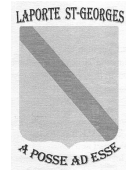




De Laporte à St-Georges



Your new Board of Directors



Left to right: Sylvain Laporte, Ghislaine L'Abbé, Baxter Laporte, Madeleine Laporte, Marcel Laporte

You can see other pictures from the last reunion inside. Since we are limited in space for the bulletin, we could not publish all of the pictures. However, those who would like to view these pictures or those published here can communicate with the president at his e-mail address: baxter@total.net



Inside

Your new Board of Directors

Anniversaries

Message of the President

2005 Reunion in pictures

French Canadian Emigration to the United States, 1840-1930

Page 1

Page 2

Page 3

Pages 4 - 5

Pages 6 - 8

Birthdays

From September to December

Our best wishes to those who have celebrated a birthday or will
celebrate one soon.

September

01 – Me Suzie St-Georges
11 – Michael St. George
12 – Gérard St-Georges
20 – Diane St-Georges
22 – Madeleine Laporte
23 – Jules Labrèche
24 – Baxter D. Laporte

October

02 – Jean St-Georges
08 – Marcel Laporte
20 – Albert St-Georges

November

27 – Paul-André St-Georges

Visit our web site
<http://www.genealogie.org/famille/st-georges>
and send your suggestions for
articles for the bulletin as well as
your e-mail address to

Marcel Laporte
m.laporte@sympatico.ca

World Association of Laporte's & St-Georges

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DE LAPORTE À ST-GEORGES

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Message from the President



Dear members, old and new,

I am very happy that we « discovered » the Manoir des Laurentides in St-Donat as the site for our 2005 reunion and even better, its energetic co-owner Sylvain Laporte, a passionate fan of genealogy who doubles as a an artist in the Manoir's theater. Thank you Marcel & Madeleine Laporte for making this discovery and organizing another marvelous reunion.

Despite some late planning and promotion, the reunion was very interesting and there was quite a bit of animation for all those who participated. This year again, we had the pleasure of welcoming many Americans, this year from the Detroit region and also other far away participants who took pleasure in meeting their newfound « cousins ». After some hesitation, I myself came directly from Arizona just to attend the reunion and I did not regret it.

I want to underline the wonderful welcome extended to us by Sylvain Laporte and his staff at the Manoir. Humor is a second nature to Sylvain and he made us laugh all day. He even drove the tour bus at one point ! The spacious and bright meeting rooms at the Manoir were much more convenient for our activities than those at the Domaine du Lac Toro in 2004 et the staff much more receptive, courteous and willing to go the extra mile to accommodate us.

I also want to express my gratitude to Gérard St-Georges and Viviane Giroux who played music for us all day and thus had to forego many of the day's activities. Gerard was even wearing his tuxedo ! (If you want to see all of the reunion pictures, please communicate with me at baxter@total.net.)

We also owe thanks to Diane St-Georges who despite a very busy schedule and little notice, surprised us by showing up with her marvelous paintings and her exhibition material. As the date and venue of the next reunion is already known, she promised us she would assemble her large, wonderful and very friendly family for next year's reunion, which means we can expect another round of very interesting cultural activities.

As I said, we were so impressed by the welcome given to us by the Manoir des Laurentides and Sylvain Laporte that the Board of Directors has decided for the first time to hold our reunion in the same place for two years In a row. Sylvain has agreed to join our Board of Directors as a Vice-President and is already very active in planning the activities for next year's reunion. That holds a lot of promise....

Finally, I want to welcome the very cheerful Ghislaine L'Abbé who was also elected to the Board as a Vice-President.

The attendance at this year's reunion in St-Donat and the renewed interest demonstrated par the new Board members are good omens for the Association's future. I look forward to seeing you again in large groups.

Baxter D. Laporte
Founding President
Tel. : 514-344-4487
E-mail : baxter@total.net

The 2005 reunion in pictures



Boat ride on Lake Archambault peppered with humor by our very own comedian Sylvain Laporte !



The American table and their Canadian cousins, including Marcel Laporte, our secretary.



Musical entertainment by the St-Georges family (G rard, Diane and Laurette) and Viviane Giroux.



The 3 St-Georges sisters: Sylvie (who created our web site), Lucie and Lise.



Everybody was having a wonderful time.



Great show!



Marcel and Baxter Laporte being "knighted" by Sylvain during his show.



The entertaining show of Sylvain Laporte



*Non-stop cheerfulness at the welcoming table.
Ghislaine l'abbé and Madeleine Laporte*



Guided bus tour of St-Donat

French Canadian Emigration to the United States, 1840-1930

By : Damien-Claude Bélanger, Department of history of the University of Montréal and Claude Bélanger, Department of history of Marianopolis College

Between 1840 and 1930 roughly 900 000 French Canadians left Canada to emigrate to the United States. This important migration, which has now been largely forgotten in Quebec's collective memory, is certainly one of the major events in Canadian demographic history. According to the 1980 American census, 13.6 million Americans claimed to have French ancestors. While a certain number of these people may be of French, Belgian, Swiss, Cajun or Huguenot ancestry, it is certain that a large proportion would have ancestors who emigrated from French Canada or Acadia during the 19th and 20th centuries. Indeed, it has been estimated that, in the absence of emigration, there would be 4 to 5 million more francophones living in Canada today. Around 1900, there would scarcely have been a French-Canadian or Acadian family that did not have some of its members living in the United States. While similar patterns of emigration affected English Canada, Canadian historians have more or less ignored this phenomenon, largely because it was far more diffused, did not affect their society as much as Quebec was affected as it was more used to migration than French-speaking Quebec where "la survivance" was always a major concern, and, lastly, did not leave the enduring traces that French-Canadian emigration did. Simply put, English Canadians were less noticeable and assimilated far more rapidly into American society than did French-speaking Catholics.

Causes of French Canadian emigration to the United States

At the outset, two important points need to be established: the first one is that there are costs associated to emigration. These costs are economical, emotional and cultural. The economical costs are fairly easy to estimate as they are quantifiable. When individuals leave, assets have to be liquidated, often at a loss. Many material possessions have to be left behind. Packing material has to be acquired. Then there is the cost of transportation to their intended destination, and the cost of sustaining themselves during their travel. Lastly, there will be further costs of settlement, once the destination has been reached. The emotional costs are more difficult to estimate. To migrate often means to leave behind beloved family and friends with whom long association have forged strong emotional ties. To leave family and friends behind certainly meant to leave behind one's support system. It also always meant to forego the familiar surroundings of one's region and ancestral home, the land which generations of their ancestors had toiled, the landscape that had defined their environment since birth. All migrants have to face these wrenching emotional costs, and they will frequently remember very fondly that which they have left behind. The cultural costs may also be great. If one immigrates from a region that has particular cultural characteristics, such as way of life, language, religion and traditions, that are quite different from the host society then one will have to adapt to a far greater extent than a migrant that would share many cultural elements with the receiving society. Thus, it is evident that the greater the costs, economical, emotional and cultural, the less likely one is to leave one's country for another. While the economical costs of French Canadians to leave for the United States might have been relatively small.

The emotional, and especially, the cultural costs were quite high. They left behind a traditional rural society with strong family ties. They entered an industrial world, alien to them by virtue of its way of life, language and religion. Given these high emotional and cultural costs, it is surprising that so many French Canadians engaged in the migration process between 1840 and 1930. In fact, it would be normal to consider that French Canadians, who only find their language and religion dominant in a part of the continent, would be the least likely to engage in the migration process. Indeed, since the beginning of the 20th century, Quebec has had consistently the greatest rate of retention of its population of all provinces in Canada. These comments serve to highlight particularly the factors of causation for the emigration of French Canadians to the United States: if French Canadians were the people least likely to migrate from Canada, what severe problems impelled them to leave?

The second factor to raise is one that is familiar to historians and sociologists: immigration is the result of the interplay of push and pull factors. As mentioned above, if there are potentially considerable costs to migrate, then one engages in this process only when there are very serious reasons to do so. These reasons may be personal, economical, social, political. Historically, the great mover of large numbers of people has been poor or deteriorating economic conditions. When one's life is miserable, when one does not see a way to pull out of poverty, then one is literally pushed out of one's environment. Much discussion of the poor economic conditions in Quebec will be found below. If that is so, where should the migrant go? Sometimes, economical circumstances, or political restrictions, will limit the choice. However, there is no doubt that what will be the most attractive alternative, what will pull the immigrant, is the land around them that is the most prosperous. In this respect, it should be noted that in the 19th century, the United States emerged as one of the most industrialised and prosperous nations on earth. To the Québécois, the United States appeared as a vast Eldorado whose streets were literally paved with gold. These factors are explored further below.

While some French Canadians emigrated to the United States for political reasons, namely young men trying to evade military conscription during the First World War or rebels who had chosen to side with the American patriots during the American Revolution or who had participated in the Lower-Canadian rebellions of 1837-38, an overwhelming percentage of emigrants left for economic reasons. What were these economic reasons?

The fundamental underlying causes of French-Canadian emigration can be found in the unequal levels of industrial development, and thus of standards of living, between Quebec and New England, or on a larger level, between Canada and the United States. The industrial gap, combined with structural problems which plagued Quebec's agriculture during the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, created an economic climate where thousands of French Canadians were pushed to emigrate in order to earn a living. Thus, we can divide the causes of French-Canadian emigration into two categories : those that pushed French Canadians to emigrate and those that attracted emigrants

Cont. text on emigration...

to the United States or, more fundamentally, the causes which are internal and those which are external to Quebec.

On an internal level, it must be noted that Quebec's agriculture underwent tremendous strains during the 19th century. In part, these difficulties were demographic. Indeed, throughout the century, Quebec experienced very rapid population growth. However, by the 1830's and 1840's, Quebec's most fertile farm land had been systematically occupied, leaving mostly peripheral regions open to agricultural colonisation, and thousands of landless farmers searching either for affordable, accessible and fertile land, or gainful employment. Between 1784 and 1844, Quebec's population increased by about 400 %, while its total area of agricultural acreage rose only by 275 %, creating an important deficit of available farmland. While not as dramatic, this trend continued between 1851 and 1901. Since Quebec was largely a rural society in the 19th century, agricultural problems were truly national problems.

After the 1850's, colonisation began in several peripheral regions. Slowly, French-Canadians began to farm in the Laurentians, the Saguenay-Lake St-John, the Lower St. Lawrence and the Matapedia Valley, certain forested or unexploited areas of the Ottawa Valley and the Eastern Townships, and, eventually as far north as the Temiscaming. In the last quarter of the 19th century, French Canadians would also begin to emigrate to Eastern Ontario, and, in smaller numbers, to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

Generally speaking, the regions of Quebec that began to be actively colonized in the second half of the 19th century suffered either from a lack of fertility, a difficult access to major markets, a short growing season, or a combination of all three factors. Thus, agricultural activity in these regions was quite arduous and often was largely oriented towards self-sufficiency and subsistence. For many, farming in these areas was only a part time activity. These farmers participated in an economy based on agriculture and forestry. Farming was often so unprofitable in peripheral regions that many would have to spend the entire winter, and part of spring and fall, working in the various primary stages of the timber trade. These seasonal jobs gave farmers access to desperately needed hard currency to develop their farms and ensure their subsistence but created long term patterns of dependency. Indeed, with timber barons being often the only major employers in many regions, farmers had little or no choice but to enter into a dependent relationship with them. Frequently, timber companies paid their employees with company scrip, lent money at very high interest rates, were the only market for the produce of local farms or monopolised the retail trade through company stores. They thus controlled the retail and purchasing price for goods, services, manpower and credit. The result was near monopolies that could have a virtual stranglehold over their region, notably, through debt peonage. Both the farmer and the timber baron lived in a symbiotic relationship. The farmer needed the employment, and the markets created by the timber industry, while the timber baron relied on the farmer to provide the manpower and the produce needed to fuel his logging camps. While co-dependent, there is no doubt, given the plentiful supply of labour, as to who profited the most from this system. The farmer could not subsist without the timber trade while the relative poverty engendered by subsistence level agriculture provided the cheap labour which the timber baron needed to generate profit. Quebec historians have termed this relationship

l'économie agro-forestière.

Aside from the obvious difficulties associated with this type of farming, agriculture in the more fertile and established regions also suffered from serious problems. For most farmers, credit, vital to agricultural expansion, technical amelioration, crop diversification and improvement of the livestock, was difficult to obtain. Before the creation and widespread expansion of *Caisses populaires* and the government farm credit system established in the 1930's, standard agricultural credit was difficult to obtain in rural Quebec. In the 19th century, and for a good part of the 20th, Quebec's banking network was vastly deficient, largely concentrated in major cities, and overwhelmingly anglophone. Banks that did have branches in rural parishes were few, frequently smaller French-Canadian institutions, regional in their scope, and had a smaller access to capital. Moreover, they tended to lend money not to farmers but rather to the local elite. Farmers frequently had to turn to local usurers for credit, with all the problems which usury entails.

The problem of indebtedness was of course related to the low productivity of the Quebec farms. There were various reasons for this state of affairs and historians have debated them for decades. These reasons will be discussed more fully elsewhere at the site. However, it should be noted that, ever since the beginning of the 19th century, Quebec was in a state of agricultural crisis that would truly only end with rural electrification, as well as with the large-scale development of the dairy industry and market gardening in the 20th century. Essentially, it should be borne in mind that until the onset of the 20th century, the vast majority of Quebecers lived on farms, when the climate, land base, and quality of soils suggested that this should not be so. Without proper alternatives, the people of Quebec were condemned to rural life. Without credit they could not improve their condition and, consequently, they fell increasingly into poverty. Historians Yves Roby and Jean Hamelin [*Histoire économique du Québec, 1851-1896*, Montreal, Fides 1971, p. 22] have estimated that the gross revenues derived from agriculture by Quebec farmers were, on average, \$230 annually. This was less than half the income that Ontario farmers derived from their land.

Thus, credit problems, and the poverty attending it, were an important motivator for emigration. Farmers all over Quebec would have to migrate to big cities in order to find work either to pay off their debts, or after their farms had been foreclosed. Furthermore, lack of credit hampered agricultural modernisation which, in turn, engendered un-dynamic, un-profitable farming. Overall, these factors combined to generate poverty even within the most fertile of Quebec's regions.

Poverty, overpopulation, debt and infertile soils pushed French Canadians off their land. However, external factors also attracted emigrants to the United States. Indeed, during the second half of the 19th century, Canada and the United States experienced rapid industrial growth. However industrialisation progressed far more rapidly in the USA while Canada's economy remained more dependent on primary economic activity. Moreover, industrial wages were generally higher in the United States than they were in Canada. Simply put, jobs were easier to obtain in the USA and at better wages.

Farmers who left their land were naturally attracted to the factories of the United States.

Cont text on emigration...

Despite the fact that, around 1890, a greater share of the Quebec economy depended on industry than Ontario did, labour markets were saturated in the industrial agglomerations of Quebec and wages were low; work was much easier to find in the USA and wages were higher. Moreover, these factory jobs frequently required no formal skills or education and often would employ children and women. While this was true of light industry throughout Canada and the United States, it was especially true in the huge textile factories of New England where several members of a family could find work.

A majority of French-Canadian emigrants to the United States were from rural parishes and agricultural problems are at the root of the economic factors that stimulated emigration. However, a significant portion of emigrants were city-dwellers. Most of these emigrants left to find more stable, higher paying work in the USA. While for most, emigration usually meant proletarianization, some middle class French Canadians also emigrated. Priests, motivated by an apostolic zeal to safeguard the souls of their compatriots, but also seeking the higher standard of living which working class American parishes provided over rural or proletarian ones in Quebec, eventually followed the general movement south. Doctors, lawyers, grocers and a wide swath of Quebec society also emigrated, thus capitalising on the emigrant's tendency to ghettoise and patronise businesses and professionals who speak his language and understand his culture.

While emigration was often seen as a temporary solution to short-term financial problems such as debt or unemployment, for many the higher standard of living of the United States became difficult to forego. Many emigrants having left Quebec to avoid seasonal unemployment, or to save money in order to buy a farm or machinery, or to pay off their debts, found themselves unable to return home. While low paying factory work may seem miserable to some, it was a dream come true for many emigrants who had lived under far harsher conditions on Quebec farms or factories. For many farmers industrial work represented a successful social gain. American life was, for many emigrants, especially in the 19th century, their first real contact with the wonders of electricity, running water, a steady paycheck, and annual holidays!

The development of the railway stimulated emigration. As Eastern North America's railroad network became more complex and affordable, emigrating to the United States became simpler and cheaper. Indeed, while in 1840 a trip from Montreal to Vermont would have taken several arduous and expensive days in a cart, by the 1880's it would only be a question of a few dollars and hours.

Thus, the emigration of French Canadians to the United States was internally caused by demographic pressures, rural poverty created by indebtedness and a host of other ills related to the climatic and geographical characteristics of the province, low productivity of the farms, the developing agricultural crisis, the lack of suitable regions of colonisation, the insufficient level of industrial development to absorb the excess population and the low wages that inevitably attended such a catastrophic situation. Externally, the proximity of the New England factories that offered easy employment, good wages by Quebec standards, and the cheap and easy access through the rail system fuelled the migration.

Where did the emigrants go?

The railway also changed patterns of emigration. During the opening phases of the movement, roughly from the 1840's to the 1860's, emigrants tended to head for Northern New York State, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine. They mostly sought work as farmhands, in lumber camps and in proto-industrial shops like the brickworks of Vermont. However, by the 1870's and 1880's, as industrialisation progressed in New England and railway ties between Quebec and the North Eastern United States became more solid, emigration patterns shifted from the States of Northern New England to the textile towns of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and, to a lesser extent, Connecticut.

Tableau 1 : Population des Canadiens Français dans la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1860 – 1880

State	Pop. in 1860	% french distribution	Pop. in 1880	% french distribution
Maine	7,490	20,0	29,000	13,9
New Hampshire	1,780	4,7	26,200	12,6
Vermont	16,580	44,3	33,500	16,1
Massachusetts	7,780	20,8	81,000	38,9
Rhode Island	1,810	5,0	19,800	9,5
Connecticut	1,980	5,3	18,500	8,9
TOTAL	37,420	100	208,100	100

Source: Ralph D. VICERO, *Immigration of French Canadians to New England, 1840-1900*, Ph.D thesis, University of Wisconsin, 1968, p. 275.

Tableau 2 : Population des Franco-Américains* dans la Nouvelle-Angleterre, 1900 – 1930

State	Pop. in 1900	% french distribution	Pop. in 1930	% french distribution
Maine	58,583	11,3	99,765	13,4
New Hampshire	74,598	14,4	101,324	13,6
Vermont	41,286	8,0	46,956	6,4
Massachusetts	250,024	48,1	336,871	45,3
Rhode Island	56,382	10,9	91,173	12,3
Connecticut	37,914	7,3	67,130	9,0
TOTAL	518,887	100	743,219	100

* Persons born in Canada, or in the United States of one or two French-Canadian parents.

Source: Leon TRUESDELL, *The Canadian Born in the United States*, New haven, 1943, p. 77; as given in Yves ROBY, *Les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle-Angleterre*, Sillery, Septentrion, 1990, p. 282.

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Part 2 of this text will be published in the next bulletin.