

**Aubigny's Métis and French-Canadian Founding Families  
Based on its Catholic Registries**

by

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“What is it the slightly older people want from the slightly younger people? They want credit for having survived so long, and often imaginatively, under difficult conditions. Slightly younger people are intolerably stingy about giving them credit for that.”

- Kurt Vonnegut

### **Dedication**

To family: mine and yours and ours.

## **Abstract**

This thesis is a microhistory focusing on the families found in the registries of the French-Canadian parish of Aubigny in Manitoba; where they came from and what could be understood of the kinship ties evident in the data. It distinguishes categories of settlers including Métis families and francophone families from the United States and Quebec and relies on family reconstitution methods to better make use of the primary source. The registries show how kinship is an aid to settlement and persistence, how marriages create new ties in the community, and how godparenting roles reveal both matrilineal kinship and the presence or absence of rapport between families in the established categories. In addition, use of various databases and newspaper archives trace an outline of families' political involvement, previous employment, and immigration routes. This work renders a high-definition picture of a very small community, serving to complement or contrast the beginnings of other rural parishes.

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## Introduction

The map of Manitoba is dotted with the names of towns that hint at the ethnic groups that founded them, among which are strewn the French-Catholic missions that enfolded their French-Catholic immigrants. These missions might have rapidly or slowly grown, prospering or managing to exist for decades, still thriving today or now only a shadow of their past. Among the latter is Aubigny, a town that shuttered its Catholic church in 2013 to the regret of those who had gathered for the ceremony, most of whom had travelled from the city of Winnipeg or from neighbouring parishes, with a claim to the community's history.

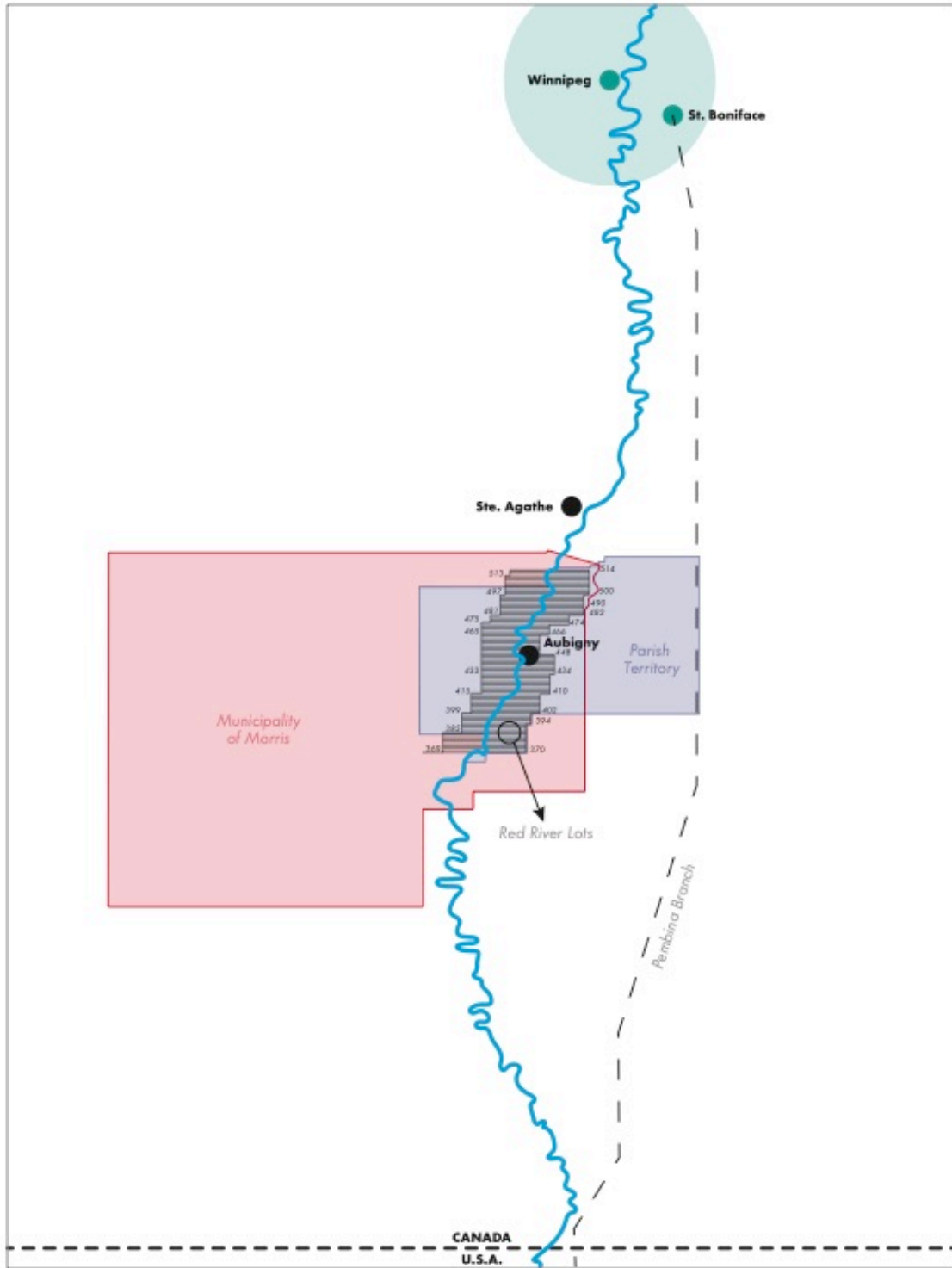
Aubigny is a town approximately 40 kilometers south of the city of Winnipeg located in the upper right side of the almost-rectangular municipality of Morris. Its parish territory exceeds the Morris municipality boundary and extends into that of De Salaberry. In the spatial map of French-Catholic colonisation, it lands in the southern parts of the province, from Catholic missionary efforts that emanated from the heart of St-Boniface, to St. Vital, St. Norbert, and the more easterly, St. Pierre. Unlike the neighbouring French towns north and south of it, Aubigny nestled itself on the east side of the Red River, a river Télesphore Robert describes as stretching "comme une couleuvre du lac Winnipeg jusqu'au Minnesota, où se trouve sa source."<sup>1</sup> The town was accessed by ferry from Highway 75 until September of 1966 when a bridge was built, its opening the occasion of a community celebration.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Télesphore Robert, *Aubigny, Manitoba: on va passer l'hiver* (Émeraude, 1991), 113.

<sup>2</sup>"Ouverture officielle du pont d'Aubigny," *La Liberté et Le Patriote*, 29 septembre 1966, Internet Archive.

FIGURE 1: MAP OF THE PARISH OF AUBIGNY, MANITOBA



This map represents the parish of Aubigny's territory as described at its canonical erection in 1903. The town itself is on the east side of the Red River, and on the west side of the Pembina Branch which was completed in 1878. Map by Annaleah McAvoy, based on "*Postal Map of Manitoba 1884*," "*Map of Manitoba (1897)*," and "*Emerson Sectional Map 23 (1922)*," (Wikimedia Commons).

The foundation of the parish of Aubigny was an act that recognized the persistence of the community of families who repeatedly requested of their bishops, Msgr. Taché and Msgr. Langevin, as early as February of 1883, their own church and priest. Taché had denied this request in 1883, stating that the area's population was too small and the resources too scant to sustain a priest.<sup>3</sup> Taché's reluctance was well justified. Of the two ways a parish could be established, creation or division,<sup>4</sup> the latter had to have one of two valid reasons for division because it involved "the loss of jurisdiction by the pastor over part of his former subjects."<sup>5</sup> Thus the parish of St. Agathe, founded in 1876,<sup>6</sup> would lose the financial support of its parishioners to the south. Canon Law at the time listed causes for division to be either "great difficulty for a notable number of parishioners to attend the parish church" or "an excessive number of parishioners."<sup>7</sup> "Great difficulty" was further defined as either distance or obstacles.<sup>8</sup> Despite some parishioners having to trek up to 12 miles to attend church services,<sup>9</sup> the appointment of a priest to the area came 20 years after residents' initial request.

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<sup>3</sup> Alexandre Taché to S. Robert, Jules St-Jean, Xavier St-Jean, Alfred Ouimet, Joviale Gratton, Philius Gratton, D. Fiset, Elie St-Jacques, Ludger Roy, 20 février 1883, Fonds Corporation archiépiscopale catholique romaine de Saint-Boniface, Société historique de Saint-Boniface, Winnipeg.

<sup>4</sup> Nicholas P. Connolly, *Canonical Erection of Parishes: An Historical Synopsis and Commentary* (Catholic University of America Press, 1938), 109.

<sup>5</sup> Connolly, *Canonical Erection of Parishes*, 51

<sup>6</sup> Père Trappiste, *Une Trappe Dans Un Pays de Missions: Notre-Dame des Prairies, St-Norbert, Manitoba; cinquante années de vie contemplative, 1892-1942* (St. Norbert, MB.: 1943), 19.

<sup>7</sup> Connolly, *Canonical Erection of Parishes*, 51, 55.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Pétition des dames to Antonin Langevin, 3 janvier 1901, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

Aubigny's name was therefore not decided by the archbishop's foundation of its parish which, in 1903, was put under the tutelage of St. Anthony. In fact, in December of 1884, residents of the area designated a postmaster and filed an application for a post office with semi-weekly service for 35 families.<sup>10</sup> The post-office application indicates the town name is "Provencher" within the district of "Provencher," however, a note on the application, stamped by the Post Office Department on January 5<sup>th</sup>, 1885, has the name "Aubigny" initialed and written transversally.<sup>11</sup> A report in January 1889 lists Aubigny among the post offices from St. Norbert to Emerson.<sup>12</sup> The town's name was therefore settled at least 14 years before its church was built.

Aubigny's history, its beginning albeit briefly sketched, is hardly unique. From the start, it is a small town and its parish relatively recently founded. As such, it might seem unusual to dedicate time and research to its fairly common past. But it was in part the challenge that these qualities posed that made the initial investigation so alluring. What could be gleaned from the parish's small footprint? What significance could be drawn from primary sources?

As it was, Aubigny, like all Catholic parishes, benefitted from a corpus of data in the form of its parish registries and this is where research began; with their transcription. By copying out the names and dates of the baptisms, marriages and burials of the parishioners, a natural curiosity grew as to their families' origins and to the prevalence of kinship ties among them. Formally, the questions became:

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<sup>10</sup> Government of Canada, Library and Archives, Post Office, RG 3, B4, Vol 49.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Vol 57.

1. Who were the Métis families in the parish, specifically in the years between the arrival of its first priest in 1903 and its canonical erection in 1911?
2. Where did the francophone immigrant families come from?
3. What could be said about the kinship ties evident within the data?

Although research has been done on similar questions in relation to Manitoba's Métis and francophone history, they have largely been treated separately. Aubigny's small population presented the opportunity for gathering from these sources, exploiting new ones, and building a narrative around the community's first settlers. Indeed, in the course of this research, a narrow focus on the families found within the registries weaves together a tapestry of detail that general histories of Manitoba rarely afford. From a scientific perspective, such a narrow focus on the settler families might be considered a microhistory in that it takes particular care to bridge gaps in knowledge as they crop up.<sup>13</sup>

Research focused on specific francophone communities is not new, but it is sparse; it is a subject still "exotic because so few modern historians in Canada have taken rural life to heart."<sup>14</sup> Basing his Master's's thesis on a rural parish in Manitoba is Michael Lucien Rowan's demographic analysis of St. Claude.<sup>15</sup> His methodology is based on that set out by Louis Henry and Michel Fleury, in France in the 1956 *Manuel de Dépouillement et d'Exploitation de l'État Civil Ancien*.<sup>16</sup> It allowed him, in 1973, to make observations on "fertility, natality, nuptiality and

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<sup>13</sup> Sigurður Gylfi Magnússon and István M. Szigjártó, "Refashioning a famous French peasant" in *What is Microhistory?* (Oxfordshire: Routledge, 2013), 106.

<sup>14</sup> Kenneth Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba, 1870-1940* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2001), 3.

<sup>15</sup> Michael Lucien Charles Rowan, "Saint-Claude (Manitoba): A Demographic Analysis" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1973).

<sup>16</sup> Rowan, "Saint-Claude (Manitoba)," 8-9.

mortality trends”<sup>17</sup> in the parish and to answer questions about the town’s social culture, religious practice, age-structure and economic prospects.<sup>18</sup>

There is also Claude De Moissac’s 1986 master’s thesis which presents a thematic history of the same town, focusing on its religious heritage, economic development, demography, and society in its rural and agricultural setting.<sup>19</sup> Referring to Rowan’s research, De Moissac points out the limitations of a town’s demography based on the sole use of registries and attaches to his research statistics from sources including *L’Écho du Manitoba*, and government censuses to further fill in the town’s early establishment and growth.<sup>20</sup> His thesis is divided by theme and therefore focuses less on individual families than it does on noticeable trends. Both Rowan and DeMoissac concentrated tightly on their respective community’s history, whereas this thesis broadens the subjects it treats by accompanying Aubigny’s settlers from their points of departure to their arrival in the parish. Doing so respected the context of mobility which these families represent and felt like a necessary look at the transportation routes that were so rapidly changing in this period.

Literature that has been most useful in collecting and organizing Aubigny’s registry data has been Edward Anthony Wrigley’s essay titled “Family Reconstitution.”<sup>21</sup> Published in 1966, it was based on Henry and Fleury’s manual (which Rowan, above, used) and adapted for use in England. Wrigley duly recognizes Henry and Fleury’s pioneering contribution to historical

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<sup>17</sup> Rowan, “Saint-Claude (Manitoba),” 3.

<sup>18</sup> Rowan, “Saint-Claude (Manitoba),” 173-4.

<sup>19</sup> Claude De Moissac, “Les premières années de Saint-Claude au Manitoba, 1892-1914” (master’s thesis, University of Manitoba, 1986).

<sup>20</sup> De Moissac, “Les premières années de Saint-Claude,” 71-87.

<sup>21</sup> E.A. Wrigley, “Family Reconstitution” in *An Introduction to English Historical Demography* ed. E. A. Wrigley (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1966).

demography<sup>22</sup> and provides a template for the organisation and use of parish registry data. It is this method Gerhard Ens used in his research into Manitoba's Métis communities in the parishes of St. François Xavier and St. Andrew's in *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century*.<sup>23</sup> Wrigley's definition of family reconstitution as "the bringing together of scattered information about the members of a family to enable its chief demographic characteristics to be described as fully as possible,"<sup>24</sup> stimulated the use of various sources and databases including:

- St. Agathe's parish registry<sup>25</sup>
- Canadian federal censuses from 1871, 1881, 1891, and 1901<sup>26</sup>
- Manitoba Vital Statistics database searches<sup>27</sup>
- Access to parish registries from the province of Quebec via Ancestry.ca
- Occasional access to American vital statistics and censuses again via Ancestry.ca
- St. Joseph's parish registry from Leroy North Dakota as compiled by Gail Morin<sup>28</sup>
- Métis genealogical resources available at the Saint-Boniface Historical Society including access to the "Programme de recherche en démographie historique" (PRDH)<sup>29</sup> and the "Contrats des voyageurs" database<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Wrigley, "Family Reconstitution," 154.

<sup>23</sup> Gerhard J. Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland: The Changing Worlds of the Red River Métis in the Nineteenth Century*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

<sup>24</sup> Wrigley, "Family Reconstitution," 96.

<sup>25</sup> Société Historique de Saint-Boniface, Fonds CACR.

<sup>26</sup> Government of Canada, "Census Search," <https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Census/index>.

<sup>27</sup> Government of Manitoba, Manitoba Vital Statistics Branch, "Genealogy Searches for Unrestricted Records," <https://vitalstats.gov.mb.ca/Query.php>.

<sup>28</sup> Gail Morin, *St. Joseph Parish, Leroy, North Dakota 1870-1931* (pub. by author, 2016).

<sup>29</sup> Drouin Institute, "Programme de recherche en démographie historique," <https://www.prdh-igd.com>.

<sup>30</sup> Centre du Patrimoine, "Contrats des voyageurs," <https://shsb.mb.ca/contrats-des-voyageurs/>.

- Local community histories published sometimes as municipality centenary books in which are often featured family genealogies.<sup>31</sup>

As family reconstitution took shape, it became possible to distinguish categories among Aubigny's families, the first of which were its Métis residents. Established in the area decades before Aubigny became a parish, those remaining by the time the resident priest penned its registry's first entries comprised only a handful of family names. Tracing their origin brought to the fore not-so-distant voyageur history. That ancestors of Métis families in Aubigny were only a few generations removed from ties to Quebec is all the more vivid in their family histories.

Most directly related to Aubigny's Métis families is Nicole St-Onge's 1983 master's thesis titled "Metis and Merchant Capital in Red River: The Decline of Pointe à Grouette 1860-1885"<sup>32</sup> which is based on land titles for 67 river lots (among those numbered 551 to 581) in the parish of St. Agathe. Today, the towns of St. Agathe and Aubigny neighbour each other and so it is unsurprising to find, among the land title owners she enumerates, ancestors to those Métis families in Aubigny's registries. Of particular interest are the descriptions she provides of large land owners Joseph Berthelette and Georges Klyne, their families and kinship ties. St-Onge's master's thesis, having been written now over four decades ago, had not been able to benefit from what subsequently became available in the form of digital databases, among other things, and which facilitate a larger family reconstitution. While St-Onge posits in her thesis various ways many Métis families lost their claims, including ambiguities and delays in the carrying-out of laws pertaining to Métis land ownership, the influx of immigrants and subsequent

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<sup>31</sup> University of Manitoba, *Manitoba Local Histories; Manitoba*, [http://hdl.handle.net/10719/manitoba\\_books](http://hdl.handle.net/10719/manitoba_books).

<sup>32</sup> Nicole St-Onge, "Metis and Merchant Capital in Red River: The Decline of Pointe à Grouette 1860-1885" (master's thesis, University of Manitoba, 1983).

speculators, land acquisition practices by the Catholic Church's clergy and differences in social class among the Métis themselves<sup>33</sup> Michel Hogue in *Metis and the Medicine Line*,<sup>34</sup> Gerald Friesen in *The Canadian Prairies*,<sup>35</sup> and particularly Douglas Neil Sprague in *Canada and the Métis*,<sup>36</sup> provide political and social motivations for Métis dispersal.

In contrast to St-Onge, Gerhard Ens in *Homeland to Hinterland* demonstrates how a large sample of Métis families from two parishes north of Aubigny; St. François Xavier and St. Andrew, adapted their livelihoods and took an active role as capitalism took over from trade to match the province's changing economy. Kenneth Sylvester's book *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba 1870-1940*<sup>37</sup> although it deals in large part with the subject of kinship, as will be seen later, nonetheless provides an example of a Métis family that matches one of Aubigny's but shows a different economic outcome.

A second category of families in Aubigny's parish could be broadly made up of non-Métis immigrant families, subdivided by their country and province of origin. Thus it became possible to identify those who were Franco-Americans, those who came from Quebec, and those who were second-generation Manitoban. Well known literature on the subject of francophone immigration to Manitoba is Robert Painchaud's 1969 master's thesis, "Le Manitoba et l'Immigration canadienne française, 1870-91"<sup>38</sup> and his 1976 doctoral thesis "The

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<sup>33</sup> St-Onge, "Métis and Merchant Capital," 69-76.

<sup>34</sup> Michel Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line: Creating a Border and Dividing a People* (The University of North Carolina Press, 2015).

<sup>35</sup> Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies* (University of Toronto Press, 1987).

<sup>36</sup> Douglas Neil Sprague, *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885* (Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1988).

<sup>37</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*.

<sup>38</sup> Robert Painchaud, "Le Manitoba et l'Immigration Canadienne Française, 1870-91" (master's thesis, University of Ottawa, 1969).

Catholic Church and the Movement of Francophones to the Canadian Prairies 1870-1915.”<sup>39</sup> In the first, Painchaud describes the various efforts undertaken by the Archdiocese of St. Boniface to attract francophone settlers to the province. It is a macro-history that uses census data to draw conclusions about the social classes to which these immigrants belonged. In the second, Painchaud delves deeper into the question of francophone immigration between 1870 and 1915 and evaluates Archbishop Taché’s idea of establishing block settlements.<sup>40</sup> Both demonstrate the role and influence of colonisation efforts on behalf of members of St. Boniface’s society and its clergy.

Painchaud’s research highlights a category of immigrant known as French-Canadian repatriates, and his analysis is crucial to understanding what factors drew them to or deterred them from Manitoba. However research on the subject of French-Canadian migration to the United States has greatly increased since Painchaud – not only has its scale been more accurately measured, its social and economic characteristics have been detailed. Whereas Painchaud focused on tallying the number of French-Canadian immigrants to Manitoba between 1870 and 1891 and gathered from census data hints to be able to categorize them by social class, this microhistory disregards the latter and narrows its field of research to only the small number of families who ended up in Aubigny and the Colonisation Society’s activities, as they relate to these families based on reporting in the local newspaper.

Themes within the literature necessarily overlap, as is the case for immigration and kinship. Audrey Pyée’s 2005 doctoral thesis titled “La terre promise: Migration de France vers

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<sup>39</sup> Robert Painchaud, “The Catholic Church and the Movement of Francophones to the Canadian Prairies 1870-1915” (PhD diss., University of Ottawa, 1976).

<sup>40</sup> Painchaud, “The Catholic Church,” vii-viii.

Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes et Saint-Claude Manitoba, 1890-1914”<sup>41</sup> includes a unique contextualization of the emigration of French citizens around the world in this period. She analyzes previous research done on Canadian immigration efforts, including Painchaud, and her research highlights the effects of the two communities’ European-French demographic on their culture and values, to which Rowan’s thesis also makes a contribution. The presence of Métis is acknowledged and their interactions with the French briefly observed. Of particular interest is Pyée’s historiographical contribution to the growing understanding of the importance of kinship networks for the establishment of a francophone community on the prairies. She examines cases of French immigrants to St. Claude and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes and shows how social and familial networks can lead to friends, siblings, and cousins’ decision to immigrate together. She writes that “la parenté joue donc un rôle important dans l’organisation des réseaux migratoires”<sup>42</sup> which this research into Aubigny’s families further corroborates. In her conclusion, she writes how analysis of local communities is what allows for an appreciation of the variety and complexity of networks at play in immigration.<sup>43</sup> As Peter A. Russel writes: “People were drawn to the Prairies by the promise of land. But often they sought it not as isolated individuals, but as communities [...]”<sup>44</sup> Her chapter titled “Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, 1890-1914” in *La francophonie nord-américaine*<sup>45</sup> clearly shows the provenance of settlers in that parish over a period of three decades with the benefit of land titles data.

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<sup>41</sup> Audrey Pyée, “La terre promise: Migration de France vers Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes et Saint-Claude Manitoba, 1890-1914” (PhD diss., York University, 2005).

<sup>42</sup> Pyée, “La terre promise,” 240-1.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

<sup>44</sup> Peter A. Russell, *How Agriculture Made Canada: Farming in the Nineteenth Century* (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2012), 188.

<sup>45</sup> Audrey Pyée, “Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, 1890-1914” in *La francophonie nord-américaine*, ed. Yves Frenette, Étienne Rivard, and Marc St-Hilaire (Presses de l’Université de Laval, 2012).

The third question now broached, literature pertaining to kinship, particularly in Manitoba, includes research from outside the historical field. Ralph Piddington, a respected professor of anthropology at the Auckland University College in New Zealand, made two field trips to “investigate French-Canadian kinship”<sup>46</sup> in 1957 and 1961 and published an article based on his findings titled “A Study of French Canadian Kinship”<sup>47</sup> Piddington “emphasised fieldwork” and “the importance of the study of living communities”<sup>48</sup> which explains the methodology of his paper based on interviews, in contrast to the present research which relies heavily on genealogical documents. Kinship, he concludes, “plays an important part”<sup>49</sup> in the survival of French-Canadian culture.

Two main sources of literature help interpret the economic motivation for the prevalence of kinship ties and their relation to family persistence in the community. First is Elizabeth Buchanan’s doctoral thesis, titled “In Search of Security: Kinship and the Farm Family on the North Shore of Lake Huron (Ontario), 1879-1939.”<sup>50</sup> It is a thorough investigation into the types of kinship ties formed among the families of hundreds of residents in three rural townships and their influence on persistence and migration. Buchanan made use of family reconstitution methods and “Anderson’s formalization of the theoretical utility of kinship ties”

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<sup>46</sup> Joan Metge, “Piddington, Ralph O’Reilly” in *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 2000, <https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/5p28/piddington-ralph-oreilly>

<sup>47</sup> Ralph Piddington, “A Study of French Canadian Kinship,” *International Journal of Comparative Sociology* 2, no.1 (1961): 3-22.

<sup>48</sup> Metge, “Piddington, Ralph O’Reilly.”

<sup>49</sup> Piddington, “A Study of French Canadian Kinship,” 22.

<sup>50</sup> Elizabeth Buchanan, “In Search of Security: Kinship and the Farm Family on the North Shore of Lake Huron (Ontario), 1879-1939” (PhD diss., McMaster University, 1989).

to prove the importance of family and to describe its influence on migration, settlement and persistence.<sup>51</sup>

Buchanan argues that kinship is key to persistence especially before the creation of social welfare programs in Canada. When it was no longer a matter of survival for family members to depend on their relatives, kinship and persistence were less closely associated. This then leads to the second source: Kenneth Sylvester's research in his 2001 book *The Limits of Rural Capitalism: Family, Culture, and Markets in Montcalm, Manitoba 1870-1940*.<sup>52</sup> It is particularly pertinent since the municipality of Montcalm adjoins the municipality of Morris in which Aubigny is located. His study includes a chapter on how immigrants "came west within family networks"<sup>53</sup> but more importantly, it illustrates how capitalist change influenced the lives of farm families. It is worth noting that Sylvester's research involved land titles data, which in Manitoba's case, "is more cumbersome to obtain for documents filed after 1900" because transfer documents under the Torrens title "must be searched individually" and because research at this scale "required permission from the Attorney-General's Office to waive the fees normally applied to land-title searches."<sup>54</sup> The reason for mentioning this is to highlight an important limitation to the present research conducted in the parish of Aubigny; namely, the lack of access to land title data in the registry period.

Aubigny's registries by Wrigley's standards are ideal, for he advises that family reconstitution only be undertaken if entries provide enough detail to be able to identify the

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<sup>51</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 350-425.

<sup>52</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, i.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 199-200.

individual, and if it is possible to access “a comparatively long period of well-kept records.”<sup>55</sup> In Aubigny’s case, registry-keeping extended from 1903 to 2013, although this research limits itself in the scope of their data. As a corpus, the parish registry is commonly found wherever there is a Catholic church and is a valuable resource for many fields of study including demography, genealogy and history. Now, in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, when increasingly secular generations are at a remove from the religious practices of the Catholic Church (not to mention those from before its Second Vatican Council), what might have been common knowledge regarding church practices is less so. Consequently, these records, in their minutia, are interesting. They relay standards the Catholic Church exacted from its ministers in administering sacraments to the faithful and they delimit milestones amid which a community’s day-to-day flowed.

The registries kept by the Catholic Church, specifically record baptisms, marriages and burials. Researchers Bouchard and LaRose wrote in 1976 that registry-keeping was first initiated by the Catholic Church and adopted in France and Italy in the 14<sup>th</sup> century and generalized in the 17<sup>th</sup>.<sup>56</sup> Recent research by Laplante argues that in fact, the practice was imposed by the king of France, who, in the Royal Order of 1539 decreed the registration of burials and baptisms as a way of clarifying and simplifying judicial roles between Church and State. Laplante’s article goes into detail to demonstrate how the king “took advantage of the Council of Trent [in 1563] to push the Church to impose on the clergy the solemnization of marriage and the registration of

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<sup>55</sup> Wrigley, “Family Reconstitution,” 102.

<sup>56</sup> G. Bouchard & A. LaRose, “La réglementation du contenu des actes de baptême, mariage, sépulture, au Québec, des origines à nos jours,” *Revue d’histoire de l’Amérique Française* 30, no. 1 (1976).

baptism and marriage...”<sup>57</sup> and how this ordinance was drafted and adopted. The evidence, Laplante concludes, shows how the king’s action influenced the church’s canon thereby managing “to generalize parish registers in all Catholic countries.”<sup>58</sup> Wrigley appraised the differences between France and Great Britain’s practices of registry-keeping, writing, “English registers give less information at each entry than the French but this is counterbalanced by the fact that in France reconstitution work is very seldom possible before the last quarter of the seventeenth century whereas in England it is sometimes possible to begin in the middle of the sixteenth century...”<sup>59</sup>

Aubigny’s registry falls within the diocesan practice that Canada’s first missionaries brought with them from France to Quebec, accompanying diocesan expansion and forming one of the clerical minister’s regular duties. In Quebec, the record-keeping was relied upon to the point of being incorporated in early civil laws requiring copies in double,<sup>60</sup> making church registries not only a religious record but a civil one as well until 1991.<sup>61</sup> Unlike Quebec, Manitoba enacted civil registration in 1882<sup>62</sup> and a loose-leaf copy of the parish’s record of a baptism, marriage or burial was sent to the provincial government.<sup>63</sup> Langevin’s circular letter of May 1902 confirms that priests in his diocese were expected to use the *Appendice au Rituel romain* (hereafter referred to as the *Appendice*) when transcribing the acts in the parish’s

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<sup>57</sup> Benoît Laplante, “From France to the Church: The Generalization of Parish Registers in the Catholic Countries,” *Journal of Family History* 44 no. 1 (2019): 24-51.

<sup>58</sup> Laplante, “From France to the Church,” 24-51.

<sup>59</sup> Wrigley, “Family Reconstitution,” 110.

<sup>60</sup> Bouchard and LaRose “La réglementation du contenu des actes,” 69-70.

<sup>61</sup> François Drouin, “Je te baptise au nom de l’Église et de l’État,” *Cap-Aux-Diamants, La Revue d’histoire du Québec*, 31 (Fall 1992).

<sup>62</sup> “A Guide to Researching Genealogy at the Cloverdale Library,” Surrey Library, updated June 2022, <https://www.surreylibraries.ca/family-history/vital-records-manitoba>

<sup>63</sup> Langevin, “Circulaire au Clergé no. 23,” May 8, 1902, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

registry.<sup>64</sup> Transcription followed a formula, according to the occasion with ellipses or blank spaces for the personal details of the individual or individuals in question.

Bouchard and LaRose indicate that Quebec's first registries were kept in conformity with the *Rituale romanum* first published in 1614 and adapted for local use by diocesan synods.<sup>65</sup> The first Canadian ritual was published in 1703 in Quebec and was revised in 1836.<sup>66</sup> They note that the 1853 and 1874 editions of the *Appendice* were adaptations of the one published in 1836, and that only slight modifications were made in the 1890 publication.<sup>67</sup> These authors put in table form the ecclesiastical regulations enumerated for each act; baptism, marriage and burial as will be seen in the tables 1, 2 and 3 that follow.

By comparing the formulaic language and personal details found in the entries made in Aubigny's registries between December 1903 and December 1911, with the formulas in the 1890 *Appendice* and Bouchard and LaRose's tables, several observations can be made based on their content. Between 1903 and 1911 inclusively, the parish recorded 176 entries, divided as follows: 116 baptisms, 11 marriages, 49 burials. They all followed a formula found in *l'Appendice* based on the sacrament administered and, with the exception of nine entries, all are signed by Aubigny's parish priest Mathias Desrosiers.

### *Baptisms*

This is the formula in the 1890 edition of the *Appendice*, which reads:

*Le (jour, mois et année en toutes lettres), nous soussigné curé (ou vicaire) de cette paroisse, avons baptisé N... né (ou née) la veille (ou tel jour), fils (ou fille)*

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<sup>64</sup> Langevin, "Circulaire au Clergé no. 23," May 8, 1902, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>65</sup> Bouchard and LaRose, "La réglementation du contenu des actes," 71.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

*légitime de N... (sa profession) et de N... de cette paroisse (ou de telle autre paroisse ou mission). Le parrain a été N... (sa profession et son domicile) et la marraine N... (sa profession\* et son domicile), qui, ainsi que le père, ont signé avec nous (ou qui ont déclaré ne savoir signer). Lecture faite.<sup>68</sup>*

The note for the asterisk reads:

Comme la plupart des marraines n'ont pas de profession, il faut présumer que l'intention de la loi est que la marraine puisse être facilement distinguée de toute autre personne portant le même nom : on y satisfait en disant par exemple, *épouse ou veuve de N...* ou bien : *grand'mère, tante, sœur, cousine de l'enfant ou encore : fille de N...*<sup>69</sup>

Taking for example the first entry Desrosiers penned, we read:

*Le quatorze décembre mil neuf cent trois, nous prêtre soussigné, avons baptisé Joseph Napoléon, fils légitime de Jean-Baptiste Berthelette, journalier, et de Marguerite Dubois, né l'avant-veille, le parrain a été Paul Berthelette, journalier, et la marraine Rose Alma Martineau, le parrain a signé avec nous, la marraine a déclaré ne savoir signer, le père était absent. Lecture faite : P. Berthelette, J. M. Desrosiers, ptre curé.*

The elements found in the registry entry (baptism date, child's name, sex, etc.) allow for a comparison to be made with the regulations listed in Bouchard and LaRose's tables. Like them, the following tables use black circles to represent data explicitly required, and white circles for data implicitly required. By comparing Aubigny's practices with these regulations, we can distinguish three categories of information found in the registry; that which is reliable, variable or non-existent.

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<sup>68</sup> NN. SS. L'Archevêque et les évêques de la province de Québec, *Appendice au Rituel Romain à l'usage des provinces ecclésiastiques de Québec, Montréal, Ottawa*, (Narcisse-S. Hardy, 1890), 168-9.

<sup>69</sup> NN. SS. L'Archevêque et al., *Appendice au Rituel Romain*, 169.

**TABLE 1 – COMPARISON OF REGULATIONS FOR BAPTISM FORMULA INFORMATION**

CONTENT ELEMENTS		REGULATION DATE	AUBIGNY'S PRACTICE
		1890	1903-1911
Birth date		●	116 / 116
Baptism date		●	116 / 116
Case of necessity	Reason	●	0
	By whom	●	0
Child's name		●	116 / 116
Sex		●	86 / 116
Legitimate or illegitimate		●	115 / 116
Parents' names		●	116 / 116
Father's profession		●	34 / 116
Parents' residence		●	0
Father's absence at baptism		●	26 / 116
Parents unknown		●	0
Names of godparents		●	116 / 116
Godparents' proxies		●	4 / 116
Godfather's profession		●	15 / 116
Godparents' residence		●	2 / 116
Relation to the baptized		○	1 / 116
Signature	Father	●	86 / 116
	Godparents	●	110 / 116
	Celebrant	●	116 / 116
Do not know how to sign		●	29 / 116

Information reliably found in the entries are the dates of birth and baptism, the child's name, the parents' names, the godparents' names and the celebrant's signature. Information that varies across this source's entries are the child's sex, (when for example, the priest marked "child" instead of "son" or "daughter"), and the father's and godfather's profession (when it is not indicated). Growing familiarity with his parishioners and the repetitious nature of a family's entries in the registry over the years could have influenced the priest's inclination to simplify

the formula. Until 1905, for example, Desrosiers always included the father's profession, and then subsequently did so only intermittently. An argument for familiarity might be made, because no modification of registry entries is mentioned in the Archbishop's circular letters that year, and visiting priests tended to follow the formula more closely.

Information can also vary according to the circumstances such as the father's presence or absence at the baptism, the godparents' proxies (should they be required), their residence (if they are from outside the parish), their relation to the child (only rarely indicated), and finally the parents' and godparents' literacy (when they indicate they are unable to sign). Between 1903 and 1911 in Aubigny no baptisms of illegitimate children were recorded. Place of residence was rarely recorded, likely because it was assumed that the title of the parish's registry was indication enough.

### *Marriages*

Besides having the longest formula, a marriage required a number of formalities to be followed before being conferred. Thus, language used in its formula points to manners of proceeding before the Church's Second Vatican Council. The intention to marry had to be declared with three marriage banns which were "a public legal notice made in a church."<sup>70</sup> These also followed a formula and had a fee; in 1900, three banns cost 15\$, two 5\$ and one 3\$.<sup>71</sup> The priest would read out the banns at the end of what was the "prône" of the mass – a kind of homily followed by a sequence of announcements made to the assembly.<sup>72</sup> If a couple

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<sup>70</sup> *Britannica*, "banns of marriage," last updated January 3, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/banns-of-marriage>

<sup>71</sup> Langevin, "Circulaire au clergé no. 14," March 19, 1900, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>72</sup> NN. SS. L'Archevêque et al., *Appendice au Rituel Romain*, 1.

could only afford 1 or 2 banns or were in a hurry to be wed, a dispensation from 3 banns had to be granted by the bishop or his vicar general.

Impediments to a marriage included consanguinity or affinity, and a dispensation could be granted for this if the couple paid the required fee which depended on the degree of their relation. In 1900 for example, a dispensation for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> degree cost 50\$ and was the most expensive.<sup>73</sup>

The formula for a marriage entry in the 1890 edition of the *Appendice* reads:

*Le (le jour, le mois, l'année, en toutes lettres), après la publication de trois bans de mariage, faite au prône de nos messes paroissiales, entre N. (sa profession) de cette paroisse, fils majeur (ou mineur) de N. et de N. de cette paroisse d'une part; et N. aussi de cette paroisse, fille majeure (ou mineure) de N. et de N. de cette paroisse, d'autre part; ne s'étant découvert aucun empêchement, nous soussigné, curé (ou vicaire) de cette paroisse, avons reçu leur mutuel consentement de mariage et leur avons donné la bénédiction nuptiale en présence de, etc.... Lecture faite.<sup>74</sup>*

The provision for minors reads:

*Nous soussigné, curé (ou vicaire) de cette paroisse, du consentement du père et de la mère du dit N. (ou, s'ils sont morts), du consentement de N. tuteur (ou curateur) du dit N., avons reçu leur mutuel consentement, etc.<sup>75</sup>*

This is the formula for a dispensation from banns:

*Le..., vu la dispense de deux (ou d'un) bans de mariage, accordée par Monseigneur N. Évêque de ... (ou par Messire N. Vicaire-Général de Monseigneur l'Évêque de...), en date du... présent mois (ou de N); vu aussi la publication du troisième ban (ou des deux autres bans) faite au prône, etc.*

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<sup>73</sup> Langevin, "Circulaire au clergé no. 14," March 19, 1900, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>74</sup> NN. SS. L'Archevêque et al., *Appendice au Rituel Romain*, 172.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

This is the formula for a dispensation from the impediment of consanguinity or affinity:

*...vu la dispense du troisième degré (ou autre) de consanguinité (ou d'affinité) accordée par, etc., comme ci-dessus.*<sup>76</sup>

Here is an example of a marriage entry in Aubigny's registry:

*Le vingt deux novembre mil neuf cent quatre après la publication d'un ban de mariage faite au prône de notre messe paroissiale, ainsi qu'à l'église de St-Jean-Baptiste comme il apert par un certificat du curé du lieu, entre Joseph Roger Vandal, journalier domicilié dans la paroisse de St-Jean-Baptiste fils majeur de feu Roger Vandal et d'Isabelle Branconnier de la même paroisse d'une part, et Melanie Laplante fille mineure de Patrice Laplante, journalier et de Monique Grandbois domiciliés en cette paroisse de St-Antoine d'Aubigny d'autre part, la dispense des deux autres bans leur ayant été accordé par l'autorité religieuse, ainsi que la dispense de parenté de 3<sup>ième</sup> au 4<sup>ième</sup> degré de consanguinité en ligne collatérale et d'après le consentement des parents de la partie mineure ne s'étant rencontré aucune opposition au dit mariage, nous Curé soussigné avons reçu leur mutuel consentement de mariage et leur avons donné la bénédiction nuptiale en présence de Patrice Laplante père et témoin de l'épouse et de Etienne Demarais témoin de l'époux, lesquels ainsi que les époux et quelques autres ont signé avec nous. Lecture faite : Melanie Laplante, Jos Vandal, Patrice Laplante, Etienne Demarais, Pete Berthelette, (...), Dina Leferrière, Etiena Laferrière, Albina Goulet, J. M. Desrosiers ptre curé.*

**TABLE 2 – COMPARISON OF REGULATIONS FOR MARRIAGE FORMULA INFORMATION**

CONTENT ELEMENTS	REGULATION DATE	AUBIGNY'S PRACTICE
	1890	1903-1911
Marriage date	●	11 / 11
Bans publication or dispensation	●	11 / 11
Dispensation of impediments	●	5 / 11
Consent of authority	●	2 / 11
Certificate of bans publication	○	2 / 11
Absence of impediments	●	7 / 11
Spouses' names	●	11 / 11

<sup>76</sup> NN. SS. L'Archevêque et al., *Appendice au Rituel Romain*, 173.

Majority or minority	●	11 / 11
Marital status	●	2 / 11
Groom's profession	●	8 / 11
Spouses' residence	●	10 / 11
<hr/>		
Parents' names	●	9 / 11
Name of deceased spouse	●	2 / 11
Residence of father or deceased spouse	●	0
<hr/>		
Witnesses names (2-3)	●	11 / 11
Relation to spouses	●	7 / 11
<hr/>		
Signature	Parties	● 11 / 11
	Witnesses	● 11 / 11
	Celebrant	● 11 / 11
Do not know how to sign	●	2 / 11

Comparing Aubigny's practices with the formula in the *Appendice* of 1890 and its regulations as listed in Bouchard and LaRose's table, we might again make a few observations. In this case, variables included the types of dispensations granted and whether or not the bride or groom came from outside the parish. Also, of the five marriages where the bride is a minor, Desrosiers only records the consent of an authority (the father's) for the first two in 1904 and 1905. Of the 11 marriages, two are marriages between widowers, which did not require the mention of their parents, only the name of their deceased spouse.

### *Burials*

The formula for burials in the 1890 edition of the *Appendice* reads:

*Le (le jour, le mois et l'année, en toutes lettres), nous soussigné, curé (ou vicaire) de N., avons inhumé dans le cimetière de cette paroisse, le corps de ... (sa profession), (s'il est marié, époux de... s'il est veuf, veuf de...), (si c'est une femme, épouse de... ou veuve de... (la profession du mari), si c'est un enfant ou une personne qui n'est point mariée, fils ou fille de... (la profession du père) et de..., si l'enfant est illégitime, né de parents inconnus; avec le nom et le domicile de la personne chez qui il demeurerait);*

décédé (tel jour), en cette paroisse, âgé de ... ans, ...mois, ...jours. Étaient présents... qui ont signé avec nous (ou qui ont déclaré ne savoir signer). Lecture faite.<sup>77</sup>

Here are two examples of entries in Aubigny’s registry for burials, one of an adult and one of a child:

*Ce quinze décembre mil neuf cent quatre, nous prêtre soussigné, avons inhumé dans le cimetière de cette paroisse le corps de Joseph Boudreault décédé le douze du présent mois agé d’environ trente huit ans, époux légitime de Catherine Nesbitt de la paroisse St-Claude Manitoba. Présents, Antoine Boudreault, Joseph Berthelette et grand nombre d’autres présents en amis. J.D. Fillion, Hermenie Jetté, J.M. Desrosiers ptre curé.*

*Ce six octobre mil neuf cent cinq, nous curé soussigné avons inhumé dans le cimetière de cette paroisse le corps de Mathias Roland Ildée enfant de Vital Rivet et de Hermenie Jetté, âgé de six mois et demi, décédé hier. Étaient présents Eugénie Pelland, Vital Rivest, et quelques autres qui ont signés. Lecture faite : Hermenie Jetté, Vital Rivest, J.M. Desrosiers ptre curé.*

**TABLE 3 – COMPARISON OF REGULATIONS FOR BURIAL FORMULA INFORMATION**

CONTENT ELEMENTS	REGULATION DATE	AUBIGNY’S PRACTICE
	1890	1903-1911
Death date	●	45 / 49
Burial date	●	49 / 49
Place of death	●	0
Place of burial	●	49 / 49
Name of deceased	●	49 / 49
Sex	●	11 / 49
Age	●	48 / 49
Marital status	●	7 / 49
Profession	●	1 / 49
Legitimacy (if a child)	●	4 / 49
Parents’ names	●	42 / 49
Spouse’s name	●	7 / 49

<sup>77</sup> NN. SS. L’Archevêque et al., *Appendice au Rituel Romain*, 178.

Father's profession		●	3 / 49
Spouse's profession		●	0
<hr/>			
Witnesses names		●	49 / 49
<hr/>			
Signature	Witnesses	●	43 / 49
	Celebrant	●	49 / 49
Do not know how to sign		●	9 / 49
<hr/>			

Among the elements of information either unwarranted by the circumstances or dropped for the sake of simplification, there is the deceased male's profession, the child's sex (indicated by son or daughter), the child's legitimacy, and the father's profession. In one instance in which the child is unnamed at the time of burial, the entry reads that it was "né avant terme et [...] fut ondoyé à la maison."<sup>78</sup>

Aubigny's registries span three books, covering baptisms, marriages and burials starting in 1903 and ending, for baptisms and marriages, in 2013. They form a corpus of 1600 entries over the parish's 110 years of existence and establish the names of the individuals and their families who, by marking life events at its church, were considered members of its parish. For this research, the number of families was limited to those names found within the registries between the parish's foundation (1903) and its canonical erection (1911). In Aubigny's case, the first year represented the year of the secular priest Mathias Desrosiers' arrival and the latter represented an official recognition of the parish's territory within the Catholic Church's administration. These are arbitrary dates because the lapse of time between a parish's foundation and its canonical erection varied. In Quebec for example, a parish's official

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<sup>78</sup> "Registre d'Aubigny," 26 juin 1907.

recognition had three steps: the first was the opening of a registry by visiting priests, the second its canonical erection and the third, its civil recognition - although these steps were sometimes disordered.<sup>79</sup> Within the Archdiocese of St. Boniface, the procedure appears to have been less formal. An example similar to Aubigny's case is that of Somerset. Wishing to separate itself from the larger parish of St. Léon, the parishioners built a church in 1900 which was served by priests from St. Léon. In 1907 the arrival of its first resident priest marked the parish's foundation and in 1909 it received its decree of canonical erection.<sup>80</sup> In Aubigny's first eight years of existence, there are 176 entries which record 27 family names and represent 53 households.

Based on the information contained therein, the following chapters are divided by the categorization of Aubigny's settlers into groups in the order of their arrival. Chapter 1 focuses on the Métis families that settled in the area prior to the parish's establishment but whose names are found at the opening of its registry. Chapter 2 follows the arrival of the first repatriate families in Aubigny, tracing evidence of their stay in the United States and their occupations when possible, as well as outlining immigration agents' efforts to bring them to Canada. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the immigrant families from Quebec with an eye to changing immigration strategies and improvements in travel. Also, in examining the arrival of Aubigny's first priest as well as his first years in Aubigny, a clearer idea can emerge of the challenges that faced the pastor of a developing parish. Chapter 4 explores the role kinship played, first

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<sup>79</sup> Frank W. Remiggi, "L'Organisation du territoire ecclésiastique," in *Atlas historique des pratiques religieuses: Le Sud-Ouest du Québec au XIXe siècle*, ed. Louis Rousseau and Frank W. Remiggi, (University of Ottawa Press, 1998), 51.

<sup>80</sup> Somerset History Book Committee, *Reflections – reflets: Somerset*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (2000), 321-323.

highlighting the kinship ties that existed in the community, the ones formed soon after immigrants' arrival, and what evidence the registries provide. The chapter also summarizes literature that helps explain earlier economic benefit of kinship ties in rural communities. Entirely motivating the choice of these families is the appearance of their names in the first eight years of the parish's registry. By default, it excludes the names of other families who lived within the parish prior and subsequent to this brief window, as well as those within the parish's territory who were not Catholic or to whom the sacraments such as they are listed and such as they were catalogued, did not apply. However, this should not diminish the value of the corpus. Beyond its demographic possibilities and limits, a registry is proof of a value system underpinning its participants' faith. To examine Aubigny's registry is to appreciate the Catholic Church as a trellis upon which a community trained itself and grew.

## Chapter 1 – The Métis

One characteristic of the data collected from Aubigny’s registries is the presence and persistence of Métis family descendants of Joseph Berthelette and Françoise Caron. This in itself allows for a serendipitous continuation of research involving the Berthelette family begun, as mentioned in the introduction, by Nicole St-Onge. The data gathered in the course of this research adds to the conclusion she reached in 1983 by providing more detail to Joseph’s ancestry, thanks in part to the access to databases mentioned in the introduction, and it also extends his genealogy. The Berthelette family was not the only Métis family in Aubigny in 1903... Although a local history by Fr. François Normandin lists five heads of family as “les premiers colons métis de la paroisse” – François Larivière, Abraham Beauchamp, Sévère Desmarais, Joseph Berthelette and Georges Klyne<sup>81</sup> – the registries show only two heads of family in common with his: Joseph Berthelette and François Larivière. The registries also provide evidence of two other families having lived in the area: the Boudreau and the Laplante. This chapter will answer the question “who were the Métis families in Aubigny?” by tracing their histories based on family reconstitution and by examining the political, social and economic issues that could help explain why the majority of the Métis families left and how the descendants of one family stayed.

### *The Berthelette family*

Edouard, Charles, Jean-Baptiste and Paul Berthelette were all heads of households in Aubigny, with large and growing families by the time Desrosiers arrived. Their great-

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<sup>81</sup> “Au poste CKSB,” 25 février 1954, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

grandfather, Toussaint Savoyard dit Berthelette was born September 21, 1771 in Montreal. He was an older second-cousin to Antoine-Olivier Berthelette, a generous benefactor of Ignace Bourget's<sup>82</sup> and whose philanthropy even extended to Taché,<sup>83</sup> a detail that highlights close ties between Quebec and the French-Catholic missions at the time. It is possible that what brought Toussaint to Manitoba was his enrollment as a voyageur in an expedition under François-Victor Malhiot.

François-Victor Malhiot was the son of a successful merchant<sup>84</sup> and had begun working for the North-West Company very young. He was promoted to clerk in 1796 and posted at Red River. Charged with an expedition into American territory in 1804, at a time when the North West Company was expanding and competing with the XY Company, Malhiot succeeded in building a fort at Lac du Flambeau, in present-day Wisconsin. Malhiot was ordered to keep a journal and it provides a slim glimpse into the lives of the men under his employ. News of the companies' merger came late to Malhiot, and changed little for him at the time.<sup>85</sup> His journal contains occasional remarks about employees, berating their weakness when they needed rest,<sup>86</sup> or praising their strength at portages.<sup>87</sup> Malhiot notes that the men in his charge "agissent en bons garçons et sont beaucoup plus polis, beaucoup plus soumis et un peu plus

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<sup>82</sup> Serge Courville and Normand Séguin, *La Paroisse* (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2001), 87.

<sup>83</sup> T.A. Bernier, "Revue de la semaine," *Gazette des Campagnes*, no. 27, February 2, 1882, BAnQ Numérique.

<sup>84</sup> François Béland and Hélène Paré, "Malhiot, François" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 5 (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003 —), last revised 1983, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/malhiot\\_francois\\_5E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/malhiot_francois_5E.html).

<sup>85</sup> François-Victor Malhiot, "Journal du Fort Kamanaitiquoya à la rivière Montréal 1804-1805," in *Les Bourgeois de la Compagnie du Nord-Ouest* ed. L. R. Masson (Quebec, 1889), Canadiana <https://n2t.net/ark:/69429/m0sn00z72x3q259>.

<sup>86</sup> Malhiot, "Journal du Fort Kamanaitiquoya," 232.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, 237.

intéressés que les gens du Nord.”<sup>88</sup> His expedition was a difficult one. He writes, “de tous les endroits et lieux que j’ai pu voir depuis treize années que je voyage, celui-ci est le plus affreux et le plus ingrat.”<sup>89</sup> Later research confirms this, noting that the region was considered at the time “inaccessible for major commercial efforts” because “long and difficult portages were required.”<sup>90</sup> Another researcher, examining Malhiot’s journal, comments that Malhiot was dealing with a number of frustrations including “the long demanding journey to the fort” and “uncertain fur returns.”<sup>91</sup> Malhiot retired in Contrecoeur, Québec shortly after.<sup>92</sup> Toussaint Berthelette, leaving no other trace of work in the fur trade, might have settled in Manitoba after this single expedition.

Toussaint Berthelette married Marguerite Sauteuse before or after Malhiot’s expedition and together they had Pierre, Joseph, Geneviève, Marguerite and Marie.<sup>93</sup> Carol Podruchny, in her research into voyageur history, writes that voyageurs were proud to take an Indigenous wife<sup>94</sup> and those who did, “frequently left the fur trade service to live with their wives’ families, to live as independent freemen, or to settle around the Great Lakes or Red River in emerging métis societies.”<sup>95</sup> Marguerite’s baptism is registered around 1776 and her burial in 1866.<sup>96</sup> Joseph, their second son, was born in 1809, was married to Marguerite Dubois in 1834, and,

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<sup>88</sup> Malhiot, “Journal du Fort Kamanaitiquoya,” 254.

<sup>89</sup> Malhiot, “Journal du Fort Kamanaitiquoya,” 237.

<sup>90</sup> Jeanne Kay, “Wisconsin Indian Hunting Patterns, 1634-1836,” *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 69, no. 3 (1979), 413.

<sup>91</sup> Jack O. Waddell, “Malhiot’s Journal: An Ethnohistoric Assessment of Chippewa Alcohol Behavior in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Ethnohistory* 32, no. 3 (1985), 255.

<sup>92</sup> Malhiot, “Journal du Fort Kamanaitiquoya,” 228

<sup>93</sup> Gail Morin, *Metis Families Volume I: Adam-Bird* (Quintin Publications, 2001), 308.

<sup>94</sup> Carolyn Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World: Travelers and Traders in the North American Fur Trade*, (University of Toronto Press, 2006), 11.

<sup>95</sup> Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World*, 15.

<sup>96</sup> Morin, *Metis Families*, 308.

after her death, was married to Angelique Laferté in 1868.<sup>97</sup> Joseph himself died in 1894 and his burial is recorded in St. Joseph's parish registry in North Dakota. Nicole St-Onge's research into the Métis families' land claims in the region of present-day St. Agathe reveal that Joseph owned a substantial amount of land. In 1849, he cultivated over 20 acres,<sup>98</sup> and in 1867 "a year of partial crop failure, he had harvested 320 bushels of wheat and 130 bushels of potatoes."<sup>99</sup>

Were these signs of prosperity an element of their son Joseph and his wife Françoise Caron's security in being able to raise a family of 10 in the future parish of Aubigny? Joseph, named after his father, born in 1835<sup>100</sup> married Françoise Caron "before 1856"<sup>101</sup> and St-Onge suspects that this generation's move further south from St. Agathe was prompted by the government's mishandling of the Métis land claims.<sup>102</sup> Notwithstanding the ability to verify Berthelettes' land claims is Joseph and his sons' involvement in the community. For example, in 1871 and 1872, Joseph was listed as school commissioner for the district. He, along with a few other men, was praised for his efforts in securing a school for the area.<sup>103</sup> In 1873, Joseph writes an indignant letter for publication over the injustice of wood being seized from land he owned:

J'ai coupé et pris le bois que le Gouvernement veut me saisir, sur une propriété à la grosse Pointe de la Saline cette terre là m'appartient. Car je l'ai prise quand le Gouvernement Canadien n'avait rien à faire ici comme Gouvernement, et lorsque notre Gouvernement d'alors, le Gouvernement d'Assiniboia permettait, autorisait et sanctionnait la prise des terres par les colons, sur la grande Rivière.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Société historique de Saint-Boniface, genealogical database, accessed on request 2022.

<sup>98</sup> St-Onge, "Métis and Merchant Capital," 77.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Morin, *Metis Families*, 309.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 312.

<sup>102</sup> St-Onge, "Métis and Merchant Capital," 88.

<sup>103</sup> *Le Métis*, 27 juillet 1871 and 12 juin 1872.

<sup>104</sup> *Le Métis*, 25 juin 1873.

## *Federal elections 1873-1874*

This letter coincided with the political turbulence surrounding the question of Riel's amnesty and his seat in parliament. The Berthelette family was directly involved, given their position in the community, in the riding of Provencher. Sprague writes a summary of events in *Canada and the Métis*: "thirty days after Lépine's first court appearance, the voters of Provencher chose Louis Riel to fill Cartier's vacant seat in Parliament." However, there

was a change of government in Ottawa in November 1873 following scandalous disclosures concerning the Conservatives' electioneering in 1872. The result was that Riel arrived in the capital almost the same day that the new government [called for] a general election, and Riel saw Parliament dissolved before he could take his seat. But Provencher re-elected him in February 1874. After his second return to Ottawa, the House of Commons demanded his expulsion in April.<sup>105</sup>

On the ground however, articles in *Le Métis* suggest a dramatic atmosphere. After George Etienne Cartier was elected in the District of Provencher in 1872, his death in May of 1873 prompted a by-election in October.<sup>106</sup> Already in June of 1873, *Le Métis* reported that three Justices of the Peace had tampered with voter lists in the district.<sup>107</sup> Preceding the by-election, *Le Métis* addressed the Provencher electorate directly with a plea for Riel's unopposed nomination, because, they argued, he was: "l'homme qui seul peut placer le débat sur son véritable terrain, l'homme qui a le droit et le devoir de rappeler des promesses trop promptement oubliées."<sup>108</sup> That Riel should be the only candidate, in the paper's opinion, was clearly implied: "[Que] les électeurs de Provencher [...] fassent l'élection de M. Riel, et que le

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<sup>105</sup> Sprague, *Canada and the Metis*, 84-5.

<sup>106</sup> Parliament of Canada, "Provencher, Manitoba."

<sup>107</sup> "La liste electorale de Provencher," *Le Métis*, 7 juin 1873.

<sup>108</sup> "Aux Electeurs du Comte de Provencher," *Le Métis*, 11 octobre 1873.

mépris seul réponde à toute autre proposition.”<sup>109</sup> The following week, *Le Métis* reported Riel’s victory and listed the names of residents who had supported his candidacy, including “Joseph Berthelet, Junior”.<sup>110</sup> Riel was not present, but *Le Métis* reports that a search party had been sent to see if he had made an appearance.<sup>111</sup> Riel did not take his seat in Parliament and was at the time in voluntary exile in Plattsburg, New York.<sup>112</sup>

The following year brought a general election and again, *Le Métis* was unequivocal: “dans Provencher, il n’y a qu’un candidat possible et sérieux, c’est M. Louis Riel. Tant que l’amnistie ne sera pas accordée, c’est lui seul et nul autre qu’il faut élire, car l’amnistie est la première et la plus vitale de nos questions politiques.”<sup>113</sup> Further, *Le Métis* writes: “en élire un autre que M. Riel c’est trahir la cause de la nation, c’est reculer au lieu d’avancer, c’est rouler dans le précipice au lieu d’en sortir avec triomphe.”<sup>114</sup> The following week *Le Métis* devoted three columns to the nomination of candidates in the Provencher District. Joseph Berthelette who had supported Louis Riel’s nomination in the 1873 by-election now supported that of Joseph Hamelin’s, as did the Métis M.P.P., Georges Klyne.<sup>115</sup> This second nomination occasioned dissension among the group assembled in St. Norbert and support for the nomination of a candidate other than Riel seems to have stemmed from the fact that Riel did not take his seat in parliament. This was refuted by Joseph Dubuc who argued that “son siège

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<sup>109</sup> “Aux Electeurs du Comte de Provencher,” *Le Métis*, 11 octobre 1873.

<sup>110</sup> “Élection dans Provencher,” *Le Métis*, 18 octobre 1873.

<sup>111</sup> Ibid.

<sup>112</sup> Lewis H. Thomas, “Riel, Louis (1844-85),” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11 (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 2016, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/riel\\_louis\\_1844\\_85\\_11E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/riel_louis_1844_85_11E.html)

<sup>113</sup> “Les Elections,” *Le Métis*, 7 février 1874.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid.

<sup>115</sup> “Nomination de Comte de Provencher,” *Le Métis*, 14 février 1874.

vide à la Chambre des Communes a parlé en faveur de notre cause plus éloquemment qu'auraient pu le faire bien des discours."<sup>116</sup> He concluded, "Si M. Hamelin a l'intérêt du pays à cœur, il doit vouloir l'union" but Hamelin, described as "the Liberal candidate [...] and a Métis who had not participated in the movement of 1869-70,"<sup>117</sup> was not persuaded. The elections took place and Riel won 126 votes to Hamelin's 69. *Le Métis'* editors who had wished a more crushing defeat for Hamelin, brought up charges against Hamelin and his father from June of 1873 of tampering with voter lists and called St. Agathe "le château-fort des ennemies de M. Riel."<sup>118</sup> Meanwhile Riel "travelled to Ottawa where he signed the oaths' book, but he was soon expelled from the house."<sup>119</sup> This occasioned a by-election in September 1874.

In spite of the opposition raised in February, *Le Métis* was confident that Riel would be elected anew: "rien ne fait pressentir une opposition à sa réélection."<sup>120</sup> Thus, on September 5<sup>th</sup> it announced "Riel élu par acclamation" despite the fact that opposition to his nomination had not disappeared. The article reports: "rien ne faisait prévoir l'ombre même d'une opposition, lorsque tout-à-coup, l'on vit arriver M. J. Berthelet qui présenta à l'Officier-Rapporteur un Bulletin de présentation. Le commissionnaire, agent de Bruce et autres du même acabit [then considered a traitor to Riel], voulait poser la candidature du Dr. Bown." The nomination was disqualified and Berthelette was singled out as being the only one "hostile à l'élection de Riel."<sup>121</sup> In the House of Commons, Riel was again expelled, then declared an

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<sup>116</sup> "Nomination de Comté de Provencher," *Le Métis*, 14 février 1874.

<sup>117</sup> Thomas, "Riel, Louis."

<sup>118</sup> "Provencher," *Le Métis*, 14 février 1874.

<sup>119</sup> Thomas, "Riel, Louis."

<sup>120</sup> "L'Élection de Riel," *Le Métis*, 22 août 1874.

<sup>121</sup> "Riel élu par acclamation," *Le Métis*, 5 septembre 1874.

outlaw and in yet another by-election, he was succeeded by Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne who was sympathetic to amnesty for Riel.<sup>122</sup>

Joseph Berthelette who twice supported the nomination of someone other than Riel when the Catholic clergy and St. Boniface elite were pressuring the electoral district to unite in supporting Riel, is proof of another moment when not all Métis identified themselves with Riel.<sup>123</sup> It was a malaise not incongruent with the previous decade's debate within the Métis community over whose leadership was better, an issue which came to a head when William Dease (a magistrate at Pointe-Coupée)<sup>124</sup> challenged Riel's actions at La Barrière.<sup>125</sup> Riel won the support of the community and, "while other prominent French Métis would slide back and forth between neutrality and opposition, Riel never again lost the support of most of the French Métis."<sup>126</sup>

Joseph Dubuc, owner of *Le Métis*, who was himself responsible for persuading Riel "to run for Provencher in the 1872 federal election"<sup>127</sup> was personally involved. Although he argued for unity, the issues at stake divided opinion as to their priority, of which: "Riel's amnesty, the recognition of the List of Rights of 1869-70 and the land claims issue"<sup>128</sup> were three. Already in

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<sup>122</sup> Gordon Goldsborough, "Memorable Manitobans: Andrew Graham Ballenden Bannatyne (1829-1889)," Manitoba Historical Society Archives, last modified 6 January 2024, [https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/bannatyne\\_agb.shtml](https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/bannatyne_agb.shtml).

<sup>123</sup> Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 175.

<sup>124</sup> Paroisse Saint-Adolphe, *100 ans de courage et de foi: Paroisse de Saint-Adolphe 1896-1996*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (1996), <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/3099472>, 5.

<sup>125</sup> Gerhard J. Ens and Joe Sawchuck, *From New Peoples to New Nations: Aspects of Metis History and Identity From the Eighteenth to the Twenty-first Centuries* (University of Toronto Press, 2016), 101.

<sup>126</sup> Ens and Sawchuck, *From New Peoples*, 101.

<sup>127</sup> Diane Paulette Payment, "Dubuc, Sir Joseph," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 14 (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 1998, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dubuc\\_joseph\\_14E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/dubuc_joseph_14E.html)

<sup>128</sup> Antoine Lussier, "The Métis and The French-Canadians, 1870-1984," *Aspects of Canadian Métis History*, (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1985), 84.

1871, there might have been the assumption within St. Boniface's Catholic elite "that the Métis considered themselves French-Canadians. In fact, nothing could have been further from the truth. The Métis faced more pressing issues than simply preserving their French heritage. Their major problem was the land question -- a problem the French-Canadian group did not have but still considered pressing for their compatriots."<sup>129</sup> The unanimity demanded from the Métis electorate in Provencher was not fair to people like Joseph Berthelette, who already felt that his land claims were not being respected, and it presaged political events to follow.

### *Georges Klyne*

Indeed, there was tumult in politics at the provincial level, which *Le Métis* again exposes, this time for a provincial election in 1878 for which Georges Klyne submitted his candidacy. Born in 1825, 1828 or 1830,<sup>130</sup> he was the son of Michel Klyne, a fur trader and buffalo-hunter, and Suzanne Lafrance, a Métis woman born in the North-West. According to biographer Lawrence J. Barkwell, Georges and his siblings would accompany "their parents on various trips that their father Michel took in performance of his duties in the fur trade."<sup>131</sup> He became Joseph Berthelette's brother-in-law when he married Monique Berthelette (daughter of Joseph and Marguerite Dubois) in 1863, after the death of his first wife Marie Ducharme dit McKay.<sup>132</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> Lussier, "The Métis and The French-Canadians," 85.

<sup>130</sup> Morin, *Metis Families*, 164-5.

<sup>131</sup> Lawrence J. Barkwell, "Klyne, Michel," *The Virtual Museum of Métis History and Culture*, Louis Riel Institute, n.d., created January 14, 2014; last revised June 5, 2018, PDF, [https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14538.Klyne,%20Michel%20\(1811-1875\)%20RW.pdf](https://www.metismuseum.ca/media/document.php/14538.Klyne,%20Michel%20(1811-1875)%20RW.pdf)

<sup>132</sup> Morin, *Metis Families*, 313.

Georges was educated in St. Boniface. In 1859, he joined the Earl of Southesk's exploratory travel expedition, working under the direction of John McKay. In the Metis uprising of 1869, Georges opposed Riel and supported Schultz<sup>133</sup> a "contradictory character, who played a central role in the founding of Manitoba."<sup>134</sup> Biographer Lovell Clark writes that Schultz had "concern for the mixed-blood and Métis [which] conflicts with the contempt [...] he is generally reputed to have had for them [...]."<sup>135</sup> As Sprague shows in *Canada and the Métis, 1869-1885*, the numbers alone of "active adherents" in the Resistance indicate that Riel did not have the unanimous support of the Métis a fact highlighted earlier by Joseph Berthelette's actions.<sup>136</sup> Therefore in the context of the political drama of these years, it should not be surprising that Georges was another Métis who might have disagreed with Riel's methods. He was taken prisoner and escaped, later becoming "one of twenty members elected to the French side of the 'Convention of 40' representing Pointe-à-Grouette (later Ste. Agathe)."<sup>137</sup> He was elected "to the First Legislative Assembly of Manitoba" in 1870, again representing St. Agathe, where he "served until 1874."<sup>138</sup> That year, Alphonse Martin was elected in his stead.<sup>139</sup> In 1878 Georges Klyne decided to run again but was surprised to learn that he was disqualified for "not [having] taken his election oath before a justice of the peace approved by the secretary of the

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<sup>133</sup> Shae Griffith and Gordon Goldsborough, "Memorable Manitobans: Georges Klyne (1828-1906)," Manitoba Historical Society Archives, last modified 25 April 2023, [https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/klyne\\_g.shtml](https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/klyne_g.shtml)

<sup>134</sup> Gordon Goldsborough, "Memorable Manitobans: John Christian Schultz (1840-1896)," Manitoba Historical Society Archives, last modified 26 February 2024, [https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/schultz\\_jc.shtml](https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/schultz_jc.shtml).

<sup>135</sup> Lovell Clark, "Schultz, Sir John Christian," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 1990, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schultz\\_john\\_christian\\_12E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/schultz_john_christian_12E.html).

<sup>136</sup> Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 1.

<sup>137</sup> Griffith and Goldsborough, "Memorable Manitobans: Georges Klyne."

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>139</sup> Gordon Goldsborough, "Memorable Manitobans: Alphonse Fortunat Martin (1849-1905)," Manitoba Historical Society Archives, last modified 21 October 2018, [https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/martin\\_af.shtml](https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/people/martin_af.shtml)

executive council.”<sup>140</sup> Cool-headed compared to the incumbent Alphonse Martin whose disqualification on the basis of “nomination papers [that] had arrived late”<sup>141</sup> caused an incident at St. Jean-Baptiste, Klyne made a trip to Winnipeg “pour protester contre l’action de l’Officier-Rapporteur.”<sup>142</sup> Nothing followed these events for Georges Klyne in *Le Métis* and it hailed the end of his political career.

Georges owned at least three river lots in the future parish of Aubigny, and St-Onge qualifies him as the second “most affluent man” in the area after Joseph Berthelette sr.<sup>143</sup> In spite of this, Griffith and Goldsborough indicate that although he was “a respected and successful farmer, [he] had difficulties with claim and title to his farmland.”<sup>144</sup> In the 1881 federal census, Georges and his wife were still in Manitoba. In 1882, Georges signed as a witness at his son’s wedding in the St. Joseph’s Parish registry in North Dakota. In 1885, Georges, his wife and their children are counted in North Dakota’s state census,<sup>145</sup> the same year his daughter Rosalie is married to an immigrant from Quebec named Joseph Perreault.<sup>146</sup> Eventually, Georges was among the Metis who travelled from North Dakota to Saskatchewan where he died in 1906 and is believed to be buried.<sup>147</sup>

Both Joseph Berthelette and Georges Klyne were involved on the political scene; Georges more actively and more decisively against supporting Riel’s uprising. The end of his political career likely preceded the loss of his land claims. Having ventured to Manitoba earlier

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<sup>140</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 110.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid.

<sup>142</sup> “Election à Ste. Agathe,” *Le Métis*, 12 décembre 1878.

<sup>143</sup> St-Onge, “Metis and Merchant Capital,” 77.

<sup>144</sup> Griffith and Goldsborough, “Memorable Manitobans: Georges Klyne.”

<sup>145</sup> North Dakota State University Archives, “1885 Census Index”.

<sup>146</sup> Morin, *St. Joseph Parish*, 134.

<sup>147</sup> Griffith and Goldsborough, “Memorable Manitobans: Georges Klyne.”

in his life, he left behind kinship ties in Alberta<sup>148</sup> and established new ones with the Berthelette family. Joseph Berthelette, by comparison, seemed willing to go along with Dubuc's plan in support of Riel until he felt that Riel was not helping Métis like him in the issues they faced. In contrast to Klyne, Joseph Berthelette's family was large, once prosperous, and had established a kinship network over generations. It is not clear whether Joseph Berthelette was able to keep his land claims... In the years following the federal elections, between 1875 and 1877, Joseph's sons held various jobs: "percepteur de taxes," "gardien d'enclos," "constable,"<sup>149</sup> "gentilhomme,"<sup>150</sup> "juge de paix."<sup>151</sup> Over two decades later in the federal census of 1901, three of them, Paul, Charles and Jean-Baptiste, are listed as farmers, as is their father. In 1911, Charles and Jean-Baptiste are listed as ferry-men.<sup>152</sup> Joseph and Françoise died in 1916 and are buried in Aubigny.

### *The Boudreau Family*

One of the families that joined the Berthelette's by marriage were the Boudreau, when François-Xavier's children, Philomène and Antoine, married Joseph's children, Joseph and Marie. François-Xavier, born in 1812, had been hired in 1832 as a middleman<sup>153</sup> in the fur trade and retired to the Red River Colony ten years later.<sup>154</sup> His arrival in Manitoba was therefore comparatively recent to the Berthelette's. His ancestors were farmers in the region of St. Ours,

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<sup>148</sup> Blackwell, "Michel Klyne."

<sup>149</sup> *Le Métis*, 16 janvier 1875

<sup>150</sup> *Le Métis*, 10 août 1876.

<sup>151</sup> *Le Métis*, 17 août 1876

<sup>152</sup> Statistics Canada, *Census*, 1901, 1911.

<sup>153</sup> Government of Manitoba, "Bodreau, François" in *Northern Department Servants' Engagement Registers (1823-1895)*.

<sup>154</sup> Douglas N. Sprague and R.P. Frye, *The Genealogy of the First Métis Nation: The Development and Dispersal of the Red River Settlement, 1820-1900* (Pemmican Publications, 1983), Table 3.

Québec. The history of the St. Ours seignory mentions his great-great grandparents, Jean Beaudreau-Graveline and Françoise Bazinet Tourblanche<sup>155</sup> as purchasers of half of l’île Deschailions on the Richelieu River in 1736 from M Pierre de Saint-Ours<sup>156</sup> and who made a final payment for it 30 years later.<sup>157</sup> François-Xavier was the son of François and Marguerite Labreche, and when he settled in Manitoba, he married Emelie Aubuchon sometime “before 1843.”<sup>158</sup> The Boudreau family leaves only a small footprint in Aubigny’s registries. Only Antoine who married Marie Berthelette in 1884 with whom he had at least 4 children baptised in Aubigny, and as many buried, leaves a trace. Sometime between 1911 and 1920 the family left for St. Rose. The following table shows residence in the United States, in Aubigny and in St. Rose.

**TABLE 4 – BOUDREAU FAMILY RECONSTITUTION 1884-1932**

PARENTS		Antoine BOUDREAU		M 1884	
		Marie BERTHELETTE			
NAME SPOUSE	SEX	BIRTH LOCATION	MARRIAGE LOCATION	DEATH LOCATION	
<b>Marie Louise</b>	F	1887-12-13			
<b>Edouard</b>	M	1891-08-26	1924-02-13		
Marie Louise HOULE		U.S.	Ste Rose		
<b>Marguerite</b>	F	1895-01-13	1921-01-10		
Eusebe DEAN		U.S.	Ste Rose		
<b>Rosalie</b>	F	1896-08-26		1911-10-06 Aubigny	
<b>Edmond</b>	M	1898-08-15			
		U.S.			
<b>Agathe</b>	F	1900-04-17	1920-05-11		

<sup>155</sup> Programme de Recherche en Démographie Historique, no 11868.

<sup>156</sup> Azarie Couillard-Després, *Histoire de la seigneurie de Saint-Ours: les origines de la famille et de la seigneurie, 1330-1785* (Imprimerie de l’institution des sourds-muets, 1915), 122, <https://www.canadiana.ca/view/oocihm.76661>.

<sup>157</sup> Couillard-Després, *Histoire de la seigneurie de Saint-Ours*, 226.

<sup>158</sup> Morin, *Metis Families*, 236.

Arsene THERIEN			Ste Rose	
<b>Marie Emelie</b>	F	1902-04	1924-02-19	
Louis Deslaurier			Ste Rose	
<b>Stanislas</b>	M	1904-03-18 Aubigny		1905-04-14 Aubigny
<b>Antoine</b>	M	1906-03-29 Aubigny		1906-03-30 Aubigny
<b>Marie Veronique</b>	F	1906-03-29 Aubigny		1906-04-11 Aubigny
<b>Joseph Doris</b>	M	1909-06-12 Aubigny	1932-02-01	
Solange BERTHELETTE			Ste Rose	

### *The Laplante Family*

Like the Boudreau family, the Laplante family's history in Aubigny is tied to one member's marriage into a family from among the Berthelette's kinship network. Thus, Boniface married Angelique Larocque, daughter of Merite Berthelette and Louis Larocque. He moved into his wife's parish leaving behind his family's parish at St. François Xavier where his parents Baptiste Laplante and Madeleine Dufond held a patent for part of Lot 156 in 1881.<sup>159</sup> Boniface and Angelique had ten children together. Although family members of Baptiste's were involved in the Battle at Batoche, he was not.<sup>160</sup> His son Patrice must have decided to establish himself in the region, for he married Monique Grandbois in 1883 and appears in Aubigny's registry twice, as father-of-the-bride in 1904, when his daughter Mélanie marries Joseph Roger Vandal; and as grand-father when Mélanie gives birth to a little girl in 1909. This despite the fact that, according to St. Onge, his father, Boniface, lost his land claim in St. Agathe in 1895.<sup>161</sup> Family

<sup>159</sup> Historical Committee of St. François-Xavier, *Our first hundred years: history of St. François-Xavier Municipality*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (1980), 12, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/2410066>.

<sup>160</sup> Lawrence J. Barkwell, *Veterans and Families of the 1885 Northwest Resistance* (Saskatoon: Gabriel Dumont Institute, 2011), 159.

<sup>161</sup> St-Onge, "Metis and Merchant Capital," 84.

reconstitution in the table below shows that three of Patrice and Monique’s children’s baptisms were registered in the parish of St. Joseph in North Dakota – a parish in which one also finds registry acts for the Berthelette and Klyne families.

**TABLE 5 – LAPLANTE FAMILY RECONSTITUTION 1883-1924**

PARENTS		M 1883-04-10		
Patrice LAPLANTE Monique GRANDBOIS				
NAME SPOUSE	SEX	BIRTH LOCATION	MARRIAGE LOCATION	DEATH LOCATION
<b>Joseph</b>	M	1883-12 St Joseph, ND		1884-10-25 St Joseph, ND
<b>Mélanie</b> J Roger VANDAL	F	1885-07-28 St Joseph, ND	1904-11-22 Aubigny	
<b>Marie Louise</b> J Arthur RICHARD	F	1888-02-19	1907-04-23 St François Xavier	1915-01-17 St Boniface
<b>Ernest</b>	M	1891-07-23		1965-01-13 Woodridge
<b>Ovide</b> M Rose DESJARLAIS	M	1893-03-31	1918-01-29 La Broquerie	1920-11-20 La Broquerie
<b>Raphael</b>	M	1894-10-03		
<b>Rose-Anna</b> Patrice BERTHELETTE	F	1896-04-30	1914-01-13 Sprague	
<b>J Romain Adrien</b>	M	1898-02-25 St Joseph, ND		
<b>Aurore</b> Raoul GOSSELIN	F		1924-02-06 Woodridge	

*The Larivière Family*

The Larivière family stands apart from the Boudreau and Laplante families because no head of household married into the Berthelette family. Their history begins with François Larivière, who was born January 28<sup>th</sup>, 1796 at Ruisseau Vacher near St. Jacques-de-l’Achigan.<sup>162</sup>

<sup>162</sup> *Nouveau Monde*, 10 février 1869.

He was the fourth child of Bonaventure and Marie Forest's 14 children.<sup>163</sup> On January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1820 François was hired by the Hudson's Bay Company in Montreal, for a five-year contract as middleman.<sup>164</sup> It was a position, like Antoine Boudreau's, that "required stamina and strength, but little experience."<sup>165</sup> A note on François' contract reads that his duties include "aider à porter les canots à trois dans les terres."<sup>166</sup> François' employment at age 24 began just before the NWC-HBC merger, which, coming after decades of competition, Friesen qualifies as a resolution unsurpassed "in its wisdom and tact."<sup>167</sup> He writes, "the 'coalition' managed to marry the administrative and financial stability of the chartered company to the field experience and flexibility of the Nor'Westers."<sup>168</sup> Just as the merger of the XY and NWC in 1804 caused "many low-ranking employees" to lose their jobs or be "forced to labour at reduced pay,"<sup>169</sup> - a possible reason for Toussaint Berthelette's single expedition as middleman, - this merger also had repercussions on employment. François was perhaps lucky that he had secured a contract in Montreal the year before.

In spite of the significant changes within the fur trade at this time, François worked for the HBC in the Athabasca and McKenzie River districts for 10 years before becoming a Freeman at Norway House and retiring to Red River in 1837.<sup>170</sup> At his death, the newspaper *Nouveau Monde* printed a brief biography, writing, "Il fit quinze voyages aux montagnes rocheuses et

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<sup>163</sup> PRDH, no.87159.

<sup>164</sup> SHSB, "Contrats des voyageurs."

<sup>165</sup> St-Onge, "The Persistence of Travel and Trade: St. Lawrence River Valley French Engagés and the American Fur Company, 1818-1840" *Michigan Historical Review* 34, no. 2 (2008), 30.

<sup>166</sup> SHSB, "Contrats des voyageurs."

<sup>167</sup> Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 83-4.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid.

<sup>169</sup> Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 24.

<sup>170</sup> Government of Manitoba, "HBC Name Indexes, Servants' Contracts (1780-ca. 1926)," accessed Sept. 2023.

hiverna trois fois sur ces montagnes avec des tribus Iroquoises, [...]. Marié trois fois, il eut plusieurs enfants, mais quatre seulement sont vivants.”<sup>171</sup>

François’ son, also named François, was one of the four children to have survived to adulthood. His mother was Marguerite St-Germain and he was born in 1836.<sup>172</sup> In March of 1863 he married Arsinoé Nault, daughter of Amable and Josephte Lagimodière,<sup>173</sup> and granddaughter to Marie-Anne Gaboury, recognized as “la première femme blanche à s’établir dans l’Ouest.”<sup>174</sup> Together François and Arsinoé had 11 children. A few months before Desrosier’s arrival in Aubigny, and the opening of the parish’s registry, François passed away, leaving Arsinoé a widow. She died many years later, in 1922, aged 86.

The Larivière family reconstitution shows that only one son, a bachelor, stayed in Aubigny after his parents’ death.

**TABLE 6 – LARIVIÈRE FAMILY RECONSTITUTION 1863-1957**

PARENTS		François LARIVIÈRE		M 1863-03-10	
		Arsinoé NAULT			
NAME SPOUSE	SEX	BIRTH LOCATION	MARRIAGE LOCATION	DEATH LOCATION	
Marie Delphine Louis VANDAL	F	1865	1897-05-18 St Boniface	1943-05-02 RM Ste Anne	
François	M	1866			
Charles Annie MARION	M	1867-02-03	1892-07-12 St Boniface	1945-11-25 Winnipeg	
Patrice Melina NORMAND	M	1869-04-20	1897-11-22 Rm Ritchot	1961-12-14 St Boniface	

<sup>171</sup> *Nouveau Monde*, 10 février 1869.

<sup>172</sup> Government of Canada, Census of 1901.

<sup>173</sup> SHSB, genealogical database, accessed on request 2022

<sup>174</sup> George F. G. Stanley, “Gaboury, Marie-Anne,” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 10 (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 2022, [http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/gaboury\\_marie\\_anne\\_10F.html](http://www.biographi.ca/fr/bio/gaboury_marie_anne_10F.html)

<b>Gregoire</b> Josephine RANGER	M	1870-12-30	1913-07-01 St Boniface	1949-11-14 St. Laurent
<b>Marie Louise</b> Benjamin LAVERGNE	F	1873-08-27	1898-11-25 Ontario	1952-05-13 Kenora
<b>Alexandre</b>	M	1875-09-08		1957-01-24 Aubigny
<b>Alfred</b> Elisabeth NORMAND	M	1877-10-21	1916-11-27 La Broquerie	
<b>Marguerite</b> Joseph VANDAL	F	1879	1897-06-28 RM Morris	1902-07-23 RM Tache
Joseph	M	1881-05-08		
Marie	F	1883-04-08		

To compare the Métis families the following table is a useful demonstration of the differences in generation.

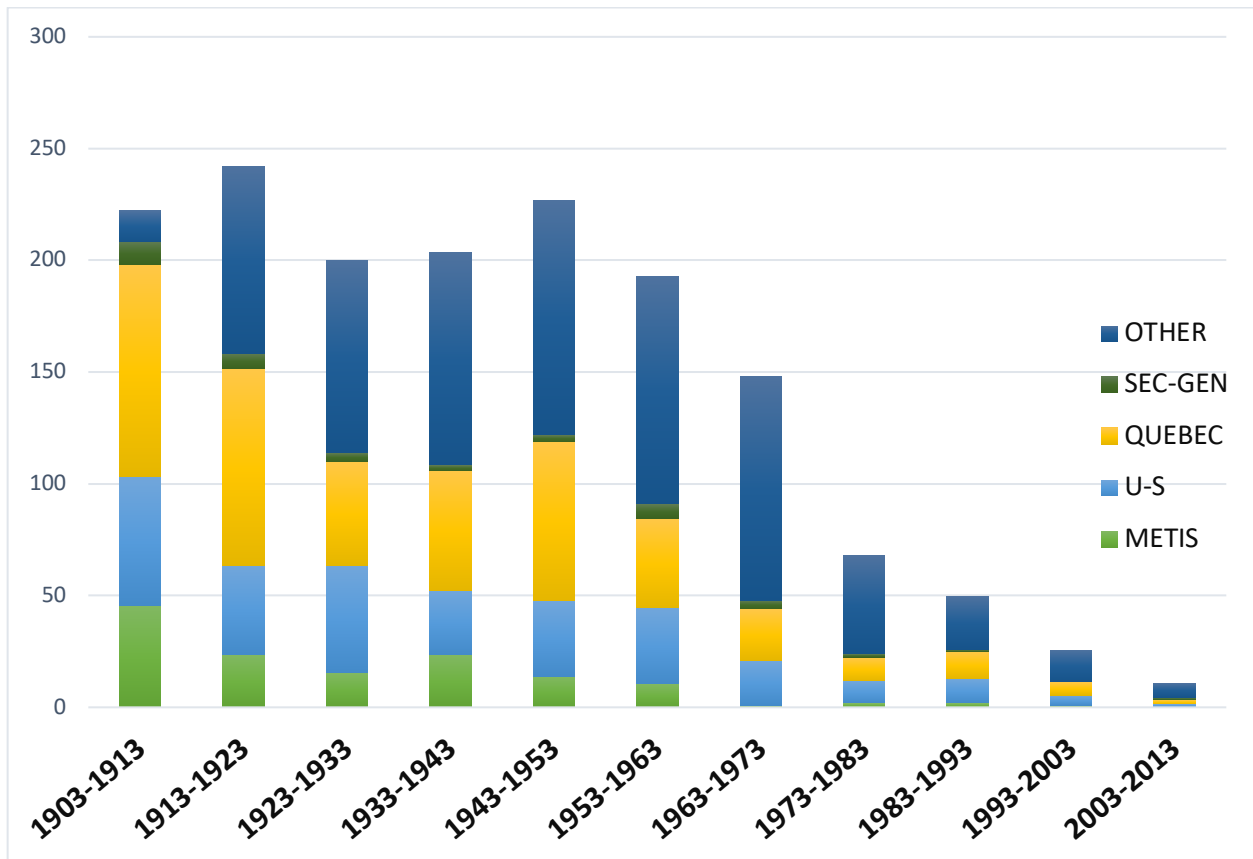
**TABLE 7 – ANCESTORS OF THE FIVE MÉTIS FAMILIES FOUND IN AUBIGNY BETWEEN 1903-1911**

BERTHELETTE	KLYNE	BOUDREAU	LAPLANTE	LARIVIÈRE
Toussaint b. 1771	Michel b. 1796		Baptiste b. circa 1809	François b. 1796
Joseph b. 1809	Georges b. circa 1828	François-Xavier b. 1812	Boniface b. 1838	François b. 1836
Joseph b. 1835		Antoine b. 1864	Patrice b. 1863	Alexandre b. 1875
Marie Edouard Charles J-Baptiste Paul				

The Métis heads of family involved in the fur trade, such as Toussaint and Michel, are shaded in grey. The descendants of theirs who appear in Aubigny's registries are outlined with a

dotted line. Laid out this way, and considering that Joseph, son of Toussaint, claimed land in nearby St. Agathe, the Berthelette's establishment in the region was well-rooted. Considering how neither Georges Klyne, Antoine Boudreau nor Patrice Laplante stayed in Aubigny, the majority of the registry acts representing the Métis category in Aubigny are descendants of Joseph Berthelette, born in 1835. A visual representation of the overall number of acts involving them can be seen in the following figure, which is a compilation of registry acts in 10-year increments, the bars segmented by these five categories: Métis at the bottom, followed by immigrants from the United-States and Ontario, then immigrants from Quebec, second-generation Manitobans who settled in Aubigny, and at the top, a category for "other" referring to those who moved to Aubigny after 1911.

**FIGURE 2: REGISTRY ACTS IN 10-YEAR INCREMENTS (1903-2013) DIVIDED BY SETTLER CATEGORY**



It is worth underlining that the above graph is a compilation of registry acts and is not a true demographic representation of the parish, it being the case that infant mortality represents a significant number of these in the first decades of the parish. Nonetheless, it provides a summary visualisation of the number of registry entries, segregated by group. As the community’s original families’ numbers decreased over time, they nonetheless retained a not-insignificant percentage of the totals by decade, outnumbered in the decades between 1953 to 1983, but returning to near-equal numbers by 1983-1993. Métis families to whom 20 percent of the registry entries between 1903-1913 belonged – compared to 26 percent for U.S. repatriates, and 42 percent for immigrants from Quebec – composed 15 percent, 14 percent, 22 percent and 11 percent of the total of original families in the four decades that followed.

## Métis Land

The Métis families that left Aubigny's parish joined many who had made the same decision elsewhere. Sprague writes:

The dispersal of the Métis and native English from Manitoba was gradual but perceptible between 1871 and 1876; it became remarkable from 1877 to 1880; and the migration increased to a rush of personnel between 1881 and 1884. Overall, more than 4,000 persons participated in the exodus, mainly to Saskatchewan.<sup>175</sup>

To hazard a guess at the causes of the Klyne, Boudreau, Laplante and Larivière dispersal, research by St-Onge, Ens, Sprague, Freisen and Hogue indicates that the likely cause was the government's prevention of Métis securing their land claims. St-Onge shows how "extended families grew up around the most prosperous individuals,"<sup>176</sup> and while the Berthelette family was such an example, it was a position that grew threatened by the 1869 uprising which brought to the forefront the question of land ownership, provoked, as Hogue writes by "Canada's annexation of HBC territories." This opened for expansionists "new lands for settlement, create[d] markets for businesses, and lead to new railroads to connect the two."<sup>177</sup> As Friesen writes, "What was clear title? What was meant by aboriginal and squatters' rights? These were now matters of private anxiety and public debate."<sup>178</sup> Although Ens writes that commercial grain farming was only possible beginning in the 1880's<sup>179</sup> and that river lot size, poor harvests and the over-hunting of buffalo caused many to leave, the Berthelettes had known a measure of success in the 1860's: "1,062 bushels of wheat, [...] 515 bushels of

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<sup>175</sup> Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 139.

<sup>176</sup> Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 11-3-4.

<sup>177</sup> Hogue, *Metis and the Medicine Line*, 66-7.

<sup>178</sup> Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 115.

<sup>179</sup> Ens, *Homeland to Hinterland*, 155.

potatoes, [...] 20 horses, 15 oxen, 19 cows [and] 19 calves.”<sup>180</sup> Sprague argues that it was the federal government’s fault. He writes:

In the period of the first Macdonald administration, from 1870 through 1873, the land claims of original settlers were neither denied nor honoured. They were held in administrative limbo while the territory was opened to newcomers whose claims were treated with unusual swiftness and generosity. In the same period of declining Métis power in Manitoba, nothing of any importance in the politics and government of the new province was permitted in strictly Manitoba terms.<sup>181</sup>

Both Friesen and Hogue hint at the barriers raised by the various amendments to the Manitoba Act: “metis residents of river lot farms were required to apply to a Dominion official to obtain clear title, a process that became more and more difficult as the decade passed.”<sup>182</sup> Hogue frames the handling of Métis land claims as an expedient but dishonest scheme. “The transformation of Metis aboriginal title into ‘conveniently alienable interests in individual fee simple titles,’ along with the many complications embedded in the scrip process and the legal chicaneries they created, revealed the Canadian government’s interest in divesting the Metis of their claims to western lands.”<sup>183</sup> This corresponds to Sprague’s earlier research, because he writes: “To be sure, the first Lieutenant Governor was sensitive to the wishes of his subjects. But Archibald’s was still a colonial administration, and his most important initiative to bolster Métis claims [...] was quietly repudiated by his superiors and subsequently subverted by Macdonald’s agent, Gilbert McMicken.”<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> St-Onge, “Métis and Merchant Capital,” 81.

<sup>181</sup> Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 139.

<sup>182</sup> Friesen, *Canadian Prairies*, 199

<sup>183</sup> Hogue, *Métis and the Medicine Line*, 189.

<sup>184</sup> Sprague, *Canada and the Métis*, 182

Members of the Berthelette, Boudreau, Laplante and Larivière families all made claims to river lots in the future parish of Aubigny, but few, excepting the Berthelettes, managed to stay. Notwithstanding the Berthelette's apparent early success in farming, and whether heads of family were able to keep their land claims, parallel cases in the neighbouring municipality illustrate the economic realities these families faced. Kenneth Sylvester's research into land title succession in the rural municipality of Montcalm highlights several cases of Métis land claims, including those of Jean Baptiste Jolibois, Benjamin Marchand, François Rainville and Antoine Vandal.<sup>185</sup> Jolibois sold his land in 1876 and Marchand and Rainville both sold theirs in 1881.<sup>186</sup> Antoine Vandal however, "seemed more determined to stay"<sup>187</sup> but ended up worse off economically. Eventually, deeply in debt, he was forced to sell the land he owned in 1907.<sup>188</sup> The Vandal family genealogy mirrors that of the Berthelette's. Toussaint and Antoine both came to Manitoba having worked in the fur trade, and married aboriginal women around the same time. Their sons, Joseph Berthelette and Antoine Vandal married the same year, Antoine to one of Joseph's sisters, and both had first born sons in the same year. The Antoine Vandal who was forced to sell his land was his family's third generation in Manitoba, as was the Joseph Berthelette who married Françoise Caron. Somehow, the latter's children stayed in the same parish, while "nearly all of [Antoine and Scholastique's] thirteen children [left] before the 1890s."<sup>189</sup>

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<sup>185</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 103-4.

<sup>186</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 103-4.

<sup>187</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 104.

<sup>188</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 105.

<sup>189</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 105.

## Aubigny’s Métis Families and the Canadian Census

Another facet that enriches the discussion in answer to the question “who were the Métis families in the parish of Aubigny” relates to Métis identity and their integration within the parish’s community. This begins with the Manitoba census of 1870, an exercise conducted in response to Métis land claims. Tracing Aubigny’s Métis families through the decades shows how their identification as such depended on census objectives and the era’s interpretation of origin and assignation of race. The following table is a compilation of data that focuses on the response to the column heading titled “Métis” in 1870, “Origin” in 1881, “French-Canadian” in 1891, “Racial or Tribal origin” in 1901 and 1911. Names in italics indicate French-Canadian immigrants as in the case of Arsinoé Nault (household number 12), Marguerite Hébert (no. 3) and Joseph Perreault (no. 13). The filled-in circles represent “Origin” indicated “Métis” or the equivalent “French-breed” in the census. The circles that are not filled-in represent “Origin” indicated “French” in the 1881 census, or “French Canadian” in 1891.

**TABLE 8 – CENSUS COMPARISON OF “MÉTIS” DESIGNATION IN AUBIGNY OVER FIVE CENSUS YEARS**

H	SURNAME	NAME	CANADIAN CENSUS				
			1870	1881	1891	1901	1911
1	BERTHELETTE	Joseph	●	○		●	○
	CARON	Françoise	●	○		●	○
2	BERTHELETTE	Joseph	●	○		●	
	BOUDREAU	Philomène	●	○		●	
3	BERTHELETTE	Edouard	●	○	○	●	○
	<i>HÉBERT</i>	<i>Marguerite</i>				●	
4	BERTHELETTE	Charles	●	○		●	○
	LAPLANTE	Marie	●	○		●	○
5	BERTHELETTE	Jean-Baptiste	●	○		●	○
	DUBOIS	Marguerite				●	○
6	BERTHELETTE	Paul		○		●	○
	MARTINEAU	Rose-Anne				●	○

7	BERTHELETTE	Alexandre					
	VANDAL	Malvina					
8	BERTHELETTE	Alfred					○
	PERREAULT	Exilda				●	○
9	BOUDREAU	Antoine	●			●	○
	BERTHELETTE	Marie	●			●	○
10	BOUDREAU	Joseph	●				
	NESBITT	Catherine					
11	LAPLANTE	Patrice	●	○	○	●	
	GRANDBOIS	Monique			○	●	
12	LARIVIÈRE	François	●	○	○	●	
	NAULT	Arsinoé	●	○	○	●	○
13	PERREAULT	Joseph					
	KLYNE	Rosalie	●	○		●	

Perhaps most striking are the designations of “Métis” (used interchangeably with “Half-breed” in English) in 1870 compared to “French” in 1881, and “French-breed” in 1901 and “French” in 1911. In all instances the instructions to the enumerators seem to have played a role in how Aubigny’s Métis families could be perceived in governmental statistics. In 1870, Manitoba’s census contained

a column [...] in the forms to designate the half-breeds. In this column the figure 1 is to be put opposite the name of every person coming under that designation. A half-breed, for the purpose of the enumeration, is defined to be any person descended, however remotely, either by father or mother, from any ancestor belonging to any one of the native tribes of Indians, and also descended, however remotely, from an ancestor among the Whites - in other words having in his veins both White and Indian blood.<sup>190</sup>

Of the 10 enumerators designated for this census, Joseph Dubuc was assigned the region of Provencher which included the Métis families in St. Agathe in 1870.<sup>191</sup> Future member of

<sup>190</sup> Sir George Adams Archibald, *Return: Instructions to the Honorable A. Archibald, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba and of the North-West Territory, &c., &c.* (Ottawa, 1871), 76.

<sup>191</sup> Archibald, *Return*, 90.

parliament for the area and later judge of the Court of Queen's Bench, Dubuc in 1870 had only recently arrived in the province with Msgr. Ritchot.<sup>192</sup>

In 1881, instructions to the enumerators did not focus so closely on counting Métis citizens. Its manual contained the following: "Column 13. Origin is to be scrupulously entered, as given by the person questioned; in the manner shown in the specimen schedule, by the words English, Irish, Scotch, African, Indian, German, French, and so forth."<sup>193</sup> Enumerators were nonetheless admonished to "assist the person giving the information, as to point out to him any apparent error" should they feel it was necessary for the "correctness of [the] entries."<sup>194</sup> In 1881, Thomas-Alfred Bernier as enumerator wrote "Français" for François Larivière (12<sup>th</sup> household in Table 8), while Joseph Pelissier wrote "Métis" for Georges Klyne (daughter Rosalie is 13<sup>th</sup> household in Table 8), Françoise Caron and her son, Joseph Berthelette, (households 1 and 2 in Table 8) before crossing it out and writing "Franc."

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<sup>192</sup> Payment, "Dubuc, Sir Joseph."

<sup>193</sup> Government of Canada, *Manual Containing the Census Act and the Instructions to Officers Employed in the Taking of the Second Census of Canada (1881)*, (Ottawa, 1881), 23.

<sup>194</sup> Government of Canada, *Manual Containing the Census Act*, 15.



and John Wittick were enumerators, and consistently qualified all the Métis families as “French breed”. In 1911, Ulric Rougeau, Edward Collette, and Walter N. Stevenson enumerated the families above and listed them all as “French”.

Literature on Canada’s federal censuses validates the data compiled in Table 8 above. Other researchers like St-Onge have observed similar examples in the Métis community in St. Laurent,<sup>196</sup> and this small sample shows that various factors affected how populations were counted. Gustave Goldman who studies “the demographic, social and economic transitions of the Indigenous Peoples of Canada”<sup>197</sup> listed three factors pertinent to this sample in a conference in 1993. They are: “changes in the formulation of the questions [...], changes in the instructions given to the enumerators (and/or respondents), [and] differences in the socio-political climate at the time the census was conducted.”<sup>198</sup> Therefore, for 1901, Goldmann writes, “this is the first post-confederation Census which makes specific reference to the Aboriginal population in the instructions to the enumerator” which included, “special instruction on how to code the various combination of ‘persons of mixed white and red blood’.”<sup>199</sup> This differed significantly from the Census the following decade in which there were “no separate counts for Indian, half-breeds and Eskimos.”<sup>200</sup> As Andersen writes, the census reflects “colonisers’ categories”<sup>201</sup> and Rivard explains (specifically in regards to the 1901

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<sup>196</sup> Nicole St-Onge, *Saint-Laurent, Manitoba: Evolving Métis Identities* (University of Regina, 2004), 53, 90.

<sup>197</sup> University of Ottawa, “Gustave Goldmann,” last modified June 2024, <https://uniweb.uottawa.ca/members/776>

<sup>198</sup> Gustave Goldmann, “The Aboriginal Population and the Census 120 Years of Information - 1871 to 1991” presented at the XXIInd General Population Conference of International Union for the Scientific Study of Population, Montréal, Canada, August 24 - September 1, 1993, 6, [https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2016/statcan/CS91-0045-1993-eng.pdf](https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/statcan/CS91-0045-1993-eng.pdf).

<sup>199</sup> Goldmann, “The Aboriginal Population,” 9.

<sup>200</sup> Goldmann, “The Aboriginal Population,” 10.

<sup>201</sup> Chris Andersen, “From Nation to Population: the Racialisation of ‘Métis’ in the Canadian Census,” *Nations and Nationalism* 14, no. 2 (2008), 353.

census): “[...] on ne peut pas être certain que ceux qui sont identifiés comme Métis [...] le soient vraiment au sens identitaire. Les consignes données aux agents recenseurs sont formelles quant à la variable permettant l'identification des Métis [...] : il s'agit de déterminer l'origine des gens, c'est-à-dire leur ‘provenance culturelle’, et non pas leur identité ou ‘appartenance culturelle’.”<sup>202</sup>

### **Aubigny’s Métis Families and Signs of Integration with Repatriates and French-Canadians**

Having so far examined the census data we now turn to Aubigny’s registries for further clues that might indicate Métis integration within the community. One of the most obvious might be marriage alliances between Métis families and immigrants from the United-States and Quebec. Marriages occur less frequently than do births and deaths, and were the following table to restrict itself to the first eight years, only 11 marriages could be accounted, of which only two involved Métis. Expanding the table to include the first decade of registry statistics yields 16 marriages, involving six Métis. Axis y to the left represents male individuals (M), axis x at the top represents female individuals (F).

**TABLE 9 – NUMBER OF MARRIAGES ACROSS MÉTIS AND IMMIGRANT CATEGORIES (1903-1913)**

	MÉTIS F	U-S F	QUEBEC F	SEC-GEN F	OTHER F
MÉTIS M	1		1		
U-S M		1			
QUEBEC M	2	1	3		1

<sup>202</sup> Étienne Rivard, “Au coeur de la résistance Métisse: Évolution démographique à Saint-Norbert, Manitoba, 1870-1901,” in *Déploiements Canadiens-Français et Métis en Amérique du Nord (18e-20e siècle)*, ed. Yves Frenette, Marie-Ève Harton, Marc St-Hilaire, and Étienne Rivard (Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2023), 166.

<b>SEC-GEN M</b>			1	
<b>OTHER M</b>	2	1	1	1

According to this table, one Métis male chose to marry a Métis woman, another chose to marry an immigrant from Quebec. Two male immigrants from Quebec chose to marry Métis females, as did two males from outside of Aubigny’s parish. By comparison, three male immigrants from Quebec chose to marry three female immigrants from Quebec, another, an immigrant from the United States. These numbers, while they might suggest integration nonetheless feel too small to extrapolate from. Chapter 4 of this thesis which discusses kinship, relies on slightly larger baptism data and shows that Métis parents did not go outside of immediate and extended family to find godparents for their children. Qualitative accounts like Téléspore Robert’s memoir *On va passer l’hiver*, provides anecdotes of a friendship with a grandson of Joseph Berthelette’s: August. August was the second youngest child of Paul Berthelette and Rose Emma Martineau. Téléspore Robert was himself grandson of Celevenne Robert (an immigrant from Quebec), third youngest of ten children born to Ovide Robert and Juliette Campeau. Téléspore and Auguste were neighbours, and Téléspore writes that he was August’s only friend and the only one who spoke to him.<sup>203</sup> But this apparent gap between French-Canadian and Métis might have been more easily bridged in this case given the intricacies of kinship relations established through intermarriage. Téléspore’s uncle, Joseph Robert, was married to a relation of August Berthelette’s mother, who was a Martineau. In his

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<sup>203</sup> Robert, *On va passer l’hiver*, 184.

account of another Métis, Alexandre Larivière, Téléphore writes, on three occasions, of his mother's generosity to the bachelor.<sup>204</sup> Another qualitative account is Aubigny's local history in *Furrows of the Valley*. Published in 1980 it is hard to determine whether the small space that the Berthelette family entry takes reflects the family's having nearly disappeared from the community by that time, or the greater importance accorded the francophone immigrants. If these factors (marriage, friendship, history) are various indicators of integration, they appear subsequently tempered.

## Conclusion

In this micro-history of Aubigny's settlement based on the families found within the parish's registries, the Métis are an important part – their names feature prominently, one in five of the registry's acts in the first eight years. Doing their family reconstitution according to Wrigley's method prompted further contextualization. It was possible to see in the Berthelette's involvement in the federal elections and by-elections in Provencher – which was Louis Riel's seat – their measured actions in the upheaval of these years. Joseph Berthelette was willing to follow Joseph Dubuc's advice in *Le Métis*, and grant Riel a chance in parliament. But seeing how Riel could not even take his seat and give voice to the issues the Métis faced, particularly land claims, Joseph Berthelette supported alternative solutions. In the case of Georges Klyne, political involvement at the provincial level was shockingly, unceremoniously ended. Most Métis families left Aubigny. The Berthelette stayed, perhaps buoyed by a large kinship network, perhaps benefiting from their ancestor's success in farming, perhaps,

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<sup>204</sup> Robert, *On va passer l'hiver*, 70, 165, 86.

unknown to this research, having made fortunate economic decisions. What is clear is that the Métis families in this chapter were practising Catholics and thus selected by means of this corpus, appear no different from the immigrants from the United States and Quebec, who altogether valued their children's education, petitioned for a priest and received the Church's sacraments. It nonetheless demonstrates a surprising degree of solidarity given that religion did not always unite members of a community, as in the case of Irish Catholics and French Canadians in the United States, which are mentioned in the following chapter.

## Chapter 2: Aubigny's Repatriated Families

In order to answer the question “Where did the francophone immigrant families come from?” in the parish of Aubigny, it felt appropriate in the course of the research to distinguish categories by provenance: immigrants from the United States and Ontario, and immigrants from Quebec including the second-generation children who settled in Aubigny from parents who had settled elsewhere in Manitoba. Grouping immigrants this way respects the chronology of their arrival in the parish which begins in 1877 and extends into the 1880’s. There are only six families in Aubigny representing the repatriate movement. The movement began with the mass migration of Quebec citizens to the United States between 1840 and 1930. This migration benefits from decades of research and waves of interest in the history of Franco-Americans and Franco-American communities.<sup>205</sup> Repatriation – the organized effort to bring these citizens back to Canada, particularly to Manitoba, was a very small movement by comparison and bore little numerical significance. Research in this area was spearheaded by Robert Painchaud in 1969 with his master’s thesis, mentioned in the introduction; “Le Manitoba et l’Immigration Canadienne Française, 1870-91.” This chapter looks at the repatriation movement from the receiving end – a small community whose local history notes the States from which came a handful of its settler families – and traces their migration from Quebec, the repatriation efforts to which they responded and the challenges they might have encountered in the course of immigration to Manitoba.

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<sup>205</sup> Yves Frenette, “L’étude de l’émigration canadienne-française et de la franco-Américanie,” *Recherches sociographiques*, 65, no. 2-3 (2024), 161-192.

## U.S. Repatriate Families' Reconstitution Data

Reconstituting the repatriate families' data using Wrigley's methods and branching out into U.S. Census data, available in particular through Ancestry.ca, shows that all six heads of family were born in Canada; five in Quebec, one in Ontario. All six can be found in the United States at some point between 1864 and 1900, although, in the case of the Fiset family (the third household listed) evidence of their stay in the United States is limited to the birth certificate of their son Stanislas in 1873 corroborated by their family story in the local history of Aubigny. Demonstrating these families' data can be done with a summary of registry entries and censuses, as shown in the following table; YOB indicates year of birth, M indicates year of marriage.

**TABLE 10 – LIST OF AUBIGNY'S REPATRIATE IMMIGRANTS, VITAL STATISTICS AND CENSUS DATA**

	NAME SPOUSE	YOB M	LOCATION			U.S. CENSUS			CANADA CENSUS						
			QC	ON	US	1870	1880	1900	1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1906
1	BOUCHARD, Damase Éliza Hébert	1847 1872	x		x							MB	MB	MB	MB
2	CHARTIER, Flavien Zoé Girouard	1842 1864	x		x	NH					MB		MB		
3	FISSETTE, Desiré Philomène Beaudoin	1841 1862	x x						QC			MB	MB		
4	HÉBERT, Janvier Adèle Geoffrion	1828 1852	x x			NH		QC	QC	QC	MB			MB	
5	HÉBERT, Hubert Annie Peterson	1863		x				ND		ON				MB	
6	VERRIER, Bruno Zoé Rainville	1839 1862	x x				NH					MB	MB		

## From Quebec to the United States

Another way of looking at these settlers from the United States, is to categorize the heads of family by age, list where they came from in Quebec and where they were staying in the United States prior to moving to Manitoba.

**TABLE 11 – AUBIGNY’S MALE HEADS OF FAMILY FROM THE UNITED STATES LISTED BY YEAR OF BIRTH, AND LOCATION OF BAPTISM REGISTRY**

NAME	YOB	BIRTH REGISTRY	UNITED STATES
HÉBERT, Janvier	1828	Varenes, Ste-Anne, Qc	Nashua, NH
VERRIER, Bruno	1839	St-David-d’Yamaska	Somersworth, NH
FISSETTE, Désiré	1841	St-Ambroise-de-Kildare, Qc	Worcester, MA
CHARTIER, Flavien	1842	St-Hyacinthe, Qc	Nashua, NH
BOUCHARD, Damase	1847	Chateauguay, Qc	Nashua, NH
HÉBERT, Hubert	1863	Kent, ON	North Dakota

What the above table shows are the various parishes in Quebec from which males migrated to work in the United States. They represent the population of young people in the crest of a wave of migrants from Quebec to the United States, estimated to have been around 900,000 in total between 1840 and 1930, a number first arrived at by Yolande Lavoie in 1972<sup>206</sup> and recently confirmed.<sup>207</sup> And true to research results that demonstrate population growth or decline by census region, the parishes above: Varenes and Chateauguay which are today both off-island suburbs of Montreal, and Saint-David and Sainte-Hyacinthe, both found in the Montérégie administrative region of the province, are all within an area that experienced,

<sup>206</sup> Yolande Lavoie, *L’émigration des Canadiens aux États-Unis avant 1930: mesure du phénomène* (University of Montreal Press, 1972).

<sup>207</sup> Danielle Gauvreau et al., “L’émigration canadienne-française aux États-Unis entre 1840 et 1930: nouvel essai de mesure et de périodisation à l’échelle des régions” *Recherches sociographiques* 65 no. 2-3, 221.

between 1861 and 1871, negative demographic growth.<sup>208</sup> Not forgetting Saint-Ambroise-de-Kildare, North-East of Montreal, which experienced negative demographic growth in the following decade.<sup>209</sup> Five of the six heads of family therefore fall within a trend in this period. Likely not intending to stay in the United States, they nonetheless benefited from easy proximity with the United States and a

réseau de chemins de fer, mis en place dès le milieu des années 1850, qui permet un repli vers le Québec lorsque les conditions de l'emploi deviennent défavorables aux États-Unis ou pour toute autre raison comme le décès d'un parent. Par la suite, ces « rapatriés » pouvaient très bien reprendre le chemin des États-Unis à la suite d'une embellie de l'emploi du côté américain ou de l'apparition de nouvelles difficultés économiques au Canada.<sup>210</sup>

While the United States drew migrants, research demonstrates that poor harvests in Quebec also influenced residents' decision to leave.<sup>211</sup> Lacroix, referring to previous research, summarily lists the challenges Quebec farmers faced: "croissance démographique rapide dans la vallée du Saint-Laurent, problème d'accès aux terres plus reculées, ravages de la mouche à blé et autres défis agricoles, chocs commerciaux dans le secteur forestier et manque d'emplois dans les centres urbains."<sup>212</sup> With the exception of Damase Bouchard, whose father escapes Quebec censuses, Janvier Hébert, Bruno Verrier, Désiré Fissette, and Flavien Chartier are all the sons of farmers in Quebec. Their wives, Adèle Geoffrion, Zoé Rainville, Philomène Beaudoin, and Zoé Girouard are all daughters of farmers. They all nonetheless find employment in the manufacturing industry, supporting what Gauvreau et al write in *Recherches sociographiques*:

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<sup>208</sup> Gauvreau et al., "L'émigration canadienne-française," 208-9.

<sup>209</sup> Gauvreau et al., "L'émigration canadienne-française," 229.

<sup>210</sup> Gauvreau et al., "L'émigration canadienne-française," 198.

<sup>211</sup> Marielle Côté-Gendreau, "Migrations canadiennes-françaises au 19e siècle: un exemple de jumelage censitaire transnational" *Recherches sociographiques* 65, no. 2-3 (2024), 291-2.

<sup>212</sup> Patrick Lacroix, "S'unir et survivre: genèse de l'organisation communautaire des Canadiens français aux États-Unis (1838-1861)," *Recherches sociographiques* 65, no. 2-3 (2024), 421.

“Ainsi, pour une majorité de cultivateurs partis du Québec, l’émigration aux États-Unis s’est plutôt traduite par une insertion dans un univers industriel.”<sup>213</sup>

### *Industry*

Indeed, New England offered a variety of manufacturing jobs as its economy flourished. Janvier Hébert, Flavien Chartier and Damase Bouchard all found themselves in Nashua New Hampshire in 1870 and 1873. Nashua was a smaller industrial textile center 20 miles south of Manchester and “had developed a diversity of manufacturing and commercial interests.”<sup>214</sup> Flavien Chartier, described as having worked in an axe factory,<sup>215</sup> likely had found employment at either Nashua Lock Co., founded in 1834 which made “edge tools, axes, hatchets, chisels, etc.”<sup>216</sup> or at the Underhill Edge Tool company, incorporated in 1852 which employed “an average of one hundred hands.”<sup>217</sup>

Worcester, which was south of Nashua, had a similar size French-Canadian population – 3,500 to Nashua’s 3,248 in 1880.<sup>218</sup> It was the hub of railroads that connected to a constellation of cities and as such developed a metal industry that shipped all kinds of products in bulk, from barbed wire fence to watch springs.<sup>219</sup> French-Canadian migrants there were not concentrated

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<sup>213</sup> Danielle Gauvreau et al., “Sociographie du mouvement d’émigration canadienne-française aux États-Unis: l’apport combiné des sources québécoises et américaines, 1850-1910,” *Recherches sociographiques* 65, no. 2-3 (2024), 257.

<sup>214</sup> Robin Roth Glauber, “Ethnic Group and Social Class Variations in Households and Families of Nashua, New Hampshire, 1850-1900” (PhD diss., New School for Social Research, 1982), 23.

<sup>215</sup> Lenore Eidse, ed., *Furrows in the Valley: A Centennial Project of the Rural Municipality of Morris 1880-1980*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (1980), 190, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/2693625>.

<sup>216</sup> George French Theriault, *The Franco-Americans in a New England Community* (Arno Press, 1980), 91.

<sup>217</sup> Judge Edward E. Parker, ed., *History of the City of Nashua, N. H., From the Earliest Settlement of Old Dunstable to the Year 1895* (Nashua, N. H., 1897), 169.

<sup>218</sup> Yves Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New England: Dreams and Realities*, trans. Mary Ricard (Septentrion, 2004), 24.

<sup>219</sup> Charles E. Estus and Kenneth J. Moynihan, “Beyond Textiles: Industrial Diversity and the Franco-American Experience in Worcester, Massachusetts,” in *Steeple and Smokestacks: A Collection of Essays on the*

in any single one of the city's industries, and Désiré Fiset might have found employment in the shoe and boot industry, just as likely as in construction.<sup>220</sup>

It was, however, the cotton mills that were renowned for drawing labour from Quebec. Constructed along major rivers in New England, the mills benefitted from the cheap water power they provided, a map of which could, according to Brault, show "at the same time a chart of Franco-American demography to this day."<sup>221</sup> In New Hampshire, the Nashua Manufacturing Company was the oldest textile mill, established in 1823, followed by the Jackson Company in 1830.<sup>222</sup> Likewise, in Somersworth, 100 kilometers north-east of Nashua, another cotton mill had also been established in 1823 under the name Great Falls Manufacturing Company.<sup>223</sup> Although it is not known if members of the Chartier, Hébert, and Verrier families worked in *these* mills specifically, it is possible, given their size. In 1870, Flavien's sisters Sophie, 19, and Lucy, 15, are listed as employees of a cotton mill in Nashua and it is likely that his wife Zoé had also worked there prior to marrying Flavien and bearing a daughter in 1868, since six of her 12 siblings are listed as cotton mill employees that year. So too are Janvier Hébert's daughters, Adèle, 17, Eliza, 15, and Arzélie 13.<sup>224</sup> The 1880 Census shows that the Verrier family, father and children, worked in a cotton mill in Somersworth: Bruno, age 40, his son Bruno jr, 16, and Delia, 15, Jacob, 13, and Salmia, 11.<sup>225</sup> There were

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*Franco-American Experience in New England*, ed. Claire Quintal (Institut français Assumption College, 1996), 167.

<sup>220</sup> Estus and Moynihan, "Beyond Textiles," 167-8.

<sup>221</sup> Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England* (University Press of New England, 1986), 54.

<sup>222</sup> Charles James Fox, *History of the Old Township of Dunstable* (Nashua, 1846), 200, 205.

<sup>223</sup> Somersworth Public Library, "Brief History of Somersworth," accessed Sept 2022, <https://www.somersworthnh.gov/somersworth-public-library/pages/brief-history-somersworth>

<sup>224</sup> US Census 1870.

<sup>225</sup> US Census 1880.

advantages to working in a factory. Hareven writes that it offered a contrast to “the deprivations and tedium of farm life” where outcomes were not determined by weather, where work did not depend on the seasons, where their livelihood was not so tightly determined by market fluctuations and where the concentration of factory mill workers differed from rural isolation.<sup>226</sup> Migrating to the United States as a family had the benefit of income for child labour.<sup>227</sup> As Podea writes, child labour was not uncommon, it existed before the arrival of French-Canadian migrants, and, according to one survey, Irish children contributed 15% more to family income than did French-Canadian children.<sup>228</sup>

### *Community*

Reconstituting Aubigny’s repatriate families provides a glimpse into the Franco-American communities from which they came. Flavien Chartier and Zoé Girouard were married in 1864 by an Irish priest; Damase Bouchard and Éliza Hébert were married in 1872 in a Franco-American parish and Désiré Fiset and Philomène Beaudoin’s son, Stanislas, was baptized in 1873 at Notre-Dame-des-Canadiens Church in Worcester. As Lacroix writes, although “la transplantation des institutions canadiennes-françaises (dont l’unité sociale de base est la paroisse [...]) n’est pas immédiate” they represent “les conditions essentielles à la création d’une vie franco-américaine : d’une part, l’enracinement aux États-Unis et l’assurance de la pérennité des communautés immigrantes et, d’autre part, le désir de vivre collectivement.”<sup>229</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> Tamara K. Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* (University Press of America, 1982), 121.

<sup>227</sup> Bruno Ramirez, *La ruée vers le sud: migrations du Canada vers les États-Unis, 1840-1930*, in collaboration with Yves Otis (Boréal, 2003), 113.

<sup>228</sup> Iris Saunders Podea, “Quebec to ‘Little Canada’: The Coming of the French Canadians to New England in the Nineteenth Century,” *The New England Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1950): 370-1.

<sup>229</sup> Lacroix, “S’unir et survivre,” 424.

Worcester's French community was granted its own church in 1869,<sup>230</sup> separate from the Irish-Catholic community's that had served as an unsatisfactory stand-in.<sup>231</sup> Indeed, as Frenette writes, in spite of a shared religion, Irish and French-Canadians throughout the United States did not share similar traditions nor did they appreciate each other.<sup>232</sup> The arrival of a priest "of their own" was reassurance.<sup>233</sup> Both Fr. Jean-Baptiste Primeau in Worcester and Fr. Jean-Baptiste-Henri-Victor Milette in Nashua were parish-founding clergy from Quebec, sent for with the approval of the diocesan bishop, the former, one of 14 French-Canadian priests authorized between 1860 and 1870; the latter, one of 28 authorized the following decade.<sup>234</sup> In Worcester, Primeau baptised Désiré Fissette's son. In Nashua, Milette blessed Damase Bouchard and Eliza Hébert's marriage at Saint-Louis-de-Gonzague.<sup>235</sup> Contrary to parishes in Canada where civil legislation provided a steady revenue,<sup>236</sup> these churches were paid for by the French-Canadian community, whose members' frugality was a recognizable trait, and who mostly made small contributions. Podea writes: "The first savings of French Canadians usually went to the church, and their fine record for financing church properties is in contrast to their slower private advancement, at the same time demonstrating their willingness to sacrifice for their faith."<sup>237</sup> It was all the more reason for a government minister to impute the pastors of these parishes a defensiveness in regard to the idea of repatriation. Faucher relays the quote:

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<sup>230</sup> Estus and Moynihan, "Beyond Textiles," 174.

<sup>231</sup> Courville and Séguin, *La Paroisse*, 252.

<sup>232</sup> Yves Frenette, "La Genèse d'une Communauté Canadienne-Française en Nouvelle-Angleterre: Lewiston, Maine, 1800-1880," *Historical Papers – Canadian Historical Association* 24, no. 1 (1989): 94.

<sup>233</sup> Estus and Moynihan, "Beyond Textiles," 175.

<sup>234</sup> Courville and Séguin, *La Paroisse*, 252.

<sup>235</sup> Theriault, *The Franco-Americans*, 142-3.

<sup>236</sup> Frenette, "La Genèse d'une Communauté," 95.

<sup>237</sup> Podea, "Quebec to 'Little Canada'," 378.

Quand un prêtre canadien-français a fondé une mission aux États-Unis, que la mission est devenue paroisse, qu'il y a érigé une église, un collège et un couvent, [...] il est assez naturel que le pasteur de cette paroisse ne soit pas très soucieux de voir son troupeau se disperser et retourner même dans la vieille province natale.<sup>238</sup>

### **Manitoba's Repatriation Movement**

To set the context into which these families would be arriving, it is worth detailing the progressive development of immigration to Manitoba and concentrating in particular on the events unfolding in St. Boniface. Monseigneur Taché, like his predecessor Provencher, found himself "on the fringes of settlement" in which he was "an agent of social, economic and cultural development."<sup>239</sup> Thus, in 1870, the year in which royal assent was granted to the Manitoba Act on May 14<sup>th</sup>, Taché was taking steps to bolster the province's population of French-speaking citizens. As Painchaud writes: "In their determination to ensure the integrity of what they perceived to be inalienable rights, clerical leaders well understood the weight of sheer numbers. The stronger the Catholic presence in the West, the easier it would be to impress upon governments the validity of their cause."<sup>240</sup> At that time, colonization schemes were not unknown in Quebec. As early as the 1840's such projects were undertaken in order to break-in new farmland north of the Saint-Lawrence river and alleviate its lack felt by the growing number of second and third generation farmers forced to find other work.<sup>241</sup> Taché's effort began with a meeting with Sir George Étienne-Cartier, and, in 1871, an appeal in the form

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<sup>238</sup> Albert Faucher, "L'émigration des Canadiens français au XIXe siècle: position du problème et perspectives," *Recherches sociographiques* 5, no 3 (1964): 315.

<sup>239</sup> Jean Hamelin, "Taché, Alexandre Antonin," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 12 (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 1990, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tache\\_alexandre\\_antonin\\_12E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/tache_alexandre_antonin_12E.html).

<sup>240</sup> Painchaud, "The Catholic Church," x.

<sup>241</sup> Jean Hamelin and Yves Roby, "L'évolution économique et sociale du Québec, 1851-1896," *Recherches sociographiques* 10, no. 2-3 (1969): 163.

of a circular letter, approved by fellow Archbishops in the province of Quebec, to French Canadian farmers who were thinking of deserting the province for manufacturing jobs in the United States, to come to Manitoba instead.<sup>242</sup> Despite the availability of land and the desire for an increased French Canadian population, Taché's invitation was tempered by prudence; Manitoba was still a developing province. Communication by mail was hampered by the weather, the uprising of 1869 was still a recent memory, and the land survey, which the uprising had interrupted, was only just resuming.<sup>243</sup> Still, in spite of the difficulties, the 1870's were a decade that inaugurated the beginnings of many French communities.

### *French Colonisation Efforts*

Taché was joined in his efforts to bring more French-speaking people to Manitoba by the very professional men he had helped recruit to the new province,<sup>244</sup> among whom Joseph Royal and Joseph Dubuc who founded, in May of 1871, the "French-language weekly, *Le Métis*."<sup>245</sup> The newspaper, while linking the nascent community to its Quebec homeland, and to those communities already established in the United States, provides a public account of immigration activity. Thus, in January of 1874, it celebrated the establishment of a Société de colonisation for Francophone immigrants. Its members were not only adopting a practice in use in Quebec, but also following suit to other immigrant communities in the province, since the foundation came "à l'instar des comités allemands et autres d'immigration [...]."<sup>246</sup> Its elected

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<sup>242</sup> Painchaud, "The Catholic Church," 95.

<sup>243</sup> William Lewis Morton, *Manitoba: A History* (University of Toronto Press, 1967), 155.

<sup>244</sup> Hamelin, "Taché, Alexandre Antonin."

<sup>245</sup> Payment, "Dubuc, Sir Joseph."

<sup>246</sup> "La Société de Colonisation de Manitoba," *Le Métis*, 24 janvier 1873.

members included for president, Alphonse-Alfred-Clément LaRivière (no relation to François Larivière), who then worked in the Dominion Lands Office.<sup>247</sup> Painchaud notes that over the course of its existence, the committee's presidency rotated from LaRivière to Joseph Dubuc, Joseph Royal and Marc Amable Girard and that in this way, the common view they held of what the Francophone community should be, shaped their choices in the immigrants they wished to recruit.<sup>248</sup> Their mission, in this decade, was that of repatriation: of enticing some of the hundreds of thousands of Quebec-born citizens who had immigrated to the United States for work, to move back to Canada and take up land, if not in Quebec, in Manitoba.

The committee's work was both supported and furthered by the newspaper. As the numbers of French-Canadian immigrants trickled into the province in the first half of the 1870's, efforts ramped up in 1876. The focus exhibited might be gauged by the amount of mentions made, both long and short, in *Le Métis*, when, in 1876, 32 of its 49 issues dedicated space to meetings, information and propaganda. *Le Métis'* editors were sometimes joined by sympathisers to the cause like Ferdinand Gagnon, editor of *Le Travailleur* in Worcester, brother-in-law to repatriation agent, Charles Lalime,<sup>249</sup> and himself a repatriation agent as of 1875.<sup>250</sup> Newspaper readers might find practical information such as homestead availability and travel routes; or advertisements about soil fertility, the healthiness of Manitoba's climate and the hospitality of its Francophone communities as well as deprecations of factory work. Appeals to

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<sup>247</sup> A. I. Silver, "LaRivière, Alphonse-Alfred-Clément," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 15 (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 2005, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/la\\_riviere\\_alphonse\\_alfred\\_clement\\_15E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/la_riviere_alphonse_alfred_clement_15E.html)

<sup>248</sup> Painchaud, "Le Manitoba," 68-9.

<sup>249</sup> Roby, *The Franco-Americans*, 39.

<sup>250</sup> Yves Roby, "Gagnon, Ferdinand," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 11 (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 1982, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/gagnon\\_ferdinand\\_11E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/gagnon_ferdinand_11E.html)

patriotism, honour, courage and responsibility were frequent and might be glimpsed in an extract from a speech delivered by a local doctor, reprinted in *Le Métis* and *La Minerve*:<sup>251</sup>

Si [...] vous donnez l'exemple du courage et de la persévérance, vous trouverez de nombreux imitateurs. Vos sueurs, vos fatigues et vos ennuis féconderont une autre province de Québec. Vos noms inscrits sur le livre de notre agent d'immigration, passeront à la postérité qui dira en lisant plus tard ces noms : voilà les premiers canadiens-français qui ne craignirent point de s'enfoncer dans ces vastes prairies du nord-ouest, et qui jetèrent les bases qui devaient asseoir une belle colonie d'agriculteurs canadiens-français...<sup>252</sup>

Added to this were the repatriation agents sent to the United States to recruit farmers for Manitoba. In this period, there were two: Dr. Richard Whiteford, nominated in 1874 and the above-mentioned Charles Lalime, nominated in 1875.<sup>253</sup> And working from St. Boniface at the behest of its archbishop, was Fr. Albert Lacombe.<sup>254</sup> Whiteford and Lalime covered different territory in the United States and their work had different outcomes. Responsible for New-England states, New Hampshire, Vermont, Rhode Island and Massachusetts,<sup>255</sup> Lalime recruited 361 settlers in 1876, and 563 in 1877.<sup>256</sup> Whiteford covered French-Canadian settlements in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Connecticut.<sup>257</sup> The repatriation movement that had begun optimistically in 1874 eventually ended in 1888 the year in which the Federal Government stopped funding the agents and offices<sup>258</sup> seeing little return on their investment as French Canadians in the United States proved reluctant to leave.

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<sup>251</sup> *La Minerve*, 2 mai 1876.

<sup>252</sup> *Le Métis*, 15 mai 1876.

<sup>253</sup> Robert Painchaud, *Un rêve français dans le peuplement de la prairie* (Éditions des Plaines, 1987), 130.

<sup>254</sup> Painchaud, "The Catholic Church," 100-1.

<sup>255</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 132.

<sup>256</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 60-1.

<sup>257</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 132.

<sup>258</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 147.

Subsequently, Painchaud writes, “l’effort de rapatriement s’accomplit plutôt irrégulièrement”<sup>259</sup> and indeed, these irregular efforts surfaced from time to time in *Le Manitoba*, when members of the clergy would venture south of the border. An example from 1895 reads: “Le Rév M. Fillion est parti mercredi dernier, pour les États-Unis, où il va travailler à l’immigration.”<sup>260</sup> Taché’s “missionnaires colonisateurs” would not have had an easy time. They faced competition from Quebec’s Ministry of Colonisation who sent its own priests to recruit repatriates,<sup>261</sup> and they were unwelcome in communities that felt like repatriation would rob them of vital members. As Roby explains, even Ferdinand Gagnon’s propaganda in *Le Travailleur de Worcester* “angered those in the Little Canadas - merchants, professionals, newspaper owners and prelates - who feared that repatriation would mean the loss of their clients, readers and parishioners, thereby irremediably weakening the communities they had taken such great pains to shape.”<sup>262</sup> For Roby, it demonstrated “a growing tension between those who viewed the emigrants as French Canadians **in** the United States for but a short stay, and others, who saw them as French Canadians **of** the United States.”<sup>263</sup>

With this movement in mind, shaping the context of Aubigny’s first French-Canadian settlers from the United-States, we can see how the parish benefitted from the early years of the repatriation movement.

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<sup>259</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 130.

<sup>260</sup> “Chronique de la province,” *Le Manitoba*, 13 février 1895.

<sup>261</sup> Ramirez, *La ruée vers le sud*, 86.

<sup>262</sup> Roby, *The Franco-Americans*, 40.

<sup>263</sup> Roby, *The Franco-Americans*, 40.

## Motives for immigration

Deciding to move to Canada to settle in Manitoba must not have been easy, the distance, for one, making it an “irrevocable” choice.<sup>264</sup> As one author writes, Montreal is five times further from Winnipeg than it is from Boston.<sup>265</sup> There were however three factors in 1877 that might have helped families decide to come to Manitoba: the United States’ economic depression, a temporary reduction in rail transportation costs and the appeal of a return to farming. Barreyre writes that “before the crisis of 1929 claimed the name, the ‘Great Depression’ commonly referred to the tough economic times ushered in by the Panic of 1873.”<sup>266</sup> Its effects were felt in the textile industry and only relented in 1879.<sup>267</sup> Promoters of immigration to Manitoba seized the opportunity to write, for example:

La dernière crise qui a ébranlé les institutions les plus puissantes de nos voisins, a démontré à nos nationaux qui ne dépendent pour la plupart que des manufactures, tout ce qu’il y a de précaire dans cette position. Elle leur a inspiré la pensée de se soustraire à cet assujettissement, de se mettre à l’abri du chômage et de la misère, par un travail moins éternel [...].<sup>268</sup>

Secondly, Charles Lalime managed to secure from the Canadian government a subsidy to help reduce transportation costs for families from the United States from 1876 to 1879.<sup>269</sup> In 1875, for example, the cost of transportation from New England to Manitoba was 27.50\$ per adult,

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<sup>264</sup> Yves Frenette, *Brève histoire des Canadiens français* (Boréal, 1998), 88.

<sup>265</sup> Jacques Rouillard, *Ah les États! Les travailleurs canadiens-français dans l'industrie textile de la Nouvelle-Angleterre d'après le témoignage des derniers migrants* (Boréal Express, 1985), 28.

<sup>266</sup> Nicolas Barreyre, “The Politics of Economic Crises: The Panic of 1873, the End of Reconstruction, and the Realignment of American Politics” *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 10, no. 4 (2011): 403.

<sup>267</sup> Theriault, *The Franco-Americans*, 144.

<sup>268</sup> “Émigrez à Manitoba,” *Le Métis*, 23 mars 1876.

<sup>269</sup> John Willis, “Québec, Manitoba, Nouvelle-Angleterre: parcours d’une migrante canadienne-française, 1880-1930” in *Déploiements Canadiens-Français et Métis en Amérique du Nord (18e-20e siècle)*, ed. Yves Frenette, Marie-Ève Harton, and Marc St-Hilaire, (Presses de l’Université d’Ottawa, 2023): 61.

and 13.75\$ per child, when a worker's daily wage might have averaged 2\$.<sup>270</sup> In 1876 and 1877, thanks to the un-advertised grant, an adult's ticket was reduced to 10.50\$.<sup>271</sup> Finally, a third element that might have bolstered some families' decision to move was the men's preference for owning land and working in the out-of-doors. Here too, promoters of immigration appealed to this feeling, elaborating on a popular slogan:<sup>272</sup> "venez vous emparer d'un sol immense et magnifique, venez y chercher les moyens sûrs de placer vos enfants autour de vous [...]"<sup>273</sup> Rouillard writes that some men never came around to appreciating factory work, finding it hard to get used to the imposed discipline and loss of independence.<sup>274</sup>

### **Travel in 1877**

There were various routes to come to Manitoba in the 1870's and all borrowed transportation networks on United States' territory, except for one. The cheapest, longest and most unpleasant route was based on an 1857 survey expedition "to find the best overland communication route between Lake Superior and the Red River Country."<sup>275</sup> Fritz writes that the expedition's civil engineer Simon J. Dawson was appointed "Superintendent of Road Construction" when interest in the route was revived in 1867, incidentally lending his name to its identification.<sup>276</sup> His construction efforts "got a tremendous engineering boost" when Wolseley's troops "corduroyed a road and built bridges over every natural obstacle" for a

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<sup>270</sup> Painchaud, "Le Manitoba," 10-11.

<sup>271</sup> Painchaud, "Le Manitoba," 14-15, 17.

<sup>272</sup> Maurice Séguin, *La Nation "canadienne" et l'agriculture (1760-1850)*, (Boréal express, 1970), 255.

<sup>273</sup> "Venez à Manitoba," *Le Métis*, 8 juin 1876.

<sup>274</sup> Rouillard, *Ah les États!*, 78

<sup>275</sup> David L. Fritz, "Special History Study on the Dawson Trail and Other Transportation Routes Relating to Voyageurs National Park Minnesota" (U.S. Department of the Interior, National Parks Service, 1986), <https://npshistory.com/publications/voya/dawson-trail-shs.pdf>, 1-2.

<sup>276</sup> Fritz, "Special History Study," 6.

section of the route on the way to quelling the uprising in Manitoba.<sup>277</sup> Fritz writes, “the engineering results of Wolseley’s expedition became clear in 1871 when the Department of Public Works established an Emigrant Transport Service [...] and opened the Dawson Road to immigrants.”<sup>278</sup>

Water and land-based, it required for travellers to “load and unload their freight as many as 70 times throughout the [month-long] journey.”<sup>279</sup> *Le Métis* promoted this trail, suggesting that it was an appropriate route for families with lots of baggage (given the lower price charged for freight), and those who enjoy “de splendides paysages et de scènes pittoresques.”<sup>280</sup> In 1873, ten articles make mention of the trail, including a series in which Joseph Royal and Msgr. Ritchot take the route themselves in order to assess its use for potential immigrants.<sup>281</sup> By the following year however, reports from immigrants themselves were decidedly unfavourable.<sup>282</sup> As Fritz writes, “discomfort ruled the Dawson Route.”<sup>283</sup> Although Friesen writes that the route was closed in 1875,<sup>284</sup> a speech made in Parliament in 1876 and reprinted in *Le Métis* suggests that the trail stayed open for use, but that its government contractors were dismissed.<sup>285</sup> *Le Métis* nonetheless hailed harried visitors arriving by this route, still, in 1879.<sup>286</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> Fritz, “Special History Study,” 8-9.

<sup>278</sup> Fritz, “Special History Study,” 10.

<sup>279</sup> Ryan Bernier, “Dawson Trail,” EGM Heritage, updated 28 February 2024, [https://heritage.enggeomb.ca/index.php/Dawson\\_Trail](https://heritage.enggeomb.ca/index.php/Dawson_Trail)

<sup>280</sup> “Route de Manitoba,” *Le Métis*, 24 mai 1873.

<sup>281</sup> “La Route Dawson,” *Le Métis*, 12 et 26 juillet 1873.

<sup>282</sup> “Le Chemin Dawson,” *Le Métis*, 4 juillet 1874.

<sup>283</sup> Fritz, “Special History Study,” 15.

<sup>284</sup> Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies*, 203.

<sup>285</sup> “La Route Dawson et le Pacifique,” *Le Métis*, 4 mai 1876.

<sup>286</sup> “Nouvelles locales,” *Le Métis*, 3 juillet 1879.

Use of railroads and steamboats just south of the border made for far easier travel. Lending transit routes to get past the Canadian shield (what Albert Faucher called the greatest impediment to accessing the prairies)<sup>287</sup> was a mutual arrangement between Canada and the United States. This is clear in *Le Métis'* publication of three routes that were the most in vogue in 1873; two routes met at Duluth and proceeded to Moorhead, one by taking boats from the Saint-Lawrence and across the Great Lakes, the other a railroad from Toronto to Collingwood to Duluth. The third was a rail route from Montreal to Moorhead. Prices were said to be comparable for all three: 50\$ first class, 29\$ for second.<sup>288</sup>

From decade to decade, travel was constantly improving. Accounts from the time of Taché's arrival in St. Boniface in 1845 and those from the late 1870's clearly show the progress. When Taché, at 21, had been animated with a religious zeal for the missionary West, his voyage from Montreal to Saint-Boniface followed voyageur waterways through Hudson's Bay and Lake Winnipeg and took two months.<sup>289</sup> Between 1850 and 1860, cart trails running North-South provided an alternate overland route and were used for trade between the settlement and St. Paul, Minnesota.<sup>290</sup> In 1857, for example, "some 500 ox-carts plied the Red River Route" on 30-to-40 days trips from Pembina to St. Paul.<sup>291</sup> The successful run of the first steamboat to arrive from the mouth of the Sheyenne River to Fort Garry via the meandering Red River in June of 1859 by Anson Northup marked an advance in the transportation of freight.<sup>292</sup> As railroad

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<sup>287</sup> Faucher, "L'émigration des Canadiens français," 291-2.

<sup>288</sup> "Route de Manitoba," *Le Métis*, 24 mai 1873.

<sup>289</sup> Hamelin, "Taché, Alexandre Antonin."

<sup>290</sup> Faucher, "L'émigration des Canadiens français," 304.

<sup>291</sup> Richard S. Prosser, *Rails to the North Star*, (Dillon Press, 1966), 1.

<sup>292</sup> Martha McCarthy, "Steamboats on the Rivers and Lakes of Manitoba 1859-96," (Government of Manitoba, Historic Resources Branch, 1987), 9, [https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/internal\\_reports/pdfs/Steamboats\\_Rivers\\_Lakes\\_Manitoba.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/internal_reports/pdfs/Steamboats_Rivers_Lakes_Manitoba.pdf).

construction advanced westward, the distance between trains and steamboats, an inconvenient gap that stagecoaches were used to cover, diminished and, in 1871, when the railroad arrived at Breckenridge, it virtually disappeared.<sup>293</sup> As Martin writes, “the golden age of steamboating on the Red from 1871 to 1879 was made possible by the railroad, with which it then had a symbiotic relationship.”<sup>294</sup> As immigration to Manitoba increased, bringing traffic and profits, more steamboats travelled the Red River; by 1877, there were five.<sup>295</sup>

### **Setting the scene of Aubigny’s first repatriate arrivals**

In 1877, navigation on the Red River began on April 24<sup>th</sup>.<sup>296</sup> The first contingent of some 400<sup>297</sup> repatriates arrived in St. Boniface May 1<sup>st</sup>, accompanied by Charles Lalime. Their route had begun in Worcester and from there headed North to Montreal. From Montreal they took the American Northern Pacific to Fisher’s Landing, on the bank of the Red Lake River in Minnesota. The five-day train ride was described as one of comfort and speed, in first class cars no less.<sup>298</sup> The recently laid railway line that deposited travellers near Red Lake River was further North than the previously used 1872 Moorehead connection to the Red River<sup>299</sup> and thus shortened the steamboat trip. The almost two-and-a-half day ride on the North-flowing Red River by steamboat, “n’a pas offert autant d’aise et de commodité que le trajet par chemin de fer”, because, as the article explains, the *Manitoba* was already packed with first-class travellers, and Lalime and his group had to use two large barges in order to arrive in Winnipeg

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<sup>293</sup> Albro Martin, *James J. Hill and the Opening of the Northwest* (Oxford University Press, 1976), 79.

<sup>294</sup> Martin, *James J. Hill*, 79

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, 114.

<sup>296</sup> “Nouvelles Locales,” *Le Métis*, 26 avril 1877.

<sup>297</sup> “Colons Canadiens des États-Unis,” *Le Métis*, 5 mai 1877.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> Marion H. Herriot, “Steamboat Transportation on the Red River,” *Minnesota History* 21, no. 3 (1940): 253.

together.<sup>300</sup> Some passengers disembarked on the way, at St. Jean-Baptiste, St. Agathe and St. Norbert. Those remaining disembarked first to Winnipeg at the immigration office and were then ferried across to St. Boniface.

The Colonisation Society made special efforts to welcome immigrant repatriates. The year before, its members had constructed a 72 by 20 foot building to provide temporary housing for newly-arriving families and the effort was appreciated.<sup>301</sup> From the group of 400 arrivals on May 1<sup>st</sup>, those who were accommodated wrote of “des poëles qui chauffaient déjà, du bois, des tables, des bancs, des couchettes, de l’eau, des lumières. C’était plus que nous attendions.”<sup>302</sup> The Chartier family account seems to indicate that they might have benefitted from the arrangement provided. It reads: “Flavien left his family in St. Boniface and walked back south along the west coast of the Red River, until he reached a spot ten miles south of Ste. Agathe.”<sup>303</sup> Flavien selected a lot, cleared the land and built a cabin and in October, “he walked back to St. Boniface” purchased a cart and a pair of oxen, picked up his wife and children and returned to his spot south of St. Agathe.<sup>304</sup> This was a typical pattern among immigrant families. Morton writes: “The men left the womenfolk and household goods in Winnipeg and drove through the country nearby or far out on the trails to make their location. When they had found a site to their liking, they returned to Winnipeg for families and outfits and with horse team or oxen and waggon box covered with canvas, set out for the homestead.”<sup>305</sup> The difference was

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<sup>300</sup> “Colons Canadiens des États-Unis,” *Le Métis*, 5 mai 1877.

<sup>301</sup> “Nouvelles Locales,” *Le Métis*, 6 avril 1876.

<sup>302</sup> “Colons Canadiens des États-Unis,” *Le Métis*, 5 mai 1877.

<sup>303</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 190.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>305</sup> Morton, *Manitoba: A History*, 157.

that in St. Boniface, the French community itself funded immigrants' temporary accommodation: "si les membres de la Société font des sacrifices pécuniaires assez considérables pour entretenir ce local, en revanche ils ont la consolation de voir de leur propres yeux de quelle précieuse utilité cette institution n'a cessé d'être à la cause de la colonisation depuis deux ans."<sup>306</sup> Humble as the accommodations may have been, "ils sont infiniment mieux que les sheds des immigrants du gouvernement"<sup>307</sup> *Le Métis'* editors argued.

The French newspaper only intermittently reported on the arrival of French-Canadian immigrants, generally distinguishing them from other immigrants to Winnipeg by calling them "colons canadiens." In the 28 editions of its paper from the arrival of the first steamship at the end of April, to the close of navigation in November, *Le Métis* reported on French-Canadian arrivals seven times. The large group accompanied by Charles Lalime was given the greatest attention in May, and smaller groups, accompanied by religious, such as Fr. Fillion and Fr. Lacombe were highlighted, again in May and then in August.<sup>308</sup> Those unaccompanied by agents or priests came in small family clusters, two to 10 at a time.<sup>309</sup> Names were rarely listed, perhaps for lack of space, but also perhaps because it was hard to keep track of everyone who arrived, dispersed for jobs or farmland, or decided to move on. Editors of *Le Métis* were also members of the Colonisation Society and would remind readers, that it was not the job-seekers who were welcome, but serious-minded farmers who brought their families with them.<sup>310</sup>

Dependence on warm weather for travel nonetheless had a significant drawback for

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<sup>306</sup> "Nouvelles Locales," *Le Métis*, 8 novembre 1877.

<sup>307</sup> "Immigration Canadienne," *Le Métis*, 25 avril 1878.

<sup>308</sup> "Nouvelles Locales," *Le Métis*, 17 mai 1877; 9 août 1877.

<sup>309</sup> "Nouvelles Locales," *Le Métis*, 20 septembre 1877; 18 octobre 1877.

<sup>310</sup> "Nouvelles Locales," *Le Métis*, 7 juin 1877.

prospective farmers. As Martin writes, “because the boats had to wait until mid-April for the river to be free of ice, settlers arrived on the ground too late to put in a cash crop of grain. This meant that the capital cost of settling in the valley was increased by the amount needed to sustain a family for a whole year.”<sup>311</sup> The *Le Métis*’ remonstrations against immigrants who arrived in search of temporary work and its emphasis on “des colons-cultivateurs ayant quelques moyens, de l’énergie, un peu de raison et entendus dans leur affaire”<sup>312</sup> underlines the challenges that caused the coming and going referred to as the “revolving door effect.”<sup>313</sup> While some, like Flavien Chartier immediately found land to settle, others upon arrival went straight to work on the railroad construction for the Pembina Branch.<sup>314</sup>

#### *Arrival Dates*

It is not always easy to pinpoint families’ arrival in Manitoba. Some heads of families made exploratory visits, some filed homestead entries and later abandoned them, and generally, the settler population has been recognized as one that could frequently move from place to place.<sup>315</sup> Church registries have the benefit of showing family permanence as do qualitative local histories, which, in Aubigny’s case points to Janvier Hébert’s and Flavien Chartier’s as being the area’s first French-Canadian families. In 1877 both families settled on land that was then still part of the parish of St. Agathe. Janvier Hébert was the senior head of household, age 49, his wife Adèle, age 46. They came with their nine children, the oldest, Adèle

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<sup>311</sup> Martin, *James J. Hill*, 116.

<sup>312</sup> “Nouvelles Locales,” *Le Métis*, 7 juin 1877.

<sup>313</sup> Willis, “Québec, Manitoba, Nouvelle-Angleterre,” 62.

<sup>314</sup> “Colons Canadiens des États-Unis,” *Le Métis*, 3 mai 1877.

<sup>315</sup> Gustavo Velasco, “The Post, The Railroad and The State: An HGIS approach to study Western Canada Settlement, 1850-1900,” *The Routledge Companion to Spatial History*, eds. Bylan Gregory, Don DeBats, Don Lafreniere, (Routledge, 2018), 375.

was 20 and the youngest, Roseanna, was five. Flavien Chartier, age 34, and his wife Zoé, age 29, left Nashua New Hampshire with their two children, Zoé, 9, and Alfred, 3.<sup>316</sup> Janvier Hébert is an example of an older head of household possibly wishing to provide opportunities for his sons, the oldest of which, Pierre, was 18 in 1877, and second oldest, Louis, was 14. Flavien Chartier, 15 years younger than Janvier Hébert, had correspondingly younger children and seized the opportunity to establish himself. Damase Bouchard and his wife Eliza Hébert likely soon followed. Going by information in the 1891 Census, they arrived in Manitoba between 1877 and 1879, between the birth of their third child, Henri, in the United States and the birth of their daughter Mary in Manitoba.<sup>317</sup> These two younger-families' decision to immigrate might have also been a consequence of their children's births... As Ramirez writes, "childbearing drastically changed their previous profile in the industrial labour market" since only the head of family could contribute his earnings to the family economy and they "had to sustain a family that had grown in size."<sup>318</sup> This was particularly difficult when children were young and their mother had to stay home for their care.

#### *Later Repatriate Families*

Both the Fiset and Verrier families likely arrived in the 1880's in Aubigny. Désiré's son Stanislas was 17 in 1891 according to the Canadian Census, and was living with his parents – information that conflicts with the local history account which situates Stanislas' arrival seven

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<sup>316</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 190.

<sup>317</sup> Government of Canada, 1891 Census.

<sup>318</sup> Bruno Ramirez, *On the Move; French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1991), 41-2.

years later as an independent, aged 20.<sup>319</sup> Bruno Verrier, born in 1839 was also close to Désiré and Flavien's age, and although his year of arrival is unclear, his early death in 1887 is registered in the municipality of Morris.<sup>320</sup>

Repatriated families were sometimes mis-identified as in the case Aubigny's second mention by name in *Le Manitoba*. A correspondent peremptorily writes: "(Aubigny) - Il y a une dizaine de nouvelles familles arrivées ici du Dakota, depuis le printemps. Nous en attendons encore."<sup>321</sup> But it is hard to pinpoint who these ten-or-so families were. The 1901 Census suggests only two families, both headed by sons of Joseph Berthelette and Françoise Caron, returned to the province in 1898.<sup>322</sup> After 1898, two other families arrived: Perrault (Joseph and Rosalie) and Hébert (Hubert and Annie). It is hard to consider Joseph Perrault and Rosalie Klyne "repatriates" since, like the Berthelettes, the Klynes had family connections on both Canadian and American sides of the border and did not have far to travel to see them. Paul Berthelette, like Joseph Perreault, married a woman whose family lived in the parish of St. Joseph, North Dakota, stayed a few years in the wife's family's community and then returned to Manitoba.

Hubert Hébert, although his stay in the United States was also relatively brief, had come from Ontario and was an outlier in another way. Unlike the five repatriate families from New England, Hubert Hébert's family represents the third of French-Canadian migrants who looked for livelihoods outside of United States' manufacturing centers. Born in the French-Canadian parish of St. Pierre in Kent, Hubert Hébert married a Norwegian immigrant named Annie

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<sup>319</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 201.

<sup>320</sup> Manitoba Vital Statistics, s.v. "Bruno Verrier"

<sup>321</sup> *Le Manitoba*, 27 juillet 1898.

<sup>322</sup> Government of Canada, 1901 Census.

Peterson, whose father was a farmer in Holland, Wisconsin,<sup>323</sup> was himself a farmer in 1900 in North Dakota, and came to Aubigny in 1905 where he joined a brother.<sup>324</sup> Their family names were likely anglicized during their stay in the United States, local history notes their name as “Ebert”,<sup>325</sup> but the Census nonetheless consistently records the family as French.

### Registry statistics

Between 1903 and 1911, immigrant families from the United States account for 36 baptisms and 12 burials. Seven of those burials are infant mortalities, or, put differently, seven of the 36 baptisms resolve in infant mortality within this short period. Three burials are of pioneer heads of family – Janvier Hébert at 79 years of age in 1907 and his wife Adèle, three years later as well as Amable Hébert at 78 years of age in 1910, father of Hubert Hébert.

**TABLE 12 – MALE DESCENDANT HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD REPATRIATE FAMILY CATEGORY IN AUBIGNY 1903-1911**

NAME	YOB	SON	YOB	YEAR OF MARRIAGE / SPOUSE	
HÉBERT, Janvier	1828	Pierre	1859		Edesse Girouard
		Louis	1863	1895	Julia Mousseau
		Joseph	1867	1889	M Louise Pelland
VERRIER, Bruno	1839	Jacob	1867	1893	Parmelia Pelland
		Wilbrod		1903	Daria Decelles
FISSETTE, Désiré	1841	Stanislas	1874	1898	Theodora Beaudoin
		Joseph	1878	1899	Marie Robert
CHARTIER, Flavien	1842	Alfred	1874	1901	Octavie Laferrière
		Noel	1880	1915	Zéphirine Hébert
BOUHARD, Damase	1847	Henri	1877	-	
		Pierre	1881	1909	Alma Hébert
HÉBERT, Amable	1832	Hubert	1863		Annie Peterson

<sup>323</sup> Government of United States, 1880 Census.

<sup>324</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 203.

<sup>325</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 203.

The registry in this period captures a picture of young second generation families as in the case of Flavien Chartier's son, Alfred. Married to Octavie Laferrière in 1901, Aubigny's registry records six of the eventual 15 baptisms their union occasioned. Two sons each of Désiré Fiset, Janvier Hébert and Jacob Verrier were fathers of young families at this time, all accounting for the baptisms in this period. By comparison, Damase Bouchard and Elize Hébert's sons Henri and Pierre are seemingly absent from parish events. In fact, Henri dies in 1907, age 30 and Pierre marries in 1909 at age 28.

In the community's local history, the Chartiers claim the distinction of maintaining the "Oldest Family Farm", having arrived in the area in 1877 like the Héberts but, unlike the Héberts, having assured the original farm's succession across four generations. This was solemnised in 1977 by a mass "celebrated on the steps of the old Chartier log house", supper in the Aubigny hall and a slide show.<sup>326</sup> But what Aubigny's registry reveals, in the family reconstitution that it facilitates, is a cloud in the blue sky of this achievement. That the Métis families' settlement predates that of the repatriates and that many Métis families subsequently left the parish is a counterbalance found in other parishes too. In St. Norbert for example, having examined the data found in registries and censuses concerning Métis family numbers, Étienne Rivard writes, "il est difficile d'exonérer les nouveaux venus canadiens-français dans ce processus de dépossession, ceux-ci ayant souvent été les bénéficiaires de ces transferts de terre."<sup>327</sup> Thus, this retroactive view of events might serve to highlight dynamics at play within a community, imperfect as the view might be.

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<sup>326</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 191.

<sup>327</sup> Rivard, "Au coeur de la résistance," 162.

Further dissecting registry entries and reading them in light of family reconstitution unveils family lives buzzing with activity. Take the year 1908 for example. Desrosiers pens baptisms, marriages and burials every month of the year except January and September. The year begins with what can only be imagined as a tragedy... Charles Mousseau and Elzire Clément's oldest child, Ernestine, dies, age eight. Pierre Hébert (son of Janvier) attends the funeral and signs the registry, and it is possible to imagine that he does so out of regard for the father, Charles. Charles 20 years previous had married Pierre's younger sister Roseanna, but Roseanna died and the widowed Charles married Elzire Clément in 1900. Three days after Ernestine's burial, Pierre's brother Louis becomes the father of twin girls, Julia and Florentine. They are their mother's eighth pregnancy and three more pregnancies are to follow. Convocated to the baptisms are Louis' sister, Eliza Hébert and her husband Damase Bouchard and their son, Georges (a bachelor, Louis' nephew), and a niece from Louis' brother Joseph's family, Alma. Florentine dies March 25<sup>th</sup>.

In May, Pierre Hébert and his wife Edesse attend Pierre Iréné's baptism as godparents. Iréné is Alfred Chartier and Octavie Laferrière's fifth child (of an eventual 16) and their first son. In June, the Verrier family, Jacob and Parmélia, welcome a little girl. In July Charles Mousseau and Alzire Clément baptise their sixth child, a boy named Gustave, having only just buried their oldest in February. In August Julia, one of the twins born in February to Louis Hébert, dies too. The year concludes with a wedding in October: Angelina Bouchard, daughter of Eliza Hébert and Damase Bouchard marries Charles Laferrière.

Naturally, this chapter focuses in particular on one category of families to the exclusion of the others, but such demographic patterns can be found among the Métis and the French-

Canadians from Quebec. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, marriages blended families across categories. Based on the registries alone, it is hard to get a sense of the dynamic between Métis, repatriates and French-Canadians from Quebec. A cursory look at the correspondence between Langevin and Desrosiers, as well as entries made in the parish's *Codex historicus* show issues dealing with the rates of tithing, the assignation of church benches, concerns over the priest's conduct vis-à-vis the parishioners, and an accusation of perjury eventually resolved. These little dramas cross the arbitrary categories of this thesis. So does the reality of large families, the interweaving family relationships and the proximity of life and death events that the registry records. Predominant however is the Church's effort to uphold a structure believed to benefit the soul. Provided the parishioners abided by the Church's rules, the Church dispensed sacraments indiscriminately.

## Conclusion

It is perhaps fitting that only a handful of families, arrived from the United States in 1877, represent the high point Painchaud identifies in the repatriate movement.<sup>328</sup> It illustrates the first ripple in population from efforts lobbed at augmenting francophone representation on the prairies. Pyée's research on immigrants' provenance in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes reveals that only one family came from the United States in that community,<sup>329</sup> a difference that could be attributed in part to the town's location and its distance from St. Boniface and the Red River. In Aubigny, tracing the families' genealogical and census data shows that heads of family and their wives and sons chose to return to farming and leave manufacture work behind. Quebec

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<sup>328</sup> Painchaud, "Le Manitoba et l'Immigration," 26.

<sup>329</sup> Pyée, "Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes," 159.

migration to the United States between 1840 and 1930 benefits from decades of research, whereas research into the repatriation of francophones to Canada is proportionally matched to its outcomes. Aubigny therefore represented an opportunity to look at the results of these schemes from their end-point, comparing the macro-trends Painchaud exposed to the micro number of repatriate families in a small parish. It was also an opportunity to use accounts from *Le Métis* to add to the understanding of travel and distance in this period – a non-negligible factor in the movement’s unfolding. It particularly distinguishes these families’ experience from those who came later in the following decade with the comparative ease of the railway. Although the registries acted as a springboard for research that delved into answering the “who” and the “how” of this category of families, close examination of the first eight years of entries heightens the detail of these lives.

### Chapter 3: Quebec's Immigrants and Second-Generation Manitobans

The second part answer to the question “Where did the francophone immigrant families come from?” leads to the third and fourth categories of settlers in Aubigny, namely the families and individuals who came from the province of Quebec and the adult sons of these immigrant families, settled in other communities in Manitoba who then moved and married and established themselves in Aubigny. These categories, based on the family names found in Aubigny’s registry, can be tabulated by number of households:

**TABLE 13: AUBIGNY’S PARISHIONERS (1903-1911) CATEGORIZED BY PROVENANCE AND NUMBERED BY FAMILY NAME AND HOUSEHOLD**

	NAMES	HOUSEHOLDS
<b>MÉTIS</b>	4	11
<b>UNITED STATES</b>	6	12
<b>QUEBEC</b>	12	25
<b>SECOND-GENERATION</b>	3	3
<b>OTHER (NON-FRANCOPHONE)</b>	2	2

This chapter will concentrate specifically on the 12 family names from Quebec, but it will also incorporate the 3 second-generation families and the 2 non-francophone families. As with the previous chapter, family reconstitution will show from where in Quebec these families came, research by Painchaud and Lalonde concerning St. Boniface’s Colonisation Society’s efforts to attract immigrants from Quebec will be used, and further context will be gathered from newspapers *Le Métis*, *Le Manitoba* and *l’Écho du Manitoba*. Finally, the chapter will end with an examination of Desrosier’s arrival to the parish as its first priest, marking its foundation, because it is a window onto the economic state of affairs in the archdiocese of St. Boniface and an appraisal of challenges that rural communities faced.

## Parishes of origin of Quebec's settlers in Aubigny

Beginning with the data from family reconstitution, immigrants from Quebec, organized in the following table by parish, county and region of birth, came for the majority from the region of Lanaudière, a region known to have also been the birthplace of many voyageurs.<sup>330</sup> Five were married to women from within their parish of birth (SP), two from within the same region (SR) and three, among the four youngest, found spouses in Manitoba (O – for Other). Both Dumontier brothers marry second-generation French-Canadian women, as does Charles Mousseau, Arthur L'Heureux and Eli St-Jacques. All unions are contracted before Aubigny's registry is opened, with the exception of Philius Dumontier, the youngest of the group, who marries in 1905.

**TABLE 14 – PARISHES OF ORIGIN OF AUBIGNY'S FRENCH CANADIAN IMMIGRANTS**

NAME	YOB	PARISH	COUNTY	REGION	MARRIAGE		
					SP	SR	O
DUMONTIER, Zéphirin	1873	Berthierville	Berthier	Lanaudière			x
DUMONTIER, Philius	1875						x
ROBERT, Celevenne	1853					x	
MOUSSEAU, Hyacinthe	1828				x		
MOUSSEAU, Charles	1867						x
PELLAND, Eugène	1836				x		
PELLAND, Alexis	1839				x		
LAFERRIÈRE, Michel	1846	St-Cuthbert			x		
LAFFERIÈRE, Louis	1852				x		
RIVET, Vital	1873	Joliette	Joliette			x	
CLÉMENT, Noé	1849	Ste-Scholastique	Deux-Montagnes	Laurentides		x	
CLÉMENT, Zotique	1852	Ste-Monique				x	
CLÉMENT, Fr-Xavier	1864	La Conception	Labelle				
ST-ONGE, Joseph	1847	St-Hugues, Bagot	St-Hyacinthe	Montérégie	x		
L'HEUREUX, Arthur	1851	St-Hyacinthe					x
ST-JACQUES, Éli	1854	St-Marc	Verchères				x
PICHETTE, Pierre	1808	N-D-de-Québec	Québec	Taschereau			x

<sup>330</sup> Pierre Lanthier and Jocelyn Morneau, *Lanaudière*, (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2016), 28-9.

PICHETTE, George	1852
PERRAULT, Joseph	1863

x

Remaining immigrants from Quebec came from the Laurentides and from Montérégie.

The three names at the bottom of the table contain exceptions: George Pichette and Joseph Perreault’s baptisms have not been found in the course of this research. The Pichette and Clément families that lived outside the area concentrated around Montreal are examples worth scrutinizing. Pierre Pichette’s father, Paul, was born and married in the parish of St. Pierre on l’Île d’Orléans. He and his wife moved to Quebec City, where Pierre was born.<sup>331</sup> Pierre eventually married Esther Préfontaine in Montreal where two of their eight children were born.<sup>332</sup> Based on their children’s baptismal registry, Pierre and Esther frequently moved; from Montreal to Massueville, Yamaska, St. Jude, back to Massueville. Pierre Pichette held a variety of jobs before coming to Manitoba. At the time of his marriage, the registry entry indicates he is a “commerçant”. At the baptism of his second child, a “navigateur”. In the 1841 census, he is listed as a “charpentier”. While in Roxton Falls, in 1854, he is a “journalier” and finally, in 1860 at his daughter’s wedding in Acton Vale, he is a “cultivateur”.

While Pierre Pichette was the oldest of the French-Canadians to settle in Aubigny, François-Xavier Clément by contrast was among the youngest and most recently-come of its settlers. When he married Méлина Campeau in 1887, both he and his wife were recorded as having come from La Conception. La Conception, according to one biographer, was among the

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<sup>331</sup> PRDH No. 100498

<sup>332</sup> PRDH No. 192541

20 new parishes that curé Antoine Labelle created<sup>333</sup> after expeditions he set up between 1869 and 1875, exploring the forested country North of his parish in Saint-Jérôme.<sup>334</sup> The Clément family and Labelle were familiar because he had performed the marriage for François-Xavier's uncle, Noé Clément in 1873. Perhaps he had had a hand in encouraging members of their family to settle and colonise new areas. François-Xavier likely represents an example of step migration since his father was born in Ste-Scholastique, married in Ste-Rose and resided in La Conception at the time of his son's marriage.

Aubigny's French-Canadian population came in the majority from the Berthier county (which is now D'Autray in Lanaudière),<sup>335</sup> but Manitoba was virtually absent as a destination in the county's out-migrating patterns.<sup>336</sup> Lanaudière was nonetheless a place of origin for French-Canadians across western Canada as Lanthier and Morneau write:

Enfin, des Lanaudois sont partis à la conquête des vastes plaines de l'Ouest canadien. À la charnière des XIXe et XXe siècles, Saint-Boniface, Saint-Norbert et Winnipeg au Manitoba, Gravelbourg, Régina, Fairholme, Saint-Victor et Willow Bunch en Saskatchewan sont autant de localités qui comptent parmi leurs populations des personnes originaires de Lanaudière. La dernière d'entre elles, Willow Bunch, lieu de naissance du géant Édouard Beupré, a même été fondée par un Lanaudois, Jean-Louis Légaré, de Saint-Jacques-de-l'Achigan.<sup>337</sup>

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<sup>333</sup> Gabriel Dussault, "Labelle, François-Xavier-Antoine," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol 12 (University of Toronto/ Université Laval 2003—), last revised 1990,

[http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/labelle\\_francois\\_xavier\\_antoine\\_12E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/labelle_francois_xavier_antoine_12E.html)

<sup>334</sup> Pierre Couture, *Antoine Labelle, l'apôtre de la colonisation*, (XYZ, 2003), 71.

<sup>335</sup> Gouvernement du Québec, "Répertoire des municipalités," archived March 14, 2012, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140318121903/http://www.mamrot.gouv.qc.ca/repertoire-des-municipalites/fiche/mrc/520/>

<sup>336</sup> Ramirez, *On the Move: French-Canadian and Italian Migrants in the North Atlantic Economy, 1860-1914* (McClelland and Steward, 1991), 36.

<sup>337</sup> Lanthier and Morneau, *Lanaudière*, 75.

Those from Berthier include the Dumontier brothers who arrived in Manitoba as bachelors, the Laferrière brothers who brought families with them, the widowed Mousseau father and his unmarried son, the two Pelland families who were cousins, and the young Rivet and Robert families. All were either themselves farmers or sons of farmers based on census data or occupation listed in registry entries. Similarly, those from the region of Montérégie came to Manitoba as bachelors, like L'Heureux and St-Jacques, or brought a young family with them as in the case of St-Onge.

The following table provides data for each case in greater detail, showing besides the year of birth, the year of marriage and the spouse's name, and, when census data is available, the decade in which they immigrated to Manitoba. Nine of the 19 families came to Manitoba between 1881 and 1891.

**TABLE 15 – IMMIGRANTS FROM QUEBEC: BIRTH, MARRIAGE AND CENSUS DATA**

	NAME SPOUSE	Y.O.B MAR.	REGISTRY LOCATION	CANADA CENSUS						
				1851	1861	1871	1881	1891	1901	1906
				PROVINCE						
1	CLÉMENT, Noé Mathilde Gagnon	1849	Ste-Scholastique D-M	QC	QC		QC	MB	MB	MB
		1873	St-Jérôme, Qc							
2	CLÉMENT, Zotique Eliza Bélanger	1852	Ste-Monique D-M		QC		QC	MB		MB
		1872	St-Jérôme, Qc							
3	CLÉMENT, François-Xavier Mélina Campeau	1864						QC	MB	MB
		1887	La Conception, Qc							
4	DUMONTIER, Zéphirin Marie Jeanne Dupuis	1873	Berthier						MB	MB
		1897	RM Montcalm, MB							
5	DUMONTIER, Philiat Etienna Laferrière	1875	Berthier					QC		
		1905	Aubigny, MB							
6	LAFERRIÈRE, Michel M-Louise Dudemaine	1846	St-Cuthbert Berthier				QC		MB	MB
		1867	St-Cuthbert, Qc							
7	LAFFERRIÈRE, Louis M Josephine Mousseau	1852	St-Cuthbert Berthier					MB	MB	
		1875	St-Cuthbert, Qc							
8	L'HEUREUX, Arthur Octavie Fisette	1851	St-Hyacinthe			QC		MB	MB	
		1881	St. Mary's, Wpg							
9	MOUSSEAU, Hyacinthe <i>Adeline Dandenault</i>	1828	Berthierville			QC			MB	
		1855	Berthierville							
10	MOUSSEAU, Charles Rosana Hébert	1867	Berthierville			QC			MB	
		1888	RM Morris, MB							
11	PELLAND, Eugène Céline Clairmont	1836	Berthierville	QC	QC	QC		MB	MB	MB
		1867	Berthierville							
12	PELLAND, Alexis Jessé Poulette	1839	Berthierville					MB	MB	
		1880	Berthierville							
13	PERRAULT, Joseph Rosalie Klynne	1863							MB	MB
		1885	St. Joseph, ND É-U							
14	PICHETTE, Pierre Esther F. Préfontaine	1808	N-D-de-Québec	QC				MB		
		1835	N-D-de-Montréal							
15	PICHETTE, George Cecilia Champagne	1852					MB	MB	MB	
		1899	RM Taché, MB							
16	RIVET, Vital Hermenie Jetté	1873	Joliette							
		1903	St-Paul, Joliette							
17	ROBERT, Celevenne Mélamise Lafond	1853	Berthier						MB	MB
		1873	St-Thomas Joliette							
18	ST-JACQUES, Éli <small>Euchariste Roy Octavie Mousseau</small>	1854	St-Marc Verchères			QC	MB		MB	
		1882 1889	St. Agathe, MB							
19	ST-ONGE, Joseph Julie Brodeur	1847	St-Hugues, Bagot					MB	MB	MB
		1869	St-Hugues Bagot							

## Settler families in Aubigny, second generation and non French-Canadian

It is worth mentioning that five families who were among the families named in Aubigny's registry, who did not come from Quebec or immigrate from the United States and were not Métis, can be sub-divided into two groups. The first, might be called "second-generation French-Canadian immigrants" and represent children of French Canadian immigrant families who left the province of Quebec when they were young and as adults stayed, married and established themselves in Manitoba. In Aubigny's case, the three adult males shown in the table all found brides in the Pelland families. Jean-Baptiste Desjardins was from La Broquerie, Isaïe Graveline was from Letellier and Octave Roy from St. Norbert. The second sub-group represents families that were Catholic, but not French-Canadian. Arthur Hopcraft came from England, and immigrated with his family in 1875, while his wife, Mary is listed as German, having immigrated from Kansas in 1896.<sup>338</sup> Mik Shebeski and his wife were more recent immigrants, Mik from Poland, in 1907 and Amelia from Austria in 1901.<sup>339</sup> Data summarized is represented in the following two tables:

**TABLE 16 – SECOND-GENERATION FRENCH-CANADIANS IN AUBIGNY'S PARISH 1903-1911**

NAME PARENTS	YOB	MARRIAGE		
		YEAR	LOCATION	SPOUSE
DESJARDINS, J-Baptiste Pierre et Luce Robitaille	1879	1907	RM De Salaberry	Odelide Pelland
GRAVELINE, Isaïe Josephat et M Louise Lafierre		1910	Aubigny, MB	Elizabeth Pelland
ROY, Octave François et Octavie Pichette	1862	1904	Aubigny, MB	Marie-Alma Pelland

<sup>338</sup> Government of Canada, 1911 Census.

<sup>339</sup> Government of Manitoba, 1916 Census.

**TABLE 17 – NON-FRENCH-CANADIANS IN AUBIGNY’S PARISH 1903-1911**

NAME COUNTRY OF ORIGIN	YOB	MARRIAGE		
		YEAR	LOCATION	SPOUSE
HOPCRAFT, Arthur England	1870	1902	St. Jean-Baptiste	Mary Gebauer
SHEBESKI, Mik Germany	1879			Amelia Chernecki

Four of these five families left Aubigny within a generation suggesting, as Sylvester terms it “a more individual pattern of movement”<sup>340</sup> having arrived in the parish without necessarily having a kin connection, except in the one case – Octave Roy, who had a sister married to Eli St-Jacques (household 18 in Table 16). The role of kinship is further explored in the following chapter. For now, the focus returns to the large group of immigrants from Quebec, with an examination of their motivations to leave the province, their choice to settle in Manitoba and, similar to the previous chapter, a look at improvements in the modes of transportation.

### **Why Farmers Chose to Leave Quebec**

Much is made of the efforts of agents and clergy who managed to secure French-Canadian families in the province and consequently fostered the growth of so many French-Canadian communities. But what made these people willing to leave in the last decades of the 1800’s in the first place? Serge Courville and Normand Séguin in *Le monde rural Québécois au XIXe siècle* provide an outline of the economic forces in this period that influenced Quebec’s rural regions to varying degrees. First, they write, after the American Civil War, and the end of the free trade agreement in 1866,

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<sup>340</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 12.

l'agriculture québécoise doit trouver un autre débouché externe. Celui-ci viendra de la Grande-Bretagne dont la demande en beurre et fromage stimule la spécialisation dans les activités laitières, spécialisation qu'encourage la demande croissante du marché québécois lui-même, poussée par l'expansion urbaine et villageoise. Cette conversion est ardue et survient dans un contexte de vive concurrence avec d'autres agricultures plus fortes sur les marchés internationaux: l'ontarienne, l'américaine et la néo-zélandaise, notamment.<sup>341</sup>

Two ideologies were also playing out across rural Quebec: “d’abord il y a cette vision agrarienne porteuse d’une message traditionnaliste de conservation (terre, famille, foi et langue)” and “plus discret et diffus, un courant moderniste, suscité par le mouvement des transformations économiques et prônant la nécessité du changement [...]”.<sup>342</sup> This latter was promoted by those “désireux de voir le monde rural québécois s’ouvrir plus rapidement au progrès et l’agriculture, s’adapter aux nouvelles conceptions de l’heure.”<sup>343</sup>

These broad themes had concrete effects in the lives of farmers. Ramirez writes in particular about those in Berthier county who numbered 20,000 in 1871, and “were spread out through a network of less than a dozen parishes ranging in size from 1,000 (Ile du Pads) to 3,000 (St. Cuthbert),”<sup>344</sup> where he finds an evident hierarchy among its agriculturalists. At the top were the approximate 9.5 percent of farmers who “owned farms larger than 200 acres.”<sup>345</sup> Below them were those that occupied the 36 percent of farmholdings of “100 acres and more” and below that were the 30 percent of farmers who had “holdings measuring less than fifty acres.”<sup>346</sup> This latter group represented the economic stagnation within the county where “land

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<sup>341</sup> Serge Courville and Normand Séguin, *Le monde rural québécois au XIXe siècle* (La Société Historique du Canada, 1989), 18-9.

<sup>342</sup> Courville and Séguin, *Le monde rural*, 24-5.

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>344</sup> Ramirez, *On the Move*, 22.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, 25.

farming constituted more a form of subsistence activity than a commercial enterprise resulting in accumulation and growth."<sup>347</sup> These smallholders, Ramirez argues, were no better off than the day labourers who were growing in number in some of the county's parishes.<sup>348</sup>

Reasons besides the economy could also be found in demography. Quebec's population increase, its "grands surplus démographiques,"<sup>349</sup> was such that farm land became less available. Already by 1850, young men had difficulty finding a foothold according to Séguin, who writes, "spectacle extraordinaire et anormal, le pays, quoique jeune et vaste, souffrait de surpeuplement et d'encombrement."<sup>350</sup> As others put it: "dans les paroisses rurales, au terme de deux ou trois générations, les bonnes terres sont généralement toutes occupées. D'où l'obligation pour les enfants en surnombre de partir, de chercher ailleurs des moyens de subsistance."<sup>351</sup> Work could be found in "logging, roadwork, railway construction or fishing to make ends meet."<sup>352</sup> But this too was precarious, depending on the length of the project or resource availability.

### *Arguments Made For and Against Settling in the Prairies*

The situation in Quebec provides some context for the language used in Manitoba's colonisation propaganda. The themes that arise in a series of 15 articles by Thomas Alfred Bernier published in 1886 and 1887 titled "Manitoba: Champ d'Immigration" are in many ways

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<sup>347</sup> Ramirez, *On the Move*, 25-6.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, 26-7.

<sup>349</sup> Gratien Allaire, "La francophonie de l'Ouest: pérennité, diversité et rapport à l'Autre," in *À l'ouest des Grands Lacs: communautés francophones et variétés de français dans les Prairies et en Colombie-Britannique*, ed. Robert A. Papen, and Sandrine Hallion, (Presses de l'Université de Laval, 2014), 29.

<sup>350</sup> Séguin, *La Nation "canadienne"*, 221.

<sup>351</sup> Jacques Mathieu et al., "Mobilité et sédentarité: stratégies familiales en Nouvelle-France," *Recherches sociographiques* 28, no. 2-3 (1987): 218.

<sup>352</sup> Roby, *The Franco-Americans*, 15.

a synthesis of the arguments used over decades of Manitoba's promotion to French Canadians. Thus, the "ease" of farming in Manitoba was in contrast to the effort of clearing new land in Quebec. Bernier writes, for example, "nos territoires sont, en plus grande partie, de vastes prairies; aucun défrichement n'est requis."<sup>353</sup> And, "le terrain est uni, sans roches, facile à labourer; les travaux d'égouttement sont très légers; en beaucoup d'endroits encore, ils ne sont même nullement requis."<sup>354</sup>

Immigration promoters were especially keen to point out Manitoba's fertility.<sup>355</sup> Bushels of wheat were tallied over the years and grain quality and the quality of beef was compared to that found in the United States.<sup>356</sup> Fears about the cold were rebuffed. Bernier writes, "ces grands froids sont exceptionnels; et du reste, la sensation qu'ils font éprouver n'est pas en proportion des indications du thermomètre" to which he adds, "la température chargée d'humidité de climats réputés plus doux ne vaut point nos froids secs, avec leur grand calme, notre ciel d'azur et plein de lumière."<sup>357</sup> Temperature was also discussed vis-à-vis the harvest. Bernier assures his readers that early frosts are rare, and that various testimonies affirm that in 60 years of agriculture, there were only four winters in which frost arrived in early September.<sup>358</sup>

Travel costs were especially high for French Canadian families, according to Green, "given the earlier age of marriage and greater number of children" heads of family "had more

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<sup>353</sup> "La Vérité' vs L'Emigration," *Le Manitoba*, 17 juin 1886.

<sup>354</sup> Bernier, "Manitoba: Champ d'immigration V," *Le Manitoba*, 10 décembre 1886.

<sup>355</sup> Bernier, "Champ d'Immigration II," *Le Manitoba*, 18 novembre 1886.

<sup>356</sup> Bernier, "Champ d'Immigration II," *Le Manitoba*, 18 novembre 1886.

<sup>357</sup> Bernier, "Champ d'Immigration VIII," *Le Manitoba*, 30 décembre 1886.

<sup>358</sup> Bernier, "Champ d'Immigration III," *Le Manitoba*, 25 novembre 1886.

dependents.”<sup>359</sup> But Bernier, who considers the argument, repeating it in his own words: “on allègue quelquefois qu’il faut un peu plus de ressources pour s’établir au Manitoba que dans certains endroits de la province de Québec,” offers the rebuttal that, in many areas in Manitoba, “le rendement est plus prompt. [...] le colon obtient dès la seconde année de son établissement, souvent à la première, la vie de sa famille.”<sup>360</sup>

It mattered that French Canadians would be able to find a welcoming environment, and this too was stressed. It is in fact the subject of Bernier’s first article in the 15-part series, in which he writes: “La province de Manitoba offre abondamment à nos compatriotes toutes les facilités, toutes les ressources désirables sous les rapports religieux et scolaires.”<sup>361</sup> He assures his readers, “Nous sommes en minorité, il est vrai, mais cette minorité est respectée.”<sup>362</sup>

Comparisons made between Manitoba and the United States are a frequent theme in this propaganda. Writers like Bernier appeal to patriotism, “cette supériorité que c’est la patrie”<sup>363</sup> and to a sense of duty, namely, that French Canadians reinforce their representation in the new province. They also appealed to the superiority of land ownership. Thus, Bernier writes: “il n’y a pas de doute que la position d’un colon fixé depuis cinq ou six ans sur une ferme sera bien préférable à celle d’un tisserand de coton dans une manufacture américaine.”

Summarizing these points, Bernier writes : “Un fermier par ici commence humblement; il est obligé d’économiser, de travailler et de faire des sacrifices; mais son travail est productif pour

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<sup>359</sup> Alan Green et al., “Conspicuous by Their Absence: French Canadians and the Settlement of the Canadian West,” *The Journal of Economic History* 65, no. 3 (2005): 846.

<sup>360</sup> Bernier, “Le Manitoba: Champ d’immigration,” *Le Manitoba*, 10 février 1887.

<sup>361</sup> “Immigration,” *Le Manitoba*, 11 novembre 1886.

<sup>362</sup> “Immigration,” *Le Manitoba*, 11 novembre 1886.

<sup>363</sup> “Immigration,” *Le Manitoba*, 11 novembre 1886.

l'avenir [...]. Tout en travaillant pour lui-même et ses enfants, il a travaillé pour son pays, car il a contribué par son énergie et son courage à fortifier l'élément canadien [...]."<sup>364</sup>

Manitoba's propaganda was very much in dialogue with Quebec. *Le Métis*, established in 1871, had as one of its goals "l'union de tous nos compatriotes"<sup>365</sup> an idea it re-iterated on its tenth anniversary: "[*Le Métis*] n'a cessé de travailler à rendre plus intimes les relations entre le groupe canadien du Nord Ouest et la mère patrie, c'est-à-dire la Province de Québec."<sup>366</sup> Therefore, many of its arguments were in response to Quebec's reluctance to champion the immigration cause. Indeed, after the passing of the 1890 "Act to Provide that the English Language shall be the Official Language of the Province of Manitoba"<sup>367</sup> and subsequent acts regarding education, Bernier's arguments were harder to defend. Instead the perception of a Western Canada that was "a relatively hostile political and social environment for French Canadians"<sup>368</sup> was reinforced.

### *The Colonisation Society's Activities*

At the dawn of the 1880's the Colonization Society was working in the hopes of directing the flow of Quebec's immigration to Manitoba.<sup>369</sup> To this end, the clergy was actively involved and targeted precisely the regions from which Aubigny's majority of immigrants came from. In Quebec, with the permission of the bishops there, visiting priests would speak from the pulpit in favour of immigration to Manitoba. There was for example, Fr. Jean-Joseph Raynel who,

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<sup>364</sup> "Emigration," *Le Manitoba*, 15 avril 1886.

<sup>365</sup> "Notre programme," *Le Métis*, 27 mai 1871.

<sup>366</sup> *Le Métis*, 3 juin 1880.

<sup>367</sup> Michel Verrette, "Question des écoles du Manitoba," in *Encyclopédie Canadienne. Historica Canada*, published February 7, 2006; last modified June 1, 2016.

<sup>368</sup> Green et al., "Conspicuous by Their Absence," 847.

<sup>369</sup> "Immigration et Colonisation," *Le Métis*, 22 juin 1880.

familiar with the Colonisation Society's work for having benefited a parish from its funds, visited St. Brigide and St. Henri near the place of his retirement at "le Gesù" in Montreal.<sup>370</sup> His message was applauded by *La Minerve* and relayed in *Le Métis*: "Nous voyons avec bonheur le clergé, dans les villes et les campagnes, dans le district de Montréal et dans celui de Québec, se dévouer énergiquement à l'œuvre de la colonisation, dont il semble vouloir faire son œuvre propre."<sup>371</sup> In the same article are mentioned Pierre-Zacharie Lacasse and Antoine Labelle as more examples of clergy who devoted to the cause "son temps, l'autorité de sa parole, et un dévouement tout apostolique."<sup>372</sup>

By far, the most successful clergyman of this decade was Charles Agapit Beaudry who worked as colonisation agent from 1887 to 1893. A secular priest from Saint-Hyacinthe, then in his early thirties, he seems to have become involved by his own choice. According to his own account, a fellow priest passed him the series of articles penned by Thomas Alfred Bernier. The 15 articles were eventually edited and bound into a 144-page booklet for distribution.<sup>373</sup> Beaudry wrote to Bernier who encouraged him to join a summer excursion to the province in 1887, which Beaudry did. *Le Manitoba* published the letter of his favourable impressions<sup>374</sup> and he was subsequently granted permission to devote his time to recruit immigrants from

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<sup>370</sup> La Société d'Histoire de Chute aux Iroquois, ...*Mission de la Nativité-de-Marie*, (Municipalité Labelle: 2008), 67, [https://municipalite.labelle.qc.ca/storage/app/media/municipalite/Vivre%20%C3%A0%20Labelle/histoire-et-patrimoine/livre\\_la\\_mission\\_paroisse\\_nativite\\_de\\_marie.pdf](https://municipalite.labelle.qc.ca/storage/app/media/municipalite/Vivre%20%C3%A0%20Labelle/histoire-et-patrimoine/livre_la_mission_paroisse_nativite_de_marie.pdf).

<sup>371</sup> "Colonisation," *Le Métis*, 23 septembre 1880.

<sup>372</sup> "Colonisation," *Le Métis*, 23 septembre 1880.

<sup>373</sup> "Chronique Locale," *Le Manitoba*, 17 mars 1887; "La colonisation au Manitoba," *L'Ouest Canadien*, 14 février 1889.

<sup>374</sup> "L'immigration," *Le Manitoba*, 4 août 1887.

Quebec.<sup>375</sup> With a government grant he revived *Le Colonisateur Canadien* and was the newspaper's director from 1888 to 1893.<sup>376</sup>

Of his own method for recruiting immigrants, Beaudry writes, "je commençai alors une série de conférences sur le Manitoba au point de vue politique, religieux et de l'éducation" in which he vaunted the province's superiority to the United States. He countered the common prejudices against Manitoba: the cold, the flooding, the lack of water and timber, the soil's depletion, "et le reste". His "conferences" began in January 1888 and he used an early image projector, then called a magic lantern, to show a collection of photographs including some by Winnipeg photographer Israel Bennetto.<sup>377</sup> He writes that the collection of photographs, which he lists, were "la meilleure arme contre les adversaires de Manitoba." In 1888 he visited 40 parishes in 9 months, prepared a group of colonists for departure in March and launched *Le Colonisateur Canadien* in April.<sup>378</sup> Beaudry's largest contingent arrived in March of 1889, with *Le Manitoba* reporting a group of over 400.<sup>379</sup>

Efforts to attract French-Canadian immigrants to Manitoba had many ups and downs over the course of the decade. While Beaudry's prominent activity was supported by other priests who were sympathetic to the cause, including for example Msgr. Antoine Labelle,<sup>380</sup> M.

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<sup>375</sup> "Nouvelles religieuses," *Le Manitoba*, 27 septembre 1888.

<sup>376</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 64.

<sup>377</sup> Gordon Goldsborough, "Manitoba Photographers: Israel Bennetto (1860-1946)," Manitoba Historical Society Archives, updated 5 February 2021, [https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/photographers/bennetto\\_i.shtml](https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/photographers/bennetto_i.shtml)

<sup>378</sup> "Un ami de la province," *l'Ouest Canadien*, 14 février 1889.

<sup>379</sup> "Nouveaux Colons: Comment ils ont fait le voyage, d'où ils viennent, et où ils s'établiront," *Le Manitoba*, 21 mars 1889.

<sup>380</sup> "Manitoba, Champ d'Immigration," *L'Ouest Canadien*, 11 avril 1889.

C. Geo Caron,<sup>381</sup> Nazaire Pelletier,<sup>382</sup> and Georges Dugas,<sup>383</sup> their involvement was evidence of some of the success of Taché's strategy. In 1887 he had changed tack and these missionary colonisers were now answerable to the bishops who nominated them as they effected a campaign that put greater emphasis on "le travail préventif" in Quebec.<sup>384</sup> Painchaud writes:

Ils tâchaient donc de prévenir les départs des Canadiens français et tâchaient de les recruter pour l'Ouest canadien avant qu'ils puissent s'établir aux États-Unis. Mgr Taché et ses confrères épiscopaux espéraient que ce changement de personnel et cette nouvelle stratégie apporteraient plus de fruits que le procédé antérieur.<sup>385</sup>

However, as Lalonde writes, there were just as many, if not more, clergymen and bishops who discouraged French Canadians from considering a move to Manitoba. According to Lalonde, some immigrants had returned to Quebec disheartened over their lack of success which served to spread prejudice against the new province.<sup>386</sup> Beaudry's "conferences" were limited by bishops like Msgr. Édouard-Charles Fabre and Msgr. Louis-Nazaire Bégin who denied him permission to speak in their dioceses.<sup>387</sup>

Political upheaval in Manitoba was another important factor, which, if it did not deter immigrants, served nonetheless to add to the prejudice against the province. After months of uncertainty in which the French Canadian community in Manitoba wondered whether Louis Riel's death penalty would in fact be carried out, he was unceremoniously hung on November

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<sup>381</sup> "Nouveaux Colons," *Le Manitoba*, 21 mars 1889.

<sup>382</sup> "Bienvenue," *L'Ouest Canadien*, 21 mars 1889.

<sup>383</sup> A.-N. Lalonde, "L'intelligentsia du Québec et la migration des Canadiens français vers l'Ouest canadien, 1870-1930," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 33, no. 2 (1979), 172.

<sup>384</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 137.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, 137-8.

<sup>386</sup> Lalonde, "L'intelligentsia du Québec," 167.

<sup>387</sup> *Ibid.*, 169, 171.

19<sup>th</sup>, 1885.<sup>388</sup> As the decade ended, Manitoba's government made public "les projets de loi antifrançais et anticatholiques du cabinet libéral Greenway."<sup>389</sup> One emphatic correspondent declared, a few years into these laws having taken effect, "Oui, les nouvelles lois nuisent à l'immigration [...]."<sup>390</sup> Immigration promoters could no longer promise that moving to Manitoba would be like finding a second Quebec. Instead, they highlighted the ways in which moving to the Canadian province was better than living in the United States.<sup>391</sup> In the midst of the crisis over French education, four Quebec bishops stayed steadfast in their support of Taché's project: Msgr. Louis-Zéphirin Moreau, Msgr. Elphège Gravel, Msgr. André-Albert Blais and Msgr. Louis-François Laflèche.<sup>392</sup> Families like the L'Heureux, St-Onge, and St-Jacques (see Table 14) for example, who had Msgr. Louis-Zéphirin Moreau as their Bishop, might have felt more easily encouraged to immigrate, for, as a biographer writes: "[he] encouraged agricultural clubs, and to combat emigration to the United States – one of the reasons his diocese declined from 120,000 faithful in 1886 to 115,000 in 1901 – he strongly supported the establishment of agricultural missionaries."<sup>393</sup>

Over the course of the 1890's, immigrants were increasingly directed further West, greater attention was paid to recruiting immigrants from Europe and a new member of the clergy became colonisation agent for the diocese of St. Boniface. *Le Manitoba* announces the

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<sup>388</sup> "Le dénouement," *Le Manitoba*, 19 novembre 1885.

<sup>389</sup> Bernard Penisson, "Un hebdomadaire libéral: L'Écho du Manitoba (1898-1905)," *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 28, no. 3 (1974), 369.

<sup>390</sup> "Les nouvelles lois au point de vue de l'immigration," *Le Manitoba*, 25 avril 1894.

<sup>391</sup> "Manitoba vs. Etats-Unis," *Le Manitoba*, 28 octobre 1891; "La Colonisation," *Le Manitoba*, 17 janvier 1900.

<sup>392</sup> Lalonde, "L'intelligentsia du Québec," 173.

<sup>393</sup> Nive Voisine, "Moreau, Louis-Zéphirin," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 13, (University of Toronto/Université Laval 2003—), last revised 1994, [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/moreau\\_louis\\_zephirin\\_13E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/moreau_louis_zephirin_13E.html)

arrival of this latter, Fr. Moïse Blais, to the province on September 7<sup>th</sup>, 1898.<sup>394</sup> Blais not only recruited immigrants from Quebec but also visited New England<sup>395</sup> and wrote articles in favour of immigration to Manitoba. On April 5, 1899 Blais accompanied a group of 175 immigrants to Manitoba “venant principalement du diocèse des Trois-Rivières.”<sup>396</sup> He was assisted by priests such as Napoléon Poulin,<sup>397</sup> and encouraged by others such as Vincent-Pierre Jutras.<sup>398</sup> His mandate ended in 1907.<sup>399</sup> Blais is proof that colonisation efforts came in waves over a period of decades, shaped by the energy and networks of individuals in particular. It also helps explain the later arrival (between 1891-1901) of seven of the 19 immigrant families from Quebec.

Beaudry and Blais are examples of how the Catholic Church took an active role in bringing French Canadians to Manitoba. These priests had a unique vocation: “porte-parole de l’agriculturalisme, le prêtre colonisateur est à la fois pasteur, agronome et entrepreneur.”<sup>400</sup> Beaudry was responsible for the establishment of at least one French-Canadian family in Aubigny, since, as we will see, the Pellands are listed among those families he brought in 1889. Blais’ involvement demonstrates how the colonisation effort persisted over decades in Manitoba, and how a town could, as in Aubigny’s case, eventually secure itself with a gradual accumulation of population.

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<sup>394</sup> “Chronique locale,” *Le Manitoba*, 7 septembre 1898.

<sup>395</sup> “Colonisation,” *Le Manitoba*, 8 février 1899.

<sup>396</sup> “Nouveaux colons,” *Le Manitoba*, 5 avril 1899.

<sup>397</sup> “Chez nous et autour de nous,” *Le Manitoba*, 24 janvier 1900.

<sup>398</sup> “Nord-Ouest et Manitoba,” *Le Manitoba*, 31 janvier 1900.

<sup>399</sup> Painchaud, *Un rêve français*, 141.

<sup>400</sup> Hamelin and Roby, “L’évolution économique,” 167.

## Travel 1878-1903: Routes by Railroad

Between 1877 and 1903, travel routes to Manitoba shortened. Whereas the Chartier and Hébert families arrived in Winnipeg by steamboat in 1877, the Pembina Branch completed the following year eliminated the two-and-a-half-day journey on the Red River's sinuous route. Historically significant for being the first railway in Western Canada, it ran from St. Boniface to the United States border on the eastern side of the Red River.<sup>401</sup> From there, the line extended southward to Crookston, where it linked up with railroads stretching into the center of the United States from the East and connecting to St. Paul in Minnesota.<sup>402</sup> Not only did this Pembina Branch "connect Manitoba with the outside world, it was [also] used to bring in material and supplies for the building of the main line of the transcontinental railway [...]."<sup>403</sup> Financing this project involved the delicate handling of a high-risk railroad takeover for which a group of six Canadian and American men formed a syndicate.<sup>404</sup> Their gamble proved successful, earning over half a million in net profits within the first eleven months of the railroad's construction.<sup>405</sup> The Canadian members eventually withdrew and "re-invested their funds in the Canadian Pacific Railway Company."<sup>406</sup> The latter "was built in a peculiar way," because segments were completed "on the western plains [...] in short order because of the flatness of the terrain" so that the section from Fort William on Thunder Bay to Selkirk

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<sup>401</sup> Gordon Goldsborough, "Historic Sites of Manitoba: First Railway in Western Canada Plaque," Manitoba Historical Society Archives, updated 15 August 2019, <https://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/firstrailway.shtml>

<sup>402</sup> Martin, *James J. Hill*, 148.

<sup>403</sup> Railway and Locomotive Historical Society Inc, "Locomotives of the Canadian Pacific Railway Bulletin 83," (The Railway & Locomotive Historical Society Inc., July 1951): 12.

<sup>404</sup> The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, "Locomotives," 13.

<sup>405</sup> Martin, *James J. Hill*, 180.

<sup>406</sup> The Railway and Locomotive Historical Society, "Locomotives," 13.

Manitoba was completed in June of 1882<sup>407</sup> while parts of the Canadian Shield still had to be circumnavigated on Lake Superior until May of 1885.<sup>408</sup>

St. Boniface was very much affected by these developments because its location on the east side of the Red River briefly made it the hub of activity. A train station was built on Provencher avenue in October 1879,<sup>409</sup> and a temporary trestle bridge was erected at Point Douglas in July 1880.<sup>410</sup> By June of the following year, the permanent structure of the Louise Bridge was completed and *Le Métis* wrote in the following weeks: “la rue Provencher a cessé d’être le théâtre d’une activité sans pareille depuis que les charretiers de Winnipeg n’y viennent plus chercher le fret”<sup>411</sup> and “le calme le plus complet règne autour des hangards à fret du Pacifique Canadien au bas de la rue Provencher. Les hôtels et maisons de pension en ressentent les effets.”<sup>412</sup> Building a bridge for the trains preceded building a bridge for traffic by a year.<sup>413</sup>

Reporting in *Le Métis* highlighted travel improvements in the hopes that it would encourage French Canadians to immigrate in greater numbers.<sup>414</sup> In December of 1878, it reported the Pembina Branch’s completion, celebrated a new era for the province, and wrote of the shortened distance: “Nous sommes à 30 heures de St. Paul, et à 90 heures de Montréal.”<sup>415</sup> As the Canadian Pacific Railroad sections were completed, *Le Métis* celebrated: “depuis quinze ans, ce pays a progressé et changé d’aspect [...] Au lieu de huit ou dix jours que

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<sup>407</sup> Fritz, “Special History Study,” 19.

<sup>408</sup> Fritz, “Special History Study,” 19.

<sup>409</sup> *Le Métis*, 30 octobre 1879.

<sup>410</sup> *Le Métis*, 22 juillet 1880.

<sup>411</sup> *Le Métis*, 16 juin 1881.

<sup>412</sup> *Le Métis*, 7 juillet 1881.

<sup>413</sup> *Le Métis*, 18 mai 1882.

<sup>414</sup> “Nouvelles Locales,” *Le Métis*, 21 février 1878.

<sup>415</sup> “Chemin de fer, L’Embranchement de Pembina,” *Le Métis*, 12 décembre 1878.

durait le voyage pour les premiers colons, c'est à peine maintenant si les émigrants sont trois jours en route."<sup>416</sup> In the same article, the benefits of all-Canadian travel are highlighted: "Par la route du Pacifique Canadien, le voyageur garde le même char jusqu'à Winnipeg; il n'a donc pas à s'occuper du trouble que causaient tous les transbordements quand on suivait la route des Etats-Unis; en même temps il est aussi débarrassé de toutes les tracasseries des douaniers [...]"<sup>417</sup> And travel continued to improve. In 1888 for example, *Le Manitoba* writes: "Aujourd'hui on vient de Montréal à Saint-Boniface en 62 heures."<sup>418</sup> A decade later: "Le trajet entre Montréal et Winnipeg se fait maintenant dans 48 heures."<sup>419</sup>

Considering all this, one immigrant family's experience could greatly differ from another's. A descendent of the Robert family writes: "Mon grand-père, Sénevenne, est arrivé dans l'Ouest en même temps que le chemin de fer, vers les 1880[s]."<sup>420</sup> Local histories pinpoint arrivals in 1880 for the Mousseau family, 1881 for Joseph Perreault, 1882 for the Laferrière family, 1885 for the St-Onge family, 1889 for Alexis Pelland, and 1890 for Joseph Xavier Clément.<sup>421</sup> Earlier in the decade, families might have arrived from St. Paul in a train with "a couple of passenger cars and one freight car."<sup>422</sup> Until a bridge was built over the Red River, and because St. Boniface "had no turntable or 'wye' track, [...] the little train had to make the return trip [...] in reverse."<sup>423</sup> With the increase in immigrant traffic and freight, the Pembina Branch was noted for its trains' lengths. When the average consisted of a locomotive pulling four or

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<sup>416</sup> "Emigration," *Le Métis*, 2 avril 1886.

<sup>417</sup> "Emigration," *Le Métis*, 2 avril 1886.

<sup>418</sup> "Les sœurs de la charité," *Le Manitoba*, 28 juin 1888.

<sup>419</sup> *Le Manitoba*, 14 décembre 1898.

<sup>420</sup> Robert, *On va passer l'hiver*, 113.

<sup>421</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 192-224.

<sup>422</sup> Martin, *James J. Hill*, 177.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, 178.

five coaches, the height of immigration season could witness a train “with twelve cars bound for points on the main line” ten of which carried immigrants.<sup>424</sup> For all the improvements, train travel could still have its annoyances, as in 1889 when *Le Manitoba* reports complaints of overcrowding and employee rudeness.<sup>425</sup>

*Le Manitoba*, like its predecessor *Le Métis*, paid special attention to reporting the arrival of big groups of French-Canadian immigrants, which were accompanied by colonisation agents or clergy. Immigrants were rarely listed by name, but the group that arrived in March of 1889 were in both *L'Ouest Canadien* and *Le Manitoba*. Alexis Pelland and his family of five is listed,<sup>426</sup> and “L. Pelland and his family of seven” matches Eugène Pelland, baptised “Louis Eugène” both of whom would settle in Aubigny.<sup>427</sup> However identifiers like first initials, place of origin, area of planned settlement, or number of children do not always match with family reconstitution data. Smaller groups of immigrants were inconsistently mentioned.

The decision to immigrate and the choice of land were variously come to. Some heads of family joined expeditions before choosing to move to Manitoba. Some came as bachelors as in the case of Aubigny settlers Joseph Perrault, and the Dumontier brothers, (see Table 14). Some, as in the case of Noé Clément, went ahead of their wife and children: “Madame Noé Clément, de Sainte-Monique, comté de Deux-Montagnes, est partie avec ses six enfants pour aller rejoindre son mari qui est parti depuis deux mois.”<sup>428</sup> Charles Mousseau filed a land claim in 1883, as did his brother Henri, for their father Hyacinthe, whom they expected to arrive in 1885

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<sup>424</sup> *Ibid.*, 214.

<sup>425</sup> “Nouveaux Colons,” *Le Manitoba*, 21 mars 1889.

<sup>426</sup> *L'Ouest Canadien*, 21 mars 1889.

<sup>427</sup> *L'Ouest Canadien*, 28 mars 1889.

<sup>428</sup> “Pour Manitoba,” *Le Manitoba*, 21 mai 1890.

or earlier. Amidst the general movement of French Canadian immigration, there was therefore a variety of methods.

### **Mathias Desrosiers – First Resident Priest**

Local histories often place great importance on the area's first priest or pastor because they are often regarded as pioneers who helped in the community's development. This did not seem to be the case for the parish of Aubigny whose first resident priest, Mathias Desrosiers, arrived at the end of 1903. It is worth spending a moment sketching his biography and examining what historical evidence there is for the 16 years he was its main priest, because besides the occupation that set him apart from the parish's residents, he could be considered an immigrant like the rest. Educated, Desrosiers was in the unique position of leaving behind tangible clues as to the challenges parish residents faced in the letters he exchanged with Msgr. Langevin, the notes he penned in the church's *Codex Historicus*, and letters to the editor published in the newspaper. From all this, a feeling of economic precarity prevails.

Desrosiers' arrival in 1903 was almost accidental. Up until that point, he had been one of four vicars who helped Fr. Magloire Auclair at St-Jean-Baptiste in Montreal. It was a large church and a populous parish... it met the ministerial needs of some 4,000 families. The building, constructed in 1874,<sup>429</sup> had had to undergo major renovations in 1897 and was about to re-open its doors when a fire completely reduced it to ash in January 1898.<sup>430</sup> Once it was rebuilt, Langevin was invited to the inauguration of the new building – a celebration held June

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<sup>429</sup> Elie-J. Auclair, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste de Montreal; monographie paroissiale 1874-1924* (Quebec 1924), 31.

<sup>430</sup> Auclair, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, 69-70.

25, 1903<sup>431</sup> for which Langevin delivered the sermon – and this is likely when he and Desrosiers met, for Desrosiers writes in September: “Comme je le disais à votre Grandeur (...) j’ai l’intention d’aller exercer le saint ministère dans votre archiclosèse [sic].”<sup>432</sup> In response, Langevin advised him to wait a year.<sup>433</sup> Desrosiers had not expected to be declined. On September 29<sup>th</sup> he confessed that he found himself in an awkward position, having received permission to leave for Manitoba from Msgr. Bruchési, having made arrangements to be replaced for the parish St-Henri in Quebec he had been about to take, and having announced his imminent departure for Manitoba to his confreres.<sup>434</sup> Langevin relented, writing “Mon cher M Desrosiers, Je comprends votre embarras et je désire bien vous avoir...” and proposed that Desrosiers take the church in Aubigny where “les gens ne sont pas riches, mais ils ont un grand bon vouloir et ils demandent un prêtre avec une extraordinaire insistance.”<sup>435</sup> On November 2, Desrosiers left Montreal for St. Boniface.<sup>436</sup> He arrived in Aubigny on Saturday the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Desrosiers’ arrival in Aubigny was anti-climactic. Having just left the service of the newly-built church of St. Jean-Baptiste in Montreal, designed in the Italian Renaissance style with columns, a dome, and a nave with a 68-foot-high ceiling,<sup>437</sup> Desrosiers now gazed upon a wooden building 60 by 32 feet<sup>438</sup> that had been erected that summer, having cost residents 1,626.95\$.<sup>439</sup> Desrosiers did not hide his disappointment writing in Aubigny’s *Codex Historicus*

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<sup>431</sup> Auclair, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, 78.

<sup>432</sup> Desrosiers to Langevin, September 19, 1903, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>433</sup> Ibid.

<sup>434</sup> Desrosiers to Langevin, September 29, 1903, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>435</sup> Langevin to Desrosiers, October 4, 1903, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>436</sup> Archevêché de Montréal to Langevin, November 2, 1903, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>437</sup> Auclair, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, 80.

<sup>438</sup> Bourret to Langevin, February 10, 1903, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>439</sup> Bourret to Langevin, November 4, 1903, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

that the church in which he is to serve is: “Une petite chapelle en bois inachevée, [...] ayant tout à fait l’apparence d’une grange de fermier, située à quelques centaines de pieds du côté est de la rivière Rouge au milieu de broussailles, tel était le site non enchanteur de la future église paroissiale.”<sup>440</sup> Whereas St-Jean-Baptiste de Montreal could seat 3,200 parishioners at once,<sup>441</sup> Desrosiers toured his parish and counted 32 families.<sup>442</sup>

Should he have been surprised? Desrosiers himself was the son of a farmer. Born in 1873 in St. Paul de Joliette Quebec,<sup>443</sup> Desrosiers was the 12<sup>th</sup> of his father’s 13 children from two marriages. Desrosiers was still a child when his father passed away. In becoming a priest in 1899<sup>444</sup> he was following the footsteps of his older step-brother, Joseph.<sup>445</sup> Unlike his brother, he left the province of Quebec. Langevin’s wishing to put off Desrosier’s arrival could hint at the challenges priests faced in ministering to small communities. The effervescent growth in the Catholic population in St. Boniface – the construction of a new cathedral was announced in September 1899<sup>446</sup> – belied the economic constraints the diocese faced, particularly in rural parishes.

In Aubigny’s case, this was quite clear. It was the reason why Langevin chose St. Antoine as patron saint for its church: it matched the name the nobleman from France, Jacques d’Aubigny took when he became a Trappist monk, having been conferred minor orders only a

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<sup>440</sup> *Codex Historicus*, Aubigny, 1904, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>441</sup> Auclair, *Saint-Jean-Baptiste*, 80.

<sup>442</sup> *Codex Historicus*, Aubigny, 1904, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>443</sup> “L’Abbé Desrosiers,” *La Liberté*, February 20, 1935.

<sup>444</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>445</sup> Jean-Baptiste Arthur Allaire, *Dictionnaire biographique du clergé canadien-français: les contemporains*, (Imprimerie de “La Tribune,” 1908), 181.

<sup>446</sup> “Une nouvelle cathédrale”, *Le Manitoba*, 20 septembre 1899.

year previous.<sup>447</sup> Langevin said as much himself writing: “j’avais donné St Antoine pour titulaire à cause du comte d’Aubigny, trappiste, espérant qu’il ferait quelque chose; mais il n’a rien fait! J’ignore si on lui en a même parlé!”<sup>448</sup> But Langevin’s hope had not necessarily been misplaced. Jacques d’Aubigny had come to America as a tourist to the 1893 World’s Columbian Exposition in Chicago.<sup>449</sup> When he visited Joseph de La Salmonière in St. Rose with whom he had been classmates<sup>450</sup> he decided to stay, eventually establishing a ranch, a general store and a dairy.<sup>451</sup> To the local church he was generous; twice he gifted bells.<sup>452</sup> It was as Frémont put, “une pluie d’or” that such noblemen rained on the developing province.<sup>453</sup> And then there was his inheritance, which, upon entering the religious life, he decided should go to the construction of the Trappist stone church monastery and part of the dormitory.<sup>454</sup> Deemed imposing, and now a provincial heritage site,<sup>455</sup> its construction had been approved because it would incur no debt.<sup>456</sup> Meanwhile, Langevin was defending against the image of affording the construction of a new cathedral, writing in *Le Manitoba* in December 1903: “Il est regrettable que l’on se soit ainsi payé le luxe d’exécuter ce que j’appellerai ‘la danse des millions’ autour de notre ‘future cathédrale’.” And: “nous ne prenons pas l’allure des ‘millionnaires’, surtout lorsque nous avons dû faire dernièrement un emprunt considérable à la banque pour aider nos paroisses et nos

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<sup>447</sup> “Visite pastorale,” *Les Cloches de Saint-Boniface*, 1 sept 1902, 277-283.

<sup>448</sup> Langevin to Desrosiers, December 4, 1907, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>449</sup> Christian Du Boislouveau, “Requiescant in Pace,” unpublished manuscript, 2012, 17.

<sup>450</sup> Donatien Frémont, *Les Français dans l’Ouest canadien* (Les Éditions de la liberté, 1959), 35.

<sup>451</sup> Du Boislouveau, “Requiescant in Pace,” 15; Frémont, *Les Français dans l’Ouest*, 37.

<sup>452</sup> Anatole E. Théoret, *Sainte-Rose-du-lac* (Gerald C. Murray, 1948), 27, 29, 49.

<sup>453</sup> Frémont, *Les Français*, 12.

<sup>454</sup> Père Trappiste, *Une Trappe Dans Un Pays de Missions*, 59, 60, 67.

<sup>455</sup> Government of Manitoba, “Manitoba Provincial Heritage Site No. 31,” accessed October 2023, <https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/prov/p031.html>.

<sup>456</sup> “Actes du Chapitre Général de l’Ordre des Cisterciens Réformés”, *IXe Chapitre Général 1902*, 7.

missions encore pauvres à bâtir d’humbles chapelles, des presbytères, des écoles ou des églises plus spacieuses.”<sup>457</sup> In associating Jacques d’Aubigny’s name to Aubigny’s parish foundation, Langevin was hoping the community might receive a donation. Some assumed that they had. It was a story repeated by Langevin’s biographer, Adrien Gabriel Morice,<sup>458</sup> and taken as a fact in Aubigny’s local history.<sup>459</sup>

If Langevin was prickly on the subject he had reason to be, because priests like Desrosiers could not make ends meet without going into debt. This is evident in correspondence from the archives. Four years after Desrosier’s arrival, Langevin writes him to complain of having met and been obliged to hear parishioners from his parish complain of being tithed too much.<sup>460</sup> In response, Desrosiers defends himself by accusing the parishioners in question of dishonesty and writing, about the amount demanded in tithes “Je veux bien faire des reductions, mais enfin il faut que je puisse vivre. Je ne me suis pas rendu encore une seule année à \$300.00 de dime. [...] J’ai \$700.00 et quelques piastres de dette sur l’église.”<sup>461</sup> Another incident over tithing occurred with a different family writing their complaint to Langevin in 1909<sup>462</sup> and in 1910 Langevin writes to Desrosiers because a creditor has involved lawyers who are asking the archbishop to intervene in Desrosier’s debt repayment. Langevin writes: “Je comprends que vous avez vécu pauvrement à St Antoine; mais, il me semble que pourriez payez les intérêts [...]” And he adds, “J’ai déjà assez souffert de la part de trois autres prêtres, à

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<sup>457</sup> “Une lettre de Mgr L’Archevêque,” *Le Manitoba*, 9 décembre 1903.

<sup>458</sup> Adrien-Gabriel Morice, *Histoire de l’Église catholique dans l’Ouest-Canadien: Du lac Supérieur au Pacifique (1659-1905)*, Vol II, (L’Auteur: 1915), 419.

<sup>459</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 166.

<sup>460</sup> Langevin to Desrosiers, November 14 1907, Fonds CACR, SHSB

<sup>461</sup> Desrosiers to Langevin, November 25 1907, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>462</sup> Pelland to Langevin, April 11 1909, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

cause de leurs mauvais vouloir scandaleux à l'endroit du paiement de leurs dettes, j'espère vous m'épargner ce genre d'ennui [...]."<sup>463</sup> The archbishop's pastoral visit to Aubigny the following year reveals a church in poor condition: "Le presbytère est très convenable, mais l'église est dans un état pitoyable et la dette est de \$1100 piastres dues à l'archevêché."<sup>464</sup> By 1913, the situation does not seem to have improved because the *Codex Historicus* reveals that Desrosiers has been obliged to "employer la terre de l'église afin de se créer une honnête subsistence grâce à son savoir-faire et à son travail."<sup>465</sup> Then, even at that, Desrosiers is unsuccessful. In 1915, he submits a question to the readership of *La Liberté*: why, after having tilled the land in spring, did his harvest only amount to four bushels an acre? Was it for lack of rain?<sup>466</sup> Desrosiers might have alienated his parishioners – Langevin after all warned him against holding grudges<sup>467</sup> – exacerbating a problem that Langevin hoped would resolve itself over the course of time as parishes generally grew and developed.

### **Registry statistics – a closer look at the Robert family as an example**

The French-Canadian families from Quebec account for 50 of the baptisms between 1903 and 1911, and 15 burials, 11 of which were infant mortalities, two child mortalities, one adolescent and one 39-year-old adult. Curiously, the first act in the registry is an insert predating the resident priest's arrival, for the baptism of Elizabeth Robert, second-oldest grandchild of French-Canadian pioneer, Celevenne Robert. Likely, having decided to marry in 1929,

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<sup>463</sup> Langevin to Desrosiers, August 3 1910, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>464</sup> *Codex Historicus*, Aubigny, 30 et 31 août 1911, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>465</sup> *Codex Historicus*, Aubigny, 10 et 11 juin 1913, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>466</sup> "Question," *La Liberté*, 3 mars 1915.

<sup>467</sup> Langevin to Desrosiers, November 25 1908, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

Elizabeth's baptismal record could not be found, and the family's insistence that she had indeed been baptised like her sister before her, and her siblings after her, a record was created based on witness account. Otherwise, the registry opens with the baptism of a Berthelette descendent. Local histories tend to immortalise the first acts recorded; Ile des Chènes,<sup>468</sup> St. Léon,<sup>469</sup> St. Malo,<sup>470</sup> St. Laurent,<sup>471</sup> and St. Rose du Lac,<sup>472</sup> are a handful of examples from among those that do. Family reconstitution has the effect of diminishing the importance of first acts because in many cases they are an ambiguous marker in the chronology of family histories. In Aubigny's case, the first act is an obligatory insertion of a vital statistic that fell between parishioners' transfer from St. Agathe's purview to that of the new parish's. Both the original and the inserted acts happen to belong to members of Aubigny's largest and most persistent families.

If the Chartier family had the distinction of being among the first French-Canadian repatriate settlers in Aubigny, and of having housed Desrosiers until he could build a rectory for himself,<sup>473</sup> the Robert family had the distinction of gifting the church its first statue.<sup>474</sup> It was a sign of the family's fervour and financial means. Of the seven sons born to Celevenne and Melanise, one remained a bachelor and the other six married women who were, for the

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<sup>468</sup> Historical Research Committee of Ile des Chènes and Grande Pointe, *À l'ombre des Chènes*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (1980), 21, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/3025569>.

<sup>469</sup> Odile Martel, *Pionniers de la Montagne Pembina: Saint-Léon, Manitoba 1877-2000*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (2000), 24, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/3106787>.

<sup>470</sup> Comité du livre du centenaire, *Saint-Malo, Dufrost, La Rochelle: A l'ombre de nos clochers*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (1994), 16, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/3106318>.

<sup>471</sup> St. Laurent and District History Book Committee, *The Land Between the Lakes : R. M. of St. Laurent*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (2010), 58, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/3114857>.

<sup>472</sup> Ste. Rose du Lac History Book Committee, *Reflections: A history of Ste. Amelie, Laurier, Ste. Rose du Lac*, UM Digital Collections; Manitoba Local Histories (1990), 40, <http://hdl.handle.net/10719/3046695>.

<sup>473</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 166.

<sup>474</sup> *Codex Historicus*, Aubigny, 1907, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

majority, second generation French-Canadian immigrants. Five of these marriages occurred before Aubigny’s registry was opened, and the following table provides a description of the spouse’s origins.

**TABLE 18: THE WOMEN WHO MARRIED CELEVENNE AND MELANISE ROBERT’S SONS – YEAR OF BIRTH, PARENTS’ NAMES, ORIGINS**

ROBERT SONS	SPOUSE NAME	YOB	PARENTS	ORIGINS
Emile	Josephine Kenny	1887	John Kenny Celina	Ireland / QC / MB
Fortunat	Celanire Clément	1883	Noé Clément Mathilde Gagnon	QC / MB
Ovide	Juliette Campeau	1888	Joseph Campeau Emiline Tourigny	QC / MB
Joseph	Clothilde Martineau	1891	Adrien Martineau Josephine Latreille	QC / ÉU
Frederic	Nathalie Robillard	1895	Octavien Robillard Delima	QC
Stanislas	Gabrielle Durand	1904	Joseph Durand Rebecca Beaudoin	QC / MB

Josephine Kenny lived within the same municipality (Provencher), and Celanire Clément within the same parish. Clothilde Martineau was born just south of the border in the parish of St. Joseph where the Martineau family, having immigrated much earlier from Quebec, had a small kinship network that included members of the Berthelette family. It is unclear when Nathalie Robillard came to Manitoba and if she did so without her parents, since they are listed in the federal census as living in Quebec in both 1911 and 1921. Gabrielle Durand’s family lived in the parish of St. Andrew’s and Juliette Campeau had been raised in St. Norbert.

The large Robert family, like the Berthelette family a few decades before them, grew in number as their young members married and bore children – and registry acts bearing their name increased and crested in the 1943-1953 decade alongside the rest of the parish’s

members (see Figure 2). Of the 230 acts recorded in the course of that decade, they were recipients or participants in 37 of them, or 16 percent. In a parish of such small size, the reoccurrence of a family name lends it a particular conformity and weight.

To extrapolate from these registry statistics a sense of community feeling beyond the kinship ties developed and discussed in the following chapter, it is necessary to include other sources. The Robert family is unique in furnishing such a source in the form of a memoir by one of its descendants, Téléspore Robert, quoted earlier in the introduction and referred to in the first chapter. Although much can be gleaned from this personal account, I want to examine the expression used (which recurs over the course of the memoir) and the explanation given in a sentence Téléspore writes. Téléspore, the son of Ovide Robert and Juliette Campeau, offers to the reader a portrait of his mother's courage in raising a family after the premature death of her husband. Raised in St. Norbert, Juliette was educated by nuns and, after marrying Ovide, had to learn to survive on the prairie.<sup>475</sup> When her son Téléspore misbehaved, she would warn him of ending up sentenced to death like a criminal: "Tu vas finir sur l'échafaud, comme McNulty (M. McNulty étant l'Écossais pendu par Riel quand maman était jeune. Ça a dû l'impressionner, car combien de fois elle m'a prédit cette fin tragique!)."<sup>476</sup> But Louis Riel had hung no one. The name of the Irish prisoner "shot by a Métis firing squad" on March 4, 1870 was Thomas Scott.<sup>477</sup> And that had been 18 years before Juliette was born. More likely Juliette was referring to the infamous case of Thomas Nulty, who was guilty of murdering four

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<sup>475</sup> Robert, *On va passer l'hiver*, 113.

<sup>476</sup> Robert, *On va passer l'hiver*, 103.

<sup>477</sup> J. E. Rea, "Scott Thomas" in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. 9., (University of Toronto/ Université Laval 2003—, last revised 1976), [https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/scott\\_thomas\\_1870\\_9E.html](https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/scott_thomas_1870_9E.html).

members of his own family. It was a tragedy that caused sensation enough in Quebec to be included in the Lanaudière history.<sup>478</sup> Juliette would have been nine years old when the story covered the entire front page of the *Montreal Herald*, November 8, 1897.<sup>479</sup> The passage shows that her family was connected to events in Quebec and that these had been what made an impression on Juliette's mind, and *not* the not-so-distant events of Manitoba's Métis history. Téléphore can easily be forgiven the flawed association given the different circumstances of his own upbringing.

Perhaps Juliette's family was not the only one who kept abreast of the news in Quebec even when no mention of the case was made in *Le Manitoba*. If the Robert family's sprawling genealogy solicits a unified image, accounts like Téléphore's provoke closer examination and a greater appreciation of individuals within the larger fabric of the community.

## Conclusion

To what degree is it possible to retrace the steps taken by immigrant families to their destination in the small parish of Aubigny? Given the "high quality of vital-records keeping in Quebec"<sup>480</sup> whose practice was continued in Manitoba, it is possible to assure a complete family reconstitution in most of the cases, and to therefore be able to precisely determine where the settlers came from. Aubigny is unexceptional in having drawn farmers from the Lanaudière, Laurentides and Montérégie regions of Quebec, for these were the areas, and Lanaudière in particular, that suffered from economic stagnation and overcrowding. They were

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<sup>478</sup> Lanthier and Morneau, *Lanaudière*, 84.

<sup>479</sup> "'I, --I, -- I Done It,' Confesses Young Tom Nulty," *The Herald*, Monday Nov 8, 1897.

<sup>480</sup> Sylvester, *Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 18.

also regions targeted by members of the Colonisation Society who, through their extended network of religious and secular clergy, had contacts, friendly or hostile, to this movement's efforts. Such particularisation of families and immigration experience does not necessarily reveal anything new, but it sharpens the picture, adding a parish to other, expanded in-depth research like Py e's "Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba" and Sylvester's study of succession in the municipality of Montcalm. It also proves that access to local archives and an attentive combing through regional newspapers allows greater specificity in a parish's local history: not only the provenance of its founding parishioners, but also elements of their decision to immigrate, the likely travel routes they took, and the atmosphere in which they started a new life. Once arrived, these families' members found partners and created households. In Aubigny, the parish's population uniformly consisted of farmers. Qualitative accounts of these years stress the predominant efforts toward survival. Highlighting the case of the Robert family serves to emphasize themes in this thesis; namely the usefulness of parish registries for research. Explored here for family reconstitution, they reveal individuals' roles – their place in the community, the connections they brought with them and the sacrifices they made.

## Chapter 4: Kinship

A striking if common feature of minority communities is the prevalence of kinship relations, which appears all the more clearly in the course of family reconstitution and substantiates the true, if imprecise, kinship awareness among French-Canadians.<sup>481</sup> Although Piddington noted an “organising function” among the properties of kinship, particularly in Quebec,<sup>482</sup> recent research on the question of French Canadian homogeneity demonstrates that geography and community size in the province of Quebec “go a long way in explaining their low degree of cultural mixing.”<sup>483</sup> But French-Canadian communities in Manitoba are comparatively small, and Aubigny is such an example. Whereas households in cities might take on boarders or hire domestics and thereby increase the chance of mixing their ethno-religious identity, “these undertakings were largely absent from villages and towns.”<sup>484</sup> Aubigny found itself eventually surrounded by Germans and Canadians of British origin,<sup>485</sup> but present from the start of French-Canadian settlement was the imperative to protect the community against Protestant encroachment, which Langevin accuses members of the future-parish of failing to do in 1901.<sup>486</sup> It should therefore be unsurprising that the kinship ties observed here are in fact a natural effect of “structural factors” observed elsewhere.<sup>487</sup> This chapter focuses on the kinship

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<sup>481</sup> Piddington, “A Study of French-Canadian Kinship,” 8.

<sup>482</sup> Piddington, “A Study of French-Canadian Kinship,” 4.

<sup>483</sup> Patricia Thornton and Sherry Olson, “A Geography of Encounter,” in *Peopling the North American City: Montreal 1840-1900*. (McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2014): 262.

<sup>484</sup> Thornton and Olson, “Geography of Encounter,” 262.

<sup>485</sup> Deryck W. Holdsworth and Donald Kerr, *Historical Atlas of Canada, Vol. III: Addressing the Twentieth Century*, (University of Toronto Press, 1990), 72.

<sup>486</sup> Langevin to Aux catholiques de la partie de la paroisse de Ste Agathe appelée « Aubigny » ou « Provencher », janvier 1901, Fonds CACR, SHSB.

<sup>487</sup> Thornton and Olson, “Geography of Encounter,” 261-2.

relations such as they can be determined from Aubigny's registries and attendant family reconstitution. Kinship being a large theme in research, the following limits itself to the characteristics of this single parish; the role of kinship in immigration, the new kinship ties created within the community through marriage, kinship ties as revealed by god-parenting roles, and the effect of kinship on family persistence.

### **Family and Kinship in Migrations**

Kinship, defined in cultural anthropology as "the recognized ties of relationship, by descent, marriage, or ritual, that form the basis of social organization"<sup>488</sup> was a founding development of the fur trade according to historian of Indigenous and French relations Carolyn Podruchny. She quotes Sleeper-Smith who writes, "kinship transformed the impersonal exchange process characteristic of capitalism into a socially accountable process."<sup>489</sup> And later, as French-Canadians immigrated to Manitoba, Frenette observes: "partout où ils vont, les Canadiens français emportent dans leurs bagages leurs traits culturels et leurs institutions, au premier rang desquelles on trouve la famille."<sup>490</sup> Family is a more restrictive term than kin, since it refers to immediate family and direct descendants. Both 'family' and 'kin' will be used to illustrate relationships in this chapter.

Studies on kinship are a relatively recent development, Beaudreau and Frenette writing that these begin surfacing in the 1970's.<sup>491</sup> Piché writes that kinship ties only became the

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<sup>488</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, "kinship (n.)," accessed July 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/1031261101>.

<sup>489</sup> Podruchny, *Making the Voyageur World*, 277.

<sup>490</sup> Frenette, *Brève histoire*, 93.

<sup>491</sup> Sylvie Beaudreau and Yves Frenette, "Les stratégies familiales des francophones de la Nouvelle-Angleterre. Perspective diachronique," *Sociologie et sociétés* 26, no. 1 (1994), 167.

subject of immigration theory in the 1980's.<sup>492</sup> Prior to this, kinship studies pertaining to French-Canadians examined its organising functions "among the rural communities of Quebec."<sup>493</sup> Pertinent to Aubigny's family and kinship are publications by Hareven, Mathieu, Roby and Sylvester among others. In particular, these historians highlight the role family played in French-Canadian migration to the United States, namely, its use in social organisation, as a means of recruitment and as beneficial for social security.

Hareven in *Family Time and Industrial Time: The Relationship between the Family and Work in a New England Industrial Community* writes that employers at mill factories were paternalistic and used "the family unit as the linchpin of the industrial order."<sup>494</sup> Family "was also considered the base of morality and stability and the socializer of the young."<sup>495</sup> Textile companies, in Hareven's case the Amoskeag, recruited French Canadians using "the workers' own informal ties by encouraging those already living in Manchester to recruit their Canadian kin and provide the necessary support for newly arriving relatives."<sup>496</sup>

Roby highlights the role of kinship in migration and elaborates on the benefits it provided, writing,

It was within family networks that occurred the phenomenon described by researchers as the 'chain migration process'. The migrants informed their relatives and friends, who had remained in Québec, about job possibilities, wages and hiring procedures; they advised them as to the best routes to take, quite often paid their train tickets and, upon their arrival, presented them to potential employers. Moreover, they had already found them lodgings and obtained credit for them with the grocer, the butcher and the baker. Then too, the presence of

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<sup>492</sup> Victor Piché, "Les théories migratoires contemporaines au prisme des textes fondateurs," *Population (France)* 68, no. 1, (2013), 155.

<sup>493</sup> Piddington, "A Study of French Canadian Kinship," 4.

<sup>494</sup> Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, 55.

<sup>495</sup> Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, 55.

<sup>496</sup> Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, 85.

relatives and friends still in Québec afforded the new arrivals a manner of insurance, should they encounter financial difficulties or insurmountable adaptational problems.<sup>497</sup>

In this way, “chain migration [...] tied families in Manchester and Quebec into one social system. Kin assistance continuously flowed back and forth between Manchester and the communities of origin.”<sup>498</sup>

Family not only played a part in migration and factory work organisation; its importance was so fundamental, it held value over individual choice. Hareven writes: “The sense of duty to family was a manifestation of family culture - a set of values that entailed not only a commitment to the well-being and self-reliance or survival of the family but one that took priority over individual needs and personal happiness. The preservation of family autonomy was valued as a more important goal than individual fulfillment.”<sup>499</sup> The economic consideration of taking work in the United States for the benefit of the family was not so different from that of taking a farm on the prairies.

In Manitoba, reliance on family was evident in the communities of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes and St. Claude, both west of Aubigny. Between 1890 and 1914, as Pyée writes, immigrants arrived from France to settle and did so, mostly as families.<sup>500</sup> Pyée pays special attention to “la complexité de l’expérience des migrants”<sup>501</sup> and observes how social networks influence migration. She writes “les candidats au départ sont amis, frères, sœurs, cousins, etc.” and, offering several examples of kinship connections between the immigrant families in Notre-

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<sup>497</sup> Roby, *The Franco-Americans of New-England*, 20.

<sup>498</sup> Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, 88.

<sup>499</sup> Hareven, *Family Time and Industrial Time*, 108.

<sup>500</sup> Pyée, “La terre promise,” 1, 3.

<sup>501</sup> Pyée, “La terre promise,” 7.

Dame-de-Lourdes, she writes, “À part un espace commun, les réseaux migratoires reposent donc sur les connexions entre les liens familiaux et communautaires.”<sup>502</sup>

Aubigny’s family connections bear similar patterns. In family reconstitution based on Aubigny’s registries, there is evidence that some families exhibited chain migration, where, for example, sons might move to Manitoba as in the case of Charles and Henri Mousseau who made land claims for themselves and for their father, in anticipation of his later arrival. More evidently there are cases where the decision to immigrate was taken at the same time, alongside another family member, in what might be too small to be termed “group migrations.”<sup>503</sup> Examples of this include the case of the Pelland families, in which heads of household, Eugène and Alexis were first cousins, and both seem to have come to Manitoba at the same time as part of Beaudry’s largest immigrant group.<sup>504</sup> The following table illustrates these cases, based solely on evident relationships between male heads of household.

**TABLE 19 – RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MALE HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD IN AUBIGNY (1903-1911)**

	FAMILY NAME	HEADS OF HOUSEHOLD	RELATIONSHIP
É-U	BOUCHARD - HÉBERT	Damase, Janvier	Damase is Janvier’s son-in-law
QC	CLÉMENT	Zotique, Noé, Xavier	Zotique and Noé are brothers Xavier is their nephew
	DUMONTIER	Zéphirin, Philius	Brothers
	LAFERRIÈRE	Michel, Louis	Brothers
	PELLAND	Eugène, Alexis	First cousins

Clergy and colonisation agents for Manitoba whose views were shared by *Le Métis’* editors, encouraged kin recruitment, the latter publishing a favourable review gleaned from

<sup>502</sup> Pyée, “La terre promise,” 240-1.

<sup>503</sup> Buchanan, “In Search of Security,” 126.

<sup>504</sup> “Un ami de la Province,” *L’Ouest Canadien*, 14 février 1889.

correspondence: “Nos canadiens qui sont partis pour Manitoba, il y a quelques semaines passées, ont écrit à leurs familles demeurées à Fall River. Nos amis semblent être très satisfaits de leur voyage.”<sup>505</sup> A correspondent for the parish of St. Vital writes in 1882: “Plusieurs familles de la province de Québec sont attendues d'ici à quelques jours. La plupart viennent sur l'invitation de parents et d'amis déjà établis dans notre paroisse.”<sup>506</sup> A similar news item was published in 1895,<sup>507</sup> and family relations among settlers and citizens of St. Boniface were noted.<sup>508</sup> A 60-day excursion to Manitoba and the West was advertised as “une autre belle occasion pour nos compatriotes d'aller visiter leurs parents et amis du Manitoba et du Nord-Ouest et de constater, [...] la fertilité de nos plaines de l'Ouest et les grands avantages qu'elles offrent à ceux qui doivent se déplacer.”<sup>509</sup>

Family assured stability. The gamble taken had a greater chance of succeeding if a whole family was invested. Mathieu, in examining the history of French immigrants to Quebec writes that women played a “stabilizing” role.<sup>510</sup> Colonisation societies therefore targeted families in particular,<sup>511</sup> and *Le Métis'* editors saw transience as the result of travelling alone.<sup>512</sup> The patterns observed in French-Canadian migration to the United States, namely, the central role of the family institution – “c'est en famille qu'on émigrerait”<sup>513</sup> played out again in French-Canadian parishes across Manitoba. Sylvester writes, “westward movement was organized by

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<sup>505</sup> *Le Métis*, 29 juillet 1875.

<sup>506</sup> “Chronique de la province,” *Le Manitoba*, 13 avril 1882.

<sup>507</sup> “Chronique locale,” *Le Manitoba*, 16 juin 1895.

<sup>508</sup> “Chronique locale,” *Le Manitoba*, 22 décembre 1897.

<sup>509</sup> “Excursion,” *Le Manitoba*, 29 mai 1901.

<sup>510</sup> Mathieu et al., “Mobilité et sédentarité,” 217.

<sup>511</sup> “Venez à Manitoba!” *Le Métis*, 8 juin 1876.

<sup>512</sup> “Nouvelles locales,” *Le Métis*, 31 mai 1877.

<sup>513</sup> Frenette, *Brève histoire*, 84.

succession strategies. Beneath the surface of national or provincial politics lay the local reality of hundreds of families on the move.”<sup>514</sup> As the previous chapter has shown, only three of Aubigny’s French-Canadian settlers arrived as bachelors. However they soon married and cemented connections within the community.

### **Establishing Kin Networks through Marriage**

Marrying within one’s own community was common practice in Quebec. Frenette writes that people married “de préférence avec une personne de la même paroisse ou d'une paroisse voisine”<sup>515</sup> and that this assured social cohesion. As Mathieu describes it, transplantation provoked a “brassage culturel” to which its participants responded by marrying, settling and “having many children.”<sup>516</sup> Doing so at the same time as one’s neighbours created a climate, Mathieu explains, in which allies were found.

In Aubigny, connections between families are numerous. Illustrating marriages made between families within the first generation, using a chord diagram yields the following image:

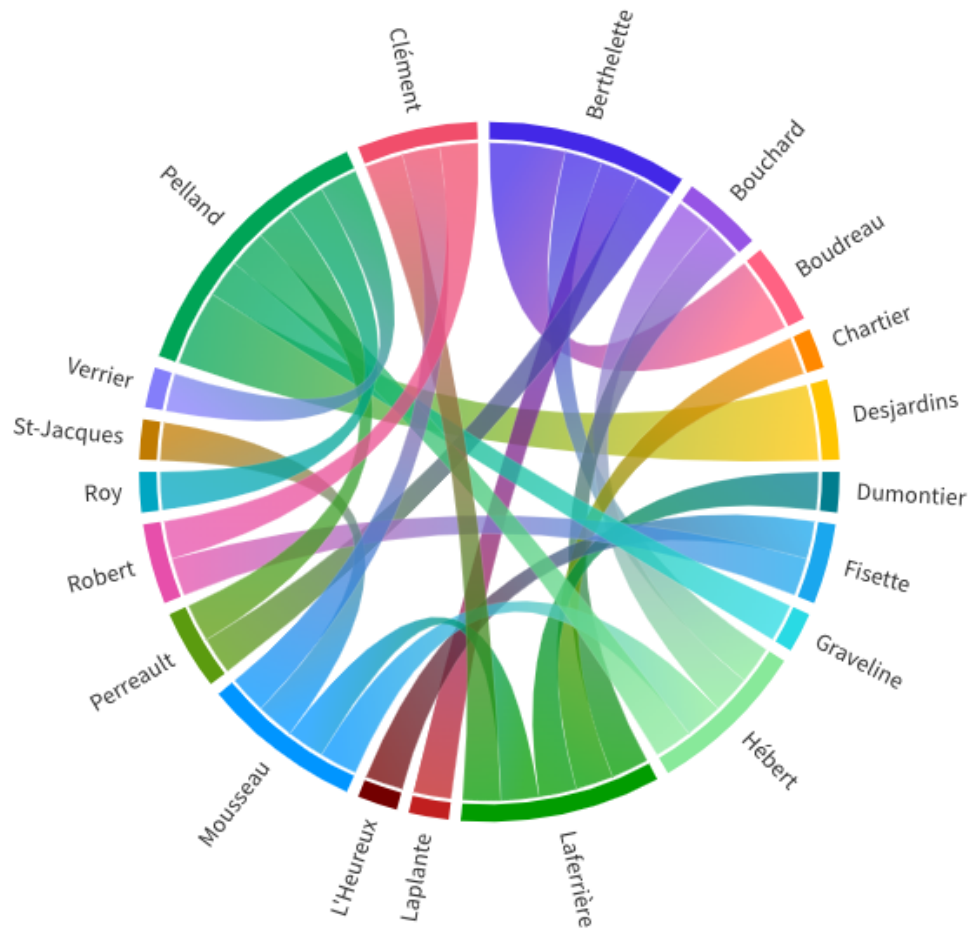
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<sup>514</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 15.

<sup>515</sup> Frenette, *Brève histoire*, 54.

<sup>516</sup> Mathieu et al., “Mobilité et sédentarité,” 217.

**FIGURE 4 – CHORD DIAGRAM OF MARRIAGES FROM 1872-1910 BETWEEN AUBIGNY'S FOUNDING FAMILIES**



This diagram demonstrates, for example, connections made from the Berthelette family to the Boudreau family (Joseph and Marie Berthelette respectively married Philomène and Antoine Boudreau), the Hébert family (Edouard Berthelette married Marguerite Hébert), the Laplante family (Charles Berthelette married Marie Laplante), and the Perreault family (Alexandre Berthelette married Exilda Perreault). The Pelland family has a large representation, constituting six women from the families of first cousins Eugène and Alexis who married men from the Desjardins, Graveline, Hébert, Perrault, Roy and Verrier families. Similarly, five

children of two brothers Michel and Louis Laferrière found spouses in the Bouchard, Chartier, Dumontier, Fiset, and Mousseau families.

Of these 26 unions, seven occurred between the parish's foundation in 1903 and its canonical erection in 1911, the remaining preceded it. Their marriages in Aubigny's registry follow the customary form: the date followed by "après la publication d'un ban de mariage faite au prône de notre messe paroissiale [...]" signifying the procedure by which "the parish is informed of the actual wedding."<sup>517</sup> Only two couples required dispensations for consanguinity, which shows that prospective partners chose to create new kinship ties. As was the practice before Second Vatican Council, dispensations were paid according to relationship distance. Miner writes "The church considers relationships of second cousins and closer as blocks to marriage, but there [were] designated amounts of money for which dispensations [could] be secured."<sup>518</sup> Alfred Berthelette was second cousin to Exilda Perreault, and Pierre Bouchard and Alma Hébert were first cousins. Dispensations in these cases, likely easily obtained,<sup>519</sup> once granted were noted in the registry's marriage entry, in the latter case as "la dispense du deuxième degré de consanguinité en ligne collatérale."<sup>520</sup>

In his research into French-Canadian kinship in St. Jean-Baptiste, Ralph Piddington observed, "a characteristic feature of French Canadian kinship is the large number of intermarriages between kinsfolk."<sup>521</sup> Having collected data from ten genealogies, he writes that it "suggests, though it does not prove, that everybody in St. Jean-Baptiste, apart from a few

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<sup>517</sup> Horace Mitchell Miner, *St. Denis: A French-Canadian Parish* (University of Chicago Press, 1939), 214.

<sup>518</sup> Miner, *St. Denis*, 78.

<sup>519</sup> Miner, *St. Denis*, 78.

<sup>520</sup> Registre d'Aubigny, 3 novembre 1909.

<sup>521</sup> Piddington, "A Study of French Canadian Kinship," 10.

recent arrivals, is related to everybody else in a complex network of kinship relationships.” This, he notes further, “does tend to produce a sense of unity in the community – almost a sense of belonging to one big family.”<sup>522</sup> Likewise, the marriages among Aubigny’s families demonstrate both the continuation of a cultural practice carried over from Quebec and the beginning of a new trend that would persist.

### **Kinship Demonstrated in God-Parenting Ties**

Compiling information from the baptisms performed in Aubigny’s church between 1903 and 1911 is another way of finding kinship connections among the members of the community. Baptism, a “sacrament of admission”<sup>523</sup> into the Catholic Church, was usually performed very soon after a child’s birth, “pour éviter que le fragile nouveau-né ne meure sans la grâce du sacrement et ne rejoigne non le Paradis, mais les Limbes.”<sup>524</sup>

Godparents, as Miner observed in the case of St. Denis’ parish in Quebec, were often related to the child. They were mostly aunts or uncles “but grandparents, cousins, or siblings of the child may also be chosen. This spiritual bond is a mild block to marriage, requiring a dispensation. Members of the family are in a position to watch after the spiritual needs of the child and have a greater natural interest in him.”<sup>525</sup> For families who had recently immigrated, or those who were at a greater distance from relatives, godparents could represent a “non-family social relationship.”<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Piddington, “A Study of French Canadian Kinship,” 12.

<sup>523</sup> *Encyclopedia Britannica*, “baptism.” last updated April 11, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/baptism>.

<sup>524</sup> Vincent Gourdon and Isabelle Robin, “Parrains et voisins? Espace et parrainage en banlieue parisienne au XIXe siècle,” *Dubrovnik annals* 21, no. 21 (2017), 53.

<sup>525</sup> Miner, *St. Denis*, 76.

<sup>526</sup> Marketa Skorepova, “Godparenthood in the Context of Family Relations in the 19th Century Bohemian Rural Space,” *Annales de démographie historique* 44, no 2 (2022), 219.

The 116 baptisms in this period are interesting for the less obvious kinship ties they represent. As shown in the introduction, Desrosiers used a simplified formula for the baptism entries and thus, only in the first year-and-a-half, did he provide the godparents' town of residence when it was outside of Aubigny (i.e. St. Adolphe and St. Claude). This left 20 other baptisms where the godparents who did not evidently reside in Aubigny, are not so handily placed. The godparents' relationship to the child is also rarely indicated and only by family reconstitution was it possible to identify them. Doing so brings into view family connections on the mother's side. Taking these factors into account and categorizing godparents generally into groups that were "extended family on mother's side (MS)," "extended family on father's side (FS)," "immediate family," and godparents who had "no apparent relation" to the child yields the following table. (A note on the numbers: given that each act requires two godparents, the individuals are each numbered. To arrive at the total for "number of baptisms", the numbers in the shaded part of the table can be added, then divided by two.)

**TABLE 20 – GODPARENT RELATIONSHIP TO BAPTIZED CHILD (EXTENDED, IMMEDIATE, NONE APPARENT)**

	NO. OF BAPTISMS	NO. OF COUPLES	EXTENDED FAMILY (MS)	EXTENDED FAMILY (FS)	IMMEDIATE FAMILY	NO APPARENT RELATION	LIVING IN AUBIGNY
MÉTIS	22	9	11	25	8	0	18
FR-CAN EU	36	8	43	16	3	10	31
FR-CAN QC	50	16	31	46	6	17	39
SECOND GEN	5	4	5	4	0	1	3
NOT FR-CAN	3	2	0	0	0	6	3

Although lumping various relationships into the general category of “extended family” hides the diversity of kinship relations, being any more specific risks blurring the near equal use of relations as godparents on both the mother’s side and father’s side across all the baptisms. Godparents from the mother’s side show proximity to families who otherwise do not feature in Aubigny’s registries. These include families like Martineau and Girouard. The former had established themselves in North Dakota, and, according to one article, had amassed “une jolie fortune.”<sup>527</sup> They left their imprint on the state as a site near the border bears the name “Dease-Martineau House” and is on the National Register of Historic Places in Pembina County.<sup>528</sup> Indeed, Adrien Martineau and his wife Josephine Latreille were in North Dakota as early as 1870, where their son’s baptism is registered.<sup>529</sup> Three of his daughters, Rose-Emma,

<sup>527</sup> *Le Progrès de l’Est*, 16 juin 1886.

<sup>528</sup> “NP Gallery, Digital Asset Management System,” National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, accessed April 2024, <https://npgallery.nps.gov/AssetDetail/NRIS/100001744>.

<sup>529</sup> Morin, *St. Joseph Parish*, 114.

Marie-Joséphine and Clothilde, married Aubigny residents, Paul Berthelette, Rodrigue Clément and Joseph Robert. Their siblings, Philomène, Joseph and Adrien were godparents at different times. Similarly, Zoé, Edesse and Cordélia were three Girouard sisters respectively married to Flavien Chartier, Pierre Hébert and Louis Laferrière.

Relationships were not always so straightforward. When Joseph Hébert and Marie-Louise Pelland had their daughter Dorothee baptised in 1904, Marie-Louise's brother, Théodore, was godfather. His wife, Albina Bouchard, daughter of Eliza Hébert and Damase Bouchard was on Dorothee's mother's side, her aunt, and on Dorothee's father's side, a first cousin. A diagram of the relationship might look like this:

<b>JANVIER HÉBERT &amp; ADELE GEOFFRION</b>	Damase <b>BOUCHARD</b>	<b>Albina BOUCHARD</b>
	Eliza <b>HÉBERT</b>	
<b>EUGÈNE PELLAND &amp; CÉLINA CLAIRMONT</b>	Joseph <b>HÉBERT</b>	<b>DOROTHÉE</b>
	M Louise <b>PELLAND</b>	
	Théodore <b>PELLAND</b>	

Another way in which godparents reveal surprising kinship is in the case of Aubigny's parish priest, Mathias Desrosiers. Mathias' father, Stanislas, married twice, first in 1853 to Caroline Forest, and second, in 1862 to Almésine Pelletier. Children from his first marriage include Joseph, and Hermeline. Joseph, born in 1857, 16 years older than Mathias, was ordained a priest in 1880 and served in various parishes in the province of Quebec as mentioned in the previous chapter.<sup>530</sup> Herméline married Henri Jetté, and bore a daughter named Hermenie who married Vital Rivet in 1903. They came to Manitoba and lived in Aubigny where they had 12 children before leaving for the U.S. in 1924. Mathias, born in 1873 to

<sup>530</sup> Allaire, *Dictionnaire biographique*, 181.

Stanislas' second wife, was, for Herménie and Vital, godfather to two of their children and might be described as their children's half-great-uncle. Miner writes that in St. Denis, a child's baptism had a "bearer," a person who brought the child to church, often the godmother, and that this person could be a widow from the parish.<sup>531</sup> In the Rivet family's case, Mathias was indeed seconded as godparent by Zoé Girouard, once, whose husband, Flavien Chartier had died in 1902. She was godmother on three other occasions where no relation can be found between her and the child being baptized.

Finally, a note on the category of godparents titled "no apparent relation." In the cases of the three baptisms of children from families that were not French-Canadian or Métis, there were no family members in the community, and parents would have had to rely on friends, neighbours or the parish priest to take on the role. But so too would have recently arrived French-Canadian immigrants, with young families, who could not necessarily count on an older sibling to be a godparent. One could imagine how this role could prove friendships and neighbourliness between families. Also notable is how the Métis families had immediate family or extended family on whom to count for godparenting roles, and how not a single child had godparents of "no apparent relation". It could indicate that the Métis had an extended kin network to choose from. It could also indicate that the Métis families were not comfortable enough to rely on people outside their own families to act as godparents, which would suggest less integration within the community.

Some baptisms fall in a category between friend on one hand and family on the other, as in the case of Louis Laferrrière, who was godfather to two of Eli St-Jacques and Octavie

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<sup>531</sup> Miner, *St. Denis*, 175.

Mousseau's children. Louis seemed unrelated to either parent, except that he had been Octavie's brother-in-law when he married Joséphine Mousseau in 1875. Their marriage in Ste-Geneviève de Berthierville which mentions a "dispense de quatrième degré de consanguinité"<sup>532</sup> suggests that the Mousseau and Laferrière families were somehow related, likely formerly lived near each other in Berthier county, and maintained a friendship even after Joséphine's death in 1891 and Louis' second marriage to Cordélia Girouard in 1907. This kind of relationship is particular to those highlighted by godparenting roles.

### **Persistence**

Given the propensity of French-Canadians to move together and marry within their community, the security and sense of identity this provided, it is natural to wonder whether this had an effect on persistence in Aubigny. This section will therefore examine the question as it has been studied by both Buchanan and Sylvester in other rural locations.

Buchanan's research focuses on a community in two Ontario townships on the North shore of Lake Huron and its 300 households, in the years spanning 1879 to 1939.<sup>533</sup> The majority of the settlers were from Southern Ontario.<sup>534</sup> Of particular interest is one of the questions she asked from the data she gathered which was: "How effective was membership in a local kinship network in promoting economic and geographical stability over time?"<sup>535</sup> The chapter dedicated to answering this question first demonstrates data on the kinship ties among the settlers, their increase by intermarriage, and the complexity of the resultant kinship

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<sup>532</sup> "Ste-Geneviève de Berthierville Registry, M 25, 12 octobre 1875," Ancestry.ca.

<sup>533</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 30.

<sup>534</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 192.

<sup>535</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 187-8.

network. The chapter then takes into consideration numerous variables, including demographic characteristics,<sup>536</sup> the number of sons in a family and male-to-male kinship,<sup>537</sup> gender, marriage status, and birth rank of potential inheritors,<sup>538</sup> and the father's age at death and consequent widowhood of the mother.<sup>539</sup> Buchanan's data confirms previous research on how kinship networks increase an individual's life chances within a community<sup>540</sup> and highlights how they favoured a family's permanence over its individuals'.<sup>541</sup> Phrased differently, "concern about the life chances of any particular individual had to be subordinated to long-term family persistence and security"<sup>542</sup> and it was land ownership that provided this security.<sup>543</sup>

For Aubigny, it is the church registries that provide data on its settlers' persistence and geographic mobility. The families in Table 21 are listed by the categories already established in the second chapter: Métis, French-Canadians from the U.S., French-Canadians from Quebec, second-generation French-Canadians in Manitoba, and non-French-Canadians. A family's establishment in the community was counted by the number of years their names appear in the 111-year span of Aubigny's registries. There are caveats however. Given that the information in the table is solely based on Aubigny's church records, there can be misinterpretations, considering, for example, bachelors who lived in the community all their lives, versus males who might have moved away from the community but who were later buried in its cemetery. Sometimes, local family histories helped ascertain a bachelor's living in Aubigny all their life.

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<sup>536</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 189.

<sup>537</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 219.

<sup>538</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 230.

<sup>539</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 232.

<sup>540</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 220.

<sup>541</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 225.

<sup>542</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 241.

<sup>543</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 246.

Secondly, if registry data is a better resource for family reconstitution than census data, the reverse is true as life in the parish changes, and sacraments are less frequently administered. A young family feels very “present” at the beginning of the twentieth century when the birthrate is high, infant mortality is also high, and life expectancy is not as long as it is today. A family’s “presence” seemingly fades as the century progresses.

The following table lists the families by category, dividing each by male and female descendants. Households headed by male descendants are counted by generation and categorized by number of years they, or members of their household appear in the registries as subjects, namely, 5, 10, 15, or 20+ years.

**TABLE 21 – FAMILY PERSISTENCE IN AUBIGNY’S PARISH OVER THREE GENERATIONS**

		1 <sup>st</sup> GEN Total	1 <sup>st</sup> GEN				2 <sup>nd</sup> GEN Total	2 <sup>nd</sup> GEN				3 <sup>rd</sup> GEN Total	3 <sup>rd</sup> GEN			
			5	10	15	20		5	10	15	20		5	10	15	20
<b>BERTHELETTE</b>	M	6	1			4	13	4			5	12	1			1
	JOSEPH F	3	1				12	2	1	3	1	17		2		1
<b>BOUDREAU</b>	M	3														
	ANTOINE F	4														
<b>LAPLANTE</b>	M	4														
	PATRICE F	3	1													
<b>LARIVIÈRE</b>	M	7				1										
	FRANÇOIS F	4														
<b>BOUCHARD</b>	M	7		2		1										
	DAMASE F	4				1										
<b>CHARTIER</b>	M	2				2	12	2	3		2	10	1	1		
	FLAVIEN F	4				1	9			1		7				
<b>FISSETTE</b>	M	2		1	1											
	DÉSIRÉ F	1				1										
<b>HÉBERT</b>	M	3				3	8		2							
	JANVIER F	6				3	17	1			1					

<b>HÉBERT</b> AMABLE	M	6				2	9			2	5			1
	F	6					6			1	9			
<b>VERRIER</b> JACOB	M	5		2		1	4			1				
	F	8				1	7							

<b>CLÉMENT</b> NOÉ	M	3	1											
	F	5		1		1								
<b>CLÉMENT</b> XAVIER	M	5	1			1	3			1	5			1
	F	2					4				5			
<b>DUMONTIER</b> ZÉPHIRIN	M	2				2	3							
	F	2					5			1				
<b>LAFERRIÈRE</b> MICHEL	M	5		1		2	6							
	F	7				2	15							
<b>LAFERRIÈRE</b> LOUIS	M	3				1	5							
	F	1					4			1				
<b>L'HEUREUX</b> ARTHUR	M	2				1	1							
	F	12					2		1					
<b>MOUSSEAU</b> HYACINTHE	M	4				1	7			1				
	F	8	1			2	3			1				
<b>PELLAND</b> EUGÈNE	M	4	1			1	11		1	3				
	F	4		1		2	5							
<b>PELLAND</b> ALEXIS	M	1				1								
	F	5	1	1		1								
<b>PERREAULT</b> JOSEPH	M	6		3	1									
	F	1		1										
<b>PICHETTE</b> PIERRE	M	4				1								
	F	1												
<b>RIVET</b> VITAL	M	3												
	F	3												
<b>ROBERT</b> CELEVENNE	M	6		2		4	23	1		1	8	33	2	1
	F	5		1			19	1	1	3	44			
<b>ST-JACQUES</b> ELI	M	2		1		1								
	F	4												
<b>ST-ONGE</b> JOSEPH	M	4				2	7		1	1	1			
	F	4					5	1			2			

<b>DESJARDINS</b> J-BAPTISTE	M	1												
	F	6												
<b>GRAVELINE</b> ISAÏE	M	3												
	F	2												
<b>ROY</b> OCTAVE	M	2		1										
	F	1	1											

<b>HOPCRAFT</b> ARTHUR	M	4																	
	F	3																	
<b>SHEBESKI</b> MIK	M	2																	
	F	2																	

Examining what is obvious at first glance, such as for example, the six families whose male children did not stay in the community (Boudreau, Laplante, Dumontier, Rivet, Hopcraft and Shebeski) and the five families whose persistence lasted into the third generation; there are aspects of persistence that are not obvious. For example, the Fisette family shows an equal chance of persistence to the Chartier and Hébert families. The two sons and one daughter of Désiré Fisette integrated into the community, marrying members of the Robert and L’Heureux families. However, both the head of the family and his sons moved away from Aubigny. Désiré died in St. Boniface in 1914, age 72. Stanislas lived in Aubigny at least 22 years before leaving in 1929 to live in La Broquerie. Stanislas’ departure is described in Aubigny’s local history as coming after a series of tragedies, of which the death of his oldest son.<sup>544</sup> This telling of the story could support Buchanan’s argument that because “no one could be certain of survival and inheritance,” a family’s security, and here, its persistence, was threatened.<sup>545</sup>

What the table above masks are the women’s persistence in communities. Although it is easier to follow patrilineal lines in family reconstitution, the Fisette and Dumontier families nonetheless provide examples of women who married and stayed in the community. Stanislas’ daughter, Octavie married Arthur L’Heureux from Quebec, and both lived in Aubigny until their deaths at 86 and 82 respectively. Their son, Prosper, married Yvonne Dumontier, who, like

<sup>544</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 201.

<sup>545</sup> Buchanan, “In Search of Security,” 255.

Octavie, was the only one of her father's children to remain in Aubigny. Yvonne and Prosper lived in Aubigny until their deaths at 86 and 83 respectively. Although the focus of family histories follows traditional patrilineal descent, in the Fiset's case, Octavie and Yvonne were the obscured halves of family genealogy whose marriages to Arthur and Prosper respectively permitted the L'Heureux's persistence in the community. Similar examples are found in the Mousseau and Pelland families.

Buchanan's research considered variables that could influence an individual's decision to stay or to move away, such as their fathers' occupation (farmer, non-farmer), and their marriage to a local resident or to someone from outside the community among others. It led her to draw a "portrait of a permanent resident," the characteristics of which include being "among the earliest arrival cohorts and, as a result, had a limited number of ancestors in the local area," marriage to local residents and occupation in farming as well as "having siblings of either gender who were resident in the same area."<sup>546</sup> The Berthelette, Chartier and Robert families' persistence according to the table above, seem to correspond to two of the characteristics Buchanan elaborates in her research. The first was the number of male children who were able to settle in the community. Buchanan writes: "the greater the number of male siblings who remained as permanent residents of the community, the more likely it was that an individual would also be a permanent resident."<sup>547</sup> Buchanan explains that the more children for whom a "start" could be provided within the community, the more likely it was that the family had a "superior economic advantage" which in turn "created a superior advantage for

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<sup>546</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 312.

<sup>547</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 301.

the social and economic welfare of family members.”<sup>548</sup> As the table shows, Joseph Berthelette, Flavien Chartier and Celevenne Robert all had two or more sons who established themselves in Aubigny.

Secondly, the characteristic Buchanan describes as “among the earliest arrival cohorts” favouring persistence is also true in Aubigny. In other words, a family’s earlier arrival within the community was an advantage. As Buchanan writes, “the importance of being an early arrival and of having a complex, but not overburdened, local kinship network is confirmed by the association of more cumulative years of family continuity in the community with permanence.”<sup>549</sup> Joseph Berthelette was among the first families in Aubigny. Flavien Chartier for his part, was among the group of Aubigny’s first French-Canadian settlers in 1877, and Celevenne Robert among the first from Quebec in the early 1880’s. However, the sample is far too small to draw the same conclusion, and there is a sense that in this period, families quickly moved on if they were unsatisfied. Whatever the favourable or unfavourable factors were in assuring a family’s persistence within the community Buchanan studied, inevitably only half the amount of settlers who had arrived stayed on.<sup>550</sup> She writes, “slightly more than half of those arriving in the first twenty years [1879-1899] became permanent residents, assisted by the government’s ‘free’ lands policy.”<sup>551</sup> In Aubigny’s case, 20 out of 27 families established children within the parish, represented in the “1<sup>st</sup> Gen” column. In turn, under half of those families established their own children, 11 out of 27, as represented in the “2<sup>nd</sup> Gen” column.

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<sup>548</sup> Buchanan, “In Search of Security,” 301.

<sup>549</sup> Buchanan, “In Search of Security,” 302.

<sup>550</sup> Buchanan, “In Search of Security,” 341.

<sup>551</sup> Buchanan, “In Search of Security,” 341.

Considering outmigration, Buchanan writes that her data suggests two hypotheses which could perhaps also apply to Aubigny's families. There were "external economic opportunities" depending on the region, and the "availability of land in the Canadian Northwest" which the aforementioned Fisette family seems to have taken advantage of, by moving to Saskatchewan according to the local family history.<sup>552</sup> There was also the "increasingly limited numbers entering farming" as the "trend toward larger, more commercial farming operations" grew. Conversely and in parallel, Buchanan writes, "problems of land acquisition associated with inheritance" and the impatience for financial independence and disillusionment "with the rewards of farming" spurred outmigration.<sup>553</sup>

In "'History of us': social science, history, and the relations of family in Canada," Cynthia Comacchio writes of kinship and persistence in a similar way to Buchanan. Thus, while immigration was "a process motivated by family imperatives and sustained by family networks that functioned as cushions against alienation and destitution," family could at once be "a unit of survival, solidarity and support, and also [...] the setting, and source, of interpersonal tensions, gender inequality, and generational conflict."<sup>554</sup> Considering the value of "family" over "individual" characteristic of farm settlers, and family historiography over time, Comacchio writes, "families are depicted as active, shrewd participants, protecting their own interests, pursuing their goals both collectively and on behalf of individual members, though not necessarily consensually or to equal benefit."<sup>555</sup>

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<sup>552</sup> Eidse, *Furrows in the Valley*, 201.

<sup>553</sup> Buchanan, "In Search of Security," 334.

<sup>554</sup> Cynthia Comacchio, "'The History of Us': Social Science, History and the Relations of Family in Canada." *Labour / Le Travail* 46, Special Millenium Issue, (2000), 201.

<sup>555</sup> Comacchio, "'The History of Us,'" 213.

## Persistence and the Changing Economy

Lacking from the analysis so far is an economic aspect to persistence, or continuity, as Sylvester terms it, which his research highlights in *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*. Sylvester selected hundreds of farm-owning households from two cohorts of 1891 and 1901 tax assessments, in the municipality of Montcalm, South of Aubigny.<sup>556</sup> These households comprised a majority of French-Canadian immigrants and “a significant minority” of Ontario settlers.<sup>557</sup> By procuring and analysing mortgage evidence, Sylvester demonstrates how “as farmers’ relationships to the market economy changed, so too did their relationships to their children.”<sup>558</sup> Sylvester’s chapter on continuity contains several remarks that are pertinent to Aubigny’s farm-owning families and help explain forces otherwise invisible in our small data sample. For example, Sylvester writes that families who might not have benefited from land procured through the Homestead Act, and might have instead bought land in the 1880s could have “continued to pay for the inflated [value of land] of those years [and had debts that] cast a long shadow over families with insufficient capital or family labour power.”<sup>559</sup> Families who might not have been in such a scenario may have nevertheless faced “pressures from the land market [that] increasingly restricted the capacity of even the best-situated parents to provide all their heirs with a start in life.”<sup>560</sup> Families either sold their land or passed on “much of the residual debt to their heirs” or had “to ask for market value for the land to satisfy outstanding

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<sup>556</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 16.

<sup>557</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 12.

<sup>558</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 135.

<sup>559</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 144.

<sup>560</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 144.

obligations.”<sup>561</sup> Fewer members from the succeeding generation could therefore be established, and parents held on to their land much longer.<sup>562</sup>

These were the effects of commercialization, of farming lots more than three times the size of farms in Quebec, where 50 acres were enough for a family’s survival.<sup>563</sup> Sylvester was nonetheless able to compare data between English, German and French-Canadian households and find differences in family persistence. There was, for example, “a higher proportion of francophone property transmission [that] remained within families”<sup>564</sup> and “francophones and Mennonites did stay on the farm longer.”<sup>565</sup> These traditions of family succession forced families to confront “the benefits of change against those responsibilities” and some did so successfully.<sup>566</sup>

## Conclusion

Is it useful to explore kinship ties within a small community like Aubigny? Given the general conclusions, the fact that kinship ties were a means of providing security in old age and that this fell away as capitalism gained ground inside family inheritance practices, Aubigny’s families conform to norms that Buchanan and Sylvester have already shown. Kinship ties in immigration too, conform to what Frenette and Pyée have set out in their research. And what Pyée writes for Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes could just as well apply to Aubigny : “une analyse à l’échelle locale permet de déceler une multiplicité de réseaux migratoires souvent connectés

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<sup>561</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 144.

<sup>562</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 144.

<sup>563</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 47-8.

<sup>564</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 140.

<sup>565</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 170.

<sup>566</sup> Sylvester, *The Limits of Rural Capitalism*, 194.

les uns aux autres et fondés sur des liens familiaux, d'amitié, communautaires et cléricaux."<sup>567</sup>

But diving into the registries to find kinship ties below the surface, in god-parenting roles for example, provides an additional layer to kinship ties that are the strength of family reconstitution based on registries. Had there not been access to Aubigny's registry, nor Quebec's, nor Gail Morin's transcription of the registry from the parish of St. Joseph in North Dakota, knowledge of these settler families would remain superficial. But thanks to these registries it is possible to get a feeling for the intensity of community fostered by these ties... ties reconstituted as families crossed Canada and rebuilt parishes, some families even reuniting, not necessarily inter-marrying, but instead, in the reshuffling of colonisation, creating new connections among families within the parish as seen in the chord diagram, and illuminating, through their choice of godparents, as children were born, less evident matrilineal lines as in the cases of the Martineau and Girouard families. As for persistence, registries – although not an ideal metric, do show families' preponderance in the parish, as in the case of the Berthelette, Chartier, Hébert, Clément and Robert families, contributing to a parish's characteristics by the families that are at its center and validating the observation: "C'est la famille, en premier lieu, et la paroisse ou l'Église, en second lieu, qui fondent la solidarité sociale en français."<sup>568</sup>

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<sup>567</sup> Pyée, "La terre promise," 357-8.

<sup>568</sup> Étienne Rivard, "Diversification culturelle et dispersion spatiale dans les plaines de l'Ouest," in *La francophonie nord-américaine*, ed. Yves Frenette, Étienne Rivard, and Marc St-Hilaire (Presses de l'Université Laval, 2012), 158.

## Conclusion

Painchaud's 1969 master's thesis on French-Canadian immigration to Manitoba concludes with the sentence: "le champ de travail est très vaste et exige encore beaucoup d'études,"<sup>569</sup> and it would be nice to think that 56 years later "le champ de travail's" vastness has diminished somewhat, but at almost midpoint between then and now, Sylvester writes: "so few modern historians in Canada have taken rural life to heart."<sup>570</sup> Could such a microhistory contribute in diminishing the lacuna? Hardly! And yet it felt important to take advantage of all the local archives – online and at the Historical Society of St. Boniface – to test what were the constraints in telling the story of a particularly small community.

This research was constantly in dialogue with Aubigny's local history and it is heartening to find among historians like Joan Sangster, an academic respect for books like *Furrows in the Valley*. She writes that academics in 1952, for example, severely criticized these endeavors written "par des amateurs qui n'avaient aucune formation professionnelle. Ils sélectionnaient donc les contenus de leurs écrits sans discernement et proposaient aux lecteurs des 'souvenirs', des récits d'événements 'pittoresques' et festifs ainsi que des anecdotes." She muses,

Il se peut que l'histoire locale ait été dénigrée dans le passé parce qu'elle résultait du bénévolat, surtout celui des femmes. Privées d'accès à l'éducation supérieure et aux emplois universitaires, les femmes devinrent souvent des historiennes amateurs en créant des sociétés historiques locales, en contribuant à la production de revues historiques regionales et en réclamant l'érection de monuments historiques.<sup>571</sup>

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<sup>569</sup> Painchaud, 170.

<sup>570</sup> Sylvester, 3.

<sup>571</sup> Joan Sangster, "L'évolution de l'histoire locale: de marginale à centrale," *Histoire Québec* 22, no. 2 (2016), 5-6.

However, had there not been a local history done for Aubigny, this curiosity to check facts with the use of the registries as a primary source would not have been as interesting an endeavor. Aubigny's local history provided paths for questions that primary sources could answer, but it also provided a contrast as those questions were answered. In particular, this was the case for the origin of the town's name, but more broadly, the registries reapportioned families' "weight" their "claim to consideration"<sup>572</sup> at the outset of the parish's history, a feature of the generational and societal remove at the heart of the questions themselves.

Why Aubigny? Beyond the personal connection to the town, a connection one can also find in Sylvester's choice of Montcalm for example, few rural towns in Manitoba benefit from academic research into their history. This presented an opportunity, "What can be said of a small parish?" and a challenge, "What does one parish's history count for?". Answering the first uncovered the presence, dispersal and persistence of Métis families, the results of the Colonisation Society's efforts at recruiting francophone immigrants, and the strength of kinship that molded the community's establishment. Aubigny presents a remarkable unity among its parishioners who were, except for two families, for the majority French-Catholic. But it was a parish that suffered for its small size, unable to sustain a priest in its first decade, envired, in the municipality of Morris, by a majority of immigrants who were not Catholic, or not French. Answering the second question throws into relief the potential benefit of registry access in other French-Canadian parishes, their immigrant families' reconstitutions and the role clergy played – whether overseeing the community's growth or weathering its challenges. Detailed research that relays the specifics of a single community hint at macro-history questions and

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<sup>572</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "weight (n.)," May 2025.

believe the limits of the present research. How do small French-Canadian parishes compare amongst themselves? How much family mobility was there between parishes? How could academic research into specific communities enrich primary and secondary school social studies?

The answers that this thesis provides to the questions in the introduction do not diverge from what is generally known about the history of francophones in the province. Rather, they zoom in on a parish and render it in greater detail. Its Métis families were in the majority connected to the once prosperous Berthelettes, and, though discreet, they too were involved in the events that rocked the Métis in the turbulent years of Riel's exile. Its immigrant families can be retraced and categorized by the location of their departure, not only by country or province, but by parishes of origin, by the towns in which they found work, by the evidence they left as vital statistics and census responses that show, in many cases, evidence of boundary-crossing mobility and willing responsiveness to colonisation schemes. At its base, a parish is made up of families, but it is surprising the extent to which kinship plays a role, first in a family's decision to immigrate, and second in governing the ties that are created within a community. Kinship, although sequestered to the fourth chapter, pervades the previous three, built as it is on family – the “cellule de base”<sup>573</sup> as Frenette puts it. Protecting its form, or reinforcing its shape, is the Catholic Church – an institution that systematized the main events in a family's history. Were it not for this practice, there would be no registry. And yet, registries were not unique to the Catholic Church. And here, a little paradox as to the determination of the greater of two forces... Is it family that unites all the components of this study? Or is it the Catholic Church to

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<sup>573</sup> Frenette, *Brève histoire*, 54.

which the families adhered? As this conclusion is being written, over a hundred years since Aubigny's registry was opened, once mighty institutions have been questioned and have faltered in their strength. The family "cellule de base" has taken on shapes unrecognizable to pioneers like Joseph, Flavien and Celevenne. And yet, there is a quality motivating both these forces; one that can be recognized now as then, defined as "Firm trust or belief in or reliance upon something (e.g. the truth of a statement or doctrine; the ability, goodness, etc., of a person, the efficacy or worth of a thing); confidence; credence"<sup>574</sup> that is faith. Thus this microhistory of Aubigny attests to this undeniable quality, in the various aspects it prioritized, in the end constituting a community.

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<sup>574</sup> Oxford English Dictionary, "faith," accessed October 2025.

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