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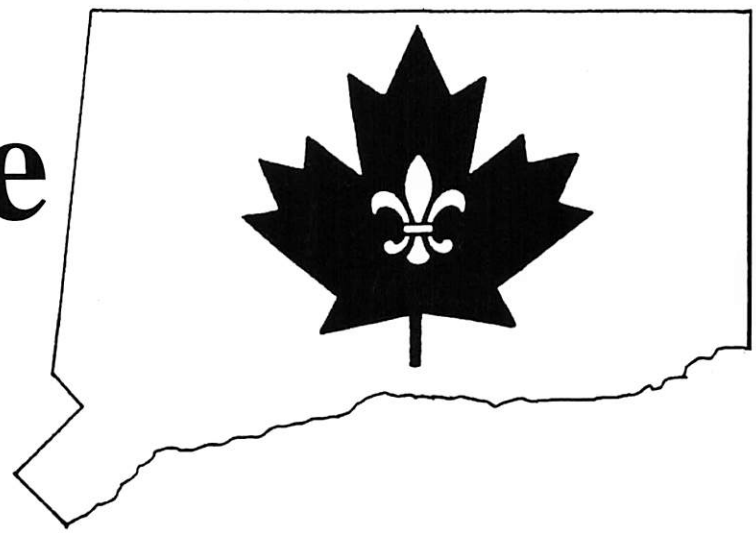
Summer 2009

# Connecticut Maple Leaf



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The *Connecticut Maple Leaf* is published twice a year by the French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut. It serves as a resource of information for members tracing their family roots from Connecticut to New France, Acadia and France. It is, consequently, a clearinghouse for historical research and vital statistics of special interest to Franco-Americans. Members are encouraged to contribute articles, including extracts from their own family studies.

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# Editor's Niche

Sherry L. Chapman, #1283

How quickly time passes. Ten years ago I had the good fortune to be appointed editor of the *Connecticut Maple Leaf*. It is a position I am proud to have held. Much has happened in those ten years, including life changes that I never anticipated. Over the last several months, it has become clear to me that I cannot continue to devote the time to the CML that it both demands and deserves. Today, I am announcing that it is time for me to step down.

Serving as editor of the CML has been a rewarding and fulfilling experience. It has offered me the opportunity to combine the activities I love most into one pursuit: reading, writing and genealogy. How often does life present a gift such as that? I have grown in these last ten years in a way that I would not otherwise have grown. I have learned things I would not now know; I have met people who would not now be friends. This role has allowed me to explore history and genealogy on a deeper and more satisfying level. There is so much I will miss.

I hope that I have served you well over the years. I have strived to maintain a level of excellence that CML readers deserve. It has been an honor to work with the talented pool of writers who regularly contribute to this journal, including those who are mentioned below. In good part due to them, the CML has matured under my tenure and I am proud of our accomplishments. My deep appreciation goes to everyone who contributed to making this publication the success it has been.

I will forever be grateful to **Ivan Robinson**, #326, my mentor, who in this issue shares the fascinating stories of two of his own family members, one a teen heroine, and another a dying poet; and to **Paul Keroack**, #157, who traces the Robideau family back to Spain and provides information on how to access Canadian census records online. Others deserving credit for this issue are **Michael Chapman**, **Nelson Disco**, #1919, **Jean Fredette**, #1537, **Germaine Hoffman**, #333, **Robert Lessard**, #1754, and **Shirley Giguere Morin**, #2075.

What does the future hold for me? Those of you who have been members throughout my tenure are aware that my son, Ryan, was killed when the car in which he was riding in as a passenger crashed just over six years ago. My immediate future goal is to finish my memoir, "Unfathomable Loss: A Mother's Grief Journey." It is a project of the heart that deserves my full attention.

I am confident that this publication will continue to advance under the direction of the next editor. Please continue to submit material that may be of interest to society members. Your submissions should be addressed to the CML Editor, and sent to the *French-Canadian Genealogical Society* in Tolland, Connecticut. The guidelines for article submissions can be found on the society's website at http://fcgsc.org/publications.htm.

I bid you *adieu*.

# FCGSC Library Schedule
## July – December 2009

| Library Hours | |
|---|---|
| **Monday** | 1-5 P.M |
| **Wednesday** | 1-5 P.M. |
| **Saturday** | 9 A.M. - 4 P.M. |
| **Sunday** | 1-4 P.M. |

| Library Closings | | |
|---|---|---|
| **JULY** | | |
| | **Sat. 4** | Independence Day Observance |
| | **Sun. 5** | Independence Day Observance |
| **SEPTEMBER** | | |
| | **Sat. 5** | Labor Day Observance |
| | **Sun. 6** | Labor Day Observance |
| | **Mon. 7** | Labor Day |
| | **Sun. 13** | Volunteer Recognition Day |
| **OCTOBER** | | |
| | **Sat. 17** | Annual Membership Meeting (Library closed 1-3 P.M. only) |
| **NOVEMBER** | | |
| | **Wed. 25** | Thanksgiving Day Observance |
| | **Sat. 28** | Thanksgiving Day Observance |
| | **Sun. 29** | Thanksgiving Day Observance |
| **DECEMBER** | | |
| | **Sat. 26** | Christmas |
| | **Sun. 27** | Christmas Holiday Observance |
| | **Mon. 28** | Christmas Holiday Observance |
| | **Wed. 30** | Christmas Holiday Observance |
| | **Sat. 31** | New Year's Eve |

**For storm or emergency closings, please check the following:**

Message machine at FCGSC (860) 872-2597, WTIC radio (1080 AM), WFSB-TV, CBS 3; WGGB-TV, ABC 40; WVIT-TV, NBC 30, or the following websites: www.wtic.com; www.wfsb.com; www.wggb.com; www.wvit.com

Any non-emergency changes to the schedule will be reported in the society's newsletter, *The Maple Leaflet.*

# Let Me Tell You About My Cousin and My Grandfather (Many Times Removed)

Ivan Robinson, #326

One of the greatest joys in genealogy is to connect with people in our past who distinguished themselves in some way. I am lucky to have found at least two such individuals, honored in Quebec annals as intrepid souls in the wars with their arch enemies, the Iroquois, in the 1600s and early 1700s.

One is Marie-Madeleine Jarret (1678-1747), more familiarly known as Madeleine of Vercheres. If I had lived in her time, she would have been my tomboy first cousin and probably a pain in the neck. Since eight generations separate us, she is actually my first cousin eight times removed.

The other is Jean Cadieux (1671-1709), who left us a famous poem, "La Complainte de Jean Cadieux," on a piece of birch bark as he lay dying on the banks of the Ottawa River after a battle with the Iroquois. He is my grandfather with five "greats" in front of it. He was a daring guy with a poetic talent, the kind today who might compose a song about the wonder of flight as he bungee-jumps off a high bridge.

If you have French-Canadian blood, you may have these two people in your ancestry, too. Both have inspiring stories. In case you're not familiar with them, I offer them here, at the risk of being accused of bragging about my family.

### Madeleine of Vercheres: Teen Heroine

It was October 22, 1692. The Iroquois, after a deceptive lull, were back on the warpath, leaving their homes west of Lake Champlain and canoeing the Richelieu River northward to maraud along the St. Lawrence. At issue, basically, was the lucrative fur trade. The Iroquois, whose trading partners were the Dutch and later the English, were determined to have it all for themselves. Their business plan was simple: Harass the French and their Algonquin allies with stealth raids and kill, capture, burn and torture. The torture, sometimes of women as well as men, was unbelievably cruel. Descriptions in contemporary accounts make water-boarding seem like a fraternity prank.

Vercheres, a seigneury on the south bank of the St. Lawrence, is about halfway between Montreal, 20 miles upstream to the south, and Sorel, where the Richelieu flows into the St. Lawrence. It was especially vulnerable. The Richelieu, also called the River of the Iroquois, was an interstate highway for their war canoes. Any settlement within easy reach of its banks, like Vercheres, could expect a band of howling Indians to pop out of the woods at any time.

Fully aware of this, Francois Jarret de Vercheres, the seigneur, had built a fort for the protection of his family and his habitant tenant farmers. The fort was a large rectangular stockade of upright logs twelve to fifteen feet high with gates on the river side. It had projecting bastions at the corners from which defenders could shoot at enemy warriors trying

to scale the walls. Inside the stockade were the family home, a blockhouse holding provisions, and a redoubt or mini-fort, a shelter of last resort where gunpowder and weapons were stored. Arms included at least fifteen muskets, some pistols and a small swivel gun that could shoot a four-pound ball. In the vicinity outside the stockade were the homes of the habitants.

As bad luck would have it, both the seigneur and his wife were away that autumn day, unaware of impending danger. Francois, a lieutenant in the militia, was in Quebec on military business. His wife, Marie Perrot, had gone to Montreal for unrecorded reasons. Their three children remained in Vercheres. They were Madeleine, 14 years old, and her two brothers, Pierre, 12, and Alexandre, 10. With them were a servant, Laviolette; an 80-year-old man, and two soldiers, Labonté and Galhet, as well as women and children. Outside the fort, about twenty men worked in the fields, bringing in the last of the harvest.

The Iroquois war party emerged from the thickets at eight in the morning. The details of what followed come down to us primarily in two accounts written by Madeleine herself seven years after the event (1699) and twenty-four years later (1716).

The first account is brief and straightforward. It prefaces a plea implying that her exploit was worth a pension for herself or, alternatively, a military promotion for one of her brothers. The second account, written at the request of the governor of New France, is much longer and richly detailed, if not embellished. By that, I mean it is hard to believe in some places. This second account, discovered in the archives and published in 1901, gained popular acceptance and launched the "legend" of Madeleine. A statue of her, musket in her hands and a kerchief around her neck, was dedicated in 1913 in Vercheres.

There's a scene in the Western movie, "The Man Who Shot Liberty Valance," in which a reporter says, "When the legend becomes fact, print the legend." In telling Madeleine's story here, I'm admittedly going with the legend, although skeptically.

According to Madeleine's second account, she was five arpents (nearly one thousand feet) from the fort when the Iroquois began their attack. She was on the river side, possibly washing clothes, when she heard shots. Her servant, Laviolette, called out to her, "Fly, mademoiselle, fly! The Iroquois are upon us."

She made a run for the gates. Her first account says an Iroquois warrior caught up with her and grabbed her by her neckerchief but she untangled herself and managed to escape. The second account doesn't mention the kerchief incident but says the Iroquois, numbering forty-five but uncounted in the first account, saw they couldn't catch her so they stood still and discharged their guns at her.

"Forty-five bullets whistling past my ears made the time seem long," she wrote, "and the distance from the fort interminable, though I was so near."

(This seems farfetched, say some historians. The Iroquois generally were good shots. And they could outrun most white men, let alone young girls.)

Finally, inside the fort, she cried out, "To arms! To arms!"

At once, this 14-year-old girl—imagine a high-school freshman today facing a gang of killers trying to get into her home—took command, sparing no time to comfort the crying women who had seen their husbands carried off. The soldiers, Labonte and Galhet, were no Audie Murphys. She found them overcome by fear and hiding in the redoubt, near the gunpowder. One held a burning fuse.

"What are you going to do with that fuse" she asked.

"I want to set fire to the powder," he said, "and blow up the fort."

"You are a miserable wretch," Madeleine quotes herself as saying. "Begone, I command you!"

Her plans definitely did not include suicide and mass sacrifice to escape the horrors of falling into enemy hands.

She put on a soldier's helmet, ran up to a bastion, and shouted and gestured to make the Iroquois believe the fort was teeming with defenders. She then fired the swivel gun at the attackers. This had the effect not only of giving the Iroquois pause but also of sounding out a call to the other forts along the river that Vercheres needed help.

Meanwhile, Madeleine's little squad had to survive the siege. She posted herself at one bastion, the octogenarian at a second, and her young brothers at the remaining two, ordering each to shoot if any Iroquois warrior showed his head. The soldiers and Laviolette, the servant, were assigned to the redoubt to protect the women and children sheltered there.

During that first day, according to her account, she made three sorties outside the fort. One, by herself, was to cover the landing of Pierre Fontaine dit Bienvenu and his family, who arrived by canoe. (Count on the neighbors dropping by when the house is a mess.) The two other sorties, with her brothers guarding her with their muskets, were to retrieve three bags of laundry and some blankets that she had left on the shore.

On the first night, cows that had escaped being slaughtered by the Iroquois began to low at the gates to the fort. Madeleine suspected a trick. There was a chance that some Indians, covered with skins from the cattle they had killed, were hiding among the animals. She would not let the cows in at first but ultimately decided to save them. Sending for her two brothers, she had them stand by with their muskets loaded and primed, in case of a surprise. The cows entered the fort without incident.

Madeleine wrote that she spent the first twenty-four hours without eating or sleeping or leaving her vigil to go into the family's house. She ordered all her sentries to shout back and forth often: "All's well! All's well!" She had her cannon fired every hour, imploring help from Montreal.

"One would have fancied, to hear us, that the fort was crowded with warriors," Madeleine wrote. "And in truth the Iroquois, with all their astuteness and skill in warfare, were completely deceived, as they afterwards avowed to M. De Callieres [leader of the rescue party].

They told him they had held a council with a view of assaulting the fort during the night, but that the increased vigilance of the guard had prevented them from accomplishing their design,

especially in view of their losses the previous day under the fire maintained by myself and my two brothers."

Finally, help arrived. One hundred men had been dispatched in boats from Montreal. Fifty Algonquins followed overland. They arrived shortly after the Iroquois had given up and disappeared into the woods. Madeleine was dozing at the time, her head resting on a table and her musket across her arms. The sentry woke her and told her he heard voices on the water. From a bastion, she shouted, "Who are you?"

The answer came back: "French! It is La Monnerie come to your assistance."

Madeleine went down to the bank of the river to receive the party. As soon as she saw La Monnerie, the officer in command of the forty-man detachment that had been split off to check out the fort, she saluted him, saying "Sir, you are welcome. I surrender my arms to you."

"Mademoiselle," he said, "they are in good hands."

"Better than you think," Madeleine replied.

**Madeleine of Vercheres**

The Algonquins, meanwhile, were on the hunt. They rushed south after the retreating Iroquois and caught up with them along Lake Champlain, freeing the habitants. Presumably, they took Iroquois captives, hence the talk with De Callieres about their being fooled. Only two habitants lost their lives in the entire episode.

There is no question that Madeleine was a courageous and resourceful girl.

"Although my sex does not permit me to have inclinations other than those it demands of me," she wrote in the first account, when she was twenty-one, "allow me, nevertheless … to tell you that, like many men, I have feelings that incline me to glory."

It's the smugness of that reply to La Monneries that makes me think that she could also have been a pain in the neck.

She did, in fact, go on to live a long life, and a contentious one. At the age of twenty-eight, in September of 1706, she married Pierre Thomas Tarieu de La Perade, a lieutenant in the colonial regular troops, and settled across the Saint Lawrence from Vercheres at Sainte-Anne-de-la-Perade, where he was part seigneur. Complications involving that seigneurie and the part of Vercheres inherited by Madeleine gave rise to many boundary disputes and lawsuits with neighbors. Although they were justified more often than not, Madeleine and her husband had a reputation of being abusive to their tenant farmers and of being ill-tempered in general.

Madeleine died at Sainte-Anne-de-la-Perade and was buried August 8, 1747, under her pew in the parish church. She was sixty-nine. Her husband died ten years later at the age of seventy-nine. They had six children. Those who married took spouses with the surnames of Deschamps de Boishebert, Lemoine, Bertrand and Gautier.

## Jean Cadieux: A Poem Before Dying

Jean Cadieux was a coureur de bois, a freelance trapper (that is, unlicensed) who was born in Boucherville on March 12, 1671, to Jean Cadieux and Marie Valade. At home in the forest, where he spent his winters in a hut, he traded supplies and manufactured goods with the Indians in return for furs. He was married to Marie Bourdon, who often accompanied him, and had eight children by her.

In May, 1709, along with a crew of Algonquins, he was on his way by canoe to Montreal to sell the furs he had accumulated over the winter. During a rest stop at Seven Falls portage at the Grand Calumet Island, one of his companions went out on reconnaissance and spotted some Iroquois who were preparing an ambush to take the cargo of furs. To escape, the group would have to forget portaging around the dangerous rapids and run them, the risk heightened by the certainty of Iroquois musket fire.

Jean saw no other choice. He decided the only hope was to create a diversion and lure the Iroquois away from the river. As he and a young Algonquin circled towards the Iroquois, the main party, which included Marie, paddled stealthily to the head of the rapids and waited, hunched down in their canoe. The signal to go would be the first sound of guns.

An hour passed before Jean and his friend came upon the Iroquois, taking them completely by surprise. In the ensuing battle, the enemy was lured away from the river. The gunshots had given the signal. The canoe loaded with Marie, Algonquins and furs burst into the rapids, hurtling down as fast as possible, and made it through. Two days later, the party arrived safely at Lac des Deux Montagnes and took shelter in a fortification there.

Three Algonquins from the group headed back over land to find their two friends. The Iroquois were no longer in the vicinity but, by reading tracks, they found the dead body of the Algonquin who had been with Jean. After two days of searching, they found a wood cross in the ground by a makeshift shelter near a place called Le Petit Rocher de la Haute Montagne (the Little Rock of the High Mountain). Near to the cross, half buried, was Jean's body with a long piece of birch bark in his hand. On this, as he lay dying, injured and exhausted by three days of dodging the Iroquois and too weak to hunt for food, he had written his parting lament and dug his own grave.

For years afterward, men plying the river stopped at the gravesite to pray, maintain the cross and sometimes take a shaving as a good luck charm. In 1905, a stone memorial was erected at the site. It stands today at Bryson, on the Quebec bank of the Ottawa River.

Some contend that Jean's wife, Marie Catherine Bourdon, was the daughter of an Indian chief. Parish records, however, will lead you to conclude that she was not. They show that she was born August 8 and baptized August 11, 1675, in Boucherville, daughter of

Jacques Bourdon and Marie Menard. Her godparents were Jean Guinest and Catherine Forestier. She was twenty years old when she and Jean were married May 30, 1695, in Boucherville.

There is some suggestion on the Web that Jacques Bourdon and Marie Menard were "Indianized" or so-called "white Indians," more at home with native ways than the French ones. It is said that three of their fourteen offspring were adopted Indian children but the records I've consulted don't show evidence of that.

Jean Cadieux and Marie Bourdon's eight children married into the lines of Gaudry, Brazeau, Viau, Goguet, Tougas (or Tougard), Blay and Lebeau.

The verses to "La Complainte de Cadieux," sometimes called "The Lament of Cadieux," follow (my translation). It indicates that he saw his rescuers pass by but was too weak to call to them:

Little Rock of the High Mountain,
I come here to finish my campaign.
Ah, sweet echoes, hear my sighs.
Languishing, I will soon die.

Little birds, your sweet harmonies,
When you sing, bring me back to life.
Ah, if I had wings like you,
I would be happy within two days.

Alone in these woods, where I have had cares,
Thinking always of my so dear friends,
I ask, alas, are they drowned?
Have the Iroquois killed them?

One of these days that leave me
In dreaming I saw smoke.
I said to myself: Ah, Great God, what is this?
Have the Iroquois taken my shelter?

I launched on a mission
To see if it was an ambush.
Then I saw three French faces
Giving my heart great joy.

My knees bent, my weak voice halts,
I fall … Alas! They get ready to leave.
I am alone … no one to console me.
When death comes for one so desolated.

A howling wolf comes close to my cabin,
To see if my fire has died out.
I tell him: Get out of here,
For, my faith, I will take your coat!

A black raven flying freely,
Comes to perch close to my cover;
I told him: Eater of human flesh,
Go find other meat than mine.

Go on over there in these woods and swamps,
You will find several bodies of Iroquois
You will find flesh as well as bones.
Go on farther. Leave me at rest.

Little nightingale, go tell my mistress,
And my children that I bid them adieu.
That I have kept my love and my faith,
And they must henceforth go on without me.

It is here that the world abandons me,
But I have recourse in you, Savior of men!
Most holy Virgin, ah! do not abandon me.
Let me die in your arms.

[For the description of Jean Cadieux's last days, I am indebted to the website, mrcpontiac.qc.ca/culture (now inactive) and to FCGSC member Ron Iacobucci, who steered me to it and who, last I heard, was on a mission to substantiate his firm belief that Marie was a full-blooded Indian.]

# The Disco Brothers of Norwich, Connecticut

By Nelson Disco, #1919

This article is based on chapter eleven of *The Disco Family of Black Brook, New York*, recently published by the author. The Disco Brothers were the five oldest sons of William Henry Disco and Almina Patenaude who relocated from Black Brook, New York, to Norwich, Connecticut, between 1892 and 1905. In Norwich they established a prosperous retail business, which continued from 1898 to 1939. They each raised families in Norwich and their forty years of business partnership is a testimony to their values and family loyalties, as well as their business acumen. This article documents the story of the Disco Brothers' business enterprise, based on many discussions with family members and research of period documents.

## Early Days in Black Brook, New York

The village of Black Brook is situated among the Eastern Adirondack Mountains in Clinton County, New York. It is near Plattsburgh and adjacent to the town of Au Sable Forks. Rich deposits of magnetite iron ore were discovered there in the early 19th century and a thriving business developed for mining and smelting iron ore. Pierre Disco (Descault), together with his five sons and many other French-Canadian families emigrated from Canada to Black Brook about 1845 to work at making charcoal for the flourishing iron industry. Pierre's fourth son, William Henry Disco, became a supervisor of charcoal making and later acquired a 150-acre farm in Black Brook. In 1890 the J. & J. Rogers Iron Company closed down the last of its open-hearth iron forges, which had been the mainstay of the Black Brook area economy for fifty years. The magnetite iron ore in the region was expensive to extract, and the rise of steel making in the Midwestern United States had made the high quality but expensively processed New York State iron uneconomical to bring to market. The great business boom of the nineteenth century in Black Brook was over. The enterprising children of the French-Canadian families that had settled in the area found themselves looking elsewhere for work and opportunity.

William Henry Disco's sons, Alexander (born 1868) and William (born 1873) were both born near Taylor Pond. The younger boys were born at the new farm, Nelson and David in 1876 and 1878, and Frank in 1881. The boys grew up with lots of hard farm work to do and with a sense of competition and friendly rivalry amongst themselves. In addition to the five brothers who relocated to Norwich, Connecticut, there were two younger brothers (Joseph and Edward) who remained on the farm for a while and there were three sisters who married and remained in the Adirondack region.

One family legend (as told to me by David Disco) tells of how the boys at one time drilled a hole in a log and filled it with black powder to facilitate splitting the wood. They set off the powder and blew one half of the log into the air, which knocked over the top of the chimney on the house. Their father was very angry and stern punishment was meted out.

Another legend, as told by my father, applied to either William Henry's farm or possibly to one of the other farmers who lived in the area. The farmer brought his potatoes in to market at

nearby Au Sable Forks in the fall after the iron works shut down, and the price was so low, that he dumped the entire wagonload of potatoes into the Au Sable River. One of the brothers, Nelson, and most likely the other boys as well, for a time operated a small store at the family homestead, which sold needles, thread, some cloth and notions to other farmers in the area. (The homestead also housed the Disco Post Office, which attracted their local customers.) This youthful enterprise provided some early business experience.

One other bit of family lore that I must mention regards the use of middle initials. I was once told that none of the brothers had middle names, but they each took a middle initial when they went into business because it "looked more professional." There was a school in Black Brook just north of William Henry's farm, known as School No. 7. The foundation and front step of this school building are still present near the W. H. Disco homestead site today. Records show that William Henry Disco supported the school in his time, served on the local school board and he boarded or paid part of the schoolteacher's salary. The boys learned English in the school system, and probably spoke French at home and with their neighbors and relatives. Arithmetic, history, and penmanship were also taught.

It would appear that the boys received a basic education at the above mentioned school and perhaps went to high school in Au Sable Forks, about ten miles from the farm. This is not documented, but other members of the family did this at about this time. Alexander, the eldest brother, attended the Albany Business College in Albany, New York, for at least a three month Commercial Course starting in June 1891 when he was twenty years old. Family legend held that Alex attended the Business College and he then instructed his brothers from what he had learned.

## Norwich Connecticut—1890s

Stedman's *Norwich Connecticut City Directory* for 1893 lists Alexander H. Disco, employed by the Hong Kong Tea Company, boarding at 50 Washington Street. This is the first documented record I have of one of the Disco Brothers living in Norwich, and probably reports on data gathered in the later part of 1892. Why Norwich of all places? I don't have a clear answer to this question, but drawing on some history of the region and the times I have speculated as follows:

Norwich was situated at the head of tidewater transportation on the Thames River. In 1892 it was a thriving community with over seventy manufacturing enterprises listed in its directory. Local manufacturers produced machinery, guns, cast iron products, metal and machined goods, and, most notably, textiles. The Shetucket and Quinebaug River valleys, connected to Norwich by rail, were developed with textile mills and mill towns during the second half of the 19th century. The towns of Baltic, Versailles, Taftville, Jewett City, Wauregan, Danielson, Putnam and Grosvenordale, used the rivers for water power and used Norwich as a route to market for their goods and later for a source of raw materials and coal, imported by barge and rail, to supplement their water power. Cotton from the South and even

from Egypt was imported by ship through Norwich.[1] The U.S. census of 1900 reported the Norwich population to be 24,534 persons. Proximity to water power, rail and tidewater navigation at Norwich gave eastern Connecticut mills a commercial advantage over less favorably situated competitors. Adjacent to and actually a part of Norwich was the village of Taftville, which hosted the huge Ponemah Mill complex. "When completed in 1871, Ponemah was the largest single building for cotton manufacture in the nation."[2] Norwich became a hub for the eastern Connecticut textile industry, its many feeder industries, and their supporting commercial trade. Many mill owners and operators settled in Norwich, including descendants of the famous Slater Family, who built great mansion homes lining the main residential avenues of Broadway and Washington Street in the city. Norwich also served as a banking and financial center for the region, providing capital for many of the mill reorganizations that were characteristic of the textile industry of the time. Beardsley noted that in 1880 the Chelsea Savings Bank organized a financial package for the Smithville Company in Willimantic, which allowed the mill to reopen after a financial failure.[3]

The huge expansion and growth of New England textile manufacturing in the 19th century created a need for workers, which could not be satisfied by the indigenous population. The mill owners conducted extensive recruitment campaigns, which lead to the immigration of many groups of people into New England. The French-speaking provinces of Canada were a prime target for recruiters. The large families of the habitants could not be sustained by the farmsteads of Quebec, and other sources of income were needed. Recruiters actively combed the villages and towns of Quebec, promising a good life and opportunity in the U.S. "As the news of mill town opportunity south of the border spread through the province, an unprecedented migration began. One third of Quebec had moved to New England by the turn of the century and most of these people went straight to the mills."[4] Black Brook, New York, is close to Canada, and it is evident that there were still many cross border ties between the French families in Black Brook and families north of the border. Surely there were conversations about economic opportunities that were affecting such a large population. It is also possible that the traveling recruiters visited Black Brook at the time that the iron industry was shutting down in the late 1880s offering job opportunities.

Adeline Disco, the oldest daughter of William Henry's brother, Pierre, relocated to Webster, Massachusetts about 1869 (at age twenty-two) to find employment in the textile mills. Unlike the Black Brook industries of mining, ironwork, charcoal making and logging, the New England textile mills offered employment opportunities for women and children of that day. Adeline married Paul Dacier in Webster in 1872, raised her family, and lived there for the rest of her life. She died in Webster in 1927. The family of William Henry Disco's older sister, Celina

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[1] Beardsley, Thomas R. *Willimantic Industry and Community, The Rise and Decline of a Connecticut Textile City.* 1993.

[2] Dunwell, Steve. The Run of the Mill. A Pictorial Narrative of the Expansion, Dominion, Decline and Enduring Impact of the New England Textile Industry. D. R. Godine, Boston, Mass., 1978, p. 134.

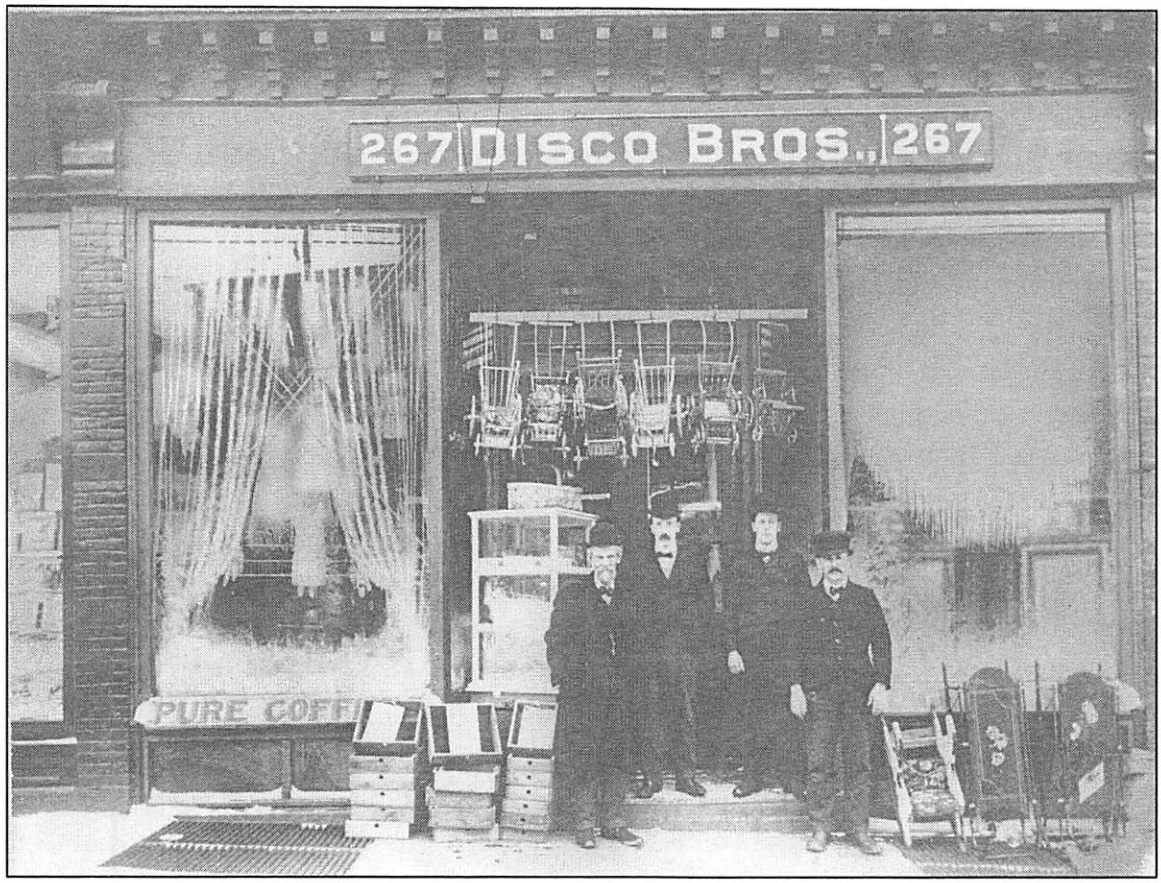
[3] Beardsley, ibid, p. 8

[4] Dunwell, ibid, p. 113

Disco Plantier, relocated from Black Brook to Wauregan, Connecticut sometime between 1880 and 1893 to work in the textile mills. Celina died in Wauregan in 1909.

Also, the family of William Henry's niece, Delia Disco Raymond, was living in Wauregan in 1890 and her daughter, Ida Raymond, was born in Wauregan on August 6, 1890. The Norwich City Directory for 1895 lists three Discos; Almedas, William, and Antoine, living in Taftville Connecticut, with Almedas being employed by the Ponemah Mills. Almedas and William were cousins to the Disco Brothers and Antoine was William Henry's brother.

Hence, it appears that William Henry and the Disco Brothers had several opportunities to learn about industrial employment and business opportunities in Norwich from their relatives while they were still living in Black Brook, New York.




**Disco Brothers Store at 267 Main Street, Norwich Connecticut, 1901**
**L-R, William Henry, father; Nelson, David and Alexander, brothers**

### Relocation to Norwich

As noted above, the 1893 Norwich City Directory reported that Alexander Disco, oldest of the Disco Brothers, was working for the Hong Kong Tea Company. In 1894 he was still living in Norwich and employed at the same address, but the company name had been changed to "James A. Reid," listed under purveyors of coffees, teas & spices. By 1896, William B. Disco had joined his brother at the Reid firm as a clerk and was boarding with his brother at 36 Boswell

Ave. Throughout their early years in Norwich, the brothers boarded with each other or in each other's houses until they were able to acquire houses of their own.

In 1898 Nelson and David moved to Norwich, and the Disco Brothers' business was founded on December 1st of that year, opening at 267 Main Street in downtown Norwich. I do not know exactly how the brothers obtained the capital needed to start their enterprise. In 1994, Millicent Disco Hallan recalled that she was told that William Henry gave each brother one hundred dollars when they left home. Unfortunately, all the financial records of the business seem to have been lost or destroyed except for one record of bank deposits from 1900 to 1905.

Stedman's Directory lists the firm of Disco Brothers under retail merchants for tea coffee and spices in their 1899 edition. It is interesting to note that there were six companies listed as specializing in the retail sale of tea and coffee in Norwich in that year.

## Growth and Development

The Disco Brothers' business seems to have grown and prospered from the start. They were first listed as merchants for the sale of tea, coffee, and spices, but soon were handling many other types of merchandise, which we today do not normally associate with tea or coffee. Kitchen and household furnishings, lamps, kerosene heaters, china, baby strollers and sleds were among their early inventories.

I have relied on the recollections of family members and friends for information on how the brothers organized themselves for the business. Alex was supposedly the shrewd one, recognizing business opportunity, and setting the financial strategy for the business. William, who first worked in Norwich as a clerk for J. A. Reid, supposedly kept the books of the partnership. Nelson and David were the salesmen, having more outgoing personalities than their brothers, and built a loyal customer base for their firm by their friendly manners. Nelson and David handled the Main Street store while Alex and William had horse drawn wagon routes through the French-speaking settlements in the Taftville and Greenville sections of Norwich where they sold their wares. It was recalled that long after automobiles and trucks became the preferred means of transportation, Alex was still driving his horse drawn wagon to Taftville. Their bi-lingual capability was a great business asset in that community. They established close personal as well as business ties with their customers. In his book written about Taftville, Rene Dugas recalled that Alex had become a close friend of their family. "...and I vividly remember him in tears as he saw my dying father for the last time. The relationship between these men and the local residents became very close and personal."[5]

Frank's daughter recalled that the brothers also dealt with the local Polish community and learned enough Polish to transact business with their customers. She specifically recalled the use of the phrase "Nagluka Techa"—"see you next week" (my phonetic spelling) being used by

[5] Dugas Sr., Rene L. *The French Canadians in New England 1871-1930 Taftville (The Early Years)*, 1995.

William on his routes. She also recalled that David had a small route for a time, as did her father, Frank.

The Brothers were always very careful with money, living modestly, and gradually building the firm's capital. Early in their business dealings they established a reputation for honest dealing and paying their suppliers in cash upon delivery of goods to their store. This characteristic had a very beneficial payoff during the World War I shortage years to follow. It also appears that they were very scrupulous with each other in their dealings. I have a record from 1902, which shows that on August 17th of that year, the brothers carefully drew out or invested additional money in the business to make their holdings exactly equal. In this set of

**Inside the Disco Brothers' Store**
**David, Nelson and Alexander—1905**

transactions, Alex drew out $18.28, William drew out $18.28, Nelson invested $10.15, and David invested $.68, thereby making each of their net investments in the business exactly equal at $350.00. Bank records of the business show that their monthly bank deposits steadily increased from $70.00 in January of 1899 to $1950.36 in September of 1902. Sales at the Store increased from $245.44 in January of 1899, to $2028.52 in October of 1905. The route sales for

Alexander and William are separately shown and these increased from about $170 per month when they started in mid 1899 to about $750 per month in 1905.

About 1900, William Henry Disco and his wife, Almina, visited Norwich and he with three of his sons proudly posed for the photograph shown on page 15. Note the merchandise displayed, strollers overhead, and the sleds to the right. The photo view on page 17, taken inside the store at about the same time, shows more of their wares; china, heaters, lamps and coffee displays.

One of their early business strategies seemed to be to link sales of coffee to other items. I have a copy of a flier, which announced "Disco Brothers' Ninth Great Annual Sale—Kitchen and House Furnishing Goods, Commencing Wednesday, January 31st, 1912." It further states; "We will offer during this great sale our entire line of Kitchen and House Furnishing Goods at a saving of 20 to 35 per cent. This is one of the great events which we offer the people of Norwich and vicinity but once a year, and it will pay all in need of new Kitchen Utensils to avail themselves of this great sale." The flier goes on to illustrate several of the sale items under the headings of Tin Ware, Galvanized Ware, Gray Enameled Ware, Nickeled Ware and Wooden Ware. A "Princess" Bissell Carpet Sweeper is featured for $2.48, (regular price $3.00)."

In the early days of the business the boys' ties to Black Brook remained strong. Alexander married in 1893 while he was still working for James A Reid. He met his wife, Anna (Anjie) Annam, after coming to Norwich, but she was born in Holland. I found no family with her name listed in the Norwich Directories at that time. However, her obituary notice in 1912 makes note of a sister living in Norwich. Alexander's first child, Almina (Mina), was born in Norwich in 1894 and was christened at St. Matthews Church in Black Brook. New York, in July 1895.

William was married in Norwich on October 2 1899, the year after the business was started. His wife, Bertha Dombrowski, was then living in Norwich, but according to her obituary notice, she was born in a region of Poland, which later became part of Germany. Nelson and David both married girls from Black Brook. Nelson in 1900, married Edith Savage, a neighbor in Black Brook, and David, in 1903, married the Black Brook School teacher, Malvina Bellerose. They all began families in Norwich immediately.

In the early days of the business the brothers would frequently get together at one of their homes for Sunday dinners, followed by cigars in the backyard. The photo above shows one such gathering probably in the backyard of Alex's home on Oak Street. The brothers and their families reportedly made annual trips back to Black Brook while their children were young, especially during the summer months.

William Henry died at his home in Black Brook in April 1905. This resulted in a change of life style for many of the family members. Most notably for the Disco Brothers' business, their next youngest brother, Frank, who was 24, joined his older brothers in the firm at Norwich. Frank married Alice Gregorie in 1911, who was of French-Canadian descent, living in Norwich. The Black Brook farm was taken over by the two youngest sons, Joseph and Edward. The family summer trips to Black Brook continued, but at some diminishing rate over the years. The wives

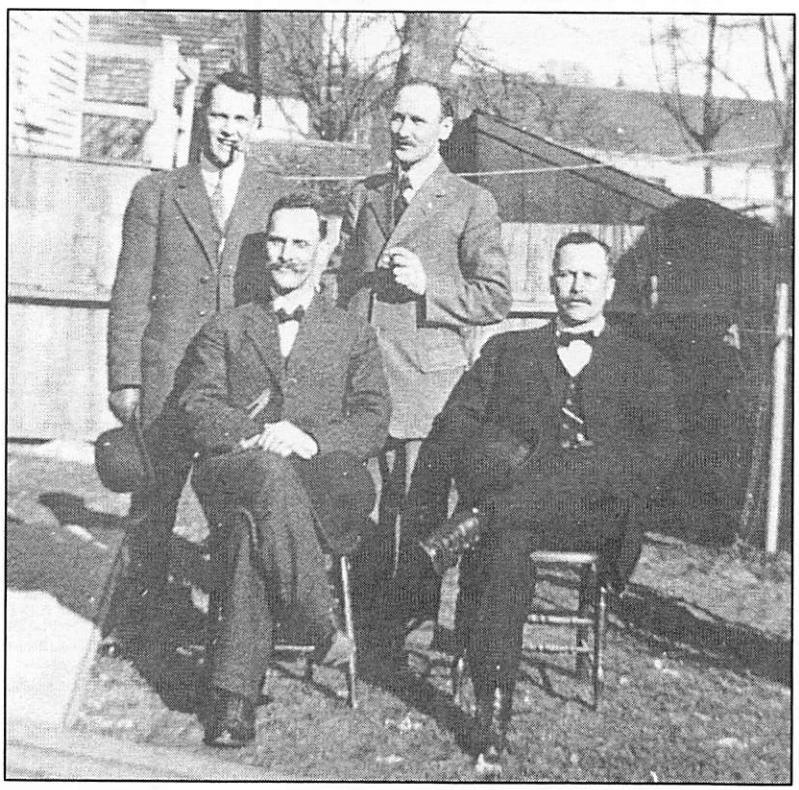
and children of Nelson and David would frequently visit the Black Brook area for several weeks during the summer with their husbands joining them for briefer visits. In 1994, David Disco's daughter recalled;

"Several times mother took us children to Black Brook by train. We took the Central Vermont Railroad from Norwich and had to spend the night at a hotel in Albany, then a train to Au Sable Forks the next day. Once we drove - an amazing trip in those days - no route numbers, no maps or gas stations along the highway, mother and dad wore dusters and goggles and mother read directions to dad from the Automobile Blue Book, which attempted to note landmarks etc. We would all watch for those - usually a church, crossroad, etc. and call out "There it is! A Connecticut car in upstate New York was a great thing! Dad held his audiences in the drug store in Au Sable Forks spell bound relating our travel adventures!"

"We stopped over one night I remember in Lake George, but I don't know how long the trip took. Once we had to pay a farmer to cross his land, - That took my father's salesmanship!"

I also recall my own father, Clarence, describing a visit to the farm when he was a young boy, and a dog, being aggressively playful (?) jumped up and bit off his earlobe. They bundled him, his mother, and the severed earlobe into a horse drawn wagon and took them to Black Brook Village or Au Sable Forks (I'm not sure which) where the local doctor sewed the earlobe back on. It healed very well although a slight scar remained to verify his tale.

**The four Disco Brothers taken about 1915 in the back yard of one of their homes in Norwich. Left to right, they are: standing, David D., Nelson C.; seated. William B. and Alexander H.**



In the 1920's the trips to Black Brook were more often automobile trips. The automobile became a part of their family lives. Picnics seemed to have been a big event with the families and my father had many fond memories of family outings in the country. Gardener Lake, Ocean Beach, and Mohegan Park were favorite destinations. David's daughter recalled family picnics as, "A fleet of five cars overflowing with children and picnic luncheons, with one car at least always breaking down and giving us children the chance to play in the countryside, while the brothers, (not an engineer or mechanic among them) tried to get things running."

As the Norwich business prospered, some of the brothers began moving to more elaborate homes. In 1912 William moved from Elm Street to 106 McKinley Ave. Nelson, who had originally settled his family on the East Side, moved to a handsome Victorian home at 210 Broadway in 1914. Following World War I, David moved his family from 84 Oak Street to a beautiful large home at 181 Washington Street. Only Alex remained in the house he bought when he first married at 11 Oak Street.

The business continued to grow and now supported five partners. The brothers, Nelson at least, made buying trips to New York City. There was a steam ship that made regularly scheduled trips between Norwich and New York in the early years, and later the trains were used. My father recalled accompanying his father to New York as a boy on some of these buying excursions. It was a great thrill for him. In New York they bought goods for the store, especially imported items such as china and crystal glassware. In later years they also bought personal things for their homes such as paintings, mirrors, and furniture.

One of the commodities that the store began to deal in was sugar. I suppose that it sort of went along with the coffee and tea, one more service for their customers. The First World War brought about a severe shortage of sugar available for domestic consumption. The family legend has it that because the Disco Brothers had established such a good reputation with their suppliers, always paying promptly, they received preferential treatment in obtaining supplies of sugar for sale. Even into the 1950s, people in Norwich remembered the long lines that had formed outside of the Disco Brothers Store of people waiting to buy sugar from the only source in town! This was a bonanza! The brothers leveraged their scarce commodity by offering to sell a pound of sugar to anyone who bought a set of dishes. Lots of dishes got sold along with the sugar. It is interesting to note that this practice was specifically made illegal during the rationing period of the Second World War. This period of sales produced substantial profits for the enterprise and laid the financial foundation for the construction of the Disco Building.

## The Disco Building

When World War I ended and the 1920s began there was a general economic prosperity in the region. The mills were producing, times were good, and the brothers needed to expand their business space and decided to erect a substantial building to house their enterprise and to provide additional income from office space rentals. They now listed themselves as wholesalers as well as retailers of the commodities they handled. They acquired a parcel of land at 255-261 Main Street, on the corner of Main and Ferry Streets near their store location. In 1922 they erected a five story building on this site. The firm of Cudworth & Thompson was the architect. The first floor of the building was devoted to a wholesale and retail sales room. The upper floors were rented as offices. Family legend held that the steel structure was designed to carry an additional five stories if they should ever decide to add floors to the building. David's daughter reported that it cost one million dollars to build at that time. In 2006, the property had an appraised value of $2,032,000 and the replacement cost of the building alone is $3,173,192, according to the City of Norwich Assessors Office.

The Disco Building in Norwich, Connecticut - 2006

In his book, *A History of Eastern Connecticut*, published in 1932, P. L. Harwood wrote, "The name of Disco Brothers is a familiar one in trade circles of Norwich, where the firm conducts both a wholesale and retail general merchandise business. The enterprise was established in 1898 by Alexander H., William B., Nelson C., and David D. Disco. They began business in the Steiner Building, opening a small tea and coffee store, but as time passed they kept adding other lines and theirs has grown to be the largest concern in this section of the country. Their present quarters are a large five story modern building, which was completed in 1923, and four floors of this structure are utilized as offices, while the main floor and basement are occupied by Disco Brothers in the sale of their merchandise. Theirs is the only fireproof building in Norwich and the structure is one hundred and twenty-five feet in depth, with a frontage of fifty-four feet. The business is conducted along the most enterprising and progressive lines and has grown steadily, constituting one of the chief mercantile enterprises of New England." Later he continues, "They have been very successful in the field of merchandising and have built up a marvelous business. All of the brothers take an active interest in civic affairs but do not seek (political) office of any kind."

As each of the children of the brothers came of age, most of them did a turn in the family business. The only one who seems to have stayed on until the business closed was Mina Disco Bailey, Alexander's oldest daughter, who supervised the china department. The others sought separate careers after a brief stint in the family firm.

## The Closing

The business boom of the 1920s ended with the Wall Street securities market crash in 1929 followed by the great Depression of the 1930s. The business struggled along and was well enough established to continue to support its owners. For one or more years, the brothers either rented or owned a cottage at Groton Long Point on Long Island Sound. Somehow they worked a sharing arrangement for this, I am not sure how. David, and perhaps some of the others made

fishing trips to Canada. Salmon fishing on the Miramichi River was one of their destinations. Their children married and began their own families.

Throughout the great Depression, the New England textile industry was hard hit by factory closings, relocations, and labor unrest. A most difficult blow came in September 1938. On September 21st of that year, a tropical hurricane of tremendous force slammed into New England without warning. Torrential rainfall and spring tides raised the level of the rivers, which converge on Norwich by about twenty feet above normal. The entire waterfront district of Norwich and all of Franklin Square were inundated. There are many photos of people rowing boats to cross the square. The basement of the Disco Building was several feet below the flood high water mark. This basement was used by the brothers to store merchandise, coffees, teas, and other perishables, which would be ruined by water. As the waters began to rise, they first barricaded the doors with lumber and heavy goods and then realizing that the waters were still rapidly rising, began to empty the basement up to the first floor by hand carrying the goods up the stairs. The flood waters rose too rapidly, and my father later told the tale of how suddenly the barricaded door burst in under the pressure of the rising flood and he was just barely able to snatch his father, Nelson, from the inrushing water. No one was injured, but their financial losses were great. My mother later reported that each partner lost $30,000 due to the flood.

The business continued, but things were not the same. There was much heavy cleanup work to do and replacement of merchandise. Alex was seventy years old and William was sixty-five. They wanted to retire. There were many long discussions over what to do. It was later told to me that they could find no way to divide the business equitably among so many heirs, so they decided to close down altogether and liquidate their assets. The Disco Brothers went out of business in August 1939.

The brothers formed the Disco Brothers Real Estate Company, with offices in the Disco Building, at about this time to continue the management of the building property. David and William were most active in this endeavor. Nelson died quite suddenly following an appendectomy in 1941, and Alexander died a year later. Frank seems to have stayed pretty much in retirement until his death in 1953. David went into a separate business with his son, Harold, following World War II called David Disco & Son. They specialized in the wholesale of hardware items, especially war surplus goods, and for a time, fireworks. This business closed in the mid fifties, and David died in 1959. William, who lived the longest, continued to work at the Disco Brothers Real Estate Office into the 1960s. He even operated the building elevator himself for many years. He seemed to enjoy meeting the people coming and going from the building. William died in 1969, two months before his 96th birthday, spending his last few years in a nursing home.

As the brothers died off, leaving their interests divided among their children, the ownership of the building became quite complicated. Some of the heirs sold out to others. David bought out the shares of many of his nieces and nephews. The family came to realize that they had to sell all of their interests to a single buyer. After the store closed, the first floor of the Disco Building was occupied for nearly twenty years by the First National Stores. The Gilbert

Furniture Company occupied it briefly, and in 1962 the building was sold to the Norwich Savings and Loan Association, which later became the Eastern Federal Bank, Inc., which occupies and operates the premises today. Harold Disco, David's son, was the executor for the sale, and his widow, Jo Bingham, recalled in 1994 that there were thirty-nine "shareholders" in the partnership at the time of the sale.

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# Robideau Families: Search for Quebec Lineage Leads From Baltic, Connecticut to Spain

Paul R. Keroack, #157

As part of my research into the emigration to the U.S. of my Trudeau ancestors, I investigated a family linked to them by marriage and circumstances. The first mention of my Trudeau line in the U.S. is a marriage entry in Webster, Massachusetts on 30 November 1856, between Joseph Trudeau and Josephine Leduc. On the previous day, Clemence Robidaux and Jane [i.e. Jeanne] Bibeau were also married there.[1] This juxtaposition would not be noteworthy except that in the next mention of my Trudeau family, on 30 April 1859 at St. Mary's Church in Norwich, Connecticut, Joseph's brother Damase Trudeau was married to Philomene Robideau.[2] In the 1860 census of Franklin, Connecticut (where Damase and Philomene resided), Justine and Marie Robidaux [this time spelled Rabadaux], Philomene's sisters, were then living with the couple. The Joseph and Damase Trudeau families lived in adjacent dwellings.[3]

By 1861, the village of Lord's Bridge in Franklin became part of the new town of Sprague, its massive cotton mill soon employing thousands of workers, mainly French Canadians. On 10 May 1865, "Edella" was born to "Collis and Merence Robudeau." (it would take awhile before Yankee clerks could make sense of French names!) On 1 May 1869, Justine was born to Joseph Robideaux, 40, and Marie Richie, 29, and on 5 January 1870, Margaret was born to John Robideaux and Margaret, her family name omitted (or, perhaps, on 5 January 1871 —Margaret to "Baptiste Robideu" and Margaret Beaudry—a separate entry in the register on that date).[4]

The 1870 census lists three Robidoux households—I tentatively placed them as brothers to Damase Trudeau's wife Philomene (Robidoux) Trudeau:

Robidoux, Calixte, 37 – carpenter, p. 713
- Mereace, 34
- Mary, 13
- Philomene, 9
- Calixte, 8
- Cedilie, 4

[All the above are noted as being born in Canada, except the youngest, born in Connecticut]

Robidoux, Joseph, 40, laborer, p. 703
- Mary, 30
- Mary, 11
- Emily, 9
- Rosalie, 5
- John B., 3
- Justine, 1
- Catherine, 70

[Of the above, only Emily and Justine are noted as being born in Connecticut]

Robidoux, John B., 27, p. 726
Margaret, 29
John, 9
Octave, 8,
Eusebe, 7
Joseph, 3
Malvina, 2
Margaret 11/12
[Only the last child was born in Connecticut]

The census information cleared up a few ambiguities—and created some others, as is usual. "Callis" in the vital records is properly Calixte and his daughter is Cedilie, not Edella. If the birth places listed are correct, Joseph Robidoux and family returned to Canada where Rosalie and John B[aptiste] were born—on their return they may have brought the brothers' widowed mother Catherine. Finally, Margaret, listed as eleven/twelfths of a year old on the official census date of 13 June 1870, could not have then been born in 1871—although her age would still not be quite correct as given. It may be that the 1871 entry was an erroneous duplication, given that the clerk may not have grasped that "John" and "Baptist" were the same man and in the first instance Margaret's surname was not recorded.[5]

During the 1870s, more births to these families were recorded in Sprague. On 15 Feb 1871, Obade was born to "Leon Baptiste" Robideau and Margaret Beaudry. Mary Josephine was born on 8 December 1875 to Joseph Robideau and Mary Piche. The death of Annie Robidoux, age 2 years and 7 months, was recorded on 23 May 1875, although with no parents listed, it is unclear whose child she was. Two marriages to Robideau families appear in the records in the 1870s and 1880s. On 17 Oct 1875 Mary Robideaux, age 17, was married to Alphonse Girard, 21, both born in Canada. She could have been either Calixte or Joseph Robideau's daughter. On 25 April 1882, 19-year-old "Ezeb" Robideau was married to Clara Lajunasse. He was probably Eusebe, son of John B. Robideau.

In 1876 the town of Sprague suffered an economic setback when the mill dam collapsed, leading to a migration of many laborers to new mills in Massachusetts and Rhode Island. At the same time, the Canadian government was attempting to stem the tide of migration that was draining the province of Quebec of thousands of families. New lands were granted to residents and former residents. The 1876 Quebec Parliamentary Papers records Joseph and Calixte Robidoux, former residents of Baltic, Connecticut, granted lands in the township of Ditton, Compton County. This hilly region, directly north of New Hampshire, was also the site of gold mining operations.[6]

By 1880, Joseph Robideaux had abandoned farming in Canada. The U.S. census that year found him in Burrillville, Rhode Island, working in a woolen mill. Remarkably, given the health hazards of the times and typical early marriages, all of the children listed in 1870 were still with the family, along with two others born during the following decade. John B. and family

had migrated to Massachusetts but by 1881 had returned to Baltic, where on 6 July the death of their male child one year and three months old, born in Fall River, was recorded.

At the beginning of this narrative we noted Clemence Robidaux. The 1880 census finds him in Worcester, Massachusetts—as Clement, employed in a boot shop, along with wife Jane and children Napoleon, Eliza, Henry and William. Apparently not a close relation, he had not joined the migration to Connecticut.[7]

Having placed the Robideaus in relation to my Trudeaus, I wished to find their place of origin in Quebec. I did not have death records for the three brothers found in Connecticut as they had later moved on. I did have a death record in Natick, RI on 22 Oct 1898 for Philomene Robideau Trudeau, age 59, in which her parents were listed as Joseph and Marie—too general to be helpful (and incorrect, as we shall see)![8] For the brothers—one having the helpfully unusual name of Calixte—I checked the Drouin index[9] to marriages, finding Quebec marriage citations for each, matching the couple's names as recorded in Baltic birth records. Their parents' names were Jean-Baptiste Robideau and Catherine Brosseau. At his 2 August 1819 marriage, Jean-Baptiste was the widower of Marguerite Giguere, whom he had wed on 8 July 1816. At his first marriage, his parents were listed as Antoine Robideau and Marie-Josephe Godin. Both weddings took place at the parish of St-Michel, Yamaska. This town is about forty miles downriver (north) from St-Cesaire, where my Trudeau family lived for a generation before emigrating to the U.S., but I have found no Canadian connection between the two families so far.

Drouin lists the marriage between Antoine Robideau and Josephe Godin in Yamaska on 13 January 1783, with his parents noted as Antoine Robidou and Marguerite Deganne. In turn, the latter couple was married at Longueuil on 19 February 1759, with his parents being Joseph Robidou and Marie Robert, married at Laprairie on 1 August 1735. At this point there is a problem—the Drouin index does not list parents for Joseph Robidou in this marriage. Jette's Dictionnaire[10] ends at the year 1730, so it cannot address this question. However, PRDH extractions exist for all Catholic records in Quebec to 1799.[11] Recorded at the 1735 ceremony was the name of his deceased first spouse, Marie Anne Fontenau. PRDH entries earlier in that year reveal the baptism on 14 February of daughter Therese-Amable—followed two days later by the burial of her 32-year old mother, Marie Anne Fontenau. I went back to Jette for the 7 January 1721 Laprairie marriage of Joseph and Marie-Ann. Joseph's parents—Guillaume Robidou and Marie-Francoise Guerin married on 11 June 1697 in Montreal.

Guillaume and his brother Joseph (who married Jeanne Seguin) were the only sons of Andre Robidou dit l'Espagnol who married 7 June 1667 in Quebec to Jeanne Denot—who nevertheless sired a large number of descendants. Andre, the Quebec pioneer, died at the age of thirty-five in 1678, but the census of 1666 revealed his origin as a native of Ste-Marie-en-Galice, diocese of Burgos, Spain—in the northwest corner of Spain.[12]

Late in my research, I discovered in the society's library a family history, "Robidous: A breed apart," by Clyde M. Rabideau.[13] In his treatment of the founding ancestor, he states that Andre was the son of Manuel Robidou of Paris, France and Catherine Alve of Burgos, Spain, and that the paternal surname is a French variation on the personal name of Robert.

Rabideau's book confirms the above lineage (but only follows the male lines). While his volume is likely excellent, I always attempt to base my research on extracted and published vital records in our library collection and other reliable sources, as indicated below, unless there is no alternative.

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[1] St. Louis Parish, Webster MA: "1856 Nov 29. Clemence Robidou & Joanam Bibeau; testes Manuel Bibeau & euxor."
*Typical of many French names, there are numerous spellings of Robidou given in the historical records. I have used the standardized PRDH (and Jette) spelling of Robidou in the title and at the end, discussing the founding settler. Otherwise I have used the variation in the record cited.*

[2] Norwich CT vital records [FHL 1311436], v. 9, p. 189: 1859, April 30, "Trudeau, Thomas, 20, to Philomene Robideaux, 19, residence, Franklin CT, at St. Mary's Norwich, Rev. D. Kelly."
Also - Franklin CT vital records [FHL 1311444], p. 308: 1861, Jan. 5, "Octave Champagne to Justine Robideaux [no ages listed, & celebrant] Hugh OReilly."

[3] U.S. Census, 1860, Franklin CT. M653, roll 91, p. 66., www.ancestry.com

[4] Sprague CT vital records [FHL 1311443], from 15 June 1861. To save space I have omitted further citations from this source.

[5] U.S. Census, 1870, Franklin CT, M593, roll 114, pages as given, www.ancestry.com

[6] Sessional Papers, 40 Vict. Documents of Session No. 2, A1876, p. 156. Township of Ditton, 30 June 1876. http://books.google.com. Accessed 6/3/2009

[7] U.S. Census, 1880, Burrillville RI, T9, roll 1214, p. 60. Also - U.S. Census, 1880, Worcester MA, T9, roll 0566, p. 421B. Accessed via www.familysearch.org

[8] Burials of the Potvin Funeral Home, 1893-1995, 2 vols. West Warwick RI, AFGS, p. 1024. [Trudeau, Philomene]

[9] Drouin, Gabriel, ed. "Repertoire alphabetique des mariages des Canadiens francais, 1760 a 1935 : ordre masculin et feminine":
**Robido, Calixte**, married **Salois, Emerance**, 30 Jan. 1855 at St-Francois du Lac.
**Robido, Joseph**, married **Piche, Marie**, 29 Jan. 1856 at St-Aime sur Richelieu [now Masseuville].
**Robido, Jean-Bapiste**, married **Beaudry, Marguerite**, 5 June 1860 at St-Aime sur Richelieu [now Masseuville].
*I also confirmed the above marriages (as well as the 1 Feb 1839 baptism at St-Aime of **Marie Philomene Robidoux**, as sister of the above) in the database "Quebec Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection 1621-1967)" via www.ancestry.com. For those without immediate access to Drouin, WorldConnect, http://wc/rootsweb.ancestry.com and www.familysearch.org may include submissions of such vitals, but use with caution.*

[10] Jette, Rene. "Dictionnaire genealogique des familles du Quebec des origines a 1730," p. 996.

[11] PRDH (Programme de recherché en demographie historique), 1621-1799. CD-ROM (Quebec: Gaetan Morin, 2002). Certificate Nos. 123835; 106022 & 106894.

[12] Rootsweb: QUEBEC-RESEARCH-L mailing list (archives). Date: 15 Feb 2009. From: owentagart. Subject: "Ste. Marie of Galice in Burgos."

[13] "Rabidou: a breed apart," by Clyde M. Rabideau. Plattsburgh NY: The Author, 2000. pp. 1-2, 30, 63.

# Maids & Matrons of New France

Mary Sifton Pepper

Part IV

(Continued from CML vol. 13, no. 4)

*Editors Note: While browsing through a favorite used bookstore in southeastern Connecticut, a title caught my eye. I reached for the tome and began to read. My husband found me in that same spot some immeasurable length of time later. The book in hand was titled, "Maids & Matrons of New France." I knew that day I had to share my discovery with our FCGSC family. This is the fourth in a series of articles that will serve to republish "Maids & Matrons of New France." The book was written by Mary Sifton Pepper and was published in 1901 by Little, Brown, and Company, Boston. Some language may be considered culturally insensitive, as it was written in the sentiment of that time in history. Its copyright is expired.*

## Maids & Matrons of New France

### SECOND PERIOD

### *PIONEER WOMEN OF QUEBEC*

### V

### Some Dainty Nurses of Long Ago

I have spoken of other women who came to New France in the ship that brought Madame de la Peltrie and Marie Guyard. These were three hospital nurses sent by a wealthy lady of France, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon, niece and heiress of Cardinal Richelieu.

Left a widow when very young, and satiated with the frivolous life of the Court, for she, too, was lady-in-waiting to Queen Marie de Medicis, she resolved to devote herself to works of benevolence. The letters of Le Jeune had fallen into her hands also, for they had found their way into the boudoirs of princesses, and were passed from hand to hand at Court until they were fairly worn out with using. After perusing that one of 1635 with absorbing interest, she resolved to establish a hospital in New France which should be open alike to Indians and French, rich and poor, young and old. This was the now well-known Hotel Dieu of Quebec, the first hospital in Canada. It was founded by this generous lady in 1639 and was maintained at her expense for thirty-five years.

The vicissitudes, changes, trials, and progress of this institution are in many respects similar to those of the seminary, and it is therefore needless to give a detailed account of them here.

Hardly had it been inaugurated in an old storeroom of the Fur Company, when an epidemic which caused great havoc in the colony broke out among the Indians of the surrounding country and struck down hundreds in its fearful ravages. Here was the opportunity for the imported nurses to gather in the sick and dying and show the superiority of the scientific treatment of disease over the simple herb medicines of the Indians; but instead

of establishing this fact, the experiment proved a disastrous failure. Nearly all the patients died, and the hospital came to be looked upon with horror by the red men, who gave it the name of the "House of Death." The air of the narrow rooms into which the sick were crowded like cattle was so impregnated with foulness, the medicines were so little adapted to the needs of these children of the air and forests, the resources so limited, that the wonder is the nurses did not give up the attempt in despair and return to France by the first ship. But their courage was dauntless, and they persevered until a time when better success awaited them.

Not long after their arrival they saw the necessity of changing their white habits for a color more obscure, as in the rough labor they were obliged to perform in their daily association with the savages, the gowns soon became soiled and unseemly. It was a matter of such importance that they decided to seek the advice of their friends, the Jesuit friars. It is curious to observe the brotherly, not to say motherly interest those missionaries took in the welfare of their countrywomen, whose unprotected condition in the midst of barbarians appealed to their innate chivalry. However, it may be said in passing that there is no record of anything on the part of the Indian men towards these French gentlewomen except the most chivalrous acts of kindness; after they had ceased wondering why they had not brought their "men" with them over the sea, they gave them the name of the "holy sisters" and accepted their ministrations with gratitude and reverence.

The missionaries and nuns lived on friendly terms with one another, the latter looking up to the former as their confessors and spiritual advisors, yet no infrequently indulging in a little raillery at their expense. Sometimes they would refer demurely to the elegance of the missionaries' gowns, patched with pieces of leather, scraps of old blankets, etc., and at other times listen with pretended horror to the subterfuges they described as necessary in the conversion of the savages, such as dosing them with sweetened water in lieu of medicine, and occasionally dropping it on the brow of a dying child to baptize it, or surreptitiously making the sign of the cross over it while pretending to feel its pulse.

Upon being consulted by the nurses as to the advisability of changing the color of their habits, the friars gave it their unanimous opinion that another color, gray or black, should be adopted, as they had observed that the white habit, however clean and attractive in the morning, inevitably became soiled before the day was ended; nor was it well for the women to spend much time at the washtub.

The nurses rebelled a little against this advice, and did not follow it immediately; for there was no material for new garments, and it was long before the ships from France would bring them the yearly supplies. Again the solicitude of the friars urged them on, suggesting a dye of walnut bark which would make the cloth the required color, and could be procured in the neighboring forest. The solution was made, the women sorrowfully plunged their garments into it, and they came out the desirable mud color. It was with rueful faces and many a shrug of disgust that they saw themselves clad in these chimney sweeps' clothes, as they

called them. For although these gentle ladies were ready to sacrifice all the other refinements of civilized life to the barbarians, they could not give up their cherished costume without protests. In a few years, when they had removed to more commodious quarters, and when they were able to hire servants to perform the menial duties of the institution, they resumed the white habit.

Occasionally, recruits would be sent over from France to share their labors. These were so filled with enthusiasm over their great vocation that they were not dismayed by the disillusions that met them almost before they set foot upon the soil of the New World, but accepted them heroically and without complaint. But there was one young girl whom homesickness and despair so completely overpowered that she eventually had to be sent back to France. This was Marie Irwin, a French refugee, who belonged to a noble family of Scotland.

Her origin was traced back to no less illustrious a person than Mary, Queen of Scots. Young and inexperienced, she had not formed a just idea of the hard and practical life led by pioneers in a new country. When she found herself shut up in an isolated building (for the first few years of its existence the hospital was at Sillery, several miles from Quebec), with nothing else to look out upon but the black wall of the interminable forest, the majestic river with naked savages stealing silently along its banks, no other recreation than prayers and catechism and the homely and oft repugnant duties of the hospital, no other visits than the rare ones of black-robed priests and hideously painted barbarians, her heart filled with despair. Her companions tried in vain to distract her by lively conversation and long walks; she wanted but one thing, and that was to return to France.

Her wish was gratified, and in the spring of 1643 she again found herself in her native land. But she was not there long before she began to sigh for the life she had just abandoned. Once more she crossed the sea to Quebec and took up her work in the hospital, where she became one of the most efficient workers. She died in the land of her exile at an advanced age.

Catherine Chevalier was an obscure maiden who had followed the nurses to Canada, declaring meekly that she would be content if, after ten years of trial, she should be received in the institution as an assistant. But her excessive zeal deranged her reason. It is related that every time her duties called her into the yard and she met one of the chickens, she looked into the simple creatures eyes and asked if it loved God. Receiving no reply, the frightened fowl would be chased round and round by the frantic girl, bent on killing it, for she declared that any living creature that did not love God deserved to die. Her reason was finally restored, and she also became a useful worker in the hospital.

There was in these early days a wealthy lady of Quebec, also associated with the founding of Montreal, of whom the colony preserves a grateful memory. This was Madame d'Ailleboust, who came over to New France in 1643 with her husband, who became its third governor. She was one of the patronesses and most earnest workers of the hospital. It is said she shed such gentle tears of humility and repentance that they did not even redden her eyes.

She became blind, but some miracle soon restored her vision. Such were her aspirations to martyrdom that for months she allowed herself to be tormented by a fractious maid to cultivate a befitting humility and patience. She often had visions in which the body became transparent, and she could see the hearts of sainted persons whom she knew. When she died she willed to the hospital all her property, which made it independent for some time to come, for her possessions were great both in New France and in Old.

In 1665, twenty-six years after the foundation of he hospital, the nurses were called upon to minister to many of the soldiers of the Carignan regiment, whose arrival in Quebec was to inaugurate an era of prosperity and comparative safety for the colonists. These men brought with them an infectious disease, and the hospital was obliged to receive over a hundred of them in one day. The nurses not only devoted themselves to the care of their patients' bodies, but also looked sedulously after the welfare of their souls. The Huguenots, who were quite numerous among these soldiers, have them especial concern. To see them die without abjuring their faith was one of the greatest trials these women were called upon to endure. But there is one related case in which they were spared this trial, for the erring Huguenot, through a shrewd device of one of the nurses, was led to accept the faith of the country.

If the Tourist of to-day who visits the Hotel-Dieu at Quebec be granted the rare privilege of seeing the relics of the martyrs, Breboeuf and Lalemont, who were burned at the stake by the Iroquois, he may perchance recall this miracle of long ago. Unknown to the soldier, who had declared he would die before he would give up his religion, the nurse mixed a pulverized bit of one of Breboeuf's bones in the medicine, with the gentle admonition to drink it to the dregs. Hardly had the refractory patient swallowed the potion than a miracle ensued. He became as gentle as a lamb, and asked to be instructed in the new faith, soon afterwards publicly abjured his own, and not only, says the historian, gained the health of his soul, but recovered that of his body.

Many instances of the civilizing influences of the hospital nurses among the savages of the surrounding county might be related, but I have already dwelt long enough on these pioneer philanthropists of Quebec. Before leaving the historic Hotel-Dieu, let us view yonder portrait of the Duchess d'Aiguillon, its foundress. There sits, with her hand resting upon a table, the figure of a beautiful woman. It is clad in a tight fitting, low-necked bodice and scant skirt of a rich and beautifully tinted texture. From a graceful head-dress looks out upon us benignantly a noble, intelligent face, full of purpose and determination. Near by, on the same wall, is the portrait of her uncle, Cardinal Richelieu. There are many other time stained canvases in this and other rooms of the hospital, but we can tarry no longer to examine them, for the sails are spread and the gentle breeze lures us onward to the great city of Jacques Cartier's dreams. Here there is another group of women equally as worthy our attention and interest as those of Quebec.

# Maids & Matrons of New France

## THIRD PERIOD

## *MAIDS OF MONTREAL*

## I

## The Founding of Montreal

The traveler who visits Montreal for the first time, and who has read the absorbing story of its founding, feels that he is treading on consecrated ground. From the summit of the sloping mountain, a mount royal indeed, he looks down upon the great metropolis with its stone towers pointing skyward, its sumptuous public buildings, its innumerable commemorative monuments, its busy streets and stately churches. As he comes down the eastern slope of the mountain, he will see a spacious pile of stone buildings surmounted by a great dome. This is the historic Hotel- Dieu. Let him pass through the gateway, up the broad flight of steps, and into the long corridor.

Facing him as he enters the door is a portrait of the foundress, Jeanne Mance. The face is long and delicate, with fine and regular features, clear, large dark eyes, long straight nose, curly hair escaping from the closely fitting cap, and a dimpled chin. A short, scant cape is pinned around the shoulders, and the face, looking downward, has a pensive expression that reminds the spectator of the famous Cenci portrait in the Barberini Palace at Rome.

The story of this pioneer woman's life, with that of others who will be mentioned, is the story of the founding of Montreal. Let us follow their fortunes for awhile, accepting their divine inspirations unquestioningly, as they did, that we may give them our sympathy in their struggles to establish a Christian commonwealth in the midst of a savage infected forest.

A Sulpician priest of Paris, Monsieur Olier, and a prosperous tax-gatherer of Anjou, Jerome le Royer de la Dauversiere, were the first to conceive the idea of founding the great city now known as Montreal. These two individuals, living in different parts of the country, were separately inspired, at about the same time, to establish a religious colony in New France. They met one day at Meudon, near Paris, as if by a miracle, ecstatically embraced like old friends, called each other by name and took a walk in the forest near by to communicate the details of their visions and to suggest plans for their fulfillment.

The natural advantages of the place chosen for the settlement, as shown by one of Champlain's old charts, were dwelt upon largely. It was situated at the junction of two great rivers, the Ottawa and the St. Lawrence, down both of which the Indians to be converted through their ministrations brought furs to the trading posts. This place was also the most frontier post in all Canada, and the one most exposed to attacks from the hostile Iroquois. But this feature was passed over lightly by the two enthusiasts, for their visions did not include a handful of defenceless settlers suffering unspeakable tortures at the hands of their savage captors; of almost daily penitential processions to the top of the mountain to ask for succor; of vows and offerings and castigations to invite the favor of Heaven; of their shrieking countrywomen suffering nameless horrors from the hideous redskins, or being reduced to the

last extremities through cold, hunger, and exposure; of the jealousy and strife of those high in office. But had their prophetic visions made known to them these direful trials, which had to be endured by the Montreal colony in the first thirty years of its existence, it would, I think, have made little difference in the founders' plans; for there was a comfortable phrase bandied about in those days to the effect that the blood of martyrs is the seed of the church. The two devotees, sauntering through the woods that afternoon, dwelt long and pleasantly on their mutual inspirations, and concluded the interview by regretting that they, too, could not take part in this pious pilgrimage, but, like Moses, must view the promised land from afar.

A company was soon formed in France, composed of forty-five devout men and women, to be the patrons of the colony, which was to be consecrated to the Holy Family and to be called Ville Marie de Montreal. To act as its governor and as the representative of the association, a Christian knight and soldier was selected, Paul de Chomedy, the Sieur de Maisonneuve, who, in the same miraculous manner in which all concerned in this enterprise appear, steps forth "with a sword in one hand and a Psalter in the other" and makes known his willingness to assume the position of chief of the colony.

In the spring of 1641 Maisonneuve and a small group of strong and courageous men gathered at Rochelle to sail for New France. But on the very eve of their departure they perceived that they needed an important addition to the company,—a need which all their money could not supply. This was a prudent and intelligent woman, of a courage equal to all emergencies and a strong will, who would follow them into the country to take care of their goods and of their various furnitures, and at the same time would serve as nurse to the sick and wounded. Already, unknown to them, this necessity had been provided for.

At this time Jeanne Mance, daughter of an honorable merchant of Nogent-le-Roi, was thirty-five years old. Her father, whose closing years she had attended with a filial solicitude, had been dead a year, and she was now casting about to see by what means she could put into execution her determination, taken long since, to cross over to New France and to engage in the good work of a pioneer, whatever form it might assume. She had not heard of the new colony of Montreal, but one of Le Jeune's letters had found its way into her hands, and she, like other devout ladies of France, was fired with ambition to minister in some way to these New World barbarians. It would take too long to describe in detail the events which led up to her final success in carrying out her determination. The most efficient instrument in the undertaking was a rich and pious widow, Madame Bullion, who, on condition that her name be kept secret, gave liberally for the foundation of a hospital, of which Mademoiselle Mance was to be directress.

After a tedious voyage across the Atlantic the new company arrived at Quebec in August, 1641. The lateness of the season caused them to abandon the hope of reaching Montreal that year, and they were obliged to spend the winter at Quebec. They proved to be both unexpected and unwelcome guests to the Quebec colony. The coldness of this Canadian winter hardly equaled that which gradually sprang up between the two rival governors, Montmagny of Quebec and Maisonneuve of the new colony. The older colony acted with

jealousy and envy towards this new, well- fitted-out and moneyed company. One of the Quebec missionaries wrote in his journal of 1641 that the Montreal associates would not get to their destination that year, adding piously, "and God grant that the Iroquois do not prevent their getting there next" Maisonneuve was constantly besought by the chief men of Quebec to abandon the expedition, the difficulties of it being depicted in gruesome colors, and to remain at Quebec, or form a new settlement on the Island of Orleans near by. At last the exasperated Maisonneuve exclaimed, "Gentlemen, I have not come here to parley, but to act. It is my duty and my honor to form a colony at Montreal, and I would go if every tree were an Iroquois! "

And go he did. On the 8th of May, 1642, he and his companions, with the unexpected addition of Madame de la Peltrie, with her servant and her furniture, started with a flat-bottomed sail-boat and two row- boats up the beautiful St. Lawrence River. There was a background of green trees, spring flowers were blooming, and brilliant song-birds were filling the air with melody. Ten days later they sprang ashore, and joined their songs with those of the happy birds. Darkness came on, an altar was erected, festoons of glittering fireflies were hung upon it by the graceful Madame de la Peltrie and her companions, and the priest raised his hand in blessing. "You are a grain of mustard seed," said he, "that shall rise and grow until its branches overshadow the earth. You are few, but your work is the work of God. His smile is on you, and your children shall fill the land." Such was the auspicious beginning of Montreal.

The life of the new-born colony went on peacefully for a period, the first serious misfortune that threatened it being the overflow of the St. Lawrence in the following December. The people were powerless to protect the settlement from the threatened flood, and in their despair resorted to prayer. The governor, taking a cross in his hand, advanced towards the approaching waters and in a solemn voice made a vow to place a cross on the summit of the mountain if the flood would spare the town. But on came the surging, tumultuous waters, on to the very edge of the powder magazine, then paused as if stayed by the power of that upraised cross, turned and sullenly receded. The town was saved, and in pursuance of his vow Maisonneuve at once proceeded to plant the cross on the top of the mountain. A path was cleared, and with suitable ceremonies a procession started to make the ascent up the gentle slope, Maisonneuve carrying the heavy cross on his shoulders. At last the top was gained, a religious ceremony was performed in which Jeanne Mance and the few other women of the colony devoutly took part, and the great cross was planted, the first ever placed on Mount Royal.

As month followed month and idyllic peace prevailed in the little settlement, Mademoiselle Mance saw no patients and no prospect of any. Accordingly, she wrote to her benefactress for permission to give the money intended for the endowment of the hospital to some needy Huron missions. Her request was met with a peremptory refusal. The word came back that the money must be used for a hospital and nothing else.

One day, through the treachery of some Huron fugitives, a band of wandering Iroquois was led to the Montreal settlement. They slipped stealthily up to the very gates of the

fortifications, and seized six unsuspecting French settlers, who were hewing wood near the fort. Three of the men were killed outright, the others led away in triumph. One of the number afterwards escaped to the fort and related to the horrified inmates the harrowing story of the tortures and sufferings of his companions.

Soon after this an industrious young colonist, Monsieur Mercier, and his wife, Catherine, were working in their field near the fort when they were suddenly surrounded by six or eight Iroquois, who massacred the husband in a horrible manner and added his scalp to those of some Hurons they had recently dispatched. Catherine's cries of distress brought three armed Frenchmen to her rescue, but, as the latter were about to carry her to safety, they suddenly found themselves attacked by forty more Iroquois who had been hiding in the forest. Seeing the impossibility of rescuing the woman, they rushed back through the gates of the fort and closed them just in time to prevent its being invested by the savages. Mademoiselle Mance, a horrified spectator of this scene, joined her shrieks to those of her unfortunate countrywoman, for she realized that nothing could be done to save her from the fate that awaited her. She was, in fact, burned to death by these barbarians after they had tortured her in various ways. The colonists could hear her appeals for help and the pitiful prayers uttered by her in the midst of her sufferings. Helpless as they were, they could only weep with her and wish her a speedy relief.

From this day Montreal was never without apprehensions from the Iroquois, a danger which was met with increased piety. Each house was placed under the protection of some saint, and the head of the family, with all the members of his household around him, at a certain hour every morning recited a fervent prayer for protection against the enemy. Many, too, were the individual petitions sent up to heaven by the terrified people. Each new arrival at the settlement seemed to outdo the others in pious practices, and if prayers alone would avail, the future of Montreal was safe. But many years of desolation and suffering still confronted it.

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# Maids & Matrons of New France

## THIRD PERIOD

### *MAIDS OF MONTREAL*

### II

### The Work of Jeanne Mange and Marguerite Bourgeois

With the Iroquois swarming to this point from all directions, Jeanne Mance did not dare to delay longer the building of the hospital. It was completed and ready for occupancy within the year 1644. Its object, as stated by the "unknown" benefactress herself, who by this time had succeeded in becoming very well known, was " to nourish, treat, and cure the poor sick people of the country and to have them instructed in the things necessary to their salvation."

These imposing buildings made a deep impression upon the friendly savages of the neighborhood. It was more than ever evident to them that their only safety from their hereditary foes, the Iroquois, lay in obtaining the good-will of these powerful palefaces, and thus find shelter with them in time of danger; although the pious writers of the day attribute this sudden attachment to their desire to be baptized and embrace the faith.

The conversion of one haughty chief particularly is recorded with much enthusiasm. Tessouat, or Le Borgne, as he was called by the French, came walking over the ice of the St. Lawrence one winter day and asked Maisonneuve to receive him at Montreal and to have him baptized, threatening that if they hesitated about granting this request, he would have the Black Robes of the Huron Mission baptize him. He was turned over to the good graces of Mademoiselle Mance, who could now speak the Huron tongue fluently, and she immediately proceeded to instruct him in the doctrines of the Christian faith. When he was sufficiently familiar with the new creed, he was baptized, and soon became a model of piety to the others, spending whole nights preaching to his fellow-warriors the benefits of the Christian religion. He was married the day after his baptism, and was given a gun, some land, and two men to help him cultivate it. "Thus," says Jeanne Mance's biographer, in speaking of her share in this great event, "was the part of Clotilda, Ildegonda, and Radegonda in the conversion of her own native France recalled to the heart of the devoted young woman."

In the year 1643 an important addition to the colony was Monsieur Louis d'Ailleboust, afterwards Governor of New France, accompanied by his wife, who has been already referred to among the women of Quebec, and by his sister-in-law, Mademoiselle Philippine de Boullongne, both of whom proved of invaluable assistance to Jeanne Mance in her work. They brought encouraging news from the Montreal associates in France, but also were entrusted with the peremptory command from the "unknown benefactress " to let nothing interfere with the work of the hospital.

Mademoiselle Philippine quickly worked her way into the hearts, not only of the French, but also of the friendly Indians. She soon learned to speak their language, and so

completely won their confidence that she was once asked by an Indian maiden and her lover, to her embarrassment and confusion, to take the place of the absent priest and marry them in the presence of the whole settlement. Another time she was told by a burly chief that, much as he loved his tobacco and his squaw, he would willingly give them both up if she would consent to baptize him.

The Iroquois, since their discovery of the little colony, kept closing it in an ever narrowing circle. They had been supplied with firearms by the Dutch of New York and were eager to try them on the hated palefaces. The colonists had all been obliged to take refuge in the fort, whence they were afraid to venture out except in squads, well armed and protected by the faithful dogs brought over from France for this purpose. There was one in particular, named Pilot, which, with her little brood, saved Montreal from many unexpected attacks and massacres. She could scent the Iroquois a long distance, and taught her family to accompany her into the forest to search for redskins, biting them fiercely if they hesitated; or if a timid puppy, frightened at the moving shadows of the great forest, would sneak back to the fort, it would receive the same punishment on Pilot's return.

One March day in 1644, Pilot and the puppies came rushing into the fort, all barking furiously, telling the colonists as plainly as they could that the enemy was nigh. The soldiers, crowding about Maisonneuve, whom they had chided for being too slow in attacking the enemy, asked him if they were never to have a chance to fight. He replied that he would lead them in an attack, and they could thus show if they were as brave as they would fain appear. Maisonneuve and thirty of his soldiers sallied forth, and proceeded some distance from the fort, preceded by the dogs; but they had followed these guides too closely, for instead of surprising the enemy, it was the enemy who surprised them.

Suddenly finding themselves surrounded by about eighty yelling savages, they began to retreat, although holding back the Indians by a continuous shower of bullets. Soon their ammunition was exhausted, and they turned about suddenly and fled precipitately to the fort, leaving Maisonneuve alone to face the enemy. With a pistol in each hand he kept the savages back, all the time retreating toward the fort. Finally, as the Indian chief rushed forward to grasp him, for they wished to take him alive, Maisonneuve raised his pistol and shot him through the heart. Dismayed by this calamity, the loyal barbarians turned from the panting Maisonneuve and rushed to carry away the body of their chief. Maisonneuve ran back to the fort in safety, and his brave defence was ever afterwards celebrated in the annals of Montreal. There is now in the Place d'Armes, the supposed spot where it took place, a statue of Maisonneuve surrounded by those of other heroic pioneers of Montreal, including Jeanne Mance.

It was seen from this incident, and others of the same character that followed, how much danger was incurred by the helpless settlement. Mademoiselle Mance devised a new expedient. Almost frightened at her own temerity, she went to Maisonneuve and suggested that he go over to France and raise a company of soldiers to protect Montreal, offering him

twenty thousand francs which had been given her by Madame Bullion to carry out this plan. "The hospital above all" was the watchword of this pious lady, but without a colony there could be no occasion for a hospital, and if the Iroquois incursions were not soon checked there would be no colony. In lieu of the money she asked and was given a large tract of land which, with soldiers and settlers brought over to cultivate and protect it, she reasoned would produce a better income than the money at interest. Thus fortified, Maisonneuve departed for France and was absent from Montreal for nearly two years.

In the mean time there was another fierce attack of the Iroquois, in which the settlers made a brave defence inspired by a valiant French soldier, Major Closse. Yet every victory left them weaker and less able to resist. Mademoiselle Mance's hospital was found to be quite inadequate for all the wounded and dying that were brought into it. She had recourse again to her benefactress, who promptly sent her more funds; also complete furniture for the hospital and chapel, including carpets, mattresses, kitchen utensils, and above all, two oxen, three cows, and twenty sheep; so that they could henceforth have milk and wool, of which they had heretofore been sadly in need for their patients. All the domestic animals, except the horse, had now been introduced into New France. The horse was not brought over until 1663, and when the savages saw it for the first time they expressed great admiration for the "Frenchman's moose."

Jeanne Mance's life soon became identified with the vital interests of the colony, and all that one woman could do to draw order out of confusion, health out of sickness, happiness and tranquility out of despair, and civilization out of barbarism, she did. No discouragement daunted her. Frequent returns were made to the mother-country to bring new recruits and to raise funds wherewith to keep the colony from ruin. Madame Bullion continued her benefactions, finally making a gift of twenty thousand francs, the interest of which was to form the income of the hospital. This Mademoiselle Mance placed in the hands of Jerome de la Dauversiere, who promised to invest it profitably and thus materially to increase their capital.

Let us go back a few years in imagination and visit the little village of Troyes in the province of Champagne. The Dominicans are celebrating the feast of the Holy Rosary, and Marguerite Bourgeois, a young woman of twenty, is walking in the procession with many of her friends and kinspeople. As the procession passes the church of Notre Dame, she glances at the statue of the Virgin, which stands on a pedestal within the church. Behold! it is shining brightly, and the face seems almost lifelike in its beauty. Her friends also glanced at the statue, but they saw nothing supernatural about it. If it looked brighter and fairer to them than on other days, they attributed the fact to the glowing October sun and the brilliant autumn tints that made all things resplendent with color and light.

But Marguerite was joining in a holy church ceremony, and her mind was attuned to mystic things. When she saw the Virgin beaming brightly in the glowing sunlight, she immediately considered it a call to devote herself to a life of good deeds. This field was soon

opened up to her in the Canadian wilds, for, as we have seen, the conversion and education of the savages of New France was now agitating the European pulse. To baptize Indian babies, be tortured by big Indian braves, and then ascend to heaven in a halo of blazing torches and painted savages was to woo saintship indeed. This fever came to Marguerite, as it did to other women already mentioned in these pages, and when the opportunity presented itself it was seized with avidity.

Monsieur Maisonneuve, while recruiting his company of soldiers in France, happened to pay a visit to his two sisters at Troyes. Here he was informed of Marguerite's desire to go to Canada. He gave her a letter to one of his friends at Nantes, a rich merchant whom he called Monsieur Coq, who was to furnish her transportation to Canada , and give her instructions. Disposing of her inheritance in favor of her brothers and sisters, she started for Nantes. Every step of her journey was beset with trials. She traveled alone with no luggage but her little bundle of linen, and, being thus friendless and poor, was treated as an adventuress by her traveling companions. At the inn at Orleans she was even refused shelter for the night and was obliged to accept the doubtful kindness of the coachman when he offered her his room. And it proved doubtful indeed, for she was obliged to barricade the door to prevent intrusion from him and his dissolute companions. In the morning early she stole away to resume her journey. She secured passage on a boat on the Loire which made a stop of a few days at Saumur, where she was again humiliated by being refused hospitality at a hostelry. But a kindly Samaritan took her in and kept her until the boat was ready to proceed on its journey.

Arrived at Nantes, she sought the merchant to whom Maisonneuve had recommended her. But her search was in vain, for no one had ever heard of such a person, as he was really known by the name of Monsieur de Bassoniers. Marguerite, weary and discouraged, with her little bundle of linen under her arm, traveled all day about the streets of the strange city, inquiring for "Monsieur Coq, Monsieur Coq." At last, despairing and almost exhausted, she approached a big burly man and timidly asked him if he knew where such a gentleman lived. "Monsieur Coq—why, I am Monsieur Coq! And if I mistake not, you are the lady Monsieur Maisonneuve wrote me about a few days ago," and he cheerfully gave her his address and sent her to his house.

But if Monsieur Coq knew who she was, Madame Coq did not, and the latter was extremely indignant at her husband for sending her this strange young woman to entertain. "I will positively receive no such people into my house," she said, "you must depart forthwith!" And exhausted and almost fainting as she was, Marguerite turned and walked away. After wandering around awhile longer, she determined to appeal to Madame Coq again. And as that lady was standing on the steps refusing her entrance and lecturing her on the impropriety of traveling about alone as she did, the lady's husband appeared. Explanations followed, and Marguerite was afterwards hospitably entertained during the three weeks she remained in Nantes until the departure of Monsieur Maisonneuve, whom she was to accompany to Canada. Their ship sailed in July and reached Quebec, September 22, 1653.

When she whom Parkman has eulogized as the "fair ideal of Christian womanhood, a flower of earth expanding in the rays of heaven," arrived in Canada, Montreal contained but about fifty houses. Maisonneuve had been absent two years; and when he returned with his hundred picked soldiers, the colonists were in a state of despair, fearing they would not be able to hold out a day longer against the ever-increasing forces of the enemy. In addition to his company of soldiers, Maisonneuve brought another gift of money from the benefactress, which was utilized in fortifying the town. It was afterwards acknowledged by those versed in the affairs of Canada, that this money, given at such a critical time, saved Montreal, and, in truth, all of New France, from certain ruin.

When Marguerite began her work, there were only two children to benefit by her instruction, for all the others who had been born in the colony in the first ten years of its existence had succumbed to the rigors of the climate. However, fourteen marriages took place soon after her arrival, and there was soon a mission for her as a teacher of children. A close bond of friendship united her and the other "mother of Montreal," and these two women thereafter shared together the toils and privations of their pioneer life.

After Marguerite had been in Montreal four years, the number of her pupils increased so greatly that it was a loss of time to go about from house to house to teach them, and she conceived the idea of building a church and having her pupils gather there, that she might teach them all together. Was ever ambition more vaulting? Here was a woman without other possessions than the clothes she wore, inspired with the desire to build a church! She went to Maisonneuve and modestly stated her wishes. He generously gave her a tract of land, the only commodity that was not scarce in the New World. After many tedious and vexatious delays, the most serious of which came from an officious bishop, who had come to Montreal to build a school for boys and had never heard of the little woman who was teaching the girls, Marguerite at last succeeded in her undertaking. This edifice, called "Notre Dame de Bonsecours," was the first stone church erected in Montreal. It was destroyed by fire in 1754, but upon the same spot was erected another which is now visited by tourists as one of the landmarks of the old city. It is a worthy monument to the inspired labors of one of Canada's pioneer women.

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# Maids & Matrons of New France

## THIRD PERIOD

## *MAIDS OF MONTREAL*

## III

### Judith De Bresoles and Her Companions

While Jeanne Mance and Marguerite Bourgeois were carrying on their labors in Montreal, other young women were being educated at a school at La Fleche, in France, under the supervision of Monsieur Dauversiere, to lend them a helping hand. Early in 1659 the two "mothers of Montreal" revisited France, each for the purpose of seeking recruits for her particular work. Three of the young women at Dauversiere's school had already been selected to accompany Jeanne Mance back to Canada. They were Catherine Mace, daughter of a rich merchant, Mademoiselle Maillet, and Judith de Bresoles, who had been in this school for seven years, studying chemistry and medicine. Marguerite Bourgeois too succeeded in getting three young teachers for her school in Montreal. Besides these, there was a small company of young women, the "king's girls," for whom Marguerite was to find husbands in New France.

The departure of the three girls from the school at La Fleche did not take place without serious difficulty. A widespread prejudice had arisen against the erratic Dauversiere, who, with a family of sons and daughters at home, had taken it into his head to establish this school for young women. It was reported that he had stolen girls from the surrounding country and had either immured them in this institution for some mysterious purpose, or had sent them over to Canada to be sold as slaves. When it was learned that three of them were really about to depart for that distant country, the villagers were aroused, and many of them sat up all night and watched the building to see that none of its inmates issued from the gates. The next morning a company of soldiers protected the departure of Dauversiere and his protégées and with their gleaming swords awed into acquiescence the belligerent rustics, who, in truth, were greatly intimidated by this show of authority and attempted no further resistance.

Judith de Bresoles was the leading spirit of this little company of recruits. She belonged to a noble family of Blois, who surrounded her with all the advantages that wealth and position can secure. It is said that while her sister was diverting herself with the joys of childhood, playing with dolls and building block houses, little Judith was going about from house to house consoling and nursing the poor and teaching their children. When only fifteen years old she was capable of composing the most wonderful remedies, of mixing medicines and dressing wounds; the lancet of the surgeon had no terrors for her, and she could assist in the bleeding of a patient or the cutting off of a limb with equal fortitude. About this time she announced to her parents her intention of devoting her life to nursing the sick. When the philanthropic propensities of the delicately nurtured young girl began to assume this dangerous form, she was peremptorily commanded to renounce all these pursuits and to give her attention to the pastimes of her age and sex. Her prayers availed not to move her obdurate parents, and finally, with the aid of an old servant, she ran away from home and entered Dauversiere's school. Her brother-in-law was one

day visiting a hospital when he suddenly came upon the missing girl, who had heretofore eluded the search of her anxious relatives. She was entreated by them to return home, but turned a deaf ear to all their supplications. Seeing that further resistance on their part would prove futile, they finally gave their reluctant consent to her plan of going to Montreal.

Finally, the party for Canada completed, they all met at Rochelle to take ship. There was Marguerite Bourgeois, her three young women teachers, and her group of "king's girls," Jeanne Mance and the trio of girls from La Fleche, two Sulpician priests, and one hundred and ten colonists who were to settle at Montreal, besides two girls who were accompanying Mademoiselle Mance as servants in the hospital. But just as they were about to embark, the captain of the ship intervened and refused them passage. An ecclesiastic of Quebec, jealous of the growing importance of Montreal, had whispered into the captain's ear that this ambitious band of young women could not pay their passage across the sea. It was true that, after several months' delay in the mother country, their expenses had made serious havoc with their funds, and they now found themselves in a state of destitution that would have daunted less courageous souls. Jeanne Mance finally induced the shipmaster to take her and her companions on trust, giving as security the note of an honest merchant of Rochelle. Marguerite Bourgeois and her young women were equally as fortunate, for at the last moment a large sum of money was found sewed into the bodice of one of them, Mademoiselle Raisin, whose father had had the money placed there in lieu of the income the young girl was renouncing in leaving her native land. This magnanimous parent also generously offered to guarantee the fare of the other demoiselles. Saint Peter, too, was instrumental in the happy outcome of this affair, for it was on his day that the captain finally yielded to their entreaties.

On the 2d of July, 1659, the day of their departure, Dauversiere appeared among them for the last time, for he was then suffering from a mortal disease, and proceeded to give them his final instructions and blessings. Mademoiselle Maillet, who acted as treasurer of Jeanne Mance's company, took this opportunity to ask him where she should apply for the interest of the twenty thousand francs, the "unknown's" latest gift, which had been placed in his hands for investment. A cloud passed over the brow of the pious gentleman, but he immediately regained his composure, and replied "with an assurance that could only come from heaven," "God will provide it, my child," and continued his conversation on the goodness of Divine Providence, assuring them that the Lord would watch over and protect them. A few months later he died of the gout, the second of the three founders of Montreal to pass away, the only one now living being Maisonneuve, the governor. The journey across the Atlantic proved to be the most terrible ordeal that any of these pioneer women had ever had to pass through. The old ship, although designated enthusiastically by one of the Sulpicians "the cradle of the Holy Family," proved rather to be the cradle of all human misery. It had been a floating hospital, and was, therefore, a veritable home of infectious diseases. Mademoiselle Mance became very ill, and it was feared she would not live to see her exile home again. In addition to the ravages of the disease, she suffered intense agony from a crippled arm. She had broken it by a fall on the ice of the St. Lawrence, and as it had been wrongly set by the clumsy surgeon of Montreal, in this last visit to

France she had had it treated by the best surgeons of Paris. No benefit resulted from this treatment; and in despair, while one day visiting the tomb of Monsieur Olier, one of the defunct founders of Montreal, she beheld a seraphic vision of this gentleman, and as instantaneously came the inspiration to ask this vision to restore to her the use of her paralyzed arm. She was given the box that contained Olier's heart, and placing it upon the withered arm, she immediately felt a warm glow thrill through it to the very finger-tips. Her hand regained its strength, and she found herself able to lift the heavy box with it. However, this arm, thus miraculously healed, is said to have caused her great suffering to the day of her death, and on this voyage added agonies to her other trials. She was so wasted away when the ship arrived at Quebec that she was obliged to remain there several weeks before she was able to proceed to Montreal.

Soon after her arrival there with the news of Dauversiere's death came that of the loss of the twenty thousand francs' endowment for the hospital, for he had used it to pay his debts. There was now no fund with which to keep up the expenses of the institution, and Mademoiselle Mance and her associates were recalled to France. This blow came upon her with stunning force, for she saw in it an ignominious end to all her ambitious dreams. But her indomitable spirit was not thus to be overcome; in her extremity she appealed to the colonists for aid. Realizing what the return of these heroic women would mean to them in their struggles to gain a foothold in this savage land, they agreed unanimously to bear the expense of their maintenance until things took a more favorable turn. Their bounty immediately took shape in the form of roasted pumpkins and cakes of Indian meal. "By which means," says a gentle sister historian, thirty years later, "they were at least kept from starving to death."

They were lodged temporarily in an upper room which had to be reached by a ladder, and of which "poverty was the only ornament." During the long northern winter they suffered greatly from the cold, which was so intense that they were obliged to thaw out their bread before eating it, and to sweep out the snow which had accumulated in drifts through the cracks in the walls. Dauntless in their enthusiasm, they went on bravely in their work for the hospital. Judith de Bresoles developed a remarkable talent for making soups out of almost nothing, such as people had never tasted before. Dainty bits to satisfy the most capricious appetites were placed before the wondering patients, who considered their origin nothing less than divine. "This comes from the Infant Jesus, does it not?" asks a half-delirious bushranger, tasting with delight a dainty dish prepared by Judith's deft fingers. "From him indeed," she replies; "let us thank him together."

Catherine Mace and Mademoiselle Maillet found their happiness in performing the menial duties of the hospital, which were occasionally interrupted by supernatural visions. In one of these granted to Mademoiselle Maillet, the two defunct founders, Olier and Dauversiere, appeared and assured her that this work would never perish, that all the tempests that assailed it would never uproot it from the soil in which it was planted like a rock, ending with the cheerful statement that poverty and suffering were necessary to its existence. The governor and other officers of the colony frequently visited them, and would often indulge in gentle raillery on the poverty of their surroundings. They once vied with one another in guessing the original color and material of the nurses' caps and gowns, the wildest guess suggesting silk, but the patches of

cotton and leather which predominated making this conjecture doubtful. Thus the happy French nature of these exiles arose above all their pitiful trials.

After two years of this life of privation the condition of the hospital became more prosperous through various benefactions and endowments in France. But almost simultaneously with this improvement in their fortunes the Iroquois again swooped down upon them, and all peace of mind was for a time at an end. The almost defenceless settlers were thrown into a state of apprehension, for the prowling savages again began to infest the neighborhood and horrible massacres were of frequent occurrence. Mademoiselle Morin, a young woman who came over from France three years after the others, gives a vivid description of this period.

"We were daily confronted by the frightful spectacle of the tortures to which they (the Iroquois) subjected our neighbors and friends who happened to fall into their hands. All this gave us a horror of these barbarians which only those who have been in a like extremity can appreciate. For my part, death would have been preferable to a life involved in such dangers, and plunged into sympathy for the horrible sufferings inflicted upon our poor brothers.

"Every time our people were attacked, the tocsin sounded to summon the people to the rescue, and to warn those who were working in dangerous places to withdraw promptly, which each one did at the tap of the bell. My sister Bresoles and I ascended to the belfry that the man-servant might go out against the enemy. From this elevated place we often saw the conflict, which filled us with such fear that we ran down all trembling, believing our last hour had come. When the tocsin was sounded, my sister Maillet almost fainted from fear, and my sister Mace, all the time the alarm lasted, remained in a state of speechlessness pitiful to see. Both went to the chapel to prepare for death, or withdrew into their rooms. As soon as I learned that the Iroquois had withdrawn, I sent and told them, which seemed to comfort them and give them new life. My sister Bresoles was more courageous; fear, which she could not help but feel, did not prevent her from tending her sick and receiving those who were brought in wounded or dying."

This siege of the Iroquois has already been referred to in the chapter on Mother Marie Guyard of Quebec. The hero Dollard and his sixteen young associates of Montreal freed the country from this scourge for a long time to come. But it was done at the cost of his own life and that of many of the best men of Montreal; among them, the two Sulpician priests who came over with the two mothers of Montreal on their last return from France; also the courageous Major Closse, who had for years defended the colony with great valor. "I only came over to Canada," said the dying man, "to die for God, serving him as a soldier, and would have left here and gone to fight the Turks rather than to be deprived of this glory."

Ten years more passed away, and Jeanne Mance too finished her course on earth. Her last years were full of suffering, but she was surrounded by faithful friends who, by their tender care and sympathy, soothed the passage of this heroic soul into eternity. She died in 1673, two years after Madame de la Peltrie and one after Mother Marie Guyard. Her work was well done. Montreal, now the great commercial centre of Canada, was founded, and the hospital or H6tel-Dieu, the hope and inspiration of her life, was firmly established. Its numbers were augmented from year to year by recruits from France, and, as has been said already, after two centuries and a

half of vicissitudes from fire, war, and famine, it may be seen today, on the same spot, one of the largest and most prominent buildings of Montreal.

The visible results of Marguerite Bourgeois' long life in Canada was the institution of a band of young women who were bound by vows to teach the young, the building of a church, and the establishment of schools for the instruction of Indian and French children. She died January 12, 1700. Her heart, which had beaten with pain at the cry of suffering childhood, with agony at the shriek of the tortured victim of Iroquois cruelty, with shame at the contentions of Christian brotherhoods, and with rapture when even one little child received the anointing drops of baptism,—that heart, encased in its silver covering, now rests in the chapel of a convent where she so long labored and loved.

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## New Members

Shirley Giguere Morin, #2075

| Name | ID | Address | City | State | Zip Code |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Leland, Joseph & Dianne | 2174 | 282 Nicholas Dr | Lancaster | MA | 01523- |
| Dandurand-Smith, Gayl | 2175 | 17 Shasta Terr | Beacon Falls | CT | 06403- |
| Ruszczyk, David | 2176 | 129 Greenleaf Dr | Florence | MA | 01062- |
| Chisholm, Kate | 2177 | 10 Fernwood Drive | Bolton | CT | 06043- |
| Suich, Joseph | 2178 | 22 Falcon Drive | Seymour | CT | 06483- |
| Piscitelli, Christina | 2179 | 5 Turnbridge Drive | Lumberton | NJ | 08048- |
| Smith, Christine | 2180 | 74 Salt Rock Rd | Baltic | CT | 06330- |
| Filon, Linda | 2181 | 17 Cornell Rd | West Hartford | CT | 06107-2906 |
| Lamothe, Jim | 2182 | 106 Haynes Hill Rd | Brimfield | MA | 01010- |
| Brousseau, Virginia | 2183 | 7 Saint Moritz Cir | Willington | CT | 06279- |
| Taschereau, Troy | 2184 | 48 Cobblestone Ct | Newington | CT | 06111- |
| Delarm-Neri, Jeanne | 2185 | 60 Robin Hood Rd | Stamford | CT | 06907- |
| Prior, Kenneth | 2186 | 364 Mountain Rd | Somers | CT | 06071- |
| Ricard, Dena | 2187 | 161 Morris Street | Naugatuck | CT | 06770-3319 |
| Langevin, Roger | 2188 | 1 Robin Woods Lane | South Salem | NY | 10590- |
| McDonald Welles, Suzanne | 2189 | 60 Avalon Ave | Oakville | CT | 06779- |
| Williams, Steven | 2190 | 187 Marshall St | Winsted | CT | 06098- |
| Welch, Pat | 2191 | 19 Tanglewood Dr | Canton | CT | 06019- |
| Dillon, Bill | 2192 | PO BOX 1295 | Middletown | CT | 06457-1295 |
| Thorne, Colette | 2193 | 701 Brookside Ct | Manchester | CT | 06042- |

# Maids & Matrons of New France

## THIRD PERIOD

### *MAIDS OF MONTREAL*

### IV

### Jeanne Le Ber

### The Recluse of Montreal

As the godchild of Jeanne Mance and the pupil and benefactress of Marguerite Bourgeois, it is fitting that the story of this strange girl's life should follow theirs. It was one long spiritual exaltation compared to which the pious zeal of the other women mentioned here seems almost like levity and indifference. While they were engaged in good works whose results have withstood the test of centuries, she was immured in a cell behind an altar making artificial flowers and embroidering church vestments, a few of which have survived the ravages of time and may be seen in a convent at Montreal. Yet she was one of the pioneer women of New France, and her idiosyncrasies have impressed themselves so indelibly on the pages of history that no mention of the women of the early days of Montreal would be complete without her.

Her mother was one of those maids whom Marguerite Bourgeois had brought over from France, and had found a husband for, in Canada. This gentleman, Jacques Le Ber, became one of the richest and most widely known merchants in the Canadian country. His contentions with one of the corrupt governors of Montreal, Monsieur Perrot, are recorded minutely in the legal documents of the times. Le Ber was a straightforward and honest citizen, and the tricks resorted to by the unscrupulous governor to get furs from the Indians aroused his indignation and resulted in open enmity between them. He is described once as leading a party of indignant citizens to demand apologies from the governor, because the latter, having nothing left to trade a burly chief for some valuable skins except his clothes, had given him these with a plentiful supply of firewater, and the drunken savage was seen swaggering around the town all day in the governor's coat, sash, knee breeches, and buckled shoes.

Jeanne was eight years old in 1670, when Marguerite Bourgeois, who had instructed her up to that time, found it necessary to make one of her visits to France. Mother Marie Guyard, though old and feeble, was still the pervading spirit of the now well-established girls' seminary at Quebec, and Madame Le Ber, thinking it inexpedient to await Mademoiselle Bourgeois' uncertain return, sent Jeanne there to be educated. During the seven years that she remained at the seminary, the annals of the place are filled with her childish acts of penance and self-mortification. She was once given a cushion upon which to do her embroidery, elaborately trimmed with ribbons and laces. She waited until the donor, a Quebec lady of rank who was a friend of her parents, had passed out of the door, then, picking up the dainty pillow, she ripped off all the lace and ribbons, and was about to throw them into the fire, when she was arrested by the indignant protest of an attendant. The ornaments were sewed on the cushion again, but the embroidery worked thereon was deluged by such a shower of tears from the offended child that it was finally decided to yield to her objections to this flummery and allow her to dispense with it Owing to her high station in life, she always wore dresses of the finest material that could be

brought from France, but she did so with an ill grace, expressing her preference for the homely and patched gowns of the charity pensioners.

She shrank from appearing in public and taking part in the little plays enacted in the school, "not because," says her biographer, "she was ungainly or awkward in her appearance, or of ungraceful speech." On the contrary, she was graceful in the extreme, and spoke with a readiness and fluency that excited the admiration of all those who heard her, not only in childhood, but on the rare occasions in after life when she condescended to express her opinions. She never indulged in the dainties that were sent to her by the Quebec friends of her family, but generously presented them to her schoolmates, who were less scrupulous about indulging their mundane tastes for sweets, and accepted them without protest. Another peculiarity of this remarkable child was a love of solitude and silence, which prompted her to pass entire days without speaking except when called upon to recite her lessons. This brief glimpse into her character will be sufficient explanation of her withdrawal from the world,—a step which she early determined upon.

At fifteen she returned to Montreal to the spacious and beautiful home of her parents on St. Paul Street. Here, although there was an even more devotional spirit than in the other pious households of Montreal at this time, there were also enough worldly diversions and entertainments to attract a young girl. Distinguished persons were guests at this house, and Jeanne soon found herself surrounded by a coterie of Montreal's most brilliant and dashing youth. Her parents, anxious to have this, their only daughter, make a brilliant marriage and establish herself well in the country, soon chose from among them a suitable husband for her and signified their desire that she should receive the young man with favor. For although the pious tendencies of their daughter's mind were well known to them, they had no suspicion of the aspirations that were filling her young soul. It therefore came upon them like a thunderclap when she repudiated the husband chosen for her, and unfolded her plan of passing all the rest of her life in seclusion, under her father's roof or wherever it might be most convenient. After mature reflection, the piety of the parents would not allow them to oppose this seemingly holy inspiration. They consented, therefore, to their daughter's making the experiment, but with the secret hope that it prove to be only a whim, and that in time she would not only be satisfied, but glad to give it up.

She immediately began her life of seclusion by immuring herself in a room in her father's house. Here she remained for fifteen years, beginning in the year 1680, without any communication with even the inmates of her own household, except through the mediation of the servant who attended her. She regarded herself as a victim, who was to expiate her own sins as well as those of the whole community. She covered her body with haircloth, and indulged in all the austerities of the most renowned candidates for sainthood. Her food was scanty and coarse, all delicacies which found their way to her room being left untouched. In fact, lest the ordinary food of the family might prove too acceptable to her palate, she had the attendant bring the crusts of bread left by the servants, which, with plenty of water, formed her diet for several days in succession. All communication with her parents and brothers was renounced, and she never crossed the threshold of her chamber except to attend church every morning at five o'clock. She

went forth attended by her servant, her eyes cast down, her hands clasped upon her bosom, and after entering the little church would prostrate herself before the altar in silent adoration. But her confessor, the sole person she had bound herself to obey, finally requested her to give up this practice, for as piety was becoming less and less conspicuous in the country, this act might attract unfavorable comment.

When Mademoiselle Le Ber had been in her retreat two years, her mother died after a long illness. Although her daughter is said to have had the most filial attachment for this parent, the suffering woman's moans did not move her from her retreat. She refused all appeals to show herself at her mother's bedside, fulfilling her duty by praying for the future repose of her soul. The mother finally died without the solace of the daughter's presence. "This was the most poignant sorrow she had to endure," says the biographer, "and the one which pierced her heart most deeply. However, she bore this great trial with a strength worthy of her magnanimous courage."

After the loss of his wife, Monsieur Le Ber entreated his daughter earnestly to abandon her retreat and take her mother's place in the now bereaved household. But she received his proposition in unrelenting silence. We can imagine the dreariness which now pervaded the home life of this family, from which the mother had departed on her long journey, and the daughter had voluntarily isolated herself. The lonely father and motherless younger brothers sat in dreary state around their bountiful table, heaped with all the dainties of Canadian field, river, and forest, sadly recalling the beloved qualities of the dead mother, and bitterly deploring the obduracy of the erratic sister. For although she was destined to become the " marvel of her century and the most perfect model ever offered to young Canadian girls," those whose lot happened to place them in her immediate vicinity were, no doubt, unreasonable enough to deplore their ill-luck in having this saint in their family.

When one of these brothers, Jean Le Ber du Chesne, was mortally wounded in a skirmish with the Iroquois and brought dying to his home, his sister again refused to leave her room. When he died Marguerite Bourgeois and a companion hastened to the bereaved family to offer their sympathy and help. Suddenly the " holy recluse " appeared before them, placed in their hands what was needed to shroud the dead brother, prayed silently an instant over his dead body, and silently withdrew, leaving the good Mademoiselle Bourgeois "full of edification and astonishment at so much fortitude and virtue at such a time."

The recluse did not divest herself of all her possessions in thus withdrawing from the world. By this fortunate circumstance she was enabled to carry out a plan which had been formulating itself in her mind by which she could make her separation from the world more complete. For, however successful had been her experiment at solitude in her father's house, this seclusion was more or less interfered with by the necessity of leaving the house every day to go to church. In the intervals between her sacred occupations, she had conceived a plan by which this necessity of appearing daily in public would be forever obviated. The plan was no other than to live in the church.

Marguerite Bourgeois' society of teachers were planning the addition of a chapel to their little establishment. Mademoiselle Le Ber determined to build this chapel at her own expense,

and have a retreat set apart in it for herself, where she might pass the rest of her life under the very droppings of the sanctuary. This plan was put immediately into execution, and in the rear of the chapel, behind the altar, extending its whole width and height, with a depth of ten feet, a room was constructed. It was divided into three cells, one above the other, to be used respectively as confessional, sleeping-room, and work-room. There was a small opening in the end of the lower cell, through which her food was to be passed in by her attendant, a poor cousin. Her bed was of straw, her dress a coarse gray serge, which she wore until it hung about her in rags, her food the plainest fare. The lower cell was separated from the chapel only by an iron grating, through which she could hear the services without being seen.

She took a vow of perpetual seclusion, August 5, 1695. There is a quaint picture of this ceremony, in which the most striking figures are the pious demoiselle herself kneeling before the altar, around her ministering priests and acolytes, standing erect the stately form of Marguerite Bourgeois, and the merchant Le Ber, stooped now and weeping, making his way out of the chapel. It is said that he offered her a gift of fifty thousand francs to return to her home, but she refused it without hesitation.

The order followed by the recluse in her new retreat has been recorded minutely,—a certain number of hours in silent, and others in audible prayer, a certain time to self-castigation, to reading holy books, to confession, etc., and what time was left after all these spiritual occupations was spent in making artificial flowers and other ornaments, and embroidering altar cloths and chasubles. At midnight she crept forth into the cold and cheerless chapel, and, prostrating herself before the altar, prayed audibly for hours in succession. Although there was a stove in her little apartment, it is averred that she seldom had a fire lighted in it, even in the intense cold of the long northern winter.

Her renown for saintliness began to spread throughout all New France. Pilgrimages were made to her retreat, and many questions asked as to her method of life, to which she seldom vouchsafed an answer. The bishop was proud of this holy prodigy, and brought many visitors to be edified by her saintly practices. Among others, two Protestant clergymen from New England, who expressed their wonder and amazement at this strange damsel's dwelling-place and manner of life. After returning to their respective homes in New England the biographer avers that one of them was so impressed with the demoiselle Le Ber's exalted virtues and holy life that he renounced his own faith to adopt that so beautifully exemplified in hers.

Her prayers were sought by those going forth to battle against the savages or English. She had been known to avert the destruction of the granary of the community by having a picture of the Virgin placed upon the door, under which was a prayer written by her own hand. This was afterwards stolen by some devout settler who wished to have the safety of his own corn assured, but Mademoiselle Le Ber was prevailed upon to replace it with another exactly like it.

Thereafter she received many requests for similar prayers, most of which she refused. However, in the year 1711, when the French were apprehending a formidable attack from the English, Baron de Longueuil, Governor of Montreal and Mademoiselle Le Ber's cousin, entreated her for some pious emblem to be carried to battle as a charm against the enemy. She granted his request by presenting him with a banner on which her artist brother, the first to

introduce the art of painting into Canada, had painted a picture of the Virgin. Beneath this she wrote the words: "Our foes place all their trust in their arms; but we place ours in the Queen of Angels, whom we invoke. She is as terrible as an army in battle array; under her protection we hope to conquer our enemies." The banner was publicly blessed, to the great edification of the people, and placed in the hands of the governor. But it was never used to lead his soldiers in battle, for the English fleet about to besiege Quebec met with disaster and ruin through a terrible tempest which arose on the night of the expected attack, and the dismantled ships returned to England defeated and humiliated.

It is said that she never went to the window to look forth into the outer world, but kept strictly in the background of her cell. The window was never opened, however sultry the day, except when she was receiving her food, which she took and ate in silence, passed back the dishes, and disappeared. If she were sick and unable to appear, a note to this effect was found at the window by the attendant, who, on these rare occasions, was allowed to enter this holy precinct and minister to the prostrate form on her pallet of straw.

Her window overlooked the well-kept garden of Marguerite Bourgeois' society, as well as that of her father's house, but she was never known to look out upon these beautiful spots. A new building designed as a boarding-school for girls was being constructed at her expense, and she could hear the shouts of the workmen, and, if she had looked out, could have seen the rising walls of the edifice. But she never did so, and when requested to visit this new building, declined positively to leave her retreat.

I have said that she left little behind her at her death to perpetuate her name except her holiness. This statement may be too positive in face of the fact that she gave all the remnant of her fortune, that she might die poor, to the endowment of this institution. She provided scholarships for seven girls in this school, stipulating that, if they were poor girls, they should not learn to read and write, for this was a sinful waste of time which might be better employed in learning some useful occupation. Her father died in the year 1706. He had always profited by his privilege of visiting the recluse twice a year, and had clung to her all these years with tenderness and loyalty. However, she would not consent to be present at his dying bed, and while his funeral services were being chanted in the neighboring church," what is worthy of admiration is," says her biographer," that in spite of her deep grief at these mournful sounds she went on with her usual pious exercises as if nothing were happening."

With this unresponsiveness to paternal love, it may be imagined that advances from more distant relatives were met with less courtesy. Two young nephews, children of a wayward brother, came one day to see this wonderful saint of whom they had heard from their babyhood. They went away well satisfied, and frightened, when, after waiting several hours in the little chapel, they at last caught a glimpse of a sombre female figure, in a tattered gray robe, praying behind the gratings of her cell.

She passed twenty years in this retreat behind the altar of the chapel of the Congregation, making in all thirty-five years of seclusion. In 1714 the demoiselle Le Ber died, in an order of sanctity which enthusiastic historians have wafted down to the twentieth century.

# Henri Bourassa and the Conscription Crisis of 1917

Michael Chapman

In the summer of 1917 the First World War was raging. The United States had declared war against Germany in April but was not yet capable of providing an army. Mutinies were occurring in the French army. Much of the Allied burden of the ferocious trench warfare fell onto the British forces, and their Canadian counterparts. Beginning in 1916 at the Battle of Verdun and the Somme, the Canadian troops had made a name for themselves as an opponent to be feared, a powerful offensive force. As Lloyd George wrote, "The Canadians played a part of such distinction that thenceforward they were marked out as storm troops; for the remainder of the war they were brought along to head the assault in one great battle after another."[1] A reputation such as this is not earned easily, or cheaply, in war. Canadian casualties at The Somme were over 24,000. Their victory at Vimy Ridge in April 1917 had cost another 10,600 casualties. The devastating effects of the losses were being felt at home, and creating political havoc as well. Standing prominently at the forefront was French Canadian nationalist Henri Bourassa.

Henri Bourassa was born in Montreal on 1 September 1868. His father was the well known artist and poet Napoleon Bourassa, also known as "Napol." His grandfather Louis-Joseph Papineau was a hero of the Rebellion of 1837, which eventually led to reforms by the British government as to the management of the colonies.

Bourassa followed in his grandfather's footsteps, entering politics at an early age. When he was twenty-two years old he was elected Mayor of Montebello, a post he held for six years. He resigned as mayor to enter federal politics, and won election to the House of Commons in 1896, standing for Labelle County as a Liberal.

In 1899 he had his first confrontation with what was to Henri a crucial issue. The British government had sent troops to South Africa to fight the Boers. His own Liberal government, led by Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier, sent Canadians forces to fight in support of the British, on the assumption that if Britain was at war, Canada was as well. He did this without discussion in Parliament. Bourassa resigned his seat in the House in protest.

He was handily reelected the following year and tried to pass a resolution giving Parliament the sole power to declare war in the name of Canada. He was unsuccessful, but it was an issue that would come up more than once again in his future.

Bourassa left the House after nine years, resigning to enter Provincial politics. He was elected to the Quebec Assembly in 1908. While in that position, he founded "Le Devoir," which soon became a prestigious and important French Canadian newspaper. He would edit the paper himself until 1932.

Publicly and through the editorial page of "Le Devoir", Bourassa passionately addressed issues of vital concern to French Canadians. He helped to create and promote a French Canadian

[1] Lloyd George, Prime Minister of Great Britain

nationalist movement focusing on "Canada's relationship to Great Britain, The relationship of French to English culture, and the values that should guide economic life."[2] His brand of nationalism did not promote a separate French speaking state. His vision was of an Anglo—French nation with equal rights afforded to French culture. In 1912 when Regulation 17 was passed, restricting the use of the French language in elementary schools, Bourassa was an outspoken opponent. He carried on against the regulation until 1916 when Pope Benedict XV called for a calming of emotions in French/Anglo relations. Bourassa felt that it was vital to promote Catholicism and to emphasize worship of God as a primary Canadian value. The regulation was eventually repealed in 1920.

In 1911 he fought, again unsuccessfully, to prevent a Cabinet bill allowing the as yet nonexistent Canadian Navy to be placed under control of the British Admiralty, again without permission of Parliament. While he was in favor of an independent Naval force, he felt a fleet under the command of the Admiralty could involve Canada in future European wars. His stand against the issue, promoted by Laurier, weakened the Liberal party's support in Quebec and may have helped lead to the election of the Conservative government that same year, a government with far more Imperialist leanings than his own, and Laurier's Liberal party.

As the First World War began in 1914, Bourassa stood in opposition to Canadian involvement. While he was not opposed to the war itself he felt it was the war of Britain and France, and that Canadians should only enter on a voluntary basis. Prime Minister Sir Robert Borden had unilaterally brought Canada into the conflict, once again bypassing Parliament's approval. Borden wanted to maintain a force of 500,000 troops. He believed that in order to have an influence on Britain's colonial policies, Canada had to maintain its troop commitment. The terrible losses of the Somme and Vimy had taken a toll and the army needed reinforcement. In 1917 Borden announced the introduction of conscription. It would divide the nation between French and English, and bring about a political crisis. Henri Bourassa would figure prominently in the strategies of both parties.

French Canadians were very resistant to participation in the war. They had no natural affection for Britain or France. There were no French Canadians divisions in the military, and very few French Canadian officers. They felt a separation from English Canadians. As a result, French Canadian enlistments were low in number, about five percent of total volunteer enlistments. Some English Canadians felt that the French Canadians were shirking their national responsibility. The conscription bill was passed in July 1917.

Upon passage of the bill riots broke out in Montreal and Quebec City. English Canadian soldiers from Toronto were brought into Quebec City to suppress the disturbances, and four people were killed. The Quebec Assembly considered secession. Henri Bourassa was an outspoken critic of conscription and his nationalist sentiments put him in the center of the storm.

Prime Minister Borden offered Liberal leader Wilfrid Laurier a seat in a coalition government if he would support conscription but Laurier felt that to do so would hand political control of the province to Bourassa. Borden's own Union party used Bourassa as a threat,

[2] Joseph Levitt, Canadian Encyclopedia

claiming that if Laurier won the election Bourassa would be the power behind the scenes, and likely pull Canada from the war. In the end, Borden and the Union party won decisively, helped significantly by two pieces of legislation designed to steer military votes towards the Union party.

Bourassa was never again to be at the forefront of Canadian politics, although he ran for, and was elected to his old seat in the House of Commons in 1925, where he served as an Independent until his defeat 10 years later. His brand of nationalism, promoting one country of Anglo—French equality was supplanted in the early 1920s by a more extreme version, led by Abbe Groulx, who favored the idea of a separate French speaking state. In the 1930s Bourassa promoted an isolationist policy, and spent his later years promoting Catholicism as a moral guide to society.

Henri Bourassa died on 31 August, 1952 and is buried in Cimetiere Notre-Dame-des-Neiges in Montreal.

After Laurier's loss to Borden in the 1917 election, MacKenzie King took Laurier's position at the head of the Liberals. King carried forward Bourassa's notion of Parliamentary approval being needed to bring Canada into a war. As a demonstration of this policy, Canada remained neutral for seven days after Britain declared war on Germany in 1939.

**Sources**

The Canadian Encyclopedia

Loyal Edmonton Regiment Museum: www.lermesuem.org

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# 1873 Corrine Wiggins, 9780 Simpson Canyon Rd, Klamath Falls, OR 97601-9364
**Garrett**
# 1812 Gary Potter, 370 Lake Ave., Bristol, CT 060100-328

**Gaudreau**
# 1840 Frances Swietlicki, 2 Copper Ridge Circle, Guilford, CT 06437

**Gauthier**
# 764 Lucille Langlois, Po Box 47, Quinebaug, CT 06262-0047

**Gelinas**
# 2013 Albert & Joyce Cormier, 73 Vandale St., Putnam, CT 06260-1419

**Gendreau**
# 1666 Phyllis Nedorostek, 5 River Rd., Unionville, CT 06085-1010

**Girard**
# 1873 Corrine Wiggins, 9780 Simpson Canyon Rd, Klamath Falls, OR 97601-9364

**Giroux**
# 685 Estelle Sawtelle, 210 Green Manor Terrace, Windsor Locks, CT 06096-2714

**Godbout**
# 722 Douglas & Mary Lou Weidl, 22 Indianola Rd, Niantic, CT 06357-3409

**Godin**
# 2082 Robin LaFerriere, 2 East St., Vernon, CT 06066

**Goodhue**
# 1812 Gary Potter, 370 Lake Ave., Bristol, CT 06010-7328

**Goulet**
# 918 Pauline Nero, 1 Horne Ave Apt D1, Winsted, CT 06098-1270

**Goyette**
# 1840 Frances Swietlicki, 2 Copper Ridge Circle, Guilford, CT 06437

**Grenier**
# 1616 Byron Benton, 77 Avery Heights, Hartford, CT 06106-4201

**Guillemette**
# 444 Edna Franz, 41 Garwood Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ 07410-4511

**Guilmitt**
# 885 Jeanne Miller, 34 Main St PO Box 233, Versailles, CT 06383-0233

**Guimond**
# 1260 Hans & Annabelle Vanderleeden, 43 Florentine Gardens, Springfield, MA 01108-2507
# 1248 Louis Guimond, 2-547 Belden Ave., Norwalk, CT 06850

**Hache**
# 370 Gilbert & Lucia Levere, 26 Ellsworth Rd., West Hartford, CT 06107-2707

**Hackett**
# 911 Maria Holmes, 488 Oak Ave Apt 48, Cheshire, CT 06410-3016

**Hebert**
# 1075 Ernest & Barbara Laliberte, Po Box 85, South Windham, CT 06266-0085
# 1765 Carol O'Neill, 525 Gardner St., Manchester, CT 06040

**Henri**
# 764 Lucille Langlois, Po Box 47, Quinebaug, CT 06262-0047

**Houde**
# 1637 Lillian Beauviliers, 641 Middlebury Rd., Watertown, CT 06795
# 1617 Armand Catelli, 18 Juniper Lane, Berlin, CT 06037

**Houle**
# 663 Jeanne Lincoln-Kent, Po Box 88, Winsted, CT 06098-0088
# 1952 Christopher Child, 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116

**Jandren**
# 1752 Joel Cohan, 7 Volpi Rd, Bolton, CT 06043

**Jolie**
# 771 Norman & Alice Jolie, 19 Yeomans Rd, Columbia, CT 06237-1534

**Joly**
# 771 Norman & Alice Jolie, 19 Yeomans Rd, Columbia, CT 06237-1534

**Jouanne**
# 1616 Byron Benton, 77 Avery Heights, Hartford, CT 06106-4201

**Kelly**
# 1799 Pat Tripp, 109 Orchard St., Ellington, CT 06029

**King**
# 1812 Gary Potter, 370 Lake Ave., Bristol, CT 06010-7328

**Kluntz**
# 1985 Robert & Millicent Lussier, 1315 Warmwood Dr., Grand Island, FL 32735

**Klunz**
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**Lablanc**
# 1961 Wm. (Bill) & Carol Askwith, 30 Fern Dr., Storrs, CT 06268
# 2160 Allen Robicheau, 205 Plymouth Colony, Branford, CT 06045

**LaBombardier**
# 1812 Gary Potter, 370 Lake Ave., Bristol, CT 06010-7328

**Labonte**
# 1481 Rita Roy, 61 Churchill Dr., Norwood, MA 02062-1644

**Labossiere**
# 515 David Labossiere, 436 Lantern Way, Windsor, CT 06095-1650

**LaBrecque**
# 918 Pauline Nero, 1 Horne Ave Apt D1, Winsted, CT 06098-1270

**Lacasse**
# 1945 John Farrow, 14 Virginia D., Ellington, CT 06029

**LaChance**
# 1637 Lillian Beauviliers, 641 Middlebury Rd., Watertown, CT 06795

**LaChapelle**
# 1773 Mark & Kerstin Ciechowski, 45 Furnace Ave, Stafford Srpings, CT 06076

**Lacroix**
# 965 Richard Snay, 1463 Riverside Dr, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255-0112
# 64 Donald Roy, 112 E Elm St, Torrington, CT 06790-5016

**Lafaille**
# 576 Bernard Doray, 734 Pratt, Outremont PQH2V 2T6, Canada
# 706 Richard Larson, 10 Depot Rd. Unit 1030, Willington, CT 06279

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# 2082 Robin LaFerriere, 2 East St., Vernon, CT 06066

**Laflamme**
# 1998 Robert Cummiskey, 45 Simpkins Dr., Bristol, CT 06010

**LaFond**
# 1270 John & Patricia Laframboise, 74 Dexter Avenue, Meriden, CT 06450-6111

**LaFramboise**
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**Lagace/Lagasse**
# 1184 Frank Melanson, 4 Edgewood Ave, Milford, CT 06460

**Lagrace**
# 53 Candide Sedlik, 196 Brace Rd, West Hartford, CT 06107-1813

**Laliberte**
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# 663 Jeanne Lincoln-Kent, Po Box 88, Winsted, CT 06098-0088

**Lalime**
# 663 Jeanne Lincoln-Kent, Po Box 88, Winsted, CT 06098-0088

**Lambert**
# 2132 Lise Lambert, 13 Hanson Rd, Canterbury, CT 06331
# 530 Doris Vaughan, 31-7 South Meadow Vl-G, Carver, MA 02330-1821

**Lampron**
# 1270 John & Patricia Laframboise, 74 Dexter Avenue, Meriden, CT 06450-6111

**Landurand**
# 2028 Chris & Cheryl Klemmer, 14 Winhart Dr., Granby, CT 06035

**Langan**
# 760 Marie Langan, 3813 West Rose Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85019-1729

**Lange**
# 1162 Sylvia Bockstein, 172 Jackson Street, Jefferson, MA 01522-1469

**Langlois**
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**LaPerche**
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**LaPointe**
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**Larche**
# 1556 Honora Futtner, 1629 Main Street, South Windsor, CT 06074
**L'Archeveque**
# 1556 Honora Futtner, 1629 Main Street, South Windsor, CT 06074
**Lariviere**
# 1952 Christopher Child, 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116
**Laroche**
# 1961 Wm. (Bill) & Carol Askwith, 30 Fern Dr., Storrs, CT 06268
**Latour**
# 2013 Albert & Joyce Cormier, 73 Vandale St., Putnam, CT 06260-1419
**Lausier**
# 996 Michele LeBlanc, 227 Tracy Ave, Waterbury, CT 06706-2521
**Lavallie**
# 435 Therese Grego, 7610 E 21St. Pl., Tulsa, OK 74129-2428
**Lebeau**
# 2121 Robert & Patricia Talbot, 32 Mountainview Avenue, Bristol, CT 06010
**LeBlanc**
# 996 Michele LeBlanc, 227 Tracy Ave, Waterbury, CT 06706-2521
# 760 Marie Langan, 3813 West Rose Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85019-1729
# 2028 Chris & Cheryl Klemmer, 14 Winhart Dr., Granby, CT 06035
**Lebrun**
# 53 Candide Sedlik, 196 Brace Rd, West Hartford, CT 06107-1813
**LeClair**
# 885 Jeanne Miller, 34 Main St PO Box 233, Versailles, CT 06383-0233
**Leclerc**
# 1617 Armand Catelli, 18 Juniper Lane, Berlin, CT 06037
**Legare**
# 1358 Irene Schott, 15 Tunnell Hill Court, Lot 14, Lisbon, CT 06351
# 444 Edna Franz, 41 Garwood Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ 07410-4511
**Leger**
# 764 Lucille Langlois, Po Box 47, Quinebaug, CT 06262-0047
**Lelievre**
# 370 Gilbert & Lucia Levere, 26 Ellsworth Rd., West Hartford, CT 06107-2707
**Lemay**
# 987 Sylvia Cologne, 190 Laurel St, South Windsor, CT 06074-2347
# 760 Marie Langan, 3813 West Rose Lane, Phoenix, AZ 85019-1729
**Lemieux**
# 1711 Wendy Lemieux, 501 Dunn Rd., Coventry, CT 06238-1164
# 996 Michele LeBlanc, 227 Tracy Ave, Waterbury, CT 06706-2521

**LePire**
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**LeVasseur**
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**Lise**
# 2132 Lise Lambert, 13 Hanson Rd, Canterbury, CT 06331

**Lord**
# 576 Bernard Doray, 734 Pratt, Outremont PQH2V 2T6, Canada

**Loubier**
# 444 Edna Franz, 41 Garwood Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ 07410-4511

**Luko**
# 370 Gilbert & Lucia Levere, 26 Ellsworth Rd., West Hartford, CT 06107-2707

**Lussier**
# 1224 Leonard Caya & Terri Richard, 438 Kemp Road, Hampton, CT 06247-2010
# 1726 Edward Perron, 59 Sunnyside Ave., Putnam, CT 06260

**Maille**
# 1961 Wm. (Bill) & Carol Askwith, 30 Fern Dr., Storrs, CT 06268

**Major**
# 1358 Irene Schott, 15 Tunnell Hill Court, Lot 14, Lisbon, CT 06351

**Mandeville**
# 2013 Albert & Joyce Cormier, 73 Vandale St., Putnam, CT 06260-1419

**Mandville**
# 18 Rene Bernier, 8 Honeysuckle Lane, Niantic, CT 06357-1933

**Manseau**
# 2175 Gayl Dandurand-Smith, 17 Shasta Terr, Beacon Falls, CT 06403

**Marc-Aurele**
# 46 Elaine Mandro, 30 Cherry Ln, West Haven, CT 06516-5607

**Marion**
# 634 Lawrence Marion, 63 Burnt Hill Rd, Farmington, CT 06032-2039

**Marion (continued)**
# 2013 Albert & Joyce Cormier, 73 Vandale St., Putnam, CT 06260-1419

**Marquis**
# 2173 Brenda Chavez, 516 Hartford Ave, Weathersfield, CT 06109
# 53 Candide Sedlik, 196 Brace Rd, West Hartford, CT 06107-1813

**Martel**
# 1952 Christopher Child, 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116

**Martin**
# 1765 Carol O'Neill, 525 Gardner St., Manchester, CT 06040

**Martineau**
# 1726 Edward Perron, 59 Sunnyside Ave., Putnam, CT 06260

**Masse**
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**Massicotte**
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**Masson**
# 1617 Armand Catelli, 18 Juniper Lane, Berlin, CT 06037

**Matinew**
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**Mayer**
# 1961 Wm. (Bill) & Carol Askwith, 30 Fern Dr., Storrs, CT 06268

**Maynard**
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**McCoy**
# 1800 Nancy Post, 227 Hollister Dr, East Hartford, CT 06118-2137

**McNeilly**
# 1800 Nancy Post, 227 Hollister Dr, East Hartford, CT 06118-2137

**Melanson**
# 1184 Frank Melanson, 4 Edgewood Ave, Milford, CT 06460

**Menard**
# 1873 Corrine Wiggins, 9780 Simpson Canyon Rd, Klamath Falls, OR 97601-9364
# 1840 Frances Swietlicki, 2 Copper Ridge Circle, Guilford, CT 06437

**Messier**
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**Meunier**
# 1574 Pauline Wilson, 73 Arcellia Drive, Manchester, CT 06042

**Meurs**
# 1711 Wendy Lemieux, 501 Dunn Rd., Coventry, CT 06238-1164

**Michaud**
# 2082 Robin LaFerriere, 2 East St., Vernon, CT 06066

**Milot**
# 1637 Lillian Beauviliers, 641 Middlebury Rd., Watertown, CT 06795

**Minor**
# 1773 Mark & Kerstin Ciechowski, 45 Furnace Ave, Stafford Srpings, CT 06076

**Molleiur/Molleur**
# 319 Mildred Roberts, 71603 180th St, Albert Lea, MN 56007-5461

**Monty**
# 911 Maria Holmes, 488 Oak Ave Apt 48, Cheshire, CT 06410-3016
# 1358 Irene Schott, 15 Tunnell Hill Court, Lot 14, Lisbon, CT 06351

**Moquin**
# 319 Mildred Roberts, 71603 180th St, Albert Lea, MN 56007-5461

**Morin**
# 1873 Corrine Wiggins, 9780 Simpson Canyon Rd, Klamath Falls, OR 97601-9364
# 1998 Robert Cummiskey, 45 Simpkins Dr., Bristol, CT 06010

**Nadeau**
# 1794 Edie Parizo, 536 South Main St., West Hartford, CT 06110
# 49 Florence "Pat" Davis, 64 Neptune Dr, Old Saybrook, CT 06475-2934

**Neron**
# 1556 Honora Futtner, 1629 Main Street, South Windsor, CT 06074

**Neveu**
# 2100 Everett & Dorothy Pothier, PO Box 50638, Summerville, SC 29485

**Nichollet**
# 444 Edna Franz, 41 Garwood Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ 07410-4511

**Nosek**
# 762 Helen Bernier, 52 Robbie Rd, Tolland, CT 06084-2210

**Oliver/Olivier**
# 1862 Janice Livermore, PO Box 222652, Chantilly, VA 20153-2652

**Pagé**
# 350 Eleanor Page, Po Box 85, South Woodstock, CT 06267-0085

**Paquet**
# 1358 Irene Schott, 15 Tunnell Hill Court, Lot 14, Lisbon, CT 06351

**Paquette**
# 2125 Pauline Casey, 28 Eleanor St, Vernon, CT 06066

**Paquin**
# 1820 Germaine Goudreau, 629 Riverside Dr. PO Box 160, Grosvenordale, CT 06246

**Patenaude**
# 46 Elaine Mandro, 30 Cherry Ln, West Haven, CT 06516-5607

**Paulhus**
# 18 Rene Bernier, 8 Honeysuckle Lane, Niantic, CT 06357-1933

**Pearl**
# 1800 Nancy Post, 227 Hollister Dr, East Hartford, CT 06118-2137

**Peloquin**
# 18 Rene Bernier, 8 Honeysuckle Lane, Niantic, CT 06357-1933
# 999 Anne Marie St Jean, 62 Maynard St, Putnam, CT 06260-1116

**Pepin**
# 444 Edna Franz, 41 Garwood Rd., Fair Lawn, NJ 07410-4511

**Perron**
# 1898 Lynn & Allan Carbonneau, 26 Patten Rd., Stafford, CT 06076
# 1726 Edward Perron, 59 Sunnyside Ave., Putnam, CT 06260

**Petit**
# 1812 Gary Potter, 370 Lake Ave., Bristol, CT 06010-7328

**Phanet**
# 2187 Dena Ricard, 161 Morris Street, Naugatuck, CT 06770-3319
**Piette**
# 435 Therese Grego, 7610 E 21St. Pl., Tulsa, OK 74129-2428
**Pinard**
# 1617 Armand Catelli, 18 Juniper Lane, Berlin, CT 06037
**Pitre**
# 1556 Honora Futtner, 1629 Main Street, South Windsor, CT 06074
**Plante**
# 2179 Christina Piscitelli, 5 Turnbridge Drive, Lumberton, NJ 08048
# 2136 Bertha Piscitelli, 392 Hope Hill Rd, Wallingford, CT 06492-2254
**Plasse**
# 965 Richard Snay, 1463 Riverside Dr, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255-0112
**Poirier**
# 1363 Pauline & Leo Andstrom, 151 Lovers Lane, Plainfield, CT 06374-1527
**Poliquin**
# 1420 Jeanne P & Thomas C Devoe, 62 Edgemont Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110-1121
**Popeilarczyk**
# 762 Helen Bernier, 52 Robbie Rd, Tolland, CT 06084-2210
**Post**
# 1800 Nancy Post, 227 Hollister Dr, East Hartford, CT 06118-2137
**Pothier**
# 2100 Everett & Dorothy Pothier, PO Box 50638, Summerville, SC 29485
**Potuin**
# 729 Romeo Potvin, 15 Clearview Terrace, Manchester, CT 06040-1918
**Potvin**
# 1752 Joel Cohan, 7 Volpi Rd, Bolton, CT 06043
**Pretaboire**
# 706 Richard Larson, 10 Depot Rd. Unit 1030, Willington, CT 06279
**Racine**
# 1312 G. Clark Parkhurst Jr, 165 Union City Rd., Prospect, CT 06712-1032
**Rasberry**
# 685 Estelle Sawtelle, 210 Green Manor Terrace, Windsor Locks, CT 06096-2714
**Ravenelle**
# 1952 Christopher Child, 101 Newbury Street, Boston, MA 02116
**Richard**
# 1420 Jeanne P & Thomas C Devoe, 62 Edgemont Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06110-1121
**Rioux**
# 1998 Robert Cummiskey, 45 Simpkins Dr., Bristol, CT 06010
# 370 Gilbert & Lucia Levere, 26 Ellsworth Rd., West Hartford, CT 06107-2707

**Roberts**
# 2028 Chris & Cheryl Klemmer, 14 Winhart Dr., Granby, CT 06035
# 319 Mildred Roberts, 71603 180th St, Albert Lea, MN 56007-5461
**Robichard**
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**Robicheau**
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**Robillard**
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**Root**
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**Rossignol**
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**Rouse**
# 1162 Sylvia Bockstein, 172 Jackson Street, Jefferson, MA 01522-1469
**Roy**
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# 1812 Gary Potter, 370 Lake Ave., Bristol, CT 06010-7328
# 996 Michele LeBlanc, 227 Tracy Ave, Waterbury, CT 06706-2521
# 64 Donald Roy, 112 E Elm St, Torrington, CT 06790-5016
# 1481 Rita Roy, 61 Churchill Dr., Norwood, MA 02062-1644
# 1626 Shirleen Moynihan, 37 King Road, West Hartford, CT 06107-3311
**Russell**
# 996 Michele LeBlanc, 227 Tracy Ave, Waterbury, CT 06706-2521
**Sabourin**
# 965 Richard Snay, 1463 Riverside Dr, North Grosvenordale, CT 06255-0112
**Salois**
# 1224 Leonard Caya & Terri Richard, 438 Kemp Road, Hampton, CT 06247-2010
**Salvail**
# 18 Rene Bernier, 8 Honeysuckle Lane, Niantic, CT 06357-1933
**Sanasac**
# 1426 Estelle Gothberg, 90 Broad Street, Manchester, CT 06040-2930
**Sarazin**
# 1940 David Pease, 33 Parsalin Court, Latham, NY 12110
**Savoie**
# 2082 Robin LaFerriere, 2 East St., Vernon, CT 06066
**Simoneau**
# 1998 Robert Cummiskey, 45 Simpkins Dr., Bristol, CT 06010
**Simoreau**
# 2187 Dena Ricard, 161 Morris Street, Naugatuck, CT 06770-3319

**Slamons**
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# 996 Michele LeBlanc, 227 Tracy Ave, Waterbury, CT 06706-2521

**Smith**
# 1812 Gary Potter, 370 Lake Ave., Bristol, CT 06010-7328

**Snay**
# 965 Richard Snay, 1463 Riverside Dr, North Grosvenordale, CT 0625-50112

**St Amand**
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**St. Godard**
# 999 Anne Marie St Jean, 62 Maynard St, Putnam, CT 06260-1116

**St. Jean**
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# 999 Anne Marie St Jean, 62 Maynard St, Putnam, CT 06260-1116

**St. Martin**
# 1937 Cora Sciarra, 46 Robbie Rd., Tolland, CT 06084

**St. Onge**
# 1820 Germaine Goudreau, 629 Riverside Dr. PO Box 160, Grosvenordale, CT 06246

**St. Amand**
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**Suprenant**
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**Talbot**
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# 2121 Robert & Patricia Talbot, 32 Mountainview Avenue, Bristol, CT 06010

**Tanguay**
# 663 Jeanne Lincoln-Kent, Po Box 88, Winsted, CT 06098-0088

**Tardif**
# 2121 Robert & Patricia Talbot, 32 Mountainview Avenue, Bristol, CT 06010

**Tessier**
# 1358 Irene Schott, 15 Tunnell Hill Court, Lot 14, Lisbon, CT 06351

**Tetreau**
# 1358 Irene Schott, 15 Tunnell Hill Court, Lot 14, Lisbon, CT 06351
# 46 Elaine Mandro, 30 Cherry Ln, West Haven, CT 06516-5607

**Theriault/Terriot**
# 49 Florence "Pat" Davis, 64 Neptune Dr, Old Saybrook, CT 06475-2934

**Thibeault**
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**Thiboutot**
# 2173 Brenda Chavez, 516 Hartford Ave, Weathersfield, CT 06109

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French-Canadian Genealogical Society
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P.O. Box 928
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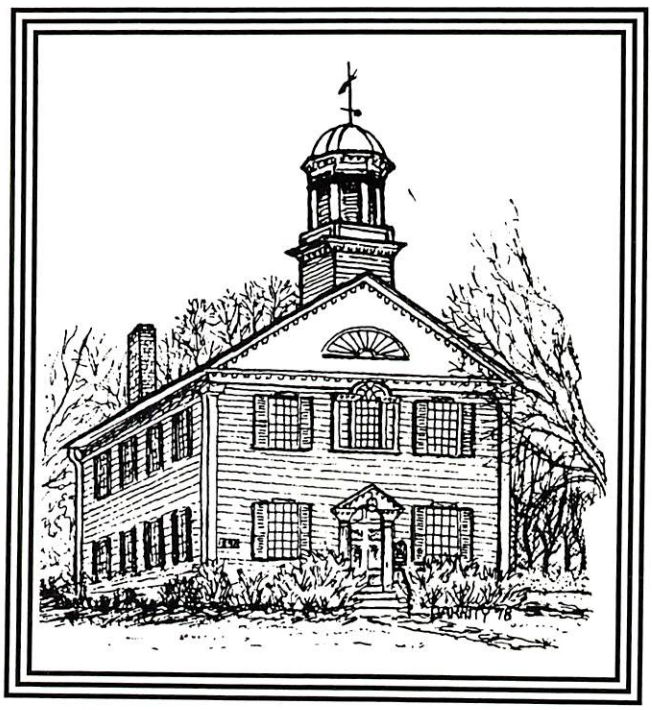

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