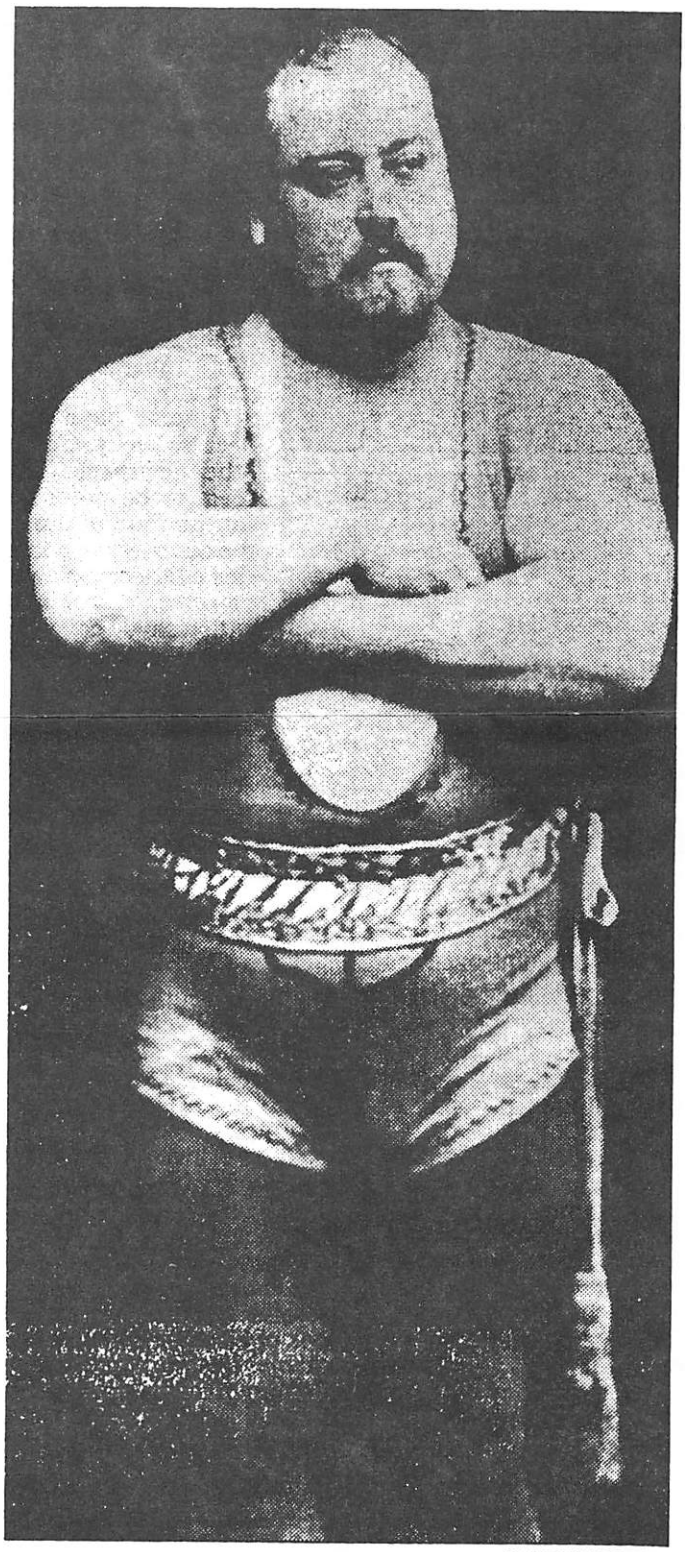
New ways of demonstrating Cyr's strength were devised. They were phenomenal. With one finger, he raised 552½ pounds. Then he lifted a barrel of wet sand. It weighed 488 pounds, but he raised it from the ground to his shoulder.

A huge table was lain on his chest. Twenty people climbed onto it. Cyr then raised himself, the table, and the 20 people.

While performing in Chicago, he demonstrated his strength in still another way. He raised 4,133 pounds from a table, using the difficult backlift.

But all his strength did not guarantee a long life. Cyr died at 49, on Nov. 10, 1912.

from MONTREAL GAZETTE
June 11, 1994
MERCI to Jean-Marc Charron



GAZETTE FILE PHOTO

Louis Cyr established seven records for feats of strength.

Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

UPCOMING EVENTS

* A **Dinner Cruise** on the St. Croix River will be held on **September 11 from 4:30-7:00 p.m.** This is a buffet dinner aboard the Andiamo out of Stillwater. Cost per person is $14.95. No reservations required. Call Louis Ritchot at 323-8729 for more information.

* **Regular meetings** of LaSociete are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. on **October 3 (at St. Louis Catholic Church St. Paul)** and **November 7 (at the Chancery of the Archdiocese,** across from the Cathedral on Summit Avenue St. Paul). **Please mark your calendar.** There will be a program on October 3. On November 7, Pat Anzelc, assistant archivist for the Diocese, will discuss the considerable resources available for family researchers through the Archdiocese.

* **Annual Christmas Party Potluck is December 10**, beginning at 6 p.m. at St. Louis Church in St. Paul.

As always, we remind you that **Chez Nous** is your newsletter, and we depend on your participation to keep the paper interesting. Send contributions to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. We look forward to hearing from you.

NAUGHTY MARIETTA TO BE PERFORMED

NOTE: This article appeared in the last Chez Nous. There are some changes, which appear below in boldface. LaSociete members Florence Stephens and Dick Bernard are active with North Star Opera, and both highly recommend the professional nature of the performers.

"Naughty Marietta", Victor Herbert's most enduring popular work, is scheduled for performance by the North Star Opera **at O'Shaughnessy Auditorium, College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, October 6, 7 and 9, 1994. The October 6 & 7 performances are at 8 p.m. and the October 9 performances is at 3 p.m.**

Naughty Marietta is set in 18th Century New Orleans, when the city belonged to France. It is a romantic musical comedy that found fame in the enormously successful 1930s film starring Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. It has not been performed in the Twin Cities for many years.

The story centers on a young countess who runs away from her French home to escape an arranged, unwelcome marriage. In disguise she joins a boat load of "Casquette" girls. They are young ladies who come from France at government expense to marry and make homes in the New World. According to the custom of the time, the frontiersman of the girl's choice pays a French official the passage money for his bride.

The musical includes many of Herbert's best known songs, including: "Falling in Love with Someone", "Ah, Sweet Mystery of Life", "Italian Street Song", and many more.

Adult tickets are $25, $21.50, $18, $15. There is a $1 senior citizen discount on all but the $15 seats. Student price is $12. **There is a handling charge of $2.50 per order.** Ticket orders can **be sent to O'Shaugnessy Auditorium #F-24, College of St.Catherine, 2004 Randolph Avenue St Paul 55105. Make checks payable to College of St. Catherine. Clearly specify program, date and number and price seats you wish.** You are urged to order early, since the North Star performances are very popular.

The 1995 bilingual calendar

***LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE/* FRENCH IN AMERICA**

The 11th edition of this very interesting calendar depicting historical events and prominent French Americans is now available for **$6.00** (add $1.50 for postage & handling). The 1995 calendar contains a surprise-photograph from Little Rock, Arkansas !
Make your check payable to: French-American Calendar-1995 and send it to: Virgil Benoit, RR2 Box 253, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

LA SOCIETE CANADIENNE-FRANCAISE
P.O. BOX 581413
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55458-1413

chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Novembre-Decembre, 1994 VOL. 16 NO. 3

la société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

LE JOUR DE L'AN

New Year's Day is really the most important feast day in the French Canadian calendar and tops the list of family social events. The family always gathered at the patriarchal home. In the morning all the children knelt at their father's feet, as soon as they saw him, for his blessing. He placed a hand on each bowed head, making the sign of the cross while making a short prayer. No matter how old, or how long away from home, whether single or married the visiting children or visiting grandchildren knelt for the patriarchal blessing as soon as they entered the house.

Everyone kissed each other on New Year's Day. The young men when calling on their sweetheart started by kissing the grandmother, the mother, and all the other girls in the family so that no one could object when he finally kissed his sweetheart.

There was always much visiting on New Year's Day with neighbors and friends calling on each other. I also remember the custom of "Courrir la Vigne Alle". One man began by calling on his neighbor and enjoying a glass - or more - of wine, after which the two of them called at the home of a third friend for another glass of wine, and so on until there were 20 or more stopping for the glass of wine. The last visit was made to the richest man in the neighborhood, as he alone would have enough glasses and wine to exercise the hospitality.

CADEAUX ET TOURTIERE

Gifts were always exchanged between adults on New Year's Day - and the children looked also for gifts, which were supposed to be brought during the night by "Croque-Mitaine".

And of course there was always a big dinner to end off the day...the table for the family dinner was festive with the best dishes, glassware and silver. French Canadians were very fond of goose, stuffed and beautifully roasted, with the traditional "tourtiere a la viande" as a close second. The tourtieres, or meat pies, made of ground pork with onions and spices with a rich crust, were baked just before the start of "les fetes". Starting with Christmas Day on to New Year's Day and "Le Jour des Rois" (Epiphany, January 6) - a holy day in Canada - with the Sundays in between, made a lot of holidays for feasting, visiting and celebrating.

Housewives would prepare for the round of entertaining by baking as many as 30 to 40 tourtieres, 25 dozen doughnuts, as well as many fruit pies of all kinds, which were frozen and then warmed up in the oven when needed. Every household had a special cupboard built on the porch just off the kitchen where the frozen food was kept.

MARDI GRAS

"Les Fetes" was the start of "Le Carnaval", each family receiving their relatives, friends and neighbors in their homes, the round of festivities ending with Mardi Gras, which is the day before Lent begins. On the evening of Mardi Gras people would dress in masquerade and go calling on neighbors before gathering at some home to celebrate until midnight.

Merci to Donalda LaGradeur, Somerset WI, (1985)
(Does this bring back your own memories? Write them down, and share with us. The Editor)

LOUIS RIEL, THE METIS AND THE FOUNDING OF MANITOBA

On March 10, 1992, Constitutional Affairs Minister Joe Clark introduced a resolution in the House of Commons recognizing Metis leader Louis Riel's "unique and historic role as a founder of Manitoba and his contribution in the development of Confederation."

The resolution was passed unanimously 107 years after Riel was hanged for treason.

Rupert's Land, the territory draining into Hudson Bay that includes what is now Manitoba, had been granted to the Hudson's Bay Company by King Charles II and settled mainly by French and Scottish fur traders. The mixed offspring of these traders and Cree and Ojibway women intermarried among themselves and became increasingly dominant in the fur trade. They created a new Aboriginal culture with its own language based on a fusion of European and Indian cultures, called Metis.

By 1869, when Rupert's Land was sold to the new Dominion of Canada, the Metis were the majority in the Red River Valley. Upset that the territory had been sold without regard to their claims to the land, the Red River Metis, led by Louis Riel, occupied Fort Garry and executed a surveyor from Ontario, Thomas Scott. Riel formed a provisional government and led a delegation to Ottawa to negotiate the entry of Red River Settlement into Confederation as the province of Manitoba. On July 15, 1870, Manitoba became Canada's fifth province, largely on terms drawn up by Riel, including both English and French as official languages and a land grant to the Metis.

Riel was elected to Parliament but was expelled from the House in 1874 because of outrage over Scott's execution. After suffering a nervous breakdown and spending time in a mental institution, Riel went to the United States where he became a U.S. citizen and taught school in Montana. He returned to Canada in 1885 after the Saskatchewan Metis asked for his help in securing land. Riel led them in an armed revolt but surrendered after two months of fighting and was hanged.

Between 1885 and 1908 the Metis were offered scrip which could supposedly be exchanged for land or cash, in return for relinquishing title to large blocks of land. They faced great difficulties in redeeming the scrip, however, and most of them lost their land to speculators.

The province of Alberta is the first to provide its Metis people with collective ownership of a secure land base. In 1990, it turned over to the Metis title to more than 200,000 acres, as well as resource management rights, local self-government and C$310 million in funding over 17 years.

Photo: C.A. Zimmerman/Glenbow Museum NA-2631-2

Julie Riel née Lagimodière (1820 - 1906)

The mother of Louis Riel, Julie was born in the Red River Settlement in 1820. Her mother, Marie-Anne Gaboury, was the first French-Canadian woman in the North-West. Her father, Jean-Baptiste Lagimodière, born in Québec, came to the North-West as a fur trader and later settled in the Red River colony.

A devout Catholic, Julie's extreme, almost mystical piety was perhaps *the* greatest single influence on the young Louis Riel. Julie outlived her husband and eight of her eleven children, dying in 1906 at the age of 86.

The above article on Louis Riel comes from the journal, Canada Today, Vol 23 #1, 1993. The biographical sketches and photos at right and below come from the brochure for the Riel House, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Marguerite Riel née Monet (1861 - 1886)

In 1881 Louis Riel married Marguerite Monet, a Métisse he had met at a wintering camp in the Dakota Territory. Only 20 when she married, her life was destined to be short and tragic. She gave birth to Jean in 1882 and Angélique in 1883. Her third child, a baby boy born in October, 1885, while Louis Riel was in prison in Regina, lived for only one day. After Louis' execution on November 16, 1885, the devoted Marguerite lost heart; she died of consumption six months later at the age of 25 in her mother-in-law Julie Riel's house in St. Vital.

Louis Riel *père* (1817 - 1864)

Son of fur trader Jean-Baptiste Riel dit l'Irlande and Marguerite Boucher, a Métisse, Riel Sr. was born at Ile-à-la-Crosse in 1817. As a young man he worked for the Hudson's Bay Company, was for a time a novice with the Oblate Fathers, but finally settled in Red River in 1843. He married Julie Lagimodière in 1844 and soon became involved in the milling trade in Red River.

A champion of the Métis people, in 1849 he organized the resistance to the Hudson's Bay Company trade monopoly in Rupert's Land. Louis Riel, Sr. died suddenly in 1864, at the age of 46. His death had a profound impact on the young Louis Riel who never forgot his father's passionate commitment to "la Nation Métisse".

Louis Riel, "John Brown of the Halfbreeds"

Vivid Actor in Historic Panorama of Northwest, Once President of Manitoba Seeking to Create an Empire for His People Whom He Believed Entitled to Distinct Rights as a Race, He Headed Rebellion Against Dominion Twice to Obtain them; Most of the Reforms He Advocated Were Granted But He Was Declared Murderer and Was Hanged at Regina.

From the ROCKY MOUNTAIN HUSBANDMAN, Great Falls MT October 31, 1940.

by Wilchey

(Editors Note: Bill Horn sent us this fascinating article some time ago. It was in a collection of his fathers papers. Except for footnoted portions, the article appears to reasonably fairly represent the life and times of Louis Riel. A pleasant coincidence for us is that the Minnesota Historical Society is publishing a new book, Strange Empire, by Joseph Kinsey Howard, which is "the dramatic story of Louis Riel, the Metis-people, and their valiant but ill-fated struggle to establish their own homeland on the plains of the American-Canadian border region...." The 601 page book is available from MHS in November, 1994, for $16.95.)

The passing panorama of history in Montana has depicted some strange characters who were actors on the stage of our frontier drama, but there have been few who have left more of an appeal to people's interest from the viewpoint of romance than Louis Riel, called "the John Brown of the Half-breeds"[1], once president of the republic of Manitoba, who made war on the Dominion government, was defeated by British troops and was hanged at Regina ~~Sept. 18~~**[Nov.16]**, 1885.

Louis Riel spent many years in Montana after he had been exiled from Canada, following his first revolt against the Dominion government, and there are men still living in this state who knew him well. The late Alex C. Botkin of Helena, one-time lieutenant governor of Montana, left an interesting account of his recollections of Riel, which follows in part:

"In September, 1882, while I was making a canvass of Montana in an effort to convince the people that they needed my services in congress, I visited Fort Benton [Which is located on the Missouri River about 50 miles northeast of Great Falls]. While I was there a figure appeared in my room that was quite sufficient in itself to fix my attention and excite my interest. It was that of a man of magnificent stature, 6 feet in height, with broad shoulders, slightly rounded, and finely proportioned throughout. He had brown hair reaching to his neck and a full beard of the same color. His complexion was fair and there was nothing in his appearance save prominent cheekbones to suggest Indian blood. There was a notable dignity in his carriage, and he had courtliness of manner that we are in the habit of regarding as characteristic of the French.

Spoke Correct English

"My interest in the caller was increased when he gave me his name. I had read of the uprising of the Metis or half-breeds in Winnipeg in 1870, and was not a little impressed to find myself in the presence of the ex-president of the republic of Manitoba, Louis Riel.

What is a Metis (Metisse)?

Peter Warren, syndicated newspaper columnist in Canada, wrote as follows in his "Notes from the North" column in an April, 1993, Grand Forks (ND) Herald.

"History is . . . unclear about the definition of the word "Metis" or "Metisse." In fact, today, Manitobans argue about the pronunciation. Hit the dictionary and you get: "of mixed race, born of parents of different nations." And, I guess, somewhere along the line, we could all qualify under that blanket. A secondary definition says "... especially of parents of French-speaking and North American Indian heritage." We do know, for sure, that the word comes from the Spanish "Mestizo."

Warren adds the sad but true commentary that "[h]istorical documents show that white settlers who had relationships with native women considered and, in fact, called them "country wives," not considering marriages legally binding, permanent or valid. The aboriginal people thought otherwise."

[1]John Brown, 1800-1859, "was a militant Abolitionist whose raid on the Federal Arsenal at Harpers Ferry VA in 1859 made him a martyr to the anti-slavery cause and was instrumental in heightening sectional animosities that led to the U.S. Civil War." Encyclopedia Britannica

"Addressing me in correct English, which he pronounced with a slight French accent, he made known the purpose of his call. This was to secure my official aid (I was then United States marshal) in prosecuting traders who were selling liquor to the half-breeds. As I had not been educated up to the practice which may be called eclectic enforcement of the laws - that is to say the custom of punishing some officers and protecting others in a monopoly of law-breaking, I encouraged him to procure the necessary evidence and promised my co-operation.

"After my return home I received several letters from him written with admirable precision in a hand that was almost feminine in its fineness. Nothing came of this for the reason, among others, that the half-breeds were not Indians in charge of an agent or superintendent, and that the sale of liquor to them was scarely within the purview of the laws of the United States. However, the incident possibly possesses some significance in showing the care that Riel exhibited in guarding the welfare of his people. He was himself a man of exemplary habits and intensely religious.

Teaching on Sun River

"My next interview with him occurred, as nearly as I can fix the time, in the spring of 1884. He was then, as he had been for some time previous, teaching an Indian school that was conducted under the auspices of a Catholic mission on Sun river. He had made the journey to Helena in a cart, and upon his arrival went into camp in the outskirts of the city. With him were his wife and baby. His wife had the appearance of a full-blooded Indian woman, and she could not read or write, but it was touching to observe the courtly tenderness with which he presented her, and her, and held and caressed the little one.

"Another member of the party was none other than Gabriel Dumont, later the commander of Riel's army in the Saskatchewan rebellion, who so won the admiration of the Canadian soldiers by his skill and daring in that insurrection that if they did not connive at his escape, they were at least glad when he was spared the fate that befell his leader. He was a diffident, taciturn man, and in the many hours that I passed in his company he scarcely spoke a dozen times; but his short, stout frame and strongly marked features conveyed the impression of a resolute character.

Wanted to Be Citizen

"On the occasion of this visit, Riel informed me that his object was to become a citizen of the United States. I gave him all the assistance in my power, and I am not apt to forget the almost childish delight with which he received his certificate of naturalization, to which Mr. Beattie, the clerk of the court, had attached a seal on glittering gilt paper, and had not omitted to charge him $10 for the embellishment.

"In "The History of the Northwest Rebellion of 1885" by Dr. Mulvany, is found the following:

""When the northwest half-breeds asked him (Riel) to lead them as he had led them in Manitoba, he at first refused, saying that he was a citizen of the United States and wished to have no more Canadian troubles, but their entreaties prevailed on him to consent."

"While Riel may have seen fit to be coy, I cannot accept the above statement in its entirety. During his visit to Helena he called repeatedly at my office and my house. In the course of our conversations he disclosed the fact that he had then projected a movement for the independence of the half-breeds and the establishment of a republic in the provinces of Assinaboia[2] and Saskatchewan. He told me that he had drafted a constitution and full plans for the execution of the scheme. I said: "Riel, you had better be careful of those papers; they are likely to get you in trouble with the British authorities."

"He replied: "Ah, I have buried them deep in the ground."

"There is reason to suspect that, so far from hesitating to accept leadership of the half-breeds because he was an American citizen, he acquired his citizenship for that very purpose. Repeatedly, he hinted at schemes to involve the United States in his revolutionary enterprise. It was conceivably with a wild notion that it might further this end that he asked me to appoint him a deputy United States marshal, a request that I felt obliged to deny.

Dreamed Half-Breed Republic

"It was of not a little interest to listen as he unfolded his dream of a half-breed republic. In his belief the half-breeds were a distinct racial people, deserving of political equality and adequate to the

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[2]It is not known for certain to what the author refers. Most likely it is to the Colony of Assiniboia which was a tiny land area, centered at the forks where the waters of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers meet, now central Winnipeg, Manitoba.

responsibilities of self-government. Some explanation of his confidence might be found in the fact that the Metis, with whom he was associated in his earlier years, were the agricultural settlers of Manitoba, who were presumably a more stable and intelligent class than the wandering half-breeds who drifted hither and thither over the Rocky Mountain region during the frontier days.

"His project was to gather the half-breeds from the United States and all the British provinces in North America and so build a nation. It was to possess a republican form of government. The Catholic religion was to be recognized in the constitution as the faith of the people, but there was to be a repudiation of the authority of Rome. Riel was to head this unique experiment, but it is only just to add my conviction that personal ambition was not the controlling motive of Louis Riel, and that there was no taint of self-seeking in his efforts for freedom, justice and humanity."

Story of Louis Riel

Louis Riel's father was a full-blooded Scandinavian, and his mother partly Irish and partly Indian[3]. He was born at St. Boniface, five miles from Winnipeg. Destined for the priesthood from his birth, after his schooling at his birthplace he was sent to the Jesuit college at Montreal. There he was noted for his diligence and proficiency in his studies. He was master of Latin, French and English, and later learned four Indian languages. He left college, however, without taking orders in the priesthood.

In 1869 when the Hudson's Bay company surrendered Manitoba and the Northwest territory to the Dominion government, the half-breeds were loud in their expression of discontent. They alleged tht they had no assurance that they would be protected in possession of their farms, and therein, at least, their cause was founded in justice. Soon they assumed an attitude of open revolt and organized a republic with a provisional government, at the head of which was Riel.

Riel demanded for his constituents fair representation in the Dominion parliament, a provincial legislature, local self government, the official use of both the French and English languages, land grants for the parochial schools and public improvements, a free homestead law and the issuance of patents to settlers for their respective holdings. While Riel is commonly classed as a visionary, and sometimes as a madman, it is difficult to find anything in these demands that is extremely unreasonable or impracticable.

Riel led the revolt with dauntless vigor and untiring energy. Seizing Fort Garry, he speedily established the authority of the insurrectionary government throughout the province. A Canadian, Thomas Scott, who defied Riel's authority, was sentenced to death and executed.

Archbishop Tache, who enjoyed the confidence and affection of the insurgents, visited Fort Garry, and by liberal promises of clemency created a more conciliatory sentiment. In the meantime the Dominion government had sent Colonel Garnet Wolsey, later field marshal and commander-in-chief of the British army, to suppress Riel and his followers, but the soldiers did not reach Manitoba until August, 1870.

In the meantime the Dominion government had passed the Manitoba Act, which admitted that province into the confederation of provinces with a local self-government, representation in parliament and made provision to recognize the rights of the half-breeds to their lands. Nearly all of the demands of the rebels were conceded, and when the Wolsey expedition reached the province, the provincial government had melted away and Riel had fled to Montana.

In 1874, at the general election, Riel, although a fugitive in Montana, was elected to parliament for the district of Provencher in Manitoba, and notwithstanding that there was an indictment against him for the murder of Scott, he went secretly to Ottawa, where by means that have never been explained he took oath and signed the roll, but thereupon returned to Montana.

Parliament met and expelled him, a new election being ordered. Riel was so strong with his people that he was re-elected, but was again expelled. This time, however, an order was made that he should be granted a pardon after five years of exile should have expired.

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[3] We are mystified at the identification of Riel as "Scandinavian". Perhaps this is because the line of his mother goes back to Normandie, named after "Northmen" (Vikings from Norway)! It is suggested in Riel's genealogy that the Riel name does go back to Limerick, Ireland. His roots are definitely and primarily French-Canadian and Metis. With all due respect to the author of this article, Riel was not Scandinavian. We invite evidence to the contrary.

Rebellion of 1884

In 1879 he settled again in Montana, where he taught school at the Catholic mission on Sun river, at times joining half-breeds to hunt buffalo. During these years he lived in extreme poverty.

The uprising in Saskatchewan was similar in its cause to that in Manitoba in 1869. The Dominion had granted to every half-breed in Manitoba 240 acres of land, but no such concession had been made to those in other provinces. Other grievances existed among the half-breeds, and when Riel went among them in the fall of 1884 at their request, it is conceded by Canadian historians that he spoke with moderation and advised only pacific measures. His bill of rights called for (1) the division of the Northwest Territories into provinces; (2) the half-breeds to receive the same grants and other advantages as those in Manitoba; (3) patents to be issued at once to the colonists in possession of the lands; (4) the sale of lands to establish schools, hospitals, and to provide the poor with seed and implements for farming; (5) reservation of certain swamp lands for distribution among the children of half-breeds; (6) a grant of at least $1,000 in aid of an institution to be conducted by the nuns in each half-breed settlement; and (7) more liberal provision for the Indians.

Riel at War Again

Riel's petition having been thrown aside by the government, he assumed aggressive tactics. Believing that England was about to go to war with Russia, he proclaimed himself "the Liberator," and established insurrection headquarters at Bateche.

Riel displayed genuine genius for rebellion. He provided a commissariat for the insurgents, selected strategical points for occupancy by his troops, and in the person of Gabriel Dumont[4], chose a man of rare natural gifts as a military commander. Some fighting followed, in which the half-breeds battled fiercely, but they were unable to resist the trained forces that they encountered. Riel was not directly responsible for the massacre at Frog's lake, where a civilian settlement was murdered by the Indians. The leader of the Indians at Frog's lake was Big Bear, chief of a renegade band of Crees and Chippewas.

After a few hard-fought battles the rebellion was suppressed and Riel gave himself up as a prisoner of war. He was tried for treason at Regina. The trial was participated in by eminent counsel from remote parts of the dominion. Riel's attorney made a plea of insanity, which he, himself, scornfully repudiated. He was convicted, and on the ~~18th of October~~**[Nov. 16]** was hanged. On the scaffold he bore himself with dignity, and protested to the last that he had acted in fulfillment of a mission.

So great was the sympathy felt for Riel by the French population of the Dominion that the MacDonald government at Ottawa was nearly overthrown because of its refusal to commute the sentence against Riel.

Riel had been called the John Brown of the half-breeds, and this name is not inappropriate in some respects. Like John Brown he was a dreamer; again, there may have been a taint of insanity in his makeup. His demands for the people of Manitoba were for the most part granted, and while the Canadian authorities were preparing to hang him, they were also proceeding to grant the demands that Riel made for the half-breeds in the Northwest Territory. Patents were issued to them for the lands which they occupied, and in less than a year after Riel's death they were granted representation in the parliament of the dominion.

In the little churchyard at St. Boniface, outside of Winnipeg, lie the remains of Louis Riel. His grave is a shrine for the French half-breeds of the Dominion, who believe today that he, like the man of Harper's Ferry, offered up his life in behalf of a poor and oppressed people.

[4] Could Gabriel be an ancestor of Ms Yvon Dumont, who was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba in 1993 and who is Metis, and past president of the Manitoba Metis Federation?

Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

MARK YOUR CALENDAR SAVE APRIL 20-22, 1995 FOR A MAJOR FRENCH AND FRENCH-CANADIAN CULTURAL EVENT IN THE TWIN CITIES.

On Thursday and Friday nights, and Saturday, April 20-22, a number of French and French-Canadian Cultural Organizations, especially La Societe C-F, will be bringing together a program of music, story-telling and dance to all those who share in a love of the heritage of the French-Canadians. (More on reverse).

KEEP OPEN APRIL 20-22, 1995.

"A NEW WORLD, An Epic of Colonial America from the Founding of Jamestown to the Fall of Quebec" by Arthur Quinn

Our own Bill Horn, sent a note about this book: "very interesting book", he says.

The 520+ page book, most likely available at your library, has twelve chapters including Champlain at Quebec, Acadian Neutrality and Montcalm at Quebec.

Another reviewer, Thomas A. Brady, Jr., says that the book is "the kind of work historians piously and often recommend but rarely write, a work of high scholarship crafted for a general audience."

It's time to renew your membership in LaSociete for 1995. Membership year begins January 1. Please follow through on this.

As always, we remind you that Chez Nous is your newsletter, and depends on your participation to keep the paper interesting. Send contributions to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th Street W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. We look forward to hearing from you.

Beginning November 1, 1994, Bonjour Minnesota, the French bilingual program, will be heard at 8:00 p.m. every Wednesday on KFAI-FM on both 90.3 and 106.7. This will make it possible for more people to hear the program in their areas of the Twin Cities. Bonjour Minnesota is hosted by Georgette Pfannkuch, and features French cultural information through music and interviews.

UPCOMING EVENTS

* Regular meeting 7:30 November 7 will be at the Chancery office of the Archdiocese (across Summit from the Cathedral). Pat Anzelc, assistant archivist for the Diocese, will discuss the considerable resources available for family researchers through Parish records.

* Annual Christmas Party Potluck is December 10, beginning at 6 p.m. at St. Louis Catholic Church Hall in St. Paul (just off 10th just east of Cedar in downtown St. Paul). These events are always well attended and enjoyable. Plan to attend.

* There will not be a meeting of La Societe in January. We resume February 6, 1995.

The 1995 bilingual calendar
***LES FRANÇAIS D'AMÉRIQUE/* FRENCH IN AMERICA**

The 11th edition of this very interesting calendar depicting historical events and prominent French Americans is now available for **$6.00** (add $1.50 for postage & handling). The 1995 calendar contains a surprise-photograph from Little Rock, Arkansas !
Make your check payable to: French-American Calendar-1995 and send it to: Virgil Benoit, RR2 Box 253, Red Lake Falls, MN 56750.

la société canadienne-française

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL/APPLICATION

(Please send with Check made to La Societe C-F to
George LaBrosse
4895 Brent Avenue
Inver Grove Heights MN 55076

Name ____________________ Telephone ____________________ Profession ____________________

Address ____
Street City State ZIP

Membership Dues:		2 Year Membership Dues:	
Family	$15.00	Family	$30.00
Senior (over 62)	$ 8.00	Senior (over 62)	$16.00
Senior Couple	$10.00	Senior Couple	$20.00
Single	$10.00	Single	$20.00
Minor (under 18)	$ 1.00	Minor (under 18)	$ 2.00

DONATIONS: The Société is a non-profit organization and accepts tax-deductible donations from people interested in promoting the French-Canadian culture. Please make out any donation you may wish to contribute to: "La Société Canadienne-Française" and mail to:
P.O. Box 581413
Minneapolis, MN 55458-1413

Donations will go into the general fund to help support our programs and activities. Thanks!

* *

You may wish to photo copy this page, and send the below release to persons you know who may have an interest in this program.

* *

TWIN CITIES GROUPS PLAN MAJOR CULTURAL EVENT WITH A FRENCH AND FRENCH-CANADIAN THEME.

Genuine Joie de Vivre will echo through the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul on Thursday and Friday nights and Saturday, April 20-22, 1995. On those dates, a number of French-Canadian and French cultural organizations will team together to bring a program of music, story-telling and dance to all those who share in a love of the heritage of the French-Canadians.

The entire calendar is still being planned for this first ever event. It is certain, however, that the program will include a music group from Winnipeg, Manitoba; an outstanding tenor from Montreal; and a dance troupe, Dance Revels, doing the ancient dances of Brittany, France and French-Canada. In addition there will be story-telling, music by the Twin Cities group Les Canadiens Errants, and a costume ball on Saturday night.

Events will headquarter at Minneapolis' Ukrainian Center, which is near the French Church, Our Lady of Lourdes. Lourdes, the oldest church structure in Minneapolis, and a Catholic Church for the French-Canadian community beginning in 1877, has a rich French-Canadian heritage of which it is justly proud.

HOLD OPEN YOUR CALENDAR FOR APRIL 20-22, 1995.

We look forward to your participation and support. If you wish details as the program developes please send an SASE to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St. W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.

LA SOCIETE CANADIENNE-FRANCAISE
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NEWSLETTER OF Mars-Avril, 1995 VOL. 16 NO. 5

la société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

A GRAND AND DELIGHTFUL

FRENCH IN AMERICA HERITAGE FESTIVAL

Minneapolis and St. Paul, April 20-22, 1995

CROSSING BOUNDARIES/ EN TRAVERSANT LES FRONTIERES - Thursday and Friday, April 20-21, 1995

This fascinating concert of dance and music will trace the roots of French and Metis heritage back to France of the 1600s. The Thursday program will be at the Minnesota History Center 3M Auditorium; the Friday program at the Ukrainian Community Center at 301 Main Street NE (near Riverplace) in Minneapolis. Both shows begin at 7:30 p.m.

Detailed information about both programs, can be found on the last two pages of this issue of Chez Nous.

The April 20-21 shows will open with demonstration of the dances and music of the Brittany region of France, performed by folk musicians and dancers of the Twin Cities group DANCE REVELS, directed by Jane Peck. Jane has performed for La Societe C-F.

The program will then show the transition of French music and dance to the Voyageurs and finally to the Metis of Turtle Mountain , North Dakota.

This program is made possible in significant part by funding received through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council and the Minnesota Legislature as well as the Minnesota Dance Alliance with Jerome Foundation funds.

There will be a reception to meet the international stars after the shows.

MELODIES FRANCAISES Saturday, April 22, 1995

The third evening of French Heritage Festival will feature the beautiful melodies and lyric French poetry as performed by Quebec tenor Jean-Louis Sanscartier. This performance will be at 7:30 p.m. at Minneapolis' beautiful "French Church", Our Lady of Lourdes, at Riverplace.

Ticket Information for all performances is on the last page of this issue of Chez Nous.

Jean-Louis Sanscartier brings a rich and delicious repertory of French and Quebecois salon songs from the early part of this century. This was a time when art song flourished, and these songs are most beautiful when sung in French by a native Francophone.

Jean-Louis performs frequently in the province of Quebec. His credits include the Opera Choir of Montreal, the Evening Opera of Montreal, and Jeunesse Musicales of Canada. He is artistic director for the Laurentian city of Prevost, Quebec.

A number of LaSociete members have heard him sing and describe his music as beautiful, and his personality as warm and outgoing. While a true Francophone, he is fluent in English.

A Quebec review describes well his talent for entertaining an audience: "It's too short", was the unanimous commentary after his concert. Truly, the virtuosity of Mr. Sanscartier, his choice of pieces, and the ambiance he created made us lose track of time."

Jean-Louis comes to the Twin Cities thanks to the Canadian Government and the work of Le Reseau de l'Etoile du Nord.

ON COMING TO THE 'STATES:

Below we present the story of Georgianna Guimont's migration from Cap St. Ignace Quebec to Dayton MN in 1877, as well as the story of her family in Dayton, MN. Dayton village is still a small rural community on the Mississippi River about 30 miles northwest of downtown Minneapolis, but in all respects the former township is now a suburb of Minneapolis. It was founded in July, 1852 by Paul Godine and Isaiah Cowet.

With variations, Georgianna's story matches that of most of our immigrant families. Most of our ancestors moved to the United States from Canada beginning about the 1850s. Popular folklore to the contrary, most of our ancestors were not Voyageurs, nor directly descended from Voyageurs. Our ancestors came, by and large, from rural Quebec communities, sometimes with a few generation way-stop in a New England milling town.

(In the next issue we will write about the general migration of French-Canadians to the northeastern United States. Your recollections are solicited if your family came from this part of the country. Deadline April 15 to Dick Bernard, 7632 157th St. W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.)

Why did our ancestors migrate? There were many reasons, but a primary one was the pressure of space in their home province. For example, on January 23, 1995, Evangeline Clement of Maple Ridge, British Columbia, wrote about her family, Collette, who moved, about 1862, from St. Lambert de Levis Quebec to then St. Anthony (later Minneapolis) to North Dakota. Later her grandfather, Philippe, moved from North Dakota to southern Manitoba, and one of his brothers, Alfred Collette, moved back to Dayton MN where he raised his family and lived the rest of his life. (He perhaps knew Georgianna Bouley well).

Evangeline says this: "the Collette family left St. Lambert de Levis, PQ. because there was no place to establish the boys (there were seven), and as there were homesteads available that is why they came west. Later, when homesteads came available in Canada, Grandpa came to Ste Elizabeth Manitoba because he had a second family [his first wife had died] and he could not expand his farm in Oakwood, ND. as the land was all taken."

So, a simple and reasonable explanation for the migration was that there was too little land for "the boys" (in these transactions, the girls did not generally count!) in the usually very large French-Canadian families, and to establish themselves they had to relocate.

There is another generalization which can be safely made in many cases: Migrants tended to move to places where they knew someone. Thus, like today's migrants to the Twin Cities from southeast Asia, whole families and members of communities would move to the same general area in this country.

THE STORY OF MY LIFE

by Georgianna Guimont Bouley, Dayton MN
written December, 1965

A few years ago, Charley Bouley gave to us the memories written by his grandmother, Georgianna. She came to the United States at the age of five, when her family settled in the French-Canadian community of Dayton, MN - a town on the Mississippi River about 30 miles northwest of Minneapolis.

These memories were written thirty years ago, and it is interesting to think about the many changes that have occurred since then, not only in Georgianna's family, but in our own lives. History is indeed in constant change.

Enjoy Georgianna's memories and let them be an encouragement to you to pen your own during this winter season! Our thoughts are with Charley, who passed on in 1992.

"I am about to embark on a long journey and recall my past. I was born November 25, 1872, at Cap-St.-Ignace, Quebec, Canada, so it is a long journey in more ways than one. I arrived in this country with my parents, Celestine and Delina Guimont at the age of five on May 10, 1877, in Minneapolis. One of my uncles took me in his arms as I got off the train. The family lived with the old Paul Goodins [Godine ?](the Bonne home) for a while, and then my father bought a place from Mr. Urban Boutin, which is the place where Robert Guimont lives now, that is the third generation. I had three brothers and four sisters.

The area was all woods. It took many a day of hard work to clear the land, but as the years rolled on, more acreage was cultivated. Corn, wheat and marsh hay were the principle crops. I did a lot of corn husking. My sister, Mary, and I walked way to the end of the farm, bringing our lunch to save steps, for those fall days were pretty frosty and cold sometimes, but we were assigned to the job, so we did it. Other outdoor work was raking hay with a little hand wooden rake. We had to make little stacks or mounds and also make bundles during grain-cutting time. The grain binders with knotters were not in existence yet, so we had to take a little handful of the grain itself and make a certain knot to keep the bundle secure. Milking cows was a regular night and morning chore. We made our own butter. There had to be at least five or six days accumulation of milk to have enough cream to churn a batch. The cream was kept in covered tin cans and lowered in the well to keep cool. That was the only cooling system anyone had at the time. I and my sister, Mary, walked many times to deliver butter and eggs to the village grocer in Dayton. Some of those hot summer days the butter got mighty soft by the time we reached our destination, but my mother put it in tin pails, so nothing was really lost.

The only storekeepers name I recall was Louis Peters. The store changed hands frequently.

One of the tasks every spring was setting hens which usually took place in May when the weather was warmer, and caring for the little chickens after hatching (they were al the heavy breeds). We let them roam around the yard all summer, then we housed them in the fall when the cold fall days set in.

In those days the women went out to help the men folk with their work besides doing their own housework that had to be done. It was real togetherness, not just a saying, but that was the way of life, so everybody pitched in. Job opportunities were not too plentiful, but one means of earning was doing housework if one was interested. This I did for six months when I was seventeen. I worked for lawyer George Fortin, who by the way was married to Victoria LaCroix. They were living next to the little schoolhouse.

I attended school three months out of the year when I first started, but later it was voted to have six months. It was a one room schoolhouse. The same one all my children attended. It is still standing today but is not in operation. The District (No. 387) was dissolved in 1964) now belongs to Anoka-Hennepin District 11. My first teacher was Miss Victoria LaCroix. Her sister, Harriet, also taught in the same school. I went to religious instruction also and had to walk to Dayton everyday for three or four weeks to prepare for my First Communion. I was ten years old then.. Father Leonard was the resident Priest.

The winter following I was married to a neighbor boy, farmer Louis Bouley, on January 26, 1891. We were married by Father Andre in the old Church in Dayton. (The church that is now standing was built in 1903). My husband-to-be had purchased a brand new buggy a few weeks previous so on the morning of the wedding we drove to the church for the ceremony in the new vehicle. The weather was not too warm and we had very little snow. I wore a brown dress; white was not thought of too much then. So life started out without knowing all the work and sacrifices that were in store. Like in everyone's life, there are sorrows and happiness and many anxious moments.

Fifteen children were born to us, eight girls and seven boys. We lost two boys, one at the age of ten months, the other at birth.

Two of my husbands brothers made their home with us when they were not working in the woods in winter time and driving logs down the Mississippi in the summer. Their mother had passed away in July, 1888, so my father-in-law lived with us also for almost 13 years. He was a big help to me, taking care of the children, churning the butter, helping to turn the washing machine what had to be done by hand and bringing in the stove wood - until that fatal morning, December 7, 1903, when I opened the back door to sweep the steps. I saw him lying face down in the snow. He had succumbed to a heart attack. That was a great loss to me as well as the family.

I could not get to town very often. Usually the groceries were bought on Sunday when we attended Mass.

In the winter time a team of horses was hitched to the sleigh and some of the neighbors would hook on for a ride. Social activities were few, but once in awhile we were asked out to supper at a friends or relatives house, and I in return would do the same thing. I didn't have much time for sewing, but I did some of it, especially for the girls. Mending was done mostly in evening by the light of a kerosene lamp. It was somewhat relaxing after the days work.

Every spring, soap making was in the offing. I'd make my own lye by putting wooden ashes in a big barrel three or four days before making a batch. Water was put in the ash barrel to seep through a cloth in a container below. This was very strong and I'd make it in a large black kettle on an open fire outdoors. I used it for the washing and for scrubbing floors.

Our present barn was built in 1898. Since then, an addition was built in 1917.

1910 was a year to remember. We had a very hot, dry summer. My husband became ill in late August with a stomach ailment. His brother, Pete, and the older children did the farm work. In 1911 we decided to build a new house. The old one was too small and so cold, so a two-story frame house was erected with twelve rooms. We moved in it in late fall. It sure was a relief to have room and comfort with the family I had and the two brothers-in-law still with us.

In July, 1912. my mother passed away and in late August of the same year a brother-in-law, Pete, also passed away. My oldest daughter was married in November. The other brother-in-law, Charley, met with an accident about the same time. He fell down the stairs in the Lincoln Mill in Anoka and suffered a fractured skull from which he never fully recovered mentally. He came back from the hospital and stayed with us nine years until his death in February, 1921.

In October, 1913, the second oldest daughter was married. Their life together was short as her husband passed away in April, 1919. She came to live with us for a while, then found employment in Minneapolis and was married in July, 1921. In 1916, the next daughter was married.

In 1917 World War I broke out. We were heavily rationed on flour and sugar. Five pounds of sugar was all we were allowed per week and with the size family left at home, that didn't go very far. I made a lot of rye bread and bran muffins. The children enjoyed this type of bakery so as far as flour was concerned, I got along quite well. The two older boys were on the verge of leaving for service then the Armistice was signed in November, 1918. This was the same year of the flu epidemic when thousands of lives were lost. We all had a spell of it, but luckily pulled out of it. That same year the family enjoyed a big thrill. Web Smith and James Ward sold us our first new car, a Dodge. I think we were one of the first ones in the neighborhood to make such a purchase, but it wasn't long after when all the neighbors weakened to the same idea.

In 1918 we built a washroom onto the house, which in these modern times they call a utility room. Quite a change took place. A shaft was put in by a good friend of ours, Mr. Charles Gemlo. We purchased a gasoline engine so now the washing machine, cream separator and pumping water could be done all at the same time if necessary.

In 1920 we started to ship whole milk, so we dispensed with the separator. By the middle twenties, the three older boys were married. In 1924, my husband and I, two of our nephews and their wives drove to Duluth for an overnight visit with another nephew who was living there. On Sunday we drove to the docks to watch the boats come in. These particular ones were loaded with coal, but it happened that they stopped at the bridge. Therefore, we didn't have the opportunity to see the bridge open up.

My father died in February, 1928, at almost 92 years of age.

In 1929 the nation experienced one of the worst depressions anyone ever knew and it lasted well up into the middle 1930s. The New York stock market went down and a lot of the small banks closed. The government put up different projects such as CCC camps for boys, WPA and other to give employment. Many people were on relief.

Another one of the boys married in 1930. A tragedy occurred in November that year. My husband's sister (Mrs. Martin) suffocated due to an explosion from a gas stove in their house. Because of being an invalid she was unable to be saved before the fireman pulled her out of her bedroom window. She died three hours later.

During this period, two of the girls sought employment in the city. One of them was married in 1932 and the other in 1936. 1934 was a very dry year. There was almost a complete crop failure and no price for crops made it very hard going. Many farms were lost. 1936 was also somewhat of a dry year, not as bad as 1934, but as far as prices were concerned, nothing had moved up. Also in 1936 we were hard hit with sickness. Our youngest daughter took sick with typhoid fever in September. She spent three months in bed. With all those worried hours and extra work because of having to have a day and night nurse for several weeks, it was

lucky I had another daughter at home to help me. It took her almost a year and a half to recover fully from that long illness.

In August, 1938, my husband passed away after a short illness.

Our youngest son and two daughters were still with me. Now a decision had to be made: either leave the farm or make improvements. As this was the home place where my father-in-law had homesteaded in 1851, it made it very hard for me to leave after living here al these years. After much thought and consideration, my son decided to take over. With much help from some members of the family, three old buildings were taken down, some of better lumber was salvaged, a new henhouse was built and improvements were made on the barn. We increased the number of milk cows and raised more chickens. Due to all of this we hired help for the farm work. From here on improvements were made on the place from time to time. Milking machines were installed, a milk house and two silos built, and we started hauling our milk to Superior Dairies in Minneapolis for there or four years.

My youngest daughter was married in April, 1939.

World War II broke out and prices soared. Here again we were rationed on sugar, meats and other foods. Gasoline was another big item. One of my sons and a son-in law decided to put up a creamery in Anoka. It wasn't long after that we hauled our milk there. This we did for four or five years. Then they dissolved partnership and quit the business, so we went back to shipping to T.C.M.P.A (Twin Cities Milk Producers Association?).

During the early forties, either the second or third year, I took a weeks trip to Sault Saint Marie, Michigan, with a daughter, her husband, their son and another daughter. We went to visit cousins who had visited us in 1929. We took a boat ride up the St. Mary River. One of the men we were visiting was a Customs Officer, so he loaded his car on the boat as he was going to drive us up into Canada a ways to where there wasn't any trouble crossing the border. We came back the same day. In the evening, sitting on the porch of their cottage, I watched the boats come in to dock and that beautiful June sunset. The trees casting their shadows on the waters was a sight that still lingers on my mind. It was the most enjoyable week I ever spent. In 1945 World War II ended. I had a son-i-law and six grandson who served our country in this conflict. One of the grandsons received shrapnel wounds, but luckily all came back safely..

A hard blow struck the family in October, 1947. One of my son's wife passed away a few hours after giving birth to twin girls. There were four other children. The oldest, a girl of 13, was not capable of taking over this big responsibility. So, as God taketh away, he also plans for the survivors to be taken care of. My daughter, who was single and was working in Minneapolis at the time, decided to quit her employment to care for the family, and is still there today (1966). From this family, the oldest boy studied for the priesthood and was ordained in September, 1962.

It wasn't long again we were engaged in another war. This time in Korea, June, 1951, and lasted till July, 1953. Only one grandson was in service this time. He had been living with us for a few years. My son, who was left alone with all the farm work, didn't think he would be able to take care of it and decided to sell all his cows and go into the poultry business. He did this for over two years, so when this grandson came back from service we bought cattle again and started shipping milk once more. We cut down on the amount of chickens because a new hen house was built in 1950 and we could only house about 400 chickens.

Both these boys were married in the fall of 1955. We decided that living apart would be better for all concerned so immediately a little four room house, all modern and full basement, was built next to the big frame house. The daughter who had been with me all the time and taken over the run of the house is still with me. I didn't think I was able to do the work and furthermore I do not care to live alone, but I had a hobby of making quits and braiding rugs. I gave most of them away. I am somewhat handicapped now. My eyesight is not very good, but I still mend and patch clothes for the grandchildren next door, and still do some knitting, so these last few years have been pretty easy living.

Looking back to the days when I started housekeeping, and what the people have to work with today, progress that has been made in improvements for the daily housekeeper, for instance, in household appliances, the refrigerators and freezers are the big food savers. Make ice in your very own kitchen instead of having it melt away in the old fashion iceboxes we used to have. We wired all our buildings in 1944 with NSP so a big

change took place: just at the press of a button we had lights and today practically everything is automatically controlled. It was not long thereafter all electric appliances were used.

We put up a new garage in 1957 which was badly needed. They did most of the work themselves to cut down expenses. In 1962 my third oldest sons wife passed away in August. She had been sick with leukemia for about a year and a half. She willingly and peacefully resigned to the Holy Will, to which we will all one day answer the call. Also in 1962 my oldest daughter and husband celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary. It seldom happens that any of the parents are still around to attend such an occasion, but I was able to, so I enjoyed meeting relatives and friends who I had not seen in many years.

North Central Gas put in a pipeline coming from Dayton past our way in the fall of 1964. We hooked on immediately and are now heating with natural gas in both houses. More economical than tank gas, remembering the old buck stoves of years ago that burnt only wood for heating purposes and also the big heavy range for cooking is something seldom seen today. When the big frame house was built in 1911, a hot water system was installed to heat upstairs as well as downstairs, a furnace that would burn wood or coal. At the time a system of this kind was thought of as being the most efficient and comfortable heat a home could have. The family wash is a cinch today. Many of the homes have clothes dryers, no worry about the bad weather. Ironing is still somewhat of a job but at least the kitchen range doesn't have to be kept going to heat the irons. We have the steam irons now where the clothes do not have to be sprinkled if one wants to do the job right away, and many other items I won't list as it would make the list too long.

But, there is one I must mention and that is TV. Having entertainment in the home from a thousand miles away the instant the set is turned on. Our first telephone was installed in 19190: a box type with a crank we had to turn to get our party and the operator. Today we had the push button dial with chimes if one cares to have it. I have very few words to say about traveling or transportation because it is incomparable from horse and buggy days to jet flying, but I think the automobile is the means of traveling people enjoy most. Our roads and super highways are either concrete or black top which makes it easy for driving. It is not too often roads are impassable in the winter time with the equipment they have to keep them open, although it has happened with a three and four day blizzard. Our ways of farming now have taken a big change from years past. There is not a piece of machinery that is horse-drawn anymore. All is done with the use of tractors where most farmers have two or three on the place. Much of the heavy work and time involved has been alleviated for the farmer through the use of this modern equipment. I must say expenses are higher too, but one wouldn't make much headway if we didn't keep up with the times.

My son who is working the farm decided to rent some of the land in 1965. Therefore, he sold all the cattle again and kept fifty acres for himself for corn and hay. These crops are always in demand so they are not hard to dispose of. He is now working at Mercy Hospital in Anoka which opened in February, 1965, doing janitor work.

This concludes my journey to date. As I look back through these 93 years, even though there were hardships and grief, there were also many pleasant and happy days. All the changes that have been made and the way we are living now I'm glad I am still here for. I am happy in my little home and well taken care of. The family has grown to a large number. Besides my own 13, there are 57 grandchildren, 167 great-grandchildren and 7 great-great-grandchildren. They have all been very good to me. May God bless them all and keep them in His care.

Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

UPCOMING EVENTS
LA SOCIETE MEETINGS:

March 6 - LaSociete member John Edel will present a most interesting program on the Voyageurs. 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Church, St. Paul.

April 6 - There will be an informal Potluck at St. Louis Church hall. Bring some food and have some fun. This program will begin at **6:30 p.m.**

April 21-22 - See program article next pages

April 27-30 - Festival of Nations. Your assist-ance at our booth is desperately needed. Call Leo Gouette at 489-8306. This years theme is Children of the World. If you have something that evokes memories of a Canadian childhood, Leo would love to hear from you.

May 1 - Regular meeting/program at St. Louis Church 7:30 p.m.

A note from Justa Cardinal:

At our February 6th meeting at St. Louis Church, Dick Bernard gave us a great slide presentation of his trip to the Philippine Islands in August. He went with a cousin who had grown up there to re-visit the life of his grandmother's brother, who returned to the Islands after his tour of duty there in the Spanish-American War in 1898.

The relative, Alfred Collette, spent the last half of his life in the Philippines, married there, was imprisoned by the Japanese during WWII in the Santo Tomas POW camp, and saw one of his children killed during the month of February, 1945, when the allies liberated Manila.

Dick and Alfred's daughter, Julie Schiller, and two of her children, traveled about the islands for two weeks. Dick brought back many photos of scenes from lush tropical vegetation to busy central Manila, which looked similar to any American city.

If you are into genealogy research, this is a good example in discovering backgrounds of families. What a challenge - search - to expand backgrounds! It's a great avocation!

An Invitation to the Past. . . .

It is a mosquito filled day, late in the spring of the year 1634. A weather beaten ship, many months at sea, has just dropped anchor in the St. Lawrence, near the small stockaded trading post at Quebec. A small group of French Catholics, full of hope, disembark for what will be an adventurous yet danger filled life in what will become French Canada. This is only a beginning to the story of French Canada. It contains many colorful people who traveled to an unknown wilderness in the quest for a better life. Who were these settlers, what were their daily lives like, and how did they contribute to their northern country?

There is a layer of freshly fallen snow on the ground. Smoke rises from a crude wooden chimney set in a rough hewn cedar cabin. The cabin could belong to a group of winterers for the Northwest Company, or it could be on the outskirts of Montreal. There are a variety of smells emitting from the cabin, the burning wood, bread baking in the oven, fresh deer meat drying for future use, and an old favorite cooking, pea soup. The history of Canada and our families is not only made up of significant events and dates, but as described above, everyday life.

There are many methods to the preservation and presentation of our colorful heritage. The tracing of family history, singing the songs of old, historical research, recreating dress and material goods, educational programs, and other methods. We would like to get the historical committee working in these areas. There are many ways to contribute" being on the committee, sharing personal research, or donating any of your valuable talents. If you are interested in helping, please call John Edel at 227-9810.

PS: The historical committee will be holding a short presentation and group discussion at the March 6 meeting.

Le Reseau de l'Etoile du Nord

MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAMS OF THE FRENCH HERITAGE FESTIVAL/ FESTIVAL DU PATRIMOINE APRIL 20-21-22, 1995

Information on purchasing tickets is at the end of this article. Seating is limited. It is suggested that you order early.

From the wind-swept coasts of Brittany, France, through the forests and waterways of French-Canada and Minnesota, to the Metis (French-Indian) people of Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota...it's all French heritage in the Upper Midwest. This is the broad sweep of a fascinating FRENCH HERITAGE FESTIVAL of three concerts being presented by LE RESEAU DE L'ETOILE DU NORD on April 20, 21 and 22. The three-day festival of French, French-Canadian, and Metis folk and classical art is a brave new venture to bring awareness to the Upper Midwest of the importance of its French heritage.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES/EN TRAVERSANT LES FRONTIERES, a concert of dance and music tracing the roots of French and Metis heritage in the Upper Midwest, will be presented Thursday and Friday, April 20 and 21. The concert is created and directed by local dance historian JANE PECK. The show opens in 17th century Brittany, France, with the ancient dance music and song of Breton musicians JEAN BARON and CHRISTIAN ANNEIX, popular guest folk artists from France. Jean and Christian are key figures in the native celtic folk revival in Brittany, France. The audience will experience ancient Breton dances by DANCE REVELS, a local dance history ensemble under the direction of Jane Peck. Jane researched these dances in France last summer. Dance Revels will be assisted by narrator RHONDA LUND as they portray the immigration of the French to Quebec, Canada, and their subsequent role in the fur trade as it passed up the waterways to Minnesota. Local French-Canadian style fiddlers LINDA BREITAG and JAMIE GANS will inspire the lively and humorous dances of the "voyageurs" performed by Dance Revels.

Many of the French-Canadian "voyageurs" married native women and remained in this area, forming a new blended culture, the Metis (or Michif). Many Metis still live in this area - a well hidden bit of heritage. Metis dancers SANDY POITRA and son JAY GOURNEAU with musicians ED and LINDA JOHNSON, all from Turtle Mountain Metis/Ojibwe Reservation, will complete our French cultural journey across international and national boundaries with their lively French/Indian dance and music. These talented Metis artists have performed for the Smithsonian Institute Folklife Festival. The audience will be welcomed to join the cast in Breton and Metis Dancing at the close of the show. A reception follows for all to meet the international cast.

This event is partially funded through the Metropolitan Regional Arts Council with Minnesota Legislature funds, and also through the Minnesota Dance Alliance with Jerome Foundation funds. The event is sponsored by Danve Revels, the Minnesota History Center, and Le Reseau de l'Etoile du Nord.

ABOUT DANCE REVELS. Dance Revels is a local dance history company which performed under the name CAPRIOL. The new name reflects a new mission for the group. Although they still perform beautiful period dances from the courts of Europe, they are committed to portraying the connections and contrasts between court and folk dance, and between European and North American period dance, in order to help us all better understand our roots. The director is Jane Peck. Dancers include Jeffrey D. Annis, Robert Cleary, Anne Schaefer, Diana Kenney, and Jane Peck.

MELODIES FRANCAISES, the third evening of the French Heritage Festival, features the beautiful melodies and lyric French poetry of tenor JEAN-LOUIS SANSCARTIER. Jean-Louis, a guest artist from Quebec, Canada, brings a rich and delicious repertory of French and Quebecois salon songs from the early part of this century. This was a time when art song flourished, and these songs are most beautiful when sung in French by a native Francophone. Savor such favorites as "Le Mariage des Roses" by Cesar Franck, or "Offrande", with poetry by Verlaine.

Mr. Sanscartier performs frequently in the Province of Quebec. His credits include many performances with the Opera Choir of Montreal, the Evening Opera of Montreal, and Jeunesse Musicales of Canada. He studied voice with Albert LaFontaine, Albert Corneiller, and Louis Andre. He is Artistic Director for the city of Prevost, Quebec.

Among many comments about Mr. Sanscartier's singing is this:

"C'est beaucoup trop court!, fut le commentaire unanime. En effet, la virtuosite de Mr. Sanscarteir, le choix des pieces, et l'ambiance creee nos ont fait oublier le temps qui passait." Ville de Verdun, Quebec.

("It's too short!", was the unanimous commentary after his concert. Truly, the virtuosity of Mr. Sanscartier, his choice of pieces, and the ambiance he created made us lose track of time." City of Verdun, Quebec.)

This event is sponsored by Le Reseau de l'Etoile du Nord with the support of the Government of Canada.

TICKET INFORMATION:

CROSSING BOUNDARIES' Thursday, April 20 show will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Minnesota History Center 3M Auditorium, 345 Kellogg, St. Paul MN. The Friday, April 21, 7:30 p.m. show will be at the Ukrainian Community Center, 301 Main Street NE, Minneapolis MN (near Riverplace. Tickets are $8. Ticket cost is $6 for seniors 60 and over, children under 13, groups of 10 or more (including members of La Societe), and History Center members (4/20 show only).

MELODIES FRANCAISES will take place Saturday, April 22, 7:30 p.m. at the beautiful AND historic French Catholic church, Our Lady of Lourdes, at Riverplace, One Lourdes Place, Minneapolis MN. Tickets are $12, $10 for seniors, children under 13 and groups of 10 or more (including all members of La Societe).

FOR RESERVATIONS SEND A CHECK (to LE RESEAU) FOR THE NUMBER OF TICKETS REQUESTED TO DICK BERNARD AT 7632 157TH ST W #301 APPLE VALLEY MN 55124. SPECIFY THE SHOWS YOU PLAN TO ATTEND. PLEASE INCLUDE YOUR PHONE NUMBER SHOULD WE NEED TO CONTACT YOU. OTHER QUESTIONS? LEAVE A MESSAGE AT 612-891-5791, OR ASK ANY MEMBER OF LE RESEAU.

ABOUT LE RESEAU DE L'ETOILE DU NORD. Le Reseau came into existence in the spring of 1994, and consists of individuals from a number of different organizations including La Societe Canadienne Francaise du Minnesota, Les Errants, Alliance Francaise, the Minnesota Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of French, L'Association des Francais du Nord (AFRAN), Dance Revels, as well as other individuals whose sole interest is the preservation of the French and French-Canadian and Metis heritage and culture.

LA SOCIETE CANADIENNE-FRANCAISE
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LA SOCIÉTÉ CANADIENNE FRANÇAISE DU MINNESOTA

chez nous

NEWSLETTER OF Mai-Juin, 1995 VOL. 16 NO. 6

La société canadienne-française

Editor: Dick Bernard

"FROM OVERALLS TO OVER-ALLS"
A brief snapshot of the French-Canadians in New England.

by Dick Bernard

Lower Canada (Quebec) has for much of its history shared a common boundary with the states of New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. Indeed, the fledgling United States made an attempt during the Revolutionary War to make what is now Quebec part of its new nation. Troops led by none other than Benedict Arnold came up the Chaudiere River with designs on Quebec City. The attempt failed and the rest is history.

Today, much of New England, from the border states through Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island in particular, have an enduring French-Canadian identity in many communities. It may come as a surprise to readers to learn that many of the French-Canadians in the northeastern US come from families which began migrating south at about the same time as other French-Canadians were moving west to the central states of the United States.

A major early "cork" on the immigration "bottle" was lack of good ground transportation.

As occurred in the US. at about the same time, the development of Canadian railroads, facilitated migration south and west. By the end of the 1840s a railroad had been completed from Montreal to the ice-free port of Portland, Maine. By 1860, the Grand Trunk railroad was completed. Its route was from Sarnia, Ontario, (north of Detroit, Michigan) through Montreal and the eastern townships of lower Canada to Portland, ME. The railroad was on only one side of the mighty St. Lawrence River, which disadvantaged cities on the opposite shore. But ferry boats at places like Levis (across the St. Lawrence from Quebec City) did allow people access to rail transportation.

Easier access to the States and western Canada arguably came none too soon. For over 200 years, large Quebec families had been filling the available habitable space, and by the time of the migration, movement elsewhere was becoming essential. Thus, it was not uncommon that entire family units picked up their belongings and moved to a new location with hopefully better opportunities. Many of them elected to move to the mill towns of New England. These mill towns, built primarily around the textile industry, developed during the industrial revolution of the 1830s along New England rivers. The rivers provided the power for the machines of the day. A mill was built where a stream could be dammed and thus provide water power.

It is impossible in a short article to fully describe the rich and enduring French-Canadian presence in New England. John Cote, my lA+ friend and relative (we have common ancestry - Jean Cote - in the 1630s in Quebec) , showed me his towns in northeastern Connecticut in 1992, and he has since provided me with a wealth of information about life in the mill towns of New England.

Through John I learned of a recent (1991) and excellent book, still available through bookstores, which gives a vivid and comprehensive description of life in New England mill towns. It is well worth reading. I am willing to loan it to

interested readers. The following excerpts are from this book, **"Towers of Brick, Walls of Stone" by Donald McGee**. (Also included in this issue of Chez Nous is a chapter of a novel written in the 1930s by Alberic Archambault of Woonsocket, RI. Alberic is the father of La Societe member Justa Cardinal, and a man of great prominence in his city and state.)

Excerpts from "Towers of Brick...."

"The early years of the nineteenth century saw enterprising Europeans such as the Scots, Irish, English, Germans, and Scandinavians, pour into the ports of the east, such as New York, Philadelphia and Boston. A flood of unskilled, but vigorous Irish came to America's shores not without effects on the health and ways of life of the earlier colonists. Men and women born and bred on the countryside in both the new world and the old world came to live crowded together, earning their bread and butter. New immigrants also came from Canada, many from the French-speaking Province of Quebec. They trekked down in wagons and trains whenever rail communication was favored to form new skills and develop old ones lost. A new unit in the labor force of factories was produced by these newly arrived groups. New families and neighborhoods came into being, sometimes crowded together....

The corporations controlled not only the growth and development of the factory, but also of the community, sometimes as much as three-quarters of the city property. The mill agents could dictate to the employees the running of the mills as well as to the community...Each mill in the cities or towns paid the same wages, set the same hours of work and operative regulations. Most corporations housed their workers in company houses and tenements, and even had company food stores and medical doctors to care for the mill employees....

SOCIAL CLASSES

The factory population of each town or city was divided into four classes. The first consisted of the agents of the Corporations - they were to be autocrats when decisions affecting the office and responsibilities of the mill affected the industrial interests of their employees or concerned the town or city as well. They lived in large houses built by the company and company employees, usually country homes away from the nearby company houses (boardinghouses in some cases).

The second class were the overseers. They were ambitious mill hands who had worked their way up from the lowest grade of factory labor. As time progressed, this class also consisted of college-trained men in business and administration, as well as technical-school graduates....They also lived separate from the factory workers, most of the time in individual houses built in the villages and towns for them and their station.

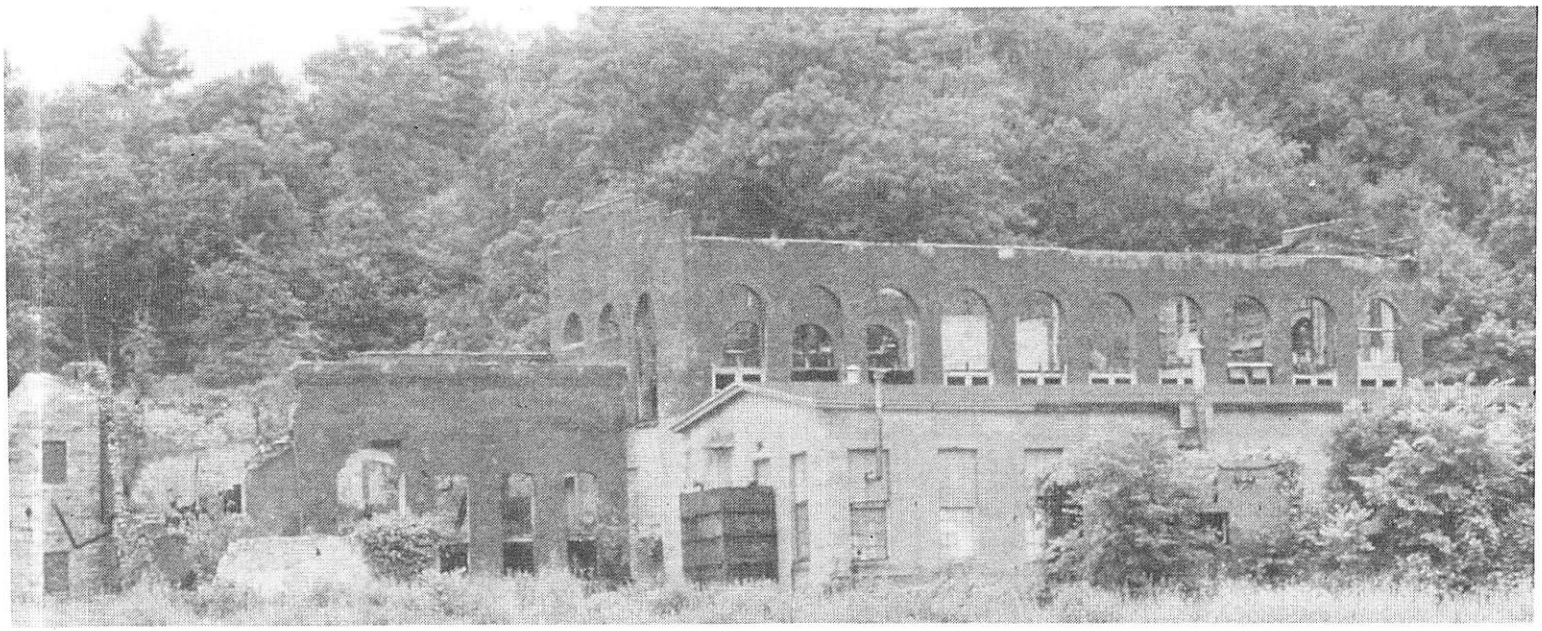
READING CHEZ NOUS AND NOT A MEMBER OF LA SOCIETE C-F?
You are certainly invited to join us. Annual dues are as follows: Family $15 (Senior $10); Single $10 (Senior $8). **Mail dues to George LaBrosse, 4895 Brent Avenue, Inver Grove Heights MN 55076. Make check payable to "LSCF"**

The third class were the operatives. These were either girls or men, employed by the company, who usually lived in tenement blocks owned by the mill. Many, however, in time purchased their own homes or rented from private owner landlords in town. The tenement blocks in many New England cities and towns became known by their distinctive architecture and style. Today there are still hundreds, if not thousands, of three-deckers of this type found in every section, depending on the area of each city....

The fourth class were also employed by the factories. Many worked as laborers and outside gangs, as they were called, in maintenance and construction or repair work. Many of the laborers lived in small shanties with their wives and numerous children....

WOMEN IN THE WORKFORCE

As we have seen through the ages, women's work had been confined almost entirely to the home. The years 1820 through 1869 saw a crucial change. The nineteenth century, which gave rise in New England to the textile industry, enabled women, mostly young and single, to leave home for employment as workers in the early years of industrialization. In turn, they enjoyed a new social and economic independence. This newfound independence, in turn, created new pressures, both economic and cultural, to which the women responded. The women came to the mills as individuals. They brought with them whatever social position and cultural outlook they had from their hometowns. The vast percentage of the



The "center" of the typical New England industrial town was the Mill, which often dominated the economy and even the politics of the town. The above ruin, photographed in far northeastern Connecticut in 1992, is just one example of what once was an extremely important part of the economy of New England.

women came from rural farms within an area of one hundred miles. Many women who came to ... mill towns of New England in the period between 1830-50 came because of economic needs; some had worked as domestic servants and had lived with relatives a short distance from their home. Many girls left home to earn wages to provide for a dowry. Mill employment appealed to them because wages were higher than they were for farm laborers or domestic servants. Many young girls...were attracted by the circulating libraries from which the boardinghouses could get books and periodicals not attainable at home. Most women did not consider mill work a long-term prospect, but an alternative until they could marry and leave the mill to raise a family.

Almost two-thirds of the women in the period 1830-50 who worked at the mills in Massachusetts had cousins, sisters, or other relatives who boarded in the boardinghouses and were employed at the mills. Kinship networks helped the operatives adjust to urban life; it also contributed to their success in the mills.

Company boardinghouses in the early mill towns of this period were well-supervised by competent matrons, and these boardinghouses were built where the girls lived under regulations strict enough to satisfy their Puritan Yankee fathers. The physical conditions of the boardinghouses were not always good. For a standard rate of one dollar and twenty-five cents a week, the girls could choose which company houses they would occupy. Many boardinghouse keepers could not furnish decent living conditions for the girls. There were crowded bedrooms, little fresh air or heat in the winter, and a lack of privacy. The girls came to stay and work in the factory towns a year or two; some came for adventure as well as money. Those who chose a more adventurous avenue were the girls who wanted a freer type of environment from that which the working girls had received living at home. The boardinghouses gave them shelter, although its accommodations were not always like those of home. It was a place to sleep and eat, perhaps one of convenience for the time, and a place to meet and make new friends. The city could provide shops, churches, entertainment, and perhaps a better prospect to acquire another job or position, or even find a husband....Once in the mills, newcomers were assigned work as spare hands...New employees were assigned a more experienced partner for the four months usually needed to master the skills of spinning, weaving, drawing in, and whatever their jobs would entail. Of the female work force who worked and resided in the Merrimack Company boardinghouses between 1830 and 1840, over 80 percent were of the age group fifteen to thirty years old...about 74 percent were single and lived in company-owned housing. These women were treated with consideration by their employers.

SOCIAL LIFE

In this early period of industrialization, rules were stringent, especially between male and female employees. Also, most of the male overseers were married men with daughters and had very different

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MILL VILLAGE

At right is a brief chapter from a fascinating 1943 book, Mill Village, written by Alberic Archambault of Woonsocket, RI.

Mr. Archambault has many claims to fame, all secondary in importance to being the father of Justa Cardinal, dedicated long-time member of La Societe Canadienne-Francaise.

The dust jacket of Mill Village says this: "Alberic A. Archambault, Associate Justice of the Superior Court of Rhode Island, twice candidate for Governor of his state, and nine years a member of the Rhode Island Senate, is well known throughout New England as a lawyer and a judge.

He was born and brought up in a mill village where his father's grocery store was the meeting place for Canadian-Frenchmen of the community. As a small boy, he used to wedge himself in between the cracker barrels and listen avidly to the old-timers reminiscences and *"lougarou"* tales that frightened him so that he would have to beg an older brother to walk home with him. Recently, when passing through a Connecticut mill town, Judge Archambault noticed that the mill houses were being sold at auction. Fascinated, he stopped to watch, and as the auctioneer's red flag traveled from house to house and bids were made, he remembered the stories that had been told over the cracker barrels of his father's store. The happy result is Mill Village, a novel in a rich vein that has been virtually untouched - the story of the Canadian Frenchman in the United States...."

While the book was written as fiction, its connection with the then-reality is strong. A recent reader of the book. John Cote of Brooklyn CT, a lifelong resident of a Mill Village, said he couldn't put it down, and it brought back a flood of memories.

Enjoy this single morsel of Judge Archambault's book...and remember your own memories.

Better yet, offer your memories for publication in a future Chez Nous! Send to Dick Bernard, editor, 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124. We publish every two months, with deadline on the 15th of every alternate month (next deadline June 15, 1995)

CHAPTER VII

Saturday Night

SATURDAY night was usually reserved by the villagers for their festivities. If a couple married, the reception was held on the next Saturday night; if a birthday was celebrated, it was celebrated on Saturday night nearest to the birthday. And every Saturday night found two or three houses brightly lighted. On Saturday afternoon the men of the house, where the party was to be held, took down the beds in the downstairs rooms, and cleared spaces for square dancing. The boys would get hair cuts and clean shaves, and the girls would curl their hair. Right after supper the girls would squeeze themselves into tight corsets and put on their prettiest dresses, and by eight o'clock the party was in full swing. The village fiddler stood in the doorway between two cleared rooms, and played jigs, usually the same tune and the same tempo, varied only by gestures. In a corner of one room stood the dance caller who started each quadrille with a loud, "Eight hands around." Young and old, fat and thin, danced around and pounded their feet on creaking floors till the rafters of the house shook. Slim waists felt the touch of warm hands and encircling arms, gestures which would have been repulsed at any other time. A boy who would not have dared to touch a girl's hand at any other time pressed her tight to his breast while he swung her off her feet in a dizzy whirl. Doughnuts and oranges were passed around, and if the host liked his beer, he had a quarter keg hidden in the cellar, and while the women pretended not to see, he took the men of the party down cellar in groups of threes and fours and served them beer in mustard glasses. Thus all made merry till midnight, when the guests departed.

One Saturday night there happened to be parties in adjoining houses, one at Mulligan's house and the other at Thibodeau's house. The Gareau house stood on the hill overlooking the common yard between the two houses, and from their front windows the Gareaus looked on. It was a warm summer night, and between dances, the men went out into the yard. Early in the evening each party seemed to respect the other, no Irishman going beyond the imaginary line which equally divided the yard between the houses, and no Frenchman venturing within ten feet of that line. As the beer in the kegs got lower, the spirits of the men rose higher, and the louder was the noise which emanated from each house. Soon each group was annoyed by the noise made by the other group, and retaliated by making more noise. Meantime, while half a dozen French fellows were conferring on the means of silencing the Irish, the Irish fellows were holding a conference of their own with reciprocal thoughts in mind. After a few more beers, each Frenchman convinced himself and his companions that he could lick any three Irishmen, and each Irishman was sure that he could lick an army of Frenchmen. And while they thought such thoughts, they went out into the yard for air. It happened that both groups went out for air at the same time. Each group sensed that the other was out for

trouble, and each group was right. No one ever knew who struck the first blow, but in a flash six Frenchmen and six Irishmen were rolling on the ground, pounding and scratching each other. The swearing and howling of the combatants brought reinforcements from both houses. Soon there was a riot, twenty men engaged in mortal combat, and fifteen women shrieking, throwing cold water on the fighters, and pulling aside a recognized sweetheart or friend. There was fervency in that fight. It took a lot of cold water on both sides to stop it.

Eventually the camps were separated. In the inky darkness sounds of tired voices were heard — "I could lick any dozen Irishmen, if I could see them."

" — I'll lick any fifteen Frenchmen, any time, under any circumstances," came from the other group, "barring, of course, uncontrollable circumstances."

"If that Patenaude girl hadn't butted in, I would have pulverized that Irishman who was on top of me when the bucket of water struck me full in the face," said one of the combatants.

"It would take six of those Irishmen to hold me down, if ever they got me down, and they wouldn't get me down if I didn't stumble. But since that horse stepped on my foot when I was a little boy, I stumble over everything. I even stumble over my own shoelaces when I wear low shoes."

The next day, only three of the celebrants went to Mass: John Kelley, who had a black eye; Peter Laramme, who limped; and Joe Bonvouloir, with a plaster on his chin. The other boys had been completely invalided the night before and needed Sunday's rest to recuperate for Monday's six-o'clock whistle.

Matante Lizette was very busy the next week, dressing open wounds and bandaging damaged muscles. Matante Lizette was nobody's aunt, so far as anybody in the village could ascertain, but she was known as Matante by Yankee, Irish, and French alike. She could set a broken arm as neatly as any surgeon, and she could brew tea with a dozen kinds of herbs. And she knew what kind of tea each patient required. She had been present at the arrival of the last fifty children born in the village. She knew how to instill courage into every expectant mother, and she could bundle a new born child so quickly and so neatly that each mother thought her child was the most beautiful ever born. She charged nothing for her services, but was content to receive whatever small sum was given her by her patients. She was often in arrears in the payment of the rent of the small three-room basement tenement she occupied, but Mr. Lockwood never pressed her for payment and never threatened to eject her. He felt she was useful to the village as a nurse and was satisfied to contribute the value of her unpaid rent to the cause of health. Whenever someone was injured in the mill, Aunt Lizette was sent for, and she gave first aid, and all subsequent aid until her patient recovered or died.

For weeks after the Saturday night parties, Frenchmen ventured out only in twos and threes, and no Irish boy went out alone unless he knew of two or three friends within hearing distance. When both groups met on the sidewalk, each group politely gave way to the other. These men respected each other, although they mistrusted each other as only pious Christians can.

At La Societe C-F's holiday get-together on December 10, participants introduced themselves. The name "Woonsocket RI" caught Justa Cardinal's ear when a newcomer briefly described her background. There was, they discovered, more than just a town name in their background. Above is pictured (at left) Justa (Archambault) Cardinal and (at right) Georgette (Mailloux) Genovese, both of St. Paul. They discovered that not only had they both grown up in Woonsocket, RI, but both had attended and graduated from the Convent of Jesus and Mary's Ste. Claire High School there.

If the walls of this duplex in northeastern Connecticut could talk, what tales they could probably tell. Homes like this, and larger "tenements", and small and large single family dwellings abounded in northeastern mill towns. This photo, from 1992, shows a home that is still occupied.

(continued from page 3)

rules about fraternizing as compared to the same rules later on. Women were segregated from male workers by divisions of labor and had very little interaction with men in their daily lives. Each mill had its own clubs. These circles were fostered and encouraged by the mill owners as a source of culture as well as a place to remedy issues concerning conditions at the mills. As a class, the factory's young women operatives were spoken of as persons who earned their living, whose conditions were fixed, and had to continue to work for their existence until they married and left the factory or retired. The early factory girls were not all country girls. Some had worked as teachers, as librarians and as chambermaids in public places like hotels and for the upper class in cities whose status demanded such. Most young women were energetic and intelligent, and soon associated themselves with their new life and became part of a community, both socially and at their work. Many went to the same churches. Most were welcomed by the best families of the community; perhaps this was for their new ideas, or new fashions, even new books. Many came to the mills with past histories and looked for a new outlet to hide their grief and identity. As a rule, it was said that factory girls were neatly dressed, uniformly good, and well-behaved. They became interested in public events of the times such as the anti-slavery movement and the Mexican War. Also, many attended lectures and parlor meetings, which were held in the boardinghouses, to discuss critical issues of the time.

THE FRENCH-CANADIAN

The French-Canadians who came to New England over a century ago resembled other ethnic immigrants. Their story was also one of hardship, discrimination, and a lasting struggle to rise to a higher social and economic position. In the short span of about sixty years, which marked the massive migration, about half of the immigrants who immigrated to the northeastern New England

states had a very strong attachment to their past. The rest, who came for a short while[1], returned to their homes in southern Quebec, after getting the necessary money they needed. The census of 1980 gave us a general idea that today they are the fifth largest ethnic group to have evolved in the United States....

The tradition and culture of the French-Canadians, and also the Irish, who immigrated after the turn of the twentieth century from Canada, was pretty basic and similar. First, each culture came from the same region, and second they were both Catholics....

The Canadian, Irish, or French-descent families were a society closely oriented. Kinship was practiced and developed even up to the third of fourth cousins. As these young people left the homestead to set out on their own, regardless of whether they stayed nearby or immigrated to the United States, this kinship continued to a high degree. Sons who did not become priests or eventually inherit the farm or settle on their own farms nearby...became craftsmen in the nearby community or went into a profession.

The same existed with the French or Irish Canadians who came to work in the mills of New England. They continued the ritual handed down from father to son for generations. Authority was clearly the father, who made all of the important decisions as to the governing of a business or farm or the children's vocational careers or future plans. The other ran the house, but also, more often, decided the children's careers and held the family in a close unit as long as each spouse lived. The eldest son, after the father's death, usually stepped into the father's shoes and became the head of the family. Each child usually, or eventually, had his or her future determined at an early age. Each family strove to give its siblings, though at times resources did not permit it, a better start in life, of a better vocation, than the parents had had[2]. Each child worked, and large families prevailed and supported the household. The greater part of any one's working wage was given to the mother, who, in turn, determined its priorities. The youngest child usually was the lucky one who received the greater education, such as going to college, at least after the turn of the century or after World War I. Most of the children married, with the oldest being first, and if not, he stayed to take over the farm. If a younger child was left at home and was single, while the older child married, he would take over the farm when the father became too old, and would take care of his parents, even if he later married but remained in the household. Sometimes the family living in one household consisted of grandparents, parents, and their siblings.

This custom continued up to the late 1950s among descendants who came to America and continued the family tradition set down from the past. The women had very few choices. They could either become wives and mothers or enter a religious life. However, the single non-married sisters often stayed in the household with the parents, taking care of the house and the elderly, and afterwards taking care and helping the brothers' or married sisters' children. They contributed to everyone's welfare on the farm and even in business, often with their own money....

Once these immigrants were settled in the many communities, various Franco-American organizations sprang up overnight. Organizations like the Societe Saint Jean-Baptiste sprang up throughout New England in the 1860s to the 1870s....These organizations became fraternal societes and merged into a mutual organization in 1900 called the Union Saint Jean-Baptiste d'Amerique in Woonsocket, Rhode Island....Franco-American newspapers have existed in most French-speaking communities in the United States since 1869...there have been over three hundred thirty Franco-American newspapers....In cities and towns...many second or third-generation Franco-Americans speak French. Some Franco-Americans prefer to use their mother tongue instead of English, yet they will never hesitate to use it to address non bilinguals.."

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[1] Among this group of immigrants was Blessed Brother Andre, the founder of the world-famed Oratory of St. Joseph in Montreal. As a young man, Brother Andre worked for a time in a mill in northeastern Connecticut.

[2] Which is where the title of this article, "From Overalls to Over-alls", comes from. Justa Cardinal remembers her Dad describing the evolution of a French-Canadian family in this way - the first generation worked at the mill for a living, the second did as well, but by the third generation the family could afford to send some of its children off to college and thus to what was perceived to be a better life.

Nouvelles Villes Jumelles

Newsletter of La Société Canadienne Française Du Minnesota

QUERY: A correspondent is seeking information about the family Des Jarlait. Anyone able or willing to assist is asked to contact Dick Bernard at 891-5791. We will pass on your offer to the lady who is seeking the information.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Monday, May 1 and June 5: Regular meetings of La Societe, 7:30 p.m. at St. Louis Church in St. Paul.

May 26-27 RENDEZVOUS at new Fort Bon Secour (East of Chippewa Falls WI at Pike Lake between Cadott and Cornell. Information: Rt 1 Box 117 Cornell WI 54732 (715)667-5362)

Sunday, June 18. PEA SOUP DAYS Parade in Somerset. MEMBERS NEEDED FOR THE FLOAT. CONTACT RALPH GERMAIN AT 439-7087.

Sunday, July 16 TENTATIVE date for summer picnic. Details in next Chez Nous.

DO YOU HAVE SOME MEMORIES OF SOMERSET, WISCONSIN, OR OTHER FRENCH-CANADIAN SETTLEMENTS IN THAT AREA? In the next Chez Nous we will print any recollections that you wish to provide. Send to Dick Bernard, at 7632 157th St W #301, Apple Valley MN 55124.

About Fort Bon Secour. (Note comment in calendar) above. About 1685 Nicholas Perrot built the original Fort Bon Secour on the southwest shore of Lake Pepin across from the mouth of the Chippewa River (near present day Read's Landing, MN). Over time a succession of forts, occupied for various lengths of time, were built by the French in this same general area. At the time the forts were built, the area was a center for people now known as Sauntee Sioux, or as they are now more properly known, Dakota.

In 1993 a group known as "The Habitants of New France, Inc., decided to built a fort for the purpose of historical preservation and re-enactments. The first major event at the new fort is planned for Memorial Day weekend, 1995. The present fort stands on the south shore of Pike Lake, which is about ten miles north of Cadott WI. The name "Bon Secour" ("of good aid and assistance" was selected since it fit in well with the group's goals and purposes.

Visitors are welcome.

Do not forget to listen to BONJOUR MINNESOTA

This fine program airs every Wednesday from 8:30 - 9:30 p.m.on "Fresh Air Radio", KFAI-FM, Minneapolis at 90.3 FM or 106.7 FM

Bonjour Minnesota is a bilingual program (French-English)

Francophone events occurring in the Twin Cities are announced every session around 9:00 PM.

Your Host is Georgette Pfannkuch, with co-host Caryl Minnetti.

The program expresses the culture from France and francophone countries through music, songs and interviews. Georgette possesses an enormous and diverse collection with music dating from 1905 (with Polin) to the present. Requests from listerners are honored by calling the studio during air-time (341-0980)