



Genealogy Fair 2006

by : Joceline Levasseur (328)



The fifth fair of Founding Families was held on February 24, 25 and 26 at the Place Laurier shopping center in Quebec City under the theme «One name, one family, one history». The fair was organized by the Foundation

of Founding Families of Quebec. There were 77 exhibitors representing 63 family associations of which the Levasseur Association was present.

Visitors to the fair, primarily from the Quebec region, learned about the history and genealogy of their ancestors and created links with various family Associations. Many descendants from our Borgia and Levasseur ancestors visited our exhibit. Our participation at this fair was a valuable experience.

The fair is an excellent promotional tool and an ideal place to obtain information from members and non-members. Many visitors whose mother, grand-mother or great-grand-mother was a Levasseur were surprised to witness the value of our data-base and to see their names within it.

Thanks to the collaboration of many of our voluntary members, Gilles, André, Madeleine, Jean, Huguette, Raymond, Jean-Pierre and I, the Association participated at this event. The Levasseur Association of America is grateful to them for their contribution to the success of the fifth fair of the Founding Families.

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From left to right on photo : Madeleine Levasseur, Joceline Levasseur and Gilles Carmel.



Personality chronicle

Marc Ouellet : Profession: Cardinal, Québec

by : Gilles Carmel (352)

Marc Ouellet was born in LaMotte near Amos in Abitibi on June 8, 1944. He is Georgiana Levasseur and Alphonse Michaud's great grand son. He completed his theological studies at the Montréal Grand Seminary (1964-1968). He was ordained to the priesthood in his native parish in the Amos diocese on May 25, 1968. He taught theology at the seminary in Bagota (1970-1971). He completed a Master's degree in philosophy at the St Thomas Aquinas Pontifical University in 1974 and his Doctorate degree in Dogmatic Theology at the Gregorian University in 1983. He was rector of the Grand Seminary in Manizales from 1984-1989) and rector of the Montréal Seminary in 1990 and the Edmonton Seminary 1994. From 1996 to 2002 he was a professor with tenure of the dogmatic theology chair of the Jean Paul II Institute for studies on marriage and the family at the Pontifical University of Latran

Elected bishop of Agropoli and nominated as Secretary of the Pontifical Council for the promotion of Christian Unity on March 3rd 2001, he was ordained by Jean Paul II on March 19th in the Saint Peter Basilica in Rome. He is presently consultant for the Congregation of Devine Cult and the Discipline of Sacraments, member of the Pontifical Committee for International Eucharistic congresses and advisor for the Pontifical Commission for Latin America. He is also a member of the Pontifical Academy of Theology. According to the functions he occupies within the Vatican, many consider him as one of the 20 Cardinals who could become Pope

He was nominated archbishop of Québec and Primate of Canada on November 15, 2002 and took office on January 26, 2003. He was elevated to the rank of Cardinal during the consistory of October 21, 2003 with the title of S. Maria in Traspontina.

Mister the Cardinal Marc Ouellet is the 24th bishop, 14th archbishop and 7th Cardinal of Québec

For more information, please consult the following bilingual web site:

<http://www.diocesequebec.qc.ca/>

Genealogy

The Cardinal Marc Ouellet is a descendant of both Laurent Levasseur and of Jean Levasseur dit Lavigne (Marie-Thérèse Levasseur and Nicolas Bonhomme Beaupré).

Laurent Levasseur
Pierre Levasseur
Jean-Thimothée Levasseur
Joseph Levasseur
Jean-Baptiste Levasseur
Georges Levasseur
Georgiana Levasseur
Georges Michaud
Graziella Michaud
Marc Ouellet
Marc Ouellet is the grand son at the 10th generation of Laurent Levasseur and the great grand son of Georgiana Levasseur.

Jean Levasseur dit Lavigne
Marie-Thérèse Levasseur
Thérèse Bonhomme
Joseph Moisan
Félicité Moisan
Marie-Geneviève Fluet
Marie Hélène Vallière
François-Xavier Boutin
Ludger Boutin
Emma Boutin
Graziella Michaud
Marc Ouellet
Marc Ouellet is grand son at the 12th generation of Jean Levasseur dit Lavigne.

More information is available on our data base, web site: www.levasseur.org



A word from your President

On Friday, April 28, 2006 Murielle Levasseur received on behalf of her deceased husband, Vincent Levasseur, a trophy for his volunteerism from « La Fédération des familles souches » This grand prize is a great honor for Murielle and her family. It is also good news for the Levasseur Association of America who had submitted Vincent's nomination in early March.

Vincent deserved this prize for having dedicated thousand of hours to genealogy for the Levasseur Association. Bravo Vincent! Unfortunately you are no longer with us to cherish this well earned prize.

I would like to extend my thanks to Roger, Huguette and Joceline who prepared the documentation recommending Vincent as a candidate for this enviable prize awarded by The Federation of the first families. Thank you also to Jean Pierre who prepared the award presentation on Abode Reader for our web site. Many hours were spent on the preparation of the documentation for this award.

Please remember that The Association will be meeting in Gatineau on the 1, 2, and 3rd of September. The annual meeting and will be on Saturday afternoon at 4:30 pm

There is an addition to the program. At the banquet on Saturday, one of our members, Mme Pauline Gill will be presenting her novel on the historical life of Doctor Irma LeVasseur, the first French speaking Physician in Québec. Her book is to be published in the fall of 2006.

My best wishes for an excellent summer.

Gilles Carmel, President

The Kamouraska Birthplace (continued)

27 Levasseur buried in the cemetery

By : Huguette Levasseur 380)



In the last issue of the Newsletter, an article identified 26 Levasseurs who from 1727 and 1793 were buried in the Kamouraska cemetery. A 27th person is to be added. Her name is Marie Levasseur, wife of Joseph Ouellet, buried on November 10, 1792. She was approximately 40 years old. She was the grand-daughter of the pioneer couple Pierre Levasseur and Marie-Elisabeth Michaud. Pierre was the son of our ancestor Laurent Levasseur married to Marie Marchand. We are invited to visit the Kamouraska birthplace, site of the first two churches and presbytery, to honor the pioneers who contributed to the development of the area.

**Reunion of the Levasseur in Gatineau, QC
September 1th, 2, 3, 2006**

Friday (evening)

19h30 Arrival and registration of guests, refreshments

Saturday (AM)

9h00 Registration of guests
Genealogy workshop

10h00 Conference : « The migration of the Levasseurs towards western Canada and the USA by Roger Levasseur (in French)
Conference « Levasseur in the military “ Dr Serge Bernier (in English)

11h00 Conference « The migration of the Levasseurs towards western Canada and the USA» by Roger Levasseur (in English)
Conference «Levasseur in the military » by Dr Serge Bernier (in French)

12h00 Lunch /buffet in location

Saturday PM

13h30 Visit of the Canadian War Museum (transportation and entrance fees included)

16h30 Association general assembly

18h00 Dinner in location (Music Gary Elliott)

Dimanche le 3 (avant-midi)

Mass in memory of Vincent Levasseur

Visit to the cemetery and unveiling of a commemorative plaque

Brunch (on your own)

Departure of guests

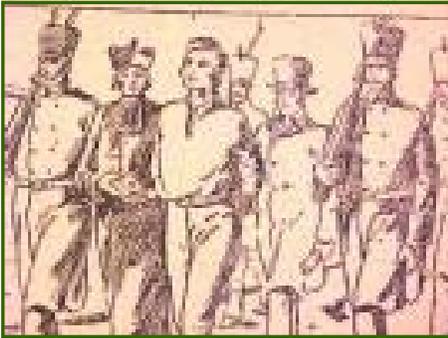
Cost : 65 \$ per person (Includes registration fees, two meals, transportation and entrance fee to the Canadian War Museum) . Information : please contact Mr. Réjean Levasseur (613) 741-8499 or by e-mail : reglevasseur@rogers.com.

Registration forms are available on our website at www.levasseur.org/gatineau2006

Address for the reunion : Salle des Chevaliers de Colomb, 635 boul. La Gappe O, Gatineau, QC



Levasseur, Borgia and Carmel ancestors associated with the 1837 Rebellion in Lower-Canada



Following different searches in various reference volumes and on internet sites, we were surprised to find many historical references on events that have influenced our history over the past two centuries.

One of the major events of our history was the 1837 rebellion by a group called «Les Patriotes». Our research has enabled us to establish ties with some of our ancestors who were directly or indirectly tied to these events.

Beforehand a historical recap:

What was Québec like in 1837?

In 1837, 140,000 British were concentrated primarily in Montreal, Quebec and Estrie (Sherbrooke) and 510,000 French descendants lived along the Saint-Laurent in zones called domains owned by lords. Divided on the basis of ethnicity, Québec was also divided on a social and economic basis creating opposition between the city and country dwellers. The English government favored an imperial dominated commerce and the defendants of the «Patriots» were from the rural community that is primarily made up of French Canadians

Was it a war between the French and the English?

Many saw in the 1837-1838 rebellion a strictly racial confrontation opposing Anglophones and Francophones. The reality is more complex. The Patriots main cause was to obtain equitable judicial and political reforms for the majority, and to make claims similar to those made by other countries during the same period. It was not a question of race or language. Initially political, their projects took a social and economic position when farmers and small business men attempted to break the monopoly of the rich colonial merchants and administrators. They were grasping the resources of the colony primarily for their individual benefits. Many of non-French origin sympathized with the Patriots. Such names as Wolfred and Robert Nelson come to mind. One also notices the Suisse, Amury Girod and Italians like Antonio Donegani or Antonio Merrazzi, Irishmen like Daniel Tracey or Edmund Bailley O'Callaghan. In 1837 the majority of English speaking abandoned the movement and consequently it was led primarily by French- Canadians

Was the rebellion solely in Quebec?

Actually no! Since 1817, Upper-Canada, now Toronto, faces similar concerns like those from Quebec under the yoke of the colony. The mayor of Toronto and reformist leader, William Lyon MacKenzie seeks more equity towards the farmers and more justice within the administration of the government that is controlled by select families that monopolize choice employments and who speculate on land purchases. During this same period, Newfoundland, New Brunswick and Nova-Scotia encountered similar crises with Great-Britain

1) SOME PLAYERS ASSOCIATED WITH THESE EVENTS:

a) LE VASSEUR BORGIA, Joseph (1773-1839)

Born in Québec and baptized in the Notre-Dame Parish on January 6 1773, son of Louis LE VASSEUR Borgia, blacksmith and of Marie-Anne Trudel. He signed LeVasseur Borgia.

Studied at the Québec Seminary from 1786 to 1792, and articulated in law and was commissioned as a lawyer in 1800.

He practiced law in Quebec

He was defeated in Cornwallis in 1804 and in a partial election on December 14, 1804 in Quebec City, Upper town. He participated in the foundation of the news paper le «Canadien» in 1806. Due to his ties with this news paper, he was discharged as an officer of the militia by the Governor James Henry Craig on June 14, 1808. He was reinstated as captain by Governor Georges Provost in 1812.

He was elected in Cornwallis in 1808 and supported the Canadian Party. He was re-elected in 1809, 1810, 1814 and 1816. He was arrested and placed under guard by the chief sergeant by order of the National Assembly on March 10, 1819 for having insulted and threatening Samuel Sherwood. He was defeated in Cornwallis in 1820 but re-elected 1824 and 1827. He did not seek nomination in 1830.

He died in Québec City on June 27, 1839 at the age of 66 and 5 month and was buried in the «Picotés» cemetery of the Notre Dame Parrish on July 2, 1839. He had one son, Narcisse Charles.

Bibliographie/Bibliography: Lebel, Jean-Marie «Joseph Vasseur Borgia,» Dictionnaire biographique du Canada, vol. 7, p. 544-546



b) BONAVENTURE VIGER, patriot and son of LOUISE LEVASSEUR-CARMEL (1775-????)

Louise Levasseur-Carmel was Bonaventure Viger's mother, an important player in the 1837 rebellion. On November 18 he started the rebellion in Longueuil.

Viger was the key instigator of the Chemin de Chambly strike or coup. He led a small group of men who captured Dr Davignon and the Notary Demaray who were being guarded by the Colborne dragons and had them jailed in a prison in Montréal. From that time on he was being pursued. Viger sought refuge in Saint Denis. It was the eve of the



battle and he wanted to be part of it, but on Nelson's orders, he proceeded to organize the rebellion in Longueuil and Boucherville. He was actively involved when he took part in the battle of Saint Charles. Viger then sought refuge in the United States. He was captured in the Bedford region (Missisquoi) and imprisoned in Montréal on December 7 1837, where he was held during six long months.

Bonaventure Viger was one of the eight that accepted exile in Bermuda in exchange for granting freedom to other prisoners. Always pretentious, Viger escaped and returned clandestinely to Canada. He was imprisoned once more on May 22, 1839. He participated in many raids instigated by the Hunting Brothers. He was finally set free and married in 1840. Viger, certainly the most unruly of the patriots, spent the remaining part of his life as a cheese maker of high quality fine cheeses. (Fauteux). Another son of Louise Levasseur-Carmel, Hilarion Viger, a farmer in Chambly, was arrested on the suspicion of treason on June 8, 1839. He was released from jail a year later.

c) François-Stanislas NICOLAS, patriot and son of Louise LEVASSEUR-BORGIA, (1762-????)

Born at Saint-Marc-sur-le-Richelieu in 1795, son of Étienne NICOLAS and Louise Borgia-Levasseur (Aubin, 2000: 427). François-Stanislas NICOLAS was raised by his uncle François Borgia, lawyer and deputy in Québec City, He was a man of stature and started his working career as a merchant (Aubin, 2000 : 323). He then embarked on a teaching career and became a professor in Acadia in 1831. He was very well educated and wrote impeccable French. (Aubin, 2000 : 323).

NICOLAS participated in the battle of Saint-Denis. Arrested the first time in July 1838, and was pursued for his implication and the execution of the spy Joseph Armand Chartrand (Aubin, 2000: 26). A jury of French Canadians had him acquitted since the execution conformed to military laws. Liberated, he went to the United States to prepare the insurrection of 1838 (Costisella, 1965: 67). He resurfaced during the Odeltown battle. The day before of the battle, captain Hefferman succeeds in capturing François Trépanier, Robert Nelson and François NICOLAS and delivers them to the colonial authorities. They nevertheless were liberated by the captain Joseph Trudeau and a group of rebels on the orders of Louis Defaillette (Aubin, 2000: 293-294, 423).

NICOLAS nevertheless is re-arrested and found guilty by a martial court. He was imprisoned a second time January 18 1838 (Costisella, 1965: 67). He was readily condemned the moment he was in hands of the authorities. The Bureaucrats had not forgiven the crime he committed against the said spy Chartrand (Filteau, 1975: 436). Condemned to die by hanging, he learns of his death February 12 when the Crown prosecutors notifies him that afternoon (Filteau, 1975: 437).

He mounted on the scaffold on February 15 1839, at nine forty-five in the morning, in company of the Chevalier of Lorimier, Charles Hindenlang, Pierre Rémi Narbonne and Amable Daunais (Aubin, 2000: 321-322). Before the opening of the trap door, NICOLAS declares to lively voice: " I regret only one thing, it is to die before seeing my country free, but providence will eventually win and have pity because there is not a country that is so poorly governed in the world " (Costisella, 1965: 68). He was 41 years old and was not married.

2) Genealogy

Direct and common lineage of Bonaventure Viger and François-Stanislas Nicolas with our ancestor Pierre Levasseur

Pierre Levasseur 1627-1694 & Jeanne Chaverlange 1637-????

Pierre Levasseur 1661-1731 & Anne Mesnage 1676-1738

François-Louis Borgia Levasseur 1707-1780

Pierre Levasseur/Carmel 1703-1779

Louis Levasseur-Borgia 1733-1811

Alexis Levasseur/Carmel 1749-1804

Marie-Louise Levasseur-Borgia 1762-????

Louise Levasseur/Carmel 1775-???

François-Stanislas Nicolas 1795-1839

Bonaventure Viger 1792-???

The Patriot's Prison, a historical site



In 2003 the Quebec Liquor Board entrusted the management of the Patriot's Prison to the National home of the Patriots. The permanent site is located in the ancient Montreal prison

It is in the basement of the building «Pied-du-Courant» where the locals of the Quebec Liquor Board are situated since 1921. The Prison-des-Patriotes presents a thematic exposition about the rebellion

from 1837 to 1838. The period covered starts with the beginning of the party around 1828 to the Act of the Union in 1840 including the famous events of 1837 and 1838. It concludes with the fire of the Montreal Parlement in 1849. La Prison-des-Patriotes is located at 903 De Lorimier avenue in Montréal, a short walk from the Métro Papineau.



Signatories of petitions or invitations to meetings of the rebels:

It is equally interesting to consult the registers of the signatories of different petitions addressed to the authorities during that era. These were divided in two types: those who conducted events associated with the English crown and those who conducted events tied to the patriots. It is rather difficult to identify these individuals in the genealogical data base, since only the name is indicated on documents. Here are some names of the signatories:

Legend :

	Events associated with the «Patriotes»		Event associated with the loyalists
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 Levasseur, Frs. - Signatory on a Patriot's invitation, Yamachiche (St-Maurice) 1837/07/10

 Levasseur, Louis - a loyal petition (Québec) 1837/07/25

 Levasseur, Ol. - Signatory on a Patriot's invitation, Yamachiche (St-Maurice) 1837/07/10

 Borgia, J. bte. - Signed a loyal petition, (Portneuf) le 01 Dec, 1837

 Borgia, J. l. - Committee member (75) at a Patriot nomination, St.John suburb 1833/04/24

 Borgia, J. Levasseur - Signatory on a Patriot invitation (Quebec City). 1835/05/18

 Borgia, J.l. - Committee member at a Patriot nomination, St.Johns suburb 1833/04/24

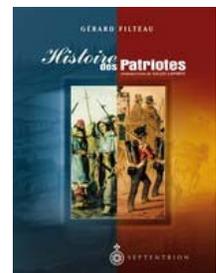
 Borgia, Jean bte. - Committee member (70) at a Patriot nomination, Pointe-aux-Trembles (Portneuf) 1834/04/20.

Source: Most information in this article was taken from the web site :



<http://cgi2.cvm.qc.ca/glaporte/index.shtml>. Thank you to web master, M. Stéphane Laporte, who granted permission to produce this information in our Newsletter.

For more information on this topic, refer to the book: «Histoire des Patriotes» de Gérard Filteau, Sillery, Septentrion, 2003. 628p.



Vincent Levasseur receives posthumously The prize of « Grand volunteer»

by : Roger Levasseur (004)



At the annual meeting of the «Fédération des familles-souches du Québec» (the federation of the first families of Quebec) held in Gatineau on the 27, 28 and 29th of April, Mr. Jean Poirier, past member of the Ontario Government awarded to Murielle Levasseur, the spouse of diseased Vincent Levasseur, a trophy recognizing Vincent for his countless volunteerism to genealogy. His accomplishments were the following:

- He founded the «Association des Levasseur d'Amérique».
- He created a data bank of more than 98,000 names of individuals for the benefit of members on internet.
- He compiled and edited two dictionaries of more than 700 pages on the descendants of Pierre, Jean and Laurent Levasseur.
- He created the Coat of Arms of the Association in 1992.
- As a researcher and dedicated genealogist, he coordinated and directed a group of 40 volunteers who gathered obituary notices in 60 news papers across the country.
- He was an active member on the Samuel-de-Champlain genealogy regional council where he directed the compilation of more than 5 million data files.
- He founded the Association's Newsletter.

Vincent leaves to the directors of the Levasseur Association of America, an organization with a sound financial status. He also ensured that a dedicated team would continue the work he originated. Mainly he provides an excellent example for his successors to follow.

The selection committee selected three award winners amongst the fifteen nominations. They are: Mr. Bertrand Drapeau, Mr. Vincent Levasseur and Mr. Jean-Paul Gagnon. Respectively they were awarded «Volunteer emeritus», «Grand Volunteer» and «Exemplary Volunteer». The selection criteria were:

- The volunteer's accomplishments.
- His abilities and aptitudes.
- Innovativeness to improve the Association's management.
- Results attained.

Members of the Levasseur Association of America are proud of Vincent's accomplishments and offer their congratulations to Murielle and to Vincent's family.



L'Association des Levasseur d'Amérique

Western Canadians

Noël Levasseur (part 3)

Continuation by Joseph Tasse



Return Home

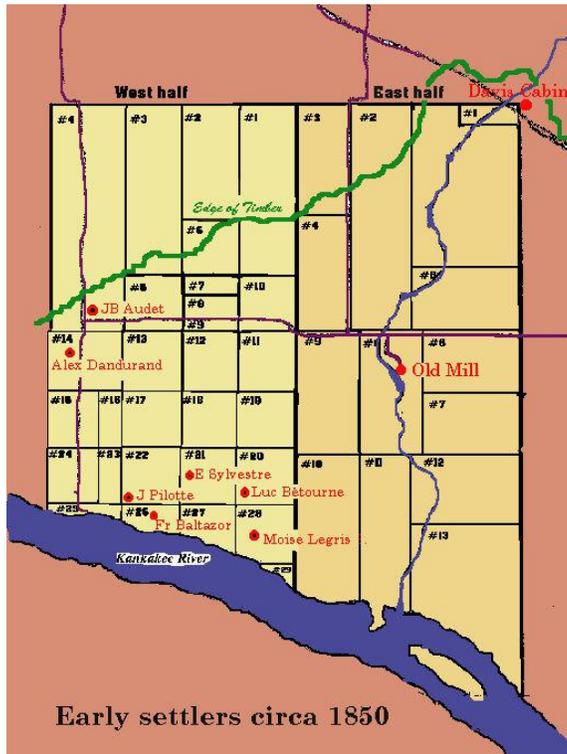
As winter approached, Levasseur settled in Bourbonnais. Dreading the boredom and the solitude of another long winter season, he decided to yield to his deep rooted desire of seeing his parents. They thought he had died, not having heard from him in such a long time. It was common in those years for many young Canadians to leave home and never return to the home land. They disappeared like the autumn leaves dispersed by the wind to far away places.

Levasseur enjoyed telling that he arrived in Saint-Michel on All Saints Day just as the religious ceremony was ending and no one recognized him. Nineteen years of absence had changed him completely. He was no longer this young man with youthful and timid features that he had prior to leaving Saint-Michel. His complexion was tanned by the sun, and his adolescent traits had given place to those of an energetic and mature young man.

He proceeded towards the paternal home, where his arrival had been announced. It was just as difficult for him to be recognized as it had been for Joseph in the Bible to be recognized by his brothers. Like the son of Jacob he was able to say: « see with your own eyes, it is me, Noël Levasseur. » He had change so much that his parents could not believe that he actually was their son. His mother especially could not believe that there in front of her stood a strong, elegant well dressed American that was her own son. The one she saw leave many years ago as a frail young man in the attire of the Voyageur. She was convinced that someone was playing a joke on her. Her maternal love, so readily ignited, was saying: -Ah! No, this is not him, he is dead, as I feared it, and I will never be seeing him anymore. In tears, Levasseur vainly approached his mother saying to her: - It is me, mother dear; I am Noël your son. - No, you are an American, she said. But suddenly, in a flash, she seized his hand and kissed it, exclaiming - Ah! It is him, look his ring finger is missing (He had had his ring finger cut at an early age.)

Overwhelmed in happiness, this good mother embraced and covered her son with kisses and the father witnessing this scene cried in silence. They did not hesitate to butcher a young calf and the parents enjoyed a memorable feast. Their happiness, since the arrival of the son was unexpected, was greater than they could possibly imagine. It was more than the return of a prodigal child; it was the return of a cherished son than they believed was lost for ever.

This is the last article from a series of three on Noel Levasseur. It was published more than 125 years ago in a volume titled : "Les canadiens de l'ouest". Readers should bear that fact in mind when reading this article.



Back in Bourbonnais

Upon his return to Bourbonnais, Levasseur built a new home on an elevated plateau that he occupied for many years. It is a brick building with two wings, decorated with a grand portico that gave the home the appearance of a Canadian manor. Shortly thereafter, Levasseur was commissioned by the authorities to assist in the emigration of three thousands Indians to the Council Bluff reserve. The caravan consisted of forty transport cars that carried women, children, old persons and even some crippled individuals. The trip lasted three months and was plagued with numerous difficulties.

During his stay with the Iroquois, Levasseur accompanied an additional fifteen hundred Indians to the same destination as an official American government agent. Since 1836, when Levasseur first set his tent in the locality, Bourbonnais became a cherished area. Not only did he identify himself with the area, his principal ambition was to see the locality grow and flourish. The first few years were years of solitude. But little by little some Canadian travelers, tired of their adventurous life

on the plains, began to settle around Levasseur and a small colony originated and grew as more inhabitants settled in the area. The new comers purchased small tracks of land from Levasseur enticed by the favorable weather conditions, the fertility of the soil and the alluvial deposits. Many invited their parents from Lower Canada to come to Bourbonnais and share in their good fortune. Their invitation to emigrate coincided with the 1837 and 1838 uprising that had triggered significant emigration to the United States. News about the location spread in many communities on the shores of the Saint Laurent, and each year a large number of compatriots chose to settle in the Illinois area. Around 1847, many farmers from Bellechasse, Islet and Kamouraska, upon their return from the Chicago area, praised the merits and benefits offered by the prairies and the West. Consequently many Canadians set out for the new Promised Land. These emigrants, with their vitality and courage, formed groups of French that thrived to preserve and maintain their French nationalistic traits. This emigration movement was at its height from 1851-1852 with Chiniquy, the father of the temperance movement, but sadly famous for having renounced his faith. During that period, hundreds of Canadian families went to the Illinois area where they found what lacked in Canada: «bread, fertile soil, freedom and liberty.»

Chiniquy claimed, with a certain revolting hypocrisy, that he wanted to reunite Canadian families « I am giving them the opportunity to preserve their beautiful language and pass on to their children their holy religion »

A letter by the renegade, dated April 19, 1852, states that the homesteads in the Bourbonnais area were mainly occupied by Canadian emigrants. New comers had to settle 15 miles to the southwest where it is said according to Chiniquy: « There, I established three magnificent locations in the prairies where I planted a cross as a rallying point for our dear and unfortunate compatriots. »



Bourbonnais is unquestionably the most important Canadian parish in the area. Others to be noted are «Les Petites-Iles or Saint-George», founded by a Canadian M.Granger: «Mantano», was founded by Ménard Martin. «L'Erable» was founded by M. Kirk, a parent of Mgr Desantels: «SainteAnne» and finally Kankakee, located two miles from Bourbonnais. The church, the college, the convent were all grouped together. The homes surrounded with vegetation, the true hospitality of the inhabitants, their cheerful character, the French accent, the pleasant sounding folklore, the popular customs so religiously well preserved: all reminded him of the country they left behind. Should you travel the entire USA where immigrants had settled, you would not find a locality with such a well preserved French Canadian style.

In her essay on «The Far West» Mme Olympe Audouard writes the following about parishes in the State of Illinois: «A few years ago, after a religious schism some seven or eight thousand Canadians directed by their dissenting priests decided to establish themselves on the shores of the Kankakee Lake; it is a remarkable locality, the soil is so fertile that the small community flourished rapidly».

Madame Audouard is mistaken. The schism did not occur in Canada but in Illinois where thousands of Canadians had settled. The schism was not the *raison d'être* of the immigration. She had also said in her essay: « I visited the towns they occupied. They live in quaint pretty villages based on models from France with pretty farm homes; cheerfulness reigns, like in the good old days when they were in our home province. They get together on Sundays and dance joyfully to the sound of the fife and drums. They also have masts to climb on which sweets and delicacies are hung and grounds where they play «boules». You will find amongst them this downright cheerfulness that distinguishes them from the austere and somewhat hypocritical stuffiness of the Yankee»

Mme Audouard lets her imagination carry her afar when she talks about the greasy poles on which delicacies are hung, that she saw Canadians dancing on Sundays to the sound of fifes and drums. Such a pole was not familiar to our compatriots and their merry dances were not to the sound of fifes and drums but to the sound of violins that we find in most Canadian homes.

The small town of Kankakee lost some of French cultural character and its commercial importance when many more immigrants arrived due to the Central Illinois Railroad.

Bourbonnais did not have the commercial importance Kankakee had, however it possessed superior educational facilities that gave the locality recognition as great literary center. Kankakee's superb College was granted University status and competed with some of the important educational facilities in the State of Illinois. An important fact to consider is that the only Canadian classical college in existence in the USA was located there.

The College was founded by the «Clercs Saint-Viateur» excellent educators, who after having contributed to the education of compatriots in the Montréal area began to establish themselves in the USA. These dedicated monks left Montreal to establish these Colleges at Reverend Father Coté request.

The Sisters of Misericordia established themselves in Bourbonnais in 1850 but were there only two years. They were replaced by the «Soeurs Marianites » of South Bent. They left that locality in 1859 and the Sœurs de la Congrégation» replaced them since 1860. They built a beautiful two storey convent where young ladies every year gather there to obtain a sound Christian education.

When Bourbonnais was without a local priest, missionaries would provide religious services. The first local priest was Father Crevier, from Vincennes. The second was Mgr de Saint-Palais, who latter became bishop of Vincennes, he befriended Levasseur. He was frequently his host when he visited Bourbonnais. He was replaced by Father de Pontavisse who built the first church with rough timber. This church was eventually replaced with a wood structure that unfortunately burnt when Chiniquy served the parish. On the site of the old church Father Gingras built a new church of stone.

When Chiniquy began his disastrous crusade against the Catholic Church, most of the inhabitants of Bourbonnais, fascinated by his word and charisma, could not resist his lectures and slid with him on the slope of the abyss. But Levasseur was not influenced by his preaching and he refused to be drawn into this new religion. He elected not to abandon the faith of its fathers, and he was the first one to reject the new Luther.

The patriots of Bourbonnais, despite Chiniquy's influence on them, began to return to the fold when in December 1856, Father Désaulnier of Saint Hyacinthe, an enlightened and sadly missed priest worked tiredly to bring all his people back to the Church.

It is however primarily due to Father A. Mailloux that we owe the return to their faith of most of the sad delinquents. His smooth and persuasive talking, his endless devotion, his evangelical virtues, exerted a beneficial influence during the three years he dedicated to this difficult task. His successors succeeded in dissipating the final wrongful beliefs and today there is not a group of Canadian in the United States that are more animated in their Catholic beliefs.

The majority of the inhabitants are farmers who live well. Some are involved in business and are also very successful. Many occupy municipal and political postings. Since two years ago, Mr. George Letourneau, a distinguish compatriot is the secretary-treasurer of the municipality.

In general they are strongly devoted to the American institutions and it is not expected that any of them would consider being repatriated back to Canada. The productive land they are farming will always keep them in this fertile Western region of the country. They are different than the French-Canadians who work in the textile mills in the New England. New Englanders are not linked to the American soil and very few owned their own home.

During the last American war Bourbonnais had a military company that distinguished itself on many occasions. Their Captain was M. Seguin and the first lieutenant was, M. Noël Brousseau. As second lieutenant, Mr. Edouard Martin served. The Company was identified by the letter D and it was part of the 71st voluntary regiment of Illinois. Because of its discipline and its ability the Company was awarded the blue ribbon of regiment. This distinction indicated that they were superior to all other companies that formed the Tennessee military corps of thirty thousand men. The regiment showed so much intrepidity in the siege of Vicksburg that they were then assigned the most perilous tasks. At the Mobile siege, Mr. Charles Paradis, of Sainte-Anne, planted the American flag on the Rlokesly Fort, in the midst of extreme fire and after having seen four soldiers get killed who had attempted the exploit. The 1861 census states that there are three hundred and twelve families in Bourbonnais and fifteen hundred souls. The population remains at the same level.

In 1837, Levasseur married Miss Ruth Russell and together they had four sons and four daughters. The eldest, Edouard participated in the war of Secession as a lieutenant in the Illinois 12th regiment. He died as a result of fatigue from the rude campaigns he undertook. Levasseur's wife,



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Ruth died in 1860. He married on September 9, 1861 Miss Eléonore Franchère, cousin of the famous Franchère.

Levasseur continues to care for his land and assists his compatriots on various occasions. He is at the head of a movement wanting to bring to Lafayette the railroad that relays the major centers of Baltimore, Cincinnati and having its main station in Chicago. If Bourbonnais succeeds, the town will be linked to the most important cities in the United States. Levasseur is of average size; he has an oval face and thick black hair adorned with silver streaks. He has a healthy complexion and vivid eyes. He is very alert for his seventy-six years, and will more than likely live to an advanced age. Levasseur enjoys reminiscing about his youth and his numerous experiences. His communication skills as a «raconteur» about his various adventures and his interest for his race and ancestors are of interest to all. When he departs the West will have lost one of its most courageous pioneers.

Note about the author: TASSE Joseph, Canadian author, was born in Montreal on October 23, 1848. He was educated at the Collège Bourget and found employment in journalism. In 1867 he became editor of the journal «Le Canada» in Ottawa and from 1869 to 1872 he was associate editor of «La Minerve» in Montreal and during that same period he was the director of «La Revue Canadienne» where he participated by writing essays on history, literature, politics and the economy. In 1873 he became a translator with the House of Commons. He visited Europe and wrote about his travels.

