## Dictionary of French Family Names in North America

# Dictionary of French Family Names in North America:

 $Onomastics \ and \ Genealogy$ 

<sup>By</sup> Marc Picard





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ISBN (10): 1-5275-5853-3 ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-5853-3 Dictionaries are like watches: the worst is better than none, and the best cannot be expected to go quite true. —Samuel Johnson

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#### INTRODUCTION

#### 1. Francophone migrations to North America

There have been four major waves of French-speaking migrants in North America since the 1600s. The earliest one came to Québec and Acadia primarily from France in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. The second was in Louisiana as a result in large part of *le grand dérangement*, the expulsion of Acadians from the Canadian Maritime provinces from 1755 to 1764 (Cormier 2020), though a sizable number of people also went there directly from France.

The third one consisted of French Canadians who left Québec and Acadia for New England and Ontario (and thence to the American Midwest) mainly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Picard 2013). The last such migration was made up of a large number of farmers from France, Belgium and Switzerland who settled in the American Midwest in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. One can also add the many Haitians who have migrated to Québec, New York and Florida in more recent times for even though they may have been primarily Creole speakers upon their arrival, their surnames are mainly French in origin.

#### 2. Anthroponymy and genealogy

In the first stages of the research that was to lead up to the present work, the objective was to produce a dictionary that was to be solely anthroponymic in nature in the tradition of Dauzat (1989), Morlet (1997) and Tosti (2020). In other words, it was meant to contain only the etymology of the surnames of French Canada. It would have indicated, for instance, that (1) the bearers of the names *Leblanc*, *Lebrun*, *Leblond*, *Lenoir* and *Leroux* are descended from people who had blond, brown black or gray hair, that (2) those named *Boucher*, *Charpentier*, *Barbier*, *Boulanger* and *Meunier* have ancestors who were butchers, carpenters, barbers, bakers and millers, and that (3) those called *Provençal*, *Breton*, *Normand*, *Picard* and *Bourguignon* have forebears from the French regions of Provence, Bretagne, Normandie, Picardie and Bourgogne.

However, it quickly became apparent that it would be impossible to find the origins of a large number of family names on the basis of their current forms in cases where these did not correspond to anything found in Europe because of the alterations they had undergone in North America. To remedy this situation, there seemed to be only one possible solution: to resort to the vast amount of French-Canadian genealogical data found in Jetté (1983) and White (1999), inter alia, as well as on several websites. In sum, it was necessary to go back in time to try to determine

whether such and such a family name could have had an earlier form related to something known. Otherwise, it would have been necessary to enter *origin undetermined* at every turn or, even worse, to simply guess, as unfortunately happens too often in onomastic works.

Take, for example, the surnames *Marchildon*, *Marleau* and *Mombourquette*, which do not appear in any dictionary of French family names. The first does not exist in France but the ancestor of all the Marchildons, namely René from Saint-Pierre-de-Maillé in Vienne (Poitou-Charentes), was also known as *Marchelidon*, a name that still exists in that region. Although the etymology of the surname cannot be deduced from this fact, it was found after a little research that *Marchelidon* has variants such as *Margelidon*, *Marcheridon* and *Margeridon* which Morlet derives from *Margeride*, a regional form of *Marguerite*, which comes from Greek *margarītes* 'pearl' via Latin *margarīta*.

Moreover, if etymology alone were taken into account, looking for a migrant named Marleau would be futile for the simple reason that the surname *Marleau* exists only in North America. However, genealogical research turned out to reveal that this form had only been around since the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Before then, the name was written *Merlot* with the first bearer being André Merlot dit Laramée from Dinan in Côtes-d'Armor (Bretagne). This name is known to be a derivative of *merle* 'blackbird' and as such was the nickname of an individual who liked to sing or whistle.

As for *Mombourquette*, which is found mainly in Acadia, the variant *Monbourquette* naturally leads to Antoine Monbourquet from Bordeaux in Gironde (Aquitaine). Although the surname *Monbourquet* does not exist in France, it turns out that *Mon-* can be an alteration of *Mau-* as in *Mondou(x)*, *Monfils* and *Monchamp* from *Maudou*, *Maufils* and *Mauchant*. It can therefore easily be surmised that *Monbourquet* comes from *Maubourguet* which is a common placename in southwestern France. In fact, one of these is located in Gironde where, as noted above, the ancestor Monbourquet was born. In short, cases like these - and there are hundreds and hundreds of them - illustrate the usefulness, and even the necessity, of using genealogy to adequately explain the origin of many French Canadian surnames.

The benefits of genealogy are not limited to forms unique to America, however, as is clearly demonstrated by common surnames such as *Boire*, *Marinier* and *Caux*. The French etymologies proposed by Morlet, for example, would suggest that the first one denoted a 'buzzard', a nickname for a dim-witted man, that the second one was the nickname of a mariner, and that the third one denoted an individual from the Pays de Caux in Normandy. Yet it turns out that these names have a completely different origin in French Canada, one that only genealogy can reveal.

The first *Boire* of New France, who was actually named Nicolas Beauher dit Laruine, came from Rennes in Ille-et-Vilaine (Bretagne). To find its origin, Deshayes' (1995) dictionary of Bre-

#### Introduction

ton names was consulted and it revealed the existence of the name *Boher* which can easily be surmised to have been the predecessor of the francized form *Beauher*. The North American *Boire*, therefore, has nothing to do with Morlet's 'buzzard' but is derived, according to Deshayes, from the verb bo(u)c 'hañ, meaning (for a nanny goat) to be seeking the buck or to be in heat.

Contrary to what one might think, the North American bearers of the surname *Marinier* are not descendants of François Marinier from Mareuil-sur-Cher in Loir-et-Cher (Centre) who arrived in Québec around 1740 because that lineage appears to have died out in the second generation. In fact, genealogical research clearly shows that they are descended from Guillaume-Charles Amringer from Strasbourg in Bas-Rhin (Alsace) whose family name was altered *Hammarrenger*, *Marengère*, *Marenger*, *Marenger* and *Marinier* over the years.

As for *Caux*, no immigrant bearing this name can be found at any time during the colonization period. Once again, however, genealogical data is what serves to reveal its true origin, namely the German name *Koch* which means 'cook'. Thus, the son of Balthasar Koch, one of the many German soldiers who chose to settle in Québec after the American War of Independence, was Jean-Georges Caux, and all of the North Americans who bear that surname, as well as that of *Lecault*, are descended from him.

In short, given that genealogy was observed to have played such an important role in determining the origin of surnames in French Canada, the decision was made to add all available genealogical information to the anthroponymic data despite the extensive research that would be required to trace the many names and nicknames that were so common among 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century immigrants. Indeed, among the veterans who settled in French Canada after their military service, there were according to Jetté and Lécuyer (1988) no fewer than 38 with the nickname *Léveillé*, 46 with *Lajeunesse*, 50 with *Laviolette*, 63 with *Larose*, and 78 with *Lafleur*.

On the other hand, given the expectation that anyone consulting this dictionary would probably be primarily interested in identifying their actual ancestors, it was deemed necessary to try to establish through a long process of elimination precisely which ones had left offspring down to the present time, something which had apparently never been done before. Thus, in the examples cited above, it was found that only three bearers of *Léveillé*, three of *Lajeunesse*, five of *Laviolette*, two of *Larose*, and seven of *Lafleur* were the actual ancestors of people who carry this surname today.

#### 3. The different types of French surnames in North America

The most common French surnames in North America are still those that arrived with the first wave of settlers from France to Québec and Acadia in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, as was mentioned at the outset. However, after some 400 years of separation, it is not surprising to find significant differences, both distributionally and linguistically, between the surnames found in France today and those of the New World. First of all, as the names in bold in Tables 1 and 2 below clearly show, there are only seven that appear on both lists of the 50 most common surnames in each region.

Table 1. The 50 most common surnames in Quebec according to Duchesne (2006) compared to their frequency in France (where '—' indicates a name that is virtually non-existent)

Surname	Frequency		Surname	Frequency	
	Quebec	France		Quebec	France
Tremblay	1	3,514	Fournier	26	21
Gagnon	2	7,863	Lapointe	27	6,784
Roy	3	87	Leclerc	28	106
Côté	4	1,485	Lefebvre/	29/—	11/29
			Lefèvre		
Bouchard	5	550	Poulin	30	2,343
Gauthier	6	49	Thibault	31	289
Morin	7	48	S(ain)t-	32	5,723
			Pierre		
Lavoie	8	72,869	Nadeau	33	3,701
Fortin	9	428	Martin	34	1
Gagné	10	5,223	Landry	35	995
Ouellet(te)	11		Martel	36	245
Pelletier	12	184	Bédard	37	13,555
Bélanger	13	10,414	Grenier	38	357
Lévesque	14	1,135	Lessard	39	11,330
Bergeron	15	1,286	Bernier	40	381
Leblanc	16	175	Richard	41	7
Paquet(te)	17	790	Michaud	42	201
Girard	18	26	Hébert	43	228
Simard	19	5,465	Desjardins	4	1,789
Boucher	20	132	Couture	45	1,906
Caron	21	76	Turcot(te)	46	29,092
Beaulieu	22	1,481	Lachance	47	
Cloutier	23	37,785	Parent	48	346
Dubé	24	9,874	Blais	49	1,519
Poirier	25	133	Gosselin	50	393

Surname	Frequency France	Quebec	Surname	Frequency France	Quebec
Martin	1	34	Girard	26	18
Bernard	2	110	Roux	27	645
Thomas	3	419	Vincent	28	226
Robert	4	86	Lefèvre	29	
Petit	5	455	Boyer	30	295
Dubois	6	72	Lopez	31	652
Richard	7	41	Bonnet(te)	32	2,600±
Garcia	8	810	André	33	1,000±
Durand	9	237	François	34	970
Moreau	10	108	Mercier	35	62
Lefebvre	11	29	Muller	36	1,900±
Simon	12	498	Guérin	37	321
Laurent	13	1,300±	Legrand	38	1,800±
Michel	14	530	Sanchez	39	1,100±
Leroy	15	2,700±	Garnier	40	2,600±
Martinez	16	839	Chevalier	41	475
David	17	383	Faure	42	4,500±
Fontaine	18	103	Perez	43	840
Da Silva	19	778	Clément	44	271
Morel	20	477	Fernandez	45	891
Fournier	21	26	Blanc	46	1,900±
Dupont	22	187	Robin	47	1,200±
Bertrand	23	120	Morin	48	7
Lambert	24	94	Gauthier	49	6

# Table 2. The 50 most common surnames in France according to Fondant (2010) compared to their frequency in Quebec

Secondly, from a linguistic point of view, the family names of individuals who are or were native speakers of Canadian French (CF) can be separated into two categories:

1. family names of French origin, that is, names that reached North America borne by settlers from France and, in some cases, from Belgium and Switzerland;

2. family names that are not of French origin although they may have come from territories that are now part of France, namely Brittany, the Basque Country and Alsace-Lorraine.

Each of these categories can in turn be subdivided into two groups:

- 1. (a) French names that have not undergone any change in CF;
  - (b) French names that have undergone idiosyncratic changes in CF or that have been newly coined.
- 2. (a) foreign names that have not undergone any change;
  - (b) foreign names that have undergone idiosyncratic changes in CF.

In addition, in terms of the etymological transparency of the surnames that form the subject of the present study, there exist three different scenarios. Excluding 2(a), which is outside the realm of French-Canadian anthroponymy per se, the following situations are found for each of the name categories 1(a), 1(b) and 2(b) to be dealt with here:

Type I

some names have a clear, obvious and unequivocal etymology;

Type II

 some names have a rather obscure etymology or have more than one possible source but there are strong indications in one form or another (linguistic, genealogical, geographical, historical, etc.) that support a particular origin;

Type III

• some names have an opaque etymology that may seem unrecoverable.

#### 3.1 Unmodified French names

Many of the French surnames currently found in North America, such as *Benoît, Bernard, Bertrand, Denis, Dubois, Dufour, Dupuis, Fontaine, Fournier, Gauthier, Girard, Lacroix, Lambert, Leclerc, Lefebvre, Marchand, Martin, Ménard, Mercier, Moreau, Morin, Pelletier, Perron, Picard, Poirier, Renaud, Richard, Robert, Rousseau, Roy, Séguin and Vincent, to name just a few, have exactly the same form as they do in Europe. They were established in New France with the arrival of the first settlers and have not been altered since. Because the origins of these surnames are usually found in the aforementioned dictionaries by Dauzat, Morlet and Tosti, they are generally of Type I and so constitute the least problematic group of names.* 

Nevertheless, a significant number of cases do require a certain amount of research, and these can be grouped into the two following categories:

- instances where the original names of the first settlers do not appear in any of the dictionaries of French family names;
- instances where these dictionaries propose different etymologies or etymologies that disagree with other sources.

#### 3.2 Unmodified names not found in the dictionaries

The first of the two scenarios above can be illustrated with the names *Arès* and *Sansfaçon* (Type I), *Patenaude* and *Côté* (Type II) and *Chèvrefils* and *Robitaille* (Type III). *Arès* is a surname that comes from Jean Arès dit Sansfaçon who hailed from Agen in Lot-et-Garonne (Aquitaine). Since *Arès* is the name of a locality in neighboring Gironde, its origin is pretty clearcut. As for the nickname *Sansfaçon*, borne not only by Jean Arès but also by several other soldiers of the time, it is simply an agglutination of the expression *sans façon*, meaning 'simple, without pretense'.

At first glance, the derivation of *Patenaude* seems entirely obscure. However, because the original bearer of the surname was named Nicolas Patenaude or Patenostre and three of his sons were named Patenaude or Patenotre, it is easy to consider *Patenaude* to be an alteration of *Pateno(s)tre*, a nickname bestowed upon a rosary maker and derived from Latin *Pater Noster* 'Our Father'. On the other hand, although *Côté* seems entirely transparent since *côté* means 'side', it is hard to imagine what it could have been related to onomastically. However, as is often the case, an orthographic variant can help resolve the issue. The first colonist to bear the surname *Côté* was Jean Côté or Costé, and chances are that the spelling *Costé* is an alteration of *Costy* considering that (1) *Costy* originates from Old Norman *costi* corresponding to Old French *costil* 'hill' and that (2) Jean Côté or Costé was from Mortagne-au-Perche in Normandie.

The surname *Chèvrefils* appears to mean 'goat son' but its structure is aberrant given that filiation in French is never expressed in that way but rather by means of the particles *de*, *d'*, *du*, or *à*, as in *Depaul*, *D'Amour(s)*, *Dujean* and *Ageorges*. From all indications, *Chèvrefils* is actually an adaptation of *Chabrefy* which literally means 'goat fig' and specifically the wild fig or caprifig. In fact, this name is particularly common in Dordogne (where the hamlet *Chabrefie* is found), and François Chèvrefils dit Lalime came from precisely that region. In short, there is every indication that *Chèvrefils* is derived from *Chabrefy*, especially since *fils* was pronounced *fi* at the time.

Finally, *Robitaille* can be cited as an example of a name of undetermined origin. It is not a place name, and it has had no discernible meaning in French at any time. The brothers Pierre, Jean and Philippe Robitaille from Saint-Georges in Pas-de-Calais are its source, and the surname is still found in that region along with the variants *Robitail, Robitaillie, Ropitail* and *Ropital*. Although it

would be tempting to divide the surname morphologically into *robit+aille* since *-aille* is a fairly common suffix in French, as in *fer/ferraille*, *gris/grisaille*, *mur/muraille*, doing so would give rise to two major problems: *-aille* is not an anthroponymic suffix and *robit/ropit* has no perceptible meaning.

#### 3.3 Unmodified names with dubious or divergent etymologies

Surnames in this category can be exemplified with *Gagnon*, the second most common name in Québec as shown in Table 1. According to Morlet's dictionary, Ga(i)gnon has two possible sources. In the Massif Central region of France, it could represent the Old Occitan ganhon 'young pig'. However, since the brothers Mathurin, Jean and Pierre Gagnon and their cousin Robert emigrated to New France from La Ventrouse in Orne (Basse-Normandie), such an origin is unlikely given the geographical distance between the two. The other etymology she proposes is Old French gaignon 'hound, mastiff', a nickname given to a mean, angry man. There is every reason to be suspicious of such an etymology, however.

First of all, it strangely isolates *Gagnon* from *Gagné* which comes from Old French *gaaigne* 'arable land', as well as from its many derivatives, most of which mean 'ploughman'. Morlet cites *Gagnant, Gagné, Gagnaire, Ga(i)gneux, Gagneur, Gagneor, Ga(i)gnoux, Gagnadour, Gagnedour, Ga(i)gn(i)er, Gagneron, Gagneret, Ga(i)gnerot, Gagnereau, Gagneraud, Gagnot, Ga(i)gnet, Gagneau, Gaigneaud, Gagnault, Gagn(i)ère* and Gagnerie, and there are surely others. Yet, given that *-on* is a very productive suffix, as in *Berger/Bergeron, Vache/Vachon, Pierre/Perron, Georges/Georgeon, Taille/Taillon*, for example, the absence of *Gagnon* in the above family of names seems highly suspect. Moreover, as noted above, the first Gagnos were from Orne in Basse-Normandie and the Gagnés were also from that region, Louis Gagné and his brother Pierre hailing from Igé which is also in Orne. In short, it certainly seems that both surnames were originally nicknames for ploughmen, contrary to the proposals found in Morlet as well as in Dauzat and Tosti.

#### 3.4 Modified French names

Surnames that manifest any differences between their original form and their current form can be grouped into two categories:

- names that were modified before their bearers immigrated;
- names that were modified after their bearers immigrated.

Hence, when a name does not appear in any of the French onomastic dictionaries and there is no trace of it anywhere in French-speaking Europe, the next step is usually to check one of the many French-Canadian genealogical directories to see whether it is written in the same way as it was recorded historically or whether it is in some other form that could help trace its origin. Other clues must also be sought, including potentially related forms with known etymologies or placenames located in the immigrants' regions of origin.

#### 3.5 Names modified before emigration

*Vaillancourt, Coderre* and *Trépanier* are examples of names that were modified before their bearers emigrated to New France. The first of these came from Robert Vaillancourt who arrived in Québec City around 1665. Because this surname does not appear in any French onomastic dictionary, it was researched through genealogical records which indicated that this individual was also known as Villencourt. Although *Villencourt* does not appear in any of the various French anthroponymy treatises either, the fact that the immigrant in question came from the Seine-Maritime region in Haute-Normandie strongly suggests that it is an alteration of *Willencourt*, a surname derived from the name of a locality in neighbouring Pas-de-Calais.

The name *Coderre* was established in Québec through Antoine Émery dit Coderre who arrived in 1665 as a soldier. Although *Coderre* is the only spelling provided by the various genealogical sources, the existence in France of several similar forms, including *Coderc*, *Couderc*, *Coudert*, *Couder* and *Coudeyre*, points to a most plausible origin, namely the very widespread place name *(Le) Coderc*, especially since about 20 localities so named are situated in Dordogne where Antoine Émery dit Coderre was born. In fact, it is possible to be even more precise since he was a native of the town of Sarrazac near where the hamlet *Le Coderc* is in fact found.

As for *Trépanier*, the fact that it was also written (*de*) *Trépagny* and *d'Estrépagny* clearly shows that the surname is an alteration of *Étrépagny*, a town in Eure (Haute-Normandie). Since Romain Trépanier who arrived in New France around 1655 came from neighboring Seine-Maritime, it would be difficult to question the proposed etymology. In sum, then, these three cases serve to show that not all the names that differ from their French counterparts were transformed in New France.

#### 3.6 Names modified after emigration

It could be argued that French-Canadian anthroponymy as such actually begins with the study of family names that have undergone changes since their introduction in North America. These names can be divided into two groups:

- names that have undergone only orthographic changes;
- names that have also undergone phonological changes.

Before addressing these issues, however, it should be noted that in terms of the three scenarios highlighted in Section 1, most of the names that have been modified nevertheless belong to Type I or Type II. In other words, their etymologies are either completely transparent or they are easy to

explain because their original forms are generally found in one of the usual reference works. Thus, although such surnames as *Laurendeau*, *Hévey* or *Déziel* may at first seem problematic, it is not too difficult to find that they come from *Rollandeau* (< *Rolland*, from the Germanic name *Hrodland*), *Devé* (< the Old French *desvé* 'crazy, furious, fanatic') and *Delguel* (< the placename *Le Guel* in Aquitaine).

#### 3.7 Orthographic modifications

Many family names have undergone singular and unpredictable orthographic modifications, such as *Chapdelaine* > *Chapdeleine*, *Charlebois* > *Charlesbois*, *Villemur* > *Villemure*, *Filion* > *Fillion*, *Farand* > *Pharand*, *Ossant* > *Aussant*, *Arel* (< *Harel*) > *Ar*(*r*)*elle*, *Marcil* > *Marcille*, *Marié* > *Marier*, *Essiamble* (< *Estiambre*) > *Essiembre*, *Deshayes* > *Deshaies*, *Maheu* > *Maheux*, *Desgagnés* > *Desgagné*, *Desgroseilliers* > *Desgroseillers*, *Pomainville* > *Pom*(*m*)*inville*/ *Pom-*(*m*)*ainville*, *Hén*(*e*)*ault* > *Hain*(*e*)*ault*, to name a few.

However, some changes are more widespread. Consonantally, initial *h* is most often involved, at times being deleted and at other times inserted. The confusion surrounding this letter stems from the fact that *h* had generally ceased to be pronounced in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and so it had become impossible to know whether a word that had an initial vowel phonetically but not necessarily orthographically should be spelled with an *h* or not. The names of some settlers were already fluctuating upon their arrival as with *Hade/Ade*, *Harbour/Arbour*, *Hardouin/ Ardouin*, *Herpin/Arpin*, *Homier/Aumier*, and this kind of wavering spread for some time, with certain names acquiring an *h*, e.g., *Abel* > *Habel*, *Élie* > *Hélie*, *Émond* > *Hémond*, *Imb(e)ault* > *Himbeault*, *Yvon* > *Hivon*, and others losing it, e.g., *Hottote* > *Autotte*, *Haguenier* > *Aga(g)nier*, *Husereau* > *Usereau*, *Harbec* > *Arbec*, *Harel* > *Arel*.

As for vowel changes, the one that has affected the most names is the introduction of an *e* into the common ending *-ault*, as in *Perreault*, *Thibeault*, *Archambeault*, probably because of the presence of this letter in the equally frequent suffix *-eau*, as in *Martineau*, *Cousineau*, *Véronneau*. Although the *-eault* variant seems to have existed in France, it must not have been very widespread since Jetté's dictionary, for example, does not cite any names with that original spelling.

Obviously, the confusion stems primarily from the fact that in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, several phonological changes had converged to render *-ault*, *-eault* and *-eau* homophones. In other words, all three had come to be pronounced *o*. Since the same was true for *-au*, *-aut*, *-aud*, *-aux*, *-eaut*, *-eaud* and *-eaux* as well as for *-ost* and *-ot*, the uncertainty this must have created is easy to imagine, especially in a society where so many people were illiterate. Thus it was that, for example, the original form *Devau* acquired the variants *Devaud*, *Devaut*, *Devault*, *Devaux*, *Deveau*, *Deveaud*, *Deveault*, *Deveaut*, *Deveaux* and *Devost*. In any event, many names that had formerly ended in *-ault* acquired variants in *-eault* in CF, e.g., *Thiffault/Thiffeault*, *Hunault/Huneault*, *Hénault/Héneault*, *Montambault/Montambeault*, *Imbault/Imbeault*, and this process was extended to names ending in *eau*, e.g., *Baribeau/Baribeault*, *Amireau/Amireault*, *Verreau/Verreault*. In fact, this process has led to a proliferation of graphic variants such as *Aspirault/Aspireault/Aspirot*, *Boudrault/Boudreau/Boudreault*, *Journault/Journeaut/Journeaux*, *Naud/Nault/Neault*, *Prénovault/Prénoveau/Prénovost*.

Another very frequent change that affected both vowels and consonants occurred when surnames beginning with Saint(e) acquired a variant with the abbreviated form St(e) such that it can never be determined from pronunciation alone whether the written form should be *Saint-Jacques* or *St-Jacques*, *Saint-Denis* or *St-Denis*, *Saint-Laurent* or *St-Laurent*, *Sainte-Marie* or *Ste-Marie*, *Saint-Pierre* or *St-Pierre*, and so on. However, *St(e)* is much more likely to be the right choice since this variant has become far more widespread.

#### 3.8 Phonological changes

The phonological alterations that French surnames have undergone since their arrival in North America are generally not methodical or systematic in nature. The only one of any significance is the replacement of the final *-et* by *-ette* and, to a lesser degree, of *-ot* by *-otte*. There are those who believe that the forms ending in *-ette* are matronymic but this is easily countered by the fact that all the names spelled that way and therefore pronounced *èt* instead of *è*, e.g., *Audette*, *Vermette*, *Gaudette*, *Ouellette*, *Paquette*, were written with an *-et* ending when the colonists who bore them first arrived. Moreover, such forms are extremely rare in any of the modern-day Francophone areas of Europe.

The alteration of *-et* to *-ette* was caused by the fact that final-obstruent deletion, which had begun to appear in the 14<sup>th</sup> century, had met with strong resistance from grammarians and was therefore still in a state of flux in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, both geographically and sociolinguistically. Consequently, an ending like *-et* would have been pronounced  $\dot{e}$  by some speakers and  $\dot{e}t$  by others. One can well imagine, therefore, that an  $\dot{e}t$  dialectal speaker could have had his name recorded with the *-ette* ending by an  $\dot{e}$  dialectal transcriber. At any rate, a large number of names ending in *-et* now have an *-ette* variant, the situation being all the more complicated since some names ending in *-et*, e.g., *Ouellet*, *Ouimet*, *Paquet*, *Rinfret*, *Gaudet*, are always pronounced with a final *t*.

As noted above, most of the names that have undergone phonological changes constitute a totally disparate set. Vowels, consonants and even whole syllables were altered totally at random, such as in the metathesis of *Machelidon* to *Marchildon*, the vowel copy of *Prénovost* to *Pronovost*, or the consonant dissimilation of *Gerbert* to *Jalbert*. Even if it is sometimes possible to conclude that such alterations were made on the basis of either folk etymology, as when the name *Lereau* of undetermined origin was transformed into *L'Heureux* 'the happy (man)', or through some sort of analogical process as when *Dagory* went to *Gadoury* under the apparent influence of *Gaboury*, there does not seem to be any rhyme or reason for such modifications. The following is a sampling of surnames that illustrate the numerous substitutions, deletions and insertions of vowels, consonants and syllables:

Haguenier > Aga(g)nier	Jouteau > Juteau
Alavoine > Avoine	Malteste > Maltais
Bourgery > Bourgie	De Gerlaise > Desjarlais
Vautrin > Vaudrin	Hazeur > Lazure
Légaré > Legaré	Delguel > Déziel
Guillot(te) > Diot(te)	Reguindeau > Riendeau
Patoile > Patoine	De Rainville > Drainville
Jouvin > Jauvin	Vassor > Vasseur
Marchàterre > Marcheterre	Desranleau > Duranleau
Noreau > Nareau	Estiambre > Essiambre
Forand > Farand/Pharand	Diel > Yelle
Juineau > Juneau	Jamme > Gemme
Autin > Hottin	<i>Hotot</i> > <i>Althot</i>

#### 3.9 Modified foreign names

As might be expected, the orthographic and phonological modifications that foreign surnames have undergone are not in any way methodical either. Although some of them have been quite radical, the situation regarding these names is basically as described in the previous section in terms of their relative etymological transparency. In other words, Type III surnames are rather rare. The main difference is that their etymology must be sought elsewhere than in the sources that have been cited so far. Essential among these are Michelena (1973) for Basque, Deshayes (1995) for Breton, Germain and Herbillon (2007) for Flemish and Walloon, and Kohlheim and Kohlheim (2005) for German, including those from Alsace and Lorraine, Reaney and Wilson (1997) for English, De Bhulbh (2002) for Irish, Francipane (2006) for Italian, and Faure, Ribes and García (2005) for Spanish.

#### 3.10 English names

The most common foreign names borne by Francophones today are of English and Celtic (Irish, Scottish or Welsh) origin, though the latter were generally Anglicized before the arrival of the immigrants. What is most surprising is that so few of these names have undergone any modifications. It is therefore not uncommon in Québec and other Francophone areas to come across a Monique Johnson, a Gaétan Hart, an Yves Ryan, a Pierre Pettigrew, an André McDonald, an Alcide Jones, an Alain Blackburn, and countless others of the same type.

The few English-speaking people whose names were altered seem to have all been found isolated in completely French-speaking environments at the beginning of the colony, some as a result of being captured by Amerindians and then released far from their homeland. If their names resembled French names, the alteration could be minimal. Thus, the surname *Edmunds* borne by Thomas Edmunds from New England who arrived in Québec in the 1690s quickly became *Edmond* and then *Émond*.

English surnames that had no resemblance to French names resulted in completely original forms. In some cases, the changes were minor, such as when *Dicker* was altered to *Dicaire*, *Stebbins* to *Stébenne*, and *Casey* to *Caissie/Caissy/Quessy*. Other changes were more radical. For instance, although the *Hains/Haince/Hainse/Hince/Hins/Hinse* variants do not seem to differ significantly from their English source *Haynes* in terms of spelling, there is a major difference between the pronunciations /hejnz/ in English and /ẽ:s/ in French. The most complete metamorphosis, however, probably occurred with the name *Farnsworth*, which gradually changed to *Farneth*, *Fanef, Faneuf* and finally to *Phaneuf*.

#### 3.11 German names

Family names of German origin undoubtedly underwent the most radical changes of all. Actually, there probably would have been very few of them had it not been for one very significant event. As explained in Wilhelmy (1997), at the beginning of the American War of Independence in 1776, about 30,000 German mercenaries were recruited by the British monarchy to fight the rebels, and of the nearly 10,000 who fought in Canada, more than 1,300 remained in Québec after the war ended. A representative sample of the Francization of the various German surnames is presented below:

Beyer > Bayeur/Payeur	Hartung > Harton
Henner > Hénaire	Spennert > Spénard
Letter > Laître/Lettre	Schumpf > Jomphe
Lindner > Dickner/Nickner	Fröbe > Frève
Heinemann > Heynemand	Behzer > Piuze
Moller > Molleur	Felz > Felx/Fex
Grothe > Grothé	Schnabel > Schnob

#### 3.12 Basque and Breton names

Although Basque and Breton are very different languages, there is good reason to deal with them together because they have long been indigenous to France with the result that the surnames of their respective homelands have generally remained unchanged in North America given that they had already been largely Frenchified before arriving there. Thus, the Breton names *Boher*, *Cadudal*, *Keréon*, *Kervoac*, *Pellan*, *Prigent* and *Tanguy* had already become *Boire* (via *Beauher*), *Catudal*, *Quirion*, *Kirouac*, *Pelland*, *Prégent* and *Tanguay* before their bearers emigrated. Only a few of them were further modified such as *Hangrion* to *Angrignon*, *Bellec* to *Bélec*, *Gour* to *Gourd*, and *Bourhis* to *Boulerice*. It should be noted, however, that some names that had not originally undergone any modification came to develop variants. For example, *Kirouac* became *Kéroack*, *Kérouack* and *Kirouack* while *Arcouet* and *Cadoret* evolved to *Arcouette* and *Cadorette*.

As for the Basque names, all those that left their mark on CF had already undergone a certain degree of Francization before they reached Canada. For example, *Bazterretxe* had been modified to *Basterretche*, *Bidegaray* to *Bidegaré*, *De Larrazabal* to *Delarosbil*, *Etxeverri* to *Etcheverry*, *Garibay* to *Gariépy*, *Aosteguia* to *Ostiguy*, *Ithurbide* to *Turbide* and *Azpiroz* to *Aspirot*. Once in North America, some of these names continued to evolve with *Basterretche* becoming *Bastarache* and *Bidegaré*, *Aspirot* and *Etcheverry* acquiring the respective variants *Bidégaré*, *Aspirault/Aspireault* and *Chevarie/Detcheverry/D'Etcheverry*.

#### 3.13 Other foreign names

Very few foreign names other than those mentioned above have been altered in CF, which is quite remarkable considering that there have been hundreds and hundreds of them over the last four centuries, not only from Europe but also from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean and Latin America.

#### Introduction

It is noteworthy, as in the case of the Breton and Basque names, that the changes often took place before the immigrants arrived. Two surnames that clearly illustrate this are *Vandelac* and *Ipperciel/Ippersiel* which are of Flemish origin. The former is derived from *Van Doolaghe* 'from Dolage' and the latter from *Niepenzele* which in Belgium produced the variants *Hypersiel*, *Hypersier*, *Ipersiel*, *Ipercielle*, *Ypersiel*, *Ypersielle*, *Ypersier*, *Yperzeele*, *Yperzielle* and *Yppersiel*.

Finally, *Rodrigues* and *Da Silva* are Portuguese names that arrived in Québec already modified to *Rodrigue* and *Dasylva* with the latter having subsequently acquired the variants *Dassilva*, *Dassylva*, *Da Sylva* and *De Sylva*. *Salvai* and *Rosa* are examples of Italian names that were minimally altered, the former becoming *Salvail* and the latter *Rose*. The Polish name *Gląbiński* was modified to *Globensky* while the Hungarian surnames *Kovácsy* and *Viola* became *Coache* and *Vignola/Fiola*.

#### 3.14 French-Canadian diaspora and recent arrivals

As was noted at the outset, a significant number of French Canadians left Québec mainly in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and headed for New England and Ontario with many of them later moving on further to the American Midwest. The vast majority of these migrants eventually became Anglicized and their surnames were modified accordingly, as when *Tremblay* became *Tremble, Trembler, Trembly, Trimble, Tromblay, Tromble, Tromble, Tromblee, Trombley, Trombly, Tromley, Troumbly, Trumbla, Trumble, Trumbley* and *Trumbly* to cite but one of numerous similar cases. The same thing happened to the surnames of the many Acadians who were expelled to Louisiana where, for example, *Thibaudeau* evolved to *Bodo, Tebedo, Tebidor, Thebodo, Thibadeau, Thibado, Thibadeau, Thibodaux, Thibodeaux, Thibodo, Tibado, Tibedeau* and *Tibedo*. Finally, there is very little to remark upon concerning the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Francophone immigrants from Europe to the United States since their family names were rarely altered in any significant way.

#### 3.15 Conclusion

Although the study of French-Canadian surnames can be viewed as a branch of French anthroponymy, it is nevertheless a very distinct one. The passing of some 400 years since migrants from France began arriving on the east coast of Canada - Port-Royal was founded in 1605 and Québec City in 1608 - has resulted in major changes to the spelling and pronunciation of many of the surnames they bore. The addition over the centuries of many non-French names to this heritage, some from France itself and some from elsewhere, has also contributed toward making North American Francophone anthroponymy a unique field of research. This is the perspective from which the present work was conceived and elaborated. Each entry in this dictionary has two parts, one anthroponymic and the other genealogical. The first part deals with the origin of the surname which can refer to (1) a place, e.g., *Champagne, Quenneville, Deblois, Dagenais, Lafrance,* (2) a trade, e.g., *Boucher, Charpentier, Lefebvre, Provost, Boulanger*), (3) a physical feature, e.g., *Brunet, Leblanc, Morin, Rousseau, Petit,* (4) a character trait, e.g., *Lebon, Doucet, Malenfant, Harel, Rossignol,* (5) an ironic nickname, e.g., *Roy, Lévesque, Prince, Chevalier Lecomte,* (6) a soldier's nickname, e.g., *Lafleur, Laviolette, Brindamour, Francoeur, Tranchemontagne,* (7) a family relationship, e.g., *Parenteau, Legendre, Neveu, Filiatrault, Cousin,* (8) a given name, e.g., *Michel, David, Jean, Martin, Adam,* (9) a Germanic name, e.g., *Landry, Berthiaume, Richard, Gauthier, Bernard,* or (10) an altered foreign name, either from France, that is, either Breton, e.g., *Boire, Tanguay, Catudal, Prégent, Pelland,* or Basque, e.g., *Ostiguy, Delarosbil, Gariépy, Bastarache, Turbide,* or from some other country, e.g., *Hains, Phaneuf, Spénard, Jomphe, Vignola.* 

All anthroponymic dictionaries contain names with problematic origins, and this one is no exception. The most obvious are those that are not found in any reliable sources and about whose origins it would simply be irresponsible to speculate. Although nature abhors a vacuum, as the saying goes, it is essential to resist the temptation of making far-fetched assumptions that are more than likely to be fallacious. Therefore, this dictionary contains a certain number of cases where the origin is simply deemed to be undetermined, such as *Bigonesse*, *Samoisette*, *Antaya*, *Thellend*, *Gallibois*, *Daraîche*, *Éloquin*, *Camiré*, *Labine*, *Riopel*, *Pincince*, *Messervier* and *Jetté*. There are also several surnames that do appear in one or more of the usual dependable sources, namely Dauzat, Morlet and Tosti, but whose origins are purely speculative as the authors themselves admit, and these are simply noted as being uncertain in this dictionary.

The second part of each entry ideally contains the following information: the migrant's name followed by those of his parents, his place of origin, the name of any spouse with whom he produced offspring, the names of her parents, and the places and dates of their marriage(s). In many cases, however, information on one or more of these elements is simply not available. In addition, the identity of the first bearer of a surname may be completely unknown, and in such circumstances, little more can be done than to indicate the region from which the surname emanates, which is usually the case for those from Haiti, for example.

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#### Abbreviations and symbols

m. : married

Var. : variant(s)

(...) : family name or given name unknown

/: or

\* : family name not attested elsewhere

> : becomes

< : comes from

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Abadie, from *Abadie*, the name of several places in the southwestern part of France.

— Jean-François Abadie (Jean-Baptiste and Claire \*Delivres) from Toulouse in Haute-Garonne (Midi-Pyrénées) m. (1) Catherine Despales in Louisiana c. 1836; (2) Adèle-Claire Champagne (Onésime and Marie-Neige Daspit) in Terrebonne, LA in 1847.

#### Abair, Abaire, Abar, Abare, Abear, see Hébert.

Abel, from the Hebrew name *Hébhel*, literally 'breath, vanity'. — Var. Habel.

— Pierre Benoît dit Abel, son of Abel from Sainte-Hermine en Vendée (Pays de la Loire), m.

Marie Dionne (Antoine and Catherine Ivory) in Sainte-Famille, Île d'Orléans, QC in 1694.

Abélard, derived from Abel.

— This surname is of Haitian origin in North America.

#### Abellard, variant of Abélard.

*— This surname is of Haitian origin in North America.* 

#### Aber, see Hébert.

#### Abner, see Lemelin.

**Abraham,** from the Hebrew name *Abhrāhām*, from *ābh* 'father' and \**rāhām* 'multitude', hence 'father of the multitude'.

Louis Abraham (Jean and Marguerite Clôtre) from Nideau in Switzerland m. Théotiste
Hébert (Louis and Anne-Marie Labauve) in Port-Lajoie (now Charlottetown), PE in 1755.
René Abraham dit Desmarais (Jean and Jeanne Brassard) from Secondigné-sur-Belle in
Deux-Sèvres (Poitou-Charentes) m. (1) Jeanne Blondeau (Jean and Jacqueline Morin) in TroisRivières, QC in 1671; (2) Marguerite Girard in Saint-François-du-Lac, QC in 1690.

#### Abran, variant of Abraham.

— Jean Abran dit Lebron and Langevin (Jean and Marguerite Plaison) from Saint-Martind'Arcé in Maine-et-Loire (Pays de la Loire) m. Marie-Josèphe Larrivée (François and Marie-Geneviève Godin) in Saint-Vallier, QC in 1762.

Achard, from the Germanic name Agihard, from agi 'tip, cutting edge' and hard 'hard, strong'.
— Joseph-André Achard dit Brindamour (Guillaume and Marie-Anne Gaspard) from Paris (Îlede-France) m. Marie-Anne Orson (Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Anne Brousson) in Sainte-Anne-dela-Pérade, QC in 1760.

Achee, Achey, see Haché.

Achille, from the Greek name Achilleus.

— This surname is of Haitian origin in North America.

Achim, alteration of *Achin*, same origin as Aquin.

— André Achin dit Saint-André (Antoine and Anne ...) from Rébec in Lot-et-Garonne
 (Aquitaine) m. Françoise Piéton (Martin and Catherine Bourg) in Trois-Rivières, QC in 1667.

Acquard, alteration of *Hacquard*, from the Germanic name *Haghard*, from *hag* 'fence, enclosure' and *hard* 'hard, strong'.

— Jean-François **Hacquard** (Pierre-François and Françoise Régnier) from Vy-lès-Lure in Haute-Saône (Franche-Comté) m. Sophie Senelet (Jean-François and Catherine Maire) in Vylès-Lure in 1848, d. in Darien Center, NY in 1911.

Adam, from the Hebrew name  $\bar{A}d\bar{a}m$ , derived from  $\bar{a}d\bar{a}m\dot{\bar{a}}^h$  'ground, earth'.

— Guillaume Adam dit Laramée (Guillaume and Marguerite Nicolet) from Beauval-en-Caux in Seine-Maritime (Haute-Normandie) m. Catherine Charron (Pierre and Catherine Pillard) in Longueuil, QC in 1701.

— Jean Adam from Brienon-sur-Armançon in Yonne (Bourgogne) m. Marie Mézeray (René and Nicole Gareman) in Québec in 1673.

— Pierre Adam (Adrien and Anne Godefroy) from Bricqueville-la-Blouette in Manche (Basse-Normandie) m. Véronique Charron (Charles and Élisabeth Poupart) in Verchères, QC in 1744.

Adolphe, from the Germanic name *Adalwulf*, from *adal* (> *ad*) 'noble' and *wulf* 'wolf'.

— Pierre Adolphe (Michel and Marguerite \*Agremarre) from Alsace m. Desanges Boulerice (Joseph and Anne Primeau) in Saint-Philippe-de-Laprairie, QC in 1819.

Adrien, from the Latin name Adriānus, derived from Adria, a placename in Italy.

— Jean-Baptiste Lamoureux dit Adrien, grandson of Louis from France, m. Angélique Lachaise (Jean-Baptiste and Jeanne Ménard) in Boucherville, QC in 1723.

— This surname is also of Haitian origin in North America.

Aganier, alteration of *Haguenier*, a variant of *Aguenier*, from à *Guenier* '[son] of Guenier', from the Germanic name *Wanhari*, from *wan* 'expectation, hope' and *hari* 'army'. — Var. Agagnier.

— Léger **Haguenier** dit Lafontaine (François and Jacqueline Lefèvre) from Flée in Sarthe (Pays de la Loire) m. Marie Froy (Gaspard and Françoise Viet) in Montréal, QC in 1658.

Agee, alteration of *Agé*, a variant of *Ager*, from the Germanic name *Adgāri*, from *adal* (> *ad*) 'noble' and *gāri* 'spear'.

— Mathieu-Isaac **Agé** (Antoine-François and Judith Chastain) from Nantes in Loire-Atlantique (Pays de la Loire) m. Cecilia Ann Godwin (Isaac and Ann Hall) in Manakin-Sabot, VA in 1720.

Aguillon, probably from Aguillon, a placename in Var (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur).

— Camille-Fortune Aguillon (François and Marie-Anne-Marguerite Turrel) from Montfort in

Alpes-de-Haute-Provence (Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur) m. Camille-Anne-Suzanne Turrel

(François-Camille and Marie-Anne-Suzanne Astréoud) in Joyeuse in Ardèche (Rhône-Alpes) c.

1859, d. in San Francisco, CA in 1906.

Ahier, apparently from the Germanic name Hadhari, from had 'battle' and hari 'army'.

— Jacques Ahier (Philippe and Marthe Blouet) from Saint-Clément (Saint Clement) in the isle of Jersey m. Isabella Brotherton (Alexander and ...) in Hope Town, QC c. 1802.

Aikey, see Éthier.

Aimé, from the Latin name Amātus, from amātus 'loved'.

— This surname is of Haitian origin in North America.

Akey, see Éthier.

Alabre, alteration of Alabré, origin undetermined.

— This surname is of Haitian origin in North America.

Alain, from Latin *Alānī*, the name of an ancient people from Scythia. — Var. Allen.

— Simon Alain (André and Catherine Marc) from Rouen in Seine-Maritime (Haute-Normandie)

m. Jeanne Maufay (Pierre and Marie Duval) in Québec, QC in 1670.

#### Alard, see Allard.

Alarie, from the Germanic name *Alarīc*, from *ala* 'all' and *rīc* 'powerful'. — Var. Alary, Allarie, Allary, Allery.

— René Alarie dit Grandalarie (Antoine and Anne Chebret) from Neuville-de-Poitou in Vienne (Poitou-Charentes) m. Louise Thibault (Michel and Jeanne Soyer) in Neuville, QC in 1681.

Albert, from the Germanic name Adalbert, from adal 'noble' and berht 'bright'. — Var. Albair.

— Pierre Albert (René and Marie Clémenceau) from Luçon in Vendée (Pays de la Loire) m.

Louise-Thérèse Grondin (Jean and Sainte Mignault) in Rivière-Ouelle, QC in 1702.

Alexandre, from the Greek name *Alexandros*, from *alexein* 'to repel, protect, defend' and *andros* 'man', hence 'defender of men'.

*— François Alexandre (François and Marie Lépine) from Roncey in Manche (Basse-Normandie) m. Marie-Cécile Proulx (Thomas and Marie-Catherine Caron) in Montmagny, QC in 1755.* 

Jacques Alexandre (François and Marie Lépine) from Roncey in Manche (Basse-Normandie)
m. Marie-Anne Gendron (Joseph and Geneviève Asselin) in Saint-François-du-Sud, QC in 1763.
Louis Alexandre (Nicolas and Louise Gauthier) from Saint-Nicolas-des-Bois in Manche (Basse-Normandie) m. Marie-Josèphe Lévesque (Jean-Baptiste and Marie-Josèphe Bérubé) in Rivière-Ouelle, QC in 1766.

Alexis, from the Greek name Alexios, derived from alexein 'to repel, protect, defend'.

*— This surname is of Haitian origin in North America.* 

Alie, variant of Alix. — Var. Allie, Ally.

— Pierre *Alie* (Brice and Julienne Breton) from Granville in Manche (Basse-Normandie) m. Marie-Josèphe Vivier (Jacques and Marie Molleur) in Québec, QC in 1747.

Alix, alteration of *Aalis*, from the Germanic name *Adalhaid*, from *adal* 'noble' and *haid* 'kind, sort'.

— Toussaint **Alix** dit Dumesnil (Jean-Nicolas and Anne Chéry) from Lesménils in Meurthe-et-Moselle (Lorraine) m. Marie-Thérèse Larivière (Jean-Baptiste and Thérèse Legrain) in Chambly, QC in 1757.

Allain, variant of Alain. — Var. Allen.

— Louis Allain from France m. Marguerite Bourg (Antoine and Antoinette Landry) in Port-Royal (now Annapolis Royal), NS in 1690.

Allaire, variant of Hilaire. — Var. Dalaire, Dallaire, Delair, Delaire.

*— Charles Allaire (Sébastien and Perrine Fleurisson) from Saint-Philbert-du-Pont-Charrault in Vendée (Pays de la Loire) m. Catherine Fièvre (Fiacre and Jacquette Dusol) in Québec, QC in 1663.* 

— Jean Allaire (Sébastien and Perrine Fleurisson) from Saint-Philbert-du-Pont-Charrault in Vendée (Pays de la Loire) m. Perrine Therrien (André and Marie Foucault) in Québec, QC in 1662.

Allard, from the Germanic name *Adalhard*, from *adal* 'noble' and *hard* 'hard, strong'. — Var. Alard, Allor, Allore, Alore.

— François **Allard** (Jacques and Jacqueline Frérot) from Blacqueville in Seine-Maritime (Haute-Normandie) m. Jeanne Languille (Michel and Étiennette Toucherin) in Québec, QC in 1671.

*— Pierre Allard (Pierre and Mathurine Verdon) from Sainte-Hermine in Vendée (Poitou-Charentes) m. Marie-Marthe Delugré (Jacques and Marie Taupier) in Beaupré, QC in 1690.* 

— Simon Allard (Émery and Julienne Baillou) from Poitiers in Vienne (Poitou-Charentes) m. Catherine Lacombe (Jean and Marie-Charlotte Millet) in Pointe-aux-Trembles, QC in 1705.

Allarie, Allary, see Alarie.

Allec, from *Allec*, a placename in Hautes-Alpes (Provence-Alpes-Côte-d'Azur).

— Édouard Allec (Édouard-Fidèle and Rosalie Barthélémy) from France m. Marie-Louise-Abeline André (Louis-Firmin and Élise-Noémie Martin) in Los Angeles, CA in 1901.