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# Je Me Souviens

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American-French Genealogical Society

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## AMERICAN-FRENCH GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

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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 @ afgs.org**. E-mail to the Editor of *JMS* should be addressed to **JMSEditor@AFGS.org**.

### MEMBERSHIP

Individual: \$32.<sup>00</sup> (\$40.<sup>00</sup> Canada); family: \$32.<sup>00</sup> (\$40.<sup>00</sup> Canada) + \$10.<sup>00</sup> ea. addl. member; institutions: \$27.<sup>00</sup> (\$30.<sup>00</sup> Canada), life: \$384.<sup>00</sup> (\$480.<sup>00</sup> Canada) Make checks payable to the A.F.G.S. in U.S. funds. *Non-U.S. residents must use postal money orders or credit cards.*

### LIBRARY

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 11 AM to 4 PM, Tuesdays from 1 PM to 9 PM, and every Saturday of each month from 10 AM to 4 PM. The library is closed on all holidays; there are no Saturday sessions in June, July and August.

### RESEARCH

The Society does undertake research for a fee. Please see our research policy elsewhere in this issue.

### ARTICLES

Original manuscripts are welcomed. Please see our authors' guide elsewhere in this issue.

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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

by: Janice Burkhart, President

This Spring, AFGS lost two very dear members - Gerry Camire and Paul Delisle. Both deaths were very unexpected.

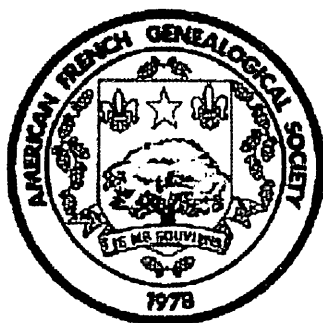
Gerry held AFGS membership number 2 so he was in fact a member since 1978 when the organization first began. After he retired, about five years ago, I invited him to come and volunteer some time at the library. The rest, as they say, is history. He became our greeter and welcomed everyone who came through the door as if that person was the only person in the room. Once he met you, he remembered your name, where you were from and who you were researching. He could speak to you in French or English but the body language was always the same and easily understood- "Welcome friend."

Paul has also been a member for many years. He was the editor of **Je Me Souviens**, printed many of our repertoires, was active in many AFGS projects and was a member of the AFGS Board of Directors. Quiet and content to work behind the scenes, he could be depended on to fulfill his tasks even when he was not feeling well.

Although I was stunned and saddened by their sudden deaths, it made me sit and think about all they did for AFGS and all that our other volunteers do as well. AFGS volunteers work so tirelessly for the Society that you could easily forget they are there. Many new members are incredulous when they learn that there are no paid members in the AFGS. Every single job is done by someone who wants to help because they enjoy the fellowship they find at the library, because they want to give something back for the help they received or because they love being part of AFGS. They open the library, close the library, empty wastepaper baskets, clean the bathrooms, dust, help new members, do research, run the film room, collect records, type records, print books, do membership, do mailings, write *Je Me Souviens*, write *AFGnews*, collect obituaries, write articles, make coffee, shovel snowy walks, work on many committees, keep up our web site and much more - all for free and often without a word of thanks. AFGS could not run without them.

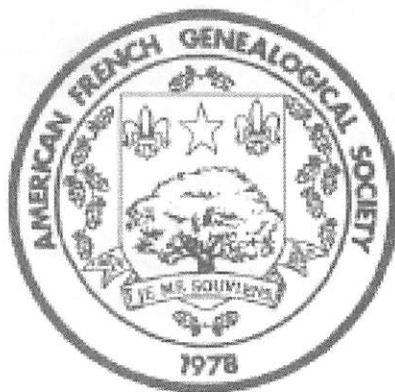
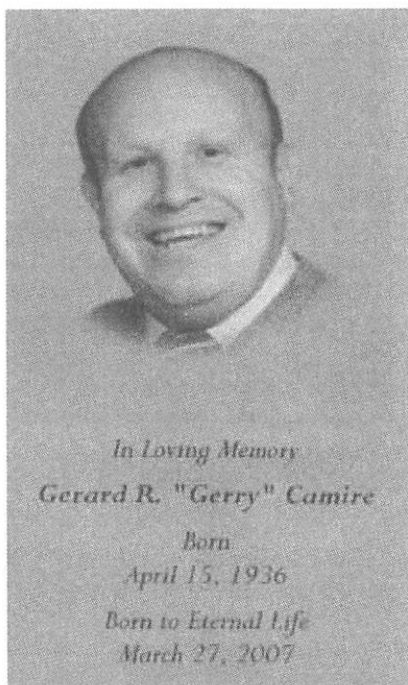
Please remember to thank a volunteer next time you are at our library. I want to thank them all now and let each of them know how much I cherish them.

Remember: **OUR VOLUNTEERS WORK FOR FREE NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE WORTHLESS BUT BECAUSE THEY ARE PRICELESS.**



# IN MEMORIAM

Gerard R. "Gerry" Camire



# IN MEMORIAM

Paul P. Delisle, Sr



**Paul P. Delisle, Sr.**

February 25, 1945 - April 9, 2007





# ACADIAN GENEALOGY: A Follow-Up

by: Dennis M Boudreau (0058L)

Having been asked to write a follow-up to my Acadian Genealogy workshop to share with the readers of Je Me Souviens, in so doing, it may just save me from having to represent such a workshop in the future. Unlike our Québécois cousins, whose registers have been preserved since practically the foundation of Quebec, its sister colony of Acadia was not so fortunate, and this primarily due to the fact that it had been the Canadian "battleground" so to speak in the constant tug of war between the rival powers of England and France for much of its history. But this doesn't mean that registers do not exist nor that Acadian genealogy shouldn't be attempted... it means it simply will be a bit more of a challenge for those of us who have roots in that part of Canada.

Where one has a preponderance of registered evidence in Québec by way of baptisms, marriages, deaths, censuses and notarial acts, the Acadians are fortunate to have some early extent registers, many deportation lists and censuses, a wealth of registry material after 1800, and a super abundance of marriage dispensations with which to work. Also Acadian genealogy's future is brighter still as more and more results of mitochondrial DNA results are coming to light, and extinguishing many myths concerning the supposed "Native" ancestries of several of our maternal Acadian ancestors, revealing their true roots as "Europeans", just as that of their husbands. As stated, there are few notarial records which have survived, if in fact they were ever drawn up to begin with.

In this article, one cannot hope to cover ALL of what's out there for Acadian genealogical research, but I'm going to try and synthesize what I can, and hopefully leave you with some tips of what and where to research to find your answers.

To begin, remember that it's a known fact that almost 75% of French-Canadian ancestries will contain a line or two of Acadian ancestors, and this, thanks to the resettlement of the Acadians

among them following the Acadian dispersion, and subsequent marriages into the Québécois population.

## **Who are the Acadians?**

They were the French settlers of what are today the Canadian Maritime Provinces (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island); and also those who descend from this primary group but live in primarily Maritime Québec, but equally they are also well-mixed in the interior population and often the only way one can locate their existence is to start climbing one's family tree until they suddenly appear as parents of a bride or groom. As a veteran researcher, I still get a chuckle when I see a look of surprise on a new researcher's face when they find one in their family tree, or a whole line of them... it's as if someone had unlocked a door and all these unknown, unspoken of ancestors fell out before them.

Our names are a dead give away, as to who we are. You are an Acadian (or an Acadian descendant if you have one of these as your surname or the surname of a person in your tree.

Arsenault, Aucoin, Amirault, Allain; Babin, Babineau, Belliveau, Boudreau, Bourgeois, Bourque, Brault and Bergeron; Chiasson, Caissie, Cormier, Cheverie, Cyr; Deveau, Dugas, Dupuis, Doucet, D'Entremont, Daigle, and Doiron; Forest, Fougère; Gallant, Gaudet, Godin, Gautreau; Hebert, Haché; Landry, LeBlanc, LeBrun, Leger, Lapierre, Longuépée; Muise/Mius, Melanson, Molaison, and Maillet; Petitpas, Poirier, Prince; Richard, Robichaud; Surette, Saulnier; Thibodeau, Thibeau, Theriault; Vigneau and Vincent. One can add to these the smaller families who married into this population in certain regions, and who although may be of another nationality, have counted themselves as "Acadian" over the last two centuries.

What were their occupations? mostly farmers and fishermen, but also religious, musicians and educators and every other occupation as well. 3/4's of my genealogy is Acadian, and my mom was adopted into an all-Acadian family, so I have spent considerable time researching these 5 out of 6 lines in my heritage (3 natural and 2 adopted), as well as my 1 Québécois line. I have also collected all the stories told to me while growing up and tried to ascertain their truthfulness by verifying

them against the records I have dealt with in my tracing back. Most, if not all of them, were true, thus confirming the oral tradition passed onto me as a child and young adult.

It should be known that like their Québec cousins, the Acadians are noted for their oral history, fantastic memory, and the longevity of their years. Like their cousins from the interior of Canada, many had very large families, to help them on their farms or in the fishing industry. Because the Maritimes were the fishing capital of Canada, many became master ship builders and sea captains, and hundreds of them gave their lives to the same industry in and around Gloucester, Massachusetts, when it was at its summit. In the same fashion as the immigrants from Québec, many Maritime Acadians found their way south to the mill cities of Waltham, Lowell, New Bedford, Fall River and Providence.

### **A Bit of History**

It always amazes me that when one mentions the Acadians, the only thing that comes to mind in the memory of genealogical researchers is having read or memorized "Evangeline" by Longfellow. Little do people know of our unique history, which is separate and distinct from that of Québec. Although closely allied in their struggle for survival of French in North America, and their subsequent defeat by the British, both of the colonies which comprised New France (Québec and Acadia) had a great deal in common. But because the Acadians failed to put up a defense, and desired to remain neutral, they were driven out, dispersed to the winds and waves which carried them south to the American colonies and east back to English prisons, French farms, and eventually further south to the bayous of Louisiana.

If you are truly interested in our history, then you can read the entire history of Acadia more in depth in Bona Arsenault's HISTORY OF THE ACADIANS (a basically good and easy book to read), or read online a more profound one at Peter Landry's Bluepete website, entitled HISTORY OF NOVA SCOTIA (a link from the Acadian Cultural Society's web site). But here follows my abbreviated version.

1605: Pierre du Gast settled a group of men at Ile Ste-Croix (off the coast of Maine), 34 of whom died from starvation that

first winter in North America. Upon his return from France with provisions, the remainder removed to La Hève (a harbor near today's Liverpool, NS), and from there to Port-Royal in today's Annapolis Valley (on the Bay of Fundy). This settlement occurred 2 years before the settlement at Jamestown in Virginia and 3 years before that of Québec City. So I guess it's safe to say, we Acadians were here first.

1606-1639: Was known as the era of gubernatorial disputes between d'Aulnay and Latour, and an era of enterprise, made famous by the huge grand of land and coastal regions, as well as the amassing of great wealth for people such as Nicolas Denys and other French merchants.

1639: Marked by the arrival of the St-Jehan and other ships with a more permanent population for settlement.

Port-Royal fell to the British in 1710, but before that, this humble fortress town gave birth to the following settlements:

Beaubassin (toward 1672) which give birth to Petitcoudiac (1698) and Chipoudy

Grand-Pré (toward 1680) which further expanded to establish Pisiguit (1701) and Cobequid (1714)

Cap Sable & Seigneury of Pobomcoup

The Treaty of Utrecht (11 Aug 1713) split Acadia in two: Nova Scotia (which included today's New Brunswick & Newfoundland) went to England. Ile St-Jean (today's Prince Edward Island) and Ile Royale (today's Cape Breton Island) went to France. In 1714, to protect their portion, the French built the Fortress of Louisburg, and in that year many Acadians fled the British section of Acadia for Ile Royale and Ile St-Jean.

Despite these large migrations to French-held territory, a good many families remained in the English section, and although living peacefully with this new power did everything they could to refuse taking an oath of allegiance to Britain. They were seen as a threat to their new captors, although reiterating their neutrality. The British also coveted their valuable farmlands that later were given freely to the Loyalists after the American Revolution.

In 1755, Governors Lawrence of Nova Scotia, and Shirley of Massachusetts devised a plan to rid Acadia of its French inhabitants, and had them deported to the American colonies. By 1756, we find this population dispersed among the inhabitants of Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, the Carolinas and Georgia. Virginia was also to receive some but reneged on their welcome once they arrived, having them all transported back to England where they were imprisoned for a dozen or so years, with many of them dying meanwhile from measles and smallpox. Those who survived were repatriated back to France where for the next two decades, they were cared for by France, which provided abandoned farms for them to tend for sustenance.

After 12 years in the American colonies (toward 1766-67), the unwelcomed Acadians were finally released to return home or to other French areas. Many returned by foot or boat to New Brunswick or Nova Scotia to settle in ethnic pockets, while a vast majority returned by ship to Quebec Province where faith and language were common calling cards. Those in England were repatriated back to France in the 1760s, staying but two decades before moving on to Louisiana, in a convoy of five ships in 1785. Some from the American colonies and other places of exile in Acadia removed to St-Pierre and Miquelon, from where they were exiled back to France on three more occasions, thus basically having endured a longer period of exile than the rest of their confrères.

By the late 1790s, many parishes were started as the Acadians began their resettlement in the Maritime provinces. Itinerant missionaries were the pastors of these small communities which they visited en circuit throughout the Maritime area, until later they were replaced by resident clergy sent to them from France by way of the Diocese of Québec. Registers also started up again and the population continued to grow. In Quebec, the Acadian repatriates married into the local population and settled in predominantly Acadian parishes.

A word should be said here about what we would today consider lay deacons, but primarily community elders known as "Les Anciens." During the Acadian deportation, certain elders in the community were appointed by their pastors in their absence to perform baptisms, witness marriage vows, bury the

dead, and lead the Sunday worship service known as the "messe blanche" (today's Liturgy of the Word with no Eucharist). Because the American colonies, except for Maryland, were primarily Protestant, one could not find a Catholic priest anywhere. For 12 years, one finds the ministry of the "anciens" occurring in many of the areas of exile, especially Massachusetts (in the person of Louis Robichaud and similar others) and in Connecticut. The fact that marriages were witnessed privately before these men and two witnesses, and because registration of these marriages was not enforced, there are no records of such unions in the civil registers. The same can be said of the births of children, or those deaths that occurred in these locales. Any hints of these events having happened and where they occurred have been recorded in the extent registers of Québec, if the pastors there were diligent enough to include them. When the Acadians returned home to Canada, and had the benefit of the availability of priests and church ceremonies, they had their marriages revalidated (réhabilitation) and their children validly baptized. You will find many records of such in Quebec in places such as Nicolet or L'Assomption or even Miquelon, where the Acadians eventually settled in communities or clans. If you search closely within the records, you will find many clues as to when and where certain events took place. Where people were married for instance "in Massachusetts or Connecticut", or where children were born, "in Savannah, Roxbury, Sutton, or Lexington". Of course the place names will always be a corrupted form of the English place name as heard by the pastors who entered these records, so be creative when trying to figure them out by sounding them out. The presence of "anciens" was a Church-created ministry to answer the need for religious practice in the lack of clergy. "Anciens" were still performing their duties when pastors were still itinerant missionaries, on circuit from parish to parish in certain areas, all during the time of Acadian resettlement. Unfortunately, these elders never kept a record of what they did, but their names are often included in certain baptismal records or death records. They were the ones performing "conditional baptisms" for example after the births of children in danger of death. Some "anciens" also taught the midwives how to baptize. One example of this was at the Magdalen Islands, where we find Charles Boudrot as the local "ancien," as well as his daughter-in-law, Louis Dugas, the local midwife. Both names appear multiple times in the baptismal records as those who officially performed the sacrament and

whose ceremonies were just being completed by the by the pastor.

## **Registers and Censuses**

You'll often hear that many of the registers of Acadia don't exist, but don't believe all of what you hear! While it is true that the earliest of the registers of Port-Royal have not survived, here listed is what is extant (among other items):

**Port-Royal 1704-1755** A series of transcriptions were published by Milton and Norma Rieder, entitled **ACADIAN CHURCH RECORDS**, as well as a digitalized version of the existing registers are now online at the Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management (NSARM) web site

**Beaubassin 1692-1748** (The Rieders also have a transcription of these registers in their **ACADIAN CHURCH RECORDS** series); originals were found in the French Archives in Paris.

**Grand-Pré 1680-1748** (These have been collected in the **BATON ROUGE DIOCESAN ARCHIVES** series, Vol. 1). The original registers were carried to Louisiana and were found after the Mississippi inundated a rectory basement with flood waters. Each page was dried out and transcribed into this first of volumes in this multi-volume series.

**Pisiguit & Cobequid** (These registers are forever lost) but the main contents were reiterated orally in the Declarations of Belle-Ile-en-Mer (which exist), depositions given by those Acadians who were exiled there, and thus, they form a written record of their ancestral ties to France.

**Port Lajoie & St-Pierre-du-Nord (PEI)** These two parishes have portions still intact, the latter of which was recently transcribed by researcher Tim Hebert of Louisiana.

**Louisbourg (to the capitulation)** These registers were abstracted and formed the content for a web page at Collections Canada. This web site has recently been disbanded, and I still have not found a link to this register material despite searching for it.

**Petitcoudiac** (in the book of that name)

St-Pierre et Miquelon (1764-1792) on microfilm from LDS; and online at Lucie Consentino's Acadian Ancestral Home web site. Also see the volumes compiled by the Institut Drouin in our library.

All of this material is presently undergoing reconstruction in Acadian genealogist Stephen A. White's ongoing DICTIONNAIRE GÉNÉALOGIQUE DES FAMILLES ACADIENNES series (two volumes already published, with many more to follow, as well as a supplement in English).

Since resettlement:

Cheticamp and Margaree, NS: The registers are on file at Les Trois Pignons in Cheticamp (Société St-Pierre), and transcriptions of some Margaree records can be found on Aline Cormier's Acadian Roots web site and at Andrée McMillan's LeBlanc family web site (see Cape Breton Gen Web for more info)

Ile Madame, NS: There are online transcriptions for Arichat, D'Escousse, L'Ardoise, West Arichat and River Bourgeois, as well as the 1891 census of Petit de Grat, all found as links at Cape Breton Gen Web

Magdalen Islands, QC: Transcriptions of the original registers can be found in my four volume DICTIONNAIRE GÉNÉALOGIQUE DES FAMILLES DES ILES-DE-LA-MADELEINE (info transcribed from films in our Drouin collection and many other sources)

Memramcook, Barachois, Grande-Digue, Cocagne, Shédiac, Aboujagane, NB: All of the extant registers of these parishes are on microfilm at the Fitchburg Library, a transcription of them can be found in Lois Graham's repertoires for several of these parishes, & in the back section of the Drouin books. Carleton & Gaspé, QC: See Rev. Patrice Gallant's REGISTRES DE LA GASPÉSIE, and Bona Arsenault's parishes of Bonaventure County series.

Cape Sable (Wedgeport, Eel Brook and Pubnico, NS) These records can be found transcribed in Leonard's Smiths' Cap



Sable volume, and in the FAMILLES DE BAS DE TOUSQUET (Wedgeport Families Anniversary book)

Digby, NS: See Leonard Smith's ST. MARY'S BAY volumes of reconstructed registers based on that of Père Jean-Mandé Sigogne's reconstruction of the parish registers.

Bathurst, Petit-Rocher, Shipaggan, Néguaq, Pokemouche, St-Isidore, Paquetville, NB etc: See Denis Jean's parish repertoires; and Rosaline Guitard's transcriptions for Petit-Rocher (register and cemetery), and Father Donat Robichaud's CHIPAGGAN.

Caraquet, NB: See Fidele Theriault's book, LES FAMILLES DE CARAQUET.

Tracadie & Pomquet: See Lloyd Boucher/Eileen Avery's transcription online at Rootsweb

Registers in France: See Al Robichaux's, Donald Hebert's, & Milton & Norma Rieder's books on all the French parishes transcribed in the St-Malo, Chatellerauld and Nantes regions

Registers in England: reconstruction of registers by Paul Delaney in Cahiers of the Société Historique Acadienne

Parishes of Quebec (in our Drouin microfilm collection): St-Philippe (Laprairie), L'Acadie, St-Luc, Napierville, Henryville, St-Valentin; St-Ours, Sorel, St-Antoine-sur-Richelieu, St-Denis-sur-Richelieu, St-Charles-sur-Richelieu; L'Assomption, St-Jacques l'Achigan; Yamachiche, Louiseville, Deschambault, Trois-Rivières, Nicolet, Bécancour, St-Grégoire, St-Célestin, Ste-Gertrude, St-Léonard, etc.; St-Charles Bellechasse, Notre-Dame de Quebec, Kamouraska, the North Coast, etc. Also Rev. François Lanoue, has a great history of St-Jacques l'Achigan entitled: ST-JACQUES, LA NOUVELLE ACADIE

Madawaska Valley, NB/ME: We have the multi-volume repertoire for this area on our shelves

Rustico, Tignish and other PEI registers: on LDS microfilms and at the Island Register web site

Please note that there is a full transcript of many important Acadian censuses and lists online at Lucie Consentino's Acadian Home site.

The most important among these are the 1671, 1681, 1701 and 1714 censuses of Acadia; the 1752 census taken by the Sieur de LaRoque (of the French inhabitants of Ile St-Jean & Ile Royale) [By the way, LaRocque was NOT a place! but a man!]

Index of the Register of Port Toulouse (online but still in progress)

Lists of French Neutrals (from the Massachusetts Archives) can be found in Paul Cyr's book: DOCUMENTS CONCERNING ACADIAN DEPORTEES IN MASSACHUSETTS TOWNS, 1755-1766. This set of books can be very rewarding when used with its companion index compiled by Elaine Comeau: AN INDEX OF THE FRENCH NEUTRALS OF MASSACHUSETTS, 1755-1766. Another good volume of original lists is Janet Jehn's ACADIAN EXILES IN THE COLONIES.

The 1767 Census of Miquelon, in Placide Gaudet's NOTES ON ACADIAN GENEALOGY

The 1809 Census of Cheticamp & Maragree in Anselme Chiasson's book, CHETICAMP

The 1811 Census of Cape Breton Island

The 1851, 1861, 1871 (online at Collections Canada), 1881 (at Familysearch.org), 1901 & 1911 censuses (at automatedgenealogy.com)

### **Reconstructions of Lists:**

Although some have been published already, and still others in progress as I write this, very soon Acadian researchers will have reconstructed lists of our ancestors who died in epidemics or drowned while en route to Europe, thanks to the diligent research efforts of Stephen White and Paul Delaney of Moncton. These two scholars are slowly but definitively compiling items needed to fill out the skeletal facts of our genealogies. Already Paul has compiled a list of the passengers of the Pembroke a

ship destined for exile but overtaken and returned to the St. John valley by its Acadian captives. He has also reconstructed a form of civil register for those men, women and children who were exiled and imprisoned in England. His latest tool has been an invaluable timeline of the events of the exile from 1755 to the resettlement of the Acadians, all of these items published in the Société Historique Acadienne's journal CAHIERS. Likewise, Stephen White has been painstakingly reconstructing the passenger lists of the doom Duke William and the Violet, whose sinking while en route back to France constitutes the largest loss of life during the tragedy that was the Acadian deportation.

## **ACADIAN GENEALOGY: A PROGRESSION**

Genealogical research is always a progression, a climbing back one step at a time, a building upon the foundation of those who came before us. For Canadian researchers, there was first the monumental Tanguay DICTIONNAIRE followed by LeBoeuf's COMPLÉMENT to this dictionary. After extracting the marriages, the Institut Drouin came out with the red series of Drouins, upon which began the compiling of parish or county repertoires of marriages. All of this has culminated in the complete series of Drouin volumes and microfilms, as well as other collections such as the Loisel and Rivest Indices. Then came Jetté's DICTIONNAIRE and the PRDH; and now the BMS2000.

Just as there is a progression of researchers and newer resources used in Québécois genealogy, so too there is a similar progression in Acadian genealogy as evidenced by the following, each building upon the work of those who went before. For the Acadians, there was the monumental gathering of data by Placide Gaudet in his "Notes on Acadian Genealogy" (1905). Upon his research continued the efforts of Fathers Patrice Gallant, Clarence J. d'Entremont, Hector Hebert, Clement Cormier, Anselme Chiasson, and many others, all of which culminated in the 1980s with the appearance of Bona Arsneault's HISTOIRE ET GÉNÉALOGIE DES ACADIENS series. While a beginning at collecting it all, the series had many errors and unfounded data, which needed to be proved and if needed, corrected. To complete this task, Stephen A. White, present Acadian genealogist at the Centre d'études acadiennes in Moncton, spent many years of diligent research with the

original sources of our genealogy, and began to publish in 2001 his **DICTIONNAIRE GÉNÉALOGIQUE DES FAMILLES ACADIENNES**, of which two volumes have already appeared, with many more poised to see the light in the coming years. When he has finished, the extent records and documented evidence concerning our ancestors will have been unearthed and presented in a scholarly fashion. To this end, his dissection of marriage dispensations and mtDNA evidence will prove its utmost usefulness, as will all his other tested methods of finding information, sometimes from the most unusual of sources.

In addition to the **CAHIERS**, two other valuable publications for Acadian research are the **ACADIAN GENEALOGY EXCHANGE** (Covington, KY) and **LE RÉVEIL ACADIEN** (Fitchburg, MA), this latter quarterly published by the only society dedicated to those of Acadian ethnicity in the United States, the Acadian Cultural Society of Fitchburg, MA. I cannot state enough the dedication of this latter group, of which I am a past-president, as well as former editor of their journal for ten years. We tried to build a strong foundation so that our heritage, history and genealogy would flourish among the descendants of our valiant ancestors from the Maritimes, and so far, it is still growing strong. The society has its own web page at [www.acadiancultural.org](http://www.acadiancultural.org). Please feel free to visit it, and take advantage of the genealogy links presented there to help with your research efforts. Of equal value in your research, you are strongly urged to visit Lucie Consentino's Acadian Ancestral Home web page at [www.acadian-home.org](http://www.acadian-home.org)

This is perhaps the best web site to find information on our Acadian ancestors, with many great secondary source materials, and of late a database of the parish cemeteries of Southeastern New Brunswick in photo format of each gravestone. Lucie has been at this for many years and is indeed a joy to know. Her tireless efforts on behalf of the Acadians and researchers everywhere goes without saying.

## **Cemetery Records and Obituaries**

Again, [Acadian-home.org](http://Acadian-home.org) has hundred of photos of Westmoreland and Kent County, New Brunswick gravestones; various New Brunswick/Nova Scotia GenWebs; and the [Islandregister.com](http://Islandregister.com) (for PEI) as well as the Prince Edward Island Genealogical Society has published complete PEI cemetery

transcripts for many of the Island's parishes for sale. And don't forget to gather your cartes mortuaires/funeral prayer cards obituaries as these too contain much genealogical information.

## **Dispensations & Other Tools**

One of the best tools used for Acadian research in the absence of registers is the effective figuring out of marriage dispensations, both for consanguinity and affinity. In a nutshell, here's what the degrees signify:

- 1st degree = (brothers/sisters) never used with consanguinity but used with affinity dispensations especially if a widowed person married their in-law
- 2nd degree = (1st cousins)
- 3rd degree = (2nd cousins)
- 4th degree = (3rd cousins)
- 2-3c. = 1st cousins, once removed
- 3-4c. = 2nd cousins, once removed

By mastering how to use these, one can bridge the gaps in registers to determine a correct ascendance. If the parish priest was correct will also help determine how correct these unknown relationships were. One of the challenges facing Acadian researchers is the lack of parents' names in many of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island registers, thanks to the lack of training given to Irish clergy in that regard. But they did leave their mark with dispensations. The challenge is in figuring these out as best one can.

Also, most Acadians in certain places did not move around too much, and were related to others in town because they settled in clans, and didn't marry outside the "Acadian race" until later in the 1800s, or when they left the community to settle and work in bigger cities. So if you're looking for someone, try and stay in the same community up to that point to find answers to identities.

Like our Québec cousins who used "dit" names, the Acadians had a similar system. Most "dit" names are like their Quebecois counterparts but these are not so much for families, as they are to describe quirks or characteristics of certain persons. There are times when certain families will take on a nickname in local patois, like the Cormiers being referred to as the "Naupan", or

the Cyrs as "Miquelon". One will often find nicknames dispersed among first names. Nicknames are very common usages in places like Cheticamp and Margaree, NS or the Magdalen Islands, QC where first names become "Simonet, Pierrot, Sandy, etc" or surnames become Lagrole, for example.

There is also another mechanism among the Acadians to help one compile a lineage at a glance. In some Acadian strongholds the common practice of the article "à" meaning "to" or "of" will link a string of names and thus provide a male or female lineage. At the Magdalen Islands and at Cheticamp, for example, when people speak of others, they never use surnames but rather talk about "Alphonse à Nectaire" or "Raymond à Félix à Félix" and immediately, one knows their lineage and which family they mean, without mentioning the surname as there is only one combination of names to which this can apply. This practice is still done to this day. They also mix in "dit" names and feminine names so that one might hear: "Joe à Cantouelle à Flore" to refer to a Boudreau with a Vigneau grandmother, or "Philomène à Mistigri à Lazare", a string of LeBlancs.

Lastly, middle initials are important. Around the mid-1800s, when simple names were being replaced by names of two or more combinations, many sons added their father's middle initial to distinguish themselves in the larger families. Thus, for example one might find a: Constant-D., Joseph-D., Edouard-D. Bourgeois, the "D" standing for "Désiré" or "David", all three of them being his sons. Sometimes the middle initial could be a hint as to the father's name and you will find this in directories and census records, and even in registers. So keep it in the back of your mind as a clue.

## **Acadians and New England**

For the most part, Québécois Acadians followed same migratory routes to New England as Québécois and for same reason, to work, thus you will find them living in Holyoke, New Bedford, Manchester, Lewiston, Biddeford, Jackman, Central Mass., Rhode Island, and Connecticut.

I have studied the migration paths of many Québec and Acadian families to our region and as a general rule of thumb have found the following to be true:

New Brunswick Acadians settled in: Waterville, Fitchburg, Leominster, Gardner (these latter three still are known today as the Acadian triangle), Waltham, New Bedford, Taunton & Brockton

Maine Acadians migrated to work in Connecticut

Nova Scotia Acadians: (Arichat & Wedgeport) sought employment on the Massachusetts North Shore (Gloucester and Salem); those from (Tracadie, etc.) migrated to the South Shore communities; many from Cape Breton settled to work in Waltham

PEI Acadians: many of this group settled in Boston & Providence

Magdalen Islands Acadians: they settled in Fall River, Cambridge, Haverhill, MA & Centredale, RI (I am fortunate to know where all of them were living and made it a point of following them and their families in my book)

## **News**

Some news: many researchers are still looking for records of Acadian ancestors in the smaller parishes of France; this is an ongoing project pouring over parish registers and notarial archives. The birthplaces of many of our ancestors in France are still something that has eluded us for centuries. Hopefully, our associates in France will make some newer discoveries in that regard. And finally, new mtDNA results are being published, further dispelling the Metisse myths regarding many of our female ancestors (see Lucie's website for details). As the world of DNA research reveals its many secrets, who knows what surprises it holds for the future of Acadian research. Stay tuned.

**THE BEGINNINGS  
of the  
FRANCO -AMERICAN  
COLONY  
in  
WOONSOCKET, RHODE ISLAND**

MARIE LOUISE BONIER



Translated and Edited  
by  
Claire Quintal

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# **My Pioneer Ancestors: Joseph TESSIER and Marie-Anne DOUVILLE**

**by : Jacqueline Carol (TESSIER) KELLER,  
great-granddaughter**

Most of the French Canadian Catholic families that settled in Wild Rice, North Dakota were not only related but often closely related. My parents are third cousins, and that was not unusual among my ancestors. I was intrigued by my extended family's practice of cousins marrying cousins and even two brothers marrying two sisters. I discovered that two of my father's sisters married two brothers with the exact same surname, TESSIER. I wanted to understand more about these marriage patterns, so 15 years ago I launched my research into my family genealogy, and I am continually surprised at the new information I am uncovering. My research joyfully included three extended visits to numerous villages along the St. Lawrence River in Quebec Province. After my most recent pilgrimage to Quebec in October 2005 with my sister, Diane (TESSIER) BACHMEIER, her interest in our family history intensified and she agreed to help me write about our roots. This story is about our pioneer ancestors, Joseph-Georges TESSIER and Marie-Anne DOUVILLE, our great grandparents who were also third cousins once removed. They were the first TESSIER family to emigrate from Canada to Dakota Territory.

I was fortunate to get to know G. Robert TESSIER, the president of the Societe D'Histoire et de Genealogie de Saint-Casimir, who is my distant cousin as we are both descendants of Mathurin TESSIER, our 17th century emigrant ancestor from France. Robert has been my ongoing mentor and is the foremost authority of the Mathurin TESSIER lineage.

## **The Joseph TESSIER Family in Quebec, Canada**

In the spring of 1881, Joseph-Georges TESSIER and his wife, Marie-Anne DOUVILLE, after living their entire lives in the same

small village where six generations of TESSIERs had lived for over 200 years, courageously packed up their belongings and four children and departed for Dakota Territory. With great apprehension and high hopes for a new life, the family of six left behind farmland, friends, relatives, and tradition to set out for an unknown future.

My ancestor, baptised Joseph TESSIER, was born in Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade, Quebec on August 30, 1841. He was the son of Alexis-Pascal TESSIER and Theotime Lanouette. At age 25, he married Marie-Anne DOUVILLE on July 16, 1867, in the church of Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade. His recorded name for the marriage was Joseph-Georges TESSIER. Surprisingly, his new wife's younger sister, Marie-Elmire DOUVILLE, was also married the same day in the same church to Joseph-Georges' fourth cousin, who was also named Joseph-Georges TESSIER! To avoid family confusion, I suspect my ancestor dropped the Georges from his first name sometime after being married. The census records of that time listed him as a navigator on the St. Lawrence River. Four years after marrying, he took up farming in the same ancestral village and continued farming there for the next ten years.

Joseph and Marie-Anne had eight children during those fourteen years in Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade, five girls and three boys. All three boys survived childhood, but sadly, only one of the five daughters survived. Marie-Clara, the first daughter to be born, lived to be 81 years old. The other four daughters died very young. August 1875 was a particularly bad time for the family as two daughters died within a few days of each other: Marie-Louise-Cecile, age 4 years, and Marie-Alphonsine, age 4 months. The last child to be born in the family was the fifth daughter, who was baptized with the exact same name as her dead sister, Marie-Louise-Cecile, but she died at 7 months of age in the spring of 1880.

One year later, in the spring of 1881, Joseph, now nearly 40, left the comfort of relatives and familiar surroundings and set out for a new life with his wife and their four remaining children, J-Irenee (Rene), age 13, Marie-Clara, age 12, Joseph-Ovide, age 7, and their youngest son, Joseph-Philippe, age 5. The journey was an ambitious adventure as the entire family took all their necessary belongings and traveled by train,

wagon, and by foot to the unknown land that would become Wild Rice, North Dakota.

Joseph TESSIER conducted some business in Ste-Anne-de-la Perade even after moving to Dakota Territory. On 14 September 1882, he borrowed \$1,200 from Pierre BIGUE. Joseph had his uncle, Nazaire TESSIER, handle the transaction for him. Joseph used his three properties in Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade to secure the loan: A) Lot # 502, a farm with a house and barn on the north side of the Ste-Anne River where Joseph and the family had lived, purchased from Narcisse GRIMARD in 1874. B) Lot #578, land on the north border of the farm (Lot #502), purchased on 21 November 1878 from the Sisters of Notre-Dame so Joseph could expand his acreage. C) Lot # 603, land in St. Prosper, a village north of Ste-Anne-de-la Perade.

On 1 August 1883, Joseph's uncle Nazaire used his fiscal and legal knowledge to again transact business for his nephew, selling the Quebec farm and adjacent land for \$1,500. Joseph might have used some of these funds to purchase property in Dakota Territory. As it turned out, years later, Joseph TESSIER and another Quebec native, Joseph TROTTIER from Champlain, Quebec, became the two largest landowners and grain farmers in the Wild Rice, ND area.

Today, the house on lot #502 near the Ste-Anne River does not exist, but some very old structures are still there. A section of autoroute 40 is being built on part of this farm land.<sup>1</sup>

### **The Joseph TESSIER Family in Dakota Territory**

Joseph was 40 years old, ambitious, hard working, and determined to create a farmstead like the one he had left in Canada. His experience working with his father, Alexis-Pascal TESSIER, had provided him with the skills to plan his own farm and create a new life for himself and his family. Little did he know that despite the many trials and tribulations of farming, he would eventually create a good life and prosper in this new country.

There were many other single and married French Canadians who had already emigrated from Quebec to Dakota Territory. These other families had already established homes and

farmsteads in the Wild Rice area. My ancestors, Joseph and Marie-Anne, hoped that these families would assist them in setting up a homestead on the new frontier. The exodus from the Trois-Rivieres area in Quebec to Wild Rice began in 1869 with the first French settlers, Ulphie COSSETTE and his wife, Zoe MARTEL, and continued for 20 years. The French speakers in the Wild Rice area came from the Quebec villages of Champlain, Saint-Maurice, Les Ecureuils, Mont-Carmel, Saint-Narcisse, Batiscan, Cap-de-la-Madeleine, and Saint-Casimir. Settlers with family names of COSSETTE, SAUVAGEAU, MORIN, HEBERT, DENIS, DUBORD, TROTTIER, RICHARD, PRONOVOST, BRUNETTE, FUGERE, RHEAULT, GRANDBOIS, DUVAL, BERNIER, BRUNELLE, ROBILLARD, MONTPLAISIR, and RIVARD were all parishioners of St. Benedict's Church. Most of these French families married within the community and continued the practice of marrying their neighbors, who were most often relatives. There truly was a "French Connection".

The community of Wild Rice was primarily settled by French people emigrating from villages along the St. Lawrence River between Quebec City and Trois-Rivieres. Wild Rice in Dakota Territory was originally called Riceville. The Wild Rice River, which flowed through Wild Rice, was so named because there was a heavy growth of wild rice along the riverbank. Early French travelers called this stream folles avoine (literally "crazy oats"), or Wild Oat River. The settlement of Wild Rice was founded in 1883 when the Fargo and Southern railroad line reached that area.

Although I cannot be certain how my relatives traveled to their new land, it is speculated that they took a railroad train west and crossed the U.S./Canadian border at Port Huron, Michigan. They would have traveled west across the entire state of Michigan and taken a ferry across Lake Michigan to reach Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In Milwaukee, they probably boarded a train for western Minnesota, possibly to the town of Breckenridge. Their final rail destination would probably have been the oldest village in the Red River Valley, McCauleyville, Minnesota. This courageous TESSIER family, Joseph TESSIER, Anne-Marie DOUVILLE, and their four children, traveling with almost all of their earthly possessions, would have left the train there and continued their journey by rig, pulled by either horses or oxen. They likely would have crossed the Red River over to Fort Abercrombie in Dakota Territory, as this was the

typical route to the area during the late 1870's. From there, they would have proceeded to Holy Cross Mission, which is about five miles south of Fargo, North Dakota. The population of Fargo at that time was approximately 1,000.<sup>2</sup> "Holy Cross Mission" eventually became St. Benedict's Catholic Church, and it is the third oldest Catholic Church in North Dakota.

The first railroad pushed into Dakota Territory in 1873. To attract people to homestead the land there, the Northern Pacific railroad ran a vigorous advertising campaign posting information throughout their rail network, including in railroad stations in Quebec. The large flyer urged people to come and stake a claim: "Best Wheat Lands, Best Farming Lands, Best Grazing Lands in the World."<sup>3</sup> Trains were a new and exciting way to travel. They went faster than horses could run and carried not only people, but also supplies, food, and fuel.

### **Bishop Louis LAFLECHE**

Not only were the railroads advertising the Dakota Territory homesteads, but in the French communities around Trois-Rivieres, Quebec, the Catholic Bishop was also an active promoter. Louis-Francois LAFLECHE (1818-1898), first ordained as a priest at age 26, had served the Catholic Church early on as a missionary priest, working over a 12-year period among the native peoples. He eventually mastered three separate Indian languages (Saulteaux, Cree, Montagnais), and was even the first to document the grammar of the Montagnais language. At some point between 1844 and 1856, he accompanied hunting parties on trips through the Red River Valley. During those trips, he surely recognized how desirable the virgin grasslands of the Red River Valley could be. The fertile soil did not need to be cleared of trees and was therefore immediately ready for plowing and seeding, unlike the heavily forested lands along the St. Lawrence River. The first five years of life on the frontier took its toll on his health. It's been documented that he suffered from rheumatism, and by age 31, he walked with a limp because of a lame leg. Back home in Trois-Rivieres, Bishop LAFLECHE encouraged the local farmers to consider settling on the abundant lands found at the confluence of the Red River and Wild Rice River in Dakota Territory. He became a very important local figure who taught mathematics, astronomy, and philosophy at Nicolet college

(across the St. Lawrence from Trois-Rivieres) and became President of the college in 1859. In April 1870, he became the Bishop of Trois-Rivieres. He published five volumes of pastoral letters and a number of other works. Bishop LAFLECHE died two months short of his 80th birthday. Amazingly, Louis-Francois LAFLECHE was born in the same village as my ancestors, Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade, and is also a relative of mine through his paternal grandmother Scholastique GOUIN.

## **Applying for a Homestead**

The Homestead Act, signed into law by President Abraham LINCOLN in 1862, was the incentive that Joseph and Anne needed to come to America. A homesteader had only to be the head of a household and at least 21 years of age to claim a quarter-section parcel of land (160 acres). Note that one section of land is one square mile or 640 acres. Settlers from all walks of life including newly arrived immigrants, farm workers without land, single women, and former slaves came to meet the challenge of "proving up" and keeping this "free land". Homesteaders had to live on the land, make improvements, and farm for five years before they were eligible to "prove up." A total fee of \$18 was the only money required, but sacrifice and hard work exacted a different price from the hopeful settlers.<sup>4</sup>

In 1881, Joseph TESSIER, as required by the Homestead Act, went to the nearest Land Office and declared his intention to claim a quarter-section of land. After Joseph paid the \$10 filing fee and the \$2 land agent commission fee, he left the office with his application and fee receipt in hand. Returning to his 160-acre parcel of land in Section 27, Stanley Township, Dakota Territory, Joseph knew exactly what he needed to do and wasted no time in starting his new life on the plains. With help from fellow French immigrants and possibly some relatives, Joseph built a small house on his homestead. All of the French Canadian immigrants would soon become friends, neighbors, and relatives as marriages between the families became commonplace.

Joseph would have purchased or borrowed a plow, somehow acquired horses or oxen to break the sod, sowed the crop seeds, and planted trees to shade the house on the prairie.

Over the next five years he made improvements to his homestead. Farm animals such as cows, pigs, horses, and chickens were gradually purchased to provide food for the family. Wheat, barley, and corn were bought for planting. Anne planted a vegetable garden for the family.

In 1882, Joseph added one room to the living quarters on the south end of the house plus a second floor on the top. Being an ingenious man, Joseph assembled and built a wooden grinding apparatus that was powered by a tall windmill. He developed a business to grind the grain for the local French Canadians and became the first grain elevator manager in Wild Rice.<sup>5</sup>

In 1887, after living on the homestead for five years, making improvements and farming, Joseph was prepared to take legal possession of his acreage. The paperwork required of homesteaders before they could obtain a title required detailed land records. These records described improvements made to the property, including houses constructed, wells dug, crops planted, trees cleared, and fences built. Joseph took this paperwork to the Land Office, along with two neighbors who could vouch that his claim was truthful. After completing the final form and paying the required \$6, he received a Land Patent signed by the President of the United States, Grover CLEVELAND. He proudly displayed this document on a wall in his home to represent the culmination of his hard work and determination.

### **Applying for Citizenship**

According to Lawrence A. BERTRAND in *THE LAND CALLED*, a book about the genealogy of five agrarian families in Wild Rice, ND, my ancestor Joseph TESSIER applied for naturalization in Cass County on November 3, 1884, which was three years after the family had arrived in Dakota Territory. The first set of naturalization documents is known as the Declaration of Intention, or "First Papers." The actual naturalization records, called "Second Papers," granted U.S. citizenship. Second Papers were granted to my ancestor Joseph TESSIER on November 5, 1892, eight years after First Papers were recorded.<sup>6</sup> Note that Dakota Territory was divided into North

and South Dakota when these states were admitted to the Union in 1889.



Joseph and Marie-Anne TESSIER in later years (around 1900?)

### **Holy Cross Mission Becomes St. Benedict's Church**

The French came from strong Catholic backgrounds, and the church was their community center and spiritual anchor. In their new settlement, they needed to reconnect by recreating a church with a resident Catholic priest who would say Sunday Mass, administer the sacraments, and tend to their spiritual and, in some cases, economic needs.



The first evidence of a church in the Red River Valley, according to Albert BINDER, St. Benedict's historian, is from a U.S. Government survey conducted in October, 1870. It documents the "Holy Cross Mission" as a 20 x 30 foot log structure located 20 chains North and 25 chains west of the SE corner of Section 13 Twp 138, Range Cass County. Holy Cross Mission became St. Benedict's Church when it was moved to a new location in 1882 to be closer to the center of the French Catholic population.<sup>7</sup> "In 1888 a larger church with seating for 300 was built for \$6000."<sup>8</sup> In 1913, St. Benedict's Church was torn down and replaced with the present church at a cost of \$12,000.<sup>9</sup> It was at that time that the TESSIER family may have contributed to the purchase of a large stained-glass window for the new church. This window depicts Saint John the Evangelist and has a smaller stained-glass window below it with the inscription "La Famille Joseph TESSIER". However, I wonder if Joseph ever saw it in the completed church, as he died in May 1913. From the 1880s until today, TESSIER family members have been baptized and married in St. Benedict's, and the headstones of generations of TESSIERs are found in the cemetery behind the church. Joseph's homestead is located only 11/2 miles from St. Benedict's Church. Albert H. BINDER wrote the following about the history of St. Benedict's parish school:

A very important phase of the history of St. Benedict's parish began in 1903 when Sisters arrived for the purpose of opening a school. In 1902 a number of Sisters of St. Mary of the Presentation had to leave their native France because of religious persecution. They came first to St. Boniface, Manitoba, and then came to Wild Rice where the parishioners wished to have a Catholic School established. Six Sisters under the leadership of Mother Cesaire arrived the end of June 1903. Father (C.A.R.) FOURNIER, the pastor, called a meeting of the men of the parish; they agreed to build a convent immediately. In the fall of 1903 the building was complete and the school opened.<sup>10</sup>

Albert H. BINDER's research showed that in 1905, the Sisters of the Presentation purchased the school building from the parish for a price of \$4,000. Additions to the school were made in 1907, 1913, and 1927. Besides educating the children of the parish, the Sisters also took in children from other families of French Canadian origin. These children received a traditional

French education with a Catholic foundation and instruction in the French language.<sup>11</sup>

## **Joseph's Four Children**

Joseph's eldest son, Irene, known as Rene, apparently was not interested in farming and I was told he returned to Canada. There is very little known about him. My elderly father told me Rene was hospitalized in Canada, probably at St. Boniface Hospital in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

On June 26, 1893, Clara TESSIER, the only living daughter of Joseph and Marie-Anne TESSIER, married her first cousin, Arthur BERTRAND. The following reflects the random thoughts about Clara and Arthur BERTRAND by Lawrence BERTRAND, their grandson:

"Clara and Arthur met while he was employed by Joseph TESSIER in Wild Rice, ND. After their marriage, they farmed in Argyle and Stephens, MN. About 1917, Arthur and Clara moved with the children to Cut Knife, SK (Saskatchewan, Canada) after some of the sons built a home and barn there. After grain farming for a number of years, Arthur died of stomach cancer in 1930. Clara lived on the home place with her son Philip BERTRAND and his wife Elsie until October 1943. Then Clara traveled to Inglewood, CA to live with her daughter, Cecile, and her husband, William VOLESKY. Clara suffered a stroke and lingered for a few years until she died there in 1950. Clara and Arthur had a total of eleven children with five living in the United States and six remaining in Canada."

"There is a picture of Clara TESSIER, taken in the mid-1940's, sitting in a high-back lounge chair with leather back and wooden arm rests. One grandchild, Leonard BERTRAND, about 5 years old, is standing on her right, and Clara, about 75 years old, is holding on her lap Rosalie BERTRAND, about two years old. The picture is remarkable because it reflects the times: a radio in the background to listen to the news during World War II, a large world map attached to the wall to identify the battles during the war, and a loving multigenerational setting. On top of the radio are African violet plants to liven the dark winter months in Cut Knife, SK. Clara, as I remember her from visits to Fargo, ND, was a short woman, speaking French and little

English. She did more listening than speaking, being a courageous, enduring person to raise a large family, to survive the winters, and to farm under difficult conditions. She also cared for me and my siblings for a short while when my mother died when I was six years old."<sup>12</sup>

Joseph's youngest son, Philippe, helped his father work the land. In 1891, when Phillipe was 15, his workload got much heavier when his father, in partnership with Joseph SAUVAGEAU, bought the east half of Section 17 in Stanley Township (320 acres). The TESSIER family now had another large parcel of land that was over two miles away from the original homestead. The additional workload may have pushed Philippe to look for an opportunity to change his future. At age nineteen, Philippe married his fifth cousin, Lucinda SAUVAGEAU, daughter of his father's partner Joseph SAUVAGEAU, on November 5, 1895. It was then that Philippe permanently left the original homestead. Two years later, December 1897, Joseph TESSIER purchased Joseph SAUVAGEAU's share of the land and gave that land to Philippe on December 12, 1898.<sup>13</sup> Phillipe improved that quarter section of land with a larger house and a horse barn. Philippe and Lucinda had four children. Lucinda died in June 1933, and only eight months passed before Philippe recognized a number of benefits by marrying his brother's widow (Ovide's wife!) in February 1934. Philippe died eight years later in Fargo, North Dakota, in December 1942.

### **Ovide and Priscilla Populate the Farm**

Joseph's second eldest son, Ovide, is my grandfather. On February 21, 1898, Ovide married 17-year old Priscilla SAUVAGEAU in St. Benedict's Church



Wedding photo of Ovide TESSIER and Priscilla SAUVAGEAU,  
Wild Rice, ND, February 21, 1898.

Priscilla was one of nine children born to David SAUVAGEAU and Emilie CHARTIER, who married in Champlain, Quebec on July 17, 1877. Priscilla arrived in St. Benedict's parish with her parents when she was 8 years old. Like most Wild Rice

immigrants, Priscilla and her parents probably were not aware of how closely related they were to their neighbors. The newlywed Priscilla was Ovide's fourth cousin once removed, which is one of the more distant relationships in this story. Priscilla became part of the TESSIER homestead in 1898 when she moved in with her new husband Ovide and his parents.

Over the next seventeen years, nine children were born to Ovide and Priscilla. They are Emilie-Anna, only known as "Maggie" (born December 7, 1898), Leon (1900), Ernestine (1902), Rose-Louise (1904), Henry (1907), Andrew (my father, born 1909), Palma (1912), Lucy (1914), and Anthony (1915). Joseph and Anna's house was overflowing with new life, and providing a living for this growing family took much work. Joseph, Marie-Anne, Ovide, and Priscilla's livelihood depended on good crops and a bountiful harvest. The good years were a gift, but the bad years of drought, excess rain, hail, crop disease, and pests created economic hardship. It was not always easy to pay the bills.



Children of Ovide and Priscilla TESSIER  
(approximately 1915, Anthony not yet born)

Joseph TESSIER (my great-grandfather), the original pioneering immigrant who brought the TESSIERs from Quebec to North Dakota, died on May 9, 1913 at age 71 after farming for 31 years in North Dakota. The cause of his death is recorded in St. Benedict's Death Register as liver disease. Left behind in the small homestead house were ten TESSIERs - his wife, Marie-Anne age 65, his son Ovide (my grandfather) age 39, Priscilla (my grandmother) age 33, and Ovide and Priscilla's seven children. The two youngest children of Ovide and Priscilla were born later in 1914 and 1915. This growing family took over the responsibilities of caring for the farm. In that same year, 1913, the year that Joseph died at age 71, the windmill on the farm and seven barns in the area were destroyed by a tornado.<sup>14</sup>

### **Communication from Quebec, 1913**

Letters between families in Quebec and North Dakota certainly did exist. Shortly before Joseph TESSIER's death in 1913, his wife, Marie-Anne, received a heart-fulfilling and prized note from her brother, I. A. Irene Douville, a priest from Nicolet Seminary in Quebec. The tone of this letter<sup>15</sup> captures the deep-seated relationship among family members.

Seminary of Nicolet  
October 1912

29

To my dear sister Marie-Anne (DOUVILLE),<sup>16</sup>

I send you with this letter an account of the celebrations I have just undergone on the occasion of my 50th year in the priesthood. All the compliments made to me made me realize that I have become old - and that my career is coming to an end. Nevertheless, I am still pretty healthy, with legs that are getting weak and deprive me of all hope of traveling as I used to do, and as a result, of coming to Wild Rice.

I will be happy to have news of you, which will be good news, I hope.

My affection and my greetings to Joseph [TESSIER] and the entire family.

I remain as always and very tenderly

Your completely devoted brother,  
I. A. Fr. DOUVILLE, Priest

P.S. I send you my portrait at the 50th year of priesthood. If you already have one, this one will be for Clara [(TESSIER) BERTRAND]17

## **Ovide and Priscilla Take Over the Farm**

Farm work was unending and risky. Tilling the soil, planting and harvesting crops, taking care of the machinery, caring for the livestock and horses, milking cows, feeding pigs and chickens, and taking care of the household duties required the help of all family members. As soon as Ovide and Priscilla's children were able to help, their household and farming responsibilities increased. When Ovide's last child, Anthony, was born in December 1915, there were twelve TESSIERs living on the homestead that Joseph built. Ovide's mother, Marie-Anne, who was widowed in 1913, lived with her son and family until she died on August 13, 1917 at the age of 69. Records from St. Benedict's Church did not list her cause of death.

Ovide had worked the farm with his father since the age of seven and was an experienced farmer. However, since Ovide was a frail man with lifelong health problems, there was always a hired hand to help on the farm. Ovide helped as best he could to provide for his mother, wife, and children despite his weakening condition. My father, Andrew, who was only 12 at the time, spoke of his vivid memories of his dad during those final months:

I recall my father was confined to a rocking chair and took a patent medicine that came by mail, which had enough alcohol for him to feel better. He went by buggy to Fargo, which was about eight miles away, to visit two separate doctors; one was Dr. DARROW, who was a well- respected physician. These doctors, who were puzzled by the cause of his infirmity, recommended his teeth be extracted. My mother (Priscilla) took care of all of his bodily needs and even carried him to and from his bed.

The summer of 1922 was extremely hot and the farmhouse had no cooling systems. There was no way to make Ovide comfortable in his weakened condition. He died that summer on August 16, 1922 at the age of 48. This was an untimely death,

and the actual cause of his death is questionable. St. Benedict's Parish Death Register listed paralysis as the cause of death, but his daughter (my aunt Palma) told me he had been diagnosed with pernicious anemia. His simple black marble headstone is located in St. Benedict's cemetery. The engraving says, "Ovide TESSIER 1885-1922. R.I.P." The first date is an obvious error of eleven years as Ovide was born in 1874, not 1885.

## **Ovide's Cause of Death Re-examined**

My sister and I have speculated that lead poisoning may have been the true cause of my grandfather's premature death. Prohibition was in full swing during this time, and bootlegging was common in grain country. Recently, I learned from my 97-year old father that bootlegged alcohol had been hidden on the farm, and nearby farms were known to have bootlegging operations. During the early 1920s, car radiators were often used by amateur distillers to condense the alcohol during its production. Someone farming in the same area mentioned that he had heard of car radiators also being used to store alcohol, since alcohol was illegal and had to be hidden. Alcohol that comes in contact with the lead-based solder holding a radiator together becomes dangerously high in lead compounds, and consumption of enough of this tainted alcohol can result in lead poisoning. Typical symptoms of lead poisoning range from numbness of the hands and feet, to paralysis, and eventually to death. The problem was so bad that thousands of people were known to have died from lead poisoning during Prohibition from drinking lead-tainted alcohol. Ovide's own father, Joseph, had died of liver disease, perhaps related to alcohol consumption, so alcohol consumption may have been a common social practice among the men of the family. Ovide's cause of death was listed in the church register as paralysis, though my aunt claimed he had been diagnosed with pernicious anemia. However, a doctor I consulted claimed many symptoms of pernicious anemia and the initial stages of lead poisoning are quite similar (weak muscles, numbness of the hands and feet, fatigue, and lack of pallor). Ovide had long sought relief from all his ills in patent medicines, and he used them up until his death. Patent medicines of the time often contained opium or cocaine, and it nearly always contained a high percentage of grain alcohol, quite likely bootlegged alcohol. Because of the



increasing paralysis in his limbs, Ovide was confined to a chair for over a year, and Priscilla had to carry him to and from bed. For his wife to carry him, Ovide must have lost considerable weight. How ironic if tainted alcohol in the patent medicines Ovide drank may have further contributed to a death from lead poisoning!

## **Ovide's Nine Children**

My grandfather, Ovide, was probably a quiet man of few words, as his four sons, Leon, Henry, Andrew (my father), and Anthony, shared this trait. All were hard-working and capable of handling any farm task. In contrast to the quiet nature of the men of the family, Ovide's five daughters were high spirited, lively, talkative women, like their mother Priscilla. Leon, Henry, and Andrew all married strong, assertive French women like their sisters who did most of the talking. The youngest son, Anthony, who never married, joined a religious order and became a Brother at Crosier Seminary in Onamia, Minnesota. "Brother A", as he was affectionately called, became the first family historian. His hand-made genealogical diagrams were passed down to me and proved to be very accurate. His research first brought to light the family trend of cousins marrying cousins. He died rather young at age 47 from a brain tumor.

Survival of the homestead and the responsibility of providing a living for the family now fell on Priscilla (age 42), and her children. With a \$6000 debt on the land, she needed the help of Leon (age 22), Rose (17), Henry (16), Andrew (13), Palma (12), Lucy (8), and Anthony (7) to keep possession of the farm. Fortunately, the children had already gained valuable farm experience from their father. Two of Ovide's older daughters had already married and left, and Rose would marry a year later and leave as well, so the remaining children had to grow up fast and take on adult responsibilities. Priscilla was determined to continue to make a life for herself and her children. She was a capable seamstress, and I was told she had made her own wedding dress. Even with all the daily chores involved in operating the farm, she made time to design and sew wedding dresses and hats for her five daughters and others. My father remembered when she fabricated and decorated a cardboard box to look like the Titanic for one of his

older sisters to bring to a church social. Besides these creative talents, I was told she assisted other neighborhood women in childbirth.

Ovide's oldest son, Leon David TESSIER, who I only knew as "Uncle Pete", did not stay with farming. Instead, his mother helped him buy a milk route in Wild Rice, and he collected milk from neighboring farms to take to a Fargo creamery. On November 27, 1928, Leon married his third cousin Albertine Simone GRANDBOIS. After his marriage, with his mother's financial help, Leon purchased a combined grocery store and gas station located across the street from St. Benedict's Catholic Church.

My second cousin, Lawrence BERTRAND, recalled an experience at Leon and Albertine's home:

"While visiting Albertine when I was a preschooler, my sister Angela and I wanted to see some cows in an adjoining field. We crawled through the barbed wire fence. While I was doing so, one of the stands of wire flew in the air and snagged my left cheek. The scar from the scratch remained for years."<sup>18</sup>

When Leon left the farm in 1928, Henry TESSIER and his younger brother, Andrew (my father), were now in charge of running the farm with their mother's direction. On January 16, 1934, at age 27, Henry marries 20-year old neighbor Aldea PRONOVOST. Aldea brought a strong, energetic presence into the household and may have changed the family dynamic. Priscilla is now possibly looking for a way to start a different life away from the farm, because one month after Aldea moves in, Priscilla moves out! At the age of 53, twelve years after her husband's death, Priscilla accepts the advances of a recent widower and marries Philippe TESSIER on February 20, 1934. Her new husband is her deceased husband's younger brother! Philippe's first wife, Lucinda SAUVAGEAU, had died only eight months earlier. Once again, Priscilla marries a distant cousin, who was formerly her brother-in-law. Only then does my grandmother reluctantly move to the city (Fargo), leaving all the farm responsibilities to Henry and Andrew, and conceding her position of homestead matriarch to Aldea.

Andrew TESSIER had spent his entire life on the family farm working with his older brother Henry. Since their mother's

departure in 1934, Henry and Andrew had run the farm as equal partners. Henry and his wife Aldea now had two small boys (David and Donald) running about the house with a third child (Maurice) on the way. Andrew, now 28, thinking he might marry soon, knew it was time to leave the farm. In October 1937, Andrew left to seek employment in Fargo and quickly found work hauling freight for \$15 a week. Not long afterwards, he married his third cousin, Berniece Helen GRANDBOIS (my mother), on February 7, 1938. My parents are third cousins because they share common ancestors, Joseph SAUVAGEAU and Natalie GARIEPY, their great-great grandparents, who were married in February 1805 in Deschambault, Quebec. Andrew's new wife, Berniece, is the younger sister of Leon's wife, Albertine! This is another example of cousins marrying cousins, as well as two sisters marrying two brothers from a neighboring farm.

Andrew and Berniece (my parents) lived in Fargo, North Dakota from then on. They had four daughters and one son: Jacqueline (born 1938), Diane (1940), Renee (1942), Sandra (1944), and Gary (1951). Andrew worked for the Railway Express Agency delivering goods from the rail station to their final destination up until his retirement. Today, of Ovide and Priscilla's nine children, only my father, Andrew TESSIER, is still living. In September, 2006, he celebrated his 97th birthday. His wife Berniece celebrated her 91st birthday that same month.

In a handwritten letter dated March 1977 to his brother Henry that was never delivered, my dad spoke about the harvest of 1937 when he made the decision to leave the homestead and move to Fargo. Andrew wrote, "That year there was a fair crop, with a lot of hay and extra corn that we sold at the elevator in Moorhead (MN), all the grain for next seeding, a barn full of corn and oats and hay to carry over for the stock for the next year. There were about 20 head of cattle, cows and calves, 9 horses that were not that great, and a full stock of farm machinery." He also wrote that, without his knowledge or consent, Henry had purchased Andrew's share of the homestead (80 acres) from Priscilla's second husband Phillippe for only \$500. His mother, Priscilla, knew of this shabby deal and had promised Andrew that he would be compensated for the fifteen years that he worked on the farm side by side with his older brother Henry. Unfortunately, his loving mother, who

was living in Fargo with second husband Phillipe, unexpectedly died in January 1942 at age 61 before her wish for an equitable distribution of the family property could be committed to paper. As a result, the entire TESSIER homestead ended up in Henry's hands, and Andrew was left with no connection to the homestead at all.

## **Henry and Aldea Take Over the Farm**

When Henry took over the farm, there were many sacrifices and much hard work ahead of him. North Dakota suffered a drought and farm production plunged sharply. Despite the difficult times, Henry and Aldea scraped and saved every penny they earned to keep their land and their heads above water. Every waking hour was put to good use. Once a week, Aldea went to town to sell fresh vegetables, fruit, chickens, and ducks. Money brought in from these farm goods helped buy the things they could not produce at home. Affordable farming machinery was beginning to make its appearance. For \$750, one could purchase a bright, shiny tractor that cut down on manpower and cost. Never did Henry want to see another horse for as long as he lived. He swore he had the two most stubborn horses that man ever laid eyes on.<sup>19</sup>

Henry and Aldea's three sons, David (born 1934), Donald (1936), and Maurice (1937), had helped with the farming of wheat, oats, barley, corn, and alfalfa ever since they were young boys. They hardly had a moment to be carefree children. Their two daughters, Delores (1941) and Judy (1943), had to help out as well. Every morning, the children were up before dawn to milk the cows and work in the barn before they went to school. These morning chores were repeated again every evening.

My sisters and I were the "innocent girl cousins from the city." I remember my pre-teen adventures when we would visit Uncle Henry on the original homestead farm. Our country cousins laughed at our naivete as we observed the commotion of all the cats, dogs, ducks, geese, chickens, horses and cows. I would say my first lesson in sex education happened when my older boy cousins took us behind the barn where the cows and bulls shared the same pasture. Another memory was when we cautiously observed David and Donald milking the cows. They

would tease my younger sisters and me by squirting our faces, and the nearby cats, with warm milk. How these older boys chuckled at our screams and shrieks when my dad and my uncle butchered the chickens. I can still remember them chopping off the chicken head with an ax and seeing all that blood squirting from the severed neck. We watched in horror when these headless chickens ran in circles and finally flopped down, sometimes at our very feet. We called it the "chicken dance without a head". Fortunately, all of this distasteful drama was followed by a scrumptious fried chicken dinner prepared by Aldea in the homestead house.

These two TESSIER cousins, David and Donald, continued to farm with their father until Henry's health declined. Both Henry and Aldea left the farm in 1993 to live in assisted living centers in Fargo, ND until their deaths. Henry died February 10, 2004 at the ripe old age of 97. Aldea died September 17, 2006 at age 93.

The country was now deep in World War II, and farm production was in demand more than ever. New and better machinery was being invented to help the farmer. Combines, hay cutters, trucks, and swatters became available. Henry's herd of milking cows increased, and with the help of milking machines and new ways to transport and cool the milk, production increased.

### **More Cousins Marrying Cousins - All Named TESSIER**

The courageous homesteaders of Wild Rice had to overcome many challenges on the prairie, including floods, hail storms, tornados, droughts, and insect infestations. With these hardships, it is not surprising that two TESSIER families did not stay in North Dakota. Two of Ovide and Priscilla's daughters, Maggie (Emilie-Anne) and Rose, married two brothers who were their second cousins once removed, and all had the exact same surname, TESSIER! Maggie TESSIER married Maurice Alexander TESSIER in 1920, and her younger sister, Rose TESSIER, married Maurice's younger brother Eugene-Nazaire TESSIER in 1923. These two men were the sons of Joseph Eugene TESSIER and M-J BARIBEAU, who had married January 18, 1887 in Ste-Anne-de-la Perade, Quebec. Maggie and Maurice had 11 children, and Rose and Eugene had 8 children.

After farming in Wild Rice for over twenty years, both of these large families sold their farms in the late 1940s and said goodbye to the harsh North Dakota winters. They headed west to the warm, comfortable climate of Southern California. There they expanded on their farming skills by successfully developing and managing chicken ranches.

## **The TESSIER Homestead, 1881 - 2006**

Over these past 125 years, there have been many changes to the original homestead farm and house. Joseph's first house, built in 1881, must have been a relatively simple shelter. In 1882, Joseph added an additional room to the living quarters on the south end of the home plus an entire second story. In 1898, when Ovide's new wife Priscilla moved in, more changes were made to the home. Priscilla may not have been impressed with the kitchen, as it was moved away from the house and converted into a chicken coop.<sup>20</sup> A new parlor was added on the main floor, and the upstairs was expanded over the north end of the house with more sleeping rooms. In 1914, Ovide built a barn to house his cattle. The next major improvements made to the original home included electric lights, furnace, and running water. In the 1940s, after Henry took over the farm, another long barn was added near the old one, and another silo was erected next to the old silo. Henry and Aldea built a new ranch style home across the yard from the original home in 1967. By 1975, there were no longer any dairy cattle kept on the farm, and grains were farmed exclusively from then on. The original homestead house was torn down in 1980, and the original barn was demolished in 2005. Henry's oldest son David also built a home on the homestead property. <sup>21</sup>

For 125 years, TESSIERs worked the Dakota land. Henry's two sons, David and Donald, farmed the land until they retired in early 2006. That means 2006 is the first year since 1881 in which a descendant of Joseph TESSIER no longer directly farms the homestead land. The six generations of TESSIERs who have lived on the homestead are Joseph TESSIER, Ovide TESSIER, Henry TESSIER, David TESSIER, Douglas TESSIER (born October 17, 1961), and Quintin TESSIER (January 8, 2005). David's son, Douglas, who is Joseph's great-great-grandson, still lives in his grandparents' home on the

homestead property with his young son Quintin, but the actual farming is now in the hands of hired help.

## **Language and Social Changes**

My first French connection was Mathurin TESSIER and his wife, Elizabeth LETOURNEAU, who left France and settled in Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade, Quebec in 1677. Six more generations of TESSIERs lived in Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade before Joseph and Anne-Marie broke tradition in 1881 and left for Dakota Territory. The French connection continues to this day, primarily in North Dakota and in California. Unfortunately, the French language has not survived. To my knowledge, none of my TESSIER cousins speak French. It saddens me to know that the beautiful sounds of our native tongue have been lost. My father, who was born in 1909, can still utter a few French words. French, the traditional language of our relatives for countless generations was totally lost in less than a hundred years.

Over three hundred male and female descendants of our pioneer family, Joseph TESSIER and Marie-Anne DOUVILLE, were born in the United States. Most of these TESSIER descendants live in California.

However, the surname TESSIER, which is carried on by the male members of the family, only numbers about fifty persons. In my immediate family, the TESSIER family name has unfortunately come to an end. My father Andrew TESSIER had four daughters and one son. That son, my brother Gary, only had two daughters, so there are no male descendants to carry on the TESSIER family name in my branch of the family tree.

In the relatively small French community in North Dakota, cousins marrying cousins was a practice that existed for quite sometime, but it is coming to an end. The mobility afforded by modern life makes it less likely for people to marry their neighbors. Since most of the parishioners of St. Benedict's Church can now easily commute to the larger cities, their spouses tend not to be French relatives from neighboring farms.

## **A Dream Fulfilled**

Bishop Louis LAFLECHE, who had accompanied hunting parties as a missionary between 1844 and 1856 through the Dakota prairies, eventually had his dream realized. He had hoped that the French Canadian families from numerous villages in Quebec could live off the fruitful land in the Red River Valley. Without a doubt, over the past century, his dream had been fulfilled by the hardy French immigrants.

I am so impressed and proud of my ancestors' courage, strength, and perseverance that saw them through their struggles in life. This article presents a hint of the way they lived and toiled for one hundred and twenty five years. Naturally I treasure the heroic nature of the family, particularly the struggles of the women during their child bearing years. I am very proud to be a descendant of the industrious immigrant family of my great-grandparents, Marie-Anne DOUVILLE and Joseph TESSIER.

\*\*\*\*\*

My collection and research of family history has been interesting and meaningful because now I more fully appreciate all these generations that preceded me. I could not have completed this time-consuming project without the capable help of my sister, Diane BACHMEIER, and my second cousin, Lawrence BERTRAND, who lives in Carlsbad, California. In Quebec, records of all baptisms, marriages, and deaths have been carefully preserved over the centuries. Those records that I personally viewed in Ste-Anne-de-la-Perade and in St. Benedict's church were often in pristine condition. I am forever grateful for this careful record keeping. Most importantly, I give a special thanks to my friend Hugh MARTIN for the tedious job of editing, proofreading, and reorganizing the disjointed parts of this story to make a more coherent whole.

Photographs included in this story:

[Photo 1] - Joseph TESSIER and Marie-Anne DOUVILLE in later years (around 1900?)

[Photo 2] - Wedding photo Ovide TESSIER and Priscilla SAUVAGEAU, Wild Rice, N.D., Feb. 21, 1898



[Photo 3] - Children of Ovide and Priscilla TESSIER (approx. 1915; Anthony not yet born)

- 1 Research by G. Robert TESSIER; paraphrased by Lawrence A. BERTRAND. (Pertains to this and previous two paragraphs.)
- 2 Lawrence A. BERTRAND, "The Land Called", 3rd edition, (Utopia II Press: Carlsbad, CA, December 1, 2006), p. 110.
- 3 Text from flyer from photocopy of South Dakota State Historical Society.
- 4 From the HOMESTEAD NATIONAL MONUMENT OF AMERICA. Homestead Act, genealogy and homestead records.
- 5 "The Land Called", p. 64.
- 6 "The Land Called", p. 61.
- 7 Albert H. BINDER, "St. Benedict's Church: A Century of Christianity on the Dakota Prairies" (Le Mann & Associates: Skokie, IL, Date of Publication unknown). p.1, Paraphrased by Jacqueline (TESSIER) KELLER.
- 8 Ibid, p. 6.
- 9 Ibid, p. 6.
- 10 Ibid, p. 6.
- 11 Ibid, p. 6. Paraphrased by Jacqueline (TESSIER) KELLER.
- 12 Researched and written by Lawrence A. BERTRAND, August 30, 2006.
- 13 "The Land Called", p. 64.
- 14 "The Land Called", p. 64.
- 15 Translated by Professor Emeritus Harriet BLUME, Crafton Hills College, CA.
- 16 Marie-Anne (DOUVILLE) TESSIER and her husband Joseph TESSIER were living in Wild Rice, ND.
- 17 Clara (TESSIER) BERTRAND was living with her husband, Arthur BERTRAND, and their children in Argyle/Stephens, MN, just northeast of Grand Forks, ND.
- 18 Based on communication between Jacqueline (TESSIER) KELLER and Lawrence A. BERTRAND, August 28, 2006.
- 19 Rural Cass County, "The Land And The People", Marilyn TESSIER, p. 794-795
- 20 Ibid, p. 794-795
- 21 Diane (TESSIER) BACHMEIER (my sister), from conversations with Judy Kalbus TESSIER, David TESSIER, and Donald TESSIER (these last three grew up on the homestead).

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# The quest for a permanent home continues

## *AFGS Building Fund campaign enters Phase II*

by: Normand T. Deragon

The second phase of the AFGS Building Fund campaign is underway. The goal of the campaign is to raise \$500,000 in donations and pledges.

The goal is ambitious. The theme ***Preserving our Past...Building our Future*** is exactly what the Society will accomplish through a successful building campaign.

The committee will explore every avenue possible to attain the building fund goal, including grant opportunities, corporate donations, and in-kind services.

In early April each AFGS member was mailed a brochure and donation/pledge card and return envelope describing the campaign and the vision the board of directors developed for the AFGS of the future.

### **Campaign History**

The board of directors established the building fund in June 2000, shortly after the Society acquired the more than 2,000 reels of the Drouin microfilm collection consisting of the births, marriages and deaths in Quebec province. The collection also included thousands of books from the now-defunct Drouin Library in Montreal. Without question, these prized acquisitions combined with the addition of other genealogical and historical research materials, makes AFGS among the premiere French-Canadian genealogical research centers in North America.

As a result, the Society's present rented space in the lower level of the First Universalist Church in Woonsocket, R.I. is no longer adequate. The dream of purchasing a home of our own

in order to provide ample space for the expansion of cultural and historical activities is still alive!

During Phase I of the campaign, the board asked members to make a commitment to AFGS through donations and pledges over time. It soon became clear that there was strong support for the Society, its mission and the value placed on our rich French-Canadian heritage.

Through the generosity of AFGS members and friends, the Society raised nearly \$120,000 in Phase I, considerably short of the \$300,000 goal. The tragic events of September 11, 2001 combined with a downturn in the economy contributed greatly to the decrease in donations. However, the dream of having a larger building of our own has never faded, and all funds raised during Phase I were placed in separate, interest-bearing accounts and were never co-mingled with AFGS general funds.

## **Phase II Campaign Overview**

The Building Fund Committee is chaired by Normand T. Deragon, and the executive committee members are William Beaudoin, Roger Beaudry, Rob Gumlaw, Marguerite Pommenville and William Pommenville.

When planning for Phase II of the campaign began, the committee first had to set a goal for the campaign. Real estate values have increased significantly over the past several years. The costs of labor and construction materials also have skyrocketed. It became apparent that the goal for the campaign would have to be raised to \$500,000 in order to acquire a suitable building and execute anticipated initial repairs and renovations. Once a building is acquired, fundraising and capital campaign goals will become clearer. However, the committee anticipates that a \$500,000 campaign fund will be sufficient to purchase a building of approximately 20,000 square feet.

## **The Vision**

During several day-long strategic planning sessions, the board of directors developed a vision plan that outlines how the AFGS will expand and improve its activities not only for

members but for all persons of French-Canadian and Franco-American ancestry.

The vision plan would be applicable to a building of approximately 20,000 square feet. The Society presently occupies about 3,300 square feet.

The building, if necessary, would be remediated and renovated to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and local and state fire code requirements.

Plans for the new home call for three "centers."

**The Research Center** will house the Society's extensive holdings and will feature

- Modern library furniture
- Security system to protect the center's valuable holdings and a secure special collections room
- Computerized catalog system
- Secure coat room and locker area for personal belongings
- Coin operated printers and copiers
- Special fire suppression system in designated areas for the most valuable holdings and collections
- Technology area with state-of-the-art networked computer work stations with an area for laptop use
- Reading room with comfortable chairs and tables

**The Education and Conference Center** will enable the Society to host workshops, lectures, video presentations, and meetings. It will feature a state-of-the-art media center that will include

- Surround sound audio
- Video and audio recording equipment and digital editing suite
- Large screen and LCD projection equipment
- High speed Internet access and teleconferencing capability
- Chairs and folding tables for classroom or auditorium seating

**The Exhibition Center** will be housed in a secure setting and will feature

- The AFGS French-Canadian Hall of Fame
- Permanent exhibits highlighting French-Canadian culture and history
- Visiting exhibitions

The complete plan is available at the library, and also may be viewed on the AFGS Web site at [www.afgs.org](http://www.afgs.org).

## **How You Can Help**

Several methods have been devised to make it convenient for anyone to support the building fund.

### **Current Gifts**

- An outright gift of cash or securities
- Donations may be made in memory of a loved one
- One to three year pledge of cash or securities that spreads giving over time
- Use a distribution from a qualified retirement plan to tap into sheltered resources and minimize tax consequences
- Take advantage of a matching gift program from your employer or your spouse's employer

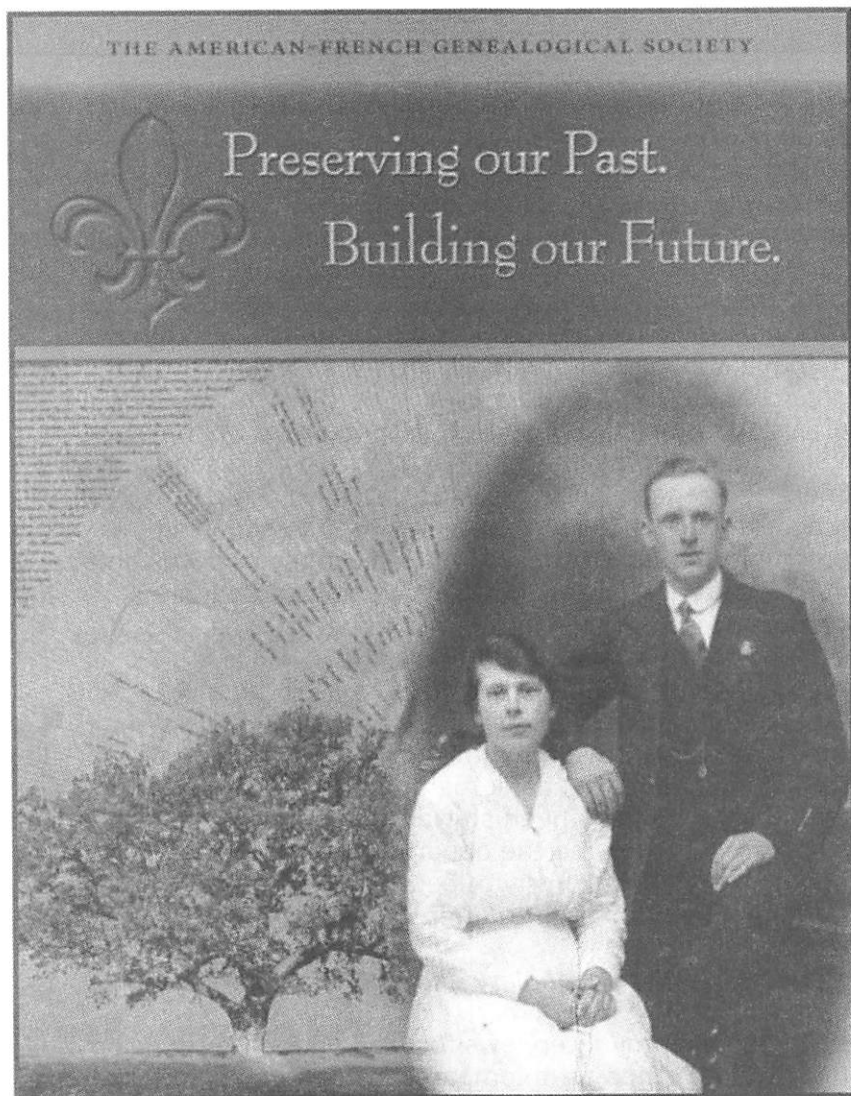
### **Deferred Gifts**

- Retain total control of assets during your lifetime but include a charitable bequest to the American French Genealogical Society Building Fund in your will or trust
- Bypass potential estate and income taxes by designating the American French Genealogical Society Building Fund as a beneficiary of a retirement plan, pension benefit, or an IRA

Every contribution—no matter what size or giving method—will make a difference. Pledge cards are available at the AFGS library, or may be downloaded from the AFGS Web site, [www.afgs.org](http://www.afgs.org). Donations may also be made on our secure Web site by selecting the building fund link on the home page.

For more information about the AFGS Building Fund, contact Normand Deragon by e-mail at [buildingfund@afgs.org](mailto:buildingfund@afgs.org), or by phone at (401) 524-7315.

Updates about the progress of the building fund campaign and building purchase will be posted regularly on the AFGS Web site and will be included in the Society's newsletter.



# **“Le Bon Français” of Woonsocket, Rhode Island**

## **An “Outsider’s” Connection with this Subject**

**By Mary Snider Bolt**

I write as a non Franco-American who grew up in Rhode Island but has lived away from it for a number of years. As a student in the Middletown, Rhode Island, school system, I fell in love with the French language and eventually ended up teaching it at Hartwick College in Oneonta, New York. Because of my interest in different ways of speaking French and thinking about the French language, I began to look more closely at Woonsocket, which seemed like a treasure trove of French language and culture practically in my own backyard. I conducted a series of interviews on the French language and cultural identity in Woonsocket, with many of my nineteen informants being people who had come to do research at the American-French Genealogical Society (AFGS). In spite of not being a member of the Woonsocket French-speaking community, I was embraced wholeheartedly and was able to acquire material for part of an article and several oral presentations in France in the mid to late 1990’s.

“Helpful” is too weak a word to describe all that AFGS researchers and staff, especially Sylvia BARTHOLOMY, and other informants have meant for my work. Writing this article offers me a chance to thank members of the Franco-American community who have been so warm, supportive, and generous. In addition, it gives me the opportunity to share some of my findings and impressions with people who may have comments or additional information to offer.

### *Interviews: Food Vocabulary and Cultural Identity*

Initially, my interviews focused on food terminology in Woonsocket French as it compares to the French spoken in France. The second series of interviews compared attitudes toward the French language and Franco-American identity among different age groups. In all, I interviewed nineteen



informants for the two combined topics, with several of them giving multiple interviews. Ages ranged from 35 to 76, with the majority of the informants being over 60. I offer a sampling of results in the hope that it might inspire not only interest, but also comments.

The following list is just a small sampling, and I would be interested to know how it matches up with the vocabulary used by readers of this article. Not every one of the twenty terms was used by every speaker interviewed. Where more than one term was used to refer to the same food item, both terms are listed. In parentheses, I give the English translation, along with the term that would be used in France.

### **Food Vocabulary**

*Woonsocket term ("English term"; term generally used in France)*

*Une beurrée ("sandwich"; une tartine)*

*De la bière de gingembre ("ginger ale"; du Canada)*

*Du blé d'Inde ("corn"; du maïs)*

*Des bleuets ("blueberries"; des myrtilles)*

*De la cassonade; du sucre brun ("brown sugar"; du sucre roux)*

*Des clams ("clams"; des palourdes)*

*De la compôte (aux pommes) ("applesauce"; de la compote (de pommes))*

*Du cranberry sauce ("cranberry sauce"; des airelles; des canneberges)*

*Du grapefruit ("grapefruit"; de la pamplemousse)*

*Des greenbeans; des haricots verts ("green beans"; des haricots verts)*

*De la nutrition de salut ("health food"; des aliments diététiques)*

*Du pain de beurre* ("a piece of buttered bread"; *une tartine*)

*Des patates sucrés* ("sweet potatoes"; *des patates douces*)

*Des pattes de cochon* ("pigs' feet"; *des pieds de cochon*)

*Du peanut butter; du buerre d'arachide* ("peanut butter"; *du beurre de cacahuète*)

*Des petits choux* ("cauliflower"; *de la choufleur*)

*Des pommes de pin* ("pineapple"; *des ananas*)

*Des prunes; des pruneaux* ("prunes"; *des pruneaux*)

*Des raisins* ("raisins"; *du raisin sec*)

*De la soupe avec des onions* ("onion soup"; *de la soupe aux oignons*)

Even though most of the terms on this list are different from the terms that would be used in France, there are many parallels between Woonsocket food vocabulary and the food vocabulary of France. I listed these terms because they were different, and, therefore, of particular interest.

A quick glance down the list shows that most of the deviations from "French French" fall into one of several categories:

**English loan words:** This category is the largest, with seven examples: *des clams, du cranberry sauce, du grapefruit, des greenbeans, du peanut butter, des prunes, and des raisins*. In the case of *cranberry sauce*, Woonsocket speakers of French found themselves compelled to come up with a word for an item that does not exist in the same form in France, at least not commonly. The expression *peanut butter* allows the speaker to avoid choosing between the French expression (*beurre de cacahuète*) and the Canadian expression (*buerre d'arachide*). Those speakers who used a French term chose *buerre d'arachide*.

Literal translations: Again, the English influence is evident in these expressions—not surprisingly, since Woonsocket speakers of French are surrounded every day by the English language. Although French words are used, they mimic English structures. Examples from our list that fall into this category are *de la bière de gingembre*, *du sucre brun*, *de la nutrition de salut*, *des patates sucrés*, and *des pommes de pin*.

Canadianisms: Just as Canadian French had a major impact on the pronunciation of Woonsocket French, it has also influenced vocabulary. Our list doesn't highlight that role as well as it might, but we do see an example of it in *buerre d'arachide* ("peanut butter"), as well as in the word *bleuets*, which is used instead of the "French French" *myrtilles*.

Structural variations: In some cases, the noun is identical to what would be used in France, but several of the short, linking words are different. A French person would notice the difference in structure but would not have any trouble understanding what was being said. Examples of this type of expression are *de la compote aux pommes* and *de la soupe avec des onions*.

### *Other Vocabulary Notes*

As mentioned earlier, the above findings were presented at several linguistic conferences in France. Some other expressions that caught the ears of conference attendees in France included *c'était dispendieux* ("it was expensive"), *elle a fait des emplettes* ("she made some purchases"), *il est venu au monde* ("he was born"), and *elle est subie* ("she died"). People easily understood the first two expressions but were interested because the expressions appear to be much more common in Woonsocket than in France, where they are considered old-fashioned or poetic. (One 62-year-old Woonsocket informant said that her mother used the word *dispendieux*, but that she (the informant) used the word (*cher*). The third expression fell into a different category altogether. Everyone was surprised by it, even scholars familiar with the French spoken in other parts of New England. So many people asked me about it that I checked my notes and confirmed that, yes, a seventy-year-old

informant had used the expression, and she recalled seeing it in a newspaper at one time. Later, I asked a 64-year-old informant about *elle est subie*, and he understood it. I would be fascinated to know if many other people were familiar with this expression.

### *French Language Proficiency and Use*

Not surprisingly, the older informants had by far the strongest command of the French language. However, age was far from the only indicator of interest in the French language. One of the most impressive gestures of devotion to French was in the language class that I attended one evening in Woonsocket at AFGS headquarters. The room was full of students of all ages who were learning French—not “le bon Français (“good French”) of France, but their own French, taught by a nun, Sister Colette AUGER, who had studied in France but who also spoke the French with which her students were attempting to reconnect—the French of their parents, of their aunts and uncles, of their “Mémères and Pépères. It was extremely touching to hear one student say that she was attending class “pour regagner ma langue maternelle” (“to gain – or win – back my native language”).

Whether learning the language from scratch, regaining earlier proficiency, or trying to maintain their level of proficiency, Franco-American learners and speakers of French are presented with a special set of challenges. One informant’s teenage children wanted to learn French, but the French that was being taught in school was the French of France, not the French that the children heard their parents speaking. As a result, “ils se découragent tous les deux” (“both of them are getting discouraged”). Even people who have spoken French all their lives acknowledge the effort that goes into thinking in French when surrounded by the influence of English: “[il] faut qu’il use la mémoire. . . et c’est pas naturel, il ne sait pas dire “un” ou “une”, you know?” (“He [a speaker of French] has to use his memory. . .and it’s not natural. He doesn’t know whether to say “un” or “une”, you know?”) The balancing act between English and French seems inevitable: “On est quasiment toute pareil. . . on commence à parler en français et puis on finit en anglais. C’est la mode de Woonsocket.” (“We’re all more or less the same. We start out speaking

French, and then we finish in English. That's the way it is in Woonsocket.")

Just as the language level differs between generations in the Woonsocket area, motivations for learning French also vary. Younger students of the language choose to learn it as a way of connecting with their families and culture. For older speakers of French, learning that language was something that happened naturally, not as a matter of conscious choice: "Si je voulais parler . . . il fallait que j'apprenne [le français]" ("If I wanted to speak, I had to learn French.") For these speakers, it sometimes became a language of convenience if they had children: "Le seul temps qu'on parle français, ça c'est quand on ne veut pas que les enfants comprennent." ("The only time we speak French is when we don't want the children to understand.") Whatever happens to the French language in Woonsocket, one speaker of French saw the question in a larger light: "Affection sera la meme chose si je parlais seulement que l'anglais" ("Affection will be the same even if I only speak English.")

"Le bon français"

When prospective informants initially responded to my request for an interview, I was invariably struck by two points: their warmth and generosity as they willingly gave of their time to help my research; and the low level of confidence that many of them had in their French abilities. On many occasions, their responses went something like this: "You want to do the interview in French? I don't think I can carry on a conversation in French anymore!" Or: "You're going to have trouble understanding me! I make so many mistakes!" Or, the most popular response of all: "Mais je ne parle pas le bon français!" ("But I don't speak good French!") In almost every case, we ended up being able to carry on part, and usually all, of the interview in French. Not only was I impressed by the fluency and vocabulary of my conversation partners, but so were the French and Canadian linguists who listened to short, anonymous excerpts from some of our interviews when I gave presentations in Lyon, Avignon, and Bellême, France. More than once, people were startled and gratified to learn that "the Franco-Americans of New England" include people from southern New England. Many members of the audiences were touched by the work and affection that has obviously gone into

preserving not only the French heritage of Woonsocket, but the French language as well. Certainly, not one of the linguists, many of them from France and Quebec, ever made any reference to a lack of "bon français" on the part of the speakers I had interviewed from Woonsocket.

It is undeniable that far fewer people speak French in Woonsocket than was the case a generation ago. It is equally true that the French spoken in Woonsocket differs in some ways from the French spoken in France. Hopefully this article in some small way helps to show, though, that there is still an interest in the French language in Woonsocket, and that people in and around Woonsocket speak it much better than they give themselves credit for. They were not only understood but were admired by international scholars of French at linguistic conferences. There is no reason to shrink from the French that is spoken in Woonsocket, and there is every reason to celebrate it. To borrow the words of Sister Colette to her class of Woonsocket French learners: "Si on se comprend, c'est déjà bien, sans essayer d'être ce qu'on n'est pas" ("If we understand each other, that's already a good thing, without trying to be something we aren't.")

Editor's Note: Mary Snider Bolt is presently Visiting Assistant Professor of German and French at York College in Pennsylvania. She invites your comments at

[mboldt@ycp.edu](mailto:mboldt@ycp.edu)

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A FAMILY TREE CAN WITHER IF NOBODY TENDS IT'S ROOTS.

A GENEALOGIST WILL DO ANYTHING FOR A DATE

A GREAT MANY FAMILY TREES WERE STARTED BY GRAFTING

A MISER IS HARD TO LIVE WITH, BUT MAKES A FINE  
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# **Discovering the American French Genealogical Society Website**

**By William Pommenville Webmaster AFGS Website**

**[www.afgs.org](http://www.afgs.org)**

If you stop by the AFGS website often or only on occasion you should check the "What's New" page which will explain the changes and updates to the site. If you're planning your first visit to AFGS check out "Plan a Visit" which gives hours, direction, Calendar, and guidelines for the library and more. Also you should consider picking up a copy of the latest "library holdings" which may save you time at the library. This way you can identify the items you want to review in advance.

As you know the AFGS is on the brink of obtaining a building! The "Building Fund" Campaign is in phase II and the website will play a roll in dispensing current information and the progress of the Building fund campaign. You can donate or pledge online or if you prefer printout a pledge card and mail it in. Follow the campaign progress including seeing a list of contributors who have come forward to help us reach this goal. Anonymous Donors will not be identified.

We now have on a line a section devoted to "Our Departed Members". Also if you want you can donate to AFGS in the name of a departed person. Information on our "Lending Library" program is also available, which allows members to borrow microfiche for their research. You can read about the "AFGS Hall of Fame" which started in 2003 and recognizes individuals of French-Canadian ancestry who have made significant contributions to their community, or who have achieved success in their life's endeavors.

The site has a "FAQ" section, which contains Frequently Asked Questions. There is a section for Members to list some of the names they are researching and it has their emails so you can respond. Also another popular is our Links section, which list Genealogy related website. We have an online store where you can purchase a large assortment of genealogical resources as

well as gifts and membership. Check the picture album about the library. Also our Recipes and of course we have our AFGS cookbook for sale.

For research information we have "Terms and Phrases" which covers - Terms - Phrases - Translations - Abbreviations - Quips (Genealogy Humor). This also includes an explanation of "dit" names. French accents, which explain how to type the French accent marks on a PC or a MAC including a printer friendly version of the instructions.

One of the largest sections of the website is for "Surname Variations" which is a collection of name variations. These names are French-Canadian Surname Variations, dit, Anglicization, etc. Also in this section are French-Canadian Given Names with English Variants, Anglicization's and Latin.

The Reference section contains "NOTES AND EXPLANATIONS" for Répertoires etc. plus it covers "KINSHIP & DESCENT". Also covered are Rhode Island Village Place and Town Names and Rhode Island Historical Cemeteries in Woonsocket, Rhode Island.

As an aide to help you find something at the AFGS website we have a search area that you can search the website for what you're looking. So stop by the AFGS website and see all that it has to offer.

American French Genealogical Society website [www.afgs.org](http://www.afgs.org)





# Dictionnaire National des Canadiens Français (1608-1760)

AFGS is offering for sale this CD ROM. Our recent purchase of the rights to Dictionnaire National des Canadiens Français (1608-1760), commonly referred to as the Red Drouin books, allows us to offer it in this CD. All three volumes have been scanned onto a CD.



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# French Radio Programming

For those of you who have visited Canada and attempted to listen to French radio programming and ended up being very frustrated because the speakers were speaking too fast and you couldn't understand what they were talking about or maybe you don't have any French programs in your local area. Listed below are some from Mass and RI that you can listen to. These stations are accessible through the internet

[WWW.WNRI.COM](http://WWW.WNRI.COM)

Woonsocket, RI WNRI 1380 AM Sundays 8:30am – 9:30am  
Salut! Bonjour! Suzanne Bernier

\*\*\*\*\*

[WWW.WNRI.COM](http://WWW.WNRI.COM)

Woonsocket, RI WNRI 1380 AM Saturday 11:00 AM – 1 PM  
Sunday 12:00 PM – 2:00 PM L'Echo Musical Roger Laliberte

\*\*\*\*\*

[WWW.WUML.org](http://WWW.WUML.org)

WUML 91.5 FM Lowell, MA Your French Connection  
Sunday 5pm-7pm Jeannine Richard, Christopher Williams  
**Website:** [jrichard.com](http://jrichard.com)

**Description/Favorites:** The world of french music from Aznavour to Zachary Richard. The latest French hits to songs of yesterday. Call in with your requests!

\*\*\*\*\*

[WWW.WMBR.org](http://WWW.WMBR.org)

MIT Campus Cambridge, MA WMBR 88.1 FM  
Mondays 6 – 8 AM **French Toast** Hosted by: *Brian & Yves*  
Voulez-vous chanter? Excuse our French... Two hours of new and old Francophone music, plus the local cultural calendar.

# IS THAT MY GRANDMOTHER OR MY GRANDFATHER?

By JANICE BURKHART

The French names in this listing are common names you will encounter in your research. They are listed in our Reference Guide along with their English and Latin counterparts. Recently a member asked if we could identify the names as female and male. Although most are obvious some can be either a male or female name and some are names with which we might not be familiar. We are printing the list here to help anyone who might be a little confused. Here are two tips that might be helpful. If you are looking at a marriage record, the parents of a bride or a groom are almost always listed father first and then the mother. This holds true in baptismal records as well. The order is usually father, mother, godfather, godmother. Most masculine names become feminine with the addition of an "e". I want to thank Lucile McDonald and Dennis Boudreau for their help preparing this article for you.

FRENCH NAME	Sex	FRENCH NAME	Sex
Abel	m	Alain	m
Abraham	m	Alban	m
Absolon	m	Albert	m
Achille	m	Alberta	f
Adelaïde	f	Albertine (a)	f
Adélard	m	Albéric	m
Adelbert	m	Alcide	m
Adèle, Addie	f	Aldea	f
Adélia	f	Aldège	m
Adéline, Addée	f	Alexandra	f
Adéodat	m	Alexandrina	f
Adjutor	m	Alexandre	m
Adolphe	m	Alexis	m
Adrien	m	Alice	f
Adrienne	f	Alida	f
Agathe	f	Aline	f
Aglaée	f	Alma	f
Agnès	f	Alphedie	f
Aimé	m	Alphonse	m
Aimée	f	Alphonsine	f

Alvina	f
Amanda	f
Amarylis	f
Ambroise	m
Amedée	m
Amélie	f
Amos	m
Anaïs(e)	f
Anastase	m
Anastasie	f
Anatole	m
André	m
Andrée	f
Angèle	f
Angéline	f
Angélique	f
Anita	f
Anne	f
Anselme	m
Antoine	m
Archange	m
Aristide	m
Armand	m
Arsena	f
Arsène	m
Arthémise	f
Arthur	m
Arzelia	f
Athanase	m
Auguste	m
Augustin	m
Augustine	f
Aurélia	f
Aurélien	m
Aurore	f
Azilda	f
Baptiste	m
Barbe	f
Barnabé	m
Barthélémy	m
Basile	m
Béatrice	f
Benjamin	m
Benoît	m
Bénoni	m
Bénonie	f

Bernadette	f
Bernard	m
Berthe, Bertha	f
Bertrand	m
Blaise	m
Blandine	f
Blanche	f
Blandine	f
Bonaventure	m
Boniface	m
Borromée	m
Brigide	f
Brigitte	f
Bruno	m
Cajetan	m
Calixte	m
Calvin	m
Camille	m
Carl	m
Carmel	m
Carmen	f
Caroline	f
Casimir	m
Catherine	f
Cécile	f
Cédulie	f
Célanire	f
Célestin	m
Célestine	f
Céline	f
Césaire	m
Césarie	f
Chantal	f
Charles	m
Charlotte	f
Christian	m
Christine	f
Christophe	m
Chrysologue	m
Claire, Clara	f
Claude	m
Clément	m
Clémentine	f
Clodie	f
Claudie	f

Clodia	f
Claudia	f
Claudine	f
Clodomir	m
Clorinthe	f
Clotilde	f
Clothilde	f
Clovis	m
Colette	f
Colombe	f
Côme	m
Conrad	m
Constance	f
Constant	m
Cora	f
Coranna	f
Corinne	f
Cyprien	m
Cyriaque	m
Cyrille	m
Damase	m
Damien	m
Daniel	m
Danielle, Daniella	f
David	m
Délia	f
Délina	f
Délina	f
Delphine	f
Denis	m
Denise	f
Desiré	m
Desiree	f
Diane, Diana	f
Dieudonné	m
Dominique	f
Dolor	m
Dominateur	m
Domithide	f
Domitilde	f
Domitille	f
Donald	m
Donat	m
Dora	f
Doris	f
Dosila	f

Dosithée	m or f
Edgar	m
Edithe	f
Edmond	m
Edouard	m
Edouilda	f
Edwidge	f
Egide	m
Eglantine	f
Eléonore	f
Elida	f
Elie	m
Elisa	f
Elisabeth	f
Elisée	f
Elmina	f
Elmire, Elmira	f
Elvina	f
Elzéar	m
Emerentienne	f
Emery	m
Emile	m
Emilia, Emilie	f
Emma	f
Emmanuel	m
Enodine	f
Ephrem	m
Eric	m
Ernest	m
Ernestine	f
Estella	f
Esther	f
Etienne	m
Euclide	m
Eudes	m
Eudore	m
Eugene	m
Eugénie	f
Eulalie	f
Euphemie	f
Eusebe	m
Eustache	m
Evangéliste	m
Evangéline	f
Evariste	m
Évé	m

Eva	f
Eveline	f
Exilda	f
Exine	f
Fabien	m
Fabiola	f
Felice	m
Felicite	f
Felix	m
Ferdinand	m
Fernand	m
Fernande	f
Firmin	m
Flora	f
Florence	f
Florida	f
Florilda	f
Florimond	m
Fortunat	m
France	f
François	m
Françoise	f
Frédéric	m
Frédérique	m
Froment	m
Gaétane	m
Gaétan	f
Gabriel	m
Gabrielle	f
Gaudelie	f
Gaudiose	m
Godiose	m
Gédéon	m
Geffroy	m
Geffroi	m
Geffroid	m
Geneviève	f
Geoffroi	m
Georges	m
Georgiana	f
Gérald	m
Géraldine	f
Gérard	m
Germain	m
Germaine	f
Gertrude	f

Gilles	m
Godefroi	m
Gracia	f
Gratien	m
Graziella	f
Grégoire	m
Guillaume	m
Gustave	m
Guy	m
Hélène	f
Henri	m
Henriette	f
Herbert	m
Hercule, Ercule	m
Herméline	f
Herménégilde	m
Herminie	f
Hermine	f
Hervé	m
Hilaire	m
Hilda	f
Homer, Omer	m
Honora	f
Honoré	m
Horace	m
Hormisdas	m
Hortense	f
Hubert	m
Hugues	m
Hyacinthe	m
Ida	f
Idace	m
Ignace	m
Ildège	m
Irène	f
Irenée	m
Isaac	m
Isabelle	f
Isidore	m
Ismaël	m
Israël	m
Jacqueline	f
Jacques	m
Janvier	m
Jean	m
Jean-Baptiste	m

Jeanne	f
Jérémie	m
Jérôme	m
Joachim	m
Joanne, Johanne	f
Josaphat	m
Josée	f
Joseph	m
Joséphine	f
Josette	f
Judith	f
Jules	m
Julie	f
Julien	m
Julienne	f
Julius	m
Justin	m
Justine	f
Laetitia	f
Laura	f
Laurent	m
Lazare	m
Léa	f
Léandre	m
Léda	f
Léo	m
Léocadie	f
Léon	m
Léonard	m
Leonie	f
Léontine	f
Léopold	m
Leopoldine	f
Liboire	m
Liguori	m
Lilianne	f
Line, Lina Léna	f
Lionel	m
Loretta, Laurette	f
Lorraine	f
Louis	m
Louise	f
Luc	m
Luce	f
Lucie	f
Lucienne	f

Lucinda	f
Ludger	m
Lumina	f
Mabelle	f
Madeleine	f
Magdeleine	f
Malvina	f
Mance	m
Manon	f
Manuel	m
Marc	m
Marcel	m
Marcellin	m
Marcelline	f
Marguerite	f
Marianne	f
Marie	f
Mariette	f
Marin	m
Marius	m
Marthe	f
Martial	m
Martin	m
Mathias	m
Mathieu	m
Mathilde	f
Maurice	m
Maxime	m
Médérise	f
Mélanie	f
Méline	f
Méralda	f
Mérana	f
Mérelice	f
Merilda	f
Michel	m
Michelle	f
Misaël	m
Modeste	f
Moïse	m
Monique	f
Murielle	f
Napoleon	m
Narcisse	m
Nathalie	f
Nazaire	m

Nicolas	m
Nicole	f
Noé	m
Noël	m
Noëlla	f
Norbert	m
Normand	m
Octave	m
Octavie	f
Odéline	f
Odile	f
Olga	f
Olivier	m
Olivine	f
Olympe	f
Onezime	m or f
Orelie, Aurelie	f
Oscar	m
Ovide	m
Pacifique	m
Pacôme	m
Palma	f
Palmire, Palmira	f
Pascal	m
Patrice	m
Paul	m
Pauline	f
Philéas	m
Philippe	m
Philomène	f
Pierre	m
Priscille	f
Prosper	m
Prudence	f
Prudent	m
Raoul	m
Raphaël	m
Raymond	m
Régina	f
Reine, Reina	f
Rémi	m
René	m
Renée	f
Rhea	f
Richard	m
Robert	m

Roch	m
Rodolphe	m
Roger	m
Roland	m
Romuald	m
Rosa, Rose	f
Rosalba	f
Rose Alba	f
Rosalie	f
Rose	f
Rose Anna	f
Rosella	f
Rosilda	f
Salomé	f
Salomon	m
Samuel	m
Sara, Sarah	f
Scholastique	f
Sébastien	m
Sedulie	f
Séraphine	f
Serge	m
Serina	f
Sévère	m
Séverine	f
Silvère	m
Simon	m
Simone	f
Solange	f
Sophie	f
Sophonie	f
Stanislas	m
Stephanie	f
Suzanne	f
Sylvestre	m
Sylvie, Sylvia	f
Tancrede	m
Télesphore	m
Tharsile	f
Théodore	m
Théodosie	f
Théodule	m
Théophile	m
Théophyte	f
Thérèse	f
Thomas	m

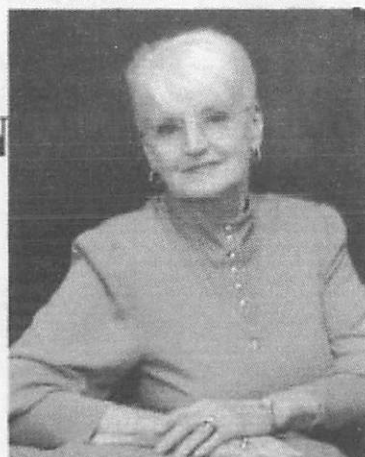
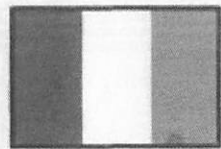


Treffe	m
Ulric	m
Urbain	m
Ursule	m
Valentin	m
Valentine	f
Valérie	f
Valérien	m
Valmore	m
Veronique	f
Victor	m
Victoria, Victire	f
Vincent	m
Vital	m
Vitaline	f
Waldo	m
Wilfred, Wilfrid	m
Wilhelmine	f
Xavier	m
Yvette	f
Yvon	m
Yvonne	f
Zénaïde	f
Zénon	m
Zephilda	f
Zéphirin	m
Zérilla	f
Zoé	m
Zoë	m

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SO MANY ANCESTORS...SO LITTLE TIME!

SOME I FOUND I WISH I COULD LOSE.

TAKE NOTHING BUT ANCESTORS, LEAVE NOTHING BUT RECORDS.

THAT'S STRANGE; HALF MY ANCESTORS ARE WOMEN!

THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THE GENE POOL: NO LIFEGUARDS

THE GENE POOL COULD USE A LITTLE CHLORINE!

THEORY OF RELATIVITY: IF YOU GO BACK FAR ENOUGH, WE'RE ALL RELATED.

THERE IS STRENGTH IN OUR ROOTS

THEY'VE SAID \*YOU\* ARE THE FERTILIZER OF YOUR FAMILY TREE!

TRY GENEALOGY. YOU CAN'T GET FIRED AND YOU CAN'T QUIT!

WHEN I SEARCHED FOR ANCESTORS, I FOUND FRIENDS.

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MIL 6390



# Parting Shots

By: Roger Bartholomy Editor – Pro Tem

It is with a heavy heart that I must announce the passing on Monday, April 9, 2007, of our Editor Paul P. Deslisle, Sr.

My wife Sylvia and I met Paul when we joined the AFGS in 1990. Paul was one of the original 50 founding members of this society and a member of its Board of Directors. It seemed that whenever we visited the library, Paul was there. Most often he was operating the Risograph printing repertoires, cookbooks, flyers, five-generation charts, anything the library needed to keep functioning. Many of us researched to the steady rhythm of Paul's printing projects.

In addition to his printing duties, Paul researched and published "The French and Belgian Immigrants to Northern Rhode Island". He was a Civil War buff and did extensive research and published articles about the French-Canadians of the Blackstone River Valley who served in that conflict.

Paul devoted years to the Rhode Island Historical Cemetery Transcription Project. He would team up with Roger Beaudry, his lifelong friend, and they would travel the back roads of northern Rhode Island following leads and consulting old maps in search of long-lost cemeteries. Once a burial ground was located, Paul and Roger would record all the data about the site and headstones for entry into this statewide project. They would then notify the local community about the cemetery so that it could be registered as an historical site and thereby be preserved for posterity.

Paul and Roger also transcribed the larger and still active cemeteries of the area such as Precious Blood Cemetery and St. Jean Baptiste Cemetery. After the on-site transcription, Paul would enter the data in a computer program. Then he would obtain the records from the cemetery office and enter that data as well to create a more up-to-date and complete file for genealogists. Roger Beaudry plans to continue this project in honor of Paul.

It was Paul's idea to publish a newsletter for the society. He edited the first issue in January/February 1990. In 1994 Paul relinquished the AFGsNews to Sylvia and I; and he assumed the duties of editing the JMS when the original editor, Henri Leblond, resigned.

Paul was never one to look for accolades or awards for whatever he accomplished. He was a quiet and unassuming individual who will always be remembered as a remarkable person, devoted to his family, his friends, and the AFGS. He was hard-working, precise in his research, and professional in everything he did. His passing is a great loss to all of us.

I have been asked to put this edition of JMS to bed. Who will take over this awesome task in the future? We don't know the answer to that question yet; but, the AFGS is searching for someone who can follow in the footsteps of Paul and Henri and maintain the professional standards of our journal.

The AFGS has also lost another favorite son on March 27, 2007 with the passing of Gerard (Gerry) C. Camire. Gerry was member #2, a fact that he was justifiably proud of. He was the face of the AFGS as he sat in his chair at the reception desk and greeted everyone who came through that door while he diligently worked on the obituary project.

Our webmaster, Bill Pommenville, has added a new section to our website to honor our departed members. It is a very touching memorial to those members who have volunteered many countless hours to this organization and have gone on to their eternal rest.

May Paul and Gerry's accomplishments inspire others to volunteer and take over the awesome tasks that they were performing in a tradition that will honor their commitment to our organization.

My thanks to Bill Pommenville, our multi-talented "Web Guy", for his technical assistance with this issue of JMS.

Roger Bartholomy  
Editor – Pro Tem

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AFTER 30 DAYS, UNCLAIMED ANCESTORS WILL BE ADOPTED

ALL RIGHT! EVERYBODY OUT OF THE GENE POOL!

ALWAYS WILLING TO SHARE MY IGNORANCE....

AM I THE ONLY PERSON UP MY TREE... SURE SEEMS LIKE IT

ANY FAMILY TREE PRODUCES SOME LEMONS, SOME NUTS,  
AND A FEW BAD APPLES.

CAN A FIRST COUSIN, ONCE REMOVED, RETURN?

CEMETERY, A MARBLE ORCHARD NOT TO BE TAKEN FOR  
GRANITE.

CLIMBING MY FAMILY TREE WAS FUN UNTIL THE NUTS  
APPEARED!

COUSINS MARRYING COUSINS VERY TANGLED ROOTS!

COUSINS MARRYING COUSINS: A NON-BRANCHING FAMILY  
TREE

CRAZY.... IS A RELATIVE TERM IN MY FAMILY.

# Humor

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GENEALOGIST GO WAY BACK

GENEALOGISTS ARE GHOST-AHOLICS

GENEALOGISTS ARE LIKE MONKEYS, ALWAYS IN THE TREES

GENEALOGISTS ARE TIME UNRAVELERS.

GENEALOGISTS DO IT GENERATION AFTER GENERATION....

GENEALOGISTS DO IT IN THE LIBRARY

GENEALOGISTS LIVE IN THE PAST LANE.

GENEALOGISTS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST LOSE THEIR ROOTS.

GENEALOGY - A SEARCH FOR THE GREATEST TREASURES -  
OUR ANCESTORS

GENEALOGY - WILL I EVER FIND TIME TO MOW THE LAWN  
AGAIN?

GENEALOGY IS LIKE HIDE & SEEK: THEY HIDE & I SEEK!

GENEALOGY IS THE REARVIEW MIRROR OF LIFE.

GENEALOGY, A REALLY DEAD END HOBBY

GENEALOGY...IT'S NOT A HOBBY, IT'S AN OBSESSION

GENEALOGY: A HAY STACK FULL OF NEEDLES. IT'S THE  
THREADS I NEED.

GENEALOGY: CHASING YOUR OWN TALE.

GENEALOGY: COLLECTING DEAD RELATIVES AND SOMETIMES  
A LIVE COUSIN!

GENEALOGY: IT'S ALL RELATIVE IN THE END ANYWAY.

GENEALOGY: TRACING YOURSELF BACK TO BETTER PEOPLE.

GENEALOGY: WHERE YOU CONFUSE THE DEAD AND IRRITATE THE LIVING.

GENEALOGY; THE STUDY OF RELATIVITY

GHOSTS ARE MERELY UNSUBSTANTIATED RUMORS

HAS ANYONE SEEN MY ROOTS

HEREDITY: EVERYONE BELIEVES IN IT UNTIL THEIR CHILDREN ACT LIKE FOOLS!

HOW CAN ONE ANCESTOR CAUSE SO MUCH TROUBLE??

I LOOKED INTO MY FAMILY TREE AND FOUND OUT I WAS A SAP..

I LOOKED UP MY FAMILY TREE...THERE WERE TWO DOGS USING IT.

I RESEARCHED MY FAMILY TREE... APPARENTLY I DON'T EXIST!

I SHOOK MY FAMILY TREE, A BUNCH OF NUTS FELL OUT

I SHOULD HAVE ASKED THEM BEFORE THEY DIED!

I THINK MY ANCESTORS HAD SEVERAL "BAD HEIR" DAYS.

I THINK MY FAMILY TREE IS A FEW BRANCHES SHORT OF FULL BLOOM.

I TRACE MY FAMILY HISTORY SO I WILL KNOW WHO TO BLAME.

I USED TO HAVE A LIFE, THEN I STARTED DOING GENEALOGY

I WANT TO FIND ALL OF THEM! SO FAR I ONLY HAVE A FEW THOUSAND.



I'D RATHER LOOK FOR DEAD PEOPLE THAN HAVE 'EM LOOK FOR ME

IF ONLY PEOPLE CAME WITH PULL-DOWN MENUS AND ON-LINE HELP...

I'M ALWAYS LATE. MY ANCESTORS ARRIVED ON THE JUNEFLOWER.

I'M NO GENEALOGIST. ... UNTIL THIS YEAR I SPELLED IT "GENEOLOGIST!"

I'M NOT SICK, I'VE JUST GOT FADING GENES.

I'M NOT STUCK, I'M ANCESTRALLY CHALLENGED.

I'M SEARCHING FOR MYSELF; HAVE YOU SEEN ME?

I'M STUCK IN MY FAMILY TREE, AND I CAN'T GET DOWN

I'M TRACING MY FAMILY HISTORY SO I KNOW WHO TO BLAME!

ISN'T GENEALOGY FUN? THE ANSWER TO ONE PROBLEMS, LEADS TO TWO MORE!

IT IS HEREDITARY IN MY FAMILY NOT TO HAVE CHILDREN

IT PAYS TO KNOW WHEN YOUR PAST IS CATCHING UP TO YOU

IT'S 2003. DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOUR-GREAT-G. GRANDPARENTS ARE?

IT'S AN UNUSUAL FAMILY THAT HATH NEITHER A LADY OF THE EVENING OR A THIEF.

IT'S HARD TO BE HUMBLE WITH ANCESTORS LIKE MINE!

LIFE IS LIVED FORWARDS, BUT UNDERSTOOD BACKWARDS.

LIFE TAKES IT'S TOLL. HAVE EXACT CHANGE READY!

MANY A FAMILY TREE NEEDS PRUNING.

MANY A FAMILY TREE NEEDS TRIMMING.

SHARE YOUR KNOWLEDGE, IT IS A WAY TO ACHIEVE IMMORTALITY.

SHH! BE VERY, VERY QUIET.... I'M HUNTING FOREFATHERS

SNOBS TALK AS IF THEY HAD BEGOTTEN THEIR OWN ANCESTORS!

SO MANY ANCESTORS...SO LITTLE TIME!

SOME I FOUND I WISH I COULD LOSE.

TAKE NOTHING BUT ANCESTORS, LEAVE NOTHING BUT RECORDS.

THAT'S STRANGE; HALF MY ANCESTORS ARE WOMEN!

THAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH THE GENE POOL: NO LIFEGUARDS

THE GENE POOL COULD USE A LITTLE CHLORINE!

THEORY OF RELATIVITY: IF YOU GO BACK FAR ENOUGH, WE'RE ALL RELATED.

THERE IS STRENGTH IN OUR ROOTS

THEY'VE SAID \*YOU\* ARE THE FERTILIZER OF YOUR FAMILY TREE!

TRY GENEALOGY. YOU CAN'T GET FIRED AND YOU CAN'T QUIT!

WHEN I SEARCHED FOR ANCESTORS, I FOUND FRIENDS.

WHOEVER SAID "SEEK AND YE SHALL FIND" WAS NOT A GENEALOGIST

WHY ARE THERE SO MANY GNARLED LIMBS ON MY FAMILY TREE?

YIKES! MY GENES ARE FADED AND FULL OF HOLES!

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## OFFICERS

(Dates in parentheses indicate end of term)

<b>President:</b>	Janice Burkhart (2008) 263 S. Worcester St. Norton, MA 02766 (508) 285-7736
<b>Vice President:</b>	Lucile McDonald (2007) 149 Sayles Hill Rd. North Smithfield, RI (401) 766-7007
<b>Secretary:</b>	Roy F. Forgit (2007) 128 Col. C. Greene Rd. Portsmouth, RI 02871 (401) 846-5852
<b>Treasurer:</b>	Roger Beaudry (2007) 730 Manville Road Woonsocket, RI 02895 (401) 762-5059

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Eugene Arsenault (2007)  
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Becky Keegan (2008)  
Robert Gumlaw (2008)  
Normand T. Deragon (2009)  
William Pommenville (2009)

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**Joseph TESSIER and Priscilla SAUVAGEAU**  
**Married 21 February 1898, Wild Rice, North Dakota**