



## Joseph-Marie Levasseur, a retiree narrates

by: Joseph-Marie Levasseur

A student said of him:

«I was able to realize your scholarly attributes but more specifically your openness to what is new... you understood due to your sensibility and your intelligence.»

«We are of those to whom it was said to say nothing because we were too young: today we are told to be quiet because we are too old», he wrote in 1984.»

N.D.L.R. : Joseph-Marie Levasseur , it is well known, likes to write as he likes to talk: frequently, very frequently and extremely frequently. Let him tell us ho he was.



Confidentially to my friends:



1928. The crazy years before the crash.

1928: Birth of a baby, the first child. According to the father, more were to come. That was not the case. This child was to be the only the one and only of Ernest and Maximilienne Th  trault. This boy had no sisters. History will show that women initially made him timid but in boarding school he learned to idolize them.

Omens predicted that he would be exceptional. To which his mother rejoiced. But being pre-warned, intelligent and pious she realized that a strict upbringing was necessary to ensure the education and formation of this genius. She took this matter seriously.

Others, locals and rumor mongers at family gatherings would whisper that he is not likely a genius but a trivial rare person that could become a monster or a spoiled son. He learned piano at the age of six and at the same time he played hockey, a hard and demanding sport.

Again, fate is involved. Doctor Germain, the Lac Simon Obstetrician, was attacked by the Charlesbourg white bears... he was massacred. What justice.

Aunt Blanche, who assisted my mother joined the nunnery, the Sisters of Saint-Rosaire and prayed a great deal.

Note that this boy had long hair and wore short pants until the age of twelve when all other young boys dressed as men with regular trousers; they had a few swear words in their vocabulary and a brush cut. I felt different than my peers.

Finally the ultimate happened; a priest arrived at our home in Lac Simon claiming that I had a vocation. A remarkable young man who knows all the prayers of the mass and vespers in Latin. Within a year I was expelled from that school. Yes expelled on May 10, 1942.

This unique candid child, due to his coolness and being to hot-blooded escaped the ordeal. . No, no, do not say that.

### My school years

In September 1942 the Rimouski Seminary taught me how to cope with all aspects of humanism. This doctrine, that ensures that nothing escapes man, was my initiation to the Latin and Greek cultures with emphasis on the grand knowledge primarily of the French and the British civilization. Since 1942 this home of humanistic knowledge continues to influence me in 2005 when deciding the orientations of my life. My Alma Mater continues to haunt me and still today I rely on my early teachings to select my life orientations.



It is easy for me to enter this red brick structure, the seminary, and to walk the floors, review the layout and be reminiscence the past. First of all, the basic intention of the school is devoted to the body and its development. Consider first the areas where interior and exterior sports were played: bowling, billiards, ping-pong, boxing, gymnastic, baseball, soft-ball, wall-ball, field games, tennis, hockey, soccer and lacrosse. In brief, I won championships, alone or in teams in all of these sports. Even in the high-jump, I jumped a height of nearly seven feet. At the age of fifteen from 1943 to 45, I played hockey with the major hockey club of the Seminary (the Fusiliers of the Saint Laurent, World War II, 39-45). I played as a centre-man on the second team of all-stars. Jules Blais, a hockey leader, saw potential in me and visited my father to have me sent to play hockey in Toronto. Later, in 1950-51, I played for Laval University hockey team.

I became a professor, and in 1953 I got married. I coached the teams of the Seminary and Maritime Institute, prior to the arrival of the physical educators, Gaston Dionne. During this period began a new era in the field of sports. Being with the Federation of Leisure we began traveling from Iles of the Madeleine to Témiscamingue. At that time, I was president to the Quebec Federation. This first phase in my life was devoted to material life and to physical health. It also included the recreation room and the cafeteria. These areas also contributed to our formation. We learned to eat what was served without questioning and participated in scholarly activities with students of the following schools: Commerce, Navy and Teachers College. One learns how to act socially and to respect others. Then there was the music room, the reading room where one could listen to music. It is also in that room that the choir met to rehearse on Saturdays. As is required, prior to other activities, there were the controlled visits to the toilets for essential activity.

The second area to visits, involves the administration. These were two large rooms where studies were carried out and projects were submitted every day of the week, including an essay on Sunday. French, Latin, Greek, History, Geography, English, Arithmetic, Design, Mathematics, Philosophy, and sciences, were all controlled activities that we were required to learn. They were not as appreciated as was evening readings which was also a pre-requisite. If a student failed one field of study, he failed his entire year and had to start over. These fields of studies became our « apprenticeship » to a general culture.

The Arts Room, that became the la Salle Georges-Beaulieu was where the orchestra, the brass band, the choir, the octet, the Emile Legault Theater, the big New York concerts were held. Also, it was the hall where year-end prizes for students were awarded and where the graduates selected a specified ribbon to identify his career choice. It was in that hall that members of the community participated in constructive debates. These activities contributed to our training, formation and the education.

The Georges-Beaulieu room is just above the cafeteria where earthly food was served. Just above was the chapel, the source of spiritual food for the soul. I recall that I participated in all levels of this training. In addition I studied piano. In that area I composed a true « hit »...«The descent to the dormitory». I then devoted my musical now how to the trumpet. First I played with the orchestra, the brass band, and then for the choir. I presided over these three groups and with some friends from Laval University we formed an orchestra.

In my working life, for a time, I substituted for the reverend father Perreault and Maurice Charest, at the helm of the Rimouski brass band. Later, my cultural engagement allowed me to participate in the creation of the Antoine-Perreault ensemble at the Musée-de-la-Mer; I was also involved with the Young Chamber of Commerce and the Richelieu Club.

Finally the third area to be visited is the chapel. It is the source of life for the soul, and the true life.

I also participated in discussion groups that were at times boisterous. I am also a regular at concerts in Rimouski and in Quebec. I also ventured in the fields of theater and cinema.

This area remains important to me for activities such as baptism, marriage, funerals, Sunday mass, major religious feast and processions. I am also concerned with the absence of priests. I learned to adapt to the changes in the Church and the social activities that are now the responsibility of lay social groups. In brief, the church continues to lead in major events and glamorous religious activities. One should not forget the church's contribution to the development of our Western world with its sacred music, remarkable texts, stained glass windows, organs, cathedrals, etc., etc. She has thus prevented us from being more barbaric. As a student, I always remember the song «Come divine Messiah» that precede the coming the Christmas exams and the vacation. We shuddered in our dreams. The important feast celebrated in the Chapel, demanded the participation of the choir, the orchestra, and the involvement of all the students, altar boys and cantors singing with joy. The uniqueness and brilliance of the attires, according to the religious feast, the music and the presence of our professors, in their colored attires, contributed to a memorable and unforgettable sense of religious well being.

Adding to our religious and cultural training each had a spiritual mentor. He was always a well trained man in the fields of education, athletics and religion. It was no easy task to follow these eight years of intense training and education. Yes! Eight years! Every day, there were checks and controls of your daily assignments. Every months, exams with report cards, and «bene and optime» cards for conduct in class, recreation and study periods. Every trimester there was an examination in each major field of study. Then, at the end of the year, all had to take final examinations. The final four years of study were in conjunction with Laval University. This period included classes in the letters, the art of elocution and theater to end with two years of philosophical studies. Students had to earn and merit the respect and recognition of his professors. Only after this demanding formation the student had completed his study in two major fields: the Arts and Sciences. After eight years of all imaginable controls beginning at five thirty until nine o'clock at night from the age of twelve to twenty-one we acquired this unique training. As an only son I gained the friendship of many brothers during these formation years from 42 to 50, the year of the fire of Rimouski. Though I was an only child I had thirty-four brothers. Classical studies have had a marked favorable impact on my life.

Joseph-Marie Levasseur.

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## Curriculum vitae

Joseph-Marie Levasseur was the only son of Joseph Levasseur an industrialist from Lac-au-Saumon, Quebec.

### Education:

- Classical studies, Rimouski seminary 1942-1950 BA Laval.
- Science and English studies, University of Ottawa.
- Literature studies: University of Montréal M.A. Thesis on Gabrielle Roy.
- Historical studies, Laval University, Arts, history graduate.
- Teaching studies, Laval University, Teachers College. Graduate in Education and certificate in specialized teaching.

### Experience:

- Thirty six years of teaching experience. Taught French, Latin Greek, History etc.
- Special courses at the Rimouski Seminary, Syntax and Methodology.
- First professor to teach girls at the Seminary.
- Was instigator, with colleagues from the Rimouski CEGEP, of the interdisciplinary program for students aspiring to study, Law, History, Philosophy, Psychology and Geography.
- Bachelor for Adults, Instructor in Analytical literature, Essay writing and Bibliographies.
- In 1978, directed the production of an 810 page book on to Rimouski, commemorating the 150th anniversary.
- Published numerous articles in various journals and participated on many radio and television shows as an analyst and commentator on various topics.
- Founder of the Museum of the Sea and the Antoine Perrault Ensemble with friends.
- Other activities include, reading, golf, skiing, sailing and tennis. He also invited as a speaker. He was married to Yolande Saint Pierre and his children, Guy, Marc and Christine who have given him seven grand children.



# LEVASSEUR ASSOCIATION



The Association, Levasseur d'Amérique Inc. is a non-profit organization, founded in 1988, in accordance to a federal charter. Its goals are:

- To join together and unite a large number of Levasseur and other descendants who have adopted the patronymic Borgia, Carmel, Carmell, Vasseur, Vassor, Vasser.
- To promote, develop and diffuse historical genealogical knowledge about the Levasseur families with Internet, an electronic Newsletter published three times per year also the publication of genealogical dictionaries.
- To maintain and update, on an ongoing basis, the genealogical data base available to members at all times on the Internet.
- To make available to members a family photo album and the Newsletters that the Association has published since 1988.
- To honor the memory of our forefathers and their descendants by way of monuments, plaques or symbolic gestures that commemorate historic events that are chronicle the Levasseur family.
- To gather all documents related to the Levasseur family for the purpose of constructing archives that will constitute the heritage of our Association and that will provide a source of information for historians and genealogists.

*We would appreciate if you could send us family related documents that would add to our data base of archives and also enable us to continue the publication of the Levasseur Newsletter three times per year. The participation of the Levasseurs and members of their families is essential to allow us to pursue our mission. Send us your photos and texts for the next publication of the Newsletter. You can download them very easily with this new tool and by providing a brief description of the photo or text that is being sent. Following receipt of your documents, a copy of all information to be published in the Newsletter will be sent to you for approval prior to final publication.*

Join our team of volunteers, contact us !!

Web site : [www.levasseur.org](http://www.levasseur.org) - [webmaster@levasseur.org](mailto:webmaster@levasseur.org)

Facebook : <https://www.facebook.com/associationlevasseur>

Other Levasseur Association Web sites:

[irma.levasseur.org](http://irma.levasseur.org)  
[militaires.levasseur.org](http://militaires.levasseur.org)  
[carmel.levasseur.org](http://carmel.levasseur.org)  
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