

# Les Nouvelles de la famille Doucet

(June 2002)

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## MESSAGE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

The LDDM board held its last meeting on May 25, 2002. We continued discussions which had begun late last year.

The most important items were membership and recruitment. Help us build up our membership by getting some of your family and Doucet friends to join LDDM. If each one of us gets just one new member, we'll have more members than we had last year. So let's increase our numbers. The more members we have, the more information we can share, the more will be the stories we can share, the more persons you can meet and communicate with, the more activities we can plan. A membership form is included in this newsletter, so make copies and pass them on to your friends and relatives.

The activities don't need to all be on genealogy. Let us know the types of get-togethers you would like to have and suggest the town you'd like to have it in.

You will notice that our web site at <http://www.doucetfamily.org> is continually being updated, added to, and improved to make it more user-friendly. If you don't have a computer, ask someone in your family or a friend to check out the site for you. Check the section on genealogy and, if you don't find your family information, submit your genealogy line to Dean Doucet, our web master; he'll be glad to add it to our site. There are so many missing pieces to our genealogical puzzle and only if each of you contributes can we ever hope to piece it together.

*Les Nouvelles de la Famille Doucet* is your newsletter. With suggestions from some of you and from the board, we have added to the types of articles that are included. Several of our board members have submitted genealogy material about their families. We encourage you, the members, to submit articles to your newsletter.

In this newsletter you'll find two articles that deal with Neimann-Pick disease, closely connected to genealogy and, more specifically, to the Doucet family.

For some time, members have been asking for a nice membership certificate. Dean Doucet volunteered to design our *Les Doucet du Monde* certificate and, Jackie Auclair graciously made suggestions about colors, border designs, fonts and paper selection.

The certificate is now complete and we are proud to issue one to each of you. You will notice that it incorporates most of our LDDM logo. The fleur-de-lis from the globe is repeated in the border, a very nice touch. Because of the beautiful font that Dean used, there is no question as to the name of our organization, *Les Doucet du Monde*, and there was no need to repeat it in the logo. Thanks to both of you!

Two persons submitted designs for our LDDM logo, Darlene Neilson and myself. Darlene, thanks for showing

your interest by sending in a logo to showing your interest by sending in a logo to be considered.

The logo chosen has the name of our organization, naturally, surrounding a globe. On the ribbon is the year of LDDM's establishment and a fleur-de-lis denotes the fact that all Doucets are of French ancestry. The globe is shown without special markings, in France, Canada and Louisiana, for instance. If we started putting marks, we would have so many dots that our globe might look like an ad for an airline company with flights throughout North America and western Europe!

Thanks also need to be extended to Jim Gaboury for providing us with the CMA 2004 flyers.

Have a pleasant summer. I hope to see a good number of you at the get-togethers that Becky is planning for our Louisiana Chapter. Unfortunately, too many miles separate the rest of us, but I look forward to seeing many of you in Nova Scotia in 2004!

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Deadlines for submitting material are : January 31 for February issue, May 31 for June issue and September

30 for October issue.

#### WEB SITE

Dean Doucet, Web Master

<http://www.doucetfamily.org>

## **ACADIAN/CANADIAN CHAPTER NEWS**

Submitted by George Doucette, Acadian/Canadian Chapter President

As the summer season fast approaches and our time to do research and other genealogy tasks is put aside for other things such as spending time with family and doing outdoor activities, we should not totally put aside looking for that one missing person that makes us lose sleep and wonder if we will ever find them. There are a number of people who are searching for loved ones and they may hold the key to the mysteries of the past. Maybe this will be the season that will reveal all that you have been seeking, and your family will be complete.

This year marks the tenth year of my dear Mother's passing and while she spent 65 wonderful years being a young girl, wife, and mother, she never once gave up on family and felt love for everyone. I have been blessed with this same passion and although I have not been blessed with a family of my own, I wish to help when a need arises. One such need has come to light with a young Yarmouth Nova Scotia teen, Lesley Anne Doucet. This sparkling young eighteen-year old has Neiman-Pick disease and her future is limited, as the doctors say she has about a year to live. She won't know what it is like to be a normal teenager and do the things young people do, she won't have the chance to fall in love and have kids of her own and to me that is not fair. She is victim of a rare Acadian disease, one that has taken root in one tiny section of Nova Scotia, one that as of today has no cure and one that robs us all of wonderful children, who through no fault of their own must endure the pain and crippling effects of this horrible disease.

I have been in contact with Lesley's mother, Susan, and she is a wonderful and strong individual who watches each day as her daughter grows weaker and yet she keeps a smile on her face so that Lesley won't feel down. This takes a lot of courage and love and Susan has that. She told me how Lesley was the poster child for the local children's hospital here in Halifax and that she went to Disney World as part of the Children's Wish Foundation. Lesley has a love for music. The famous country group, "Farmers Daughters" are her favorite and she has met them in person. I thought about this and decided to contact this group to see if they would do something for her. I asked them if they could make a young "Super Fan" happy and maybe give her a jacket. I don't know what will happen, but I also wrote the local ferry service from Bar Harbour Maine to Yarmouth N.S. and asked them if they could possibly see their way to take Lesley and her family on a day cruise on the "Cat", something Susan would like to do for Lesley. Seeing the rising costs of Lesley's medication and special needs, I thought this would be a nice gesture. So far I have not received any response, but I will not give up.

I ask you all to send your prayers and thoughts to Lesley; you will find her address in this newsletter. A card, a letter just say hello and show her that we are a caring family. Pass the word around about Lesley and have others write to her as well. Keep the smile on this young lady's face and we will all be enriched by her.

Have a wonderful summer and don't forget to tell others about LDDM. We need more people to make this family more aware of their roots and to pass on information so that generations to come will be filled with knowledge and a sense of pride when they look back on their past.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: We've received good news since George sent in this article. One of the Farmer's Daughters is sending Lesley an autographed CD. George also received news from the "Cat." They will give Lesley and a companion a day trip, a free meal as well, and if she can they will give her a tour of the wheel house, or the captain will come and speak to her).

## **LOUISIANA CHAPTER NEWS**

Submitted by Carol Doucet

We plan to have get-togethers of our Louisiana Chapter in several areas of the state. For instance, we hope to meet in the western area, the central area and the eastern area of South Louisiana. This way, you should be able to come to at least one or two of our get togethers.

Send us your ideas soon about the kinds of activities you would like to have. Are you interested in sharing stories and family pictures? Would you like a speaker (if so, what type of topics)? Should we plan a covered dish meal or simply a brown bag lunch or picnic type of meal?

We need your help to make LDDM more of an active organization. We need YOU to attend our get-togethers.

As you will recall, not all chapter officer and board positions were filled in the last election; offer your services. You can also help by volunteering to serve on a committee - telephone committee, membership committee, or on the committee to plan and organize our get-togethers.

Help us by spreading the word about LDDM and recruiting new members and encouraging those who have not renewed their membership to do so now. A membership form is included in this newsletter.

## **NEIMANN-PICK DISEASE**

Submitted by Michele Doucette

Lesley Anne Doucet is a cousin of mine. Her ancestral roots, like my own, hail from the Yarmouth area of Nova Scotia.

Lesley has just recently turned 18 years of age. She has a fatal disease known as Neimann-Pick Disease (NPD) [also known as Nova Scotia variety of Neimann-Pick Disease (NS-NPD)].

I came across an article entitled The Genealogy and Genetics of the Nova Scotia Variety of Niemann-Pick Disease in a personal copy of *Les Cahiers*, a publication for members of La Société Historique Acadienne (Moncton, NB). The article was located in Volume 23 Number 1 (January to March 1992).

My sole reason for wanting to obtain a copy of this particular issue of *Les Cahiers* was due to the fact that F. René Perron of Sèvres, France, had submitted an article entitled "Bourgeois et Doucet: À Basseville, des suites surprenantes." Not knowing that the future might introduce me to a relative with this disease, I was intrigued by the fact that there were connections to Yarmouth County.

The information contained in the article, "The Genealogy and Genetics of the Nova Scotia Variety of Niemann-Pick Disease," was written by Joan Bourque-Campbell. I shall now take the time to paraphrase several key points.

Niemann-Pick is a rare genetic disease of severe progressive psychomotor retardation. In its acute form it is characterized by seizures and dementia. NPD has come to be associated with a specific ethnic population in western Nova Scotia.

Evidence to date indicates that NPD is an autosomal recessive disorder in all of its forms.

A recessive gene is present on one of the twenty-two pairs of autosomes or non-sex chromosomes and becomes manifest only if that gene is present in both parents. The disease may occur in one or more family members, and has increased frequency in certain populations from the same geographical area and/or similar ethnic background.

Although usually manifest in children, NPD may first appear in adulthood.

It is included in the group of diseases referred to as lipid storage diseases. It is characterized by an enlarged spleen, liver and lymph nodes, chronic diarrhea and malabsorption of food, and patients may exhibit mental retardation. Diagnosis is established by bone marrow and tissue biopsy, and few patients survive beyond early adulthood.

With the help of Father Clarence d'Entremont, Dr. E. J. T. Winsor and Dr. J. P. Welch of Halifax, Nova Scotia, found that the type D version of NPD could be attributed to three 17th century Acadian couples; however, most cases could be traced to one particular couple; namely, Joseph Mius and Marie Amirault.

It was established further that the parents of the fifteen patients (seven males and eight females) who were studied were neither first nor second cousins, but must have been carriers of the same gene which caused NS-NPD. All fifteen patients lived within a radius of ten miles in Yarmouth County, and were in a specific school district.

NS-NPD has been confined to a small ethnic community in western Nova Scotia. Inbreeding may be a factor, but there are similar Acadian communities elsewhere in Nova Scotia without any manifestation of NS-NPD. It is proposed, therefore, that by chance several of the "founding fathers" must have carried the same aberrant gene leading to a high initial frequency of the disease. It is also speculated that the gene responsible for NS-NPD may have been a single new mutant.

This genetic research concerning the Nova Scotia variety of Niemann-Pick not only illustrates the potential for close community association between genealogy and genetics, but also demonstrates how crucial genealogy can be in interpretation of the development of such rare familial diseases.

Lesley Anne has Neimann-Pick type "C" with a "D" variant, thought to be the only known case as far as the local IWK Children's Hospital (situated in Halifax, Nova Scotia) knows. Her condition is getting worse now with as many as 3 to 15 seizures a day, which leave her totally drained and needing rest. Her speech has become laboured. She can only swallow very small amounts of liquid, and therefore requires tube feeding. She has a hard time walking around the house, although she is capable of some movements. She requires special medical equipment, needles and formula that are very costly. Her parents, Susan and Norman, are trying to do the best they can to make her life as enjoyable as possible.

Lesley has met the Canadian country group "Farmer's Daughter." Music is something that she especially enjoys. She has always wanted to take a day trip on the local CAT ferry (which travels from Yarmouth, Nova Scotia to Bar Harbour, Maine). She has been to Disney World as part of the Children's Wish Foundation program.

Lesley knows that she has a fatal disease. Susan keeps nothing from her. During the times when Lesley cries, she is told that things will be better when she is in Heaven.

Susan knew that I would be calling her. My way had been paved by George Doucette, the current Acadian/Canadian Chapter President of LDDM. Like George, I called merely to show family support, wanting to make Lesley's day a little brighter. I can't wait to meet this special young lady when I travel home to visit family in Nova Scotia this summer.

For those who wish to make contact with Susan, Norman and Lesley Anne, passing on thoughts and well-wishes, please address your cards/letters to:

Ms. Lesley Anne Doucet  
C/o Mrs. Susan Bethune  
Box 586  
Port Maitland  
Yarmouth County, NS  
B0W 2V0

They can also be reached by telephone at (902) 649-2762.

## **WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT?**

Submitted by Gaetan Doucet

In its first three years of existence, the family organization, Les Doucet du Monde, has had some difficulty in getting new members. Why?

There is no easy answer! I believe a variety of factors have conspired to make its growth difficult: geographical distance between members, difficulty in getting face-to-face meetings, ironing out the purpose and the raison d'etre for the group.

What is key, however, is the fact that a small group of very dedicated individuals, who for the most part, met for the first time at the Doucet family reunion in Opelousas, Louisiana in 1999, felt that it was important that a governing body for the family be created. So much had been accomplished in those few days in Opelousas that it would have been a shame to let the initiative die. Thanks to the initiatives of Dean Doucet, a group of interested persons set out to create an organization that would be available to all Doucets of the world. Dean created a web site that informed the world as to what we were about and also to help all genealogists interested in getting more information on the Doucet family genealogy.

The executive of the organization tried in many ways to get new members to join. They even sent out mass mailings to certain areas of the American continent, with disappointing results. The one place where there was much interest and participation was Louisiana where the first CMA meeting had occurred. Under the leadership of Carol Doucet, the group met at various times and held some pot luck suppers. From my perspective, it appears that this is a good way to get people interested in the organization and get it to grow.

I have recently had the opportunity to meet with the president of the Forest Family Group, who is a distant relative. He explained to me that since their family is so widely dispersed, they have developed a strategy to reach more of their members. They hold small local reunions, in various parts of the country, and meet with any and all interested parties.

There is a small village near here (My home is in Sudbury, Ontario) called Verner, population 2,000 or so. A few families are found there. He lives in Quebec and he drove up to the meeting; he came back with quite a few new members. During an information session, they explain all aspects of interest to the people present and also explain some of their special projects. For example, the Forest family organized a special two-week visit to France and Belgium in the fall of 2001 to visit members of the Forest family who lived in those parts of Europe.

All this is to say that perhaps we have to think of trying a different way of getting the family group to grow. Should the executive draft a plan to disseminate information about us? They could select some of the members who live in different sections of the two countries to call local meetings and try to encourage participation and, when possible, sell memberships. The face-to face meetings could lead many to see our group as a worthwhile organization, one they would like to belong to. Possibly, the local groups could grow in size and family meetings could then be organized apart from CMA. These meetings could have many purposes: genealogy--ball, hockey or golf tournaments; card games; travel and pot luck suppers-whatever could meet the needs of that particular group

People need to have a reason for belonging to a group or organization and it is usually a personal one. The person wants tangible returns for his investment in time. If he knows the people involved and sees the value of participating, he will join.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the members of the executive for their unselfish gift of time to the family organization.

## A NOTARIAL RECORD

Submitted by Gaetan Doucet

Adrian Bergeron, S.S.S., the author of the book, *Le Grand Arrangement, Des Acadiens au Québec*, explains that he came across what he considered was an interesting fact about a Doucet family, worth noting in his book. Three successive descendants of the same family became notary publics in Montreal. On page 141 of his book he explains that these three gentlemen worked as notary publics for over 113 successive years, from 1804 to 1917.

The total number of documents that they processed over that period of time is as follows:

Nicolas-Benjamin Doucet (1804-1855)	30,754 docs.
Benjamin-Theodore Doucet (1839-1867)	28,558 docs.
Theodore Doucet (1867-1917)	44,583 docs.
TOTAL	103,895 docs.

IT MUST BE A RECORD!

UN RECORD NOTARIAL  
Soumis par Gaetan Doucet

Adrien Bergeron, S.S.S. dans son livre *Le Grand Arrangement, Des Acadiens au Québec*, à la page 141 explique que trois générations de Doucet ont œuvré à Montréal comme notaires publiques. Ces trois Doucet furent donc notaires successivement pendant 113 ans, (soit de 1804 à 1917)

Le chiffre total des actes qu'ils ont signé se répartit comme suit :

Nicolas-Benjamin Doucet (1804-1855)	30,754 actes
Benjamin-Théodore Doucet (1839-1867)	23,558 actes
Théodore Doucet (1867-1917)	44,583 actes
TOTAL	103,895 actes

CE DOIT ETRE UN RECORD!

NOTE: In Quebec the role of notary is totally separate from the role of lawyer. This is due to the fact that Quebec has a British common law/criminal law system but a Napoleonic French civil law system. Thus a notary in Quebec holds a very prestigious role and that person must notarize all legal documents relating to civil issues, such as marriage contracts and mortgages. The lawyer is limited to criminal law.

## WITCHCRAFT, SORCERERS AND SPELLS

Submitted by George Doucette

(NOTE: George found this story about his grandfather on the Yahoo GeoCities website.)

Witchcraft, in one form or another, has been spoken of as far back as history has been recorded. Some persons really have had the power to cast spells on people, animals or things. You have all read or heard about people who would have acquired this power from the devil to whom they would have given their soul. All this, though, is rather in the realm of legends. Most of the time, people, in their ignorance, not being able to explain certain evil occurrences, blame them on the so-called "sorcerers."

Those so-called "sorcerers" existed at the time of our immediate ancestors. Even those spells or charms brought down to us by tradition are so numerous that it would take a whole book to narrate them all. An old French missionary, by the name of Father Amable Petithomme, who from 1836 to 1839 was pastor of Sainte-Anne-du-Ruisseau, which comprised then all the French colonies of Yarmouth County, tells us of wizard's books of spells that the Acadians were making use of, although this is the only mention that we have of them.

The best-known among those sorcerers at that time was David Doucet, tall, well-built, called for that reason, "Le Grand David," but better known by tradition as "Le Sorcier" (the Sorcerer), or even "Le Maitre des Sorciers." (the Master Sorcerer). Is it because he could perform magic that we find him at several different places, even seemingly at the time? Born most probably at Muise's Point, the "Pointe-des-Ben" of the French people, beyond Sluice Point, the son of Michel, we find him in Quinan, at Rucco Point and in Plympton, Digby County, where he founded the "Doucet Settlement." It would seem that as soon as he would get somewhere, evil events would take place. We, his grandchildren, have no need to fret of having inherited anything of his sorcery. It existed only in the minds of the people, or did it?

This story is of my grandfather and did these things really exist in people's minds? Well, I'll never tell!



## **MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

A Membership Application is located within this section of the web site, so is not included with the newsletter.