A

Je Me Souviens

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CORRESPONDENCE

Written correspondence should be addressed only to our post office box. The library telephone number for voice and fax is **(401) 765-6141.** An answering machine will take messages when the library is not open. The Society can be reached by E-mail at **AFGS @ ids.net.** E-mail to the Editor of *JMS* should be addressed to **delislep @ juno.com.**

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Our library is located in the basement of the First Universalist Church at 78 Earle Street in Woonsocket, Rhode Island. It is open for research on Mondays from 12 PM to 5 PM, Tuesdays from 1 PM to 10 PM, and the first and third Saturdays of each month from 10 AM to 4 PM. The library is closed on all holidays; there are no Saturday sessions in July and August.

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AFGS Mission Statement

The mission of the American-French Genealogical Society is:

— To collect, preserve and publish genealogical, historical and biographical matter relating to Americans of French and French-Canadian descent.

— To play an active part in the preservation of French-Canadian heritage and culture in the United States.

— To establish and maintain a reference library and research center for the benefit of its members.

— To hold meetings for the instruction of its members.

— To disseminate information of value to its members by way of a regularly published journal and other appropriate means.

— To disseminate genealogical and historical information to the general public, using appropriate means.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Roger Beaudry, President

On Saturday May 29th there will be a ceremony at the Elder Ballou Meeting House Cemetery in Cumberland, RI. This cemetery, located on a gentle hill, once overlooked the Elder Ballou Meeting House, long ago destroyed by fire. The cemetery itself dates back over 200 years, and contains the remains of most of the inhabitants of the Northern Cumberland area, including that of Reverend Abner Ballou himself. Many of those buried in this cemetery had long and productive lives which benefited not only themselves, but the community.

One life was not so long, however. Harriet Amelia Ballou died July 3, 1808 at the age of 1 year 11 months, and 26 days. This story begins over 190 years after her death. Approximately 15 years ago her headstone was stolen. It was taken by a college student from New York state who decided that he wanted to take a bit of New England back home with him. It lay in a backyard for many years until a concerned neighbor, interested in returning it to its rightful home, contacted the CGN (Connecticut Gravestone Network). All this person knew is that the stone had come from New England and had decided to try Connecticut first. A check of their database found no stone matching this name. A check of the Ballou Genealogy revealed that a large number of that family resided in Northern RI around that time. John Spaulding of CGN then contacted John Sterling of the RI Cemetery Transcription Project. A check of the main RI database revealed that a person of that name and death date had a stone in the Elder Ballou Cemetery. John contacted me since I had done the actual transcription of that particular cemetery and asked me to check it out.

While Harriet Amelia's stone had indeed been there during the 1930's when the last transcription was done, my data revealed that the stone was no longer there in 1995. Harriet's brother, mother and father were still there, but Harriet was missing.

I went back to the cemetery and found the remaining stones. The other three were still there, but there was a gap where Harriet's stone was once located. It had taken some phone calls, e-mails, and research, but we had found Harriet Amelia Ballou's resting place.

On Saturday May 29th at 2:00 PM we will formally return the headstone to its rightful place with her family. Those of us who are interested in genealogy should be very glad to have a

dedicated group of individuals working to preserve these ancient burial grounds. It is because of the databases compiled by both Connecticut and Rhode Island that this one remnant of a person's life has been returned to its rightful place.

If I could only find out where Jemima Carter's stone came from, I could get it out of my garage and return her to her family.

Thoughts on Our Favorite Subject

*Your ancestors were real swingers... from trees and gallows.
*When you were born, your mother had a bad heir day.
*You're the Dutch Elm disease of your family tree.
*You must be the fertilizer for your family tree.
*Every family tree has some sap in it... I guess you're it.
*Your ancestry must be a river, since you're such a drip.
*Genealilocks and the forebears.
*Ghosts are merely unsubstantiated roomers.
*Genealogy isn't fatal, but it can be a grave disease.
*My genes are faded and full of holes!
*Genealogists are like monkeys, always in trees.
*Genealogists do it for centuries.
*Genealogists do it with dead relatives.
*Genealogists will date any old thing.
*Genealogy in the buff... I mean a genealogy buff!
*A family reunion is an effective form of birth control.
*Be nice to your kids. They'll choose your nursing home.
*Insanity is hereditary – you get it from your children.
*He ain't heavy... He's my brother's aunt's sister's husband.
*My kids will appreciate the research I've done... when pigs fly.
*Learn from your parents' mistakes – use birth control.
*Heredity: Everyone believes in it until their children act like fools.
*Climbing my family tree was fun until the nuts appeared.
*Insanity runs in many families; in mine it gallops.
*My family coat of arms ties at the back... is that normal?
*Misers are hard to live with, but they make fine ancestors.
*Computer Genealogy: Tracing your system's roots back to the abacus.
*We are born naked, wet and hungry. Then things get worse.
*Dead people like to hang around cemeteries.
*Adam and Eve probably found genealogy boring.
*Can a first cousin once removed come back?
*Time is the thing that keeps stuff from happening all at once.
*On a tombstone: "I TOLD YOU I WAS SICK."
*Sign in a Pennsylvania cemetery: Persons are prohibited from picking flowers from any but their own graves.

In Memoriam
Therese Y. Poliquin

Seekonk, MA—With the passing of Therese Y. Poliquin on Wednesday, February 24th, our Society lost a valuable worker, and many of us a close personal friend. She was a long time member of the AFGS and its Treasurer from 1982 until illness forced her to retire in 1998.

Therese was 74, and the wife of the late Edward J. Poliquin. She was born in Fall River, MA, a daughter of the late Albert and Eva (Banville) Vermette. She had lived in Somerset, MA before moving to Seekonk 50 years ago.

She was a bookkeeper for Sunnybrook Farms and after retiring was a part-time bookkeeper for World Wide Travel. In addition to her activities for the Society, she was a member of the Stagettes, a club she helped found in 1952.

She leaves a son, Edward J. Poliquin, Jr. of North Conway, NH; two daughters, Elaine J. Williams of Woodstock, GA, and Denise M. Poliquin of Seekonk. She also leaves a brother, Elizee Couture of Somerset, MA.

Burial was in the family plot in Mount St. Mary Cemetery in Pawtucket.

The Society extends its condolences to her children and to her brother.

In Memoriam

Rev. Clarence J. d'Entremont

Meteghan, Nova Scotia — Funeral services were held in West Pubnico, Monday, 16 November 1998, for the Rev. Clarence Joseph d'Entremont, 89. Rev. d'Entremont was a retired Eudist Fathers priest who served in the Fall River Diocese in Massachusetts and was well known as an authority on Acadian history and genealogy. Father d'Entremont died Friday. November 13, at the Villa Acadienne in Meteghan. where he lived since 1997.

Born in West Pubnico, the future priest graduated in 1931 from St, Anne's College in Church Point, and that year entered the Sacred Heart Seminary in Charlesbourg, Québec, a seminary maintained be the Congregation of Jesus and Mary, better known as the Eudist Fathers.

Father d'Entremont was ordained 9 February 1936, by Most Rev. Patrick Chiasson, bishop of the Bathurst Diocese in New Brunswick, now deceased.

Father d'Entremont was sent to Rome for two years of study in canon law at the Angelicum, earning his licentiate degree. He also studied canon law at Laval University in Québec and at the Catholic University in Washington, DC.

Father d'Entremont taught in seminaries in the United States and Canada until 1952, when he was incardinated as a priest of the Fall River Diocese. A curate at St. Antony of Padua Church in New Bedford from 1952-65. Father d'Entremont also was director of St. Anthony High School from 1960-65. He was chaplain of Our Lady's Haven in Fairhaven, MA, from 1965 until his retirement in 1982.

The author of a five-volume history of Cape Sable, Nova Scotia, and a biography of the Rev. Basile-Joseph Babin of the Eudist Fathers, Father d'Entremont was the author of many other historical works written in French and English.

Father d'Entremont, whose forebears settled in Acadia as early as 1651, did much research into Acadian genealogy and history, and was a member of the Acadian Historical Society and a co-founder of similar societies in Maine and Nova Scotia.

He founded the Massachusetts Society of Genealogists in 1975 and began a federation of such societies. He organized an Acadian celebration in Massachusetts for which Gov. Michael S. Dukakis proclaimed 24 May 1976 as Acadia Day.

The Devoted, the Distinguished, and the Dauntless

Unusual Women of Seventeenth Century New France

by: Eugena Poulin, RSM, PhD

Editor's Note: Research for this article was funded by the Small Grants Committee of Salve Regina University.

They were courageous, they were indefatigable, and they were exceptional. They were the women of New France. "They were Amazons," stated the *Relations of the Jesuits*[1] referring to the religious women who founded the schools and hospitals of the French colony. Actually, this latter statement could be applied to most of the women who chose to be the earliest French pioneers.

Merely reading the accounts about the voyages across the Atlantic confirms for posterity the courage, spirit of adventure, and devotion of these tenacious settlers. Some passengers claim that the worst part of the experience was the terrible seasickness. Many of those afflicted were neither able to lift their heads off the bed, nor swallow even clear water for days on end. Some prayed that their sufferings would end, even by death. There were many other harsh realities in traveling to the New World. There was of course the danger of being lost at sea, being captured by pirates, or dying slowly of some disease contracted aboard ship. The odor of human maladies, human waste, and the lack of fresh air was not conducive to good health or recovery from illness.

The courage required of a colonist did not begin with crossing the ocean or with arrival in the new land. The bravery started with the decision to face the unknown, to endure the pain of separation from loved ones, to leave the security of the comfortably familiar. Yet, the women came. In studying the feminine influence on colonial life in the Seventeenth Century throughout the known world, it would not be surprising to discover that the women of New France were probably among the most influential in their own colony.

Colby in his book declares, "The truth is that after searching the Seventeenth Century for the types of Canadian women, we find two and only two. These are the wife and the nun."[2] Ultimately, women were wives and nuns, but a great deal more. The early colony of New France had a unusual social composition. It is perhaps valid to say that it was unique. At the colony's beginning there were few women. Despite their scarcity the feminine colonists were varied in interest, social standing, and motivation.

Probably the best known women were the nuns who arrived shortly after

the founding of Québec.[3] Their celebrity, no doubt, springs from the fact that they were more educated than many of the other colonists and left written accounts in letters and reports for future generations. Also among the founding women were a number of noble or high society ladies. Later in the century came the much written about and romanticized *Filles du Roi*. In this group there were also a number of noble or genteel members as well as the hardy peasant girls or women. The less hailed were the hundreds of peasant girls or women who came with one or more family members. Thus the feminine segment of the colony included religious women, high society women, women contracted for marriage and peasant women.

A word needs to be said about another segment of this early feminine society; the Indian woman. They were not French, however, many learned to speak French, nor were they immigrants intending to found a colony, but there seems little doubt that their influence on the French was considerable.

In order to better understand Seventeenth Century French colonial life and women's place in it, several women have been profiled here. These selections were made to indicate the unusual aspects of these women's lives or their distinctive contributions to the founding of New France.

Religious Women, The Devoted

The Jesuits had first used the term "Amazons" in describing the nuns who were among the earliest women to arrive in New France. There are some individual names that stand out in the history recounting the saga of the Québec and Montréal settlements such as: the Ursuline, Mother Marie de L'INCARNATION , the Hospitalières, Mothers Marie GUENET, Anne LE COINTRE, Marie FORESTIER, and Marguerite BOURGEOYS, founder of the Congregation of Notre Dame in Canada.[4]

The two religious women selected for this article were both famous in their day. The names of Marguerite BOURGEOYS and Marie-Catherine DE LONGPRÉ can be found in most comprehensive histories of Canada.

Early Years

Marguerite BOURGEOYS was born in Troyes in Champagne on 17 April 1620. It happened to be Good Friday . She was born to a bourgeois family. Her father Abraham BOURGEOYS was a coin minter and candle maker and her mother, Guillemette GARNIER, belonged to a prosperous bourgeois family. The Bourgeoys were able to provide their twelve children with a comfortable lifestyle. Contrary to some popular biographies, Marguerite was nineteen years old, not twelve at the death of her parents. She was sixth in the family and it was her older sister, Anne, who was in charge of the orphans. Marguerite went to live with Mme du Chula, sister of Chomedy de Maisonneuve. Later Marguerite tried to enter the Carmelite Order, as well as the Poor Clares, but she was rejected by both orders. She taught in a Sodality for girls which was associated with the Congregation of Notre Dame. The Directress of the Congregation was Chomedy de Maisonneuve's other sister. In 1641 Paul CHOMEDY de

MAISONNEUVE with Jeanne MANCE had founded Montréal, then called Ville Marie. MAISONNEUVE had returned to France to implore the French government to send some soldiers to help with the defense of the colony which had been sorely harassed by the Iroquois. Hearing the tales of adventure and the primitive life in Canada several of the extern sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame begged MAISONNEUVE to take them to the new colony. He refused giving as a reason that the colony could not support the nuns. It was through his sisters that MAISONNEUVE had been introduced to Marguerite BOURGEOYS in 1652. When she offered to go to Montréal her offer was accepted.

There was a suggestion of a marriage proposal by MAISONNEUVE which Marguerite refused, saying she had taken a vow of chastity. MAISONNEUVE never married[5]

Founding of a Religious Order

He returned to Canada in September 1653 not only with one hundred five men under contract for five years, but he also brought with him Marguerite BOURGEOYS. She had at first helped Jeanne MANCE with hospital work. They prepared the bodies of the dead for burial and comforted the grieving families.

Marguerite finally was able to devote herself in 1658 to her original goal of being an educator. MAISONNEUVE had given her a log stable which was converted into a school house. Marguerite and her resident pupils used the loft as sleeping quarters. The lessons learned were cooking, sewing and knitting. She introduced weaving as well into Canada. She herself was not well-educated, but she counted on the Jesuits to guide her in teaching the three Rs. She returned to France in 1658 to recruit some young ladies to help her. Her quest was successful; she brought with her three young bourgeoises Edmée CHATEL, Marie RAISIN, Anne HIOU and also a young girl to do the heavy work. The group of young ladies was already known as "Filles de la Congrégation." The voyage to Canada, however, was not without its particular perils. On 29 June 1659 the ship set sail. They were hardly out of the port when typhus broke out. The vessel , the *Saint André*, had been used as a hospital ship and had not been disinfected, in consequence, an epidemic aboard decimated the passengers. At first the captain and passengers did not want Marguerite and her volunteers to tend to the sick. They did not want them to become infected, considering them too valuable to the colony. Among the one hundred ten passengers, mostly destined for Montréal, there were two Sulpicians, three Hospitalières, Jeanne MANCE, Marguerite BOURGEOYS and her young ladies. After ten people had died the captain relented and allowed the sisters to care for the stricken passengers. Jeanne MANCE herself fell prey to the fever which was probably exacerbated by the extreme seasickness she always suffered. Once they began their ministration there were no more deaths aboard ship.

In 1669 Marguerite built the first convent in Montréal. It was a revolu-

tionary idea because it was uncloistered.[6] Once again she traveled to France to request approval for her congregation in 1670. She received the approval of the King and the Church for her religious order. She returned to Canada with three of her nieces Marguerite, Catherine and Louise SOMMILLARD.[7] Two of the women, Marguerite and Catherine, entered their aunt's congregation.

A Nun, and A Marriage Bureau

Marguerite rendered many services to the new colony. The two most unusual were her function as a marriage bureau supervisor and as a participant in a homicide trial. She and her nuns became part of the marriage bureau when the French Crown decided the colony was not growing fast enough. Thus appeared the famous *Filles du Roi*. At the arrival of the potential brides, Marguerite and her companions met the young, and sometimes not so young, ladies at the dock, housed and supervised them until their marriages.

Nun in Homicide Case

This tragedy began with the ANDRÉ family, Françoise NADEAU and her husband, Michel ANDRÉ, dit Saint-Michel. In 1673 their little girl, Catherine, was only five years old. It seems that Catherine was a rather mischievous child and a bit difficult to correct. After some minor infraction by the child on July 19th, the mother wishing to discipline her brought the errant child to the barn and placed her in a barrel. In order that she remain a prisoner in this makeshift cage, the mother placed a board over the opening of the barrel. On top of the board, she added a sack of flour. Later the mother returned to the barn to retrieve the little child only to discover that she was dead. Apparently in an effort to free herself from incarceration, Catherine had tried to lift the board with her head. Her neck, unable to support the weight of the flour, became jammed between the board and the edge of the barrel. The distraught mother knew she had to report this death to the authorities. Grieving, guilty and frightened she sought the help of Sister BOURGEOYS. After listening to what had occurred, Marguerite summoned two surgeons, Jean MARTINET de Fonblanche and Antoine FORESTIER, to examine the little corpse and to prepare testimony for the court.

The tribunal heard the case on July 21. Sister BOURGEOYS was called as a witness. She recounted for the court all that had been told to her by Françoise ANDRÉ, the defendant. She stated that the accused was a good mother and that it had been her intent merely to punish her daughter who was also acknowledged to be impish. There is no record of the mourning mother facing indictment and the case seems to have ended there. It was a strange situation since nuns were not usually called to appear in court and especially not in homicide cases.[8]

Fire and Victims

Life presented many obstacles to Marguerite's young community. In 1683, after thirty years of tireless work in Canada, Marguerite tendered her res-

ignation as superior of the Congregation. However, there were other hardships waiting in the wings for this heroine. On the night and morning of December 6 and 7 a fire consumed the Motherhouse of the Congregation. Even more devastating than the destruction of the convent building were the deaths of the two likely candidates for the position of superior. Geneviève DUROSOY and Marguerite SOMMILLARD. The latter was the niece and namesake of Sister BOURGEOYS. Desolate at this tragedy, Marguerite, nevertheless, gathered her courage and relinquished her plan to retire. She once again took the reins of authority.

It was during this period that numerous new foundations were started; both old age homes and schools. Besides the fact that an uncloistered order was very unusual, Sister BOURGEOYS also held very avant-garde pedagogical ideas. It was always one of her priorities to educate poor girls. This in an age when education for the poor was rare and education for girls was considered unnecessary and superfluous. Marguerite finally retired as superior of the order in 1693 and died on 12 January 1700.

The list of her accomplishments and that of her Congregation is impressive. She was a woman of foresight, daring and generosity. The church recognized this extraordinary woman by beatifying her in 1950.

Devils, Devils, Devils!

Another rather fascinating and curious feminine personality was Mother Catherine St. Augustin. Was she, in fact, a mystic or was she delusional? The priests of the day seem to argue that she was saintly in every way. Some of her experiences were, at best, mystifying.

This nun born Marie-Catherine SIMON DE LONGPRÉ, in Bayeux, France 3 May 1632 was the daughter of the prominent Jacques SIMON DE LONGPRÉ and Françoise JOURDAN who belonged to the parish of St. Sauveur le Vicomte, Normandy. Marie-Catherine was placed under the tutelege of her grandmother and of a maternal relative, M. JOURDAN, a chaplain, a man of prayer and undisputed sanctity. At a very early age she showed signs of her religious intensity. Her spiritual advisor, the Jesuit, Father MALHERBE, guided her to extraordinary heights of spirituality. As a young girl she had already developed a special solicitude for the sick. At one point in her childhood, she herself suffered torturous ear pain and underwent unbelievable treatments. At times the remedy was more excruciating than the ailment. One treatment sometimes used on ear problems was to pour red hot ashes into the ear. Despite the ministrations of the medical profession, she recovered. At age ten she signed in her blood, a vow to the Virgin Mary that she would always regard her as her mother. She further promised that she would never commit a mortal sin, and that she would always be chaste.

A Slight Case of Vanity

However, during a very short time in her very early adolescence she

seemed to have been taken by the need to be loved, to please others and to be admired for her beauty. She would soon regret this brief worldliness. At twelve she felt the call to a religious vocation, but at first resisted since the world still held some little attachments for her. She entered the order of the the Hospitalières of Bayeux in October 1644 where her older sister was already a member. Realizing that her age was probably an impediment to becoming a novice, she clearly stated to the community that she entered this convent to see if, in fact, her religious vocation was truly genuine.

When a request from Québec for reinforcement for the *Hôtel de Dieu* was announced to the community at Bayeux by Jesuit Father Vimont, both LONGPRÉ sisters readily volunteered; however, their father, Jacques DE LONGPRÉ, a man of weighty influence, objected strongly and prevailed on his older daughter to withdraw her name. Marie-Catherine, however, was adamant in her resolve. So distraught was the father about the projected departure of his daughter that he brought a court case to prevent his little girl from undertaking the grueling and hazardous journey and assuming a primitive and isolated lifestyle. There was also some consternation in the community at Bayeux over the loss of such a young and enthusiastic member. Because of her youth it was feared that she might decide she had no vocation after arrival in the far land.

There was also the fear that the very powerful LONGPRÉ would withhold financial support or worse still retaliate against the community for the loss of his daughter. Marie-Catherine did receive secret support, however, from an unlikely source. The Queen Mother[9] sent a confidential missive to the diocesan officials in favor of Catherine's departure for Canada. . Because of the young girl's steadfastness, her father and family finally relented. She left all that was dear to her, not only her parents, but also the community in which there were several family members including two sisters and an aunt. Marie-Catherine was not yet sixteen years old, the age required for the pronouncement of vows. She was allowed to make simple vows before leaving Bayeux. Upon reaching Nantes she was professed at that convent on 4 May 1648, the day after her birthday.[10]

The three members of the *Hospitalières*[11] bound for Canada boarded the ship 27 May 1648 at La Rochelle. They spent three months on the ocean. Catherine, now Mother Catherine de Saint- Augustin, was so ill during the crossing that she thought she was going to die. In fact many did die, including the capitain of the ship, Pierre LE GARDEUR de Repentigny. As soon as the *Hospitalières* arrived in Québec 19 August 1648, they helped their welcoming Community members to set up the hospital for the sick passengers. Only three died in the hospital, but the religious suffered greatly because a large portion of their supplies, food and wood were consumed taking care of the ailing new arrivals. They were now nine nuns.[12]

Mother Catherine quickly became enamoured of her adopted country. When the sisters, especially her aunt, became alarmed at the decline in her health, she wrote them a letter in

which she stated, "I prize Canada too much to be able to separate myself from it. Believe me, my dear aunt, it is only death or a complete reversal in this country that would shatter this bond."[13] Mother Catherine was widely respected in life and in death.

Devils, Angel, and Potion

In today's world, it is difficult to reconcile her many visions of the devil and her claim in her journal that she was beseiged by many devils. Her interior life according to her journal and her biographer, Father RAGUENEAU, was tortured, yet exteriorly, she was surrounded by an aura of peace. On 5 February 1663, there was a substantial earthquake in Québec. Mother Catherine saw four devils shaking the earth.[14] The tremors continued until September. Catherine attributed the quakes to God's anger at the inhabitants of Canada. She also saw an angel who, according to the visionary, brought warnings to the populace. She had several visions which RAGUENEAU described in his biography. In a bizarre instance, her religious fervor led her in 1665 to mix the pulverized bones of the martyred Jesuit, Jean DE BRÉBEUF,[15] in the beverage of an very ill heretic brought to the Hôtel-Dieu. This Huguenot had rebuffed all efforts at conversion to Catholicism. The potion prepared by Mother Catherine appeared to produce the desired results.

Throughout her religious life in Québec she occupied several positions of importance in her Community. She was treasured by her colleagues and honored by the clergy and laity alike.

Whether one considered her saintly or delusional, she was indeed an unusual and complex woman. Mother Catherine de Saint-Augustin died 8 May 1668 in Québec at the age of thirty-six.[16]

The Distinguished, Society Women

There were several famous names among the noble class in Québec and Montréal in the Seventeenth century. Madame DE LA PELTRIE and Madame D'AILLEBOUST.[17] Probably one of the best recognized names is that of Madame DE CHAMPLAIN. It is clear that her name is well known, but she remains baffling in many respects. Madame de CHAMPLAIN was born Hélène BOULLÉ in Paris in 1598 to a noble Huguenot family. Hélène's biographers often depicted her as a victim of the customs and habits of the Seventeenth Century.

In 1610 Samuel DE LA CHAMPLAIN, who had founded Québec two years earlier needed a financially productive marriage. He was a man of forty-three, an adventurer and explorer. It can logically be speculated that this was the reason he married Hélène, who at the time, was only twelve years old. Because of her youth, consummation of the marriage was postponed until at least after 1612. Champlain reportedly received 6000 *livres*[18] dowry. He left his bride after only three months and returned to Québec. During her first two years of marriage she studied and converted to the Catholic faith. She also persuaded her mother and her brother, Eustache, to follow her example.

Since Champlain spent most of his time in New France or on his many voyages to and from the New World, the couple spent very little time together during their first ten years of marriage. Surprisingly in 1620, Hélène accompanied her husband to Québec. In any event, the twenty-two year old noble and probably pampered woman arrived in the primitive French settlement. What she discovered in the colony were a couple of crude habitations, natives dressed in tribal attire, whose cleanliness was not assured, and no physical comforts. The natives viewed her with awe. They considered her beautiful, her apparel elegant and her hand mirror magical. At that time Madame HÉBERT and her daughters were the only permanent female inhabitants of the colony. There does not appear to have been much contact between the HÉBERT women and Madame DE CHAMPLAIN. The latter spent much of her time during her four year stay in Québec educating the Indians. It is recorded that she was even more proficient than some of the Jesuits in her command of the Algonquin language. She left Québec in 1624 with her husband to return to France. He remained in France until 1626 at which time he returned to Québec. She, however, did not accompany him this time. It can reasonably be speculated that the lonely, rude and extremely dangerous life of a colonist motivated her decision. During the interim, Hélène had sought her husband's permission to enter the convent, but he refused. Yet, she continued to follow her husband's career and even forced Guillaume DE CAEN[19] to settle some financial affairs in favor of her husband.

Champlain returned to Paris in 1629 and remained with his wife until 1633. He then returned to Québec and died there in 1635. It was not until his death that she began to plan for her entrance into the convent. It would take many years to straighten her husband's financial affairs and therefore, she was forced to postpone her entry into religious life. Ten years after the death of her husband, Hélène BOULLÉ CHAMPLAIN entered the Ursuline convent in the faubourg St. Jacques in Paris. Again her situation was ambiguous. She entered the convent as a benefactor and as a novice. A rather unconventional situation then arose. While still a novice, she received permission to found a convent in Meaux where she then pronounced her vows. There the archives state she had to endure numerous difficulties despite the fact that she was allowed many privileges not given to the other religious. She had better food, she received uncensored mail, had a heated room, and was excused from the early morning prayers. Most documents state she died in the odor of sanctity.

Two Countries and Four Husbands

Eleanor DE GRANDMAISON, in total contrast to Hélène BOULLÉ, was a shrewd businesswoman. While marriage had not apparently appealed to Hélène, Eleanor DE GRANDMAISON on the other hand was married four times, twice in France and twice in Canada. Reading about her life one learns about an enterprising woman.

Eleanor was born around 1619 or 1620[20] in Clamecy in Nivernais. She married Antoine BOUDIER, sieur de

Beauregard, a man of whom little is known. She was merely an adolescent at the time of this nuptial. This was, of course, a common occurrence at this period. Eleanor, a widow while still probably a teenager, married François DE CHAVIGNY de Berchereau before 1641. She and her husband are listed on the ship's register as arriving in Québec in June 1641. She is identified as being twenty-two years old. Chavigny, a man of noble birth, was originally from Créancy in Champagne. In 1640 the Company of New France which had its headquarters in Paris had given important concessions of land to Eleanor and her husband. One piece of land was two *arpents*[21] in the area of Québec City where the couple could build a home and garden. Located outside the city boundaries was another much larger piece of land of thirty *arpents*. The couple also possessed a third grant of land, though small, only a *demie lieue*[22] by three *lieues*, but important because it bordered the St Lawrence River. They had six children.

CHAVIGNY was influential in the community. Governor MONTMAGNY entrusted CHAVIGNY with several governmental positions. He became a replacement for the Governor during his absences. In 1648 he served as a member of the newly formed Council of Québec with such notables as Robert GIFFARD and Jean-Paul GODEFROY. The couple exhibited *sang froid* living at Sillery and at the fief of Chavigny at a time when the Iroquois were on the warpath. Most colonists dared not live far from the enclave of Québec. Eleanor moved to the island of Orleans with her husband in 1648 thus becoming the first white woman to inhabit the island. Her husband who was ailing, decided in 1651 to return to France to receive treatment, but he died en route. Eleanor was formally given the concessions previously owned by her husband. Five months after his death Father CHAUMONT married Eleanor to Jacques GOURDEAU de Beaulieu on 13 August 1652 in the chapel of the island of Orleans.

Fire and Murder

Jacques GOURDEAU de Beaulieu, Eleanor's third husband, had been a Québec colonist since 1636. He had previously been a native of Niort in Poitou in France. He was five or six years her junior. Her new husband also received a concession of land in 1662 which was located in the lower city of Québec where he built a house. All was not well in the GOURDEAU household, on 29 May 1663 the house burned down with GOURDEAU inside. It was not an accident. The fire had been set by the family servant to conceal the murder of the master. Eleanor de GRANDMAISON was again a widow and the mother of four more children. Eleanor's fourth and final marriage was celebrated less than five months after the murder of GOURDEAU, husband number three. Her new husband was no less a businessman than her previous spouses. As Jacques DE CAILHAULT de la Tesserie was born around 1620, he was about the same age as his bride. He was originally from Saint-Herblain, close to Nantes, and was a member of an old noble family. He like his predecessors was active in the colony. He was a member of the Sovereign Council, and the Council on fur trade. He discovered a mine at Bay St. Paul and served as an interpreter. He

died in 1673. Eleanor, now in her early fifties had been widowed four times, was the mother of ten children, and possessed valuable real estate. It seemed that her business life and family kept her sufficiently occupied, and so she never remarried. She died in February 1692, at the age of seventy-two years old. She was active and influential in the society and in the business of the young French colony.

The Dauntless Where are the Women?

From the earliest days of the French colony, there had been concern about the lack of women. Since the ultimate goal of the French King was that Canada become a viable settlement, steps had to be taken to insure its success. It was, therefore, decided to send some respectable young girls and women to New France to marry the inhabitants. Between 1663 and 1673 more than seven hundred females made the voyage to Canada. They ranged from twelve to forty-five, though very few were from the older age category for obvious reasons. The French Crown funded the cost of the passage, the upkeep of the young ladies until their marriage, and furnished a dowry. There were provisions that only healthy females of good character were to be recruited. According to historians most of the girls and women were from the urban areas; some were orphaned, most were impoverished, some were widowed. It must have been desperation or a spirit of adventure that motivated these young ladies to undertake such an endeavor. Perhaps in some instances it was a combination of both. It is conceivable that the decision to immigrate may have been made by families or the authorities for many of the hapless girls. Their circumstances by any account present a romantic picture, a picture which the lived reality most likely quickly obliterated.

If biographies of each of the *Filles du Roi* existed there is little doubt that their stories would evoke awe, admiration and perhaps even sympathy. In his book, *Les Filles du Roi en Nouvelle-France*, Silvio DUMAS does provide some biographical information on these young women.[23]

All in the Family

Since many of the ladies coming to New France as wards of the King were orphans or destitute, most came alone. However, there were cases of relatives being among the contingent financed by the French Crown. There were for instance the DESCHALETS sisters, Claude, Elizabeth and Madeleine[24] and the DUVAL sisters, Françoise, Madeleine and Marguerite.

A rather unusual case was the situation of three RACLOS ladies: Françoise, Marie, and Marie-Madeleine. The fact that all three came to New France in 1671 is not so bizarre. That their father came with them and in addition gave each one a dowry of one thousand *livres* was quite curious. It is true that many of the *Filles du Roi* did have small dowries in addition to the royal grants. Since all the records of the *Filles du Roi* did not mention the dowry in the contract, it is difficult to ascertain if the dowry given to the RACLOS ladies were among the largest. But of those mentioned in the

DUMAS research, the RACLOS dowries were among the most substantial. Why would a father send his three daughters thousands of miles from home, accompany them on the hazardous passage, and supply generous dowries? Were there adversities at home? Whatever the reasons, the circumstances were unique.

The three girls were the daughters of Bon (Godebon) RACLOS and Marie VIENNOT. All the girls were born in Paris. At the time of their immigration Françoise was eighteen, Marie-Madeleine seventeen, and Marie fifteen. The first to marry was the youngest, Marie who married René BEAUDOIN in October of 1671. Both of her sisters and her father were present at the nuptials and signed the marriage contract. The following month of the same year, Marie-Madeleine married Nicolas PERROT, a captain in the military and stationed in the area of Trois-Rivières. Again two sisters and the father attended the wedding and signed the contract. Finally Françoise, the oldest, married Michel DAVID in December 1671. The bride's two sisters were there to witness their sister's marriage, but Bon RACLOS, their father, who apparently had come specifically to accompany his daughters to the New World had taken the last ship returning to France. The father's motivation in these transactions certainly arouse some curiosity. What finally happened to the RACLOS family?

The Ordinary And The Not So Ordinary

Also among the dauntless were all the many peasant girls and women who made the French New World their home in the Seventeenth Century. The term peasant as used here indicates those of the working class. In Europe it frequently indicated those involved in rude farm labor. Here the term applies to all those who did not belong to the moneyed class or the nobility. Ultimately, it is often difficult to write about this class of women since many times they themselves did not know how to write, and therefore left no letters or journals. Unless there was a court case or a testament (See *Je Me Souviens*/Spring 1998) or they are heroines like Madeleine DE VERCHÈRES, it is surprising that anything at all can be gleaned about the lives of these all-important women. Yet, many genealogists, after perusing numerous documents, can relate some astonishing facts about some female Seventeenth Century ancestor.

The two women selected for particular inclusion among the dauntless are Guillemette HÉBERT and Jeanne MERCIER. The former eventually became identified with nobility since members of her family obtained letters patent of nobility.

First Family of Canada

Guillemette HÉBERT, daughter of Louis HÉBERT and Marie ROLLET, was born into a family, that though at the time, was not noble, had been reasonably successful in Paris. Guillemette lived a life of adventure, danger and sorrow. Her father, Louis was an apothecary. Why he would leave a seemingly comfortable life in France for the uncertainties and dangers of the New World can only be conjectured. He first settled in Acadia. He left his Pari-

sian wife twenty-five, his oldest daughter, Anne six, Guillemette four and a son eighteen months old. The expedition in which HÉBERT participated consisted of two ships which left Le Havre 7 March 1604. HÉBERT returned to his family in France in 1606 but made plans to return to Acadia, but this time his faithful and long suffering wife accompanied him. During a conflict with England, they were captured and taken as prisoners to England, but they made their way back to France. Finally, HÉBERT was offered land in Québec by CHAMPLAIN if he would become a colonist in the newly formed settlement of New France. It was 1617 and there was no doubt that the HÉBERT family would accompany him. They left from Honfleur, Normandy and arrived in Québec 14 June 1617. Guillemette was approximately seventeen years old. From this date until 1634 the HÉBERTS were for all practical purposes the only French family permanently settled there. There were, of course, the *coureurs des bois*[25] who made their sporadic appearances in Québec. These individuals had domiciles that changed according to the run trapping season for the fur trade, the change of the weather or the animosity of the Indians. The HÉBERT household seemed to be the center of the social, educational and religious life of the colony.

Despite all the medical assistance given to the colonists by the HÉBERT couple , their own daughter, Anne died giving birth to her first child. She had been married in 1618 at approximately twenty years of age. This was the first Catholic marriage in the colony. There doesn't appear to be any record of the birth of the child in the church records. In 1627 the HÉBERT family held a great banquet presided over by Marie ROLLET and her family. The festivities were held to celebrate the baptism of the Indian, Naneogauchit, son of Chomina. The size of the feast seems incredible for his period of time. The guests consumed fifty-six wild geese, thirty ducks, twenty teals[26] and a quantity of other game. The HÉBERTS welcomed the Indians. In fact, the HÉBERTS were the educators of the female Indians because the Jesuits thought it more proper that they, as priests, concentrate on the males. Thus Guillemette had unusual role models in her parents.

On 26 August 1621 Guillemette married Guillaume COUILLARD in Québec. The bride was approximately twenty-one. Guillemette's husband had arrived in Canada in 1613 and had hired on as a carpenter and sailor for the Merchant Company. The two families had long been associated because Louis HÉBERT, Guillemette's father, had chosen to form a partnership with COUILLARD.

Multi-Racial Household

This marriage between Guillemette HÉBERT and COUILLARD would establish a genealogical tree with numerous branches because Guillemette and her husband had ten children.[27] Most of Guillemette's daughters would marry very young. Louise was twelve, Marguerite eleven, Elizabeth fourteen, Marie fifteen and Catherine-Gertrude sixteen. Like her mother before her Guillemette welcomed all to her home, Indians, *coureurs du bois*, and those passing through

town. The Jesuits found the HÉBERT-COUILLARD home turbulent and unconventional. Guillemette became the godmother for numerous Indian babies. Two particular Indians who came under the tutelage of Guillemette and her mother were the two young Indians, Charity and Esperance, adopted by CHAMPLAIN.[28] In addition to the Indians, a black youth, Olivier LEJEUNE, who was left behind when the English departed Canada, remained with Guillemette's family.

Tragedy

Life was not without tragedy for theCouillard family. Guillemette HÉBERT-COUILLARD like so many Seventeenth Century women frequently faced death and danger. On 24 June 1661 her twenty year old son, Nicolas, was killed by the Iroquois and the following year her son, Guillaume, twenty-seven, succumbed to the same fate. Guillemette became a widow on 5 March 1663 and sometime before 1666 her daughter, Madeleine died. In less than five years, Guillemette suffered the loss of three children and her husband.

Guillemette's life was novel and intense. She was always immersed in colonial society and she demonstrated independence in her actions. She was a woman of strength, compassion, and intelligence. There are myriad Canadians and Franco-Americans today who can claim Guillemette HÉBERT COUILLARD as an ancestor. She died in the Hôtel-Dieu in Québec in 1684. She was approximately eighty-four years old.

Twelve Pounds of Butter and a Basilica

Jeanne MERCIER, the peasant woman, was much less renowned. Even today some aspects of her life are unknown. It is believed that she immigrated with her family from the Mortagne region of France before 1636. Her father, Loup MERCIER, and her mother, Jeanne GAILLARD, were married 25 June 1611 in France. Jeanne was born 25 November 1621 and baptized by the midwife. She was solemnly baptized in Mortagne in 1622, her godparents were Pierre ROCHÈRE and Anne LAPROU. In 1639 she was in Québec where she married Claude POULIN[29] in the church of the Recouvrance, Québec 8 August 1639 by Jesuit Father Nicolas ADAM and witnessed by Guillaume BOIVIN and le seigneur de Beauport, Robert GIFFARD.

Jeanne and her husband vanished from the civil register for several years. Even their daughter, Marie's birth was lost because of the fire at the church of the Recouvrance which took place in June 1640. At this time all the church registers were destroyed. Many of the records were later reconstituted by the clergy and the colonists, but since Jeanne and her husband had already returned to France, Jeanne's first daughter's birth was left undocumented. However, it was other birth records that provide a clue to Jeanne and Claude's location in France. In the repertoire of St Maclou in Rouen, Normandy in 1645 there is the baptismal entry for Pascal POULIN and one for Madeleine's baptism in 1646. The reasons which impelled Jeanne and her husband to make the perilous journey back to France are unclear. It most likely concerned the POULIN side of the family since Rouen

was Claude's hometown. During this same period of time the governmental documents in Paris indicated that Claude was granted a parcel of land in Québec by Olivier LE TARDIFF. Around 1648 Jeanne returned with her husband and children to Québec. Her fourth child, Martin, was born in Canada on 26 September 1648, but because the missionary was absent, Martin was baptized at home. He was later solemnly baptized 17 October 1648 by Jesuit Father B. VIMONT in Québec. Jeanne and her husband were intimately allied to St. Anne de Beaupré Church. They had moved to the Côte de Beaupré sometime after they returned from France to take possession of the tract of land they had received which bordered the Saint Lawrence River. Claude sometimes worked for the church. He carved the front door for the first chapel. One of the Poulin children was one of the first babies baptized in the new chapel. When the church needed a new roof it was Jeanne MERCIER POULIN who furnished the food for the roofers for which she was paid twelve pounds of butter. The youngest Poulin boy, Pierre was also baptized at St. Anne de Beaupré. Jeanne's loyalty toward the church extended beyond St. Anne's parish. When Bishop LAVAL visited the area to administer the sacrament of Confirmation, the Poulin family traveled to the site of the ceremonies. This action was undertaken at great personal risk, since it was winter and the Indians had been actively waging war.

Jeanne Mercier POULIN and Claude had nine children, two lost in the forest or stolen by the Indians. Jeanne had forty-eight grandchildren including twin grandchildren who may have been the first twins born to white parents in the New World. Five of those grandchildren would devote themselves to religious life. The very land on which Jeanne and her family built their homes became the site surrounding the now famous basilica of St. Anne de Beaupré. This internationally celebrated shrine now occupies the ground given by her daughter, Marie and her son-in-law, Etienne LESSARD. Jeanne was married to Claude POULIN for forty-eight years, she died on 14 December 1687. Her life partner followed her three days later. Historians might deem it appropriate that Jeanne and her husband are buried in the churchyard of St. Anne de Beaupré.

Heroines and Saints

Although the next category of women was not French, it nevertheless, left an indelible mark on the Seventeenth Century French colony. The Indian women appeared in the journals of many of the early religious: the Ursulines, the Hospitalières, and the Sisters of the Congregation of Notre Dame. They were taught and ministered to by noble women, nuns, and peasant women. These native women like their French counterparts contributed to history, stories of heroism and uniqueness. The women of New France were indeed notable including the native women. One of the motivations for most French religious and many early colonists was the christianization of the Indians. Although the French had more success in dealing with the Huron tribe, they, nevertheless, had friends in other tribes.

Gouentagrandi, an Indian woman belonging to the noble circle of the

Oneida tribe can reasonably be compared to the celebrated Pocahantas. Although Suzanne, her baptismal name, belonged to a warlike tribe, she and her husband, Chief Manchot, proved to be staunch Christians and friends of the French. Little is known about Suzanne's early life, but her heroic efforts in saving the life of Father Pierre MILLET in itself qualifies her for a place among the devoted, the distinguished and the dauntless. In his 1691 writings Father MILLET revealed that he had previously converted this Indian family. This Jesuit was captured in 1689 in a raid on Fort Frontenac. Suzanne and her husband provided shelter and security for the missionary during his captivity. During the time that Father MILLET lived within her safe home, she brought children to him to be baptized. Protecting him from the belligerent faction of her tribe often became very harrowing. At times, in order to provide sanctuary, she was forced to move the priest from house to house. It was through Chief Manchot and Suzanne that Father MILLET was finally able to live among the Oneidas not only in safety but with a position of dignity. Suzanne was also able to help in negotiations between the Indians and Governor Frontenac. The latter held Suzanne in esteem. Many of the details of her life remain obscure because the society in which she lived left few records. Yet her daring actions place her among the dauntless women of New France.

Another native woman whose life impacted the society of the era was Skanouharoua, baptized Geneviève-Agnes. She was originally from the village of Conception. She was the daughter of Pierre ONDÂKION one of the leading members of the Huron tribe and his wife, Jeanne ASENRÂQUEHAM. Both husband and wife were firm Christians. Geneviève had been their first child born after their conversion.

This young Huron had been a boarder with the Ursulines. When the famous fire of 1650 occurred the Ursulines were left with the dilemma of what to do with their boarding students. At the insistence of the Jesuits, the Sisters of the Hôtel-Dieu of Québec, Les Hospitalières, agreed to take in more resident students. Geneviève-Agnès was among their number. She was an astonishingly gifted student learning to read and write French in less than two years. She had such a command of her own language and that of French that she served as an interpreter for the Hurons who came to the Hôtel-Dieu for medical treatment. She inspired all who came in contact with her. She received her First Communion with great devotion and her religious fervor matured.

Subsequently, she prayed that she might become a religious. Contrary to the norm for young native students who were forever seeking the freedom of the open fields, Geneviève-Agnès sought the cloister of the Hôtel-Dieu. Eventually she became a postulant in the order of Hospitalières where she was attentively observed to determine whether she would be a suitable candidate for the religious community. Under critical scrutiny, this young girl was considered to be serious, fervent, humble and pliable. After serving eight months as a postulant she became very ill at the end of October 1657 and because of her acute condition, she was allowed to don the habit of the Hos-

pitalières on 1 November, the Feast of All Saints. She asked to take the name "Tous Les Saints." On November 2, All Souls Day, she was allowed to pronounce her vows. She died November 3, 1657 at six o'clock that night. Geneviève was merely fifteen years old at her death. She was the first native to become a religious.

Conclusion

The women described in this article cannot be considered typical of the Seventeenth Century feminine colonists. Some of these women were rich, while others were poor. Some were religious, some were mothers, still others were simply young women seeking better lives. Yet, most of these women exhibited immense fortitude and noble perseverance. It would be nearly impossible to describe an ordinary Seventeenth Century colonial woman in New France. The words "typical"and "ordinary" could well appear inappropriate in the circumstances in which these women found themselves. Their extraordinary lives, pious motivation, and enduring dedication, raised them in the eyes of most historians from the realm of the mundane to the status of awe-inspiring. Yet, they were human. They were our ancestors. They fashioned our history on Canadian soil. A celebrated psychologist once stated " We are a product of our history." [30] The words of Trevelyan can attempt to summarize the lives of our ancestors:

"Once on this earth once on this familiar spot of ground, walked other men and women, as actual as we are today, thinking their own thoughts, swayed by their own passion, but now all gone, one generation vanishing after another, gone as utterly as we ourselves shall shortly be gone like ghosts at cock-crow."[31]

But we, as the treasurers of our heritage can keep these generations alive by recalling, recording and retelling their stories. Thus, we and they shall not be gone as ghosts, but we can live in our recorded ancestral history We, as genealogists, can leave an inheritance to a new generation.

Endnotes

[1]Reuben Gold Thwaites *The Jesuits Relations and Allied Documents* Vol. I. (Cleveland: The Burrows Brothers, 1898)
[2]Colby, Charles, *Canadian Types of the Old Regime. 1608-1698 (* New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1908)
[3]The Ursulines and Hospitalières nuns arrived in Canada in 1639.
[4]Micheline Dupont, Michèle Jean, Marie Lavoie, and Jennifer Stoddart, *L'Histoires des Femmes au Québec (* Montréal: Le Jour Editeur, 1992)
[5]Ibid. *Dictionnaire Biographique du Canada,* Vol. I. Québec: Les Presses de L'Université Laval, 1966.
[6]It was the first religious order founded in Canada..
[7]Louise Sommillard would later marry Fortin. Jetté
[8]*Bulletin des Recherches Historiques.* Beauceville: L'Eclaireur pp. 192-193.
[9]Anne of Austria (1601-1666) was the daughter of King Philippe of Spain, the widow of Louis XIII, and mother of the future Sun King.
[10]Ibid. p. 67.
[11]Ibid. p. 65. Mothers Anne de l' Assomption (Dieppe), Jeanne Thomas

de Ste Agnès (Vannes), and Catherine de Longpré de Saint-Augustin.

[12]Mothers Marie Forestier de St Bonaventure, Anne LeCointre de St. Bernard, Catherine Vironceau de St. Joseph, Marie Deschamps (or des Champs de St. Joachim), Marthe Sennentos de Ste Geneviève, Anne de l'Assomption (Dieppe), Jeanne Thomas de Ste Agnès (Vannes), Catherine de Saint-Augustin, and Marie G iffard, Sister de St. Ignace, was given the habit in October. Mother Marie Guenet, one of the original nuns, had died in 1646 at the age of thirty six. She had worked in Canada seven years.

[13]*Dictionnaire Biographique du Canada*. p. 623.

[14]*Annales*. p.126.

[15]Jean de Brébeuf was one of the Jesuit martyrs, tortured and killed by the Indians.

[16]She was canonized by Pope John Paul II.

[17]Her maiden name was Barbe Boulogne. (1615-1685).

[18]La livre was a unit of currency sometimes called a chelin. There were twenty sols to a livre. A sol equaled twelve deniers. Modern day equivalents would be difficult to assign because of the fluctuation in money values and the different standards of living.

[19]Guillaume de Caen was a famous Norman merchant in the Seventeenth Century.

[20]Claire Gourdeau, "Etablir ses enfants au XVII[e]: Eleanor de Grandmaison (1619-1692) et sa descendance," *Espaces-Temps Familiaux au Canada aux XVII[e] et XVIII[e] Siècles* . 1995. pp. 45-68. Gourdeau lists Eleanor's birth as 1619. The *Dictionnaire Biographique du Canada* records her birth as 1620.

[21]Arpent was an old French measurement roughly equal to an acre.

[22]Lieue or league equals four kilometers.

[23]Silvio Dumas. *Les Filles du Roi en Nouvelle-France* (Québec: La Société Historique de Québec, 1972)

[24]Two of the sisters, Claude and Madeleine were in slight trouble with the law. Dumas 225.

[25]"Coureurs des bois" referred to the fur trappers.

[26]Teals were small fresh water ducks.

[27]The ten children, six girls and four boys, were born within twenty-three years to the Couillards.

[28]Champlain had adopted three Indian girls, Faith, Hope and Charity. One returned to her tribe.

[29]Claude Poulin arrived in Québec in 1636. His parents were Pascal and Marie Levert.

[30]Adrian Von Kalm.

[31]G.M. Trevelyan. *An Autobiography and Other Essays* quoted by Gillian Tindall in the Preface of *Celestine: Voices from a French Village.*

Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day.
Teach him how to fish and he will sit in a boat and drink beer all day!

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EMERY J. SANSOUCI
1847-1936

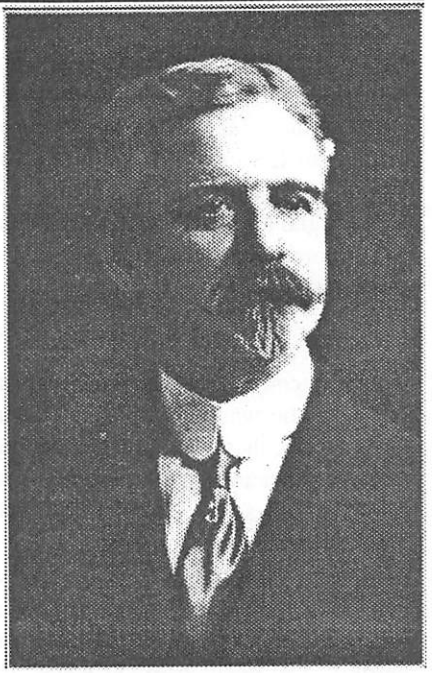
Businessman-Civil War Veteran
Governor of Rhode Island

by: Richard L. Fortin

Emery-Jean SANSOUCI, was born in Saco, Maine on 24 July 1847, the seventh of eight children born to Eusebe SANSOUCI and Louise GAOUETTE (CAHOUET) originally from Saint Cesaire, Rouville County, by way of Stukely, Quebec.

He attended local schools and the age of eleven, he went to work in the Biddeford mills and at some point the family relocated to Saint Albans, Vermont where at the outbreak of the United States Civil War, he, along with his father and older brother Eusebe Jr. enlisted in the Union Army, Company L of the 1st Cavalry Regiment. In the battle of Salem Church, Virginia his father was mortally wounded on 4 June 1864. His brother also was also seriously wounded and eventually died as a result of his wounds.

After his discharge Emery decided to settle in New England, and in 1875 he became employed as a store clerk in Greenfield, Massachusetts. A year later he moved to Providence, Rhode Island and in 1878 he relocated to Hartford, Connecticut to work in the shoe manufacturing and sales business. It is while working in Hartford that he met Minnie A. J. DUFFY a Hartford native born on 5 Sep 1867. She was the daughter of Daniel DUFFY and Mary-Anne CALLERY and they were married in Hartford on 1 November 1880. They later became the parents to two daughters; Marie-Louisa and Euphemia-Maybelle.



Emery J. Sancouci

In 1890 he returned to Providence and with two of his brothers and opened a chain of shoe stores known all over New England. He later becomes Secretary-Treasurer of the SanSouci Shoe Store located in the Olneyville section of Providence.

In 1901 he was elected to his first public office, that of Providence City Councilor and served until 1907. From 1909 to 1914 he was Aide-de-Camp to Governor Aram POTHIER, and in 1914 he was elected as the state's Lieutenant Governor. He served in that position until his election to the office of Governor in 1920, garnering the largest plurality given any Republican candidate up to that time. He also led a Republican sweep of the State to the point where not a single town or city in the State went Democratic. His election as Governor made him the first Catholic native of Maine to be elected to a governorship in New England, he also became the first native born Franco-American to be chosen for this same office.

The next two years, however would adversly affect his political career. Although he was directly involved in these events, they were not of his doing and was rather a victim of circumstances. The first of these events and the one that affected his political career, was a series of strikes in the state's textile industry. The main cause of this labor unrest were the manufacturers, in order to meet competition, had decided to cut wages by twenty percent and at the same time increase working hours.

This caused unrest among the underpaid mill workers and in January 1921 a few hundred workers walked out of the mills in West Warwick. Spurred on by professional union organizers the strike spread state-wide and the number strikers grew to twenty-thousand. Peaceful picketing soon turned into riots and on 20 February 1921, the Governor, at the urging of many mill owners, ordered National Guard units into West Warwick, where they were ordered to patrol the area around the mills and mounted machine guns on the roof of the Natick mill to insure order.

The situation was compounded even more when on 11 March, The Governor sent troops into Pawtucket to carry out the wishes of the mill owners to evict the strikers and their families from the mill-owned tenements. The harshness of this action was not forgotten by those affected and the Democrats would not let them forget. Finishing his term in 1923, his party denied him renomination and he retired from office to become the Collector of the Port of Providence by appointment of President Warren G. Harding, a position he held until his death at the age of 79.

Emery-Jean SANSOUCI, died in Providence on 10 August 1936 and after an imposing funeral service at the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul's he was laid to rest alongside his wife who had died in Providence on 6 January 1927. They are buried in the family plot in Mt. St. Benedict cemetery in Bloomfield, Connecticut. At the time of death, he was serving as Director of the Union Trust and Trustee of the Old Colony Cooperative Bank of Providence. He was also a member of l'Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste d'Amerique, Providence Council # 41.

His contributions and place in Franco-American history will always be overshadowed by Aram POTHIER who preceded and succeeded him, and the labor troubles during his administration as Governor. Couple this with the fact that genealogical research has uncovered that New England's first native

born Franco-American governor's original ancestor was not of French descent.

He was an English captive taken to Quebec by the name of William JAMES dit LANGLAIS, JAMESIE, LANGLOIS, SANSOUCY, ANGLOIS. He was born in 1683 in Pimpill near Windron or Wimbron, County of Dorchester England, the son of Nicolas JAMES and Christine NORTH. He arrived September 1686 at Baie Verte, Newfoundland and was captured in January 1697 by Claude ROBILLARD. He was then sponsored by Father Leonard CHAIGNEAU, the parish school master and baptized 6 January 1698 in Montréal. He was married 5 September 1703 in Montréal to Catherine LIMOUSIN dit BEAUFORT and had five children. He was naturalized in May 1710 at Pointe-aux-Trembles de Montreal. He died at Cote Saint Laurent and buried 2 September 1722 at Riviere-des-Prairies, Québec.

ASCENDANT PATERNAL ANCESTRY

SANSOUCI

1. Guillaume JAMES Nicolas GEMS Christine NORTH	M. 5 Feb. 1703 Montreal	Catherine LIMOUSIN Hilaire Antoinette LEFEBVRE
2. Joseph LANGLAIS	M. 23 Nov 1744 Longue-Pointe	Catherine SIMON François Suzanne CHAPERON
3. Joseph	M. 15 Nov 1779 St-Mathias	Josette VADNAIS Nicolas Catherine PLANTE
4. Pierre SANSOUCI	M. 30 Oct 1815 St-Luc	Archange TREMBLAY François Felicité ROUGEON
5. Eusebe	M. 21 Sep 1848 St Cesaire	Louise GAOUETTE François Louise MORIN
6. Emery-Jean	M. 1 Nov 1880 Hartford, CT	Minnie A. J. DUFFY Daniel Mary-Anne CALLERY

ASCENDANT MATERNAL ANCESTRY

CAOUET/GAOUETTE

1. Pierre CAOUET was from Landerneau, Brest (Finistere), Diocese of Treguier in Britany was the son of Jean and Marie VALLEE and 27 July 1793, he married at Cap-St-Ignace Anne GAUDREAU, who was the daughter of Gilles and Anne PINAULT.

2. Jean-Baptiste-Claude	M. 25 Aug 1729 N.D. de Quebec	Genevieve JEAN Pierre M. Mad. PINSEAU
3. Claude-Rafael	M. 19 Apr 1762 L'Islet	Elizb. CLOUTIER Jean-Baptiste Angl. THIBAULT
4. Joseph-Marie	M. 4 Aug 1788 St-Hyacinthe	Charlotte COYTEAUX Joseph Charlotte DION
5. François	M.6 Aug 1822 St-Cesaire	M. Louise MORIN Antoine Josephte BEAUPRÉ
6. Louise	M. 21 Sep 1848 St-Cesaire	Eusebe SANSOUCI Pierre Arch. TREMBLAY

Sources used on this article are as follows:

**Guide Franco-Americain des Etats Unis 1927.*
**Je Me Souviens*, Vol 14 # 1, official journal of the American-French Genealogical Society, article on Aram Pothier by John Robert Veader and Janice Burkhart, Librarian of AFGS and her staff of voluneeers.
*Robert Chenard of Waterville, Maine
*The Catholic Church in Maine by William Leo Lucey, SJ
**L'Union*, Official Organ of L'Union Saint-Jean-Baptiste d'Amerique
**English Captives Carried to Canada*, by Roger W. Lawrence
*The research staff of the American-Canadian Genealogical Society
* The French-Canadian Genealogical Society of Connecticut, its current President Ivan Robinson and the research work of Arthur Corbeil

Any family tree produces some lemons, nuts and bad apples.

Life in the Sweet Lane

by: Albert Boissonneault

Editor's Note: *The following is taken from the book, Je Me Souviens—A Family Remembrance, by Albert Boissonneault, and is reprinted here with his widow's permission. This is the eighth installment. Mr. Boissonneault's book is in the AFGS library.*

For about one year I worked at the shipyard, but in the summer of 1927, I was lucky enough to obtain a much sweeter job in a candy factory. A friend of the family was a candy maker, and he recommended me for a job at Durand & Company, makers of fine chocolates. That job left me with appreciation for fine chocolates and a *sweet tooth* that exists to this day!

For 44 hours a week, at a salary of $12 a week, I was hired as a chocolate boy; in other words, I mixed up the chocolate coating for the hand candy dippers. I tended to four or five large belt driven kettles, into which I would break ten pound slabs of chocolate, mixing dark and milk chocolate to attain the proper coating.

After the coating was properly mixed, I poured it into a coal hod and carried it to the dipping room next door. The refrigerated dipping room contained four stainless steel tables, with five chocolate dippers sitting on each side of a table. Between each facing pair of dippers was a tank which held the melted chocolate. When I filled those tanks, each dipper would take some of the chocolate out with her right hand and work it a little to smooth it.

In front of each dipper was a wooden tray holding raw candies or creams. With her left hand, the dipper would take a candy, a nut, or a cream and toss it into the chocolate that she was stirring with her right hand. She would cover the cream completely with the chocolate coating, pick it up, and lay it on a piece of heavy waxed paper which had been set in a small wooden tray. The trays would hold 40 to 60 pieces of chocolate, depending on the size of the cream. As the dipper put the chocolate down, she would mark it with what they called a string, a thin stream of chocolate in the shape of an initial. The chocolate coating on each piece would be marked with a P, N, or X, or any designated mark to signify what was inside the chocolate.

For filling a tray of 40 to 60 pieces of chocolates, the dipper received two and one half to three cents per tray. Since it was all piece work, they had to work very quickly to make any money. The majority of dippers

were women of Italian nationality or background, though a few were Irish. They were excellent workers and very skilled – although they were not paid for their skill, only for their production.

As soon as a dipper had four or five trays filled, a floor girl would carry the trays to a cooling area. My sister Gabrielle became a floor girl. She had to work swiftly to keep up with ten dippers, furnishing them with trays, papers, and candies, and collecting their production. Each time that she took five trays from a dipper, the dipper would give her a check numbered like a lunch check in series of 5-10-15-20, etc. Gabrielle would take the ticket to the forelady, who would give the trays a quick inspection and then punch the ticket, thus giving the dipper credit for her piecework. The floor girl would then stack the chocolates under some fans to dry.

After an hour or so, some other girls would put the chocolates in small wooden boxes, about six layers to a box. They would accomplish this by slipping wax paper from the trays into the boxes. The loaded boxes would then be put in the finished stock inventory, where the contents would eventually be packed in one or two pound boxes.

My sister Estelle was employed as a fancy packer. She would work on a long table big enough to hold 100 boxes of chocolates (#1 boxes). Lining up the boxes on a table, she would open up each one, put in a glassine paper liner, and put one piece of chocolate in each box, either a cream, a caramel, or a nougat. As she packed it in the box, she would place each piece in a chocolate-colored paper cup. She would then proceed to pack the next pieces, putting the second piece in each box, then the third, etc. the bottom layer might contain 18 chocolates before she covered it with a sheet of cardboard and then packed the top layer, which was packed tighter than the bottom layer. It might hold 22 pieces of assorted chocolates, and all had to be packed exactly according to a specified plan, with different boxes holding different assortments.

After each layer of chocolates was in place, it was brushed with a very soft brush to bring out the shine. The fancy packer next put in a folded glassine liner, a paper mat, and covered the box. From her station it went to the wrappers, who would tie a ribbon bow on the cover and wrap the box in cellophane. The chocolate was now ready to be marketed.

The company also employed some belt packers. About 16 or 17 girls were lined up next to a conveyor belt about 30 feet long. An eye level shelf running the length of the conveyor held wooden cases of chocolates. A box would be placed on the conveyor belt and the first girl in the line would put in one or two chocolates. The next girl would add two or three more until the box reached the end of the conveyor, by which time it was completely filled. This mass production line was used only for the cheaper boxes, allowing many more chocolate boxes to be packed during an eight hour shift.

When I returned to the factory after World War II, a chocolate enrober had been installed to dip the chocolates; no longer did anyone want to learn to be a chocolate dipper. During the war

women took over men's jobs in all kinds of trades and manufacturing plants, and they discovered that there were easier ways to make good money than sitting in a cold room dipping chocolates for a pittance.

I never worked on an enrober, but I know that the candies were lined up on a canvas belt. They were first dropped onto a screen belt which traveled through two or three inches of chocolate, enabling a thin layer of chocolate to cover the bottom of the candy. Next it went through an enclosure where the chocolate coating was poured over the candy. Any excess coating was returned to the chocolate tank through the screen. Girls at the end of the machine marked the chocolates as they came rolling out. The confections next went to a cooling chamber to dry and then into the wooden cases already described.

After a couple of years, I was moved to the starch room, where the creams were molded, This room contained a huge machine, called a Mogul Machine, which was about 30 feet in length, Loaded trays about two feet by four feet and about three inches deep were filled with starch and then loaded one or two at a time on a conveyor belt. After traveling about three or four feet, each tray would be tipped upside down, emptying the starch which would then fall through a screen to the bottom of the machine. After the tray proceeded another five or six feet, clean starch would be put into the tray. Six feet further along, it would meet a press which had a mold the same size as the tray. This mold would cut either squares, circles, or heart shapes. The mold would come down in the tray and would stamp about 10 rows across of impressions, with 24 squares or circles to a row. The tray would resume its trip on the conveyor for about eight feet until it reached a tank with a steam jacket around it. Liquid creams had been poured into that tank and as the tray approached, a pump would fill each space on the tray with flavored creams (pineapple, strawberry, etc.) as it passed underneath.

Once filled, the trays would be removed and stacked with about 40 trays to a stack; with a special truck, the stack would be moved to the back of the machine. In about four hours, the creams would be dried and the trays would then be put on the machine and the whole process repeated. When the starch would fall through the screen, candies would be conveyed the side of the machine and put in trays by another waiting operator. Trays of creams would then be moved by truck to the dipping room, where the chocolate dippers would take over.

After some time in that operation, I was made receiver. I signed for all raw materials used in the factory, sugar, glucose, boxes, ribbons, etc., indeed everything. I was also responsible for the storage of all the materials and keeping track of what was used up; it was a cardinal rule that we must never run out of any supplies and thus hold up production. I worked as a receiver at Durand's until I went into the Army in September, 1942.

Applying computer technology is simply finding the right wrench to pound in the correct screw.

Vitaline Lantier Chartier (1864-1935) A French-Canadian Matriarch

by: Adrien L. Ringuette

My mother Anita LANTHIER RINGUETTE (1899-1974), daughter of Joseph LANTHIER and Emma BLAIS, grew up in Central Falls, RI, during the first two decades of the 20th century. She frequently visited her aunt Vitaline LANTHIER CHARTIER and her uncle Napoleon CHARTIER and their family, also living in Central Falls, and kept in touch with this family thereafter. Many years later, on 4 May 1958, my mother wrote me a long letter describing the life and times of her aunt Vitaline. I believe her narrative captures the times eloquently, and I now offer it to the readers of this publication, along with my background research and notes on the life of Vitaline LANTHIER CHARTIER.

By way of background, Vitaline LANTHIER was born and baptized on 30 October 1864 in the parish of St. Joseph of Chambly, which lies on the Richelieu River in Québec province. She was the oldest child of Joseph LANTHIER (whose given name was Dosithe) and Adelaide GAUTHIER dit ST.-GERMAIN, who had married at Chambly nine months previously on 2 February 1864. Her godparents were her uncle and aunt Joseph GAUTHIER and his second wife, Sophie LAVOIE.

When Vitaline was born, her father was 26 and her mother 34. Joseph LANTHIER was a native of St.-Eustache, north of Montréal, and according to family tradition he left home at 16 to learn the tanning trade. He was a resident of Chambly in 1864. Adelaide GAUTHIER dit ST.-GERMAIN was a native of Chambly. The census of 1861 shows her parents had both died, and she was living with the family of her brother Joseph, who was then a widower.

Joseph LANTHIER brought his wife and infant daughter to Roxton Falls in the Eastern Townships about 1866. There Joseph bought a farm, but actually worked in the tannery business, then flourishing in Roxton Falls. In 1867 a second daughter was born in Roxton Falls, but did not survive. My grandfather, Joseph (Jr.) was born there two years later, on 2 July 1869.

Alas tragedy struck early in 1872. Vitaline's mother died on 26 January of that year. Adelaide GAUTHIER was only 41. Vitaline and her brother were sent to live temporarily with their aunt Françoise GAUTHIER and her husband Edouard LARIVIERE, who were living in the nearby village of Ely.

Back in Chambly, Joseph GAUTHIER, brother-in-law of Joseph LANTHIER, had just taken as his third

wife Aurelie DESROCHES. They were married on 17 July 1871. Joseph LANTHIER thus had occasion to meet Aurelie's sister Mathilde and they were soon married. The marriage took place at Roxton Falls on 28 July 1872. Mathilde DESROCHES thus became stepmother to Vitaline and her brother.

Anita Lanthier Ringuette
1899-1974

Joseph LANTHIER and his second wife were to have five children, but only two survived, namely Alcide (born in 1874) and Eva (born in 1877). Eva was born in New Bedford, MA, where Joseph had taken his family to live in 1876, leasing his farm to his brother-in-law Joseph GAUTHIER. While Joseph LANTHIER returned to Canada in 1877 in order to attend to the sale of a right of way through his farm to the railroad, his family remained in New Bedford for another year. Vitaline and her brother were thus able to have two years of schooling in New Bedford from 1876 to 1878. Joseph decided to remain in Canada, however, and sent for his family in 1878.

Returning to Roxton Falls from New Bedford in 1878, Vitaline turned 14 soon afterwards. She was not quite 15 when she married 19 year old Napoleon CHARTIER. The marriage took place at Roxton Falls on 22 September 1879. The record states that the witnesses were Godefroy CHARTIER, father of the groom, and Joseph LANTHIER, father of the bride.

Napoleon CHARTIER was a native of Roxton Falls, having been born there on 19 January 1860, the son of Godefroy CHARTIER, blacksmith, and Lucie AUGER. The Chartier family had come to Roxton Falls about 1856 from St.-Pie, south of St.-Hyacinthe. It was at St.-Pie where Godefroy had married Lucie on 5 October 1841. Napoleon's grandfather, Philippe CHARTIER, was a native of St.-Pierre-du-Sud, near Montmagny. He had migrated to St.-Hyacinthe, and then to St.-Pie, where he settled.

Roxton Falls, located in the Township of Roxton in the Eastern Townships, came to be populated by French Canadians after 1848. In 1856 the Catholic parish of St. Jean-Baptiste was established. The tanning and lumber industries began to flourish there, especially in the 1860's. By 1861,

Roxton Falls had a population of 600, including Godefroy CHARTIER and his family. Joseph LANTHIER was to bring his family to Roxton Falls several years later. By the 1880's, however, the tanning industry in the area was in decline, although the lumber industry continued to flourish. In 1886, Joseph decided again to emigrate, and brought his family to Central Falls. My grandfather, Joseph Jr., came to Central Falls with his father, stepmother, and his half brother and sister. The family attended the French-Canadian parish of Notre-Dame in that city.

Napoleon and Vitaline had settled in Roxton Falls upon their marriage. By 1886, Vitaline was 22 and had already given birth to four children, of who three survived. This family remained in Roxton Falls for another twelve years, finally following the LANTHIER family to Central Falls in 1898. By then, Vitaline had given birth to five more children. There were eight children who made the trip, ranging from Celanise at 16 to Emma at age 1. Emma would die in Central Falls 2 years later. Vitaline would have another four children born in Central Falls between 1899 and 1906. By that time the oldest son was already married and living away from home. Of the ten children still at home in 1906, six were girls and there were four boys.

My mother's narrative begins when the standard of living of the CHARTIER family was relatively high. This was due to multiple salaries coming in from the older children as each in turn entered the workforce. This is reflected in the entries found in the City Directory for Pawtucket and Central Falls over time. In 1899 Napoleon was listed as a "mill operative" and the family was living on Summer Street in Central Falls. By 1904, however, the family had moved to Fletcher Street and was living next to Jenck's Park. Napoleon was successively listed as "carpenter" and "clerk" between 1904 and 1910. His relatively "easy" life beginning at about age 45 after years of hard work led him to abandon his family for a younger woman.

This unfortunate turn of events took place on New Year's Day in 1911. I could fix the year because the City Directory for 1911 omitted the name of Napoleon CHARTIER. He had fled to Fall River, MA with his mistress.

Vitaline continued to manage family affairs after the defection of her husband. Several years later, Napoleon fell from a staging and was hospitalized in Fall River. Vitaline, as his lawful wife, made daily trips to Fall River to visit him. After his death, she had his body returned to Central Falls. He was buried at Notre Dame Cemetery in Pawtucket. The date was 2 October 1915. Napoleon died at 55. Vitaline survived her husband for twenty years. She was buried at Notre Dame Cemetery on 5 June 1935. She was 70.

My mother's narrative follows. It is unedited except that as to Vitaline's children, some comments not pertinent to her life have been omitted.

"Vitaline LANTHIER CHARTIER was four years older than my father. Married at the age of fifteen to Napoleon CHARTIER, tall, dark, and probably handsome. She was small, never put on any weight, about 5' tall,

and very very pretty. Her skin was fair, but she had large dark beautiful eyes. Probably had three or four years of schooling like my father. Like him, she was generous to a fault, but there the similarity ended — she had a fiery temper and ruled her household like a matriarch of old. She was an excellent housekeeper; loved people. possessive with her family, enjoyed parties with them, had a very keen brain, and her large sparkling eyes never missed anything even when her house was full of people — had about 13 children, but I can only recall 12. Her children went to work at 14 and as their pays came in, so their way of life was raised — the standard of living went up as fast as the money came in.

"Traditions, such as feasting on New Years (Canadian traditions) as well as the Church traditions of observing church holidays — Christmas and Easter. She did all the sewing for her girls, and shirts for the boys, and thought nothing of sewing all night long the night before Easter so that all her daughters might be in the Easter Parade on Easter Sunday.

"She was not refined like my mother, and my mother did not like to go there, but I did when I was ten or twelve, because there were so many adults there — I liked their house full of company and adults just as you liked the RINGUETTE parties because there were many children there. I did not like them to use that 4-lettered word freely as they did, but I was allowed to sit with the adults, and the were gay. On New Year's Day, it was open house — food was served every time someone walked in — meat pies by the dozens and coffee on the stove — turkey dinner at 2:00. Everything went smoothly — like the good manager that she was — all her daughters were trained to do their part, and nobody noticed the work.

"The house was immaculate the year round, even on Mondays when she had the wash tubs in the kitchen all day. On Tuesdays there was ironing all day long and all evening — so many starched petticoats, starched dresses, starched blouses, etc., but the well trained girls took a hand at it after they came home from work and nobody sat down until all the work was done — and so it was each day of the week.

"After quite a few children went to work and brought in their full pays to Mother, Father did not have to work so hard, and was quite often out of work (a carpenter at times, and a bartender sometimes), but Vitaline did not mind if he did not work too hard. She loved her husband as well as her children.

"The first child — Celina *(1882-1965; born Roxton Falls, buried at Notre Dame Cemetery in Pawtucket)*, tall and dark like her father, and thin. A spinster. More or less the drudge of the family, as the oldest child of such a large family was then apt to be. Had to help with the housework after work, so many younger children and everything had to be spic and span. Never had a chance to go out with other girls much and never learned much — generous to a fault. Loved her brothers and sisters like a doting parent.

"The second child — Delsey *(Born 1883, Roxton Falls)*. There was an uproar when he got married to an

Irish girl. He was so much older and away from home when I was old enough to go there, that I remember little about him. He drank and died in his forties. I do remember that when he died I went to the funeral with my mother.

"The third child — Clara *(Should be #4; born in 1889, Roxton Falls; married Alfred GAUTHIER, unrelated, in 1908 in Central Falls. Moved to New Jersey).* Had a large family. When she wanted to get married, her mother raised the roof and ordered him out of the house. Nobody was good enough for her children — he would never amount to anything, etc. Father Beland was appealed to, and he went to talk to Vitaline and convinced her that she did not have any right to oppose the wedding of those two people. Alfred GAUTHIER was a good boy, two of his sisters were nuns. Father Beland must have felt like telling Vitaline that Alfred's family was as good as hers. After all, her daughter was a mill girl who went to work at 14, and helped to bring up the rest of the brood after work — never had a chance to go out hardly.

"The fourth child — Eva *(Should be #3; born 1886, Roxton Falls; married Stanislaus NAULT, 1920, Central Falls).* Not too tall, dark like her father (and Clara), in fact she looked like Clara. Generous to a fault like Celina and Clara. Good to her mother and the younger children (they all loved their mother very much). Met a man, a bachelor, in her late thirties. He was ridiculed by Vitaline. She told Eva that she would have to work the rest of her life. After a while Father Beland came and interceded for Eva. They were married, and she did work the rest of her life in the mill. He never raised a finger — never worked after he got married — went to the movies in the afternoon. She loved him. The family lost their respect for him, and her for supporting him, and finally could not stand having him come to visit them. She died of heart trouble after 15 or 20 years of marriage.

"The fifth child — Aurelia *(Born 1891, Roxton Falls; married Henri CAMIRE, 1911, Central Falls; moved to Chicago).* Average height, blond, and beautiful. Went to work at 14 like the others, in the mill. At 20 or 21 she met a young man she wanted to marry. Again the matriarch opposed — he was not worthy, etc. Again Father Beland came to the house and interceded for the young couple. They were married. Soon after they were married they moved to Chicago. They bought a paint store (he was a painter) and did well, but the marriage was broken. Celina told me he was too jealous (she was really beautiful). Never knew what really happened. She died when she was in her late forties, I believe.

"The sixth child — Napoleon *(Born 1893, Roxton Falls; married Anna DESROSIERS 1920 in Central Falls).* Met a girl that he wanted to marry. Matriarch opposed — and they went around for a long while. Finally got married. She was a good woman. She loved her husband. He bought a dine and dance place, and she helped him in his work. She died a few years ago, and he is still running his dine and dance place.

"The seventh child — Emma *(Should be #8; 1897-1900, buried in Notre Dame Cemetery in Pawtucket).*

Died at 3.

"The eighth child — Ida *(Should be #7; 1894-1917; Born in Roxton Falls; married Emile ROY, 1916 in Central Falls.; buried in Notre Dame Cemetery).* Ida was quite pretty — average height, not quite as blond as Aurelia. When she was 20 she wanted to marry a young man her age. The usual opposition was met — he was too dumb, according to Vitaline, and he was ordered out of the house. They met secretly — one Sunday afternoon Ida was at my house and asked me to go somewhere with her. We went to the house of a friend where she met her boyfriend. We all played croquet in the yard, and he bought three sundaes at the drug store and left us at the corner. Ida warned me not to tell about the meeting — I objected to telling a lie, but she said there would be an awful scene if the family knew, so I agreed. Sure enough, as soon as Celina got me alone she asked me whether Ida had talked to her boyfriend or met him anywhere. I had to say 'no.' Ida had inherited her mother's fiery temper — she did not ask the priest to intercede for her, she simply left home and boarded at the house of a distant cousin until they were ready to get married.

"The ninth child — Aurore *(1899-1988; born in Central Falls; never married; buried in Notre Dame Cemetery).* About 1 year younger than I am. Dark like her father. Quiet and intelligent. Went to work at 14 like the others. She is now manager of a theater in Central Falls. I liked her.

"The tenth child — Ernest *(1902-1982; born in Central Falls, buried in Notre Dame Cemetery).* Was a boxer. Married a Polish girl. She could not take care of her own babies. She kept on working and had someone take care of her babies. Not desirable as a wife and the marriage broke up. I don't think he was an angel either, but at least he tried to take care of his children.

"The eleventh child — Louis *(Born 1904 in Central Falls; married Alice A. BOLER, in 1927, in East Providence, RI; moved to Newport, RI.)* Blond — looked like my father. Could not learn anything in school. Went to work at 14. He learned the roofing trade. Married a quiet refined girl. Like the rest of the children he loved his mother deeply and actually went into hysterics when she died not long after he got married. There were no objections to this marriage. When he got a chance to go into business for himself, he did not have any money and went to Celena and borrowed her life's savings, $1100. He did well from the start and soon repaid her. Albert *(my mother's brother)* tells me that he is now a millionaire. He has a lumber yard, a roofing business. He bought a mansion and turned it into beautiful apartments., etc., etc. Vitaline did not live to see his success. Too bad, she was so proud — how she would have enjoyed watching his progress.

"The twelfth child — Albert *(Born 1906 in Central Falls; married Elsie Anita NEWSHAM in 1934 in Pawtucket).* Not as tall as his father, but dark like him and good-looking. Married an attractive girl and had a lovely child that died at the age of three. Have not heard anything more about them since.

"But Vitaline did not keep her husband busy enough. He fell in love with a much younger woman and left her right after a New Year's party. He walked out with the last guests and never returned alive. I was there that night, and I remember that after he had a few drinks too many, he kept repeating that he hated women so very much, so much that he hated his own wife. Vitaline paid little heed to that, went around seeing that her guests were served with drinks, etc., as men often talked too much when they drank too much. I did not want to go home when my father left, so it was suggested that I sleep there. That suited me fine. I remember vaguely during the night my aunt walked back and forth and came into the room where I was sleeping with one of the daughters, and would say, 'It is three A.M. and he is not back yet." And so it was every hour until morning.

"It seems that he went away with this younger woman and they went to Fall River. A child was born from this common law marriage. But soon after he got hurt in an accident when he fell off a staging. Being seriously hurt, as a Catholic, he had to give up his common law wife. Soon Vitaline was notified that her husband was dying. Always ready to forgive anything, she went to see him every day until he died, just as a woman would do for a loyal husband. As she did not have a car, it was with great inconvenience that she made that trip from Central Falls to Fall River for two months. When he died she had the body brought home and sent word to the Church that she wanted a high mass — in other words, a big funeral. Father Beland dashed over there when he heard and tried to talk her out of it. He told her that she needed her money and could not afford such an expensive funeral. The man did not deserve it, he said. But she was firm — this time, Father Beland's eloquence was wasted.

"We went to the funeral. At the grave when the family started to leave, my mother asked my father to take her to my brothers' graves. When we returned, we had to go by Napoleon's grave on our way out. Imagine our surprise when we noticed this woman all in black crying as though her heart would break — so this was the woman he had left home for! Evidently she loved him too! Later, she married a rich man.

"Vitaline died a few years later. Still mentally active, but her heart had been thru too much — she died of heart trouble in her early 60's, probably 64 or so."

Vitaline's father, Joseph LANTHIER Sr. spent the remainder of his life in Central Falls. He died there at 69 in 1907. Mathilde DESROCHES, Vitaline's stepmother, died in 1909. Both were buried in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Vitaline's brother, Joseph LANTHIER Jr. went to work in the mill upon his arrival in Central Falls. In 1896 he married Emma BLAIS in that city. They had eight children, but one son died in 1915 and another in 1916, leaving six children who survived to adulthood, including my mother, who was the only daughter.

From time to time Joseph received promotions, rising to foreman in 1902.

It was then that he left the mill and acquired a milk business, which he operated for about ten years. However, the milk business failed in 1911, and in due course Joseph returned to the mill, from which he eventually retired in 1934. He bought a farm in Attleboro, MA in 1921, and after retirement he became a full time farmer. Losing his wife in 1931, he survived her for thirty years. He was 91 when he died in 1961. He and his wife are both buried in Notre Dame Cemetery.

Vitaline's half-brother Alcide left Central Falls in 1905 when he was 30. He never married. It is said that he played in the U.S. Army Band in Washington DC.

Vitaline's half-sister Eva (1877-1972) married Albert BRULE in 1904 in Central Falls. They had six children. She lived to be 94, and is buried in Notre Dame Cemetery.

I Am My Own Grandpa

Many, many years ago
When I was twenty three,
I got married to a widow,
Pretty as could be.

This widow had a grown-up daughter
With flowing hair of red.
My father fell in love with her,
And soon the two were wed.

This made my dad my son-in-law
And changed my very life.
Now my daughter was my mother,
For she was my father's wife.

To complicate the matters worse,
Although it brought me joy.
I soon became the father
Of a bouncing baby boy.

My little baby then became
A brother-in-law to dad.
And so became my uncle,
Though it made me very sad.

For if he was my uncle,
Then that also made him brother
To the widow's grown-up-daughter
Who, of course, was my step-mother.

Father's wife then had a son,
Who kept them on the run.
And he became my grandson,
For he was my daughter's son,

My wife is now my mother's mother
And it makes me blue.
Because, although she is my wife,
She's my grandma too.

If my wife is my grandmother,
Then I am her grandchild.
And every time I think of it,
It simply drives me wild.

For now I have become
The strangest case you ever saw.
As the husband of my grandmother,
I am my own grandpa!

Marin Chauvin, Gillette Bonne, and Jacques Bertault

By Lucille Rock

This article first appeared in the September 1978 issue of this publication.

French Canadians are one of the few people in the world to have preserved their archives almost in their entirety. For this reason and also because of the diligent and untiring research of many devoted Canadians, we can research our genealogies secure in the fact that we will find our ancestry. In a rare case, the two records of the marriage act and the record of the marriage contract will have been lost. Such is the case for the ancestor, Marin CHAUVIN.

When research was done in the notarial contracts in Tourouvre, France, an important document was discovered concerning CHAUVIN. On 8 March 1648, he signed a three-year contract to work in New France for Noel JUCHEREAU, for the sum of forty *livres* per year. In this contract he gave his residence as St. Mard-de-Reno. Research was done in this parish and the birth of a Marin CHAUVIN, son of Jehan CHAUVIN, was found dated 24 February 1609. However, in the neighboring parish of St, Victor-de-Reno, the birth of another Marin CHAUVIN was discovered dated 16 March 1625. This one was the son of Nicholas CHAUVIN and Catherine PIEDGARS. Perhaps a document will be found in the future which will reveal to us which of these two is our Canadian immigrant.

Toward the end of 1648, or in 1649, CHAUVIN married Gillette BONNE daughter of Marin BONNE *(or BAUNE)* and Isabelle BOIRE of Argences, Normandy, France. One child, Marie, was born from this union on 8 September 1650 in Trois-Rivières. This daughter married Robin LANGLOIS in 1664 and became a widow within a few months. On 20 July 1665 in Trois-Rivières, she married Jean DENOYON. He was the son of Jean DENOYON and Jeanne FRANCFORT of the parish of St. Pierre in Rouen, Normandy, France. From this marriage nine children were born, thus perpetuating Marin CHAUVIN's blood line.

The date of Marin CHAUVIN's death is not known. However his widow, Gillette BONNE, signed a marriage contract on 27 July 1653 with Jacques BERTAULT. He was the son of Thomas BERTAULT, a merchant, and Catherine COULONNE from Essarts *(Vendee)*, Poitou, France.

BERTAULT was a locksmith and spent his life in Trois-Rivières where he owned the following property: A parcel which had been granted to his wife

by Governor d'AILLBOUST on 7 June 1650; one-seventh of Ile St. Christophe, which had boon granted by Abbé GAREAU on 9 March 1655; and a third parcel which had been granted by Abbé DELAPLACE on 4 June 1656. Jacques BERTAULT and Gillette BONNE had six children:

Jacques, who was born at Trois-Rivières on 25 November 1654, and died before 1666. Marguerite, who was born at Trois-Rivières on 21 December 1655; she married Denis VERONNEAU *(contract by Notary AMEAU, on 6 January 1668)*, and died in Boucherville on 21 November 1687. Suzanne was born at Trois-Rivières on 18 December 1657. She married Jean HUSSE at Trois-Rivières on 24 September 1671, and after his death married Jacques BRUNEL at Boucherville on 24 November 1677. She died on 2 May 1739 at Chambly.

Elisabeth was born at Trois-Rivières on 23 January 1659. She married three times: On 12 August 1671 at Trois-Rivières to Julien LATOUCHE; on 6 November 1673 at Boucherville to Noel LAURENCE; and in Repentigny on 1 March 1688 to Jean-Baptist PILON dit LAFORTUNE. The date of her death is not known.

Jeanne was born at Trois-Rivières on 27 March 1660. She married: Vincent VERDON at Cap-de-la-Madeleine on 1 September 1680; Mathurin RICHARD at Boucherville on 5 December 1688; and Nicholas VINET at Boucherville on 18 August 1698. She died at Boucherville on 20 December 1698.

Nicholas was born at Trois-Rivières on 26 February 1662 and died before 1672.

Jacques BERTAULT and Gillette BONNE were to finish their lives tragically. Their daughter Elisabeth *(sometimes called Isabel)* had married an alcoholic by the name of Julien LA TOUCHE, *Sieur de Champlain* at Trois-Rivières. LATOUCHE habitually assaulted Elisabeth, who was only twelve years old at the time of the marriage. Elisabeth and her parents devised and executed a plan to poison her husband.

On 8 June 1672 the Lieutenant-General for civil and criminal affairs of the Provostship of Québec condemned BERTAULT and his wife to be strangled and hanged. The Sovereign Council, showing compassion for Elisabeth's tender age, did not condemn her to death. But her sentence would be one she would remember for as long as she lived; she was condemned to witness her parents' executions.

At four o'clock in the afternoon, on the day of the executions, Jacques BERTAULT, Gillette BONNE, and their daughter Elisabeth were led, rope around their necks, and torches in their hands, in front of the parish church in Trois-Rivières. There Jacques BERTAULT (bareheaded, a sign of disgrace) in his undershirt, his wife and daughter, also in their undershirts, knelt on the ground and begged God, the King, and the courts of justice, forgiveness for the crime they had committed. The executioner then led them to the town square where scaffolds had been erected for this purpose. Jacques BERTAULT was placed on a cross of St. André *(an oblique cross in the form of the letter X)*, and was struck with a bar. He was

then led to the scaffold and strangled in the presence of his wife and daughter. With a bar, he was struck again on his arms and on his thighs. Gillette BONNE was hanged next. The body of BERTAULT was then placed on a wheel in the town square to serve as an example.

Because of their crime, the estate of the BERTAULT's had been seized by the King. From this estate, a fine of sixty *livres* had to be paid to the Recollets for prayers for the repose of the soul of LATOUCHE, whom they had murdered. The remainder of the estate was divided equally between their two minor children, Nicolas and Jeanne. Elisabeth for her part in the crime, was left destitute.

Having on child to support, Elisabeth remarried at the age of fourteen to Noel LAURENCE in Boucherville. They had six children. LAURENCE died on 14 November 1687. Elisabeth married a third time, four months after the death of her second husband, to Jean-Baptist PILON dit LAFORTUNE. The ceremony was held in Repentigny on 1 March 1688. Three children were born from this marriage.

Misfortune seemed to follow Elisabeth and she was to face another traumatic experience. On 22 August 1702, Thérèse LATOUCHE, her daughter from her first marriage, committed suicide by throwing herself in the river.

This is a bizarre seventeenth century case and it would be a mistake to judge all our ancestors by a few isolated cases. It would also be a mistake to judge the BERTAULT's too harshly. Details of their crime are sparse and punishment in that era was not only cruel, it was also excessive.

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Strength

We don't always have to be strong to be strong. Sometimes, our strength is expressed in being vulnerable. Sometimes, we need to fall apart to regroup and stay on track.

We all have days when we cannot push any harder, cannot hold back self-doubt, cannot stop focusing on fear, cannot be strong.

There are days when we cannot focus on being responsible. Occasionally, we don't want to get out of our pajamas. Sometimes, we cry in front of people. We expose our tiredness, irritability, or anger.

Those days are okay. They are just okay.

Part of taking care of ourselves means we give ourselves permission to "fall apart" when we need to. We do not have to be perpetual towers of strength. We are strong. We have proven that. Our strength will continue if we allow ourselves the courage to feel scared, weak, and vulnerable when we need to experience those feelings.

Today, help me to know that it is okay to allow myself to be human. Help me not to feel guilty or punish myself when I need to "fall apart."

Pierre Boucher

by: J. Richard Lebel

This article first appeared in the Spring 1982 issue of Je Me Souviens.

Pierre BOUCHER's long life was one of total devotion to the service of New France.

The eldest of five children of Gaspard and Nicole (LEMERE or LEMAIRE) BOUCHER, he arrived in New France from Mortagne-sur-Perche with his family. Pierre stated in a report drafted in 1695 that he had come to those shores in 1635 at the age of thirteen, but evidence exists that he may have arrived in 1634.

In any event, Gaspard BOUCHER and his brother, Marin, entered into an agreement with Robert GIFFARD, surgeon, chemist, colonizer, and founder of Beauport. The brothers sold their farms, Gaspard on 1 February 1634, the year after he had bought it, and set sail in the spring with their families, and accompanied by other settlers. Among these were the master-mason Jean GUYON, master-carpenter Zacharie CLOUTIER, and Noel LANGLOIS, a navigator and future pilot on the St. Lawrence River. In all, forty-three people, including six complete families, landed in New France to form the foundation of a new people.

His family having settled on the Jesuit's farm at Notre Dame des Anges, Pierre BOUCHER assisted the missionaries from 1637 to 1641 in Huronia, where he shared the Indians' life. At the same time, he learned their customs and dialects.

Upon his return to Québec, he was taken into the service of Governor Huault de MONTMAGNY as a soldier, interpreter, and an Indian agent. Taking part in all negotiations with the Indians, Pierre gained valuable experience which would stand him in good stead for the rest of his life. His work obtained for him rapid promotion from Private to Sergeant, and in 1644, he was appointed official interpreter and clerk at the fort of Trois Rivieres. He played an active role in discussions with the Mohawk chief, Kiotseueton in 1645. His parents settled there about this time, the beginning of his permanent residency.

In 1648 and 1649, Québec was threatened with annihilation because Ville-Marie (Montréal) could no longer be depended upon to prevent the Indians from attacking down the St. Lawrence River, and the only remaining outpost was Trois-Rivieres, whose governor, Jacques LENEUF de la Poterie, more of a businessman than a

soldier, was often absent. The new royal governor, Louis d'AILLEBOUST, appointed Pierre BOUCHER captain of the town of Trois-Rivieres, and asked him to prepare a plan of defense, its implementation later becoming the object of an official ordinance. He concentrated the scattered and far-flung farms, and enclosed the families in a stockade, or *enceinte*, which each settler helped to build. He also taught them to handle weapons and organized them into watches.

In 1652, Captain BOUCHER opposed the plan of the acting governor, Duplessis-Kerbodot (Guillemot), to launch a massive attack against the Iroquois, fearing a reversal. He remained in the fort with a few men, where he learned of the slaughter, on 19 August, of 22 settlers and soldiers, including the governor, not far from the town. The entire colony was now in danger.

One year later, on 23 August, six hundred Iroquois surrounded the fort, which Pierre BOUCHER, now acting governor, held with only forty or so adolescents and old men. After a siege of nine days, the Iroquois asked for a *parler*. To conceal the weakness of his position, BOUCHER met with them alone outside the fort. What transpired has not come down to us, but somehow, he persuaded the enemy chiefs to return their French and Indian prisoners, bring gifts to Québec, and conclude peace with the royal governor. This was done, and the colony was secure once again.

Pierre BOUCHER next received a commission as commander of the fort, and was appointed governor on 1 October 1654. In addition to his new responsibilities, Governor BOUCHER was also churchwarden in charge of charitable activities in the parish, and had been since 1651. He also occasionally performed the duties of civil and criminal judge. Through all of these functions, he came to realize that Trois-Rivieres was not the place where he hoped to establish a seigneury in keeping with his ideas.

In 1657, although elected King's Councillor in the council in Québec, he asked the royal governor for permission to retire to his property, the grant of Sainte-Marie, a domain of 200 acres at Cap-de-la-Madeleine. He made heavy expenditures for the construction of redoubts, bastions, and stockades, to protect his copyholders.

On 31 August 1661, the new royal governor, Dubois DAVAUGOUR, arrived in Québec and was appalled at the deplorable state of the colony. He proposed to send a delegate familiar with the country to the new king, Louis XIV, to plead the colony's cause. The Jesuits and the notables of the colony agreed on Governor BOUCHER, to whom DAVAUGOUR had recently presented letters of nobility, brought with him from France.

Pierre BOUCHER, Sieur de Grosbois, sailed for Paris on 22 October, with dispatches from the colony's governor, and an important letter to the Prince de Conde, along with letters from the Jesuits to their mother-house. He was granted an audience with the king, during which Louis promised to help the colony and place New France under his protection. BOUCHER also convinced the Prince de Conde and

Colbert, the minister of finance, of the colony's importance to France. He left for home on 15 July 1662 with ships, soldiers, and provisions.

The success of Pierre BOUCHER at the French court marks a turning point in the history of New France. His mission resulted in curiosity, sympathy, and increased interest in BOUCHER's adopted country. It bought about the arrival of the Marquis de Prouville de Tracy in command of the Carignan-Salieres Regiment, comprised of 1,000 men and officers, and the first Intendant, Jean TALON.

On 17 November 1663, the office of royal judge was conferred upon Governor BOUCHER by the *Conseil Souverain*, a post which he gave up the following year,

He had become the colony's dominant figure, sought after by civilian and military leaders alike for his advice and opinions. However, he was not satisfied. He believed that New France, continuously at war, should be a country at peace, and so he decided to set the example himself.

In 1667, while still governor of Trois-Rivieres, and Seigneur of Sainte-Marie, the Sieur do Grosbois persuaded the royal governor and the viceroy to accept his proposal to settle in the heart of Indian country on his seigneury of Iles Percees. later called Boucherville.

In an extant document, the disappointment he felt when he saw his fellow countrymen and relatives, for whom he had risked his life and fortune, leading lives which did not conform to the ideals he had set for himself, is evident. He was forty-five years old and he wanted a place in the country where honest people could live in peace. Thus began the last, longest, and most peaceful stage of his career. He would establish a seigneury according to his conceptions, with settlers judiciously chosen and willing to accept a flexible discipline, basing its foundations on that of the seigneury of Robert GIFFARD.

Boucherville became the ideal seigneury in less that fifteen years. It was described as "one of the richest and most magnificent territories in the colony."

As an example of the possibility of creating a new people by the union of French men and Indian women, BOUCHER married a Huron girl, Marie OUEBADINSKOUE, called Marie-Madeleine CHRESTEINNE, in 1649. A widower, he next married Jeanne CREVIER, from Rouen, in 1652. Fifteen children came from this union, and in accordance with custom, his sons took new names, many inspired by district names in Perche. Among others, they founded the families of BOUCHERVILLE, MONTARVILLE, MONTBRUN, GROSBOIS, GRANPRE, LABRIERE, and MONTIZAMBERT. The latter became English and Protestant after the cession of 1763.

In his old age, Pierre BOUCHER wrote his *Memoires*, a kind of biography, and *My Last Wishes*, a testament of such originality and simplicity, that tradition has it that the parish priests of Boucherville read it from the pulpit on New Year's Day for several years.

Pierre BOUCHER, noble, soldier, interpreter, governor, royal judge, founder and seigneur of Boucherville, died on 19 April 1717 at the age of 95 years, at least eighty-two of which were spent serving New France and its people one way or an other. He served for twenty years under Louis XIII, seventy-three under Louis XIV, and two under Louis XV. He could have known the first thirteen royal governors, and the first seven Intendants of New France.

Your Angel

Bare foot and dirty, the girl just sat and watched the people go by. She never tried to speak, she never said a word. Many people passed, but never did one person stop. Just so happens the next day I decided to go back to the park, curious if the little girl would still be there. Right in the very spot as she was yesterday she sat perched on high, with the saddest look in her eyes. Today I was to make my own move and walk over to the little girl. As we all know, a park full of strange people is not a place for young children to play alone.

As I began walking towards her I could see the back of the little girl's dress indicated a deformity. I figured that was the reason the people just passed by and made no effort to help. As I got closer, the little girl slightly lowered her eyes to avoid my intent stare. I could see the shape of her back more clearly. It was grotesquely shaped in a humped over form. I smiled to let her know it was OK, I was there to help, to talk. I sat down beside her and opened with a simple Hello. The little girl acted shocked and stammered a hi after a long stare into my eyes. I smiled and she shyly smiled back.

We talked until darkness fell and the park was completely empty. Everyone was gone and we were alone. I asked the girl why she was so sad. The little girl looked at me and with a sad face said "Because I'm different." I immediately said "that you are!" and smiled. The little girl acted even sadder, she said, "I know."

"Little girl," I said, "you remind me of an angel, sweet and innocent." She looked at me and smiled, slowly she stood to her feet, and said, "Really?" "Yes, ma'am, you're like a little guardian angel sent to watch over all those people walking by." She nodded her head yes and smiled, and with that she spread her wings and said, "I am. I'm your guardian angel," with a twinkle in her eye.

I was speechless, sure I was seeing things. She said, "For once you thought of someone other than yourself, my job here is done." Immediately I stood to my feet and said, "Wait, so why did no one stop to help an angel?"

She looked at me and smiled, "You're the only one who could see me, and you believe it in your heart." And she was gone.

And with that my life was changed dramatically. So, when you think you're all you have, remember, your angel is always watching over you.

Pass this to everyone that means anything at all to you....make sure you send it back to the person who sent it to you, to let them know you're glad they care about you...like the story says we all need someone. Every one of your friends is an angel in their own way.

The French in Rhode Island

by: Armand B. Chartier, Ph.D.

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW. The first French contact with Rhode Island occurred in 1524 when King François I sent the *Dauphine*, captained by Giovanni da Verrazano, to explore the Atlantic coast. Enchanted by the beauty of the area and by the friendliness of the Native Americans, Verrazano spent two weeks on or near our shores, naming Block Island *Claudia* and Newport *Refuge*. European politics did not allow full advantage to be taken of this early exploration, however, and there were no further links between France and Rhode Island for over a century and a half.

In 1686, forty-five Huguenot families established residence in a section of East Greenwich still today called *Frenchtown*, despite the disappearance of all tangible reminders of this colony. The settlement ended unpleasantly in 1691 after a controversy concerning the legitimate ownership of the land. Throughout the next several decades, more Huguenots immigrated to Rhode Island — though never in large numbers — and were more successful than their predecessors in setting up permanent residence. The French Protestants included men such as Gabriel BERNON, equally devoted to commerce and religion, instrumental in the founding of Newport's Trinity Church, and remembered also because Bernon Village, later part of Woonsocket, was named after him. Another prominent Huguenot immigrant was Henry MARCHANT, selected as one of Rhode Island's delegates the First Continental Congress.

In July 1780, residents of southern Rhode Island were afforded a most unusual sight, as the flag of France was seen flying on Point Judith. This was the signal that the area was secure for the French troops to land, the six thousand French troops commanded be the Comte de Rochambeau, weary troops who had just spent seventy interminable days crossing the Atlantic to help us in our struggle for freedom. In a broader sense, of course, the flag and the troops offered concrete proof that the King of France had been serious in agreeing to the *Traite d'Amite et de Commerce* with the United States in 1778. Others had preceded Rochambeau, including the Marquis de Lafayette, indefatigable, totally committed to the cause of American freedom from the very start, a frequent visitor to Rhode Island during his countless missions throughout the colonies. The Marquis de Malmedy had also been among the first to arrive, and was appointed a Brigadier General by the Rhode Island General Assembly. In July 1778, a French fleet had anchored off the coast of Newport, under the command of Admiral d'Estaing. But by far

the most significant assistance was brought by General de Rochambeau and fleet Commander Admiral de Ternay, for in 1781 these would be the troops marching to Yorktown for the final battle. Sadly, the French Admiral would not be present for the British surrender, as he contracted a severe fever during the encampment at Newport, and died in December 1780. He was buried in Newport's Trinity churchyard.

The ten-month presence of the French was much appreciated and long remembered by the local population. The behavior of the troops was exemplary, the opportunities for intercultural communications were numerous, long-standing distrust was dissipated. The townspeople, especially the women, would not forget the gaiety of the balls given by the officers, nor the enhanced glitter of the town's social life during that long winter. Some would cherish yet another memory, that of George WASHINGTON visiting Rochambeau at Newport in March 1781, along with the pageantry associated with the visit of the Commander-in-Chief, or again the sight of both generals walking together leisurely through the streets in the evening. Further, the inception of Roman Catholicism in Rhode Island is also associated with the French. Mass had been celebrated by French chaplains during the encampment and a few members of Rochambeau's army settled on Aquidneck Island, thus laying the foundations for a Catholic community.

But Rhode Island's French connection was about to become even more permanent in the nineteenth century. François PROULX and his family are considered the first French-Canadian immigrants to settle in Woonsocket — indeed, in Rhode Island — thereby initiating a trend that would last nearly a century. While there were few immigrants between the Revolution and the Civil War, it is estimated that over thirty thousand French-Canadians immigrated to Rhode Island from the eighteen-sixties through the early twentieth century. From the start these immigrants took part in American life, as shown be the fact that fifty six French-Canadians or Franco-Americans from this state joined the Union Army to fight in the Civil War. This contingent included Calixa LAVALLEE, the future composer of *O Canada*, who, at the age of nineteen, enlisted in the Fourth Rhode Island Regiment, and was later wounded at Antietam.

The major reasons for this exodus from the North are largely economic, since the agricultural and industrial policies of the Canadian and Québec governments did not yield adequate employment opportunities for a fast expanding population. Upon their arrival, the immigrants were generally unwelcomed by the Anglo-Americans — seldom known to welcome immigrants from anywhere — and by the Irish-Americans. As the Irish and the French came to know one another better, the gap widened between the two groups, not only because the French were willing to work for lower wages, but also because of differences in temperament, language and customs (e.g. in matters relating to parish management, as will be seen). This animosity and suspicion had to be countered with proofs of loyalty to the United States — wartime bloodshed was one such proof — and with repeated demonstra-

tions that one could be *both* Franco *and* American. At the same time, every effort was made to preserve the French language and culture, including frequent formal and informal contacts with France and Canada, Behind this effort was a doctrine long preached by Franco-American religious and lay leaders, a doctrine called *survivance*, meaning cultural survival, resistance to assimilation, the preservation of culture, *i.e.* religion, language, customs, and traditions.

Thus the exodus from Canada continued for half a century, many immigrants being drawn to the expanding textile mills of the Blackstone and Pawtuxet Valleys. In time, there came to be large French populations in a dozen centers: Woonsocket, Manville, Ashton, Albion, Slatersville, Central Falls, Pawtucket, Providence, Warren, West Warwick (more specifically Artic, Natick, Lippitsville and Phenix). Also in time, although quite often this might require more than one generation, the immigrants moved from the mills to other realms: the arts, business, the Church, education, the law, medicine and politics.

In politics, the career of Aram J. POTHIER (1854-1928) remains unsurpassed by any Franco-American of Rhode Island.

Having immigrated to Woonsocket at the age of sixteen, POTHIER learned English as he learned the banking profession, became Mayor of Woonsocket in 1894 and Governor of Rhode Island in 1908, a post to which he was repeatedly reelected (1908-1914; 1925-1928). A successful banker and politician, Aram POTHIER has also left an enviable record as an industrialist, having founded or cofounded several mills, thus creating jobs for thousands, while helping to transform Woonsocket into a thriving industrial center. Doubtless it was of men such as Aram POITHIER that Josephat BENOIT , the longtime Mayor of Manchester, NH must have referred to when he wrote: "Rhode Island is the state where the Franco-Americans of New England have become most famous in politics."

Limitations of space and resources do not permit more than passing mention of the ethno-religious controversies which took place in Woonsocket in the 1920's. The best known of these struggles is called *La Sentinelle*, a controversy which sent shock-waves throughout New England and French Canada. The *Sentinelle* dealt chiefly with questions of parish autonomy in the management of parish funds, as opposed to the diocesan administration of those funds. It also raised questions about control of Mount Saint Charles Academy and about the Bishop's right to levy taxes for the construction and maintenance of high schools whose purpose would be the rapid assimilation of immigrants. Then, as now, there were no easy answers, certainly no answers which might have been (might be) universally accepted. As the *Sentinelists* saw it, one's cultural heritage need not be incompatible with one's faith, no more than one's faith should require blind submission to the Church hierarchy. The clergy itself was divided, as experts in Canon Law, from Québec, Montréal and Rome were pressed into the service of the opposing camps. Theological warfare — and a war of

nerves — dragged on, into the late nineteen-twenties, until sixty-five men were excommunicated before relenting.

Whether this vehement conflict of ideas and loyalties accelerated or slowed down the *Americanization* of the Franco-Americans will never probably be established. It does seem clear, however, that Franco-American awareness and involvement have never been greater than they were in the 1920's or the 1930's, *i.e.* during those very years when the group was polarized...and during the ensuing years when a semblance of peace was restored.

The story of the French in Rhode Island, from the 1930's through the post-war period is revealed to an extent by the growth of Franco-American institutions. Of these, none were more important than the parishes, especially the older parishes: Notre-Dame, in Central Falls (dedicated in 1875), the first church in the Diocese to be completed by French-Canadian immigrants; Precious Blood, in Woonsocket (dedicated in 1881), destined to play such a controversial role in the history of the French; St. Jean-Baptiste, in West Warwick (dedicated in 1880), built to resemble churches in Québec. These and the fourteen other French national parishes have until recently, remained close to the hearts of the people, because they were built with the small contributions of the immigrant mill workers, rather than with the large gifts of the wealthy; and because too, the parish has played such an enormous role in both the religious and the social lives of its people.

Individualistic yet clannish, the Franco-Americans have worked collectively to develop other impressive institutions, such as the Union Saint Jean-Baptiste, founded in 1900, headquartered in Woonsocket because of the city's preponderantly French character. In 1979, the Union Saint Jean-Baptiste, with $131,000,000 of insurance in force, a membership of forty thousand Franco-Americans throughout the country, remains the largest fraternal benefit insurance society for Americans of French descent. It still today works in a spirit of defending and promoting the Franco-American cultural heritage, through a number of educational and charitable programs.

Mount Saint Charles, a Woonsocket prep school which opened in 1924 is another institution apt to instill pride in French Rhode Islanders. Although the *Mount* has been criticized for the inadequate role of French in its curriculum, it must be emphasized that the school has, from the very start, been clearly identified as a Franco-American academy, ably directed and staffed by the *Fréres du Sacré-Coeur.*

Founded in 1933, also in Woonsocket, Club Marquette has been involved in a broad variety of political action, charitable, educational and cultural programs. Yet it's most visible achievement was the creation, in 1944, of the Marquette Credit Union, patterned after Québec's well-known *Caisses Populairs Desjardins* — with assets, in 1975, of forty-six million dollars and a ten story office building which dominates the Woonsocket skyline. *Editor's note: Marquette Credit Union failed in 1991 in the midst of a statewide banking crisis.* Mention must be made of Pawtucket's *Le Foyer*, a

Catholic men's social club established in 1936 and in 1979, still actively promoting French activities in northern Rhode Island.

But the vitality of institutions must not lure us into unrealistic optimism. Assimilation, that is, eventual loss of collective cultural identity, has made devastating inroads since World War II. A hard look at the situation of the Franco-Americans today reveals, as with other ethnic groups, generalized apathy, a lack of dynamism, the absence of a firm commitment to go on being a Franco-American in an active, meaningful, creative way. The *New Ethnicity* and the *Roots* phenomena will have merely forestalled the inevitable by a few years at best.

ARTS AND LETTERS. In discussing the artistic a literary production of Rhode Island's Franco-Americans, it is necessary to emphasize at the outset that the *total* production, in these fields, by the New England French, is modest in both quantity and quality. Few Franco-American writers or artists have achieved a lasting national or international reputation — surely no more than one or two per generation over the past century. The reasons are simple enough: first, the total population of the group does not appear to exceed two million (authoritative figures do not exist). Secondly, the emphasis was long placed on survival, *survivance*, economic and cultural subsistence, with few resources left to stimulate esthetic pursuits.

Because the mass of Franco-Americans was compelled to concentrate on earning a livelihood and to do so in an environment not conducive to artistic elevation — it is difficult to work in a textile mill and to write poetry at the same time — the group's artistic activities are all the more remarkable. Certain dates are also remarkable, such as 1885, the foundation year of Woonsocket's *Cercle Nationale Dramatique*, a literary and theatrical organization whose goals were to develop, in young and old alike, a taste for the theater, as well as a love for the French language and French literature. These goals were pursued by a variety of means, lectures for example, by distinguished visitors such as the French-Canadian historian Benjamin SULTE, or receptions for visiting statesmen of the stature of former Québec Premier Honore MERCIER, in 1893. During the early years of this century, St. Jean-Baptiste parish of West Warwick had a flourishing theater, the *Odeon*, modeled on the Paris Odeon, a theater which became a major performing arts center in the region, and which often featured Moliere plays produced by the pastor, Rev. Joseph R. BOURGEOIS.

Indeed, the Franco-Americans of Rhode Island have contributed significantly in the area of the performing arts, and the following are cited merely as a few outstanding examples. J. Ernest PHILIE (1874-1955), organist and composer, spent ten years at Precious Blood (Woonsocket); he is best remembered for a cantata, *Les Voix du Passe*, a waltz, *Sous l'Azur Etoile*, several masses and motets, patriotic songs such as *Le Pays*, a chorus, *Fantasia*. Clearly the man had a multifaceted gift.

Unjustly forgotten is Chambord GIGUERE, born in Woonsocket in 1877, a master-violinist who had

achieved international renown before his retirement in the nineteen-thirties. Better remembered perhaps is Alfred T. PLANTE (1897-1970), a Woonsocket organist, music director and composer for nearly half a century. Founder of *l'Orpheon Saint-Cecile*, a male choral group specializing in Gregorian and polyphonic music, he composed a *Mass for Mixed Voices*, several hymns, waltzes, minuets, a *Suite française* for piano; in addition to composing numerous other selections, he was a much sought after music teacher.

Rene VIAU (b. 1903 in Pawtucket) was a competent organist at age ten, gave piano concerts from age thirteen, studied at Juilliard and at the New England Conservatory, became the organist and music director at various Rhode Island parishes, including St. Jean-Baptiste in Warren and Notre-Dame de Lourdes in Providence. Besides giving concerts throughout the Northeastern United States and Canada, he was a founder of the *Club Chopin Jr.* (Providence), of the *Club Beethoven* (Woonsocket), of a French opera troupe in Woonsocket, of the Woonsocket Symphony Orchestra and the *Vocal Art Society* of Central Falls.

Herve LEMIEUX (b. 1907) also earned the title of music director at Notre Dame Church in Pawtucket at age 21. Later with Albert VANDAL, he founded the *Gais Chanters*, a group of male singers which by now has acquired the permanence of an institution, but having the dynamism and vigor sometimes lacking in institutions. The group's repertoire has remained extensive since its foundation, covering the entire range of French and French-Canadian vocal music, from classical to popular and folk. Also widely known and admired is Dr. C. Alexander PELOQUIN, composer and choir master at the Cathedral of SS. Peter and Paul. Recognized above all for his rousing, joyous religious compositions, of which *Lyric Liturgy* is a choice example. Dr. PELOQUIN has devoted his life to answering a fundamental question he has raised for himself: "How can I serve the community, how can I serve my fellow man, with visions of beauty?"

This same question preoccupied the artist Lorenzo DE NEVERS (born in St. Elphege, Québec in 1883), one of the best known Franco-Americans in art circles. Accepted at the prestigious *École des Beaux-Arts* in Paris (1902), he spent ten years studying under the master art teachers of the day. His love for art sustained him during the several difficult years following his return to America, as his work went unappreciated, his talent not understood. Restless, he lived alternately in Montréal, New York, Woonsocket, and Central Falls, doing church decorations to earn a living, but remaining ever in touch with the world of beauty, in response to his true calling. He completed nearly three thousand paintings in all, many of them religious in nature, such as his *Sainte Face* which now hangs in the Vatican. Other paintings are portraits of Franco-American notables or of international figures, his portraits of Spain's King Alfonso XIII and of President Franklin D. ROOSEVELT having been singled out for special praise.

In literature, we must look to the newspapers for the earliest beginnings. As early as the eighteen-seventies,

Woonsocket and Central Falls had their own French-language press, although too often these papers were short-lived. Others, such as *Le Courrier Canadienne*, enjoyed a longer existence thanks to the energetic dedication of men like Dr. Gedeon ARCHAMBAULT, whose articles repeatedly reflect his concern for the betterment of the French-Canadian immigrants.

In 1895, *La Tribune* was founded as a daily, and would serve the Franco-American community for four decades, in times of peace as well as during years of controversy. *La Tribune* attracted many talented writers, including Olivier ASSELIN who thrived on verbal warfare, or again J. L. K. LAFLAMME, another formidable polemicist who often thundered against the assimilationist tendencies everywhere evident. *La Tribune*, like its later rival *La Sentinelle*, favored the expression of ideas and adopted a strong posture of advocacy. The use of the French language, the need for a Franco-American clergy, for Franco-American parish schools, for Franco-American fraternal benefit societies, these were the perceived needs, they were defended repeatedly, while means for meeting them were ongoing topics of discussion.

As shown by literary history, the French are fond of ideas, they discuss them vehemently, they defend them passionately. All of that is evident in the Franco-American press of Rhode Island and in works which are predominantly polemical. Elphege DAIGNAULT's *Le vrai mouvement sentinelliste en Nouvelle-Angleterre*, for example, refutes J. Albert FOISY's *Histoire de l'agitation sentinelliste en Nouvelle-Angleterre*. A full half-century after the struggle, both works can still move a reader and they are still essential for an understanding of the Franco-American heart and mind.

Other noteworthy achievements by Franco-American writers include the election of Blanche-Yvonne HEROUX of Providence to the Rhode Island Short Story Club at the turn of the century. This was a difficult feat since the Club was an avowed Anglo-American society, open solely to professional women writers. Later, Judge Alberic ARCHAMBAULT of West Warwick would publish *Mill Village*, one of the first English-language documentary novels about the French-Canadian immigrants and their settlement in New England shortly after the Civil War.

In poetry, much has been written by — among others — Gabriel CREVIER (Woonsocket), Rodolphe-Louis HEBERT (West Warwick), Claire QUINTAL (Central Falls and Worcester, MA), and Paul-P. CHASSE (Providence and Somersworth, NH). To date, virtually the only attempt to collect these scattered poems has been made by Professor CHASSE, in his *Anthologie de la poesie Franco-American de la Nouvelle Angleterre*. The same anthology revealed the budding talent of Woonsocket's George McFADDEN, a very young poet who expresses well certain aspects of Franco-American life today.

Several other fields have benefited from Franco-American contributions, fields as diverse as: Reference, with the compilation of *Le Guide Franco-American*, (1946) by Therese

and Lucian SANSOUCI, also editors of *Le Phare*, an independent magazine which appeared in the late nineteen-forties; Genealogy, with Dr. Ulysse FORGET's *Onomastique Franco-Americain*; Travel Literature, with the Rev. Georges BISSONNETTE's *Moscow Was My Parish*; and Local History with Mathias HARPIN's *Trumpets in Jericho*.

The state of Rhode Island has also played a role in the lives of two other French-Canadian/Franco-American writers. Remi TREMBLAY (1847-1926), journalist, novelist and poet, emigrated to Woonsocket with his family at age twelve. After fighting for the North in the Civil War, he eventually returned to Woonsocket where he married and worked at various occupations, including journalism. He is perhaps best known for his Civil War novel *Un Revenant* (1884). Edmond DE NEVERS (1863-1906), historian and essayist, author of the masterful *L'Avenir du peuple canadien-français* and of *L'Ame americaine*, spent the last several years of his life in Central Falls, where he died on 15 April 1906.

Claiming that Rhode Island's Franco-Americans have outdone their follow citizens in the other New England states would be erroneous, but the foregoing (in effect only a partial listing) should substantiate the contention that they have assuredly made an appreciable contribution. While so doing, they have also encouraged us to emulate them.

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It is when we forget ourselves that we do things that are most likely to be remembered.

James N. Williams

Baptist Missionary to the French Catholics in New England

Editor's Note: This article first appeared in two parts in the December 1979 and the March 1980 issues of this publication. Reverend Williams is considered to be the first Baptist missionary to successfully minister among the French Catholics of the New England area.

Born in the small Protestant community of Sherrington, Québec, he eventually held pastorates in various parts of Canada and in the Detroit-Chicago area in the United States. From 1873 until his death in 1915, he labored to bring "The true gospel of Jesus Christ" to the French Catholics of New England. This one thought preoccupied his entire life's work.

From an editorial standpoint, one must remember that this work was written in 1928 under the auspices of the Secretary of Missionary Education for the Baptist Church. Written with a crusader's zeal, the work was intended to expose the "chicanery and wiles of the Roman Church." As such, one must be careful to discern the religious propaganda from the historical fact when reading this account.

To walk worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing, bearing fruit in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God. (Colossians 1:10)

The Province of Quebec in the early days was almost entirely Catholic. It had been discovered and occupied by the French. In the early part of the sixteenth century; the navigator, Jacques CARTIER, had taken possession of the land in the name of the French King and the Catholic Church. The victory of General WOLFE changed things somewhat; but still the Roman priests were the wealthiest and most powerful persons in the province.

BIRTH AND PARENTAGE OF WILLIAMS:

Scattered here and there through the country were small Protestant communities. Most of the people in these villages were of English descent, and were members of the church of England. They were surrounded by the French, who had their large churches and were ruled by the priests. One of these Protestant towns was Sherrington. It was located midway between Montreal and the head of Lake Champlain. Here was born James Nelson WILLIAMS on 22 December 1829.

The parents of James were of Welsh extraction. They were living in this settlement of about twenty-five

farmers, and like their neighbors, they worked many and long hours on the land. They were all frugal people with large families. James was one of eighteen children. In this large household God was worshiped, as both parents were religious. They believed that homes should always be nurseries of piety.

SCHOOLING:

It was a great delight, therefore, to this small group of farmers that Sherrington was one of the stations of the Methodist circuit-rider. Whenever Rev. William HARVARD, the venerable pastor, would make his periodic visit, the WILLIAMS family all would plan to attend. They looked forward to these visits with much delight. They liked to hear the gospel preached

In his ninth year James accepted Christ as his savior. From his earliest childhood he had heard the Bible read, and he had sung songs of the Kingdom. He felt the need of this public acknowledgment of his faith in Jesus. Though he played with many French boys who knew nothing of real Christianity, boys whose entire concept of religion was diseased by the ecclesiasticism of the French Catholic Church, still James, because of his home training and his constant attendance on the meeting found deepest joy in his new birth into the Kingdom of God.

Among the reminiscences of his life, Doctor WILLIAMS has written a vivid description of the status of religion at that time: "I recollect that once from the top of a snow bank, I watched with great wonderment the passing of two sleighs in procession. In the forward one a man was standing in his wintry furs, swinging a bell about the size of a usual auction bell. In the winter rig that followed was a priest, his coachman driving, and he was seated erect and with folded hands behind. I learned from the French boys whom I found posted on such matters, what it all meant and that it was *'Le Bon Dieu qui passait!'* It was God going by. 'But why did the man ring a bell,' I ventured to inquire. 'Why don't you know? To warn people that *Le Bon Dieu* was going by so that folks might come out of their homes and get down on their knees and say their prayers.'"

As a boy he did not hold himself aloof from the French boys in the neighborhood. His father now had been commissioned captain of the militia, but he was a man who believed in fairness and kindness toward all men whether they differed with him in politics and religion or not. The French had sought to overthrow the English rule, but they had been entirely unsuccessful.

One day James was visiting the home of his neighbor Joseph TALLARD. This man had been hearing the Bible read to him by his daughter Addie. So impressed had he become with its teaching that he was delighted to hear it. James took part in the discussion of this holy book, and they became great friends.

Rev. Mr. ROUSSY was in the habit of visiting the TALLARDs as he made his rounds, and he was much impressed when they talked to him about James WILLIAMS. When they urged him to take the boy to Grande Ligne mission, he told them that the mission

was primarily for French children. However, when ROUSSY finally met James they had a long conversation, which resulted in Mr. WILLIAMS driving James over to Grande Ligne in 1844.

As a lad of fifteen he entered this school, which was to be his home for over eight years. In writing of the founder in after years, he said: "Madame FELLER. as I remember her, had a face aglow with benevolence and intelligence, a voice of distinctly kindly and beautiful tone. From the time of her first greeting, I adopted her as the ideal good mother that she ever proved to be during my sojourn at the Institute. I count it one of the highest privileges of my life to have shared the interest and undergone the influence of that saintly woman."

Other teachers of this school made a deep impression on this young man. There were Rev. Leon NORMANDEAU, a converted priest, and Rev. Philip WOLFF, who taught him music. Dr. C. H. CÔTE, a converted Catholic, used to come often to the mission ; and the young people were always glad to see him. These men of God helped to mold the student body into a power for the Kingdom of God.

When his preparatory work was finished, WILLIAMS entered the Baptist College in Montréal. This was his first contact with city life. He had only been in small communities, so that many of the ways of the city disturbed and perplexed him. With the same fortitude that he displayed in later life, he studied hard, determined to be a missionary to the French people.

He entered Rochester Seminary, therefore, where he studied for three years. His name had been sent to Newton Institution with the hope that he might attend there. The answer did not reach WILLIAMS because it was not stamped. Meanwhile, Madame FELLER had visited Rochester; and while there she made arrangements for WILLIAMS to enter the Seminary. Due to his ability to talk French, his fellow students had named him *Parlez-vous*.

During these years of training he sought in every way, outside of the Seminary, to fit himself for his chosen work. He did some special studying to know the full contents of the Roman faith. In the summer of these years he worked as colporter of the Grande Ligne Mission. The last year in Rochester he started to hold meetings which were quite largely attended by the French Canadians.

MARRIAGE:

James WILLIAMS had married Miss Rachel J. McCARTY in 1853. She was a wonderful help to him in all his work. Interested in whatever he undertook, and loving Christ with an intensity of devotion that knew no reserve, she proved her love in many ways. Though in later life Mrs. WILLIAMS became an invalid, the sincerity of her faith was a constant source of inspiration to him.

PASTORATE IN CANADA:

The first charge to which he was appointed after his graduation from Rochester was Henryville. This was a station of the Grande Ligne Mission. It

was about twelve miles out; and the district was populated with both French and English. Thither WILLIAMS took his wife and began his ministry in Canada, which lasted for ten years.

At this first definite preaching appointment there were many things indicative of the real pioneer. He was ever on the move. Henryville was but the headquarters of the territory that he now sought to cover. He visited Pike River with his helper, Eloi ROY. This little village was always fragrant in his memory. It was here that Williams read the Bible to the large THERRIEN family. From this home he had the privilege of baptizing the mother Mrs. THERRIEN, the first person to be baptized in his ministry. Even more significant is the fact that two of the THERRIEN boys became missionaries.

Several other villages became regular preaching appointments for him. As he went preaching he suffered much; somewhat from open persecution; but more from covert attacks and malicious lies on the part of the French parish priests. These Catholic priests, who called the Grande Ligne Mission "the Protestant pest-house of a school" were determined that the entire work of the Baptists among their people should be stopped.

Following these few months of service, WILLIAMS moved to Montréal to become pastor of the St. Helen Street Baptist Church. He spent a little over three years with this church. That was the longest period of time given to work outside of his chosen task, that of French evangelization. He had the privilege of preaching to a large company of Scots and many English, in this, the only Baptist Church of Canada's metropolis.

Though he enjoyed his work in Montréal, he very gladly closed his ministry there to accept the oversight of St. Pie, Granby, and Roxton Pond under the appointment of the Grande Ligne Mission. WILLIAMS thoroughly believed that God had called him to preach the gospel to the French. At times in his life he was led into other by-paths. He always considered them as detours which would ultimately bring him to his chosen avenue of service.

One of the most interesting experiences of his life in St. Pie was to be a participant in a debate. The priests had been constantly challenging his work and with their brazen effrontery had sought to dispute every new line of operation. WILLIAMS staged a debate with them before a large concourse of people. He defeated the priests to such an extent that the Bishop forbade them to have part in any more such encounters with the doughty Baptist missionary.

An offer of unusual promise came to WILLIAMS, which was accepted and he moved again to Montréal. In his few years of preaching among the French he had felt the lack of sufficient literature of the proper sort to give to the converts, and to those who expressed an interest in his work. In this new position, he was to seek to create proper periodicals for all the evangelicals of the French. He immediately began the publication of a religious weekly, *Le Moniteur*, The Teacher. The American Baptist Home Mission Society was in sympathy with this new ven-

ture, and they sent him an appointment "to labor under its auspices in cooperation with the Montréal Association."

This editorship which he started with so much pleasure, he soon gave up. He would not do anything that would in any way bring him into conflict or antagonism with the work or the policy of the Grande Ligne Mission. He owed too much to the mission, and he valued too highly the work it was doing. His resignation from this literary work came when the Society in Montréal determined that they would increase their interests to take in the whole field of French evangelization. That meant either a break with the Mission or the surrendering of one of his own chosen and heartily desired tasks. He chose the latter, and so closed his work in Canada.

FIRST YEARS IN THE UNITED STATES:

On 9 May 1866, WILLIAMS started on one of the longest journeys of his life. With great faith in his God, and with face set for the West, he left for Detroit, Michigan. With him were his wife, his three daughters, Emma, aged eleven; Alice, aged seven; Florence, aged three; and his son Henry, aged five. So they went out, leaving the land of their birth to come to the country to which he gave his long life of service. He went to Detroit, not to receive a position already awaiting him, but to find the place which he believed his God was leading. While there was no cloud of smoke by day or cloud of fire by night, he was sure that he had but to obey the leadings of God's assurance that in His own time the position of God's appointing would be awaiting God's appointed.

WILLIAMS discovered in Detroit a friend of school days, Rev. R.B. DESROCHES, who was pastor of a flourishing Baptist church. Following his suggestion, WILLIAMS went to Stryker, Ohio, in company with a member of DESROCHES' church. This Ohio village was about fifty miles west of Toledo on the Michigan Southern Railroad. In making his first notation of Stryker, WILLIAMS wrote: "It is the market-place of a thickly settled farming community, mainly French, who had emigrated from the northeastern provinces of France. They hailed mostly from the Department of Donby, a Protestant section of their native land. Because of isolation they had become indifferent in matters of religion.

The field was very inviting to a man of WILLIAMS' temperament. The task that was hard, and the situation that was difficult, lured him onward! They seemed to him to be a real challenge to his life. So when two families of Stryker asked him to come and minister to that needy place, he answered by immediately moving there with his wife and five children. Elizabeth had been born in Detroit.

Although many of the French disliked the Baptists, and some of them hated them intensely, although there were only two families who had agreed to help support him, when WILLIAMS arrived with his family they all gave him the things that he needed. They themselves had little silver and gold, but out of their poverty they gave him butter, eggs, and so many articles of food that he wrote, "I never suffered less want

than in my non-salaried venture to preach the gospel to the Stryker French.

The problem of support was a very acute one, for in his present status it was impossible for him to devote all his time to his preaching. He made an appeal for aid to the Ohio State Convention at their anniversary meeting that year. He was a stranger to Ohio Baptists, but he had the backing of the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Toledo, the Rev. Mr. PLATT. Due to the influence of PLATT, the Convention voted to give WILLIAMS four hundred dollars toward his mission work,

Stryker remained his headquarters for two years. There were two distinct factors that contributed to the success of the mission there. The first was the difference between the purity and sincerity of the gospel that WILLIAMS preached, and that which was the common practice of the countryside. Perhaps the most noteworthy example of this came when a new French priest was brought into the village with the hope that he could keep people from following WILLIAMS. The priest was so drunk and so vile, and his life was such a contrast to the integrity of the Baptist missionary, that his presence aided rather than hindered WILLIAMS' work. The second fact was that many of the important families of the community were converted and joined the Baptist church. When their neighbors threatened to boycott with the hope of changing the views of these members, one of them said: "If you make it impossible for me to earn a living as a tradesman in your midst, I'll find something else to do if I have to hire out as a day-laborer or a farm hand. But this I want you all to know, I'm going to serve my Lord and Savior, come what may."

The next five years of his life WILLIAMS spent in and near Chicago. He had made a few trips from Stryker to Chicago, thinking that he could alternate his work; but he soon found that impossible. He finally left Stryker on 23 July 1868, for Chicago. In this city he hoped to be able to secure one-half of his salary from the Home Mission Society and the other half from the Second Baptist Church. This church had promised him this money on the condition that he would devote part of his time to their "Stock Yards Mission." The Home Mission Society, due to a lack of funds, was unable to help WILLIAMS. He was, therefore, forced to give French lessons to students of Chicago University.

At this time there were about twenty thousand French in Chicago. The Roman Church was doing all in its power to keep these people, who were nominally Catholics, within their fold. Williams, who was ever seeking the difficult job, moved to Chicago. He felt that he could safely leave the Stryker church in the case of Brother LONYS; and he could try to win these French Catholics to a realization that form and ceremony were not enough to enter the kingdom of heaven. "Ye must be born again."

PASTORATES IN CHICAGO AND MOMENCE, ILLINOIS:

Unable to make a living for his family in Chicago because of the uncertainty of even the amount expected, he found it necessary to leave the work among the French for a few years. He

accepted the pastorate of the South Baptist Church of Chicago. For the next five years he preached to two congregations, to that one in Chicago, and to the Baptist Church at Momence, Illinois. He enjoyed these two pastorates, but he felt that he was not doing the work to which he had been called by God, that of seeking to win the French to Christ.

An offer came to him from the Home Mission Society to accept charge of the Baptist Mission on the island of Haiti. This opportunity was presented just when he had started his work at Momence. He did not think it fair to this church to leave them until he had completed his year of service. The Grande Ligne Mission also asked him to return to Canada to take charge of one of the French churches. He felt that to leave the United States without a direct leading of the Spirit would be to question the certainty of the leading that had brought him to Detroit.

Some of the darkest days and weeks of his life were just ahead. He had resigned his second Illinois pastorate to accept a position with the American Foreign Bible Society as a collecting agent. He had moved his family to the Englewood district. There were now six children, as Fanny was born in 1868. The new work proved to be an unfortunate venture on his part. In fact his whole experience in Chicago seemed to pull him away from the French people rather than to place him among them. Was he called to do evangelistic work for the French? Did God want him to continue to win them from ritualism to reality, from formalism to fervor, and from ecclesiasticism to a regenerated church? Was it the purpose of his Father that he should be a watchman for the French? These thoughts were surging through his soul these days.

Never did WILLIAMS entirely lose sight of his call to service. No matter how dark the present or how dim the vision seemed to grow, there was ever with him the assurance of His presence. The French people needed Christ. He rejoices in the privilege of telling them the story. Obstacles of the present would be overcome if he were faithful!

Williams wrote to the secretary of the New York State Convention. This man he had known for many years. In this letter he offered his services to the Convention for work among the French, suggesting that he could make his headquarters at Malone. He knew this part of New York State as he had carried on some missionary work there in the early part of his ministry. He felt sure that he could reach out to the French in Champlain Ogdensburg, and many other places.

SUPERINTENDENT OF FRENCH MISSIONS FOR NEW ENGLAND:

He waited for some weeks for an answer with both fear and faith. Finally, one day, there came a letter postmarked New York. He was sure that the answer had come, and that it would be favorable. To his intense surprise the letter contained an offer from the Home Mission Society, entirely unsolicited, "of an appointment as missionary among the French of New England." This he felt was a very definite call of God, so without hesitation he accepted. Thus he began a work that was to engage all his powers and his time until

he was called to a higher and better service where he could work and never grow weary.

Meanwhile the letter containing his commission from the New York State Convention had been lying in the Post Office at Englewood. The letter had been misplaced. When it was finally discovered and delivered, the New England appointment had been received. In this way, seemingly so accidental, but in reality so providential, was the life of this true minister directed to New England.

BOSTON HEADQUARTERS:

The Board of The American Home Mission Society had suggested that he make his headquarters in Boston. How to procure enough money to move his family and his household goods to the East was a big problem. He wrote to two of his friends concerning this serious matter; one Mr. J. B. FULTON, of Rochester, New York, and the other, Mr. B. F. JACOBS, of Boston. In response he received railroad tickets for himself and his family from Chicago to Boston. Money was also loaned to him without any guaranty; and with the statement that he need not try to return it until he felt able to do so.

On 1 March 1873, James N. WILLIAMS started for New England. He made his home in South Boston for the first few years. The Baptists of the Tremont Temple Church aided him in getting settled. They took up an offering of $52 for him at one of their prayer meetings. It was with a heart of thankfulness and praise that he entered his new work. Surely the Lord had led him. During the years in Chicago the Lord had been trying and testing his faith for the long period of service among some of the original colonies.

The Rev. Narcisse CYR had been predecessor in this work. CYR had labored for only two years, then been released by the Home Mission Society. This man had shown two glaring faults, First, his work had been rather uncertain. Instead of trying to develop any one, or any few stations, he had covered a great deal of ground, had preached in many places; but had no permanent work started. Secondly, he would branch off into travel lectures, or other kindred subjects, and leave the gospel message undelivered.

When WILLIAMS began he immediately adopted the circuit idea. He wrote in one of his first notes, "I am going to include only so many centers of the French as I can visit regularly once a month." The first group of cities that he visited were Lowell, Salem, Haverhill, Fall River, and Worcester — all in Massachusetts, and Providence and Woonsocket in Rhode Island. He began this itinerating ministry on 5 April 1873, and continued it until he became a teacher in the Newton Theological Institution in 1890.

He found in Lowell, about 12,000 French; and the only French Protestant worker in the employ of the Home Million Society, Mr. Z. PATENAUDE, the Baptist colporter, was stationed there. He was an old acquaintance, having worked with WILLIAMS on the field of the Grand Ligne Mission. One of the joys of this work in New England was the meeting of the friends of years before of the Feller Institute.

In this city of Lowell he had his first difference with another Protestant communion. "The Congregationalists," WILLIAMS wrote, "were the wealthiest of our evangelical denominations in New England." He believed very firmly that million work among the French should present a united Protestant front to the Catholics. It grieved him when the Congregationalists started a separate work in Lowell. For four years WILLIAMS had carried on in this city with considerable success; and then the Congregationalists began their mission. They settled a missionary in Lowell, hired a very fine hall, and then campaigned in a very determined way to lure the Baptists into their fold. WILLIAMS had no time to fight any denomination. He never in his work among the French appealed to religious prejudice. He made his appeal to the reason of people. So blessed was the Baptist work in Lowell that by 1885 a resident missionary, Rev. G. AUBIN, was settled there.

Not all of the work was so fruitful. There were some places where after years of barrenness and apparent hopelessness the harvest came. He found himself opposed everywhere by the chicanery and wiles of the Roman priests. These men sought in every way possible to intimidate their members and even to make them fearful of attending a meeting conducted by the Protestants. Most of all did these priests seek to keep out of their communities, and to try to deny the right to speak to the Rev. Father CHINIQUY, the converted Catholic priest.

Father CHINIQUY would deliver one lecture as he did in Woonsocket, Rhode Island, in 1876. In this lecture he would fearlessly expose the evils of Romanism. At the Woonsocket meeting there was an extra large crowd, most of whom were Irish Catholics. They had gathered for no good purpose. As WILLIAMS looked out over the audience during the address he realized that there would be a conflict. Only by being able to pass out the rear of the hall, and into a secret passage did he and his companion reach their hotel in safety.

Sometimes Father CHINIQUY would hold a week's or two week's meetings. These would be very largely attended, as they were in Putnam, Connecticut, in 1874. Here the Catholics burned all of the outbuildings of the man in whose home CHINIQUY and WILLIAMS stayed. When these two men went to Worcester, Massachusetts for a revival campaign they were backed by the Ministerial Union of that city. The greatest center of French population in Western Massachusetts was Holyoke. To this city CHINIQUY went with his message of a loving Savior and a regenerated church membership. WILLIAMS always found it very profitable to follow in the wake of this ex-priest and reap the harvest.

Many and varied were the experiences that WILLIAMS had as the Romanists sought to obstruct him. One of the inevitable difficulties was boycott. When due to his preaching in Haverhill, a doctor and his family were converted, the Catholics all boycotted him. They were so successful in this that the doctor had to leave the city to find other people whom he might serve. Another method of attack used by the Romanists was that of ridicule, WILLIAMS had been blessed in his work at

Worcester. Before passing judgment of his teaching a group of young men said that they would ask their priest about the whole matter. WILLIAMS told them that he would be glad to meet their priests anywhere; but no call came. On his next visit WILLIAMS asked why he didn't hear from them. They said, "The priest will not debate." Then WILLIAMS inquired if the priest had given any reason for his refusal. "Yes," they said, "he did." He said to them, "Don't you see that man is no gentleman nor scholar, or he wouldn't have sent his name on that little rag of paper. I'll nothing to do with him. He is beneath my notice." WILLIAMS questioned the young men at great length in order to learn whether they thought this a valid excuse. The paper referred to was not a note to the priest; but merely a memorandum so that these Frenchmen might remember his Boston address. Many said that Williams won a great victory by the refusal by the priest to debate.

God was in the work of winning these men destitute of the real gospel to His Son Jesus. Williams had some remarkable examples in marvelous conversions even to the point of some of the clergy of the Roman Church. One of these men lived in Salem, the city that was his second appointment in his monthly tours. The young Frenchman had been reared in the home of a *bedeau*, that is, a sexton in the Roman Church. In his early environment he had thus come into intimate contact with all the vessels, vestments pictures, and statues in the church. As a boy he had been a great favorite of the old priest. He had educated and trained in all of the work of the priest. In order to better his condition he had come to America and settled in a small town in Connecticut. His landlady placed a copy of the French Bible on his washstand. He did not want her to know that he was reading it; and so after he had studied it, he was very careful to place it in the spot in which he had taken it. Because of this long study of God's Word, WILLIAMS did not find it hard to lead the young man to Christ.

When the Bible in all of its matchless teaching is given the right of way in the human heart victory is assured. "My word shall not return unto me void" On one of his journeys Williams learned of a young man who was very much addicted to drink. He had a sick wife, and one day he became possessed with the idea that he ought to find peace of soul. He went to the Roman Church and prayed most earnestly. It seemed to him that he must go out and obtain a Bible. He went out and bought a Bible, and came home to read it for hours. Through this reading he was brought to Christ, and joined the church. His old acquaintances, Romanists, taunted him; and one day they caught him and tried to pour liquor down his throat. He remained true and became a minister of the Bible.

Williams was tireless. He went everywhere preaching the word. The record of his activities is, as Dr. C. L. White has written, *The Story of a Wonderful Life.* In December of 1873 he attended the dedication of the first New England French Mission Chapel at Burlington, Vermont. This chapel had been made possible by the gift of Mr. Mial DAVIS, who gave $400 for its erection. What a delight it was to Williams to be present on that day; espe-

cially as Rev. A. L. THERRIEN was to be the pastor, the young man whom he had led out of Romanism to the light of Jesus.

Just a few months later; in the spring of 1875, he made his first visit to Maine; and started work in Waterville. In both Lewiston and Biddeford there were more French; but because of the severity of the opposition of the Catholics to the Baptist work, he decided on Waterville. Furthermore, a Mr. LEGER of this town took a considerable interest in the work; and when WILLIAMS came to hold a ten-day revival meeting he was very helpful.

Both of these men felt there ought to be a mission at Biddeford because it was the largest center of French population in Maine. It was estimated that there were about nine thousand there. In 1880 they started work in the midst of violent attacks on the part of Catholics. One meeting was broken up as these Baptist missionaries became the target for quids of tobacco. On another occasion, the meeting was dismissed due to catcalling and heckling of the speakers. Protection was sought from the officers of the law; and these deputies kept order. Due to these disturbances, and also to the fact that no missionary could be found, no mission was established.

Another field where Williams went once a year was northern New York. One of the reasons for these annual visits was that he had attacks of hayfever. "Another and better reason," WILLIAMS wrote in his notes, "was the fact that scattered all along the boundary line between Canada and the State of New York there were, as fruits of mission work, small groups of Protestants. They were mostly without oversight in their services in their own tongue." He made his headquarters at Malone on these annual pilgrimages.

One of the statements of the priests that was difficult to refute was that the Protestants had the wrong Bible. The French Catholics were so governed and controlled by the priests that they accepted their statements as if that was statements of God. Williams determined, therefore, to secure a Bible of the Catholic owned by a priest. So he was delighted when he came to Worcester one day to learn that one of the Protestant women had in her home the Bible of the Catholic priest of that city. It was a copy of the Glaire version, and had the name of the priest inscribed in the cover. The woman had secured it when she had gone out with her Catholic neighbor to the priest. He told them that the Protestants had the wrong Bible; and after much persuasion he had loaned them his own for two weeks. At the suggestion of WILLIAMS this young woman now took the Bible back to the priest and offered to buy it. He charged her a dollar and started to scratch out his name. Knowing that the name of the priest in his own handwriting was one of the things that enhanced the value of the Bible, she quickly took it from him and gave it to Williams. Always thereafter when he would have a dispute with the Catholics he would show this Bible with the name inscribed. It was an irrefutable argument.

Wherever he heard of a group of French, thither he went to seek to bring them to the light. In December of 1883 he went to New York City. Dr. Edward

JUDSON had become very much interested in the project of starting a French Mission here. The time seemed to be ripe due to the recent conversion of a French priest. While in this city Williams saw evidence of the fanatical hatred of the Catholics who assaulted a man who was giving out tracts to Romanists as they came from their church.

Williams also visited the mining region of Pennsylvania, and his former church in Stryker. He went to Ohio the first time for the purpose of helping in the dedication of a new church building. His second visit was in 1884 when he held a three-weeks meeting. On his journeys into Pennsylvania he sought out the French. As he went from group to group, and from city to city, he discovered that there was a great need of trained workers. That was his experience in many such locations. French people were estranged from their former church; and many of them were living as sheep without a shepherd. "Pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth reapers."

During all these trials, difficulties, and disturbances Mrs. Williams had encouraged him. Though during the last few years of her life she was an invalid, she was always cheerful. She died during 1885, leaving six children. Hardly had her husband been accustomed to her loss, when another sorrow came to him, his only son William Henry, who was a student at Brown University, died in Providence in 1887. These two deaths proved a tremendous blow to this missionary who had labored for fifteen years in New England. He had been so active, and energetic, so forceful, and yet, with it all so kind and thoughtful, that folks loved him.

The time had come for a rest. He decided to go to Europe and to combine with his period of relaxation some study in the universities of the old world. He also wanted to brush up on his French, and to study Romanism at first hand. He visited Rome and Berlin; but he spent most of his time while abroad in Paris.

INSTRUCTOR AT NEWTON THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTION:

When he returned to the States he began his new work as an instructor of the French department in the Newton Theological Institution. He held this position for eight years.

"We studied," he wrote, "very thoroughly the teachings of the Holy Scripture on the various doctrines of the Church of Rome, and I devoted much time to an academic drill of my class in French literature by reading, composition, oral debate, and extemporaneous or written discourse, leaving to the other departments of the seminary the care of their studies in the usual courses."

PROVIDENCE, RI, HIS LAST HOME:

During these eight years over twenty-five men graduated equipped to work among the French people. In 1898 it was necessary to retrench. Finances were very low, and the Massachusetts State Convention abandoned its policy of using French students. WILLIAMS, therefore, resigned his professorship, and moved his family to Providence. This city thus became home for the remainder of his life.

Now he was almost seventy years of age, it was necessary for him to readjust his work. He could not do as much traveling as formerly; so through letters and messengers he sent his suggestions to those men, the most of whom he had trained, who were doing the colporter and missionary work. One of these men, in after years writing, of WILLIAMS said:

"He never exercised autocratic authority, much less ecclesiastical censorship over his brethren. His religion was the right kind, reasonable, free from asceticism, not secluded, long-faced, and hypocritical."

Until the end of his life, WILLIAMS held the position of Superintendent of Baptist Missions among the French of New England. Never did he cease to think of these people, to pray for them, and to do all in his power to bring their needs to the attention of Baptists, As he grew older in the work, as those closest to him saw more clearly the purity of his life, they loved him. One said, "It seems that WILLIAMS is in constant and secret communion with God."

In 1905 he decided to go out to California for a rest in the home of his daughter, Mrs. Alice MERRIAM. He had been busy writing books. Two of these books were in the French language; one, *The Rule of Faith*, or *Four Questions*, and the other, *The Golden Rule*.

Just before leaving for this long trip he had helped in work at the manufacturing town of Manchaug. A very interesting situation had developed there under a Rev. Mr. RIBOURG. This priest had offered his services to the Roman bishop for this community, but he had been refused. Despite the fact, he began work there, and gathered around him about three hundred Catholics, who were disgusted with the disreputable men who had been their priests. When Rev. E. RAMETTE of Woonsocket visited this city he learned that Rev. Mr. RIBOURG was preaching the fundamentals of the evangelical faith. Yet this priest, for fear that the Catholics would cease to attend, had them make the sign of the cross and say, *A Hail Mary*. After prayer and consultation, RIBOURG thought that he had better leave and permit another to come in and reap the harvest. WILLIAMS counseled against this, believing that he who had led this group thus far should lead them all the way to the Baptist position. On 29 March 1905, RIBOURG was baptized in the first Baptist Church of Worcester, and with him were about forty others. Many more followed him, so that the movement became almost a mass movement to Protestantism.

THE CLOSING DAYS:

Honors came to WILLIAMS in later life as the value of his service became known, and the singleness of his purpose became more manifest. Colby College gave him the degree of Doctor of Divinity in his seventy-sixth year. Other organizations sought to do him honor. As age stiffened the joints and weakened the blood, men began to appreciate more than ever the solidity of the foundation which he had laid, and the integrity of his life.

THE MISSIONARY OF THE BLAMELESS LIFE:

On 9 July 1925, he was called to God. After forty-two years in New England the sphere of his labor was changed to the homeland of the soul. When Dr. C. L. WHITE conducted his funeral service two days later, he referred to Williams as one "who had a radiant countenance." Later, Doctor WHITE wrote in *Missions* of him: "The missionaries who worked under him loved him like a father. His tenderness in dealing with those who stepped from the path of rectitude, his patience and long-suffering with others who found it difficult to adjust themselves to the freedom of personal faith, his wisdom as a counselor, and his ability to untangle difficulties, wove through the years a mantle of personal influence revealing in every part a personal design.

When Williams himself was seeking to write down a summary of his work, toward the close of his life, he said, "From 1873 no less that seventy-two centers of French population have been opened either as stations or outstations." Then, he closes his notes with a sentence that is prophetic, and that is also filled with pathos: "The battle has just begun in our native land."

The Wishing Well

An eight-year-old boy approached an old man in front of a wishing well, looked up into his eyes, and asked, "I understand you're a very wise man. I'd like to know the secret of life."

The old man looked down at the youngster and replied, "I've thought a lot in my lifetime, and the secret can be summed up in four words.

The first is think. Think about the values you wish to live your life by.

The second is believe. Believe in yourself based on the thinking you've done about the values you're going to live your life by.

The third is dream. Dream about the things that can be, based on your belief in yourself and the values you're going to live by.

The last is dare. Dare to make your dreams become reality, based on your belief in yourself and your values. "

And with that, Walter E. Disney said to the little boy, "Think, Believe, Dream, and Dare." When you make your life a vision, you will see an abundance of blessings.

AUTHORS' GUIDELINES

Subject Matter: *JMS* publishes articles of interest to people of French Canadian descent. Articles dealing with history and genealogy are of primary interest, although articles on related topics will be considered. Especially desirable are articles dealing with sources and techniques, i.e. "how-to guides."

Length: Length of your article should be determined by the scope of your topic. Unusually long articles should be written in such a way that they can be broken down into two or more parts. *Surnames should be capitalized.*

Style: A clear, direct conversational style is preferred. Keep in mind that most of our readers have average education and intelligence. An article written above that level will not be well received.

Manuscripts: This publication is produced on an IBM-compatible computer, using state of the art desktop publishing software. While this software has the capability to import text from most word-processing programs, we prefer that you submit your article in straight ASCII text or in WordPerfect 5.1 or 6.x format on 3.5" floppy disk. If you do not use an IBM-compatible computer, or do not have access to a computer, your manuscript should be typewritten on 8.5" x 11" paper. It should be double-spaced with a 1-inch margin all around. If notes must be used, endnotes are preferable over footnotes. A bibliography is desirable.

Illustrations: Our software is capable of importing graphics in most IBM-compatible formats. Vector graphics (PIC, PLT, WMF, WMT, CGM, DRW, or EPS) are preferred over bit-mapped graphics (BMP, MSP, PCX, PNT, or TIF). Scanned images can also be used. We prefer the Tagged Image File Format (TIF) for scanned photos. You may also submit printed black-and white photographs. We will have them scanned if, in our opinion, the photo adds enough to the article to justify the cost.

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Members' Corner: Members' Corner is a section whose purpose is to provide a conduit by which our members may contact each other for the purpose of exchanging information. This is a service provided for members only at no cost on a space-available basis. You may submit short items (one or two paragraphs) in

the following categories:

Work in Progress - If you are involved in an unusual project or are researching a specific subject or surname, you may use Members' Corner to announce this fact. Members able to help are encouraged to contact you.

Books Wanted - If you are searching for a book or books to aid you in your research, you may advertise your need here. Please include as much information as possible about the books, i.e. title, author, publisher, publication date, etc.

Books for Sale - We will accept items for used books which you wish to sell, or for books you have personally authored. Be sure to include the name of the book and your asking price. Book dealers may not use this space. Book dealers are encouraged to purchase advertising space in this journal. Rates are published on the inside front cover.

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All submissions to Members' Corner must include your name, address and phone number. Deadlines are 15 December for the Spring issue, and 15 June for the Fall issue. Keep in mind that this is a semiannual publication. Where time is important, items should be sent to AFGnewS.

To Submit Articles: Mail all submissions to Paul P. Delisle, P.O. Box 171, Millville, MA 01529.

The French in Rhode Island – Religion and Education

by: Rev. Edward St. Godard

This article first appeared in the March 1980 edition of Je Me Souviens.

It would not be stretching the point to claim that the original Catholic Church in Rhode Island was French Catholic. For in 1780 the first Catholic Mass in Rhode Island was celebrated in Newport by Father de GLEANON, the chaplain of the French army under Rochambeau. The second recorded Mass was also "French" when in 1789 Father de la POTERIE, a French priest, celebrated the Eucharist in Providence.

The actual organization of the Franco-American Church in Rhode Island is due, remotely at least, to Bishop Louis de GOESBRIAND of Burlington, Vermont. He published an article in 1869 in which he declared:

"The Canadians need missionaries from their own country. They need separate churches. God, in His Providence, desires that nations be evangelized, at least in general, by apostles who speak their language, who understand their customs and attitudes."

There already existed a few Franco-American parishes in New England — St. Joseph's in Burlington, founded in 1851, being the oldest — but Bishop de Goesbriand's initiative is what sparked the founding of national parishes all through New England.

The first French national parish in the Diocese of Providence was founded when this diocese included the area now covered by the present Diocese of Fall River. The parish in question was the famous shrine of St. Anne of Fall River, founded in 1870 by Fr. M. de MONTAUBRICQ from France. Approximately two years later, Fr. James A. FITZSIMMONS organized a territorial parish which in 1874 became a Franco-American parish — with a French pastor — St. James, Manville. And so, in a sense, St. James can be traced back as the oldest French parish in Rhode Island.

The fact that the first *French* pastor was indeed *Irish* points to an interesting fact in Rhode Island Church history. The Irish immigration, in general, preceded the French influx by a quarter of a century. Thus the Hibernians had already established a church system before their Canadian brothers arrived. The Canadians had no choice but to attend *le Messe* at the *Irish* (as any territorial church would be called) church. This is especially true of the three great centers of Canadian migration in our state — Woonsocket, Pawtucket, and West Warwick.

In Woonsocket the original parish was that of St. Charles. By 1866 this parish had enough French-speaking communicants that Bishop McFARLAND decided to give them a parish of their own and so the ill-fated church of *St. Joseph of the Village of Woonsocket* was planned. The Rev. Eugene VYGEN, a Belgian, was to be pastor. Together with the Bishop, the Vicar-General, and two trustees, Father VYGEN filed papers for incorporation. This caused problems for the Canadians. First, they wanted a Canadian, not a Belgian pastor. Secondly, they wanted lay control of the parish as they had in Canada. This, of course, did not sit well with the Bishop and so he stopped the formation of this parish. Instead, he sent Father Lawrence WALSH, who spoke fluent French, to minister to the Canadians at St. Charles until 1873 when Precious Blood parish was formed to better serve the French community.

In the Pawtucket area at this time, all Catholics attended St. Mary's parish whose pastor was the Rev. Patrick DELANEY. In 1872 a young Canadian priest from the diocese of St. Hyacinthe was sent by his bishop to Pawtucket. Father Charles DAURAY was seriously ill and the bishop thought he could recuperate better at the home of his brother Hypolite. While in Pawtucket, the young priest approached Father DELANEY seeking permission to say Mass at St. Mary's. The French people flocked to these Masses to hear sermons in their own language. This so impressed the bishop that he was able to persuade Father DAURAY to stay and found Notre Dame parish in Central Falls in September of 1873.

The third area of Canadian migration witnesses to the same story. The original parish in what is now West Warwick was the Church of Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Crompton. The pastor, the Rev. James GIBSON, was aware of the great number of Canadians attending his church, and so in 1872 he petitions Bishop McFARLAND for an assistant who could speak French. In response the Bishop assigned Father James BERKINS to the parish. One Sunday Father BERKINS did not appear for his scheduled French service and so that very afternoon the leaders of the Franco-American community assembled and decided to ask for the formation of their own parish. The bishop was favorable and acquired the services of Father Henry SPRUYT, a recent arrival from Holland who was fluent in French, as the founding pastor of St. John the Baptist parish in Centreville (Arctic).

The question naturally arises as to why the Franco-Americans required their own parishes. Why did they not just assimilate themselves to the American or *Irish* culture which predominated in the existing churches? At the risk of oversimplifying we could give the answer in a pithy French saying, *Qui perd sa lange, perd sa foi!* (He who loses his language loses also his faith). This is questionable sociology, but may be responsible for the fact that of all the nationalities, at least up till now, the French have clung to their language the longest. There are still parts of the state, e.g. Manville, Central Falls, Woonsocket, where French is heard throughout whole neighborhoods. When the liturgy of the Church changed into the vernacular, most of the Masses in the tra-

ditionally French parishes went from Latin to French. This is changing as more and more parishes either abolish the French of leave just one early-morning *token* French Mass.

The bishops and leaders of Québec were alarmed when the Canadians in ever increasing numbers began migrating south to New England — fully 1/4 of the province of Québec migrated. They were concerned about the Protestant ethos and influence their people would face. They also felt that the migrators were being slightly traitorous to both their country and their Church, hence the battle-cry, *Qui perd sa langue, perd sa foi.*

If we look at things from the perspective of the newly arrived New Englanders, we can sympatize with their situation. They arrived in parishes which, to them at least, spoke a foreign tongue. The people, and even the priests, did not understand the culture and customs of the Canadians; the seats were all rented out to the parishioners who had built these parishes and so the Canadians had to stand at the rear of the churches; the parishioners resented these newcomers who insisted on speaking French thus keeping the *Irish* slightly in awe. We can understand indeed the need, at least for a time, of having French National parishes. Canonically in the Diocese of Providence we have sixteen parishes listed as *French* National parishes. But there are many more which though considered *territorial* parishes are basically French and even have French Masses.

The various *Councils of Baltimore* — assemblies of the nation's bishops to discuss the situation of the Church; and held in Baltimore, the primatial See — stresses the need for Catholic schools to "protect the children from secular and Protestant influence." At least at that time the public schools were not too favorable to Catholicism and operated out of the Protestant ethic.

If this were true, it was doubly true for the children of French immigrants. Not only were Protestant inimical, but the English-speaking Catholics were often just as unfriendly. And so we see the beginnings of the French parochial school system from grammar school to the college level. The French may have trailed their Hibernian brothers and sisters in the matter of building churches, but not in that of building schools. This was to be the problem in the 1920's when the Diocese of Providence initiated a drive to build Catholic high schools. The French interpreted this to mean *Irish* Catholic high schools and were thus very sparing in their pledges.

The Canadians had an adequate school system throughout the state, especially in the Blackstone Valley area, and so they did not want to contribute to a competitive school system. This was the beginning of the infamous *Sentinel Movement* which pitted the majority of French against Bishop William HICKEY and his *Irish* institutions.

Nevertheless, the French school system served the Church well. It both preserved the Canadian culture and eased the immigrants into the American system. Most schools adopted the plan suggested by Msgr. Charles DAURAY of Woonsocket — the same sickly priest who had come to Pawtucket many years

before. Father DAURAY directed that his schools be bilingual — for half the day subjects were taught in French; for the remainder of the day, classes were held in English. Thus Father DAURAY transformed, albeit gradually, a Franco-Canadian institution into a Franco-American one.

In order to run efficient bilingual schools, pastors had to acquire the services of nuns and brothers, who if not actually French, were at least bilingual. A case in point is St. Charles in Woonsocket where a group of Irish Sisters of Mercy spoke and taught in French. But in most parishes religious communities were called in either from Québec or directly from France. Some of the more famous orders are the Brothers of the Sacred Heart; the Religious of Jesus-Marie; the Presentation of Mary sisters; the Sisters of Ste. Anne; the Sisters of the Holy Union of the Sacred Hearts; and the Sisters of Ste. Chretienne. All of these congregations are still vital elements in the school system of the Diocese of Providence. It might be interesting to add that there are two congregations of French Sisters who do domestic work in Rhode Island in French rectories — the Sisters of Joan of Arc and the Sisters of Our Lady, Queen of the Clergy.

Thus far we have been speaking of French Roman Catholics in Rhode Island. But not all of the French were or are Catholic. Rhode Island is famous for its colony of Huguenots, many of whom eventually settled in and around the area called *Frenchtown.* The Huguenots were French Calvinists who suffered much at the hands of Louis XIV of France, particularly when this monarch revoked the *Edict of Nantes.* This edict had given the Protestants a bit of freedom. With this liberty removed, approximately one-quarter million Huguenots left their homes in France and migrated to other countries.

Among these people were the family of Gabriel BERNON, who together with the LEROYS, the TOURTELLOTS, the AYRAULTS, and others came to Newport in search of religious freedom. In the *City by the Sea,* BERNON helped establish Trinity Church. He soon moved to Providence and helped establish King's Chapel, now the Cathedral of St. John. The Cathedral still displays some of BERNON's possessions.

Depending upon the source, the French population of Rhode Island is estimated at between 12% and 19% of the total population. Certainly, their contribution in the area of religion and education cannot be fully estimated.

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Believe In Your Heart

Believe in your heart that something wonderful is about to happen.

Love your life.

Believe in your own powers, and your own potential, and in your own innate goodness.

Wake every morning with the awe of just being alive.

Discover each day the magnificent, awesome beauty in the world.

Explore and embrace life in yourself and in everyone you see each day.

Reach within to find your own specialness.

Amaze yourself and rouse those around you to the potential of each new day.

Don't be afraid to admit that you are less than prefect; this is the essence of your humanity.

Let those who love you help you.

Trust enough to be able to take.

Look with hope to the horizon of today, for today is all we truly have.

Live this day well.

Let a little sun out as well as in.

Create your own rainbows.

Be open to all your possibilities; all possibilities and Miracles.

Always believe in Miracles!

Questions and Answers

AFGS Research Committee

The following answers were received from Mr. Al Berube. Once again we owe him a big thank you for taking the time to research our questions;

Answers to Autumn 1998 questions:

25/1 LAROCH, Georges (Médard & Martine MESSIER) — LABELLE, Louisa (Onésime & Martine FAILLE), married 27 May 1895, Ormstown, Québec.

25/2 (Possible answer) DELISLE, Louis-Joseph (Antoine & Marie-Catherine FOUCHER) — TOUPIN-DUSSAULT, Marie-Madeline (Jean-Baptiste & Madeleine TURCOT), married 28 February 1727, Point-aux-Trembles, Québec.

25/3 DEXTRAZE-LAVIGNE, Isaac (Pierre & Angélique LOISELLE) — GUILLET, Geneviève (Louis & Marguerite BERTON), married 5 February 1821, St. Hyacinthe, Québec.

25/8 (Possible answer) LEROUX, Alphonse (Ferdinand & Tharsille TESSIER-LAVIGNE) — DONNELLY, Anne (Peter & Mary LALLY), married 20 October 1868, Notre Dame, Montréal, Québec.

25/9 GAGNON, Basile (not Bastien) (Jean & Marie-Jeanne MARCEAU) — RENAUD, Marie-Madeline (Charles & Elisabeth GARNEAU), married 5 October 1772, Charlesbourg, Québec (Contrat Genest, 3 October 1772.)

25/11(Probable answer) LAFOREST, Joseph (Joseph & Marguerite ROBIDAS) — FERRON, Victoire (François & Victoire JANOT), married circa 1803, location unknown.

25/2 (Probable answer) NORMAND, Louis (Louis & Josephte MERCIER) — HAINAUT-DESCHAMPS, Josephte (Etienne & Josephte PERRON), married 19 November 1850, St. Timothée, Beauharnois, Québec.

25/15 BOISVERT, Jean-Marie (Jean & Marie ABEL) — BERNARD (LAJOIE), Marie-Elisabeth (Pierre & Marguerite DURAND), married 6 May 1761, Canton Chambly, Québec.

Questions for the issue:

26-1 Seeking parents of Louis CHRÉTIENS, his 1st wife was Sophie PLANTE married second wife Lucie DESROCHERS at St. Anicet, Huntington, Quebec, 20 August 1861. (R. Deschenes)

26-2 Seeking m/p for Joseph CREVIER

dit DUVERNAY and Victoire GIBOULEAU ca 1840. (D. Duvernay/ R.D.)

26-3 Seeking m/p for Joseph-Medard LEMAIRE and Adelin-Marie BOURDEAU. (J. Woodward)

26-4 Seeking m/p for Peter LAFLEUR dit POUPART and Mary McDONNELL. (Gail Marzano Estok)

26-5 Seeking m/p for Antoine PLOMONDON and Marie MARTEL ca 1750. (R. Plomondon)

26-6 Seeking m/p for Jean HUARD and Marie FORTIN, their daughter Marie married Joseph TARDIF on 8 May 1876 St. Peter and Paul, Lewiston ME. (P. Tardif/RD)

26-7 Seeking m/p for Joseph MORIN and Luvine BARNARD. Joseph was born ca 1840 in Quebec. (R. Deschenes)

26-8 Seeking m/p for Eli BREBANT and Sylvie GRANDVILLE ca 1870. (P. Sherley)

26-9 Seeking parents of Joseph BILLY and Angelique DEZIEL m. 28 January 1743 Notary LAFOSSE, Richelieu, Co. (L. Guimond)

26-10 Seeking m/p for Charles BRISSETTE (Michel & Marie BRIEN) and Josephte PRUDHOMME. (L. Guimond)

26-11 Seeking m/p for Alfred GAGNE and Rose-Anna LAPOINTE. Their son Albert m. Doris CHARETTE on 4 November 1928, N.D. de Lourdes, Fall River, MA. (Georges Bellavance)

26-12 Seeking m/p for François BOLDUC and Julienne COTE, their son Pierre married Aurelie LAURENDEAU on 14 May 1860, St.Ferdinand d'Halifax. (G. Depolo/ RD)

26-13 Seeking m/p for François LADOUCEUR and Marie St. GODARD ca 1780. (F. Anderson)

26-14 Seeking m/p for François CHAPDELEINE and Julie BEAUREGARD-JARRET, ca 1840. (F. Anderson)

26-15 Seeking m/p for Jean-Baptiste-Joseph FORAND and Regina ALLARD or PROVENCIAL. Their son Jean Marie Ovide Philias was b. 8 February 1892 at St. Pierre, Manitoba. (D. Ciriello)

26-16 Seeking m/p for Jean-Baptiste-Evangelist SYLVIN and Adelaide JUBINVILLE. (D. Sylvain)

Members' Corner

Seeking parents and marriage of Vitale GOUDREAU/GAUDREAU & Marie-Celeste PRIMEAU; married before 1853. They had 14 children. Their son, Cyrille married Jeanne PILKEY at St. François-Xavier, Tilbury, Ontario, 14 July 1890.

Cheryl Rodrigue
P.O. Box 224, S. Walpole, MA 02071

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STEP ONE: WHAT YOU SEND

Your request and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Your choice of the type of research to be done according to the following descriptions:

A. Single Marriage - Only one marriage to search. Marriages of parents will be counted as additional single marriages and billed as such. Rates are $5.00 per marriage for AFGS members and $10.00 per marriage for non-members.

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C. Five-Generation Ancestral Chart - Standard five-generation ancestral chart of 31 ancestors with 8 marriages found. The last column of names will give parents' names only: no marriages as they will each start a new chart. Prices are $35.00 for AFGS members and $50.00 for non-members.

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STEP TWO: OUR JOB

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STEP THREE: YOUR APPROVAL

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All requests not resolved by the Research Committee will be placed in the Question and Answer section of *Je Me Souviens.*

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Did you remember to renew your AFGS membership?

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Dictionnaire des Mariages Laurent-Lortie. Soft cover. $20.00.
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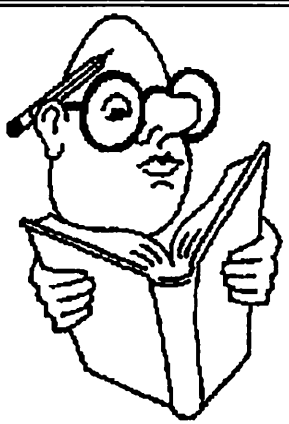

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· I will be courteous to research facility personnel.

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· I will dress appropriately for the records office that I am visiting.

· I will not take small children into repositories and research facilities.

· I will not approach the facility asking for "everything" on my ancestors.

· I will not expect the records custodian to listen to my family history.

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· I will be courteous to other researchers and work with only a few records or books at a time.

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· I will not leave without thanking the records custodians for their courtesy in making the materials available.

· ***I will follow the rules of the records repository without protest.***

* The above was compiled by Joy Reisinger, Certified Genealogical Records Specialist, 1020 Central Ave., Sparta, WI 54656 for the 1995 annual conference of the Federation of Genealogical Societies, Seattle. Some points were adapted from codes adopted by the Board for Certification of Genealogists and the Association of Professional Genealogists.

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Bumper Stickers

Genalogists live in the past lane.
Just follow my roots. I'll turnip somewhere.
Ankle deep in the gene pool.
Vampires are blood relatives.
Genealogy means chasing your own tale.
Fastest way to trace your family tree: Run for public office.
Genealogy: It keeps going, and going, and going. . .

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PARTING SHOTS

Paul P. Delisle, Editor

The Society has lost two very valuable people in the past few months. One was Rev. Clarence J. d'ENTREMONT, the prolific Acadian researcher and author. He died on 16 November 1998 at the age of 89.

The other was a close personal friend. Therese POLIQUIN died in Seekonk, MA at the age of 74. Although not a charter member, she and her late husband joined the Society soon after its founding in 1978. They both worked very hard to achieve the goals of the Society. Therese served as a longtime member of the Board of Directors and as our very able Treasurer from 1982.

She will be sorely missed, both as a co-worker and as a friend.

On 16 April 1999 the Associated Press reported an incident at the Mormon Genealogical Library: "SALT LAKE CITY — A 71-year-old man calmly walked into the Mormon Church's renowned genealogical library during an international convention yesterday and methodically shot people with a small-caliber handgun.

"Before it was over, the gunman had killed a church security officer and a library patron and wounded five others, including a police officer. He was fatally shot by police and died later in an ambulance.

"Police knew of no motive for the gunman, identified as Sergei Babarin of Salt Lake City. Mayor Deedee Corradini said at a news conference that the gunman was schizophrenic and had not been taking his medication. . .

"Babarin, a married man with children was a Russian native often frustrated by his broken English, neighbors said.. . .

"The library, the largest center for genealogical research in the world, is directly across the street from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints' Salt Lake Temple and Tabernacle. It has more than 2 million rolls of microfilm copies of census and other records from more than 100 countries.

"An international genealogical convention had attracted heavy traffic to the library, which has two floors below ground level and three above. Some 250 people — patrons and employees — are in the building on a typical day. . .

"Lyman Platt, a genealogist, said the gunman entered the library and

quickly fired off a dozen rounds.

'He came in the lobby and shot a lady in the head and two or three other men.' Platt said.

"Shots were fired as much as 45 minutes after officers arrived on the scene, at first leading police to believe there might be a second gunman.

"Seventeen people on the second floor locked themselves inside when the shooting began and were evacuated unharmed early in the afternoon as SWAT teams combed the building.

"The gunman, who had exchanged fire with police, was taken out of the building to an ambulance parked in front of a nearby restaurant about 90 minutes after the first shots were fired.

"Among the five wounded was a police officer who was treated at the scene for a minor wound; an elderly man with a chest wound; and a 71-year-old woman with a head wound. Two women, ages 45 and 80, were in stable condition, one with a shoulder wound and the other with a face wound."

Speaking for the AFGS, our hearts reach out to the innocent victims of this terrible tragedy and to their families.

On a more pleasant note. . . Roland BOULIANE and Noella NICHOLS will be celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary on 15 June of next year. Noella and Roland are longtime workers at the library. Their wedding portait graces the back cover of this issue. Roland is noted for creating the durable covers for our books at the library. It is our wish, and we are sure that the rest of you will join with us, that the happy couple should have many more healthy and happy years together.

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Roland Bouliane and Noella Nichols
Married on 15 June 1940 In St. Joseph Church, Woonsocket, RI