



# THE FRIGONS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE  
FRIGON, FRIGONE, FREGO,  
FREGOE, FREGON, FREGONE FAMILIES

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FALL 2002

## JOHN FREGON AND THE GOLD RUSH

John Riddell (187)



Jean Frigon /John Frigon



Elizabeth McCoy

### GENEALOGICAL SKETCH

(John Riddell)

François Frigon and Marie-Claude Chamois

Jean-François Frigon and Gertrude Perrot

Antoine Pierre Frigon and M.-Anne Trottier

Joseph Frigon and Magdeleine Lefebvre

Joseph Frigon and Josephte Savoie

Jean Frigon / John Frigon and Elizabeth McCoy

Herely Fregon and William Bradley

Elizabeth Bradley and Henry Riddell

John Riddell et Margot James

connection to the Frigon family tree. At that moment, I found hundreds of cousins in North America and embarked on an adventure, which still has a long way to travel.

Jean Frigon was born in Louiseville, Quebec in 1829 to Joseph Frigon and Josette Savoie. His family emigrated to the US and I believe Jean went to the California gold rush in the late 1840's. Gold was discovered in Australia in 1851 and many of the California miners who were down on their luck came to the Australia in search of riches.



Australian shipping records show a John Fregoie landed in Melbourne, Victoria from the Ocean Eagle, which

From early childhood, I knew that my grandmother's father, John Fregon, was a French Canadian. However, neither my grandmother, (Herely Rachael Fregon) nor my mother (Elizabeth Bradley) ever talked much about him. When I attended High School, a second language was compulsory and for some reason I chose French which, I might say, I didn't enjoy, but after all what was the point in an Aussie kid learning French. In 1960, my grandmother who was the last surviving child of John and Elizabeth Fregon, died. Years passed and when my mother was failing, I began to realize that I really knew very little about my past and the French Canadian connection in particular. The rest of my ancestry was English and Irish stock

I well remember the day in November 1999; I was on the net and at a loss to know where to surf. I landed on ancestry.com and entered Herely Fregon in the search engine. To my complete surprise up came her



### Public Record Office Victoria

Index of Inward Passenger Lists for British and Foreign Ports 1852-1889  
Surname Given Name Age Year Month Ship Port Fiche page  
FREGOIE JOHN 20 1852 DEC OCEAN EAGLE F 5 3

sailed from Boston in 1852. There seems no doubt that this is Jean Frigon from Louiseville, Quebec. On arrival in Australia Jean Frigon anglicized his name to John

(Continued on page 92)

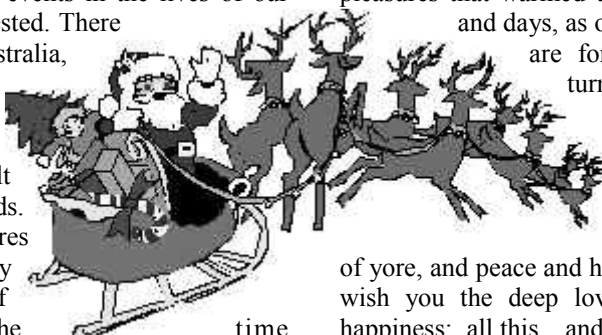
### CONTENTS

John Fregon and the gold rush .....	89
A word from the President .....	90
Board of Directors of the Association .....	90
The team of the Quarterly Newsletter .....	90
Édouard Frigon <i>alias</i> Edward "Ned" Frigon .....	91
François Frigon - Voyageur, XVI	
Ode to the "Coureur des bois" .....	93
Light on the past - XII	
Louis Durand and Joseph Moreau .....	94
A Hunting Trip with the Frigons, during the 40'S -V- .....	96

## A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gérald Frigon (116)

It is always enjoyable to read about events in the lives of our pioneers and the courage they manifested. There was John Vantilles Fregon in Australia, Edward "Ned" Frigon in British Columbia, Joseph Moreau in Illinois, François and all the adventuresome entrepreneurs of the period who built the country with their own hands. Mainly, we read about their adventures and misfortunes, but they certainly must have experienced moments of happiness and joy as well. Think of the time when there was neither radio nor television to keep us entertained: the pleasure of warm and cordial encounters,



pleasures that warmed the heart and the soul for many hours and days, as opposed to today's virtual pleasures that are forgotten as soon as the television is turned off.

For the holidays, I wish you a return to the traditional values of friendship and cordiality; I wish you the tranquillity that enveloped the valleys of yore, and peace and harmony with neighbours and friends; I wish you the deep love of those dear to you and lasting happiness; all this...and more...is my sincere wish for you and yours throughout the New Year.

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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.

# Édouard Frigon *alias* Edward "Ned" Frigon (1834 - 1917) *Pioneer in 1850 among the aboriginals on Vancouver Island*

Raymond Frigon (1)

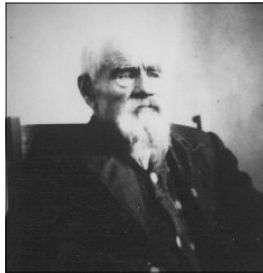
and

Charles Frigon (50), Wendy Scott, Margo Frigon (7), Robert Frigon (2), Lucie Frigon (56), Paul Frigon (6)

91

## I - Finding Édouard Frigon's origin

Édouard Frigon was born in Saint-Prosper on March 28, 1834, first-born of Hilaire Frigon and Mary-Ann Grant. He left home about 1849 for San Francisco, lured it seems by the Gold Rush. About 1850, he went on to British Columbia where he variously traded furs with the natives in the North, was holder of a mine concession and later operator of a hotel featuring, it is said, the longest bar North of San Francisco!



Édouard Frigon c.1915

### GENEALOGICAL SKETCH (Édouard "Ned" Frigon)

François and Marie-Claude Chamois  
|  
Jean-François and Gertrude Perrot  
|  
Antoine Pierre and M.-Anne Trottier  
|  
Pierre Antoine and Josephite Massicotte  
|  
Ignace and Marguerite Prénouveau  
|  
Hilaire and M.-Anne Grant  
|  
Édouard Frigon

He died in Quatsino in 1917, having lived 65 of his years in his adopted land. If we can describe with accuracy the milestones in his life from birth in Saint-Prosper to death in Quatsino, it is on account of findings our research team were able to make, albeit randomly, over several years. We had to sort out fact from the hearsay prevailing in North Vancouver Island's earlier history...even the official death record puts Édouard as born in France! What we will be telling you about Édouard is in a sense new information - an important addition to the local history of Vancouver Island. Edward's life reads like an adventure novel.

The story of the research into his identity runs like a crime novel where detectives follow numerous leads before solving the crime! Following is an account of the several paths that had to be followed before Édouard's true origin could be finally identified.

Our research on Édouard Frigon started in **April 1994** when **Charles Frigon (50)** of Edmonton wrote to the *B.C. Geographical Names Office* in Victoria to enquire about how the **Frigon Islets**<sup>1</sup> on the west coast of Vancouver Island got their name. A quick reply came from the *B.C. Geographical Names Office's* Research Officer, **Janet**

**Mason**. The name was suggested by H.Parizeau of the *Canadian Hydrographic Service* to honour the memory of Edward Frigon, first settler among the Kwakiutl in North Vancouver Island. In **March 1995**, **Wendy Scott** of Ladysmith, B.C., whose hobby is the history of North Vancouver Island, wrote to **Margo Frigon (7)** of Vancouver to ask for help in identifying "Ned" Frigon. On behalf of Margo, **Raymond Frigon (1)** answered the letter and thus began a most fruitful correspondence. Ms Scott provided much essential information including Édouard's death certificate, which shows him as having been born in France, but with relatives in Saint-Prosper. **Robert Frigon (2)**, the Frigon family *guru*, could not find in the records any Édouard Frigons born in Saint-Prosper at the time.

**Raymond** then suggested assuming that Édouard had in fact originated in France. He may have been part of a particular immigration of French from France that took place from about 1765, after the Conquest<sup>1</sup>. The French immigrants after arriving in New York from Le Havre reached Quebec by way of the Hudson and Richelieu rivers, thus crossing the border at Lacolle. Mention is made in the local Vancouver Island literature that Édouard spoke of **Lacolle** and nearby Noyan which could be taken as proof, if vague, that he was one of these later immigrants from France. **Robert** visited the Lacolle-Noyan region and found no Frigons there.

In **March 1996**, **Robert** searched for a possible christening of an Édouard Frigon in the parish of Sainte-Geneviève-de-Batiscan next door to Saint-Prosper. In the *Répertoire de Naissances (1728-1987) de Sainte-Geneviève-de-Batiscan*, he found: *Édouard Frigon, né le 28 mars 1834, premier-né de Hilaire et de Mary-Ann Grant*. At the time of Édouard's birth Saint-Prosper had not been raised to the status of parish; baptisms had to be performed in neighbouring parishes. The **March 28**, 1834 date of birth matches closely the date of **March 8**, 1834 that **Raymond** found in the Canadian Census of 1901. Thus was clarified the mystery of Edward "Old Ned" Frigon's place of origin.

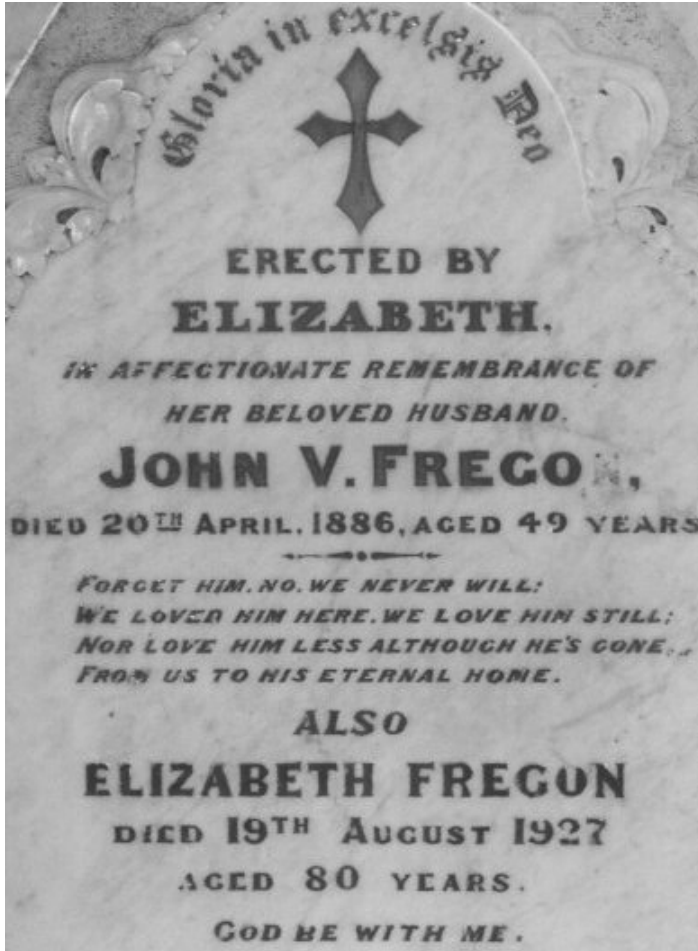
In the next issue: II - Édouard Frigon, a life. "With full page of photographs and maps".

1- The Frigon Islets are located close to Port Alice in Neroutsos Inlet and can be easily found on a map of North Vancouver Island. See <http://maps.nrcan.gc.ca/search/namequery.html>.

2 - *Les Français au Québec 1765 - 1865*, Marcel Fournier, Septentrion-Christian, 1995 - *Un siècle d'émigration au Québec*, Marcel Fournier, Gé-Magazine, juin 1995.

(Continued from page 89)

Fregon and at some point lowered his age, as his death certificate and gravestone show he died on 20/4/1886 aged 49, whereas the Quebec records indicate he was 57 when he died.



In 1855, James and Charlotte McCoy and family of eight left Edinburgh in Scotland bound for Victoria. He was a Scottish farmer who had lost his livelihood in the Scottish Clearances of the mid 1800's and was drawn to Australia with the promise of huge tracts of virtually free farming land. Their second eldest daughter Elizabeth married John Fregon in Omeo, Victoria in 1861 when she was sixteen and a half.

Gold was discovered in Omeo, Victoria in the 1850's, and although it was in an extremely inhospitable area, a small settlement rapidly grew as gold diggers from all over the world descended on Omeo looking for their fortunes.

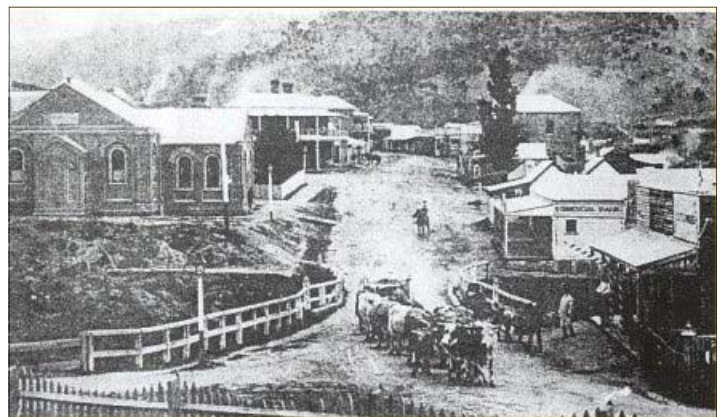
John and Elizabeth selected land at Tongio, 10 km south of Omeo, set about clearing it for farming, and built



their first house, which was virtually a bark humpy. Their first child John James arrived in 1866 and they subsequently had 12 children, 4 of whom died in childhood.



Gold mining with pick and shovel is a thirsty business in the searing hot Australian sun. John and Elizabeth saw their fortune could be made from hotels rather than gold, so purchased and operated The Golden Age Hotel in Omeo in the late 1860's. The hotel was a single story timber building and was burnt down in 1871. The Fregons subsequently rebuilt. They constructed a double story building that in



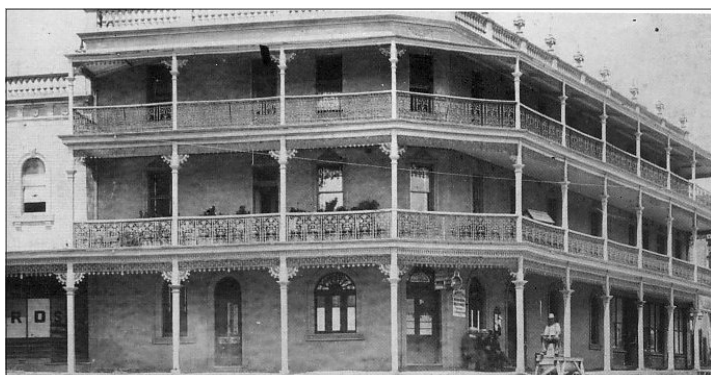
*Omeo main street showing the two story Fregon's Golden Age Hotel at the end of the road, circa 1885*

turn was destroyed by fire in 1891, some 5 years after John Fregon's death from pneumonia on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1886. John was buried in the Omeo cemetery, 17,000

(Continued on page 93)



(Continued from page 92)



*Fregon's three story Golden Age Hotel built 1894.*



*Burnt out shell of the Golden Age Hotel January 1939.*

km from his birthplace in Louiseville, Quebec.

Elizabeth was left with several young children and decided to rebuild yet again, this time a magnificent three-story brick building. However, debt and the land crash of the late 1890's forced Elizabeth into bankruptcy. On 13<sup>th</sup> January 1939 a wild forest fire engulfed the town of Omeo and Elizabeth's magnificent

hotel building was burnt out; just a smouldering shell remained.

Further information and pictures can be found at <http://www.fregon.cjb.net>

John Riddell  
*jandmr@ozemail.com.au*

## Fregon Family in Australia

**François Frigon - Voyageur**  
Pierre Frigon (4)

### XVI Ode to the "Coureur des bois"

As an epilogue to this series of articles on the 17<sup>th</sup> century fur trade, here is a poem sent in by Lucie Frigon (56).



*Author  
Henri-Raymond  
Casgrain  
(1831 - 1904)*

From the Indian I have learned to be carefree,  
Ever listening and intrepid:  
We share the same audacity,  
And the same love of liberty.

There is not a breath nor murmur,  
Not the slightest rustling in the woods,  
Not one of nature's sounds  
That I am unable to imitate.

My rifle is my sceptre,  
Heaven's dome my palace,  
As a rug, delicate moss,  
For a throne, the hills and forests.

When evening's darkness falls,  
I make a bed of evergreen boughs  
And resting near a lively flame  
I dream and sleep until the morn.



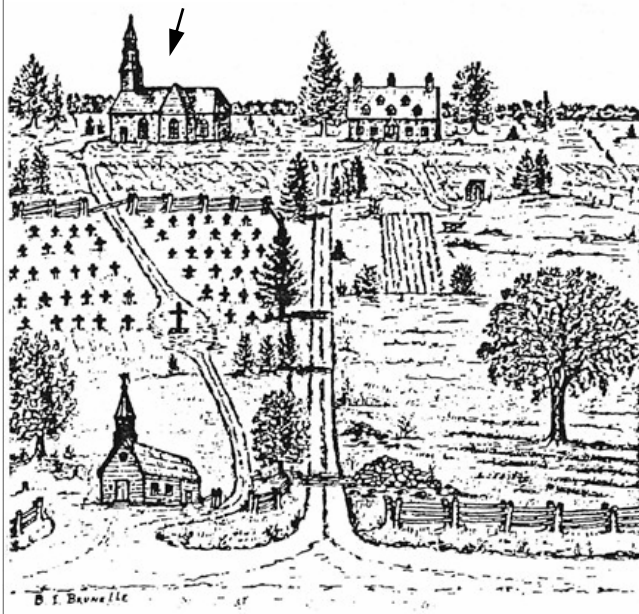
*Indian Encampment on the Ottawa River, Ontario [ca. 1870]  
National Archives of Canada/C-45487/Detail*

## Louis Durand and Joseph Moreau (continued)

Robert Frigon (2)

This chronicle, started in 1994, titled *Light on the Past*, describes the life of our ancestors in New France, and appears sporadically in the quarterly newsletter of the Association of Frigon Families. One of these chronicles informed its readers of the wedding of Francoise Frigon, daughter of Francois Frigon, to Joseph Moreau, son of Jean Moreau and Jeanne Guillet. The wedding ceremony took place in the middle of winter, as was the custom, in Batiscan on February 8, 1700. It is this Joseph Moreau, who died somewhere in Illinois sometime later, who will be the subject of this episode.

Church of Batiscan in 1700



de Lamothe Cadillac, were at the home of Antoine Adhemar, notary of Ville Marie. Marie-Therese did not accompany her husband but remained in Montreal to supervise the shipping of merchandise ordered by her husband and destined for Fort Buade. Holding her husband's Power of Attorney, she could legally sign any notarial documents. The two traders received one hundred pounds for their expenses to Illinois and the transportation of all merchandise as selected by Marie-Therese Guyon. They could also trade some personal effects to make up for the meagre compensation she paid them.

"Only the people eager for great accomplishments should venture to Canada," wrote Marc Lescarbot, analyst of Champlain's exploits of 1609. Did he already foresee the arrival in New France of a mysterious gentleman displaying gallantry while hiding low moral fibre, named Antoine de Lamothe Cadillac and who in 1701 founded Detroit? Admired in the United States, he was later honoured by naming an automobile after him. Hailing from "Musketeer Country" this ambitious Gascon native, built his fame and fortune on the back of his enemies. His mentor, Count of Frontenac, delegated him to Pontchartrain in Paris to deliver messages and receive instructions. Upon his return, he was made Captain and assumed command of Fort de Buade (Michillimakinac). It is with this sanction that Lamothe Cadillac became ruler of the unoccupied half of New France.

That era was the golden age of fur, the trade of pelts flourished. This activity was the prime source of revenue in New France and Michillimakinac was the trading centre for beaver pelts and dealings with the western allied tribes. A letter from Intendant Bochard Champigny addressed to Louis XIV, King of France, dated July 3rd, 1698 describes a treacherous act inflicted upon the traders **Louis Durand** and **Joseph Moreau**. On the morning of April 11, 1696, these two traders in the company of Marie-Therese Guyon, wife of Antoine

Their canoes loaded with merchandise, oarsmen and traders arrived in Michillimakinac a few weeks later, but not without having been stopped at Lachine by Intendant Champigny's emissary, **de la Touche**. In the name of his superior, the latter seized the surplus that the governor's permit allowed. Lamothe Cadillac had made enemies along the way and was detested by the intendant. The surpluses were auctioned and the proceeds given to the *Hospitalières* of Hotel Dieu for the poor. The voyage continued without further incident.

At Michillimakinac, the commandant, none the less satisfied to obtain the trading goods, offered the two traders a partnership. Expecting substantial profits from the more than seven thousands pounds of merchandise, he needed traders to deal with the Sioux. Some time elapsed before an accord was reached and during that time the two traders, taking advantage of this delay, sold goods and liquor to the neighbouring Indians, much to the commandant's displeasure. Upon learning of these events, the tempestuous Gascon flew into a cold rage, tempers flared up, and insults and bitter comments were exchanged. Fearing that his authority was undermined, the arrogant captain had the two culprits incarcerated and their merchandise confiscated.

From his cell, Louis Durand advised Cadillac that in his

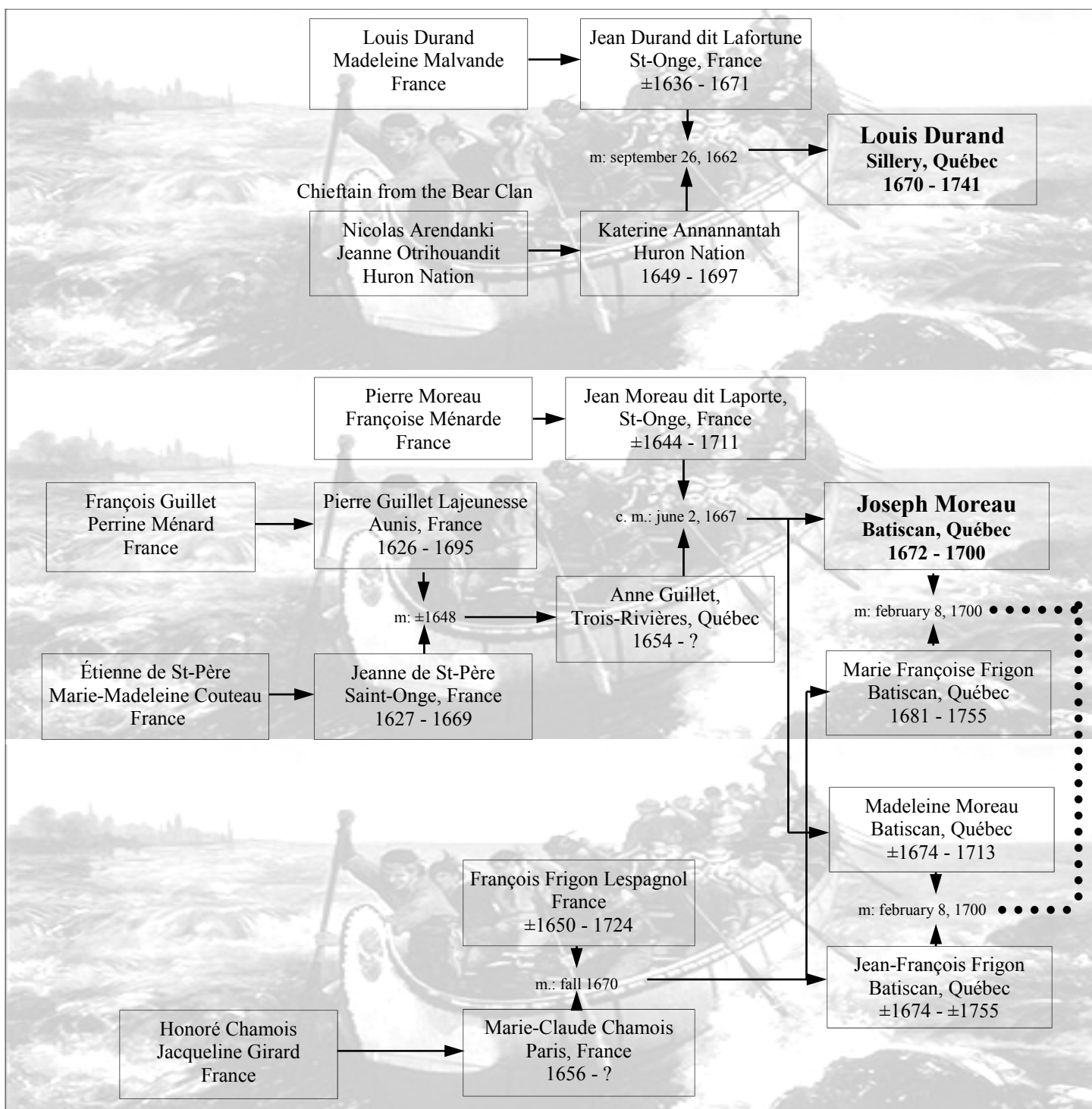
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present situation he could not honour the terms of his contract and that he and his companion Moreau should be liberated in order to continue their dealings with the Sioux, and that they were willing to cooperate. This valid argument convinced the commandant to free the prisoners. Their situation became more precarious as they found themselves deprived, isolated and at the mercy of an insolent military despot, who like an animal, was driven only by an instinct to control.

#### Bibliography:

1. - "La Nouvelle France" Robert Lahaise and Noël Vallerand (Editor Lanctot)
2. - "The adventures of Louis Durand, Joseph Moreau and Sieur Antoine Laumet de La Mothe Cadillac". Louis Durand in The Journal of the French-Canadian Heritage Society of Michigan



## A HUNTING TRIP WITH THE FRIGONS,

during the 40'S

-V-

*Jean-Pierre Frigon (194)*

### GONE ARE THE DAYS...

Hunting has changed a lot since the time of our ancestors. Certainly, some aspects have remained the same: but the strategies, the call, and tracking down the game have changed very little. The hunter is always trying to keep in touch with nature, to return to the roots, to discover something greater than him. Hunting remains a demanding outdoor sport. However, today's hunting parties are simple little outings in the woods compared to the arduous expeditions of yesteryear.

No longer is the climb to the camp the test of endurance that it used to be. A road that would have made the ancestors green with envy has replaced the long steep portages that led to the cabin. Today we get to the cottage in a "Jeep" or perhaps even by car. For travelling in rough areas, there is a wide range of sophisticated all-terrain vehicles. Even planes are used for expeditions to isolated areas. Outboard motors have eliminated the need for oars, paddles, and the rowing that made hunting so relaxing. Distance does not matter anymore.

Gone are the days of small, rustic log cabins heated by wood stoves and lighted by lanterns. Today, most hunting camps are comfortable, well-equipped, insulated, and attractive cottages. Generators produce the electricity needed. There are re-frigerators, freezers, and electric or gas stoves. In short, nothing that can be compared to the crude cab-ins that sheltered our robust grandfathers.

Nowadays, hunters take

along a healthier and more varied food supply. They even bring perishables. The big pots of steaming hot pork and beans are but a happy memory. They have been replaced by pasta, frozen dinners for the microwave oven, and by dehydrated "delicacies." Running water, even hot water, have been installed in the cottages, thus facilitating dishwashing and daily bathing. Forty years ago, this luxury could not even be imagined!

In short, hunting has lost much of its character of adventure. The camps are more comfortable and less rustic; the territories are less isolated and more accessible. Hunting is no longer the great adventure that it used to be. It has become a sport, a leisure activity. Is this good or bad...who knows?



Moreover, hunting has lost much of its prestige. Leisure activities have developed at lightning speed in the past 40 years: all kinds of sports, tourism, trips, etc...So many activities are available to fill our need for getting away from our daily routines. Hunting is only one

leisure activity among so many others. There are still a few (hunting) addicts who, much to everyone's amazement, do not mind suffering a bit to recreate the experiences of the past.



As we come to the end of our series, we salute the hunters of yesteryear. This race of men knew how to confront nature with sheer muscle power. Hunting was a traditional ancestral activity. Their wonderful adventures still make young men dream. My father was so lucky to have seen it all!