

Spring 2014

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James Myall

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LE BULLETIN

Issue 12—Spring 2014

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UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MAINE
Lewiston-Auburn College

FRANCO - AMERICAN
COLLECTION
FRANCO - AMÉRICAINÉ



LE BULLETIN: The Newsletter of USM's Franco-American Collection

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f = version français

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Editrice de langue française: Mary Rice-DeFossé

Cover: *Untitled (Nun with Violin), Eddie(?) Couillard, Oil on Canvas, n.d.*

The provenance of this painting is uncertain, and it is not known if the figure in the portrait was painted from life, or from the artist's imagination. However, the image is representative of the thousands of women of French-Canadian or Franco-American heritage who took vows to become members of religious orders, especially in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the first half of the 20th century, about 3% of all the young women in Québec became nuns. SEE L'ART DES FEMMES / THE FEMININE ARTS

From the Coordinator

In this issue of Le Bulletin, we have plenty of exciting developments to report on. As you'll see, we were very busy this spring with public events here at the Collection, and appearances in Augusta, Brunswick and even Washington, D.C. The public profile of the Collection and Maine's Franco-Americans, continues to grow.

We've also been busy developing and publishing an online catalog for the Collection. This a first for us, and you can read more about it below, but I'm sure you'll agree that this is an exciting development.

I hope you'll be able to stop by the Collection this summer, either individually or for one of our events. June 21, we're planning a Franco-American History Fair to coincide with St Jean-Baptiste Day. As you can read below, the event will be a great way to learn more about Maine's Franco-American history for both novices and old hands alike!

And don't forget to catch our current exhibit *L'Art des Femmes*, before it closes at the end of June.

Unit! Next time,

James Myall, Coordinator

Du Coordinateur

Ce numéro du Bulletin inclut beaucoup de renseignements formidables. On peut lire ci-dessous des rapports des événements publics à la Collection ce printemps. En plus, j'ai présenté à propos des sujets divers à Augusta et Brunswick, et même à Washington, D.C. Le profil public de la Collection et des Franco-Américains du Maine continue à agrandir.

Nous nous occupons aussi de développer et publier un fichier numérique en ligne pour la Collection. Ce fichier numérique est le premier pour nous, et on peut lire tous les renseignements ci-dessous, mais je pense que vous serez d'accord avec moi que ce nouvel est vraiment formidable!

J'espère que vous peut visiter la Collection cet été - soit tout seul, soit pour aller à un de nos événements. Le 21 juin, la Collection accueillera un festival d'histoire franco-américaine, vers la date de la fête de Saint Jean Baptiste. Comme on peut lire ci-dessous, cet événement sera une occasion excellente pour apprendre plus au sujet de l'histoire franco-américaine; si on est un débutant ou un expert.

A Bientôt!

James Myall, Coordinateur

Online Catalog now Available

The Collection now has an online catalog! This exciting development is the result of several years' work at the Collection. For some time, the Collection has been building an electronic catalog of its holdings, and we've now made that catalog available to you!

Currently, the catalog consists of over 1500 records which can be viewed online for free, at any time, anywhere. The records include items from several parts of the Collection – our library, the music collection, artifacts and, of course, archival material. In particular, there are hundreds of photographs which can be viewed online. Visitors have the ability to email records to family and friends, to write the Collection with feedback, or to order reproductions of images.

The catalog, which represents approximately 10% of the Collection, will be added to regularly, thanks to the work of Collection staff, volunteers, and student workers. Preference will be given to the Collection's photographic holdings.

The catalog will be of interest to those researching Franco-American history, of course, but also to anyone with an interest in the history of Lewiston-Auburn or Maine, which areas comprise the bulk of the Collection. Powerful search tools and a comprehensive indexing system allow users to search the catalog for people, places and subject.

[Visit the online catalog.](#)



Construction, St Dominic Hockey Arena, Lewiston, c.1949. Fr. François Drouin and Reginald Cloutier discuss the plans for the new indoor arena.

This photo is just one of hundreds of items in the online catalog.

Fichier Numérique est Maintenant en Ligne

La Collection a publié un fichier numérique en ligne! Le personnel et volontaires de la Collection ont travaillé dur pendant plusieurs années à réaliser cette énorme réussite. Nous avons construit un fichier numérique de nos artefacts, livres, photographies et papiers, et, maintenant, tout le monde peut regarder le fichier. .

Aujourd'hui, le fichier inclut plus de 1500 entrées, qu'on peut regarder gratuitement – n'importe quand; n'importe où, Les entrées décrivent des objets de tous les parties de la Collection – la bibliothèque, la collection musicale, les artefacts, et, bien sûr, les archives. En particulier, il y a des centaines de photographies qu'on peut regarder en ligne. Ceux qui visitent le site-web peuvent envoyer une entrée par courriel aux amis, écrire à la Collection au sujet d'une entrée, ou acheter une copie d'une photographie.

Le fichier, qui représente seulement 10% de la Collection complète, va s'élargir, grâce au travail du personnel et des bénévoles de la Collection. Les photographies s'ajouteront de préférence.

Le fichier intéressera tous ceux qui cherchent l'histoire franco-américaine, bien sûr, mais aussi ceux qui cherchent à propos de l'histoire de Lewiston-Auburn, ou du Maine. La plupart de la Collection se basent sur ces endroits. Le fichier a les fonctions de recherche puissants, et un index exhaustif.

[Visitez le fichier](#)

Prochain: Fête d'Histoire Franco-Américaine

Le 21 juin, la Collection va accueillir une première dans le Maine – une fête d'histoire franco-américaine. L'événement, qui se déroulera de 9h du matin jusqu'à midi, inclura des petites expositions par des sociétés historiques, des bibliothèques, des musées et des groupes généalogiques sur des thèmes franco-américains. Le public peut visiter les stands de ces organisations, y découvrir l'histoire franco-américaine du Maine, et poser des questions aux experts.

Il y aura spécialistes de musée présents à l'événement, et on peut leur apporter ses « trésors » pour les identifier, conserver ou évaluer.

On pourra aussi explorer la Collection, qui sera ouverte au public. Durant le matin, il y aura des conférences courtes gratuites sur des sujets divers historiques.

La liste des exposants inclut le « Lewiston Public Library », le « McArthur Public Library » de Biddeford, le « Maine Franco-American Genealogical Society » d'Auburn, le « Franco-American Women's Institute », le « Biddeford Mills Museum », le « Castine Historical Society », et le « Pejepscot Historical Society », de Brunswick. Nous comptons accueillir encore d'autres organisations.

L'événement est gratuit, et il n'est pas nécessaire de réserver des billets. La fête se déroulera à la salle 170 à « USM's Lewiston-Auburn College » à 51 Rue Westminster, Lewiston.

Plus des renseignements sont disponibles [sur notre site-web](#).

Upcoming: Franco-American History Fair

Join us Saturday June 21 for a Maine first – a Franco-American History Fair! The event, which runs from 9am – 12 Noon, will feature exhibits from Maine historical societies, libraries, museums and genealogical groups with a Franco-American connection. Visitors will have the opportunity to visit exhibitors' booths, to explore the diversity of the Franco-American experience in Maine, and ask questions of the experts. The Collection and other participants will also have items for sale.

A museum conservation professional and an appraiser will be on-hand, so bring your family treasures along to be identified or valued, and learn the best way to preserve them for the future.

The event will also be an opportunity to explore the Collection, which will be open to the public. Throughout the course of the morning, short presentations will be offered on historic topics, at no additional cost.

Confirmed exhibitors include: the Lewiston Public Library, the McArthur Public Library, Biddeford, the Maine Franco-American Genealogical Society, the Franco-American Women's Institute, the Biddeford Mills Museum, the Castine Historical Society, and the Pejepscot Historical Society, Brunswick. Several others will be expected to join us.

The event is free to attend, and no registration is necessary. The fair will take place in room 170 of USM's Lewiston-Auburn College at 51 Westminster Street, Lewiston.

For more information, [visit our website](#).



St Jean Baptiste Day Parade, Lewiston, 1964. Reginald Parent and his son Laurent, dressed as John the Baptist.

Sing-Alongs Continue in June, with a Summer Hiatus

Our monthly sing-along sessions have continued throughout this winter and spring, and the final session of the season is upon us! June 20th will see *Les Troubadours* (as our group of volunteers is sometimes known) take their talents to the Odd Fellows' and Rebekahs' Home of Maine, at 85 Caron Lane in Auburn. The session will take place from 1:30-2:30.

After a summer hiatus, sessions will resume in the fall. Watch this space for the dates of the autumn and winter schedule!

Les Chants en Chœur en juin; pause d'été

Les chants en chœur ont continué pendant l'hiver et le printemps. La séance finale de la saison aura lieu le 20 juin. « Les Troubadours » chanteraient à « Odd Fellows' and Rebekahs Home of Maine » à 85 Ruelle Caron, à Auburn. La séance commencera à 1:30 et durera une heure.

Après une pause pour l'été, les chants en chœur recommenceront en automne. On annoncera les horaires d'automne dans un « Bulletin » futur.

Student Work : *Sustaining Cultural Identity: Acculturation of French Canadians and the Diaspora of Somali Refugees' Immigration to Lewiston, Maine*

Frank Wooten, USM

The balance of sustaining cultural identity and assimilating into a new host society can be a challenging deed. The United States is thought to be a land of hope and prospect. It is seen by many as a way to escape the hardships they go through back in their home land. Many years ago, people flocked to the United States seeking for a better life, not only for themselves, but for their families as well. For the French Canadians, they immigrated to Maine in the mid 1880s in hopes of better jobs. The Somalis immigrated here in the early 2000s seeking refuge from their war torn country. Often times, cultural conflicts arise. The American culture may prove to become an obstacle. For both the Franco and Somali people, how much of their own cultural identity did they sacrifice in order to succeed in the land of opportunity? This paper points out the obstacles and barriers that challenge any culture through the process of integration, assimilation, segregation and marginalization.

Wooten made use of the many resources at the Collection. Wooten's essay, a project for his Senior Seminar at USM LAC, has been deposited at the Collection, and can be read by visitors.

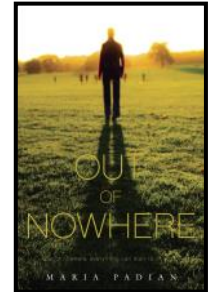
Report: Spring Event Series

With the help of a grant from the University of Maine System's Diversity Office, the Collection held a series of public and academic events this spring, in conjunction with faculty at USM's Lewiston-Auburn College. The events served to bring members of the public and students together to consider important aspects of Franco-American history and contemporary issues in the community. The series included:

February 27, a lecture by Prof. [Christian Potholm](#) of Bowdoin College, on the role Franco-Americans have played as an important voting bloc in Maine's elections – and their potential role in the upcoming race for the Blaine House in 2014. This event was offered with *LCC 320: Sustaining Democracy*.



March 27, a book reading by Brunswick author [Maria Padian](#), on her novel for young adults, *Out of Nowhere*. The book tells the story of high school soccer players in the fictional community of Enniston, Maine. Franco- and Somali-American teenagers grapple with the differences - and similarities - between the two communities. This event was offered with *LCC 370: Towards a Global Ethics*

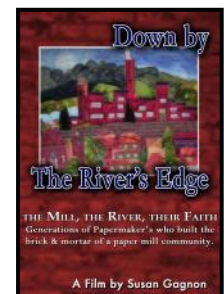


April 17, a lecture by Rhea Côté Robbins, founder of the [Franco-American Women's Institute](#), on the roles of Franco-American women, especially in relationship to the traditional ideas of motherhood among Franco-Americans. This event was offered in conjunction with *HUM/SBS 358: Representations of Motherhood*.

[You can watch Robbins' talk](#) online on our website or our Youtube channel.



May 1, a film screening of [Down by the River's Edge](#), a documentary about the community which worked at the Otis Mill in Jay, Maine. The movie examines the way in which work defined the community around the mill, especially in the village of Chisholm. Much of the documentary focuses on the Franco-American workers, as well as other immigrant communities – Italian- and Slovak-Americans. This event was part of the *Poetry, Peace Potluck* Mayday celebration at USM LAC, and was offered in conjunction with *HUM 330: Labor and Literature*.



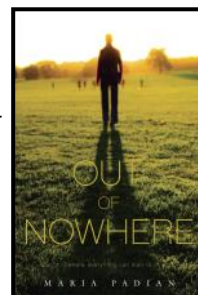
Rapport: Série Printanière d'Événements

Grâce à une bourse du bureau de la diversité de l'« University of Maine System », la Collection a organisé une série d'événements publics et académiques ce printemps, avec l'aide des professeurs à « Lewiston-Auburn College ». Les événements ont servi à réunir le public général et les étudiants pour considérer certains aspects importants de l'histoire franco-américaine et des questions contemporaines signifiantes dans la communauté.. La série comprend:

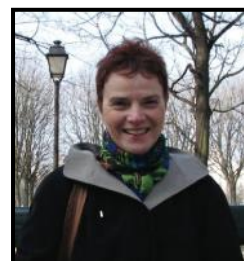
Le 27 février, une présentation par Prof. [Christian Potholm](#) de « Bowdoin College ». Il a expliqué le rôle des Franco-Américains comme électeurs dans le Maine – et l'importance du vote franco-américain dans l'élection pour le gouverneur du Maine ce novembre. Cet événement était en collaboration avec la classe « *LCC 320 : Sustaining Democracy* »



Le 27 mars, la lecture du livre « Out of Nowhere » par l'écrivaine, [Maria Padian](#). « Out of Nowhere » est l'histoire d'une équipe de foot dans une ville imaginaire qui s'appelle « Enniston », dans le Maine. Les jeunes franco- et somali-américains font face à certaines différences – et similarités – entre les deux peuples. Cet événement était en collaboration avec la classe « *LCC 370 : Towards a Global Ethics* »

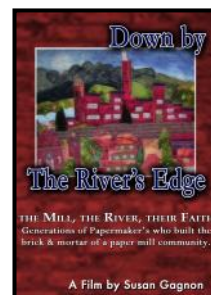


Le 17 avril, une présentation par Rhea Côté Robbins, la fondatrice [de l'Institut des Femmes Franco-américaines](#). Robbins a décrit les rôles des femmes franco-américaines et, en particulier, les idées traditionnelles de la maternité. Cet événement était en collaboration avec la classe « *HUM/SBS 358 : Representations of Motherhood* »



On peut [regarder la présentation](#) sur notre site web, ou notre chaîne Youtube.

Le 1^{er} mai, une diffusion du film « [Down by the River's Edge](#) », un documentaire au sujet du moulin « Otis » à Jay, Maine, et des gens qui y ont travaillé. Le film étudie les communautés diverses qui s'étaient établies autour du moulin, et les peuples ethniques qui y habitaient. Le village de Chisholm, en particulier, comprend les Franco-Américains, mais aussi les émigrés italiens, grecs, et slovaques. Cet événement était une partie de l'événement majeur « Poetry, Peace, Potluck », et est en collaboration avec la classe « *HUM 330 : Labor and Literature* »



Report: Maine Franco-American Day 2014

Wednesday, March 19, the Maine State Legislature celebrated its annual [Franco-American Day](#), and the Collection was present at the festivities. Among this year's inductees was Prof. Mary Rice-DeFosse, Professor of French and Francophone Studies at Bates College, and a member of the Collection's Board of Directors.

The Collection has gathered information on all the past inductees to the Maine Franco-American Hall of Fame (the only place you can currently find this information together). You'll find that on our website, [here](#).

This year, Franco-American Day was covered by the team at Radio Canada Acadie for their *Tout en Samedi* program. Several of the exhibitors and participants at the event were interviewed for segments that aired on successive weeks. You can find a full compilation of the interviews (in French), including one with Collection Coordinator James Myall, [here](#).



The Collection Display in the Hall of Flags at the State House, Augusta

Rapport: Journée Franco-Américaine du Maine 2014

Le gouvernement du Maine a proclamé mercredi le 19 mars [la journée annuelle franco-américaine](#). La Collection avait une présence à la célébration à Augusta. Parmi des élus était la Prof. Mary Rice-DeFossé, Professeure des Études françaises et francophones à « Bates College ». C'est aussi un membre du conseil d'administration de la Collection.

On peut trouver les noms et la citation pour toutes les élus au panthéon franco-américaine sur notre site-web. C'est le seul endroit où on peut trouver tous ces renseignements.

Cette année, Radio Canada Acadie a rapporté la journée franco-américaine pour l'émission *Tout en samedi*. Radio Canada a interviewé quelques exposants et participants à l'événement. Ces interviews étaient diffusés pendant plusieurs semaines. On peut écouter tous les interviews [ici](#) (en français), y compris un interview avec le coordinateur de la Collection, James Myall.

Report: The Collection Abroad

The Collection has also been increasing its presence nationwide. Collection Coordinator James Myall participated in two speaking events this spring, raising the profile of both Franco-Americans and the Collection.

February 26, James was the opening speaker for a series of talks organized by the Pejepscot Historical Society of Brunswick, Maine. The talk, entitled *Les Raquetteurs: Maine's Franco-American Snowshoeing Heritage*, described the history and resonance of the snowshoeing movement in Maine. James recounted the establishment of snowshoeing as an organized sport in the United States with the founding of *Le Club Montagnard* in Lewiston in 1924, and went on to chronicle the remarkable International Snowshoe Convention of that year, and to chart the rise and fall of the movement over the 20th century.

As part of this year's focus on Franco-American topics, the PHS invited Public Radio's *Story Corps* to conduct interviews with local Franco-Americans. These interviews will be available at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick and, eventually, online.

You can find out more about the Pejepscot Historical Society, and their Spring Lecture Series [here](#).

Tuesday, March 18, James gave a presentation to the Alliance Française of Washington D.C., on the subject of Franco-Americans in Maine. Integrating both an historic and contemporary perspective, the lecture offered an overview of Maine's Franco-Americans through the lens of Lewiston. Audience members were led through the history of the Franco-American community in Lewiston, illustrated by historic photographs from the Collection. James also offered an analysis of U.S. Census Bureau data which shed light on the Franco-Americans of today. You can see some of that analysis [here](#).



Snowshoe Race, Location Uncertain, c.1950



Le Passe-Temps Drum and Bugle Corps, City Park, Lewiston, 1948/9

Rapport: La Collection à la Monde

Le profil public national de la Collection et des Franco-Américains du Maine continue à agrandir. Le Coordinateur, James Myall, a présenté deux conférences ce printemps. Ces événements ont valorisé la Collection et les Franco-Américains du Maine.

Le 26 février, James a commencé une série de présentations organisées par le « Pejepscot Historical Society » de Brunswick, Maine. La conférence, intitulée *Les Raquetteurs : Maine's Franco-American Snowshoeing Heritage*, a décrit l'histoire et l'importance du sport de raquette dans le Maine. James a raconté l'histoire du début de la raquette comme un sport organisé, dans le Maine avec la fondation du Club Montagnard à Lewiston en 1924. Il a parlé aussi au sujet de la convention internationale des raquetteurs dans cette même année – un événement remarquable – et, finalement, la grandeur et décadence (la montée et la chute? La croissance et la diminution?) du sport aux Etats-Unis pendant le 20^e siècle.

Le « Pejepscot Historical Society » a aussi invité l'émission de radio, « Story Corps » à enregistrer quelques interviews avec des Franco-Américains à Brunswick et Topsham. Ces interviews seraient déposés à « Curtis Memorial Library » à Brunswick. Un jour, on peut les écouter en-ligne.

On peut trouver plus de renseignements au sujet de la « Pejepscot Historical Society » et sa série d'événements [ici](#)

Le 18 mars, James a présenté à l'Alliance Française de Washington, D.C. les Franco-Américains du Maine. La conférence a inclut l'histoire ainsi que le contexte courant, et a présenté la communauté franco-américaine de Lewiston-Auburn comme une étude de cas pour les Franco-Américains de la Nouvelle Angleterre en général. James a expliqué l'histoire des Franco-Américains de Lewiston-Auburn, en se basant sur des photographies choisies de la Collection. James a analysé quelques statistiques du « U.S. Census Bureau » pour éclaircir le contexte d'aujourd'hui. On peut lire cette analyse [ici](#).

Exhibit: L'Art des Femmes / The Feminine Arts

"The Feminine Arts" were a narrowly-defined set of acceptable occupations for young women before the feminist movements of the 20th century. Traditionally, femininity was closely connected to domesticity – keeping up a household, caring for children, and making oneself appealing to men. An ideology that portrayed women as intellectually and physically inferior to men, with delicate sensibilities helped to restrict women to a very narrow range of acceptable activities within this domestic sphere. This was particularly true of early Franco-American society which was generally very traditional in its outlook.

There were certainly women who stepped outside these social norms and acted as businesswomen, doctors, even soldiers, and the conditions of colonial-era New France were particularly conducive to eliminating gender norms, as everyone pitched in to ensure the survival of the community. Women worked in the textile mills alongside men, in similarly tough conditions. As teachers, and especially as nuns, women played a key role in educating future generations of Franco-Americans. By the late 20th century, of course, Franco-American women, just like all American women, were participating fully in the labor force.

This exhibit, however, focuses on those "feminine arts" and particularly, the creative outlets they offered women. Although the focus on domesticity now seems antiquated and even oppressive, Franco-American women often showed great skill as seamstresses, cooks, and musicians. Literary talents found an outlet through poetry and the writing of novels.

The exhibit pulls together items and themes from several parts of the exhibit. It includes paintings, textiles, calligraphy, books, recipes and drawings. Don't miss this great chance to get a look at some of the items in the Collection which we don't get to display very often!

The exhibit closes June 30



Chaffers Sisters, 1934

2014.0.10

This photograph is labeled "international piano recital." The context of this event is unknown, but it presumably accounts for the sisters' costumes.

Left to right: Madeleine Chaffers; Patricia Chaffers (later Croteau); Rita S(...?); Helene Chaffers (later Mattisen); Pauline Chaffers (later Bourassa).

L'Art des Femmes / The Feminine Arts (continued)

Pauline Allard, Snow Taffy,
c.1960

2012.0.12

The practice of making “snow taffy” was popular. Hot maple syrup would be poured over fresh snow; as the syrup hit the cold snow, it would harden into a chewy taffy.



**Antoinette Gagne with Hand-Knitted
Afghan**

Acrylic yarn

2013.26.1

Each of the 92 different snowshoe clubs in the United States and Canada is represented in the afghan by a crocheted square in the club colors. Each square is topped by a knitted element resembling a *tuque*, the traditional snowshoer's hat. This unique piece was crafted by hand, and took a dozen years to make – not just because of the labor involved, but because of the difficulty in finding yarn in some of the more unusual colors.

Antoinette Gagne (1910-2013) was a long-time member of the Jacques-Cartier Snowshoe Club of Lewiston, and the first president of its women's auxiliary branch. She also crafted several snowshoe uniforms – for herself and her husband, Dominique, but also family members and friends. Several of these uniforms are in the Collection.