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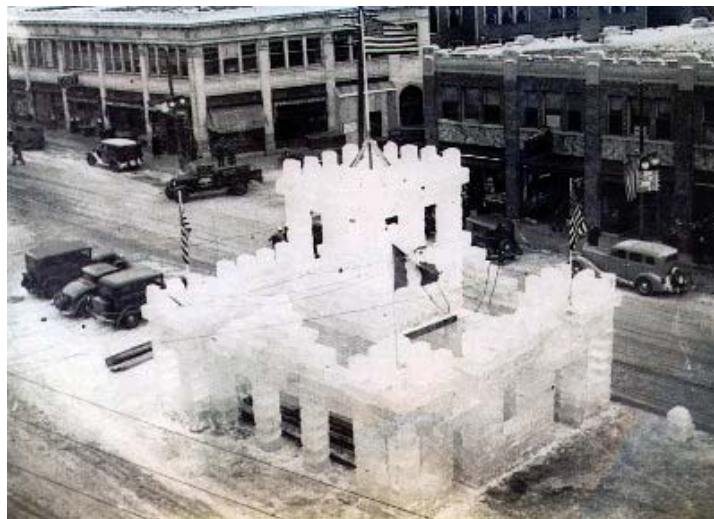
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Le Bulletin

Issue 4 - January 2011

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Ice Palace, Main Street, Lewiston, 1927

From the Coordinator:

I hope you all had an enjoyable Noël - for my part, my family and I indulged in a number of Franco-American traditions, including home-made bûche de Noël (baked by my wonderful wife, Kate) and local tourtière. I recently discovered that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has included the French Culinary Tradition on its register of 'intangible heritage', so it's good to see that we were all in good company over the Christmas period!

As the holidays draw to a close, and we enter 2011, we're all planning for the year ahead, and USM's Franco-American Collection is no exception. If you can find time to read through this month's edition of Le Bulletin, you'll find out what we've been up to in order to celebrate the Christmas season, like our Joyeux Noël event and some of the things we have planned for next year, such as the exciting Troubadours project, which kicks off this month.

Many of the visitors to Joyeux Noël were generous to donate items to the Collection, and in general, our policy of accepting 'digital donations' and allowing donors to keep treasured originals is proving to be very popular. Remember that if you have something you'd like to preserve in the Collection, but don't want to part with it just yet, why not ask about taking advantage of this service?

Finally, I'm starting to work with some local school teachers to encourage the teaching of

Franco-American history in schools. If you know of a teacher who might be interested in using some of the teaching materials available from the Collection, please put them in touch with us (information at bottom of page).

Until next time, Bonne Année à tout!

James

Joyeux Noël Family Celebration

December 11 saw the Franco-American Collection host an old-fashioned family Christmas with the help of Vermont folk trio Va-et-Vient. Visitors also had the opportunity to have family portraits taken with Mainely Kids Photography, and children could craft ornaments with volunteers from USM's Student Government Association. Turnout for the event was excellent, and around 120 people were able to enjoy the traditional Franco-American folk music, take part in a Christmas sing-along of old favorites, while munching on sugar pie and molasses cookies.

On the same day, we were lucky enough to be able to invite Story Bank Maine, an on-going radio and podcast project which records the stories of everyday Mainers, to the event. Story Bank Maine interviewed a number of members of the Franco-American community about growing up in Lewiston, Franco Christmas traditions and the importance of music to Franco culture, among other subjects. I know that the interviewees enjoyed sharing their tales, and that Story Bank were very pleased with the material they recorded that day. A copy of each of the interviews will be available in the Collection for future researchers, and the originals will be broadcast on public radio sometime next year – I'll let you know the date when I hear back from Story Bank. Oral histories are an important part of the Franco-American heritage in Maine, and if you, too, would like to donate an interview to the Collection for future generations, please feel free to get in touch with the Collection (information at bottom of page). An interview can also become a unique piece of family history to pass on to your children and grandchildren.



Vermont Folk Trio Va-et-Vient

Les Troubadours

Do you enjoy singing? Would you like the chance to share songs from your childhood with others who remember them? USM's Franco-American Collection is planning to organize a series of monthly French-language sing-along sessions, and is looking for recruits. The gatherings will be fun and informal (no set rehearsals, no performances to large audiences), and will get underway at USM's Lewiston-Auburn College at 1:15, January 19. The gathering will last until around 2:15, and the aim is simply to have a good time singing! Future meetings will be held alternately at USM's Lewiston-Auburn College and elsewhere in the community on the third Wednesday of each month. Anyone interested in more information should contact the Collection (information at bottom of page).

New Items at the Collection:

Photographs of the Pine Tree Warriors Drum and Bugle Corps, donated by Bert Dutil.

Family Photographs, donated by Mercedes Gastonguay.

Être Huron, inuit, francophone, vietnamien, a book of ethnographic identities, donated by the author, Louis-Jacques Dorais.

Books on French literature and music, donated by Michael Parent.

Oral History Interviews donated by Mercedes & Jean Gastonguay; Irene Coady; Francis Gagnon; Lorraine Ouellette; Bert Dutil; Helene Sylvaine & Irene Mercier; Aliiete & Ron Couturier; Jacynthe Jacques.

Allegretto.
mf

Es - ten-nia-lon de tson - oué le - sous a - ha - ton - nia, On -

na - oua - té - oua d'o - - ki n'on - ouan - da - skoua - en - tak En -

non - chien skoua - tri - ho tat h'on - ouan - di - lon - ra - cha - tha

rall.

a tempo. *ff* *cresc.*

le-sous a - ha-ton-nia, le-sous a - ha-ton-nia, le - sous a - ha-ton - nia !

The Huron Carol

In the Christmas season, we remember that the message of the holiday, 'goodwill to men, and peace on Earth', extends to people of all faiths and cultures. It's a message we can all understand and agree with, but, unfortunately, it's not very often a reality. The story of the Huron Carol, the oldest Canadian Christmas Carol, illustrates both the positive and negative results of cultural intermingling between the different cultures and faiths of New France.

In 1625, Jean de Brébeuf, a French Jesuit missionary travelled to Canada with the intention of evangelizing the Amerindians. In particular, he was interested in the Huron people of the Saint Laurence Valley (now known as the Wendat Nation), and in order to understand them better, he lived among the Huron for more than fifteen years. Apart from the distance (more than 900 miles from Quebec City and 4,000 from France) and the dangers of the voyage, the biggest obstacle Father de Brébeuf faced in understanding the Amerindians was the language. Nevertheless, de Brébeuf was a determined individual, and eventually, he even succeeded in creating the first dictionary of the Huron language.

To explain the nativity story to the Hurons, de Brébeuf wrote a song – the first Canadian Christmas Carol, in 1643, in the Huron language. The song was called Iesus Ahatonnia (Jesus is Born), and described the voyage of the Three Magi (or, in this version, three elders) to find the infant Jesus. The words were accompanied by a traditional French tune, Une Jeune Pucelle. Christmas turned out to be rather popular among Huron converts. One Jesuit priest wrote:

"The Indians have a particular devotion to the night which was enlightened by the birth of the Son of God... They build a chapel made of cedar and fir branches, in honor of the Baby Jesus' manger... They meet at a given place in order to sing hymns in honor of the newborn babe." (Jesuit Relations, 1644).

But in 1649, tragedy struck. A group of Iroquois, armed with European weapons, attacked de Brébeuf's church, St. Ignatius, killing him and many Hurons. After this and other massacres, the Huron Nation was scattered to the four winds. For three hundred years they wandered over the United States and Canada, often facing persecution. The song, Iesus Ahatonnia seems like a last reminder of that happier time for the Hurons. On the one hand, Jean de Brébeuf had wanted see the Amerindians and Europeans understand each other better through this song, but on the other hand, the Huron Carol, a Christian hymn, also represents the beginning of a period of incomprehension between two cultures and faiths.

Below, you can see the original Huron lyrics, alongside the first French translation (offered by Paul Picard, a Huron-Canadian, in 1909) and my own English rendition. Other, more popular, translations exist (as Jésus est Né, in French, and 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime in English), but I have chosen two which more closely resemble the original Huron. Listen to the Huron Carol [here](#).

Iesus Ahatonnia

*Estennailon de tsonoue Iesus ahatonnia
Onnaouateoua d'oki n'onouandaskouaentak
Ennonchien skouatrihotat
n'onouandilonrachatha
Ieous ahatonnia. Iesus ahatonnia.*

*Aloki onkinnhache eronhialeronnon
Iontok ontatiande ndio sen tsatonnharonnion
Ouarie onnaouakoueton ndio sen
tsatonnharonnion
Iesus ahatonnia. Iesus ahatonnia.*

*Achink ontahonraskoua d'hatirihouannens
Tichion halonniondetha onhoua achia aharen
Ondaie te hahahakoua tichion halonniondetha
Iesus ahatonnia. Iesus ahatonnia.*

*Thoi chien stahation tethotondi Iesus
Ahoatatende tichion stanchiteaouennion
Ahalonatorenten iatonk atsion sken
Iesus ahatonnia. Iesus ahatonnia.*

*Onne ontahation chiahonalen Iesus
Ahatichionnonniannon kahachiahandialon
Te honannonranouannion ihontonk oërisen
Iesus ahatonnia. Iesus ahatonnia.*

*Te ekouatatennton ahekouachiendaen
Ti hekouannonronkouannion de sonouentenrade
Outoleti skouannonhoue ichierhe
akennonhonstha
Iesus ahatonnia. Iesus ahatonnia.*

*(Noëls Anciens de la Nouvelle-France,
M. Gagnon, 1913)*

Jésus est Né

*Hommes, prenez courage, Jésus est né!
Maintenant que le règne du diable est détruit,
N'écoutez plus ce qu'il dit à vos esprits.
Jésus est né! Jésus est né!*

*Écoutez les anges du ciel.
Ne rejetez pas maintenant ce qu'ils ont dit.
Marie a enfanté le Grand Esprit, comme ils vous l'ont dit.
Jésus est né! Jésus est né!*

*Trois chefs ce donnèrent parole
En voyant l'étoile au firmament;
Et ils convinrent de suivre l'étoile.
Jésus est né! Jésus est né!*

*Alors Jésus leur suggéra l'idée de venir le voir
Et la pensée que l'étoile les conduirait vers Lui;
Et ils se dirent donc qu'ils iraient vers l'étoile.
Jésus est né! Jésus est né!*

*Ces chefs firent des offrandes; en voyant Jésus
Ils furent heureux, et lui racontèrent de grandes choses;
Ils Le saluèrent et Lui parlèrent sincèrement.
Jésus est né! Jésus est né!*

*A présent venez tous Le prier,
Adorez-Le. Il a exaucé nos vœux,
Écoutez-Le. Il veut que vous soyez saints.
Jésus est né! Jésus est né!*

(trans. Paul Picard Tsahenhoit, 1909)

Jesus is Born

*Have courage, you who are humans, Jesus is born
Behold, the spirit who had us as prisoners has fled
Do not listen to it, as it corrupts our minds
Jesus is born! Jesus is born!*

*The sky people are spirits, coming with a message for us,
They are coming to say, "Rejoice"
"Marie, she has just given birth. Rejoice."
Jesus is born! Jesus is born!*

*Three elders have left for such a place,
A star that has just appeared over the horizon leads them there
He who leads them there will seize the path.
Jesus is born! Jesus is born!*

*As they arrived where Jesus was born,
The star was stopping, he was not far past it
They told themselves to come close to the star.
Jesus is born! Jesus is born!*

*Behold, they have arrived there and have seen Jesus
They praised him many times, saying "Hurray, he is good in nature"
They greeted him with reverence, saying "Hurray"
Jesus is born! Jesus is born!*

*We will give to him praise for his name
Let us show reverence for him as he comes to be compassionate to us.
It is providential that you love us and wish, "I should adopt them."
Jesus is born! Jesus is born!*

(trans. John Steckley, 2007)

Le Noël Huron

À la saison de Noël, on se souvient du message de la fête, la paix sur terre, et la bonne volonté hommes, est pour tout le monde, qui s'applique à toutes religions et cultures. Tout le monde comprend et aime cette idée, mais, malheureusement, ce n'est pas très souvent une réalité. L'histoire du Noël Huron, la cantique de Noël canadienne la plus ancienne, illustre les résultats positifs et négatifs du mélange des cultures et des confessions de foi de la Nouvelle France :

En 1625, Jean de Brébeuf, un missionnaire jésuite français, a voyagé au Canada pour évangéliser les Amérindiens. En particulier, il s'intéressait les Hurons de la Vallée du Saint-Laurence (qui maintenant s'appelle la Nation Wendat) et pour les connaître, le père Brébeuf habitait chez eux pendant plus de quinze ans. En dehors de la distance (900 milles de Québec, et 4000 de la France) et des dangers du voyage au pays des Hurons, l'obstacle le plus grand pour comprendre les Amérindiens était la langue. Néanmoins, Brébeuf était un homme résolu, et finalement, il parlait la langue Huronne si bien qu'il a écrit le premier dictionnaire de cette langue.

Pour expliquer l'histoire de la nativité aux Hurons, le Père de Brébeuf a écrit en 1643 une chanson – la première cantique de Noël canadienne – dans la langue Huronne. La chanson s'appelait Iesous Ahatonnia, ou 'Jésus est né', et a décrit le voyage des trois Rois Mages (ou,

dans cette version, les trois vieillards) pour trouver l'enfant Jésus. Les paroles se sont accompagnées de la musique d'une chanson populaire ancienne, Une Jeune Pucelle. Noël était assez populaire parmi les Hurons – en 1644 les jésuites ont écrit :

« Les sauvages ont une dévotion particulière à la nuit qui fut éclairée de la naissance du Fils du Dieu... Ils bâtirent une petite chapelle des branches de cèdre et de sapin en l'honneur de la crèche du petit Jésus...ils se trouvèrent à point nommé pour chanter des Cantiques en l'honneur de l'Enfant nouveau né. »

(Relations des Jésuites, 1644)

Mais en 1649 une tragédie est arrivée. Des Iroquois, avec des armes européennes, ont attaqué l'église de Brébeuf, Saint Ignace, et ils 'ont tué Brébeuf et beaucoup des Hurons. Après ce massacre et d'autres, la Nation des Hurons était semée aux quatre vents – pendant trois cents ans, ils erraient partout au Canada et aux Etats-Unis, souvent persécutés. La chanson, Iesus Ahatonnia, est le dernier souvenir d'un temps plus heureux pour les Hurons. D'une part, Jean de Brébeuf a voulu que les Amérindiens et Européens se connasait au moyen de cette chanson, mais d'autre part, le Noël Huron, une cantique chrétienne, représente le commencement d'une période d'incompréhension et d'intolérance entre les deux cultures et fles deux confessions de foi.

Au-dessus sont les paroles originales huronnes à côté de la première traduction française (par Paul Picard, un Huron-Canadien, en 1909) et ma propre traduction anglaise. Il y a d'autres traductions (en français, il s'appelle Jésus est Né, en anglais, 'Twas in the Moon of Wintertime), qui sont plus populaires, mais j'ai choisi les deux qui sont ressemblent plus les paroles huronnes. Ecoutez au Noël Huron [ici](#).

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