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Franco in Maine Article

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One word suffices to explain why French-Canadians settled in Lewiston-Auburn, as well as elsewhere in Maine. That word is: economics. They came ^{here} to better their way of life.

They were called French-Canadians because they originally came from France to help colonize Canada in the 17th century. Life was difficult in those years when farmland was frequently a wilderness grant ^{made} on condition it be developed. This meant felling trees and clearing land before farming operations could begin, and housing consisted of a rough dwelling.

Everything had to be done through individual ^{labor,} skill and ingenuity, and every one of the family worked, ^{merely} ~~just~~ to keep alive and warm in a country of long winters. Farming operations were just enough to supply the family, ^{even as arduous as they were, merely supplied} ~~merely supplied for the family, even~~ though ^{though} ~~neighbors~~ helped in the fields in addition to their household duties.

It was an era of large families. French-Canadians averaged at least a dozen children, and there were always ^{a few} ~~several~~ in each family ~~that~~ who died either at birth or in early childhood. No hospital, and few doctors, were available, ~~so~~ mothers ^{invariably} ~~usually~~ had to depend on mid-wives or more-or-less experienced ^{distant} neighbors ^{or other medical} for child-birth assistance. Mothers died frequently, ~~and~~ and men re-married. When husbands died, widows did the same, out of necessity, and children of both marriages were brought up together as one family.

These people had been in Canada more than 150 years before Great Britain ^{in 1763,} took over. While governed by their own people, the French-Canadians could endure their hardships, always hoping, that, from generation to generation, life would become easier, and it did, for some. Others fared only moderately, and some gave up the struggle and returned to France at the time of the "conquest" as the French-Canadians still refer to ^{the end of} ~~the~~ that war.

^{When the} conflict ended, ~~and~~ France ^{was} strong enough to insist ~~that~~ on a guarantee that its people remaining in Canada would have the freedom to

retain their speech and religion. Assured of that by treaty, French-Canadians ^{have} ~~upheld~~ these rights to this day. ^{more} ~~French-Canadians~~

Note probably from
Chas lotte michoud

Clergymen who had been among the discoverers of that country--as well as part of these United States--remained to minister to these people, grouping them around their churches and schools. To remain French and Catholic was fostered as synonymous.

After the conquest, some French-Canadian girls did marry military men of the occupation forces, so that one now finds many French-Canadian families with English and Scottish surnames, but their children were brought up French in language and tradition; rarely the other way.

When children married, they were given a corner of the family land-holdings. They first remained in the ^{husbands'} family homestead and tilled their corner of the land until they were able to build their own home where they, too, raised large families. Family farms thereby became smaller with each generation, making it increasingly difficult ~~to maintain them~~ for families to subsist.

~~Subsistence~~ A family having more daughters than sons generated its own hardships, since no employment was available to them except in the household. Even in cities where some form of employment might have been available for ~~some~~ women, French-Canadians, clinging to Old World mores, considered it ^{demeaning} ~~improper~~ for their womenfolk to be employed outside the home.

~~To further complicate matters, Englishspeaking residents began to migrate to Canada in greater numbers as under British dominion. Conflicts developed, mostly over lack of communication--French-Canadians refusing to obey any government edict that appeared solely in English.~~

Between farming seasons, French-Canadian men began to look for employment elsewhere and ^(nearby) ^(such opportunity.) Maine offered ~~them~~. They came to work in lumber camps and on constructions. They came in sufficiently large numbers to ^{cause} ~~draw~~ the French-Canadian clergy to send "missionaries" ^(out of Quebec) to minister to them during their stay in Maine.

These temporary migrants usually came by way of Jackman, the nearest travel road between the eastern part of Canada and our state. ^{during} ~~through~~ ~~more~~ repeated work-stays in Maine, French-Canadians ~~had opportunity to~~ ^{observed} the better ~~economic~~ ^{economic} conditions here ^{more} and to become ~~the~~ ^{by} familiar with American ways of life."

Initiation

~~Initiation~~ of railway travel and recruitment of labor by the developing textile industry ~~spurred~~ further spurred these men to consider bringing their families to Maine, as well as ^(to) other New England states that bordered their country.

Proffered textile work required little or no training, and a further inducement was that freedom of speech and religion was guaranteed in the Constitution of this new country. French-Canadian men ordinarily came to look the situation over, usually settling where ~~to~~ ^(had preceded them) relatives, friends or former neighbors. Lodging was then located, and wives and children travelled to the chosen spot by train.

Frequently, the move was considered as a temporary affair. Money would be earned ~~sufficient~~ to clear any debt on the ~~the~~ Canadian property, then the family would return. Others ^{disposed} ~~would~~ of their holdings before leaving Canada, and ~~was~~ ^{bought} anew in this country.

The first French-Canadian to settle in Lewiston--George Carignan--came in 1865. ~~His descendants~~ One of his daughters married Joseph Leblanc, founder of a clothes-cleaning business that ~~exists~~ ^{still operated} to this day, and ~~his~~ ^{is} ~~operated~~ by ~~his~~ ^{his} descendants. ~~His descendants~~

Between 1870 and 1890 migration from Canada to these cities was constant. These new residents arrived at the Grand Trunk station on Lincoln street and looked for lodgings in that area. Stores lined the streets, ^{and upper floors of these} ~~many~~ buildings ~~that~~ provided lodgings, ~~many~~ ^{upper floors}. Rents were ~~large~~ necessarily large, and could be obtained also on neighboring streets, but they ~~soon~~ were soon filled, ~~and~~ ^{later} ~~later~~-comers had to cross the south bridge and settle in that part of Auburn which became identified as New Auburn, and is so-known to this day.

Tradesmen, builders, and professionals naturally followed the migrants, realizing this influx of laborers ^{clergy} would generate a need for their services. The ~~clergy~~ ^{clergy} was already here. Missionaires had been coming to

Lewiston since 1848, and, by 1855, there was a small chapel on Lincoln street to serve Catholics of Irish descent who were the first of that faith to settle here. ^(more)

French-Canadians joined them, and, as early as 1870, the Most Rev. David William Bacon, first bishop of the Portland diocese (which includes all of Maine) was providing the French-speaking part of the congregation with a French ~~Canadian~~ ^{Canadian} pastor, the Rev. Edouard Letourneau of St. Hyacinthe, Que. He was here for one year; was followed ^{in 1871} by the Rev. Pierre Hevey, also of St. Hyacinthe, who built the first parish church for these new residents, ^(from France) and the Dominicans, who still direct SS. Peter and Paul parish, ^{was succeeded by} came in 1881.

~~Earliest residents~~ Earliest of the French-Canadians to settle here, however, worshiped with the Irish ~~people~~ on Lincoln street, then in St. Joseph's church, which was built for Irish Catholics of the city, in 1857. That is why one finds graves of French-Canadians in Mount Hope cemetery. St. Peter's cemetery, ~~to care for the dead of all~~ ^{to care for the dead of all} Lewiston-Auburn residents of French descent, was established only in 1876,

Employment was readily available to men, women, and children. It was before the establishment of labor unions and child-labor laws. Already used to hard work, men and women took the working hours from 6 a.m. until 6 p.m. in stride, though it prevented them from enjoying daylight except on Sundays ^{during the summers.} The work-week consisted of ~~six~~ six days with no coffee-breaks ^{not paid vacations,} ~~only~~ during short

It was easier for the children. They worked only ~~short~~ periods of time--the girls carting bobbins, as needed, in wheeled carts; the boys oiling machinery. Between these tasks they played games children have enjoyed from time immemorial and the boys learned to play baseball. Many children, now in advanced years, recall ^{they} ~~having~~ started working before attaining teen-age.

They enjoyed being a member of the laboring class. It gave them an adult status, ~~looking at~~ ^{looking at} a school attendant. Parents urged them to get an education, however, and most of them attended private classes conducted ~~adults in~~ ^{Some taught as many as 50 to 60 children each.} by ~~adults in~~ their homes. Later, they attended night schools provided ^{for women who conducted classes in for children} by the city, where they studied English, as well as academic subjects. ^{as many as 50 to 60 children more}

Perforce, English had to be studied by all ^(these new residents) ~~or them~~ for its ever-present need. They learned from one another, used ^(the) ~~the~~ few words they knew, oft-times putting them together erroneously, and got laughed at. Thereafter, some would stop their efforts and manage with interpreters, but, their numbers increasing, it soon became ~~possible~~ possible for them to attend to most of their material and professional needs by dealing solely among their own people. ^{Only the Jewish merchants made any effort to learn enough French to deal with these new residents & this contributed to their prosperity.} By 1880, a newspaper printed in French had been established in Lewiston, and that ^{set Can.} ~~the~~ further served to keep these ~~people~~ united. From its columns, they learned of daily happenings of common interest, they were urged to attend school whether child or adult, to learn English that they might become citizens of this new country, and then to vote that they might obtain political office and jobs.

It was a period when the Irish dominated the political life of Lewiston but, ~~already~~ already in 1880, Emile Lefebvre was serving as councillor of Lewiston's ward Six, ^{where} ~~where~~ most residents of French-Canadian ancestry lived. In 1884, Dr. Louis J. Martel was elected to represent his fellow-citizens at the state legislature; ⁱⁿ 1887, P.X. Angers, an attorney, was the first ^{local} Franco-American to serve as alderman; and, in 1890, F.X. Belleau, also an attorney, was ^{the} ~~the~~ first city clerk from that same ethnic group. Three years later, Belleau was appointed by President Grover Cleveland to represent the United States at the Canadian consulate then located ^{at} ~~at~~ Trois Rivières, que.

Through this entire period, ^{local} ~~these~~ French-Canadians were building schools, churches, convents and monasteries, these last ~~to~~ to house the religious they were importing from Europe to teach their children and conduct their religious services. The ~~immigrants of only a few years back were already~~ numerous enough to be able to manage this. ^{quote p 13 - 1869 - 1,000 - doubled in 4 yrs} Diocesan leaders, faced with a shortage of priests and religious, were glad to welcome them, but early in this century controversy arose over the financial handling of ^{parish} ~~church~~ properties.

more

By 1873, they were dedicating their first church at Ash and Bartlett streets, ~~xxx~~ the Lewiston Evening Journal voicing the amazement of the over community ~~that~~ "these 2,000 French people consecrating a church worth \$50,000 after living only three years in a foreign land and before they have homes of their own!" Total cost was nearer \$75,000. Construction of this church contributed to bringing more French-Canadians to the city, and by 1875, parish records reveal they had increased to 2,896.

~~Therewas a great many French people living in the city at that time and they were very devoted to their religion. Bishop Bacon spoke in both French and English at the church dedication, and singing was by the choir of St. Joseph's parish with its organist, D.J. Wood, at the organ.~~

French and Irish worshiped together Sundays, but week-days ~~xxxxxxx~~ were different. School boys of that day were regularly met by bands of Irish boys at the end of classes and had to fight their way out. The Irish did it for sheer love of a godd fight, but the French have to be angered to fight, and ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ over ~~their~~ those school day experiences left resentment ~~xxxx~~ alive for many years.

~~xxxx~~ Years afterward, when this had subsided somewhat, one enterprising local French sportsman made it ~~a~~ practise to promote a baseball game between the French and the Irish. It was always largely attended, proceeds going to some charity ~~butxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ agreeable to both groups. Occasionally, the Irish would hire some French youth to round-out their team--or to assure victory?--but the youth had to be well paid to offset the "boo's" that accompanied his every appearance on the field.

When the French first arrived here, however, their first concern after obtaining employment and establishing ~~was~~ a home was to build a church and a school. ~~They gave xx as a matter of course for such undertakings, but always with the provision that French must be the language in those institutions.~~ They held their clergy and ~~xxx~~ teaching brothers and nuns in high esteem, and looked to them for guidance in all matters material as well as spiritual.

red sweater "Bourgeoisie" Schump - mother, report from "H. H. White" Ranger paper, radio

Diocesan leaders, faced with a shortage of priests and religious, ~~were welcomed~~ welcomed the cooperation of these people, but early in this century ^{Most} controversy arose over the financial handling of parish properties. The Rev. Louis J. Walsh, third bishop to head the diocese, then sought legislative action whereby he and succeeding bishops of Maine would have sole jurisdiction over parish properties within the diocese. ~~There was considerable opposition~~

French-Canadians who, for ages, had served on parish committees having close contact with their pastors, found this untenable, and fought against it at mass meetings, in their newspapers here and elsewhere in Maine, and by word-of-mouth. The French called it "la corporation sole", and opposition was general.

When Bishop Walsh retaliated, the opposition merely went underground, but five early Maine residents--including one from Lewiston--who had led the opposition publicly, were ex-communicated from the church for the lifetime of ~~the~~ Bishop Walsh. Some survived him, but not all, and the tragedy was one that caused considerable ~~much~~ grief and misfortune to these men and to their families.

~~There~~ Many long remained unreconciled to this unwelcomed development, and some still bemoan the fact that despite the many French-Canadians and Franco-Americans who adopted a religious life and served in Maine for generation they still have yet to have one of their own nominated bishop of the diocese.

Hardly a family of those early years failed to give one of its members "to God", as it used to be referred to. At a time when each member of the family worked and salaries were pooled for the common good, it was a hard decision for one to decide to pull away from the family ~~circle to fulfill a~~ ^{circle to fulfill a} religious vocation.

more

French-Canadian leaders in several Maine communities banded together to oppose ^{then-} Bishop Louis J. Walsh ~~the abbot of the diocese of Maine~~ who sought legislative action whereby he and ~~the~~ succeeding bishops ^{of Maine} would have sole jurisdiction over parish properties. It was identified in French as "la corporation sole". For a group that had been used for generations to serve on ~~the~~ parish committees having close contact ~~with~~ with their pastors, this was untenable, and they fought it at mass meetings, in their newspapers, and by word-of-mouth.

Bishop Walsh won, and five of those early residents--including one from Lewiston--were ex-communicated from the church for the lifetime of Bishop Walsh. The effects of this controversy have not been erased to this day, ~~and~~ and, despite the great ~~number~~ number of French-Canadians and Franco-Americans who adopted the religious life through ~~the~~ many years, it is still pointed out frequently that they have yet to obtain the nomination of one of their own to head the diocese.

~~the~~ Hardly a family of those early years ~~was~~ failed to give one of its members "to God", as it used to be referred to. At a time when ~~the~~ each member of the family worked and pooled salaries for the common good, it was a hard decision for one to decide he or she preferred to seek a religious life. It meant depriving the family of one salary, and imposing additional expenses, since acceptance in ~~the~~ religious orders usually meant several years of study for which the family must pay. Yet, no family was ever heard to refuse the ordeal, and it was a considerable one in those days.

These people were intensely religious. It was reflected in the decor of their homes, their daily practise of prayers before meals, and ^(prayers in unison) ~~by the~~ ~~the entire family~~ ^{teacher} usually immediately after supper. Then, came a bit of relaxation when the children were entertained by some adult who related some fearful story--(these have been collected by historians)--and adults indulged in ^{necessarily} card-play, but not for long, because of ~~the~~ early risings.

It meant the family had to be deprived of a much-needed salary, and had to bear the expense of several years of study before the youth—~~male or female~~—could be accepted for religious life, and this had to be paid for by the family. Yet, no family was ever known to refuse, though this placed a heavy burden on each member.

These people were intensely religious. It was reflected in the decor of their homes, the custom of ~~praying before meals~~ reciting the Angelus and prayers in unison usually immediately after supper. One resident recalls that his family arrived at the Grand Trunk as mill bells announced the noon hour. Said the father, "On your knees, children, for the Angelus." There on the station platform, the entire family ~~knelt~~ prayed together.

Evenings at home provided relaxation when the children were entertained. the more frightening it was, the better. These "contes" by some adult who related some fearful story, ~~these~~ were handed down ~~for~~ through generations, and have been collected by historians-) ~~may~~ After the children had been bedded down in unheated rooms under heavy home-made blankets, frequently "catalogues", woven from discarded sheets, the parents/ would be joined by neighbors for card-play, usually whist. If the women couldn't join them, the men played ~~xxxxxx~~ checkers.

These games were spirited affairs accompanied by ~~appropriate~~ and good-humored banter; ~~occasionally~~ much laughter and considerable slapping of cards on the table when there was an especially clever play. Such diversion was of short duration because everyone had to rise early the next day.

take in printed page as marked.

Honesty was highly regarded by these people. One paid debts, ~~and~~ ^{within} without hesitation. If a financial need arose beyond income, funds were obtained ~~from~~ the family circle and promptly repaid. One took care of the indigent in the family, the infirm, the aged and orphaned. One constantly heard of this and that orphaned child brought up in this or that family; of children who refused good ~~or~~ marriage prospects to care for a widowed parent; or elder children who brought up brothers and sisters after their ~~mother's~~ mother's death. *more*

They weren't all "saints",~~xxx~~ according to the dictum of the day. There were some among these French-Canadians who considered mill employment sort of demeaning, but there was little else they could do. Maine was a prohibition state, but men learned an ~~illicit~~ illicit trade in spirituous liquors was carried on in the city. This ~~xx~~ was a profitable business despite its hazards; required little training; and French-Canadians were noted for "not spitting" in the stuff.

For generations, these people had been acquainted with spirituous liquids, and when it was not available legally, even the ~~xxxx~~ most respectable families made their own. ~~xxxxxx~~ Holidays without wine ~~xxxx~~ was just unthinkable. Men preferred the harder stuff, of course, so rum-sellers provided it.

Some French-Canadians went to work for these leaders, learned the tricks of the trade, then went into business for themselves. It involved devising ways of evading police intervention, and it was done by graft and concealment in which last they developed considerable ingenuity. Regardless, one got caught occasionally, but resumed business with added caution.

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Wives were first in most households to leave mill employment. Their pregnancies were mostly at 15 or 18-month intervals, and were expected from her first year of marriage until her infertile years. Pregnant women remained at home when their condition became evident. Occasions were ~~few~~ relatively few when she could accompany her husband to Sunday ~~xxxx~~ church services, preferably high Mass.

On such occasions, leading men of the community wore silk hats and Prince Albert cutaways; the women, their best finery. It was an occasion marked by an etiquette of its own. One drove to church in a buggy drawn by the best horse one could afford.

No refrigeration being available in those days, purchases of food had to be made just before requirements. Men rose earlier to start the wood-fire in the kitchen stove, then to hasten to the grocery store to obtain the breakfast food. It had to be hearty to sustain the hard day-long work. This store trek also provided opportunity to exchange news of neighbors and community.

Later, a grocery clerk would call at ~~the~~ homes to deliver food ordered the previous afternoon for the noon's meal, and he would return later to bring the morning's order. Through the day, the housewife had to maintain the wood-fire over which she had to cook without benefit of thermostat, gauging oven ~~heat~~ ^{readiness} merely by the heat it generated on her hand.

She washed laboriously over a wash-board, boiled clothes for ~~breakfast~~ thorough cleaning, diluted blueing for whitening. ~~Then~~ On successive days, she ironed, mended, cleaned house, made clothes, knitted and crocheted, and, on Saturdays, cooked for two days that she might have a somewhat leisurely Sunday.

Her pregnancies were ~~sixteen~~ mostly at 15 ~~or~~ or 18-month intervals, and ~~was~~ ^{were} expected after her first year of marriage until her infertile years. ~~then~~ Occasions were few when she could accompany her husband to Sunday Mass. High Mass was preferred, and one drove to church in a buggy drawn by the best horse one could afford. Leading men of the community wore silk hats and Prince Albert coats; the women, their best finery.

7-2 Family pews were preferably in the center aisle, and ~~there~~ the wife preceded the husband, and ~~men~~ entered the pew first. ~~He~~ ^{men} always occupied the aisle seats. Unmarried women who ~~would seek entry to~~ ^{would seek entry to} a seat in that same pew ~~seeking entry~~ would tap the man's shoulder, and he would rise, step into the aisle to allow her passage, then resume his seat. ~~then~~ Just before the end of the service, the men left, as on signal, to prepare the horse for the return trip, and their womenfolk would join them outside. more

~~at~~ noon-time, sisters and brothers with their families would join for Sunday dinner, and, if not, the reunion would be held in the evening, both for sociability and the exchange of family news. The ritual was observed by all families, the only change being ~~that when~~ members alternated as hosts or guests.

Main events of their lives--christenings, weddings and funerals--were big occasions. Convention ruled the choice of a child's name, godparent, ~~also~~ the one who would carry the child to the baptismal font, and all was done ceremoniously. The same was true of weddings where traditionally a reception was held on Sunday evening at the bride's home, and she was married early Monday morning. The wedding trip was always to Canada ~~and~~ the bridal couple ~~most anxious~~ to meet train departure ~~every~~ schedules. *plans were made*

Funerals were a three-day affair with nightly wakes until the church service and burial. Every member of the family abstained from work outside ~~the home~~ *through such periods* and deep mourning was observed. For parents, one wore black for two years; for other relatives, one year sufficed. In both cases, it was permissible to wear lavender, gray or white at the mid-period.

But, *naturally* they had their gay times, too, for these people are *light-hearted*, by nature. Any social reunion ~~was~~ occasion for laughter and music; otherwise, someone ~~was~~ sure to remark: "Is this a funeral?" ~~So~~ the talented in any group were always asked to sing, to play some instrument, or to *declaim*...

By 1872, these French-Canadians had formed a ~~mut~~ society they called Institut Jacques Cartier (after the French explorer to Canada) and membership included mutual financial benefits. Member-meetings were occasions for entertainment following the business session. From such solo or ~~small~~ group programs, it was a natural progression to staged plays and musicals--always in French, and always well patronized, since all other forms of diversion in the community were *always* usually in English, a language ~~which they were still not quite familiar~~ *was still foreign to them*.

Churches maintain^{ed} several choirs, each with soloists heard every Sunday. ~~There were 24 parishes in the parish~~ Parish organizations ~~which~~^{other} brought together ~~many~~ groups, each with their own talents. Teaching brothers and nuns discovered and trained the children; ^{playing} bands were formed both among children and adults, and, to raise money for the various parish enterprises, such as the building of schools, churches and meeting-places for the male-youth especially, bazaars were organized.

These last were week-long affairs that filled city building auditorium every night of the week. Bands played, choruses sang, young males staged military drills, and the children, coached for months by the nuns, ^{presented} ballets in European fashion. ~~This last was about 1906-7-8 when that form of art was yet to be generally known in this country.~~ ~~There were no other theatrical productions in this country.~~

None but ^{an extended} ~~a separate~~ account can give proper credit to all the theatrical and musical productions these people contributed to the cultural life of the community. It included stock companies maintained for years, comprising a large number of amateur actors who attained sufficient reknown to tour in other French-speaking communities of our state.

On the musical side, ~~and~~ a large number of ^{plays with musical} ~~operettas, operas and~~ interludes, operettas, and operas were presented over ~~many~~ many years under the direction of local musicians, and accompanied by orchestras formed by local residents, ~~mostly French~~ usually all French. In later years, these same people even maintained a symphony orchestra, and ^{usually for several years} ~~regularly~~ presented cantatas, ~~the~~

All such productions were usually from ^(the practice began on the death of the director) traditional or classic French repertoire, and when J.B. Couture - (publisher of Le Messager for the greater number of years and long ^{a leader local} ~~active~~ in theatrical and musical productions) - thought it would be pleasant to add "Pinafore" to the local repertoire, he took on the task of translating the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta ^{into} French. It was given several local ^{presentations} ~~productions~~ in that ^{language} ~~English~~ with casts ~~that~~ varied through the years.

more

and directors who

Meanwhile, families prospered, one big factor being that ^(salaries of) ~~each~~ working ~~were~~ given by them to the ~~members of the family~~ father who ~~paid all expenses out of the~~ accumulation, giving ~~each contributor~~ each contributor a small spending allowance. It soon became possible for families to either buy the "block" in which they lived, or to build one of their own.

To live in such blocks--probably so-called because of their shape--required some adjustment ^{living} for families formerly used to ~~live~~ in private homes. These blocks usually had at least four stories--some five--and a central hallway separated each rent. One family lived each side of the corridor, and, summers, with doors and windows opened for ventilation, willy-nilly one ^{became} was aware of about every thing that went on, not only across the hall, but above and below, and even across the street.

Adults usually kept aloof from children's quarrels, which must have been frequent with ~~surely~~ enough ^{children} in each block to ~~fill~~ amply fill a classroom. Such close quarters must have served to create friction among adults, too, but the most frequent ^{fusses} ~~one~~ hears ^{about} to this day was ~~that~~ ^{about} such-and-such a tenant who failed to keep her portion of hall and stairway sufficiently clean.

It was an era when women took pride in their ~~housekeeping~~ ^{household} housekeeping functions. They'd put the wash to soak on Sunday evenings that they might be first to put a wash on the line Mondays, and one heard talk of such-and-such a woman who ought to be ashamed to put such a "yellow" wash on the line.

Women aged early in life. By 50, she was ~~considered~~ ^{admittedly} old, and it was ~~that~~ considered unseemly for her to dress fashionably. Her clothes must not be fitted too tightly, ^(either) and her summer coat was traditionally a black loose-fitting taffeta..trimmed with beaded embroidery, if the family was affluent.

^(and except for church choir rehearsal and society meetings, his place was at home as it was for his wife) Men worked hard outside the home, boys brought up the wood from cellars and stacked it within the wood-box next to the stove; girls helped with the housework, and ~~most of them~~ they, too, married early in life and went through the same cycle of bringing up large families. Migration continued, and still does, ^{so} that for some years ^{now}, these people have formed the majority of our ~~population~~ ^{more} ~~and they continue to do so.~~

Presently, They have become thoroughly Americanized, but, generally, ^{they} still live a French life. Among themselves, they are apt to "look-down" upon one of their own who has given up the language and ^{traditional} ~~ancestry-bound~~ activities of his forbears. These last ^{usually} hasten to tell you they "understand" French, even though they may not speak it.

It's only within the last 30 years or so that local Americans of French descent have adopted English as their home-language. Prior to that, a Franco-American might use English entirely during his working-hours, but, at home and among his friends, French was the common language, and ~~it was~~ ^{was customary to} ~~congregate outside the home usually~~ ^{only} with others of the same lineage.

~~Marriages~~ Marriages among Franco-Americans and residents of different backgrounds began, rarely at first, but ^{they} ~~have~~ increased with the years, until our so-called Irish parishes now list many obviously French names, to say nothing of the many Irish names ^{adopted through marriage} ~~that have been adopted~~ by women of French descent, ~~through marriage~~. One even finds French names on the rosters of Protestant churches, nowadays--again through so-called mixed marriages.

None of these Franco-Americans were ~~in this country~~ ^{here} in time to serve in the Civil War, to say nothing of preceding conflicts, but, during the Spanish-American war, these people were among ~~those~~ ^{those who} ~~served~~ ^{participated}. In every war since, they have served ~~honorablely~~ ^{can fight} predominantly and honorably. They ~~they~~ call themselves Franco-Americans, but they are Americans first, and French mostly ~~for~~ ^{for} pride of ancestry and culture.

They have been here four and five generations now, and form a group of 950,000 in New England states alone. None of them ^{can forget} ~~has forgotten~~ that this country ~~has~~ ^{them} gave ~~them~~ ^{choice in} refuge and freedom of ~~speech~~ ^(their) speech, religion and education.

As I write this, holiday church fairs are occupying many local women. These have been a tradition in local Protestant churches for many years, always in the weeks just preceding Christmas. Catholic churches attended by our Franco-Americans have them, too, but at other times, and they are called "bazaars", which is the French spelling of the word.

One was held by SS. Peter and Paul parish last year when its centenary was observed, and to hold a "bazar" was the natural thing to do, because similar events have been the main money-raising project for the various churches by that particular congregation.

Old-time bazaars were week-long affairs, usually held in the large auditorium at city building. There were sales booths ~~all over~~ lining both long sides of the hall, and always, at front-left, a larger area where the late Charles Morneau served ice cream.

~~It was~~ I don't know at what time of the year these were usually held, but I do know that they were annual affairs for several years, because I participated in them from early childhood. ~~It was not until after the war that I was able to participate in them.~~

~~earlier~~ I do recall that in the weeks preceding those of us who knew Alpha Ouellette made sure our ^{friendly} relations with her were in good order. Charles Morneau was her uncle, and he always depended on Alpha to recruit waitresses for his bazaar booth.

~~Waitresses were scarce~~ It took quite a few, because none of us served more than one night during that week. Besides, we were all inexperienced and some years away from our 'teens. Older girls were working at ~~so many~~ booths, ^{so} that none but in our age-group was available.

The ice-cream was sold at 10¢ a dish--how much the parish got out of that, we never knew--but, for such young waitresses, it presented no arithmetical problem. Customers usually paid with the exact change, and tips were non-existent in those days. Neither were we paid for our services, except that we were promised "all the ice cream" we could eat, *for free.*

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