FRENCH-AMERICAN HERITAGE FOUNDATION OF MINNESOTA

* *

February 08, 2026 By Rémi Roy

LA LANGUE DE CHEZ NOUS
The Language of Mae Collette

The Prairie Frontier

Unlike her perfectly bilingual husband, Joseph Roy, my grandmother, Mae Collette, initially struggled with English, even though they both spent their early childhood in North Dakota. According to her daughter Joanne, “when she arrived in Lampman, Grandma's English was rather poor as she spoke only French in their home.” Grandma's French was the rich, colourful, rustic language of Franco-Manitobans—the same tongue that courses through the novels of Gabrielle Roy, who is perhaps the most widely read novelist in Canada, in both French and English through her translated works. Grandma came from a “Little Québec,” a compact block of Franco-Manitoban settlement on the Red River; in contrast, Francophones in Saskatchewan were more dispersed, making cultural survival more difficult.

Lottie Mae Collette and Joseph Roy
Winnipeg, 1913

Joanne, Daughter of Mae and Joseph Roy
On her passport, her name is listed as
Marie Jeanne d’Arc Thérèse Roi.

While the Gervais brothers played a significant role in opening the Minnesota frontier and founding settlements that became cities, Grandma knew nothing of these men or their exploits. (see Gervais) Though she had been born in the neighbouring city of Anoka, Minnesota, she was completely unaware of her family's historical weight. To her, this *héritage tranquille* was simply the way she spoke and her religion. When I asked about her ancestry, she could only provide one name: her grandfather, Denis Collette.

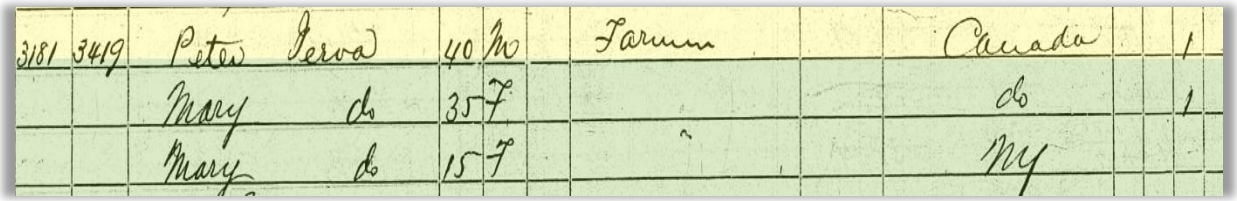
Maison de Denis Collette, Saint-Lambert-de-Lauzon, Québec
House Belonging to Denis Collette, Mae's Grandfather

Église Saint-Étienne
St. Stephen's Church, Anoka, MN
Mae's Place of Baptism, 1890

In tightly knit enclaves, French Canadians intermarried and kept their language, religion, and traditions for generations. A commitment to *survivance* contributed to the desire to live in *Canadien* neighbourhoods. The unwavering desire to preserve the French language, Roman Catholic faith, and ancestral customs meant maintaining a separate identity in America. They continued the struggle for the survival of the *Canadien* language and culture, and they saw themselves as just as American as the original English colonists. Moving to *Canadien* communities in the United States, the emigrants felt that they were expanding the territory of *la nation canadienne*, to which they maintained their fidelity.

The Archaic Accent—*Le França*

Grandma likely retained much of her great-great-grandmother's accent. She was born in 1770 and migrated south from the Montréal shore to Champlain, New York, around 1808. This maternal legacy was passed down through six generations of women living in the United States, ending with Grandma's death in 1998. She called her mother tongue *le França*, pronouncing the *-ais* and *-ait* endings with the short a sound of "cat." This phonetic trait was a hallmark of 17th and 18th-century Laurentian French and explains why, in the New York censuses of 1840 and 1850, her great-grandfather, Louis Pierre Gervais, was recorded as "Gerva." The census takers were simply writing what they heard. This is the New York 1850 census, including the names of his wife and his eldest daughter, grandma's grandmother.



Émilie Samson Collette and Phillipe Collette
Mae's Mother and Father
Émilie Is the Daughter of Marie Gervais Samson

Marie Gervais Samson
Mae Likely Never Knew This Grandmother
(Daughter of Louis Pierre Gervais and Marie Tremblay)

Louis Pierre Gervais
Mae's Great-Grandfather
Founder of Maple Grove, Minnesota
Brother of Benjamin Gervais

Gervais Sisters – Daughters of Louis Pierre Gervais and Marie Tremblay
Mae's Grandmother and Mae's Great-Aunts
Front Row: Marthe Gervais Bottineau (Wife of Pierre Bottineau),
and Marie Gervais Samson (Mae's Grandmother)

Mae called her people *les Canadiens* and the homeland le *Canadaw*. In her prayers, the Blessed Virgin wasn't *la Vierge*, but *la Viarge*. She avoided the modern "mwah" and "twah" (*moi* and *toi*), sticking to the old-school "*mway*" and "*tway*"—her own married name, Roy, was pronounced *Rway*, the way the King's name was spoken at the court of Versailles. She spoke with a rolled "R" flipped with the tip of the tongue—a feature of Molière's time that vanished long ago in France and has since faded in Québec.

When she spoke French with my girlfriend from Québec, Louise remarked that Grandma sounded Acadian. It is a common perception among Québécois that the prairie accent shares that rhythmic, archaic quality. Virgil Benoit was a professor at the University of North Dakota, and noted this when he hosted students from the University of Laval in 1984; they, too, found that the local French pronunciation "seemed Acadian." He told me that his own folks spoke French much the same way my grandmother did, using, for example, the pronunciation *franç*a.

Having studied at French-speaking universities and taught at a French college, my pronunciation had shifted toward a more neutral "Radio-Canada" French. In later years, while speaking with my father, I used the expression, "*Ça ne prend pas la tête à Papineau*" (It doesn't take a genius.) I pronounced the word head as *tête*—like *tete-a-tete* in English. He immediately corrected me. "We said it like *tight*," he remarked. My grandmother pronounced it that way, too.

I had grown up with *Mémé's mamanais*—that 18th-century French baby talk passed down through the generations. She doted on me with words like: *bobo* (ouchie), *dodo* (nap), *toutou* (doggie), and *cou cou, le voila!* (peek-a-boo, here I am). She once had a dog named *Patou*—an old variation of *pitou*, which was just another name for doggie.

For the most part, I spoke with Grandma almost exclusively in French. Her French was notably more 'classical' than the dialects heard in many parts of Eastern Canada today, and certainly more so than in some regions of France. She once scoffed at the harsh, strident accent of a professor from Northern France or Belgium that I had mimicked, who pronounced *manger as 'muncher'*. She laughed in disbelief; it was a sound utterly foreign to her own soft, prairie accent: "*maing-zhay*."

When my sister came home from school and repeated, in an atrocious English accent, the French she was learning from her Anglophone teachers—phrases like "*La chatte est derrière la porte*," which came out as "*LLah shaht-tuh ay dairy-air LLah porre-tuh*," with the heavy North American R, or "*mercy bo cue*" for merci beaucoup. To Grandma, this sounded like 'mercy, beau cul'—a cheeky compliment to a lady: "mercy me, what a beautiful ass!"—Grandma howled with laughter and promptly "corrected" the mangled accent—it should have been *Marsi bo coo*, she said.

Laurentian French and the *Filles du Roy*

The early settlers of New France were not the traditional peasants one might expect. In fact, only 25% came from rural backgrounds; the vast majority came from urban centers. Primarily under the age of thirty, these tradespeople and soldiers were far more "modern" and francophone than the subjects living in *la France profonde*.

The true linguistic transformation, however, began with the arrival of approximately 800 *Filles du Roy* (the King's Daughters) between 1663 and 1673. These young women were the architects of the French language in North America. When they first arrived, the colony consisted of barely 3,000 people. The impact of these founding mothers cannot be overstated; they gave birth to roughly 4,500 children, effectively standardizing the speech of

an entire generation. At the time, around half of the men in the colony spoke little to no French, communicating instead in regional *patois*. (see Les Filles du Roy)

L'arrivée des jeunes filles fançaises à Québec, 1667
The Arrival of the French Girls in Québec, 1667
Watercolor by C.W. Jefferys (1869–1951)

Specialists estimate that 80% of these women were already fluent in French, and nearly half were Parisian. Most had been raised in orphanages where they received an excellent education, learning to read and write in a non-patoisant French close to the language of the King's court. As the literate members of their households, they naturally took the dominant role in family life, ensuring that their children spoke in some ways, like "King's French" rather than their fathers' regional dialects.

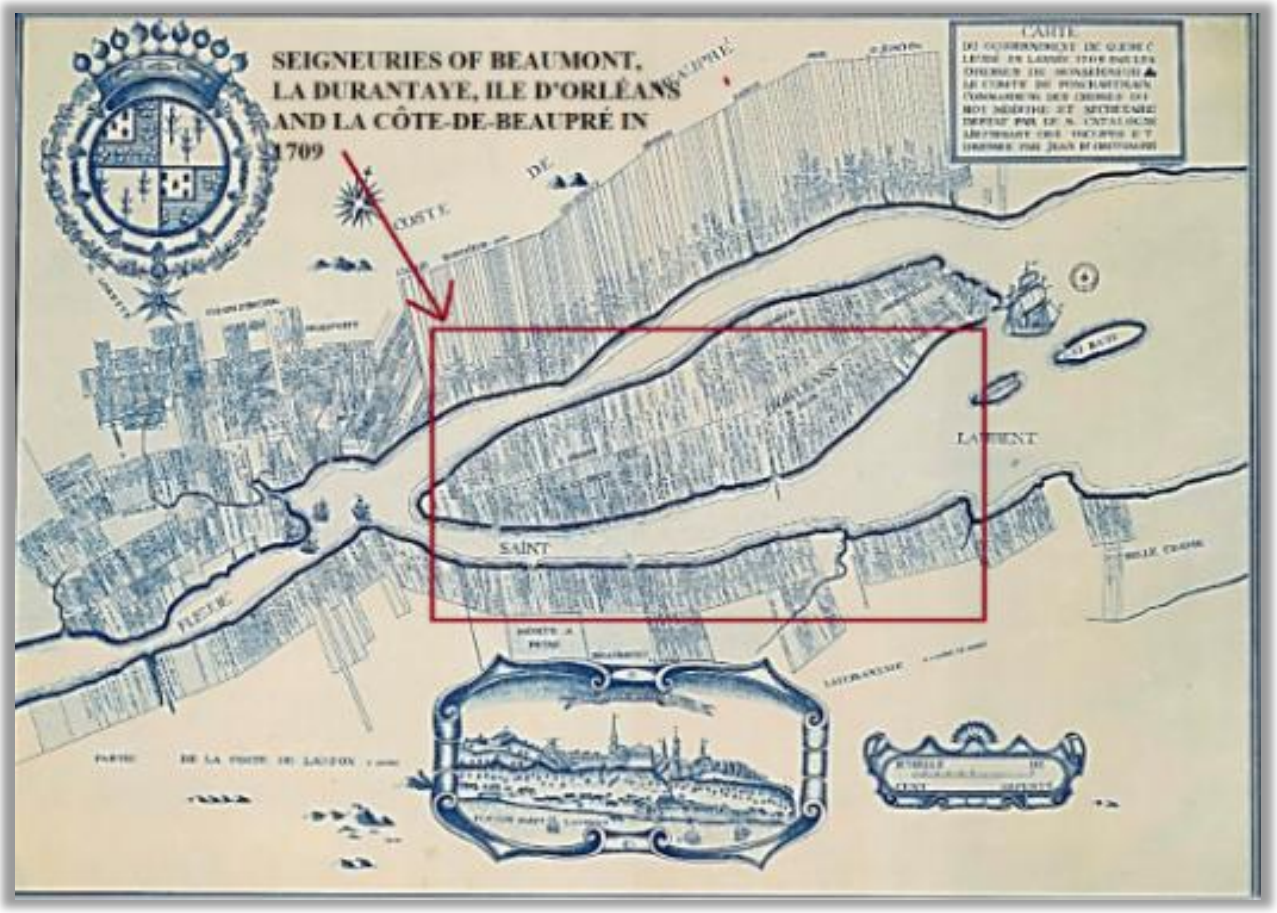
This linguistic unity was further solidified by the arrival of the French-speaking Régiment Carignan-Salières in 1665, many of whom settled in the colony and married *Filles du Roy*. Among Grandma's ancestors was one such couple: the 17-year-old orphan, Madeleine Després and soldier Nicolas Audet, who have over 2,500,000 descendants. (For their biographies, see my biographical dictionary of the 400 pioneers of my father who came to Canada.)

Madeleine DESPRÉS - b.1653 → Marie AUDET - b.1682 → Marie CREPEAU - b.1703 → Marie Ursule NOEL - b.1745 → Marie Thérèse LECLERC - b.1778 → Mathilde VERMETTE- b.1823 → Philippe COLLETTE - b.1848 → **Lottie Mae COLLETTE - b.1890**.

Incredibly, while Grandma and Grandpa's children claim 31 Filles du Roy as ancestors in total, 15 of those women now have between 1,000,000 and 2,500,000 descendants each, according to the *Généalogie des Français d'Amérique du Nord.* This massive lineage illustrates how a small, determined group of women became the biological and linguistic mothers of an entire continent.

Because of this unique history, women became the pivotal figures in *Canadien* families—a dynamic that set them apart from their counterparts in France and the neighbouring Puritan American colonies. In the colony, women enjoyed far more latitude and influence than those in Europe. Grandma Mae was a direct descendant of this fierce heritage. One of her own ancestors, Esther Sayward, had been kidnapped from a Puritan settlement during the border raids and ransomed to New France. When the opportunity eventually came for her to be

"rescued" and returned to her original home in the American colonies, she flatly refused. She had discovered a level of freedom in the French colony—legal, social, and personal—that was non-existent in the rigid, austere world of the Puritans. By the time her English relatives arrived to bring her back, she had even forgotten how to speak her mother tongue. She had become, in every sense, a woman of New France. (see Baker)



All the ancestors of Mae's father, Philippe Collette, lived within an area of roughly 12 by 15 miles as outlined in red on above chart from 1709. Île d'Orléans is in the middle surrounded by the Fleuve Saint-Laurent (St. Lawrence River). Québec City is on the north shore.

By 1700, Laurentian French, the tongue of the St. Lawrence River Valley, was much more uniform than the French spoken in France itself. After 1789, the revolutionaries in France eliminated the Parisian aristocracy and their manner of speech, yet that *langue royale* was preserved in Canada. When the Revolution occurred, Parisian-street speech became the new norm. Pronunciations like "mwah" and "twah" for *moi* and *toi*, which were considered a vulgar dialect before the uprising, were imposed throughout the new Republic as a political litmus test. To speak like an aristocrat was enough to get you hauled before a revolutionary tribunal. Low-class speech won the day in France, while the speech of the Parisian court remained in Canada and, eventually, in the pockets of the United States, where Mae's ancestors settled.

Mae's Grandfather Denis Collette and Sons
Mae's Father Philippe Collette Seated on Left

However, Montréal was a hub of the fur trade, attracting many hardy settlers from northern France, particularly Normandy and Perche. While Québec City was the seat of government and attracted more "official" Parisian types, leaving the speech of that area more like old Parisian Colonial French, Grandma's maternal ancestors lived on the Montréal South Shore, in the seigneury of *La Prairie*, for about 150 years. Almost all of her mother's pioneer ancestors who settled there were from Normandy.

Influenced by the Norman accent, their language took root for generations before the migration to the United States. It was this blend, the "King's French" of some of the Filles du Roy mixed with the salty influence of Normandy, that Grandma Mae eventually carried to the prairies. Just as the *Filles du Roy* had anchored the colony centuries before, Grandma Mae made her voice heard and served as the guardian of the language. This fierce linguistic independence was matched by a political one; while the *Filles du Roy* anchored the home, their descendants were ready to pick up a musket to defend their vision of a French Canada.

The *Patriotes* of the American Revolution and 1837

The lineage carries a legacy of military service through the Second Canadian Regiment (also known as "Congress's Own"). Recruited initially in Québec and later among *Canadien* refugees in the northern New York colony, the regiment was organized on a French-style four-battalion structure. These soldiers earned a reputation for exceptional discipline and combat performance at Staten Island, Brandywine, and Germantown. They called themselves les *patriotes*. They shared the same hatred of the British as the Americans. The *patriotes* hoped that if the Americans succeeded with French support, after a British defeat, the French would return to govern Canada again. (see Everest)

Second Canadian Regiment Uniform
Watercolor by Charles M. Lefferts (1873–1923)

Most significantly, the *Canadien* Regiment played a meaningful role in the Siege of Yorktown. On September 24, 1781, Colonel Moses Hazen was given command of the Second Brigade in the Marquis de Lafayette's Light Division—placing his *Canadien* soldiers directly under Lafayette's command. They took part in the key siege operations that helped force the British surrender.

At Yorktown, where French troops outnumbered the Americans, a fascinating linguistic divide existed. While the professional French soldiers arriving from Europe primarily spoke regional dialects, with only about 10-12% fluent in standard French, the *Canadien* soldiers were remarkably different. While the French army relied on non-commissioned officers to serve as translators between the troops' "patois" and the standard French of the command, the *Canadiens* already spoke a standardized colonial French; they had for generations. In 1871, generations after the American War of Independence, only one quarter of the French population in France itself spoke standard French.

Many of these soldiers originated from the Bellechasse region of the colony, the same region where Grandma's ancestors lived. The main recruiter was a Collette cousin, Captain Clément Gosslin. (see Dufour) Because they had taken up arms against the British Crown, these men were the United States' first refugees. Many settled in the Refugee Tract, which was officially

organized as Clinton County, with the Town of Champlain among its first settlements. It was the first *Little Canada* in the United States. Grandma's great-great-grandparents migrated there shortly after to join *patriote* relatives, following this path into the young Republic. Champlain was the starting point for some early French-Canadian migration to the American Midwest.

Patriots in November 1838
Sketch by Katherine Jane Ellice (1813–1864)
Beauharnois Rebels Led by Jean Baptiste Laberge

HMS Buffalo Sailing Towards Australia, c. 1840
Painting by Maritime Artist Paul Deacon (Born 1953)
***Patriotes* Jean Laberge and Pascal Pinsonneault**
Were Among Those Deported on This Ship

Most French Canadians were at once wary of but also admired Americans. They considered English Canadians, many of whom were descendants of the Loyalists to the King, who left the U.S. for Canada, *des Américains manqués*, failed, second-class Americans.

In 1837–1838, there was an attempted liberal republican insurrection in Lower Canada (Québec). These latter-day *patriotes* greatly admired the American political system; many wanted to establish a French-speaking republic or at least to achieve democratic republican institutions for Canada within the British framework. But the superior British troops crushed the insurrection. After the defeat, some *patriotes* took refuge in Clinton County, reinvigorating the republican ideals of the American Revolution. Grandma's ancestors there likely already shared these ideals with their *patriote* relatives in St-Philippe. This Montréal south shore was a hotbed of *patriote* activity in 1837. It was less than 30 miles away, and family ties remained strong through a constant *va-et-vient* (coming and going).

A nephew of Grandma's great-great-grandmother, Marguerite Pinsonneault, from St. Philippe, Pascal Pinsonneault, accused of murder, was sentenced to death; he was later exiled to Australia. One of the great grandfathers of a cousin of Grandma from her father's side, Réne Collette, Jean Baptiste Laberge, was a leader in the Rebellion and also received the death sentence for his part in the uprising. The ruling was changed to deportation, and he was also exiled to Australia. They were sent on the same ship, the HMS *Buffalo*, along with 55 other *patriotes* in 1839. (See Messier for biographies of Jean Laberge, Pascal Pinsonneault and ten of his other well-known relatives, most of any family involved in the insurrection.)

Grandma knew nothing of this, but she was very positive about the U.S., remained an American citizen, and stayed in touch with her relatives in North Dakota. Her parents moved to Manitoba from North Dakota, not only for cheaper land but also lured by the recruitment efforts of the Canadian government to return, this time to open the West, so as not to lose their language and religion. For their honeymoon, Grandma and Grandpa visited her relatives in Oakwood, North Dakota. She said, "It was a memorable week, filled with laughter, singing old French songs, and plenty of fun". (To listen to the songs they had sung, see *Le P'tit Canada* in Prairie French.)

While these *patriotes* in the Refugee Tract clung to their 18th-century standard of speech as a badge of honour, a very different linguistic evolution was taking place later, further east in the industrial 'Little Canadas' of Massachusetts.

The Convent, Gabrielle Roy, and Jack Kerouac: The Sacred, the Sublime, and the Profane

Like Gabrielle Roy, Grandma was educated in a convent; her written French was flawless, unlike that of many of my Québécois students. Gabrielle Roy was widely considered the preeminent Canadian *écrivaine* (writer) of her time. Despite growing up in Manitoba and being fully bilingual, she chose to write solely in French as a response to the marginalization of Francophones in her home province.

Couvent des Soeurs des Saints Noms de Jésus et de Marie
Convent of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary
Built 1897–1898 in St. Jean Baptiste, Manitoba
Convent Where Mae Collette Attended School

There is a television series called Le Monde de Gabrielle Roy. The first season depicts the author's childhood in Saint-Boniface and her visits to her relatives in nearby villages and in Saskatchewan. The characters' speech authentically restores the language of that era, echoing the cadence of my grandmother's voice. While the *tournures de phrases* remain familiar, Grandma's accent felt more ancestral—perhaps a legacy of her mother's side. Roy's grandmother's language is a closer match in accent and vocabulary; for instance, she uses the word "catin" for a ragdoll.

The second season explores her life as a young adult, acting with *Le Cercle de Molière*, the oldest continuously running theatre company in Canada, and her journey as a teacher in Manitoba. The troupe won several awards at the Dominion Drama Festival in the 1930s, proving to the rest of Canada that French culture was thriving outside of Québec. The series shows the arrogance of the snobbish Montréal participants, looking down on these *rejetons d'habitants* (descendants of peasants) who left so long ago to live on the primitive western frontier, and their dejection when the country bumpkin underdogs from the prairies won!

Through English translations, Gabrielle became the most widely read Canadian author among both French and English-speaking readers. Her father, a cousin of Grandma's father-in-law, followed the same migration from Beaumont, Québec, to the textile mills in Massachusetts and finally to Manitoba. Because they worked in the mills for less than five years, they didn't pick up the factory argot. They brought the language of old Québec to the prairies intact.

Grandma, too, was comfortable navigating these two worlds. Fully bilingual, she moved easily between her Irish friends and her *Canadien* and Métis neighbours. On the community party telephone lines, she would speak French daily with some friends, like Dora Nadon, much to the chagrin of the nosy Anglophone “rubber-neckers.” (see Conversations with Old Residents in Prairie French)

Gabrielle brought a new realism to literature with her landmark novel *Bonheur d’occasion (The Tin Flute).* She was the first Canadian to win France's prestigious *Prix Femina*, and the book became a massive international bestseller; in the United States, it was a Literary Guild selection and sold nearly a million copies. She was among those who laid the groundwork for the Quiet Revolution in Québec.

Grandma’s education likely influenced her distinct vocabulary. For instance, her word for crotch was *califourchon*, which in standard French means "astride," whereas the common term is *entrejambe*. Thinking of it now, it could have been a quaint euphemism for the more vulgar word *fourche*. Because Grandmother was educated in a convent, the sisters would have been very careful with vocabulary; perhaps they took an adverb and turned it into a "polite" name for a body part. I was still a very young child when I overheard her use a unique expression with my father as we watched our dog urinating: "*Le chien a pris ses précautions*." To my ears, the mysterious new word sounded like *prokoss-i-own* (prokosjɔ̃), with the slight nasal ending of prairie French “*ion.*” I thought it simply meant *pipi*, a *mamanais* like *caca*. In reality, she was much more formal; she was stating that the dog had "taken the necessary precautions." She always addressed her best friends as "Madame"—Madame Nadon, Madame Côté, among others.

When my father returned from the war after nearly a year in Paris, he dismissed his parents' language as "*habitant patois*," considering it less than "real" French. He was wrong. The language was simply different, much like the distinctions between British and American English. The relaxed French spoken among *Canadiens* differed from the language used in formal contexts, such as religious ceremonies, legal matters, and traditional songs (*chansons à répondre*) at *soirées*, pronounced (*sway rays*), where Grandpa would get in two-step competitions. Evidence of this linguistic depth was in the seamless communication between Grandma and the priests and nuns from France at the nearby convent school where she sent her eldest son.

Mae Collette Roy and Son Wilfred 1942

Wilfred Roy (1919–2005)
In Paris After the War, May 1945 to January 1946
Author Rémi Roy’s Father

Grandma spoke with the old *Canadiens*' methodical cadence, a slow delivery that Gabrielle Roy noted in her work. However, her rhythm shifted instantly when she prayed. Travelling together once, we hit a dangerous section of road, and she instinctively began reciting her litany with lightning speed—we didn't understand a word! Her knowledge of prayers and their use in different situations was truly encyclopedic, as when she reeled off an incantation to St. Anthony when a tool was lost on the farm. She never learned to pray in English.

Gabrielle Roy was born in St. Boniface, but she wrote about visiting the *Canadien* villages where her grandmother and cousins lived (see the episode in the series about her visit to her *mémère* and her short story in *The Oxford Book of French-Canadian Short Stories*). She used earthy words to give her characters a soul. A child's eyes *liraient* (lit up with excitement). She portrayed their *parlure* with phrases like "*chui m'nu au monde icitte*," the old-fashioned, "I came into this world here."

Jack Kerouac used the same expression in his first novel, written in the French of his childhood: "*Chu canadien, m'nu au monde à New England… Quand j'brauille, j'brauille toujours en françа.*" (I am a French Canadian who came into this world in New England. When I cry, I always cry in French). Kerouac was the first to write uniquely in French-Canadian vernacular—the language he heard as a child, which was his only level of French. In a 1967 Montréal interview, he spoke in New England *patois.* (see Kerouac) It was such a contrast from his beautiful, innovative American English; he was the voice of the beat generation. He said his writing was original because English was a second language. He said *"The reason I handle English words so easily is because it is not my own language. I refashion it to fit French images."* He didn't learn English until he went to school, and he still spoke English with an accent until his adolescence. His parents had left Québec around 1890, much later than Grandma's ancestors, at a time when the language in the East was already colliding with the rough slang of the mills.

He said that French Canadian was the most powerful language in the world. He spoke with the same cadence and intonation as Grandma. Some expressions and pronunciations could have come from her, like *père*, which sounded like the English word 'payer' (pé-yère), *Chu tanné d'moi même* -pronounced like mime (I'm tired of myself), *jama*, - *jamais* (never), - *swayer - soir*, (evening), *toutyay - tourtière*. But unlike Kerouac, Grandma never would have said *il watchait*.

Grandma's language itself was worlds apart; hers remained an echo of an earlier era, absorbing the flavours of the frontier while keeping its roots pure. Just as Jack Kerouac's innovative American English was rooted in it being his second language, Grandma Mae's English was also creative. Once, her sister-in-law, Aunt Josephine—who visited from California and truly embodied that lifestyle—persuaded Grandma to chop her long, auburn braids into a short bob. Josephine eventually married and divorced five times. Thirty years later, Grandma whispered to my mother with polite, but quite suggestive, convent primness: 'Her centrepiece must be worn out".

Around this time, the great Québécois playwright Michel Tremblay, whose mother was a Métis from Saskatchewan, was also transforming the literary landscape. He was inspired by Roy's portrayal of the language of simple people in Manitoba and in working-class Montréal, and by the prairie French of his Métis mother. But he began writing in *joual*. The term *joual*, a corruption of the word cheval (horse), originated as a derogatory label for the urban, working-class French of Montréal. It is characterized by its heavy use of anglicisms and "sacrilegious" profanities known as *sacres*. While it was once dismissed as a "broken" language, writers like Michel Tremblay transformed it into a powerful tool of cultural identity and rebellion during the Quiet Revolution. In the 1967 interview, Kerouac actually pronounces the word cheval as *joual*! And in a 1959 interview, he scoffs at French (from France) pronunciation, as Grandma

always did and even mocks the St. Louis (Missouri French) accent, the ancient voyageur accent so close to Grandma's. (see *C'est pu comme ça anymore* in Prairie French)

Like Grandma, Tremblay's women were "*les patronnes*" (bosses) of the family, a legacy of *les filles du roy*. Grandma would have understood the old expressions in his plays, but not some of the words. In one of his plays, a woman said, "*Y'a rien que les guidounes qui peuvent aimer les hommes, nous autes, on les endure*." (Only the floozies can actually love men; the rest of us just put up with them.) *Guidoune* came from factory slang, which Grandma did not understand, though she could have said, "*nous autes, on les endure*" (and she had a similar opinion of men). In another play, a woman says, "*Regarde la p'tit guidoune avec son air sainte–nitouche*" (Look at the little tart, with her holier-than-thou act). Grandma most probably knew what *Saint-Nitouche*. meant. In another play, a factory worker said, "*Asteure dans ta job steady, tu fa partie de ta tabarnak de machine! C'est pu toé qui watche quand a va faire défaut, c'est elle qui watche*" (Now in your steady job, you become part of your 'tabernacle' of a machine! It's the one running you! You aren't the one watching to see when it's gonna break down, it's the machine that's watching you). I never heard Grandma use an anglicism, and she would have cringed at the word *tabarnak*. In agreement with my father, she would not have considered this to be "real" French, but she would have understood everything. She could have said "*a va faire défaut*." (see *pièces de théatre*)

In the West, there was no *révolution tranquille*; it was rather *l'héritage tranquille*. We preserved what we had. By the 1960s, most Québécois had rejected religion. Most of us stayed true to the Catholic faith. When Grandma died at age 108 in 1998, she still prayed only in French. At that time, most of my Québécois students could not recite one prayer. Grandma's family had preserved traditions that had been forgotten in Québec. On New Year's Day, she said to me, "*Bonne heureuse année*," which I found strange (good, happy year?). She pointed to a lithograph hanging on a wall of a father giving his paternal blessing on New Year's Day, as her father did. Her father would start his blessing this way.

La bénédiction du jour de l'an
New Year's Day Blessing
Lithograph by Edmond-Joseph Massicotte (1875–1920)

Author Rémi Roy's First Birthday
Seated with Grandmother Mae Collette Roy
New Year's Day Blessing Lithograph on Wall

The play *Michel & Ti-Jean* by George Rideout explores two distinct expressions of identity. Set in 1969, it depicts an imagined meeting between the young Michel Tremblay and an aging, cynical, jaded Jack Kerouac. Their encounter contrasts, Tremblay's revolutionary French with Kerouac's broken, frozen, and fading New England joual, highlighting the tragedy of a great American author who felt like a French-Canadian boy lost in the U.S., *un Canadien errant* (a wandering *Canadien*), like the title of the iconic French-Canadian song about the *Canadiens* exiled to Australia. (Listen to Mouskouri sing the song)

Grandma, Kerouac, and Tremblay share a connection to the language of the heart; the deepest emotions cannot be translated. One of Tremblay's characters, Pierrette, cries out: "*Ch'pense que j'vas brailler... J'ai l'cœur gros comme une patate... On n'peut pas parler d'd ça en angla, ça sort pas d'la même place*." ("I think I'm going to cry... My heart is as big as a potato... We can't talk about this in English; it doesn't come from the same place.")

Kerouac and Tremblay were also educated by nuns. Kerouac was educated by nuns in a parochial school where they taught French grammar and catechism. However, this did not measure up to Gabrielle Roy's and Grandma Roy's convent French education. Even though the nuns taught "proper" French in the classroom, the moment the bell rang, the kids—and often the teachers themselves—reverted to Lowell *Joual* on the playground and at home. This education did not improve Kerouac's French very much. Michel Tremblay also attended schools run by nuns and priests; he often wrote about how the religious authorities tried to repress the "vulgar" language of the working class. Like Kerouac, he lived the tension between the "proper" French taught in the classroom and the language spoken at home. Grandma did not have this conflict; she boarded at the convent, always surrounded by the nuns.

Lottie Mae Collette and her husband Joseph Roy, Gabrielle Roy, Jack Kerouac, and Michel Tremblay are all cousins through several ancestral lines. This connection exists because a small group of only about 3,000 original settlers serves as the foundation for over 10 million French-descended people today.

Zacharie Cloutier and Xainte Dupont are the "Adam and Eve" of this population, appearing in the lineage of almost every descendant. This shared heritage links Grandma not only to these authors, but also entertainers such as Céline Dion, Justin Bieber, Madonna, Ryan Gosling, Jim Carrey, Angelina Jolie, Beyoncé, Ricky Gervais, Avril Lavigne, Alanis Morissette, and Shania Twain; and influential icons including several Canadian Prime Ministers such as Justin Trudeau and Pierre Trudeau, Hillary Clinton, Camilla Parker Bowles, Alex Trebek, and over six million others.

A central point of connection between Kerouac and Tremblay is their shared obsession with their mothers, the primary keepers of both language and faith. Ultimately, they find common ground in the heavy weight of their Catholic upbringing and the rhythmic "litany" of prayers that shaped their writing styles. These were themes that were close to Grandma's heart. Just as in her own life, the women were the anchors of culture and faith, while the men remained distant figures. While the "profane" French of the cities was shaped by the machine and the mill, Grandma's prairie French remained a mosaic—ancient, resourceful, and quietly enduring.

The Mosaic of Prairie and Western French

A unique "*prairie joual*" emerged—original words and expressions understood only within certain Western communities, like péquat (moonshine). Surrounded by a sea of Anglophones, these settlers adopted anglicisms and calques, such as *factorie* and *pomme de pin* (a literal translation of pineapple), *labour d'été* (summer fallow), *faillir un examen* (to fail an exam), *faire la lune* (to make moonshine), and *fleur* (flour). Some even said *courir ennehors de sel* (to run out of salt). They borrowed English words for new things, like light bulb for *ampoule* and transformed others into words like *wôpile* (woodpile).

Grandma, however, did not use these abominations and calques of her neighbours. She became proficient in English; she learned to speak without an accent. Many French speakers in Canada may not realize they are using anglicisms, particularly if they do not speak English

Les prairies à perte de bue, qui incarnent les accents « prairiens »
The Endless Prairies, Associated with the "Prairie Accents"

themselves. Grandma, however, made a clear distinction between her languages. For her, summer fallow was *jachère*, flour was *farine*, and to run out of salt was *manquer de sel*. Her vocabulary and syntax were relatively modern, devoid of patois or anglicisms. Once in a while, her English betrayed that it was not her mother tongue, like when she said, "*Thanks God!*"

We adapted our vocabulary to the local landscape, borrowing Indigenous names for western plants like the *saskatoon*, a wild berry from which Grandma made the very best pie, and we loved the warm winter wind we called a *chinouk*. Living alongside immigrants from the Russian Empire—Russian Germans and Ukrainians—we adopted words for their food that we came to love but often mispronounced: *olopchi* (cabbage rolls), *bortsch* (beet soup), and *pierogi* (stuffed dumplings).

Western *Canadiens* also preserved expressions that have since faded from the collective memory in Québec, such as the verb *chienner* (to dawdle). Some old voyageur words and expressions made their way back through the influence of the Métis. Expressions such as *chicoque* (skunk), *au temps de la prairie* (in the old days), *pisse tranquille* (a slow worker), and *soulier mou* (moccasin) were picked up. Even today, Franco-Manitobans still say, "*Ça sent la chicoque!*" (It smells like skunk). Curiously, some Métis and *Canadiens* called pemmican, that staple food in the old West, *la viande pilée* (pounded meat), rather than the term borrowed from the Cree. (For a more in-depth discussion of Prairie French, see the chapter in my family history.)

In Québec, *les sacres* (cursing) became parasitic automatisms, used so frequently that speakers were often unaware of them, without any idea of blasphemy. Grandma's ancestors left rural Québec before cursing became widespread. When itinerant workers called *batteux* came from Québec to harvest, Grandma strictly prohibited foul language in front of the children. Her family did not curse. Grandpa's most forceful exclamation in French was "*sacre!*"—literally the word for "oath," like "I swear!", which he pronounced so it sounded like "*sucre*" (sugar). When he spoke English, his curse was also "*Sugar!*" These were euphemisms in both languages. Grandma's strongest words may have been the very mild ancient euphemism, *bon sang de bon sang* (for goodness sake). Grandpa once told a cursing worker: "*nouz aut, on porle paw comme saw par icitte*" (we don't talk like that here).

Yet, their French remained the blunt language of the farm when it came to physical realities. Grandma and Grandpa always spoke English in the presence of Anglophones, like my mother, but when alone, they reverted to French. For health reasons, my grandfather spent his winters in California with his siblings. One afternoon, shortly after his return, my mother overheard them talking in another room: "*J'voué que tu pètes toujours*." Curious, she asked my father what they were saying. He replied with a grin: "Maw said, 'I see that you're still farting."

This earthy honesty extended to the children as well. My aunt Evelyne wrote:

> "In my preschool days, I spoke French as this was the language spoken at home. One day, while on an adventure, we experienced something special. Our mother cat, who was expecting kittens, gave birth while we were there. This was the first time we had experienced this, and we had no idea what was happening. When we got back to the house, I remember saying to my mother in French, '*Maman, la chatte a chié des petits chats,*' which means, 'Maman, the mother cat shit out some little kittens.' My mother was horrified to think that we had witnessed this perfectly natural thing."

Grandma was horrified—not because of the word *chié*, but because she felt the children, especially the girls, should have been shielded from such a thing.

Aunt Evelyne shared another memory:

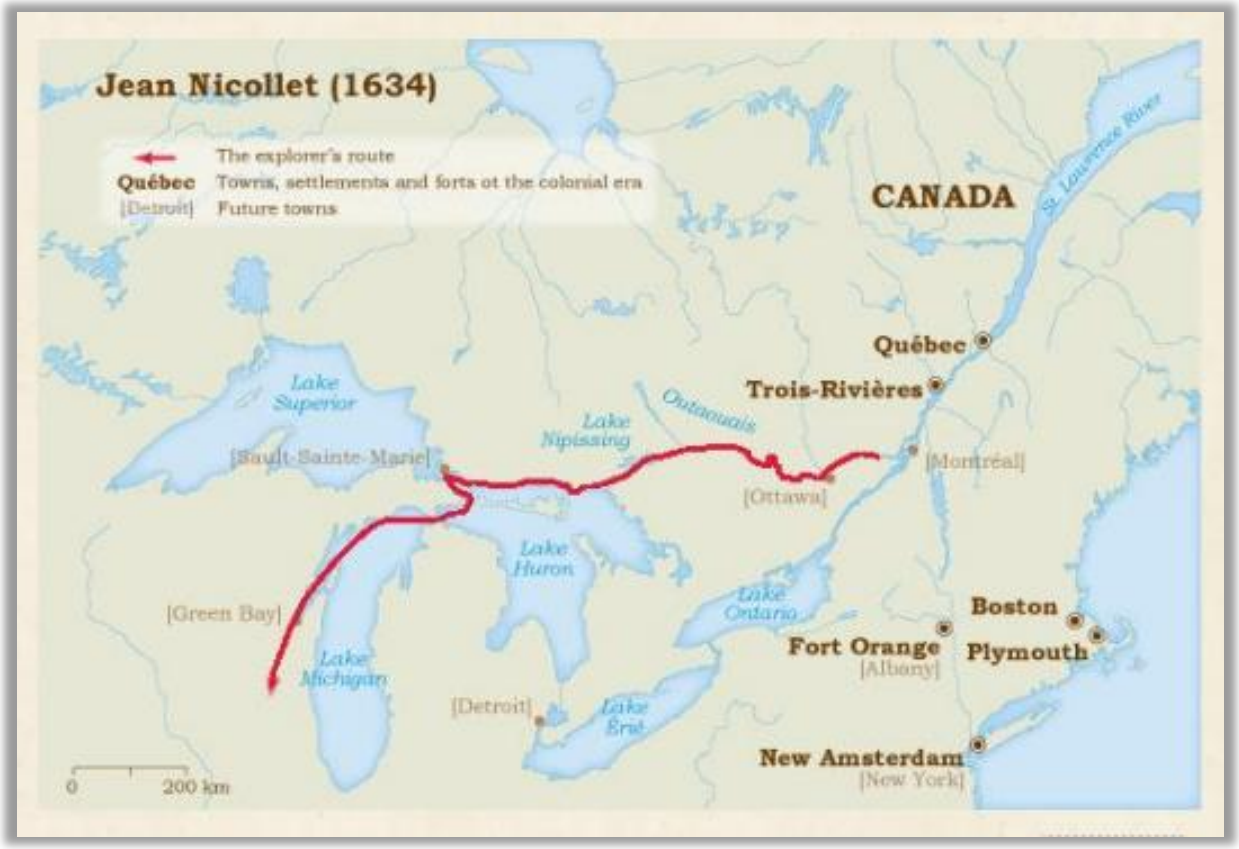
> Another memory I would like to share about Christmas Eve is going to midnight Mass. It was so exciting to get dressed up warmly, and snuggle under blankets at the bottom of the sleigh. I remember the sleigh rides being pleasant and soothing, the jingling of the harness, the sound of the horse's hooves, and the crunch of the runners on the snow. The Mass was beautiful, and the choir was at its best. The hymn I remember best is *Minuit, Chrétiens* (O Holy Night), sung in French by Madame Lalonde.

Grandma frequently used the term *affaires*, and expressions like "*y a pas d'bon sang, faire des affaires de même*" (it makes no sense doing things like that) and "*aller au frette comme ça, c'est des affaires pour attraper la guédille au nez*" (going outside in such cold weather will make your nose drip). There really is no English equivalent for *guédille*, nor does it exist in modern European French. *Frette* is the quintessential Canadian French word for cold. While *froid* is just "chilly," *frette* describes the bone-chilling cold of a Prairie winter. It preserves the original French pronunciation from the 1600s. (see Conversations with old residents…., in Prairie and Western French)

From the St. Lawrence to the Great Plains: The Continental Lingua Franca

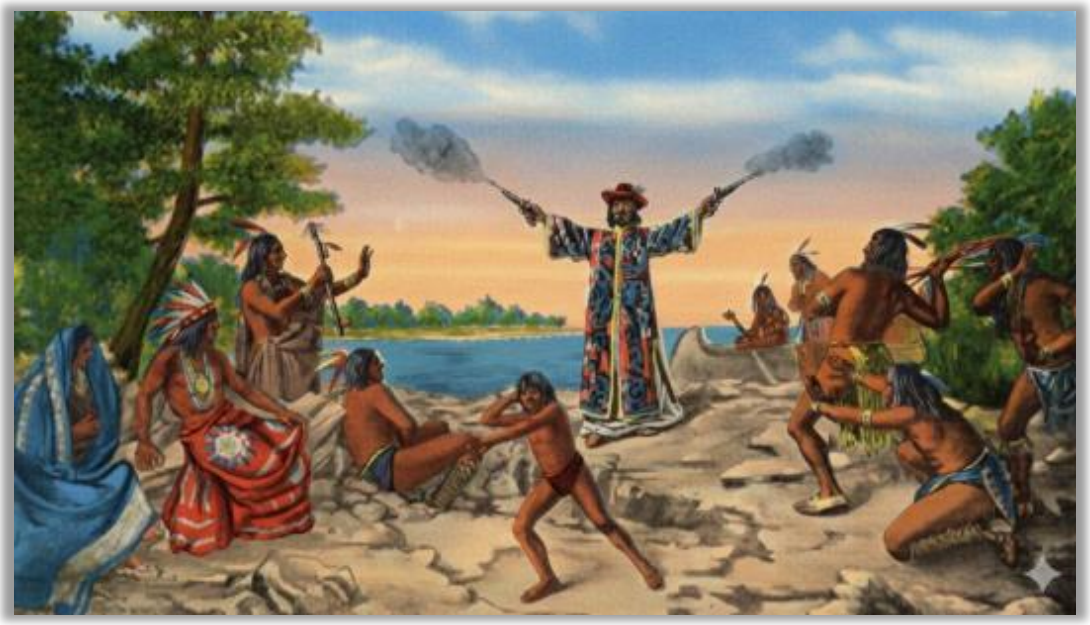
Jean Nicolet's 1634 arrival in the Midwest marked the beginning of a centuries-long presence that shaped the American interior long before Yankee settlers arrived. As historian Robert Foxcurran notes:

> "For 200 years, French was the continental lingua franca from the St. Lawrence Valley... across the Great Plains, all the way to the Pacific coast. When Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific, there were already French-speaking settlements. Their journals and maps were so saturated with French terms that one could onclude the French were the sole inhabitants of the lands the Americans were only then discovering.'"



French Explorer Jean Nicolet's 1634 Route – Image from Virtual Museum of New France
Canadian Museum of History / Musée canadien de l'histoire

This historical record exposes the irony of the American "Corps of Discovery." When Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific, they were latecomers to a world already traversed and named by French speakers. In 1851, when Louis Pierre Gervais founded Maple Grove, Minnesota and his son-in-law, Pierre Bottineau, established the adjoining Osseo, French was still the dominant language of the region, stretching to the Dakotas.



1634 Landing of Jean Nicolet at Red Banks on the Eastern Shore of Green Bay
Painting by Franz Edward Rohrbeck (1852–1919)

French Explorer Jean Nicolet Historical Monument
Cast Bronze Statue by Sidney Nelson Bedore (1881–1955)

Wequiock Falls County Park, Wisconsin
(Statue Relocated from Red Banks, Wisconsin, in 2009)

Note: Funds for this project were raised by a state-wide campaign among Wisconsin school children.

Nicolet's daughter, Euphrosine-Madeleine, was an ancestor of Grandma through her father, and the first métisse woman born in North America outside of Spanish territory to leave a documented lineage. Grandma is also a descendant of Hélène Desportes through her mother in three distinct ways—Hélène being the first child of European descent born in North America beyond the borders of New Spain to survive and have children. Together, these dual matriarchs are the founding mothers of both the French-Canadian and Métis nations and the earliest women of the whole northern continent to leave a living legacy.

Grandma's language was the French of the Great Plains, a tongue that was Canadian, American, and profoundly North American. Although their ancestral roots lay on different shores, first the French and later the English-speaking pioneers were bound together by the shared physical reality of the wilderness. They endured the same climates, navigated the same landscapes, and experienced the same natural world. This lived experience forged a shared North American worldview and a sense of belonging that transcended linguistic divides. The demands of the frontier shaped both North American English and North American French, distancing them from their European origins. In this way, these two languages became more similar to one another in feeling and spirit than to the dialects of the Old World.

Full Circle—La boucle est bouclée

While it's true that the majority of Grandma and Grandpa's descendants no longer speak French, the thread of our *Canadien* cultural traits remains unbroken. As David Vermette eloquently concludes in his book, *A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans*, we "preserve – *joie de vivre*, combined with a keen sense of irony, a fierce love of family, and strong identification with their communities. Stoicism, fatalism, and aversion to 'complaining' shape the collective memory." This cultural resilience, despite the language shift, is a testament to the enduring strength of our shared heritage.

Following a long migration that began on the Montréal South Shore, settling first in Upper New York, then Minnesota, North Dakota, Manitoba, and finally to the plains of Saskatchewan, a linguistic inheritance was passed down through generations of women. The journey has now come full circle; Grandma's language lives on in the descendants of both

wives of her father, Philippe Collette, who reside in Montréal today, 220 years after the family first departed for the United States. Much of her mother's and father's voices endure through them, keeping that original, beautiful language alive. I will always cherish the memory of my grandmother, Lottie Mae Collette, the strongest woman I have ever met.

Joseph and Mae Roy Family in 1929
Children: Philippe, Joanne, Wilfred, George, Evelyn, and John

100th Birthday of Mae Collette
Back: Wilfred, George, John, and Phil
Front: Joanne, Mae, and Evelyn

Grandma's zest for life continued to the end. She asked for a new dress for her 100th and her 105th birthdays. Mae died in 1998, at age 108.

Guest Editor, Rémi Roy, Ph.D.
Born in Lampman, Saskatchewan
Professor Emeritus of Political Science at Collège Montmorency, Laval, Québec
French-American Heritage Foundation 100 Associates Member

Bibliography

Primary Family History

Bernard, Richard. *The Collettes of North Dakota, Minnesota, and Manitoba: A family history.* Woodbury, MN, 2002.

Bernard, Richard. *The First 400 Years, Remembering Four Families (Côté Blondeau, Bernard, Collette).* Woodbury, MN, 2010. Online Access.

Roy, Rémi. *A History of the Roy-Collette Family.* Online Access.

Roy, Rémi. *Roy–Collette Ancestry: Biographical Dictionary of the 400 Pioneers Who Came to Canada.* Online Access.

Les Filles du Roy

A short very good documentary on *Les Filles du Roy* and their role as architects of North American French: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRl_YWbCtwM&t=227s

Barkskins is an American historical drama television series based on the novel of the same name by the Franco-American author Anne Proulx. It originally aired on the National Geographic Channel and is available for purchase on YouTube. The series chronicles the arrival of French colonists in the New World and offers an especially authentic portrayal of the Filles du Roi. https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=barkskins+episode+1

Généalogie des Français d'Amérique du Nord. Filles du Roy.
https://www.francogene.com/gfan/gfan/998/fdr.html

JSTORE. *Filles du roi*: the Founding Mothers of New France. Excerpt: "The influence of these women is evident even now in the French dialect spoken in Québec. Prior to the arrival of the *filles*, the men of New France spoke in a variety of distinct vernaculars they brought with them from their rural French hometowns. The *filles*, mostly from larger cities, arrived with their own urban argots. As primary caretakers of their children, they passed these to the next generation. This Parisian-influenced accent became, through time, the distinct Québécois French taught in Canada today, with its closer roots to eighteenth-century France than contemporary French in Europe."
https://daily.jstor.org/filles-du-roi-the-founding-mothers-of-new-france/

Landry, Yves*. Les Filles du Roy au xviie siècle.* Montréal, 1992.

La Société d'histoire des Filles du Roy. Les Filles du Roy, Pionnières de la Seigneurie de La Prairie. 2019.

Plourde, Michel and Georgeault, Pierre (Editors). *A History of the French Language in Québec: 400 Years of History and Life. Les Publications du Québec*. Online in French.

Gervais Family

Echo de l'ouest (Minnesota Newspaper), 24 December 1891. Obituary of Louis Pierre Gervais.

Labine, Mark*. In the Beginning, There Was a Chapel.* French American Heritage Foundation, 2016.

Neill, Edward D. and Williams, J. Fletcher. *History of Hennepin County and the City of Minneapolis.* 1881.

Vanek, John. *Little Canada Family Gervais Book Project*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NNwOJTdrZvM

Vanek, John. *The Lives of Benjamin Gervais and Geneviève Laurence.*
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CNOYnr42drM

Wingerd, Mary Lethert. *North Country: The Making of Minnesota.* University of Minnesota Press, 2010.

Gabrielle Roy

Ely. Ely, Ely, in The Oxford Book of French-Canadian Short Stories.
https://archive.org/details/oxfordbookoffren00tele/mode/1up

Gabrielle Roy, Dictionary of Canadian Biography
https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/roy_gabrielle_21E.html

Le Monde de Gabrielle Roy. https://ici.tou.tv/le-monde-de-gabrielle-roy/s01 and
https://ici.tou.tv/le-monde-de-gabrielle-roy/s02

Morency, Jean. *"L'influence de Gabrielle Roy sur Michel Tremblay."* (The Influence of Gabrielle Roy on Michel Tremblay.)

Ricard, François. *Gabrielle Roy: A Life*. McClelland and Stewart, 2001.

Roy, Gabrielle, *Enchantment and Sorrow: The Autobiography of Gabrielle Roy*. Translated by Patricia Claxton, Lester & Orpen Dennys, Toronto, 1987.

Kerouac

Kerouac, Jack. *La vie est d'hommage. Boréal*, 2022**.** All of Kerouac's works in French are assembled in this book.

Rideout, George. *Michel Ti-Jean*. Talonbooks, 2014.

Online

Jack Kerouac – a Wandering Canadian? This article is about Kerouac's youth in a 'Little Canada' and his sense of conflicting identities as a "wandering *Canadien*" in the United States. The *Encyclopedia of French Cultural Heritage in North America*, https://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en where this article is found, contains hundreds of other articles and hundreds of songs.
Jack Kerouac - a Wandering Canadian? | Encyclopédie du patrimoine culturel de l'Amérique française and https://www.ameriquefrancaise.org/en/chansons

Kerouac, Jean Louis. *Entrevue en français avec Jack Kerouac en 1967*. (Interview with Jack Kerouac) Archives, Radio Canada. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4lj8dao3Kaw

Part of that same interview with English subtitles.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-r2aOSoRsoE&t=5s

A 1959 interview in French.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7VGW_7RBh4U&t=3s

Part of the same interview with English subtitles.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RssFZh0be8I

Le Grand Jack. “An excellent portrayal of Kerouac’s life. It offers a powerful ‘reanimation’ of his journey, tracing his path from his French-Canadian childhood through to his tragic death.”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EZfvbzsScf0

The Kerouac website https://jackkerouac.org/

Tremblay

Michel Tremblay, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michel_Tremblay

Tremblay, Michel. *Un ange cornu avec des ailes de tôle, Montréal, Arles, Leméac et Actes Sud, 1994*. He writes of his Fransaskois Métis mother.

Vehicule Press, *Michel Tremblay, Bard of Plateau Mont Royal*
https://www.vehiculepress.com/montreal/writers/tremblay.html

Pièces de théatre

Backyard theatre, National Film Board https://www.nfb.ca/film/backyard_theatre/

En pièces détachées Pièce de Michel Tremblay
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjz1c5mhWWA

Françoise Durocher, Waitress, National Film Board. Very good quality. The life of a waitress. It is so typical Tremblay. Like the litany that she reels off in an order to the cook in totally anglicized Montréal joual, it sounds like she is praying.
https://www.nfb.ca/film/francoise_durocher_waitress/

Il était une fois dans l’est Carmen “Gyp-sé”
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuayDLmji1k

Les Belles-Sœurs de Michel Tremblay on YouTube The most famous play by Michel Tremblay. Very good quality. Some of the quotes in my article come from this play.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5hY_mOELItY

Une fois dans l’Est - Denise Filiatrault
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QDzuo0DFMjo

Prairie and Western French

Audio and Video

Benoit, Virgil. Interviews with elder Francophones in the American Midwest. Virgil Benoit is a Professor Emeritus of French at the University of North Dakota. He was born in Red Lake Falls, Minnesota, a French-Canadian enclave in the Red River Valley.

Quand on parlait français au Minnesota, Radio Canada. An interview with Virgil Benoit in French and elders in Minnesota who still speak French, with an accent that is, in ways, closer to my grandmother’s. It also shows some dancing and other heritage as well.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6xzYc8xuLWw

Conversations with Old Residents of Villages Neighbouring my Grandmother's in Rural Manitoba and North Dakota. There are almost 100 recordings of *Canadiens* and Métis of my grandmother's generation. In these recordings, they discuss local history, traditional farming methods, indigenous remedies, and recipes for *Canadien* food. They also preserve many old *Canadien* and Métis songs and expressions. In this interview, Madame Amanda Nadon mentions that she boarded at the Couvent des Sœurs des Saints Noms de Jésus et de Marie in St. Jean Baptiste, Manitoba. This was the same convent Grandma attended; since they were the same age, they certainly knew one another. I noted in my article that Grandma spoke French on the phone every day with our neighbour, Dora Nadon. As it turns out, Dora and Amanda were double first cousins—sharing both sets of grandparents, a fact they all knew, though I was completely unaware of it at the time.
https://archivesshsb.mb.ca/list?q=amanda+lebleu+nee+nadon&p=1&ps=20

L'histoire des francophones à l'honneur au Festival du patrimoine de Montcalm **More Contemporary Manitoban French in these villages.**
https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1986966/familles-agriculture-perron-saint-joseph

Le P'tit Canada, National Film Board. Filmed in the 1970s in Lowell, Massachusetts, it shows women of my grandmother's generation singing traditional songs exactly as she did. It's a charming example of oral tradition in the diaspora. In one scene, they are singing *"Le curé de Terrebonne*," a song about a priest in a village they had never visited. In fact, they knew nothing about the town and may even have thought it was fictional, as they had never been to Canada (my daughter lives in this town). It's a classic, "cute" story of a girl who confesses to a kiss; the priest offers absolution in exchange for a kiss of his own, provided she keeps it a secret. This anecdote illustrates the longevity of oral tradition—the song survived even after the geographical connection to Québec, was long lost. and collective memory had vanished.
https://www.nfb.ca/series/le-son-des-francais-damerique-english-version/season1/le-ptit-canada-english-version/

C'est pu comme ça anymore, National Film Board. This video features old people speaking Missouri French in the 1970s.
https://www.nfb.ca/series/le-son-des-francais-damerique-english-version/season1/cest-pu-comme-ca-anymore-en

Books and Articles

Bergeron, Léandre. *Dictionnaire de la langue québécoise*. Montréal, 1980 (*A Franco-Manitobain*). Léandre Bergeron calls his work *Dictionnaire de la langue Québécoise* rather than "Canadian French." In reality, it is a dictionary of North American French as spoken by French Canadians. Born in a French-Canadian village not far from Grandma's, Bergeron compiled more than 15,000 entries written exclusively in "*canayen*," many of which he learned during his youth in Manitoba. Whether in Montréal or Saint-Boniface, we speak a form of Canadian French that reflects a linguistic heritage carried across the Great Plains for centuries. His dictionary preserves numerous terms that have disappeared from everyday use in Québec but remain in use in the West, recording the same words and expressions Grandma used.

Bigot, Davy and Papen, Robert. *Varieties of French in Western Canada*. University of Concordia, 2022.

Boulay, Yvette. *Le fransaskois: un aperçu sociolinguistique. Mémoire de maîtrise en linguistique, à l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, octobre 1998*.

Gaborieau, Antoine. *La Langue de Chez Nous*. L'Éditions des Plaines, 1999.

Gareau, Laurier*. « La parlure fransaskoise », L'eau vive, chroniques de langue parues entre le 6 octobre 1988 et le 4 juillet 1991, Regina.*

Marchand, Anne-Sophie. *La mosaïque identitaire et linguistique francophone du Manitoba. Dans Cahiers de sociolinguistique 2002/1 (n° 7).*

Papen, Robert A. *La diversité des parlers français de l'Ouest canadien: mythe ou réalité? Université du Québec à Montréal, in Cahiers Franco-Canadiens de l'Ouest vol. 16, Nos 1-2, 2004.*

Valdman, Albert. *Vernacular French Communities in the United States: A General Survey*. The French Review, Vol. 80, No. 6, La Francophonie aux États-Unis (May 2007).

Patriotes

DuFour, Pierre and Goyer, Gérard. *Captain Clément Gosselin, Dictionary of Canadian Biography*. https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/gosselin_clement_5E.html

Everest, Allan. *Moses Hazen and the Canadian Refugees in the American Revolution.* Syracuse University Press, 1976.

Lacroix, Patrick. (2019). *Promises to Keep: French Canadians as Revolutionaries and Refugees, 1775–1800*. Journal of Early American History, 9(1), 59-82. "This is a remarkable description of the role of French Canadians in the American Revolution, the best research ever done on the subject." The Role of French Canadians in the American Revolution

Messier, Alain. *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des patriotes, 1837-1838*, Montréal, 2002.

Mouskouri, Nana. *Un Canadien errant.* https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6bPq8-FlD00

Richards, Deke. *Patriots Down Under.*
https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/peace-conflict/patriotes-down-under

Additional Resources

A most beautiful rendition of the hymn *Minuit, Chrétiens* (O Holy Night), sung in French, as remembered best by my Aunt Evelyne, and referenced in the article.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imYPsNyChrQ

Baker, Charlotte Alice. *True Stories of New England Captives Carried to Canada During the Old French and Indian Wars*. Cambridge, 1897.

Foxcurran, Robert, Bouchard Michel and Malette Sébastien. *Songs Upon the Rivers. The Buried History of the French-Speaking Canadiens and Métis from the Great Lakes and the Mississippi Across to the Pacific.* Published, by Baraka Books of Montréal, 2016.

Hamelin, Jean. *Nicollet de Belleborne, Jean,* Canadian Dictionary of Biography.
https://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/nicollet_de_belleborne_jean_1E.html

The Explorers, Jean Nicolet 1634.
https://www.historymuseum.ca/virtual-museum-of-new-france/the-explorers/jean-nicollet-1634/

Vermette, David. *A Distinct Alien Race. The Untold Story of Franco-American Industrialization, Immigration, and Religious Strife*. Baraka Books, 2018.