



THE FRIGONS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
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FREGOE, FREGON, FREGONE FAMILIES

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WHO WERE THOSE EARLY PIONEERS OF CANADA?

Pierre Frigon (4)

The first European pioneers to colonize Canada were French. Were they of peasant origin? It was to answer this question that the American Leslie Choquette wrote her

Ph.D. thesis⁽¹⁾. The amazing conclusion of this thesis does not by itself explain how this handful of immigrants, who conquered the North American continent in the name of the King of France, was able to resist the English assimilation and is still thriving to this day. However, she gives us the opportunity to put into perspective the idea of a backward agricultural society that was conveyed by certain observers during the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth centuries. A perception which is unfortunately still passed on by the Anglophone society.

Lord Durham, in his famous report to the King of England in 1839, concluded that Quebec was a country populated by peasants without a history or a future. He did not know that these people were peasants because of circumstances beyond their control and not by birth: these nineteenth century peasants were not sons of peasants! That is the conclusion of Leslie Choquette's Ph.D. thesis! Let us take a closer look at her findings.



(Continued on page 118)



Weathers, *Nos ancêtres*, Vol. 19, p. 4 (1990)

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1- *French Emigration to Canada in Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, Harvard University, 1988, published in 1997 by President and Fellows of Harvard College Editions under the title *Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity and Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada*.

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

The Frigons, History and Genealogy

Gérald Frigon (116)

During the meeting of March 29, 2003, your Board of Directors approved the idea of launching the project to publish a book on the Frigons. This book would detail the entire known genealogy of the Frigons, Frigones, Fregos, Fregoes, Fregons, Fregones, giving their occupations, social (in the broad sense) and economic status or all other general aspects relating to their life in their milieu. Furthermore, this book would relate the history of the Frigons and present the context in which they lived, worked and enjoyed themselves.

The publication of *The Frigons, History and Genealogy* represents an enormous enterprise. There are still big gaps in our genealogical data. For example: Mike Frigon, (son of Daniel Eugene, son of Daniel Francis, son of Eugène) who lives in Cloquet, Minnesota cannot yet be linked to any of the ancestors listed in our data base.



The historical section is even leaner. We only know the

occupations of roughly half of our ancestors. As for the data regarding their social roles (magistrate, church trustee, etc.) and leisure activities (fiddler, gardener, hunter, ...), it is scarcer still.

To know them better, we must also talk about the historical context in which they lived, the economic situation at the time, their health, their nutrition, etc. These are all fields in which we must do research, especially in all the places where there were Frigons (Batiscan and Louiseville in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, New England in the 19th and 20th centuries, and even Australia in the 20th century).

This publication will be a gigantic undertaking, given the quantity of data gathered from research, documents, and accumulated knowledge that must be put together. Each one of you can help according to your fields of interest: genealogy, history, economics, sociology, health, etc. If you consider this project to be a worthwhile undertaking, you can take part in it. The Egyptian Pyramids were not built by supermen, but by the accumulation of small tasks. Which small task will be your share in the publication of this book?

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Annual Meeting

Cap Vie 2003



The annual meeting will take place at the Cap Vie Community Centre, 367 Sainte-Rose Boulevard, in Laval. You will find further information in the pamphlet enclosed in this newsletter.

first six generations (of Frigons) which he prepared for the Association's Web site. This family tree will be available free of charge. There will also be a slide presentation of the Frigon Family CD.

Also on the agenda is an important meeting for all members interested in the Frigon-Chamois Park project.

The highlight of the year will be the launching of the book project, *The Frigons, History and Genealogy*.

Furthermore, Georges E. Frigon (93), who is in charge of the Genealogy Committee of the Association, will be there to make a computerized personal family tree for those who wish to have one, and to explain the tree of the

SUMMARY ANNUAL MEETINGS	
August 23, 2003	in Laval
August 24, 2002	in Brigham
July 20, 2001	in St-Paulin
Sept. 2, 2000	in Ste-Anne-de-la-Pérade
May 22, 1999	in Montreal
Sept. 26, 1998,	in Cap-de-la-Madeleine
May 17, 1997	in Hull
August 31, 1996	in Batiscan
Sept. 23, 1995	in Cap-de-la-Madeleine
May 7, 1994,	foundation of the Association

For nature-lovers, the Rivière des Mille-Îles Park offers outdoor activities.



We hope to see all of you at this ninth annual meeting!



THE NEWSLETTER BY E-MAIL !



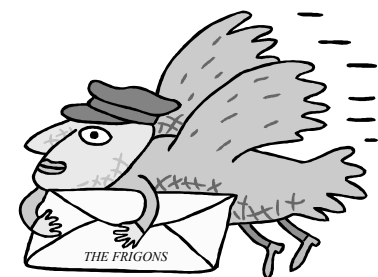
If you are among those who would prefer to receive the Newsletter by e-mail rather than by post, all you have to do is inform Jean-René Frigon (11) of your choice at :

jrf@cgocable.ca

After having tried this new format, you can always go back to the "paper format", simply by notifying Jean-René.

Sending out the newsletter by e-mail offers several advantages: a considerable reduction in costs and especially in handling time. Moreover, you will receive your Newsletter before those who receive it by post, e-mail being instantaneous.

Welcome to all cybernauts!



It's fast, easy and ecological!

Legal deposit - 3rd Quarter 2003
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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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National Library of Canada

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Revision: authors of manuscripts are free to accept or reject the corrections, remarks or suggestions proposed to them by the revisers.

I. - The Great War

Georges E. Frigon (93)

On the 1st of August 1914, Germany declared war on Russia and, two days later, on France. France then sought the support of Great Britain. On August 4th, Germany, while marching against France, invaded Belgium which had remained neutral. Great Britain then issued an ultimatum to Germany that had also promised to respect Belgium's neutrality, to remove its troops. The ultimatum, that was never answered, expired at midnight on August 4th: Great Britain was now in the conflict. And since Great Britain was at war, Canada was also.



Canadian troops on Salisbury Plain, during the winter of 1914-1915. ID #20833

Credit: Department of Defence / National Archives of Canada / PA-22705

<http://www.canadianheritage.org/reproductions/20833.htm>

The prospect of a prolonged war incited both sides to look for allies immediately. The "dominions" (Australia, Canada, New Zealand) sided at once with Great Britain and dispatched troops that

did not delay to take part in the operations. As of 1915, the conflict assumed worldwide proportions.



In 1914, as soon as Great Britain entered the conflict, it was obvious to Canadians that their country was at war, and the nation offered its support to the motherland with incredible spontaneity. Sir Wilfred Laurier, spoke in the name of most Canadians when he declared: "It is our duty to inform Great Britain that the Canadians are animated by one and the same sentiment, and stand solidly behind the motherland."

At the time, Canada with a regular army numbering only 3,110 men and a navy that was just being formed, was poorly equipped to embark on a world war. Yet, enlistment centres soon had thousands of young Canadians flocking in from every corner of the country.

Within a few weeks, more than 32,000 men



National Archives of Canada PA 2468, 0-4429, N 135, O-3125

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were gathered together at Camp Valcartier, situated near Quebec City, and during the next two months the first contingent of the Canadian task force sailed for England, forming the most important convoy ever to cross the Atlantic.

After landing in England, the Canadians passed a long and lugubrious winter training in the mud and drizzle of the Salisbury plains. In the spring of 1915, they were considered ready for the battle front; and they were eager.

Meanwhile, in Canada, enthusiasm did not falter, even as the list of casualties grew longer. A second contingent sailed for England in the spring of 1915, and gave rise to the 2nd Canadian Division. After training in England for a while, the second contingent went on to join the 1st Division in France in September.

In April 1917, the Canadians helped turn the tide of the battle when they won an important victory at Vimy Ridge. But this triumph, too, had a price: more

than 10,000 dead and wounded in six days. The war continued for more than a year, but, finally, the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918, and the Canadians marched in a parade of triumphant combatants in Mons.



Canadian soldiers playing cards in a shell-crater at Vimy Ridge. April 1917.

Those were four appalling years during which death and desolation were scattered everywhere by an arsenal of modern warfare (destructive explosives, rapid-fire machine guns, deadly gases, powerful warships, furtive submarines and planes).

In the next article, we will give the names of the cousins who did military service between 1914 and 1918.

Sources : Canadian Veterans www.vac-acc.gc.ca/general
 National Archives of Canada www.archives.ca
 National Archives of Australia www.asaustralia.com/mint2.htm#medals
 Archives of Radio-Canada www.radio-canada.ca

THE BOOK CORNER

Lucie Frigon Caron (56)

THE BOOK CORNER

Those who read the novel « Chemins de papier » (Paths of Paper) written by H el ene Potvin undoubtedly were surprised to discover that one of the characters is called Jos ephine Frigon.

When I read the name, I wondered if it was fictitious or if the author had been inspired by the life of a real Josephine Frigon. So I questioned the author via the (Web) site <http://www.sagamie.org/alma/artistes/helene.potvin/fiche-helenepotvin.html> and this is what she answered:



Actually, the names of all my characters are fictitious...

As for the name Frigon, it came to me in a flash, probably from my memories of a friend, Suzanne Frigon, with whom I attended school in Arvida, my birthplace in the Saguenay region. We were very close and my childhood proved to be a magnificent period of my life.»



The surname FRIGON, which is rare and not at all widespread, seems to be coming out of the shadows. We hear it mentioned more and more frequently in the media; it will be even better known now that it identifies Josephine, an important character in this novel!

THE BOOK CORNER

THE BOOK CORNER

(Continued from page 113)



In this study of emigration to Canada during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Leslie Choquette scrutinized a population of 15,810 persons who came to Canada under one title or another.

"Urbanites accounted for nearly two thirds of the group: 35% came from towns of less than 10,000 inhabitants and the remaining 64.5% came from larger cities. These proportions speak for themselves and are, in fact, impressive if we compare them with other places that are commonly mentioned in both Canadian and French historiography. The core of France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as was so often mentioned by Pierre Gouvert, was essentially rural, 85% of all French people lived and worked in communities of less than 2,000 inhabitants and approximately 80% earned their living directly from farming. Cities with a population of more than 10,000 inhabitants were scarce at the end of the Old Regime and they accounted for, at best, 10% of the total population."⁽²⁾

The emigration of women is even more remarkable. The origin of 80% of the women in the study is known: "... West Central, North West, and Parisian regions predominate with respectively 28.4%, 27.5% and 24.7% of the female immigrants ..."⁽³⁾ Amongst these women, 76.2% came from cities, 56.8% of which were large cities (more than 10,000 population), and 19.4 % from cities of less than 10,000 population. The remaining 23.8% came from boroughs or villages, that is, from rural areas.⁽⁴⁾ Furthermore, 23.9% of the women came from the Paris region (Ile de France).⁽⁵⁾

Thus, "despite the old cliché that the French Canadian settler was backward, this study of the regional origins of the French emigrants to Canada underlines the contribution of the newly developing Atlantic economic sectors that were the most focused outward, that is, the North West, West Central and South West as well as the greater Parisian district."⁽⁶⁾

As a matter of fact, "The epithet 'MODERN' is the one that best describes the regional origins of these French

immigrants to Canada, although this does not for the most part correspond with the point of view of traditional historiographers. The fundamental modernism of these "Frenchmen" was obscured for a long time by a nostalgic image of the peasant settler, an image that projected and idealized the myth of backwardness upon a group of people who were in reality the leaders of the Atlantic expansion of France."⁽⁷⁾



We can better appreciate, then, the indignation felt by our ancestors at being labeled as peasants. The French peasant belonged to the lowest social class, which was close to slavery. This was far from being the case of these independent, enterprising and free-spirited urbanites who landed in Canada.

This helps us to understand the astonishment of Lahontan, Peter Kalm and other observers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who described the free spirited and enterprising Canadian settlers, their modernism and good manners, their stylishness, the freedom granted their women and the quality of their speech. The founders of Canada seem to have experienced "liberty, equality and fraternity" long before their countrymen, who did so only from 1789 onward, thirty years after the conquest of Canada by the British.

Furthermore, we can better understand that a great number of these immigrants were unskilled farmers. Imagine these former city-dwellers facing a forest of forty acres, with only their arms and a minimal knowledge of agriculture. How would you have reacted? This appears to have been the situation facing two thirds of these French settlers who came to Canada during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries!

After the conquest, excluded more and more systematically from trade and the business world, these pioneers of urban origin became part of the agricultural milieu, but their mentality remained very different

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2- Leslie Choquette, *De Français a paysans, Modernité et tradition dans le peuplement du Canada Français* [From Frenchmen to Peasants, Modernity and Tradition in the Populating of French Canada]. Septentrion Presses de l'Université de Paris-Sorbonne, 2001, 325 pages, page 32.

3- Leslie Choquette, p. 40

4- Leslie Choquette, p. 45

5- Leslie Choquette, p. 41

6- Leslis Choquette, p. 46

7- Leslie Choquette, p. 23

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from that of the peasants. The British rulers were hard pressed to impose themselves upon them. To the point where, fearing the loss of this colony to the independent United States, the King of England proclaimed the "Quebec Act" in 1774, an act that allowed this unique colony of his realm to practice a religion other than Protestantism and to keep its own Civil Code.

The situation of the Catholic Church became precarious after the conquest because the King of England could impose Protestantism upon them at any time. To assure its survival, the church assumed the control of its flock in order to keep Canada in the bosom of England. Guardian of religion, education, health, arts and literature, the church proclaimed, by the intermediary of its Bishops, that the English victory was God's will and that all must abide by His holy will.⁽⁸⁾ This policy which caused a lot of grumbling in the lower echelons of the clergy and the population was, nevertheless, maintained until the revolt of 1837 and up to the "Quiet Revolution" in the nineteen sixties.

Then the advocates of modernism came to power; Jean Lesage's "Équipe du tonnerre" (a unique, powerful team) launched its famous slogan "Maîtres chez nous" (literally, masters in our own home). The Ministère de l'Éducation, the Caisse de Dépôt (Quebec's retirement fund), and the Société Générale de Financement were established. The nationalization of electricity, the Montreal Metro (subway system), Expo 67, the 1976 Olympic Games, etc, ensued. Quebec society renewed its ties with its pioneers' spirit of modernity as well as with the continental and world-wide vision of its ancestors.

It is interesting to note thirty years later that Quebec was the principal, if not the only province, to endorse the free trade agreement with the United States, while Ontario fiercely opposed it. With regards to juvenile criminality, Quebec is the only province to favor an educational approach rather than incarceration.

Amongst the two hundred Canadian enterprises having offices in China, some forty are from Quebec. The Cirque du Soleil has revolutionized the circus concept and enjoys worldwide recognition. Also, Quebec farmers have become very competent.

The Quebec Government has commercial offices in Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Chile, China (Beijing, Shanghai); in Costa Rica, the Ivory Coast, Spain, the United States (Atlanta, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Miami, New York); in France, Japan, Mexico, Panama, Peru, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. South Korea, the Philippines and Taiwan have offices in the Ministère de l'Industrie et du Commerce in Montreal. Italy also has an office in Montreal.



Many Quebec companies are leaders in biotechnology, aerospace, the construction of railway-system equipment, commercial printing, pulp and paper, etc. etc.

We are the product of the efforts and hard work of previous generations. The quiet determination of the founders of Canada, their notorious insubordination, their free spirit, their continental vision have made us what we are today.

It would appear that the enterprising spirit and the modernity of the pioneers have triumphed over two hundred years (1760-1960) of forced rurality, and that the reputation of being a backward society has definitely been relegated to the realm of urban legends.

8- The orders of the Bishops are eloquent in: Adrien Therio, *Un siècle de collusion entre le clergé et le gouvernement britannique, Anthologie des mandements des évêques (1760-1867)*, [A Century of Collusion between the Clergy and the British Government : an Anthology of Bishops' Orders]. Editor XYZ, Collection Documents, 1998, 267 pages.

DID FRANÇOIS FRIGON COME FROM FIRMINY?

Lucie Frigon Caron (56)



Always seeking clues that might lead to the discovery of our ancestor François Frigon's birthplace, I was exploring on the Internet when I found a site that mentions the marriage of Antoinette Fournier, the daughter of Jean FOURNIER and Anne **FRIGON**. The date and place of the marriage, October 29, 1647 in Firminy, gave me hope that I had found a good lead.

In order to learn more, I wrote to the owner of the genealogical data base in question in France. This was in September 2002. Having received no answer, I made a second request in December and this time, Mr. Christian Lauranson replied and suggested that I contact his brother Yves, for the information requested concerned the ancestors of the latter's wife.

In January, I contacted Yves Lauranson. He informed me that he had no other details about Anne FRIGON who lived in Firminy or thereabouts in the 17th century.

Though disappointed by his answer, I continued my research and, while exploring the town of Firminy's Web site, I discovered the existence of the Firminy and Vicinity Historical Society.



Town Hall of Firminy

I got in touch with this Society, hoping that it would confirm the existence of Frigon families in the region. The reply came quickly: there is no trace of the name FRIGON in the records of Firminy and the surrounding area. Regarding the marriage of the FOURNIER/FRIGON couple's daughter, the archivist of the Historical Society of Firminy (Château des Bruneaux) Mr. Vigouroux, wrote the following:

“According to the Catholic registers of the parish of Firminy, the following is the marriage recorded on that date: Marriage of Pierre DU FRESSE, son of André and Louise NERON of the Séauve/Semène region (parish of Saint-Didier-en-Velay), and FORNIER Antoinette daughter of Jean and Anne **PICHON** from Raboin (parish of Firminy).”

“You will note (unfortunately) that there is no question here of Anne FRIGON...”

The results of this inquiry were not those we had hoped for; so we must continue our research and tell ourselves that, someday, we will find the right lead.

To Internet researchers: the mention of the name **FRIGON** on the site <http://www.ma-genealogie.org/lauranson/rosaz/> is a false trail

For a cybervisit to Firminy :

<http://www.prysnnet.com/~villefirminy/index.php3>



FAMILY NEWS Georges E. Frigon (93)

Sincere condolences to our members, cousins and families who have lost a loved one:

Armand E. Frigon,	husband of Martha Hibbard,	died on April 10, 2002 in Woonsocket, RI, USA.
Claude Frigon,	husband of Jocelyne Bourassa of Lac-à-la-Tortue,	died November 17, 2002 in Shawinigan-Sud, QC.
Joan Frigon,	daughter of Edouard Frigon and Jeanne-d'Arc Joly of Sorel-Tracy,	died December 25, 2002 in Greenfield Park, QC.
Jean-Marie Frigon,	husband of Blandine Blais of Albanel,	died January 4, 2003 in Dolbeau Mistassini, QC.
Peter J. Frigon,	husband of Kathleen V. Sullivan,	died February 6, 2003 in Salem, MA, USA.
Wanda Phelps, of Wescosville, PA, USA,	wife of Royal Snyder. and daughter of Louis Phelps and Hazel Frego,	died February 20, 2003 in Allentown, PA, USA.
Corinne Aubé,	wife of the late André Frigon,	died April 7, 2003 in Louiseville, QC.
Carole Lavoie,	companion of Jacques Frigon,	died May 5, 2003 in Trois-Rivières, QC.
Sonia Lapointe Frigon,	wife of Martin Frigon,	died May 19, 2003 in Quebec, QC.
Edgar Bordeleau, of Saint-Stanislas	husband of Isabelle Frigon,	died May 22, 2003 in Trois-Rivières, QC.
Rita Frigon,	wife of the late Liboire Paré,	died May 23, 2003 in Montreal, QC.
Lucie Frigon,	daughter of Gabrielle and Paul-Émile Frigon, of Shawinigan,	died May 24, 2003 in Montreal, QC.
Justin Frigon,	husband of Cécile Ayotte, of Lac-à-la-Tortue,	died May 31, 2003 in Shawinigan-Sud, QC.
Mathieu Frigon,	son of Serge Frigon of Crabtree,	died May 31, 2003 in St-Paul de Joliette, QC.