

L Les Nouvelles de la Famille Doucet

NEWSLETTER OF LES DOUCET DU MONDE

JUNE 2007

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MESSAGE FROM The PRESIDENT

By Carol Doucet

Amongst the articles in this issue, you'll find personal experiences of some of our Les Doucet du Monde members.

A couple of articles from The Daily Advertiser in Lafayette, LA give a general overview of two groups of Acadians who migrated to Louisiana. The first Acadian Doucets arrived in 1765. My ancestors were in that group.

One of our members explains how his ancestors migrated to Maine. His account of the French-speaking people in Maine being forbidden to speak French at school is similar to what happened in Louisiana at the beginning of the 20th century.

We'd also like to hear some of your stories.

Message du President

Par Carol Doucet

Parmi les articles dans ce numéro, on trouve des expériences de quelques-uns des membres de Les Doucet du Monde.

Deux articles, de le Daily Advertiser de Lafayette, Louisiane, mentionnent deux groupes d'Acadiens qui ont immigré en Louisiane. Les premiers Doucet Acadiens sont arrivés en 1765. Mes ancêtres faisaient parti de ce groupe.

Un de nos membres explique comment ses ancêtres ont immigré dans le Maine. Son conte des francophones du Maine qui étaient défendu de parler français sur le terrain d'école est semblable à l'histoire des Acadiens francophones en Louisiane au début du vingtième siècle.

Envoyez-nous vos histoires.



Book corner

I visited the Maine Coast Book Store in Damariscotta, Maine on Memorial Day. I stumbled across a soft-cover book named "Pemaquid" by Arlita Dodge Parker published in 1925 and reprinted with permission for the benefit of the Bristol, Maine Lions Club charities of 2004. The book focuses on the early settlements in Maine including Pemaquid, Monhegan Island, Popham Beach and Castine (Pentagoet). There are about 20 pages of the book on Castine (Pentagoet) from 1611 to the 1690's covering the period when the French were there with Germain Doucet.

There is no mention of Germain. Most of the players mentioned are Castine. Razallai, la Tour and d'Aulnay from 1632 to 1654. Grandfontaine and Chambly are mentioned in the 1673 era.

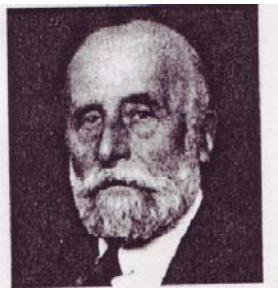
--Norman Doucette

CHECK YOUR MEMBERSHIP STATUS!

sketches, amongst them one of me bringing in wood, one of me on horseback, one of the old barn, etc. He would look at them as I held them for him but he would let them drop when I would put them in his hand. He wanted to hold absolutely nothing in his hand. Then, I chose the sketch of the fisherman in the boat. Without saying anything, Dad looked carefully at that sketch, he held it in his right hand and he continued to look at it. He didn't drop it. He studied it well. I imagine that it reminded him of a lot of Saturdays and Sundays fishing, and of many good friends with whom he went fishing over thirty years. And of a lot of good places to fish.

JACQUES DOUCET (1893-1929)

Jacques Doucet was the Parisian couturier who designed the sweeping tea-gowns and ball dresses appliquéd with silk flowers, and the flattering filmy outfits worn by leading stage personalities of the Belle Epoque. His clients included Réjane, Sarah Bernhardt and Marcel Lander, and the *grandes cocottes*, Cléo de Mérode, Emilienne d'Alençon and La Belle Chéro.



During the opulent years before the outbreak of World War I, Doucet's large and luxurious fashion house on the *rue de la Paix* was frequented by wealthy American ladies and their daughters hoping to catch a glimpse of the great couturier, but Doucet left the business side of Maison Doucet to his managers and would only see his most important clients. He much preferred art collecting to pinning dresses onto demanding women. As a designer he was superb—and enormously successful—but his heart was never really in the family couture business, which he had inherited as a young man. As a sideline, he speculated in property on a rising market and was eventually so wealthy he was able to sell off the Maison Doucet and its premises and devote himself to his true passion—collecting.

Doucet had an unerring eye for line and colour in paintings as well as fashions. During his long lifetime he formed three important picture collections, as well as collections of furniture and decorative arts. He had started when only twenty-one, buying works by Degas and Monet in the 1870's, then in 1875 he bought his first Watteau drawing and began to collect eighteenth-century art and antiques with which he furnished an entire house for the great love of his life. After her tragic death in a riding accident Doucet wanted to obliterate all memories of their time together—selling off the house along with his eighteenth-century antiques and paintings.

To forget his personal tragedy, Doucet's passion for collecting took a new turn, and he now returned to collecting Impressionist and Post-Impressionist art, buying major works by Degas, Monet, Cézanne and Van

Gogh. In 1925 Doucet bought Van Gogh's *Iris* from August Pellerin through Bernheim-Jeune (there is no record of how much he paid for it). But by this time, under the influence of the young Surrealist poet André Breton, whom he had met in 1919, Doucet's taste had changed again. Breton worked part-time as Doucet's secretary-librarian, and it was he who urged Doucet to collect works by Rousseau, Picasso and Matisse, including Picasso's great *Demoiselles d'Avignon*.

[Source: Susanna de Vries-Evans, *The Last Impressionists: Masterpieces from Private Collections*. Publisher Roberts Rinehart, c. 1982, p. 177]

ERRORS FOUND IN RECORDS: Can You Top This? Not Even Church Records Are Error-Free By Jacqueline Auclair

Here is an example of original records being incorrect. My mother-in-law was married in a triple wedding with a sister and a sister-in-law on August 16, 1933. Due to three parties being involved, there were many pictures, and of course, everyone knew the date of the wedding, which was also established by the wedding certificates.

I needed some other information from the local church records in Maine where the weddings took place, and in viewing those records, I came across my mother-in-law's wedding entry which stated July 16, 1933, but the other two participants records showed they were married August 16, 1933. I pointed out the error to the priest, but he was unwilling to change any records even after viewing the original record as recorded by the state, and listening to the story of three weddings performed on the same day. I left a post it note on the church page, and left it at that. One doesn't argue with an old Priest.

Also please be careful of State sites on the Internet. Someone had to type in the records at one point before the website was set up, and my own marriage record online as listed by the State of Maine is incorrect. Trying to get it straightened out has been an ordeal.

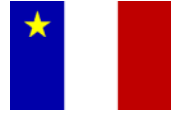
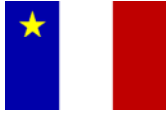
GENEALOGY QUERIES

We would like to have as a regular feature in each newsletter a section for members to submit genealogy queries. If you have reached a "brick wall" in your research and would like to seek help from other members, submit your query, including as much information as possible. Include your name, address, E-mail address (and phone number, if you wish). We will publish it and ask members to reply to you. Please advise our web master Dean Doucet (see contact info on page 1) of any information you receive so it can be added to the Miscellaneous Section of the Genealogy Section on our web site.

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Betty Cormier-Ducharme is looking for the parents and marriage of Zepherin Doucet and Eurasie Clement. Children were Marie born in 1864 and Amelie born in 1860 in Louisiana.

--Betty Cormier-Ducharme  
[Bjd6049@louisiana.edu](mailto:Bjd6049@louisiana.edu)



## ANNUAL MEETING OF THE ACADIAN CULTURAL SOCIETY By Norman Doucet

Last year on Sunday, October 1, 2006 my wife Linda and I attended the meeting held at the Acadian Social Club, 193 Parker Street, Gardner, MA. The business meeting was held at 2 p.m. with the election of new officers for the year. The guest speaker was the new Canadian Consul General based in Boston, Neil J. LeBlanc. He talked about living in the Boston area when he was younger and how he became a Boston Red Sox fan. His family runs a large wholesale lobster and fish shipping company in Wedgeport, Nova Scotia. He expressed his desire to generate greater links between the Acadians of New England and those of the homeland in the Maritime Provinces.

Other guests were the mayor of Gardner, Gerald St. Hilaire, State Representative Robert Rice and city councilor Josh Cormier.

Two new books were available for sale and autographs by their authors. "Talking Acadian: Communication, Work and Culture" was written by John Chetro-Szivos. He is the Chair of the Dept. of Communications at Fitchburg State College, MA. The book jacket describes the book as providing a look into the lives of the French-speaking American Acadians particularly those who left eastern Canada to settle in Massachusetts in the 1960s. The other book was "Surviving Damnation" by R. W. "Ben" Benoit, Ph.D. The book jacket describes the book as a well documented historical novel about eighteenth century

Acadians, who lived in what is now Nova Scotia. Acadian foods were served, such as poutines rapées, chiar (rappie pie) and fricot which is a unique type of chicken stew traditionally enjoyed at Acadian gatherings and celebrations.

Music was provided by Don Cormier's band "Kitchen Breakdown" with songs in both French and English.

## ACADIAN DAY 2007 IN TEMPLETON, MASSACHUSETTS By Norman Doucette

The 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Acadian Day celebrations will be held at the Templeton Fish and Game Club, Partridgeville Road, Templeton, Mass. on Saturday, June 16, 2007, from 12 noon until 8 p.m. The cost for admission is \$5.00 per person and children are free.

Food will be served from 12 noon – 2 p.m. and from 4 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Traditional New Brunswick Acadian fare (poutines, rapée, fricot) will be available for purchase, as well as hamburgers and hot dogs, during these times. There is no take out.

Entertainment starts at 2 p.m. with music by The Roys and The Williams.

Camping is available for self-contained campers at \$10 per night. No reservations needed. For more information call Germaine at (978) 537-5071.

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The 4th World Acadian Congress  
will be held in the Acadian Peninsula,  
the northeastern part of New Brunswick,  
from Friday, August 7, 2009  
to Saturday, August 23, 2009.

As of June 24, 2007 there  
remain

**776 days**

until the beginning of CMA 2009.



Le 4<sup>e</sup> Congrès Mondial Acadien  
aura lieu du  
vendredi, 7 août au dimanche, 23 août  
dans la péninsule acadienne

Commençant le 24 juin 2007 il reste

**776 jours**

à l'ouverture du CMA 2009.

CMA 2009 will present four major activities throughout the Acadian Peninsula:

- Opening day activities in the Lamèque-Shippegan-Miscou region
- The main event for the feast of August 15 in the region of Caraquet
- Closing day in the region of Tracadie-Shell and Neguac
- Festive activities in the Pokemouche area, the geographical center of the Acadian Peninsula

Le CMA 2009 présentera en partenariat quatre grand rassemblements dans la Péninsule acadienne:

- La journée d'ouverture dans la région Lamèque-Shippegan-Miscou
- L'événement principal autour de la fête du 15 août dans la région de Caraquet
- La journée de fermeture dans la grande région de Tracadie-

Shella et Neguac

- Un "carrefour d'activités festives" installé à Pokemouche au centre géographique de la Péninsule acadienne

**A LA CHASSE AU MEMBRES DE LA FAMILLE DOUCETTE**  
**Par Don Levesque**  
**Grand Isle, Main, & St. Basile, New Brunswick**

Je suis allé à l'université Ste-Anne à la Pointe de l'Eglise en Nouvelle-Ecosse en 2004 pour assister à la rencontre Des Doucet du Monde et je serais dans la Peninsule Acadienne du Nouveau-Brunswick en 2009

Je suis né à Grand Isle, Maine, le 19 novembre 1947. Grand Isle est situé dans l'extrême nord du Maine, au long de Rivière Saint-Jean qui forme la frontière entre les Etats-Unis et le Canada. Il y a des Acadiens ici depuis 1785.

Mes ancêtres Doucette n'ont probablement pas été expulsés de l'Acadie. Je présume qu'ils se sont sauvés à travers les bois à pieds, se rendant au nord de la province du Nouveau-Brunswick et de là ils se sont rendus dans la région de Kamouraska au Québec. Là habitaient depuis longtemps mes ancêtres Levesque et Ouellette. Sans doute, trois lignés de ma généalogie se connaissaient là.

Au long des années mes ancêtres Doucette sont venus s'établir dans la grande région de Madawaska, suivant mes ancêtres Levesque et Ouellette. La grande région de Madawaska s'étendait dans c'temps la de près de Grand-Sault, NB, jusqu'au Lac Temiscouta, QC. Cette région possédait de belles terres riches et disponibles a qui en faisait demande.

La région de Madawaska était considerée comme une seule place jusqu'à 1842 quand le Webster-Ashburton Treaty a déclaré que la rive sud de la rivière Saint-Jean appartenait au Etats-Unis et l'autre coté à la Grande Bretagne. Les familles et les voisins de la rivière Saint-Jean se sont retrouvés séparé par une ligne sure une carte.

Mais, cette ligne n'a pas changé le monde d'un jour à l'autre. Après le choqe initial, pour les prochaine 100 à 125 ans, la région du Madawaska est demeuré plus ou moins une seule région et presque entièrement francophone. Le moyen de transport entre les deux rives de la rivière était par canot ou par traversier.

Quand j'ai grandi à Grand Isle, a partir de 1947, tout mon monde était en français. Mon père, Gilbert Levesque, ne parlait presque pas l'anglais et il le lisait très peu. De l'autre côté, ma mère, Lauraine Ouellette, pouvait se déhaller pas mal en anglais.

En 1952 quand moi et mes amis avons commencé l'école à Grande Isle, les bonnes sœurs voulaient qu'on apprennent le chinois. Non, je fais une farce, elles voulaient qu'on apprennent l'anglais ... mais, ça aurait pu aussi bien être le chinois, quant à nous. Pendant toutes mes années d'école élémentaire nous étions punit si on s'faisais prendre à parler français sur le terrain d'école. Nous devions copier des centaines de fois, « I will not speak French in school, » ou nous devions copier des pages et pages du dictionnaire Anglais, d'autres élèves étaient batus sur le bout des doigts avec une grande règle de bois. Elles nous

disaient qu'on parlait pas français, qu'on parlait plutôt un jargon que personne hors Grande Isle comprenait, d'abord on était mieux d'apprendre l'anglais si nous voulions réussir dans la vie. C'était un génocide culturel, non seulement approuvé mais instauré par l'Etat du Maine.

Pourquoi ? Pourquoi ? C'est une histoire qui date de loin. En 1921 le Maine a élu un nommé Ralph Brewster de Portland comme gouverneur. Brewster était secrètement un fier adhérent du Ku Klux Klan. Il y avait dans ce temps là, plus de membres du KKK au Maine qu'il en avais au Mississippi et en Alabama. Le KKK dans le Maine étai anti-Catholiques et anti-francophones. Il y a eu plusieurs grande demonstrations de KKK dans les rues de plusieurs villes au sud du Maine à cette époque.

Dans le nord du Maine, une région environ 99% francophone, il n'y a pas eu de demonstration, mais des croix furent brulées à plusieurs endroits. Nous, on était chez nous et eux ils étaient des agitateurs anglophones d'ailleurs qui n'ont jamais réussi a former un mouvement ici.

En 1918 le legislature de l'état du Maine avais fait passer une loi qui considerait le français comme une langue étrangère, défendue sur tous les terrains d'écoles. C'est pour moi une grande ironie que les francophones étaient établis dans le Maine bien avant les anglophones. En tous cas, c'était nous qui étaient maintenant devenues des étrangers chez nous.

Cette loi a été abolis en 1967, grâce aux efforts du Sénateur Emilien Levesque de Madawaska, Maine, le petit cousin de mon père.

C'est beaucoup mieux maintenant. Dans les 10 dernières années, group de gens s'intéresse a promouvoir et préserver notre belle langue française. La plupart des écoles dans la Vallée Saint-Jean offrent maintenant un curriculum en immersion française. Mais c'est toujours une lutte budgetaire que nous devons redéfendre trop souvent.

Un Conseil d'Heritage Acadien du Maine a été formé et, grâce a une ange gardienne financière du Chicago, nous avons aussi un Club Français.

Le Maine Legislature célèbre à tous les mois de mars une journée Franco-Américain et nous avons maintenant un Temple de la Rénommé Franco-Américain sur papier, même si nous n'avons pas de bâtiment.

Nous sommes maintenant optimistes encore une fois.

Enfin, j'arrive à ma famille Doucette. La mère de mon père, c'est-à-dire, ma grand-mère Levesque, était Georgiane (Georgina) Doucette. Elle est mort à l'âge de 33 ans, donnant naissance à mon père. Elle a laissé dans le deuil, mon grand-père Joseph Levesque et six jeunes enfants, Alfred, Clara, Eva, Cécile, O'Neil et Gilbert. La famille Doucette, que demeurait le voisin de mon grand-père Levesque, a gardé mon père jusqu'au temps que grand-père se remarie.

C'est pour cette raison, le décès de la mère de mon père, que je n'ai jamais trop connu ma parenté Doucette. Mon père est décédé à l'âge de 75 ans, mes oncles et

mes tantes sont décédés aussi au long des années. Mon père était plus près de mon oncle Neil. Nous allons souvent voir mon oncle Neil et ma tante Agathe avec mes parents quand nous étions jeunes. Eux ils demeurais à Madawaska, 10 miles ouest de Grand Isle. Mon oncle Neil et mon père travaillaient tous les deux dans le moulin de pâtes et papier de Fraser Paper Limited de Madawaska.

Lorsque mon oncle Neil est mort en 1998, son neveu, qu'on prenait soin dans ses dernières années, est venu me voir au bureau du journal. Il me fait cadeau d'une vieille photo encadré. C'est une photo d'une jeune femme, bien coiffée et très sérieuse. Bert LeClerc, le neveu à mon oncle Neil, me dit, « Ça c'est ta grand-mère, Georgiane Doucette. » J'en croyais pas mes yeux. J'avais vu cette photo dans le salon chez mon oncle Neil des centaines de fois sans que personne me dise qu'il était cette dame. Peut-être qu'ils croyais que je savais déjà.

Je suis journaliste au St John Valley Times, un petit journal hebdomadaire. Du moins, j'ai été journaliste pendant neuf ans. Maintenant je suis l'éditeur et le rédacteur, mais j'écris depuis 1988 une chronique. J'écris comme on parle par che' nous. En tous cas, dans ma chronique, « Mon 5<sup>C</sup>. » Le français et l'anglais sont mêlés dans ma chronique. J'écris comme on parle par che' nous. En tous cas, dans ma chronique qui parle surtout de notre belle Vallée Saint-Jean, notre histoire, nos histoires, dicton, patois, notre avenir nos particularité, etc., j'avais parlé de ma grand-mère Georgiane Doucette et comment j'aurais aimé la voir.

C'est ça qu'avait incité Bert de me donner la photo.

En 2004 à la rencontre Des Doucette du Monde en Nouvelle-Ecosse, j'ai assisté à une session avec le généalogiste renommé de l'université de Moncton, Stephen White. Pendant sa présentation, des gens se levaient ici et là dans la salle et ils posaient des questions à M. White. A un moment donné, ma fille, Andréa, dit, « Dad, la femme le bas a dit Grand Isle, Maine ! » Il y avait comme 700 personnes dans la salle. Mon épouse Lorraine dit elle aussi, « C'est vrai, je l'ai entendu. » J'avais commencé à prendre des notes rapidement parce que la dame avait posé une question à propos de Laurent à Laurent à Laurent Doucette. Ma ligné.

La dame en question parlait encore. Je me lève et je traverse à l'autre côté de la salle. Je m'arrête à sa rangé et je lui demande, « Did you say Grand Isle, Maine ? » Elle m'a regardé comme si j'étais fou. Mais, j'ai souri et j'ai dit, « Well, I'm from Grand Isle, Maine. » Il y a comme 300 personnes à Grand Isle. Elle part à pleurer et me saute au cou. Cette dame, Rose, est une petite cousine de loin, née à Grand Isle mais partie de là quand elle était jeune.

Avant rencontrer Rose, Lorraine et moi étions presque déçus. Nous n'avions rencontré personne qu'ont connaissait. Ma ligné n'était pas dans l'ordinateur Des Doucette du Monde. C'était évident que beaucoup de gens se connaissaient depuis longtemps. Il y avait des chartes généalogiques un peut partout, mais pas pour ma ligné. Je suis devenu membre quand même à

l'association des Doucette du Monde ... au cas où.

Après notre rencontre inprévue, moi et Rose sommes devenus presque des vedettes Doucette. Les gens prenaient nos photos. Nous avons même fait une entrevue avec une journaliste nommée Doucette pour la radio BBC. Partout où on allait, les gens nous reconnaissaient. Enfin, Lorraine et moi nous étions en famille avec les Doucette du Monde.

**NB :** *Je suis certainement pas un généalogiste, même pas un généalogiste amateur, mais peut-être un de nos membres pourra m'aider à remplir quelques trous dans la ligné Doucette.*

*Je suis :*

**Donald Levesque**, b. Nov. 19, 1947, Grand Isle, Maine ; m. Lorraine Morin, b. Sept. 24, 1949, at St. André-de-Madawaska, N.B.

**Gilbert Levesque**, b. June 11, 1913, d. June 28, 1988, Grand Isle, Maine ; m. Lauraine Ouellett, b. June 12, 1922, d. Dec. 21, 1997, Fort Kent, Maine.

**Joseph Levesque**, b. 1873, d. 1953, Grand Isle, Maine ; m. Georgianna Doucette, b. 1880, d. June 11, 1913, July 4, Lille, Maine.

**Octave Doucette**, b. 1841, d. Nov. 8, 1910, m. Clementine Picard, b. ?, St. Ephiaphane, QC, d. 1897, Oct. 28, 1869, Lille, Maine.

*Comme vous voyez, il manqué beaucoup d'informations. Le peu que je possède me fut donné par quelqu'un rempli de bonnes intentions mais ses informations me semblent peu précis. Je suis toujours optimiste qu'un vrai généalogiste pourra m'aider un jour.*



#### ON THE LOOKOUT FOR DOUCETTE FAMILY MEMBERS

By Don Levesque

Grand Isle, Maine, & St. Basile, New Brunswick

In 2004 I attended the Doucette du Monde reunion at Ste-Anne University, Church Point, Nova Scotia, and I will attend the Doucette du Monde reunion in New Brunswick's Acadian Peninsula, God willing.

I was born in Grand Isle, Maine on November 19, 1947. Grand Isle is located in very northern Maine, along the St. John River that forms the border between the United States and Canada. There have been Acadians here since 1785.

My Doucette ancestors probably weren't deported from Acadia. I assume that they escaped through the forests, making their way to northern New Brunswick

and eventually to the Kamouraska region of Quebec. My Levesque and Ouellette ancestors had lived in Kamouraska for many years. They undoubtedly knew each other there.

After several years my Doucette ancestors came to settle in the Madawaska Territory, following my Levesque and Ouellette ancestors. The Madawaska Territory was very large at that time, stretching from near Grand Falls, NB to Lac Temiscouata. It was an area of fertile soil and beautiful lands, almost for the taking.

The Madawaska Territory was considered then as one region. However, in 1842, the Webster-Ashburton Treaty declared that those living on the south shore of the St. John river were Americans and those on the north shore British subjects. Families were torn apart, separated by a line drawn on a map.

But the line did not change the people overnight. After the initial shock, for the following 100 to 125 years, the Madawaska Territory, for all practical purposes, remained one region and almost entirely French-speaking. The only means of getting from one bank to the other of the St. John River was by canoe or ferry.

When I grew up in Grand Isle, my entire world was in French. My father, Gilbert Levesque, couldn't speak English and could hardly read it. My mother, Lauraine Ouellette, wasn't too bad in English.

In 1952, when my friends and I started school, the nuns wanted to teach us Chinese. No, I'm kidding, they wanted us to learn English but it might as well have been Chinese as far as we were concerned. Throughout grammar school, we were punished when caught speaking French anywhere on school property. We were made to copy hundreds of times, "I will not speak French in school" or made to copy pages from the English dictionary for hours after school, some students were physically struck with a large wooden ruler on their fingertips. We were told that we didn't speak French, that we spoke some kind of jargon that no one beyond Grand Isle understood, so we had better learn English if we wanted to get anywhere in life. It was a cultural genocide, not only sanctioned but instituted by the state of Maine.

Why? In 1921 Maine elected as governor, Ralph Brewster of Portland. Brewster was secretly a proud member of the Ku Klux Klan. At that time there were reportedly more KKK members in Maine than in Mississippi and Alabama combined. There were many KKK marches in several southern Maine cities then. The KKK in Maine were anti-Catholic and anti-French.

In northern Maine, a region perhaps 99% French-speaking, there were no KKK parades but there were crosses burned in several places. But we were home and they were strangers from "away" who didn't speak French and they never successfully built a base here.

All that to tell you that in 1918 the Maine Legislature passed legislation that considered French as a foreign language and forbidden on all school property. Ironically, the French had been in Maine longer than the English. No matter. Franco-Americans and Acadians were now considered foreigners at home.

This law was only overridden in 1967 thanks to

Maine State Senator Emilien Levesque, my father's second cousin.

Fortunately, especially during the past 10 years or so, there has been a grassroots resurgence of interest in promoting and preserving our beautiful French language. Most of the schools in the St. John Valley offer a French immersion curriculum. But it is a constant budgetary battle.

A Maine Acadian Heritage Council has been formed and thanks to a financial benefactor from Chicago, we now have a Club Français.

The Maine Legislature has an annual Franco-American Day in March and a Franco-American Hall of Fame is now at least on paper, even if there is not as yet a physical building or hall.

So, we are optimistic again.

I now finally arrive at the Doucette side of my family. My father's mother, that is, my grandmother Levesque, was Georgianna (or Georgianne) Doucette. She died at the age of 33 while giving birth to my dad, leaving my grandfather, Joseph Levesque, with six young children: Alfred, Clara, Eva, Cécile, O'Neil and Gilbert. My grandfather's in laws, the Doucette family, who lived next to my grandfather, took care of my father until my grandfather remarried.

So, I never knew too much about the Doucette side of my family. My father, who died at the age of 75, rarely talked about her or them. I was much more familiar with the Levesque side of my family. My father was closest to my uncle Neil Levesque. We often visited Uncle Neil and Aunt Agathe with my parents as I was growing up. Both my father and uncle worked at the Fraser Paper Ltd. pulp and paper mill in Madawaska.

When Uncle O'Neil died in 1998, his nephew, who had taken care of them in their last years, came to see me at the newspaper office. He presented me with an old framed photograph. It was a photo of a young woman, well-coiffed and very serious. Bert LeClerc, my uncle's nephew, said, "This is your grandmother, Georgianne Doucette." I couldn't believe my eyes. I had seen that photo hundreds of times without anyone telling me who she was. Maybe they thought I already knew and I never asked, as far as I know. She was just a lady.

I am a journalist at the St. John Valley Times, a small weekly newspaper. Actually, I was a reporter for nine years. Now I am the publisher and editor of the newspaper and I have written since 1988 a weekly column, "Mon 5¢," with French and English mixed together, pretty much like we speak around here. In any case, the column focuses on our beautiful St. John Valley, our history, our stories, sayings, colloquialisms, our future, our peculiarities, and so on. At one point I had spoken about Georgianne Doucette and how I would love to see what she looked like. This is the reason Bert came to give me her photo.

In 2004, during the reunion of Les Doucette du Monde in Nova Scotia, I attended a session with renown genealogist Stephen White of the University of Moncton. During his presentation people would stand up here and there in the audience to ask questions. At one point, my

daughter Andrea said, "Dad, that woman just said 'Grand Isle, Maine!'" There were approximately 700 people present. My wife, Lorraine, agreed. "I heard her say it, too." I had started to take furious notes because the woman had asked a question about Laurent à Laurent à Laurent Doucette. I believe they are among my ancestors.

The woman was still asking her question. I stood, walked across the room, stood at the end of her row and asked her, "Did you say Grand Isle, Maine?" She looked at me like I was crazy. But I smiled and said, "Well, I'm from Grand Isle, Maine." There are about 300 people in Grand Isle. She started to cry and hugged me. The woman, Rose, is my distant cousin. She was born in Grand Isle but left there at an early age.

Before meeting Rose, Lorraine and I had been almost disappointed. We hadn't met anyone we knew at the reunion. My genealogy line was not in the Doucette du Monde computer. It was obvious that a lot of people knew each other well. There were genealogy charts everywhere but not my line. I joined the Doucette du Monde anyway—just in case.

In Nova Scotia, Rose and I became minor Doucette celebrities. People would take photos of us. A journalist, by the name of Doucette, interviewed us for BBC Radio. It seemed that everywhere we went, people recognized us. Lorraine and I finally felt at home with Les Doucette

du Monde.

**Note:** *I am certainly not a genealogist, not even an amateur genealogist, but perhaps one of our members can help me fill in some of the many holes in my Doucette line.*

*I am:*

**Donald Levesque**, b. Nov. 19, 1947, Grand Isle Maine, m. Sept. 3, 1973, St. André-de-Madawaska, Lorraine

**Morin**, b. Sept. 24, 1949, St. André-de-Madawaska, NB  
**Gilbert Levesque**, b. June 11, 1913, Grand Isle, Maine, m. May 11, 1947, Lille, Maine, Lauraine Ouellette, b. June 12, 1922, Lille, Maine

**Joseph Levesque**, b. 1873, Grand Isle, Maine, d. 1957, Van Buren Maine, m. July 4, 1899, Grand Isle, Maine, Georgianna Doucette, b. 1880, d. June 11, 1913, Grand Isle, Maine

**Octave Doucette**, b. 1887, d. Nov. 8, 1910, married Oct. 26, 1869, Lille, Maine, Clémentine Picard, b. ?, St. Epiphane, QC, d. 1887

*As you can see, there is a lot of information missing. The little I have was given to me by a well-meaning individual but some of the information appears incorrect. I hope that a true genealogist will be able to help me someday*



## LOUISIANA CHAPTER NEWS



### NEW ORLEANS WELCOMED ACADIAN MIGRANTS

**By: Jim Bradshaw**

(The Daily Advertiser, Lafayette, LA, February 28, 2007)

One of the first large groups of Acadians to migrate to Louisiana, led by Joseph "Beausoleil" Broussard, reached New Orleans during the last week of February 1765. They were tired, hungry, sick—and a big surprise to the government officials here.

Charles Phillippe Aubry, who was acting governor at the time, wrote, "Two hundred Acadians, men, women, and children...have just disembarked here. They would actually have died of misery had we not provided them with some assistance. I thought that the honor and humanity of our country compelled me to do something for those poor families who have been wandering for the past ten years.

"Their affliction is the result of their sacred attachment to their homeland and religion. I shall attempt to settle them, as close to the city as possible. They should be provided weapons, ammunition, agricultural implements and provisions. Without these, what would become of them?"

Instead of settling them close to New Orleans, however, he sent them into the Attakapas District, centered around St. Martinville.

"The settlement will afford, in a short time, great advantages to the colony. We lack cattle altogether (and) the spot to which the Acadians are going has the grazing land

where prosperous cattle ranches can be developed to supply New Orleans. These Acadians, who are, for the most part industrious farmers, will be able to supply the needs of the city in a very short time," he wrote.

### ACADIANS HAD LONG JOURNEY TO GET TO LOUISIANA

**By: Jim Bradshaw**

(The Daily Advertiser, Lafayette, LA, May 10, 2007)

On May 10, 1785, Acadian exiles in France asked to be sent to Louisiana, beginning the biggest exodus of Acadians to the state. By the end of the year, seven ships carried more than 1,500 of our Cajun ancestors to Louisiana from France.

This was 30 years after the exile of 1755, and it had been long and hard years for most of them.

A good number of them were sent first to Virginia, where they were not allowed off the ships. From there, they were sent to England, most of them to virtual prisons in Southampton and other places.

Finally, in 1763, after the Treaty of Paris, they were sent to France, but they were equally strangers there as they had been in England. The Acadians had been gone from France for generations. They knew no more about St. Malo than St. Louis.

Although most of these Acadians had been farmers, they were dumped into the port cities of France. They had no money, no skills, nothing – and the French didn't like taking



care of these destitute paupers any more than any of their other "keepers.

It took the influence of Spain to bring these people to Louisiana. When the country took over in Louisiana, it began to look for people to populate what was a virtual wilderness. They wanted hard workers, farmers and Catholics.

The Acadians met the criteria. After much negotiation, the seven ships of 1785 sailed from France to New Orleans.

### LONGFELLOW'S MEMORY HONORED: POET'S 200<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY CELEBRATED

By: Jim Bradshaw

(The Daily Advertiser, Lafayette, LA, February 28, 2007)

ST MARTINVILLE – Henry Wadsworth Longfellow was remembered here yesterday as a man of great social conscience who "spoke out on behalf of multiculturalism before the word was invented."

(February 27<sup>th</sup>) was the 200<sup>th</sup> birthday of the poet whose epic *Evangeline* was one of the first widely read chronicles of the history and the heartbreak of the Acadian exile from Maritime Canada.

Ceremonies to unveil a plaque donated by the St. Martinville Rotary Club in the poet's memory were held beneath the *Evangeline* Oak on the banks of the Bayou Teche that was named for the heroine in the poem.

The plaque will be placed with a bust of the poet that was unveiled earlier this year and that was also donated by the Rotarians.

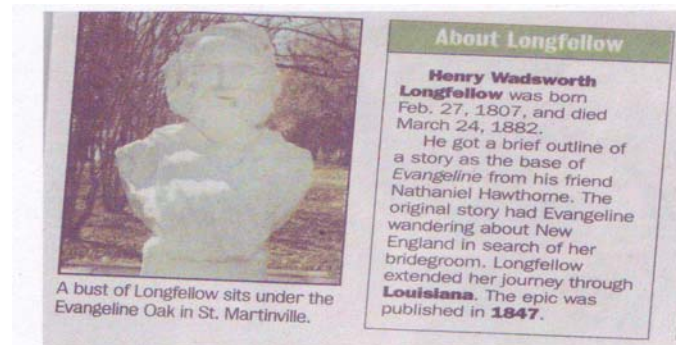
Brenda Comeaux Trahan, curator and director of the Acadian Memorial, noted that Longfellow "told Americans about America through his historical poems," that included not only the Acadian tale, but also anti-slavery poems such as *A*

*Slave's Dream*, and his sympathetic story of American Indian life in *Hiawatha*.

Longfellow's poem and stories told by an ancestor, Marguerite Martin, were in part the inspiration for a 1908 book of *Acadian Reminiscences* by Judge Felix Voorhies, in which he tells the story of Emmeline Labiche and Louise Arceneaux – "practically the exact tale that Longfellow told," according to Christie Maraist, past president of the Acadian Memorial Foundation.

In Longfellow's account, Evangeline finds her long lost Gabriel on his deathbed in Philadelphia. In the Voorhies account, Emmeline and Louis are reunited in St. Martinville.

Modern historians suggest that both versions are composites of many similar stories of lovers who were separated at the time of the dispersion.



"Probably there were girls with similar stories any place where there were exiles," Maraist said. "It rings true wherever there are Acadians.



### WE ARE THE CHOSEN Submitted by Jacqueline Auclair

We are the chosen. In each family there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve.

Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts but instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the storytellers of the tribe. All tribes have one. We have been called as it were by our genes. Those who have gone before cry out to us, "Tell our story." So we do.

In finding them, we somehow find ourselves. How many graves have I stood before and cried? I have lost count. ; How many times have I told the ancestors, "You have a wonderful family, you would be proud of us." How many times have I walked up to a grave and felt somehow there was love there for me? I cannot say.

It goes beyond just documenting facts. It goes to who am I and why do I do the things I do. It goes to seeing a cemetery about to be lost forever to weeds and indifference and saying, "I can't let this happen." The bones here are bones of my bone and flesh of my flesh.

It goes to doing something about it. It goes to pride in what our ancestors were able to accomplish, how they contributed to what we are today. It goes to respecting their hardships and losses, their never giving in or giving up, resoluteness to go on and build a life for their family.

It goes to deep pride that the fathers fought and some died to make and keep us a Nation. It goes to a deep and immense understanding that they were doing it for us. It is of equal pride and love that our mothers struggled to give us birth. Without them we could not exist and so we love each one as far back as we can reach.

That we might be born who we are. That we might remember them. So we do.

With love and caring and scribing each fact of their existence, because we are they and they are the sum of who we are. So, as a scribe called, I tell the story of my family. It is up to that one called in the next generation to answer the call and take my place in the long line of family storytellers.

That is why I do my family genealogy, and that is what calls those young and old to step up and restore the memory or greet those whom we have never known before.

--Author Unknown

**LA KERMESSE RECIPE FOR FUN  
STILL MUSIC, FOOD AND FAMILY**

**An estimated 40,000 will attend the 25<sup>th</sup> annual  
Franco-American festival before it ends today**

By Noel K. Gallagher, Staff Writer

(Portland Press Herald and Maine Sunday Telegram,  
June 24, 2007)

BIDDEFORD – While would be “idols” were singing their hearts out and dreaming of the future on the main stage at La Kermesse, many visitors to New England’s largest Franco-American festival on Saturday were more interested in their past.

“This is why we came,” said Steven Adams of Kennebunk, who was standing in front of a table stacked with dozens of local French-American genealogy records provided by the Franco-American Genealogy Society of York County.

Within minutes, Adams and his mother, 77-year old Eleanor Bartus, had discovered a family coat of arms that they had no idea existed.

“I thought it was pretty cool,” said Bartus, whose father came to Biddeford to work in the mills. “We’re trying to put together a family history, but you forget things over the years.”

“The festival’s cultural tent, which also featured regional Franco-American authors, poets and singers, is at the heart of La Kermesse, which was founded 25 years ago by a local man who went to a Franco-American festival in Lewiston and wanted to start something similar in Biddeford.

Today, the four-day festival draws up to 40,000 attendees, with particular attention paid to its popular block party and fireworks show, held Thursday night.

On Saturday, visitors entering the festival grounds off West Street were enveloped by the atmosphere of

the Revolutionary War era, as re-enactors portraying the 85<sup>th</sup> Regiment de St. Onge, a French unit that joined American forces, bustled past them in period dress, cooked over open fires and spoke to each other in French.

La Kermesse also features more traditional summer festival elements, of course, fried dough and French fries, a midway, carnival rides, and several stages featuring entertainment, including the popular “idol” singing competition, clogging and comedy acts.

Pony rides and a petting zoo with goats were a hit among younger children, along with exhibits featuring parrots, femurs and even an armadillo.

“He ate the whole thing!,” said a delighted 4 year-old, Joseph Binette, when a particularly eager goat snatched a cup of food out of his hand.

Celeste Steele, a member of the York County genealogical society, was helping people at the cultural tent. She said she understands why people get interested in genealogy because it happened to her more than 20 years ago.

Steele was at one of the first La Kermesse festivals and started looking at the genealogy documents. The man behind the table asked her a few questions before he said the magic words.

“He said, ‘Oh, I’ve got a picture of your aunt right here’,” Steele said. “And there she was. I couldn’t believe it.”

The festival has grown considerably over the years, Steele said, but the main themes remain the same.

“It’s about the music, it’s about the food and it’s about the family,” she said.

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