

Bill Marquis: Introduction

Today it gives me great honor to present Rene' Jette', who is a member of the Historical Soc. of College of St. Jette. He is also the author of the most well-known and respected books on Fr/Can. Genealogy. These Genealogy books are commonly known as the JETTE' BOOKS. What a lot of people do not know is that he is also the author of the DIT Book in our Library. This book was published by the Univ. of Montreal Press in 1983. This work is a genealogical reconstruction of all the families of Quebec since 1730. His most recent work is the Treatise of Genealogy Methods and Guide to Genealogical Research in Queb. He is also active in the Genealogical Research Program of the Univ. of Quebec at Chicocogan. It gives me great pleasure to introduce Rene' Jette'. If everyone does not have his book for him to sign, he'll gladly sign anything - just ask. Ha! Ha! Now I give you RENE' JETTE'.

Rene': Thank you very much. You'll soon realize that I speak softly. I'll try to speak as loud as I can, if you can not hear me, let me know and I'll try to speak louder. Note: At this point it is obvious he is hot and uncomfortable with a tie on and he mentions he seldom wears a tie. So the audience said "take it off and be comfortable": and he did amid snickers and applause.

"O.K." I think I'll talk about the problems of genealogy searching in Quebec for about a half hour and then I'll try and answer your questions. Speak slowly and I will try and translate my answers. O.K., You can take notes if you wish but this is not a classroom now. Ha! Ha!

There are two big problems we face.

#1 is migration. When searching in Quebec there are many research groups and now books available in N.Y.S. Libraries. The Prudhomme series is a great help but I imagine it is too expensive for most libraries. It runs about \$2000 a set. But you can use the very good Genealogy Library in Montreal for practically nothing. I think Montreal has the best because they have most all of the Parish Records books from the beginning of Quebec. until 1930. All you have to do is open a book and you will find every marriage, even in Ottawa, and in an hour you should have your line, or maybe a half hour if you are very fast. HA! HA!

In my own research I would state: I was born in 1944 and I began doing my own families genealogy at 14. But I tried and tried to find my ancestors, only to discover there were very few records available. I began helping Benoit Pontbriand, one of the very first genealogists, when there were no books. When I found my Grandfather who was married in St. Michel (this is questionable because of his broken Fr. accent) no one knew where that was. I took one whole year searching all of the Parish records-one by one. I found clues and eventually found him in ST. ????. One year to find only one marriage. O.K.? That was the beginning for me.

When the marriage is out of Quebec, especially in other regions, such as Hudson River area, and Michigan - where Canadians crossed into the U.S., the young couples were reluctant to give their addresses and parentage. This makes them harder to find and trace, but inside Quebec it is much easier as records were well kept.

#2 Problem:

Records FAIL! Quebec has an almost complete survey of all Church records but 1 or 2 may be missing for unknown reasons. Also, from the beginning, Irish and Indian records were not available but you have to look to other cross references. Marriage records in Que. give always the Mother and Father of bride and groom and this is very useful. People are always sending me questions and letters I can't answer because of missing records. Around 1830 there were many emigrations. The first Parish in N.Y. was Coopersville. These records were destroyed in a fire so a whole Quebec emigration generation was lost. Now, in reference books, you have most of these records so if you try and match them up to Canadian records, as to birth, death, marriage - it is not impossible to fill in the gaps. Why? You should read my book (in French and difficult to understand) and you will see how serious a book it is. In it are the ways (Chap.7) to search. You can adapt them to every country from Ont., Queb. to US, etc. Sources are in the book - follow the trail. Note: He adds that he is not allowed to promote his books and they are sold through a special firm because he would lose his College Research status otherwise) But jokingly he does just that.)

Posted on the board behind me is a Genealogy magazine (the one with Madonna on the cover) . If you are in any way Fr/Can. you will probably be her cousin. HA! HA! She is a descendant of St. Martin, her mother was a Fortain. I love her because of her ancestry. HA! HA! When you have found your line you will have all the proof you need available in Canada. This magazine was only published 2 issues because it was done with private money and we did not have enough to continue.

Note: Here he adds as an aside: How many of you have used computers in your searches? 75% raised their hands. He adds, this is why I will NOT be adding book #3 to my Jette Books. I will, instead, within about 2yrs, put my data on Internet or America On Line. You will then be able to contact Quebec direct and get a fax printed out of the family data you are looking for. There is no further need for books, as you can see, and no profit in it.

I know English speaking people with French names find it very difficult to find the true sire names. I will give you some examples: #1 Some people change their first names on documents to another name. By example: In Baptism they give their girls names like Mary Magdeleine, Mary Ann, etc. No one uses the Mary, so they go by the second name. However, I had a Aunt who was baptised Mary Louise but she was always known as Blanche (White). Why? I have no idea. Nothing comes to me on it. Often I found names translated into the Eng. meaning.

There is a solution, Compare it with Census records. The God Parents and parents are listed. If they didn't like a name, they changed it. I had a girl friend when I was a teen - with a very old name often found in Queb. The parents decided to modernize it to Dianne. Then there is the problem of spelling. My name is Jette but some spell it Jeytté, Jeeté and in America it becomes Stay, Shtay and Sthay. Confusing?? Yes. When I find a difficult name I have to try and pronounce it in French and see how close it comes to the English. To Hear a true name in Fr. you have to remember A is E and you have to spell it to find it in the records.

DIT names: Use my book listing all of these possible names, and spellings. If you are aware it CAN be another name, you will be smart to look under all possible names. This is why I wrote my DIT book. There are as many as 60 different spellings of the same name, such as Champagne. Why do they use DIT names? Well, some were nicknames. When I was a child they called me just Jette. I had others but...HA! HA! My Mother's name was Ladigar and that was a nickname that had become an official name by long usage. I suppose someone will someday do a study in Que. as to why our names are so much more difficult than in the U.S. No other place has such a problem. Soldiers nicknames in their regiments often became their sire names. Also may did not give their true names, preferring to use the area they came from (such as Champagne) as their name. Ladabouch (Casava) is one. Does anyone know what the translation here is? Is it DeBauche? Note: A lady in the back jumps up and says, "Oh!, you mean Debauchery. That means sick sex" Everyone howled at that one. Actually a German Mercenary soldier was called DeBouche (in French this means an opening for soldiers to pass through) . In WWI and II we heard the term the Bosche. What you hear is seldom what goes on the paper.

Note: IN our line Robert Demers was called Robert Cheffeville (Meaning chief of the Village) . Since every generation repeats the same names over and over, they frequently took DIT names to distinguish themselves from one another.

When the family had no male heir, they then took the Mother's maiden name as theirs and that is why they are equally important.

I will now take questions. Tape ends.

I asked Rene "from which of Urbain Jetté's (original settler) children does your line begin with?" He replied "Paul." Note: Paul married Martine Demers, sister of our first Robert who married Madeleine Jetté (Paul's sister) 6 cross marriages between the Demers and Jetté lines-both first settlers and neighbors.