

Bibault Families in France, Canada, and the United States Since the Seventeenth Century

by
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BIBAULT Families

Summary of family line leading to Thomas G. Paterson (see below): André Bibault (1690s?) → Pierre Bibault (1714) → André Bibault (1741) → Pierre Bibault (1768) → André Bibault (1805) → Charles Bibault (1835) → Théophile Bibault (1864) → Rachel Bibault (1892) → Suzanne Monchamp (1910) → Thomas G. Paterson (1941)

Summary of family line leading to Denis Bibault (see below): André Bibault (1690s?) → Pierre Bibault (1714) → André Bibault (1741) → Pierre Bibault (1768) → André Bibault (1805) → Charles Bibault (1835) → Emmanuel Bibault (1879) → Léon Bibault (1916) → Denis Bibault (1940)

Bold and *italics* together denote family line to both Denis Bibault and Thomas G. Paterson. Thereafter, *italics* alone denote family line to Thomas G. Paterson and **bold** alone denotes family line to Denis Bibault.

- **André Bibault** (1690s?-before 1736) and Marie Demié (1690s?-after 1736)
 - **Pierre Bibault** (about 1714-1781) and Vincente Briand (about 1714-1794) (m. 1736)
 - Pierre Bibault (1737-1743)
 - Jean Bibault (1742-1747)
 - Anne Bibault (1746-1747)
 - Françoise Bibault (1748-1750)
 - **André Bibault** (1741-1797) and Marie Guilbault (about 1738-1789) (m. 1767; 1st)
 - **Pierre Bibault** (1768-1845) See below
 - André Bibault (1771-1844) and Françoise Châlon (1768-1839) (m. 1789)
 - Françoise Bibault (1790-????) and Louis Pichon (about 1790-after 1844) (m. 1812)
 - Jeanne Bibault (1792-1868) and Louis Bastard (about 1783-1814) (m. 1813; 1st)
 - Jeanne Bibault (1792-1868) and Charles Luquel (about 1794-????) (m. 1816; 2nd)
 - Jeanne Bibault (1792-1868) and Jacques Douteau (about 1796-1872) (m. ???; 3rd)

- Jacques Douteau (1825-????)
 André Bibault (1798-1800)
 Marguerite Bibault (1798-1833) and Pierre Gilloire (1794-after 1852)
 Jules Gilloire (1827-????) and Sophie Girard (about 1833-????) (m. 1852)
 Marie Bibault (about 1806-1858) and Charles Faucillon (about 1802-1869) (m. 1827)
 Marie Faucillon (1830-????)
 Louise Faucillon (about 1833-????)
 Catherine Bibault (1774-1776)
 François Bibault (1778-1858) and Louise Poirault (about 1786-1857) (m. 1813)
 Louise Bibault (1814-after 1840) and Louis Criton (????-after 1840) (m. 1840)
 François Bibault (1816-1892) and Marie Louise Poingt (1818-1880) (m. 1846)
 Catherine Bibault (1780-????)
 →**André Bibault** (1741-1797) and Renée Martin (about 1773-after 1797 (m. 1790; 2nd)
 Marie Bibault (1791-after 1851) and Louis Pasquier (about 1784-after 1851) (m. 1813)
 Louis Pasquier (about 1814-????)
 Louise Bibault (1792-1795)
 Jeanne Bibault (1793-????)
 →**Pierre Bibault** (1768-1845) and Marie Thibault (about 1773-1843) (m. 1793)
 Pierre Bibault (1794-1868) and Madeleine Criton (1798-1876) (m. 1820)
 Madeleine Bibault (1821-1876) and Pierre Robin (1826-after 1911) (m. 1848)
 Jeanne Bibault (1824-1842)
 François Bibault (1826-1891) and Marie Auré (1830-1897) (m. 1851)
 Marie Bibault (1856-1908) and Louis Roy (1842-1918) (m. 1875)
 Berthe Alexandrine Bibault (1869-after 1912) and Louis Georget (about 1867-1927) (m. 1890)
 Gilberte Bibault (about 1893-after 1901)
 Marie-Jeanne Bibault (1795-????)
 François Bibault (1800-1882) and Marie Coindreau (1811-1842) (m. 1831; 1st)
 François Bibault (1831-after 1911) and Marie Briand (1835-after 1911) (m. 1865)
 Marie Bibault (1837-????) and Jacques Malécot (about 1829-????) (m. 1858)
 Louise (1838-????)
 Pierre Bibault (1840-????)
 Louis Bibault (1842-after 1911)
 François Bibault (1800-1882) and Marie-Louise Charpentier (about 1816-after 1911) (m. 1844; 2nd)
 Édouard Bibault (1845-after 1912) and Josephine Gouin (about 1845-1907) (m. 1871)
 Marie-Louise Bibault (1851-1853)
 Eugénie Béatrice Bibault (1854-1946) and Jean Châlon (about 1848-after 1911) (m. ????)
 Maximin Bibault (1857-1874)
 →**André Bibault** (1805-1848) and Anne Bonnet (1803-1864) (m. 1832) See below

- Jeanne Bibault (1807-????)
- André Bibault** (1805-1848) and Anne Bonnet (1803-1864) (m. 1832)
 André Bibault (1834-1847)
- Charles Bibault** (1835-1905) See below
- Alexandre Bibault (1839-1913) and Madeleine Buzat (1844-1916) (m. 1865)
 Émile Alexandre Bibault (1870-1947) and Marie Alexandrine Ruficot
 (1871-1947) (m. 1895)
 Alexandre Émile Bibault (1897-1897)
 Unnamed feminine infant (1899-1899)
 Georges Bibault (1901-1973) and Émilienne (1908-1977) (m. ????)
 Thérèse Bibault (1934-) and ??? Mouillé (????-????) (m. ????)²
 Bernard Bibault (1938-)
 Carmen Bibault (1948-)
 Marianne Bibault (1951-)
- Arthur Adrien Bibault (1879-1959) and Marie Berthe Chauvet (1883-1929)
 (m. 1906)
 Anne Bibault (1842-1845)
- Charles Bibault** (1835-1905) and Marie-Louise Naly (1847-1900) (m.
 1863)
- Théophile Bibault** (1864-1932) and Eugénie Malècot (1869–1918) (m. 1886;
 1st)³
 Valada Bibault (1888-1888)
- Rachel Bibault** (1892-1937) and Jean Monchamp (1884-1918) (m. 1907;
 1st)⁴
 Louis Antoine Monchamp (1909-1965) and Claire Augusta Lee (1915-
 1997) (m. 1938)
 Jeanne Clara Monchamp (1913-2005) and William Anderson (1914-
 1997) (m. 1936)
- Suzanne Virginie Monchamp** (1910-2001) and Thomas Paterson, Jr.
 (1909-1997) (m. 1934)
 Shirley Jeanne Paterson (1936-) and Billy Gilmore (1933-) (m.
 1957)
 Billy Graham Gilmore (1958-1958)
 Jeanne Suzanne Gilmore (1960-) and Johnny Mac Brown (1956-)
 (m. 1979)
 Michael Thomas Gilmore (1961-) and Charlene Mathis (1962-)
 (m. 1981)
- Thomas Graham Paterson** (1941-) and Elizabeth Cain (1941-)
 (m. 1958; 1st)
 Thomas Graham Paterson, Jr. (1959-) and Kimberly Naviaux (1958)
 (m. 1982)
 Thomas Graham Paterson, Jr. (1959-) and Janet Marie Panaro (1963)
 (m. 1997)

² Four children: Patric; Patricia; Anita; Michel.

³ 2nd marriage of *Théophile Bibault* (1864-1932) to Berthe Virginie Aillault (1860-1934) (m. 1920).

⁴ 2nd marriage of *Rachel Bibault* (1892-1937) to Auguste Fix (1897-1969) (m. 1919); child Raymond (1921-1921).

- Rebecca Virginia Paterson (1960-) and Timothy Putnam (1960-)
(m. 1979)
Amy Elizabeth Putnam (1979-) and John Carlson (1976-) (m.
2010)
- Stephen William Cain Paterson (1968-) and Chanthou Prak (1980)
(m. 2011; 2nd)
Avril Prak Paterson (2001-)
Madelin Prak Paterson (2005-)
Thomas Samnang Paterson (2013-)
- Thomas Graham Paterson* (1941-) and Holly IZard (1951-) (m.
1975; 2nd)
Aaron Matthew Paterson (1979-) and Kathleen McMichael (1980)
(m. 2006)
Colin Graham Paterson (1981-)
- Claire Marie Bibault (1902-1973) and Jean Marie Emmanuel Chabbert
(1892-1928) (m. 1917; 1st)
Léon Chabbert (1921-2010) and Faye Rose Steinberg (1928-2001) (m.
1948)
Michael Chabbert (1948-) and Carleen Christie (1st)
Michael Chabbert (1948-) and Teresa Brock (1951-) (2nd)
Steven Chabbert (1956-1956)
Emilie Chabbert (1922-) and Frederick Louis Gibson (1921-1997) (m.
1943)
Leon Gibson (1944-) and Gloria Gaudio (1944-)
Jack Gibson (1950-) and Russana Fast (1952-) (1st)
Jack Gibson (1950-) and Roxanne Carulli (1952-) (2nd)
Anita Gibson (1955-) and Janes Edward Nork (1950-)
Paul Gibson (1957-) and Kim Morris (1962-)) (1st)
Paul Gibson (1957-) and Diane Failmetzer (2nd)
- Claire Marie Bibault (1902-1973) and Eldon Ross Reveal (1898-1958)
(m. 1931; 2nd)
Darwin Reveal (1937-2014)⁵
- Gabrielle Bibault (1907-1975) and Raphaël Garsuault (1899-1964) (m.
1926)
Gérard Garsuault (1930-1997) and Marie Thérèse Basset (1927-1997) (m.
1950)
Bernard Garsuault (1951-)
Sylvie Garsuault (1958-)
- Victorine Marcelline Bibault (1871-1953) and Eugène Célestin Guéret (1864-
1936) (m. 1889)
Arthur Alexandre Guéret (1891-1970) and Lydia Poiroux (1895-1984)
(m. 1912)
Rachel Hortense Guéret (Aglaré) (1899-1971) and Pierre Joseph Erkins
1883-1958 (m. 1917)

⁵ 1st wife Betty Acker; 2nd wife Marge.

- Emmanuel Guéret (1902-1950) and Marie-Rose Bosc (1904-1996)
(m. 1923)
Juliet Madeleine Guéret (1904-1972) and Raphaël Brick (1898-1956) (m.
1923)
- **Emmanuel Joseph Bibault** (1879-1959) and Juliette Diacre (1882-
1910) (m. 1903; 1st)
Marie Bibault (1904-1992) and Omer Gour (1904-1968) (m. 1930)
André Bibault (1906-1983) and Anne-Marie Pilloud (1922-1987) (m.
1940)
- **Emmanuel Joseph Bibault** (1879-1959) and Berthe Eugénie Giraud (1892-
1967) (m. 1912; 2nd)
Maurice Bibault (1914-1972) and Jeanne Payette (about 1918-1949) (m.
1940; 1st)
Maurice Bibault (1914-1972) and Anne-Marie Émond (m. 1958; 2nd)
- **Léon Bibault** (1916-1969) and Marie-Anne Labossière (1917-1952)
(m. 1938)
Albert Bibault (1938-1945)
Gillis Bibault (1940-2015) and Deana Hardcastle
- **Denis Bibault** (1940-) and Géraldine Sibilleau (1946-) (m. 1965)
Nanette Bibault (1961-) and Paul Magne (1963-) (m. 1991)
David Joseph Leon Bibault (1966-) and Nicole Cecile Noella
Bourrier (1969) (m. 1992)
Christine Bibault (1967-) and Gilles Durupt (1969-)
Nathalie Bibault (1974-) and Steven Sydorko
Albert Bibault (1977-) and Jolyne Martel (1981-) (m. 2006)
Joseph Bibault (1945-1995) and Betty Fingus (m. 1965)
Lucille Bibault (1949-2005) and Robert Harper
Thérèse Bibault (1932-) and André Lesage (1924-2007) (m. 1950)
Isabelle Lasage (1952-) and Florent Desrochers
Jean Lasage (1953-) and Roselie Webber
Albert Lasage (1954-) and Glenda Hobey
Roger Lasage (1954-) and Elaine Barlow
Donald Lasage (1957-) and Carol Fowler

The Bibault Journey: Preface

These pages tell the stories of many Bibault families in France, Canada, and the United States, beginning with André Bibault, probably born in the 1690s in the commune of Curçay-sur-Dive, department of Vienne, region of Poitou-Charentes, in west central France. He is the first Bibault we have identified thus far in available records as being in our family line. This chronicle moves through several generations into the twentieth century, where we find my great-great grandfather Charles Bibault (1835-1905), born in the nearby commune of Ternay, Vienne. He

married Marie-Louise Naly (1847-1900), my great-great grandmother, in her birthplace, the commune of Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, department of Deux-Sèvres, also in the Poitou-Charentes region.⁶ There, mostly in the small village of Vrères (also spelled without the “s”), Charles and Marie worked, had three children, and experienced the challenging conditions of an agricultural community in flux.

Their son, my great-grandfather Théophile Bibault (1864-1932), born in the adjacent town of Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Deux-Sèvres, married in 1886 Eugénie Malécot (1869-1918), born in Louzy of the same department. Charles and his family emigrated from France to Manitoba, Canada, in the early 1890s. One of the four children of Théophile and Eugénie was my grandmother Rachel Bibault (1892-1937), born in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba. In that small, wheat-farming town, in 1907, Rachel married Jean Monchamp (1884-1918), born in Le Pertuis, department of Haute-Loire, in France’s south central region of Auvergne. He had immigrated to Lourdes in 1895 as a boy with his family. Their second of three children, Suzanne Virginie Monchamp (1910-2001), was my (and my sister Shirley’s) mother, born in Lourdes in a farmhouse.⁷

In early 1891, Charles Bibault did something quite remarkable when he courageously uprooted his family from their traditional Deux-Sèvres-Vienne nexus in France and moved to Canada. Imagine, in March-April 1891, Charles Bibault and Marie Naly and two of their children, Théophile (with his spouse Eugénie) and Emmanuel, making a major break from their ancestral home, their family “zone.” (Their daughter Marceline followed a few years later.⁸) Imagine the Bibaults’ very long journey and their uncertain future. They departed their village of Vrères in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun by wagon. Perhaps they headed to nearby Thouars, Deux-Sèvres, to board a north-bound train to Paris. Or, they may have traveled farther, to Poitiers, Vienne, some 50 miles away. From there, they would have caught a north-bound train to France’s capital.

From Paris, they likely traveled by rail to France’s port city of Le Havre on the west coast. They stepped on a ship that carried them across the English Channel. In Liverpool, England, they boarded a steamship. For 11 days, in chilly, sea-sickening

⁶ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Marriages, 1836-1872, p. 170, DSA.

⁷ For the Bibaults and Monchamps in Canada, see Thomas G. Paterson, *You Must Remember This: Thomas Paterson, Jr., Suzanne Monchamp Paterson, and Their Many Families Through History* (Ashland, Oregon, 2011) and other history reports by Paterson on the Malécot, Bonnet, and Naly families. See the “Bibault Families” list above for my cousin Denis Bibault’s ancestors, many of whom we share. Together, in June 2014, Denis and I discovered even more of our forebears during our trip to France. My daughter Rebecca Putnam and I visited Denis and his family in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes in September 2015, exploring our ancestors’ places and sharing stories.

⁸ Marceline stayed in France with her husband Eugène Guéret. They moved to Manitoba in 1894 (see below).

weather, they crossed the Atlantic Ocean to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Then they rode a Canadian Pacific Railway train to Manitoba and settled in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. In the difficult prairie environment, Charles and Théophile Bibault soon cultivated homesteads of 160 acres, substantial acreage by French standards. Why did they make the “leap?”⁹ Their story begins centuries earlier.

Gaul, Pictones, Rome, France, and Bibaults

Gaul. We begin the story of the Bibaults with Gaul, a land that once included Belgium, France, Switzerland, and parts of Germany, the Netherlands, and Italy. Gaul evolved over many centuries of wars and reconfigurations into the country of France. The letters “aul” in “Bibault” suggest Gaulish origins. In the seventh century BCE (BC), Celts from the Danube area of central Europe conquered native dwellers and settled in the region of Gaul. These Celtic Gauls spoke “Gaulish” and organized into competing tribes, perhaps 75 in number, each led by a king or chief. They created territorial boundaries and often went to war against one another from the fifth century BCE to the fifth century CE (AD).

One Gaulish tribe, the Pictones, governed an area on the south side of the Loire River. This tribe established its capital at Poitiers in the present-day French department of Vienne.¹⁰ The Pictones are likely the tribe to which the Bibaults belonged, because Poitiers is only about 50 miles from where Bibault families lived many centuries later. In fact, confirming the connection, available parish records for the town of Poitiers from the 1500s to the early 1700s include many “Bibault” and “Bibaud” names.¹¹ Gaulish artifacts have been unearthed in the Thouars area (*le pays Thouarsais*), a short distance from where modern-day Bibaults have lived. In Thouars, too, excavations have turned up Gaulish currency and medals that resemble those of Poitiers. Historians have also discovered that Gaulish “metallurgical establishments” operated in “Vrère,” commune of “Monbrun,” the very place where Charles Bibault and his family lived centuries later and where Charles worked as a wheelwright with metal and wood.¹²

In the second century BCE, Roman legions from present-day Italy began to whittle away at Gaul, bloodily defeating, subduing, and coopting the tribes. In 58-51 BCE,

⁹ Henry Lewis Gates, Jr., Public Broadcasting System, “Faces of America,” ch. 4, 2010.

¹⁰ Carl Waldman and Catherine Mason, “Pictones” and “Gauls,” *Encyclopedia of European Peoples* (New York: Infobase Publishing, 2006), pp. 287, 588; William W. Kibler et al., *Medieval France: An Encyclopedia* (New York: Garland, 1995), pp. 1404, 1408.

¹¹ “Poitiers-B,” *Dépouillement de registres paroissiaux*, VA.

¹² Hugues Imbert, *Histoire de Thouars* (Niort: L. Clouzot, 1871), pp. 7-8.

General Julius Caesar conquered all of Gaul, attaching it to the Roman Empire while advancing Christianization. The Romans dominated Gaul for five centuries. In the area that became present-day Deux-Sèvres, the Romans built a road network and planted the first vineyards for the production of wine.

In the tradition of violence that beset the region, Germanic (Frankish) tribes from the Rhine Valley invaded Gaul in the fifth century. Roman rule collapsed and quarreling Frankish kingdoms emerged. In 762, the King of the Franks (Pepin the Younger) actually destroyed Thouars.¹³ In 843, by treaty, what we recognize today as France took form. (The present-day neighboring departments of Deux-Sèvres and Vienne were created in 1790 during the French Revolution.)

During the medieval period, roughly the tenth century to the mid-fifteenth century, French people were subjected to feudalism—a system of power based on landed fiefdoms controlled by privileged lords or nobles who built fortified castles and subjugated the dependent peasants (*païsants*, or people of the countryside) who cultivated the lords' lands. At the top of society stood the Catholic clergy (The First Estate) and the nobles (The Second Estate). Developing was an infant bourgeoisie class that made its money in business and trade and began to acquire agricultural property.

Peasants or commoners (The Third Estate) occupied the social and economic bottom—about 80% of the population. Most of them were landless and subservient to the lords. The Bibaults were peasants. They were farmers, tradesmen, and laborers; some came to own small plots of land.¹⁴ Villages took shape as peasants clustered around a Catholic parish church and the lord's land. These villagers developed a sense of order based on a regular calendar of planting and harvesting and on religious festivities. Women had their children at home. Infant mortality was frequent.

The “precariousness of human life” for rural folk also stemmed from devastating epidemics.¹⁵ In repeated plagues, contagious bacterial diseases spread fast. Their source was rodents' fleas, although the disease also infected people through the air and through direct human contact. “Bubonic” plague, causing swelling in the groin and armpits, was a major type. The primarily bubonic Black Death, 1347-1348, exploded from the fleas of black rats. Some 25 million people died across Europe. Many other plagues maimed France for centuries. A plague in 1563 attacked

¹³ www.thouars-communaute.fr.

¹⁴ For French history, including Gaul: Roger Price, *A Concise History of France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); William Beik, *A Social and Cultural History of Early Modern France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); and Ernest John Knapton, *France* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971).

¹⁵ Price, *A Concise*, p. 19. See footnotes below on plagues and famines.

Poitiers, Vienne, and the widespread plagues of 1600-1616, 1626-1627, and 1629-1632 also wracked France. Famines also killed people, starving them to death.

During the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, all across France, peasants, even those who might have owned some land, faced fluctuations in climate and thus in the prices for their cereal crops. “Widespread poverty,” undernourishment, and “psychological misery” relentlessly undercut peasants, especially when harvests were bad.¹⁶

What is more, constant wars interrupted and endangered their lives. Maybe they had to billet soldiers who ravaged their land and exploited their resources, or they themselves had to serve in the military. Their taxes increased. The 100 Years’ War against England (1337-1453) severely damaged Deux-Sèvres and its inhabitants. An English occupying army controlled the area for a time during that war. The fifteenth century witnessed infighting among the feudal lords in the region of Deux-Sèvres.¹⁷ Later, battles erupted between Catholics and Protestants in the 1560s-1570s. In 1568, Protestants burned the church in the village of Oiron in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun.¹⁸ In the seventeenth century, France battled Spain in the Thirty Years War (1618-1648). More wars followed, as kings endlessly strove to build empires and control European politics. The peasantry paid a high price in all of these bloody conflicts.

For rural, agricultural people such as the Bibaults, the overarching trends persisted for centuries: feudalism; political and religious turmoil; fluctuating prices and uncertain economies; burdensome taxes paid to the royal government; fees paid to the lords in kind and labor; tithes paid to the church (8-14 percent of crops, levied in kind); wars; famines; plagues; malnutrition; and illiteracy. Poor agricultural folk struggled to gain self-sufficiency and feed their families. Sometimes peasants protested, as in armed revolts from the 1570s to the 1630s, when crowds marched against tax collectors. This was the “world” the Bibaults inhabited, one of instability, threats, and limited opportunity.

The Bibault Family Zone in Vienne and Deux-Sèvres

From birth, baptism, marriage, death, military, and census records, we have learned that, from at least the early seventeenth century and stretching into the twentieth century, the Bibaults and their kin in France lived in an identifiable locality in the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷ Conseil Général de Deux-Sèvres, “History of Deux-Sèvres,” www.deux-sevres.com.

¹⁸ www.st-legerdemontbrun.fr/Nouvel-article,5; “Un peu d’histoire,” www.stleger.info.

region of Poitou-Charentes in the west-central area of the country.¹⁹ The “family zone” constituted a small, rural, agricultural area that straddled the border between the Poitou-Charentes departments of Deux-Sèvres and Vienne, in the far northern parts of each.²⁰

One Bibault generation after another lived, worked, farmed, courted, married, raised families, and died in this concentrated family zone, in which small-scale agricultural production and localized markets characterized their economic activity. Bibaults married spouses who lived within a few miles of one another in small towns (*communes*) marked by little villages and hamlets, farm plots, and vineyards, sitting at an elevation of about 50 to 100 meters (164-328 feet). Even when they relocated to another place, Bibaults went very short distances. In Deux-Sèvres, the zone included the communes of Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, and Louzy, among others. In Vienne, the zone included the towns of Curçay-sur-Dive, Ternay, and Pouançay, among others.

To grasp exactly how tight this rural family sector was, we can travel among some of these “face to face” communities²¹: Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon is 2.9 kilometers (km) (1.8 miles) from Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, which is 8.7 km (5.4 miles) from Ternay, which is 8.6 km (5.3 miles) from Curçay-sur-Dive, which is 5 km (3.1 miles) from Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon and 5.7 km (3.54 miles) from Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, which is 10.7 km (6.6 miles) from Louzy. One of the connectors for these “parishes” and their people over time was the “common market” in nearby Thouars, where they bought, sold, talked, shared information, and made acquaintances.²² Thouars lies 11 km (6.8 miles) from Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, 9.2 km (5.72 miles) from Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, and 14 km (8.7 miles) from Curçay-sur-Dive. (Most distances here and throughout this report are based on the website Google Earth, which calculates measurements by roads rather than by “as the crow flies.”²³)

To put this geography in perspective for France as a whole, historians note that, as late as the mid-nineteenth century, most peasants had limited contacts beyond their village network. “Normally the range” of external contacts was “confined within a periphery” of about 25 km (about 15 miles).²⁴ Later, improved highways and new

¹⁹ Bibaults lived in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon at least as early as 1630-1689, because, when I visited the town hall of the commune on June 13, 2014, I held a bound volume of documents labeled with those dates and at least one “Bibault” was represented.

²⁰ DB to TGP, March 21, 2013.

²¹ Roger Price, *A Social History of Nineteenth-Century France* (New York: Holmes & Meier, 1987, p. 169.

²² Imbert, *Histoire*, p. 123.

²³ See also www.cartesfrance.fr and www.viamichelin.fr.

²⁴ Price, *Social History*, p. 144.

railroads in the 1840s reduced isolation and expanded contacts with other regions. And, compulsory service in the French military introduced some young male villagers to a wider world. Nonetheless, the circumscribed family zone in Vienne and Deux-Sèvres, century-after-century, was the center of life for the Bibaults.

**André Bibault (1690s?-before 1736),
Pierre Bibault (about 1714-1781), and Their Times**

The first Bibault in my (and Denis Bibault's) line whose name appears in a researchable website document is André Bibault of Curçay-sur-Dive, Vienne. André was my great-great-great-great-great-great-great grandfather. His agricultural town housed a few hundred people in the eighteenth century, and in 2011 counted 221 people. The Dive River, surrounded by marshes, runs through the commune, where La Reine-Blanche, a graceful stone Gallo-Roman bridge arches over the water to this day. The fourteenth-century Saint-Gervais church has survived, but the twelfth-century Saint-Pierre church has eroded to a shell with only the exterior walls intact. Bibaults and their relatives were baptized in these churches. A castle tower (*donjon*) still stands as a local landmark. This structure was built in 1350 for the nobleman Huet Curçay and was once part of the fortress that served as a look-out for the defense of the lord's house.²⁵

We know that André Bibault died in Curçay before 1736, because he was deceased at the time of his son Pierre's marriage to Vincente Briand in July of that year (see below). We now must work through the documents and we must speculate. The record for this 1736 union, providing no birth dates or occupations, states that Pierre was the son of André Bibault and Marie Demié.²⁶ Pierre was my great-great-great-great-great grandfather. His 1781 death document seems to report that either he or his wife Vincente was 67 years-old at the time and thus born about 1714.²⁷ Her 1794 death record indicates that she was 80 years-old when she died and thus born about 1714.²⁸ Most likely, Pierre himself was also born about 1714 in Curçay. We can further estimate that Pierre's parents André and Marie were born about the same time in the 1690s, meaning that about 1714, when Pierre may

²⁵ Postcard photograph of the tower: Curçay-sur-Dive, "Dungeon-4705 Fi," VA.

²⁶ RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre Parish, 1736-1741, p. 2, VA. The name "Demié" appears in a Ternay record with a possible death date of 1693, but further research is needed to identify Marie's parents (RPC, Tables, 1692-1781, Ternay, p. 12, VA).

²⁷ RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre Parish, 1780-1792, p. 12, VA.

²⁸ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1793-1794 (Year II), pp. 39, 43, VA.

have been born, they would have been in their late teens or early twenties, a common age for marriage.

André, Marie, Pierre, and Vincente, in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, experienced in Curçay the long-term conditions described above, especially feudalism and unstable agricultural production. Catholic priests did not always record the occupations of peasant people. But, whether they were tenants, small landowners, craftsmen, or laborers, peasants were burdened with high dues and taxes owed to three entities: The Roman Catholic church, the royal government, and the lords. Peasants were required to work on roads, house and feed soldiers, and serve in militias. Discontent grew among country folk because they were left with only one-third of their income. Without schools to attend, they grew up illiterate.

In France, including Vienne and Deux-Sèvres, diseases such as smallpox, typhoid, and cholera, long beset ordinary people such as the Bibaults.²⁹ The smallpox virus caused ghastly pain and death, with convulsions, fever, blisters filled with pus, swelling, and bleeding. Many died a horrible death and survivors became disfigured.³⁰ The plague of the late 1620s-1631 and its partners famine (*disette*) and starvation caused heavy loss of life in Poitiers, for example. About a million people in France died from that epidemic. Plagues recurred in 1644-1647, 1661, and 1668. In 1720, in Poitiers, a parish priest noted: “A lot of farms are vacant due to the large number of householders who died the previous year” from the plague.³¹ In 1729-1733, another major epidemic devastated France, including southern Vienne; almost no wheat or rye was harvested.

Bad weather, poor harvests, and food shortages often distressed people in the countryside, accentuating nutritional deficiencies. In very cold 1630-1631, grain harvests fell short in France, including Thouars near the Bibault family zone.³² In 1660-1662, famine again left people vulnerable in France. During 1693-1694, food became scarce after a rainy summer (floods) and cold winter (freezes).

The Great Winter and Famine of 1709-1710 struck with meanness across France, including Deux-Sèvres and its commune of Thouars. A drought had preceded the

²⁹ Information on epidemics and famines here and elsewhere from lists and records in “Epidemics and Famines in France,” angeneasn.free.fr/epidemies.htm; Genealogical Society Poitevin, “Climate in Poitiers,” herage.org/histoire_climat4.htm; W. Gregory Monahan, *Year of Sorrows: The Great Famine of 1709 in Lyon* (Columbus, Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1993); and Imbert, *Histoire*.

³⁰ Hervé Bazin, *The Eradication of Smallpox* (San Diego: Academic Press, 2000), ch. 1.

³¹ “Climate in Poitiers.”

³² Imbert, *Histoire*, p. 301.

frigid winter. Rivers froze, as did liquids in household bottles. Corn fields, wheat crops, vineyards, and walnut and chestnut trees were destroyed. Domestic animals died en masse. Villagers took to the roads in search of food in cities, where they begged for bread and sometimes rioted against bakers and police. A case study of Lyon in east central France reveals that conception and marriage declined while mortality increased. Everywhere people suffered anemia and lethargy. Malnutrition led to disease and death. “The loss of hope ... must easily have crippled the very will to live,” writes one historian. He also points to the “psychological cost” of the famine: “The endless varieties of brain damage to old and young alike from fevers and lack of food, the agonizing decisions ... to feed one child and starve or abandon another.”³³

In 1711, the people of the Thouars area, hardly recovered from the food crisis, were pummeled by a hurricane that toppled the Gothic spire of the church of Saint-Laon.³⁴ To make matters worse, the famine and its terrible aftermath occurred at a time when France was fighting a long-term war in Europe (see below). Estimates are that two million people in France died in the famines and related epidemics of the 1690s-1710s. Epidemics and famines flared again in the 1720s and 1730s. To cite another example: In 1756 in Romagne, Vienne, egg-sized hail killed cattle, maimed people, leveled fruit and nut trees, and destroyed corn and grape crops.

The catalog of climatic disasters and contagions that afflicted country folk was unrelenting. We have no way of knowing exactly which of these calamities Bibaults and their fellow villagers endured, but, given the evidence available for Thouars, we can reasonably conclude that they could not have escaped all of them. Perhaps André, before 1736, when he was in his late thirties or early forties, died from an epidemic, famine, or military service.

While his people suffered, King Louis XIV, who ruled from 1661 (or from 1643 when he assumed the throne at age five) until his death in 1715, was building his grandiose palace of Versailles near Paris and fighting one expensive war after another—including, in André Bibault’s and young Pierre’s time, wars with England and Spain (1688-1697) and with England (1701-1714). These conflicts and a later one with Austria (1733-1738) ruined trade and bankrupted the government, which increased unpopular taxes.³⁵

³³ Monahan, *Year of Sorrows*, p. 152.

³⁴ www.thouars.fr.

³⁵ Overviews: Price, *A Concise*, pp. 68-71; Knapton, *France*, pp. 212-213.

On July 6, 1736, the marriage of Pierre Bibault (born about 1714 and thus about 22 years-old) and Vincente Briand (sometimes spelled Briant), born about 1714 (thus about 22 years-old), took place in the Saint-Pierre Parish of Curçay. Vincente may have been a widow.³⁶ Rapid remarriage—within a year—was common because of the frequent death of adults.³⁷ As the marriage record reports, by this time, Pierre’s father André was deceased. Vincente apparently lived in the Parish of Saint-Silaise (?), whose priest certified that no Christian or civil reasons existed to prevent the marriage. Her parents are listed as André Briand and Vincente Dorbé (or Forbé). The priest “declared them spouses in marriage through the ordinary ceremonies of our Mother the Holy Catholic Church after having celebrated the Holy Mass.” In the age of feudalism, the father, “the ruler of his own realm,” had the authority to decide whether or not his children could marry and the Catholic Church as well had to give its blessing to the marriage.³⁸ Present were André Briand (Vincente’s father), Jacques Briand (perhaps her brother), André Dubois, and others. Only Dubois and the priest Larny signed; the others declared themselves “being unable to sign.” The document did not list an occupation for Pierre.³⁹

Pierre and Vincente had at least five children, all born in Curçay-sur-Dive and baptized in the Saint-Pierre Parish: Pierre (born 1737); André (1741); Jean (1742); Anne (1746); and Françoise (1748). The first was Pierre, baptized on August 3, 1737, by the priest Lambert.⁴⁰ This son died on August 14, 1743, the record reporting that he was five years-old.⁴¹ The second child was André, born in 1741 (discussed in the next section). Another son, Jean, was born in 1742. He died March 3, 1747, at five years-old.⁴² In 1746 Anne was born, but she died a year

³⁶ Questions arise from Curçay records about Vincente Briand: Was she previously married? Did another Vincente Briand exist? On June 27, 1725, a Pierre Champion was baptized. His parents were Jean Champion and Vincente Briand (RPC, Curçay, Saint-Pierre Parish, BMS, 1718-1736, p. 14, VA). On September 1, 1731, an André Champion, son of Jean Champion and Vincente Briand, died and was buried in the Saint-Pierre Parish cemetery (*ibid.*, p. 28). On April 4, 1734, a Jean Champion, son of Jean Champion and Vincente Briand, was baptized (*ibid.*, p. 52). The relationship of this Vincente Briand to the Vincente born about 1714 (a date determined by her age of 67 in 1781 and her death at the age of 80 in 1794), and who married Pierre Bibault in 1736, is unclear. The Vincente married to Jean Champion, to have had a child in 1725, would likely have been about 20 years-old and thus born about 1705, or if 18, she would have been born about 1707—in any case, not 1714. A Jean Champion, at the age of 15, died in October or November of 1735. The Saint-Gervais Parish death record for him is very brief (*ibid.*, p. 58). The questions about Vincente Briand are difficult to answer because on-line records for Curçay baptisms begin in 1718 and some documents are illegible and unreadable due to poor handwriting and faint or blurred ink. Her 1736 marriage document does not mention a previous marriage or her status as a widow.

³⁷ Beik, *Social and Cultural*, p. 59.

³⁸ James F. Traer, *Marriage and the Family in Eighteenth-Century France* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1980), p. 15.

³⁹ RPC, Curçay, Saint-Pierre Parish, BMS, 1736-1741, p. 2, VA. Translation by Denis Bibault.

⁴⁰ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1736-1741, p. 7, VA.

⁴¹ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1737-1744, p. 37, VA.

⁴² RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1742-1751, p. 32, VA.

later, on March 19, 1747, a few days after her brother Jean.⁴³ The last child was a daughter, Françoise, baptized March 14, 1748.⁴⁴ She died January 19, 1750, at the age of two.⁴⁵ None of the records for these children or for Pierre's marriage (1736) or death (1781) identify his occupation.

The loss of so many children is staggering. Four of the five offspring of Pierre and Vincente died very young. Some of them may have perished from poor nutrition, hunger, and sickness. Throughout the 1740s famines struck France. To illustrate: A famine, caused by a cold winter and a very hot summer, belted France in 1741-1742. Five-year-old Pierre Bibault died the next year. In Curçay, in the famine year of 1747, 18 people died. Eleven of them were children, and two of them, Anne and Jean Bibault, died within days of one another in March.⁴⁶ In 1750, the year Françoise Bibault died, another famine devastated France.⁴⁷

Pierre Bibault lived until August 14, 1781, and was perhaps 67 years-old at his death. His son André (see below), his brother-in-law Jacques Briand, and other relatives and friends were present.⁴⁸ Vincente Briand lived until March 25, 1794, when she died at the age of 80.⁴⁹

André Bibault (1741-1797) and Marie Guilbault (about 1738-1789) in Curçay-sur-Dive, Vienne

Of the five children of Pierre Bibault and Vincente Briand, only André survived childhood. André continued the Bibault line of my family. He was my great-great-great-great-great grandfather, born in Curçay-sur-Dive, Vienne, in July 1741, the full date unclear because of the poor quality of the handwriting on the document.⁵⁰ He died on February 27, 1797, in Curçay, at the age of 55.⁵¹ André's occupation was that of *serger* (serge weaver), a trade that he passed on to his son Pierre (1768-

⁴³ *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1745-1763, p. 16, VA.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

⁴⁶ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1742-1751, pp. 32-36, VA.

⁴⁷ "Epidemics and Famines."

⁴⁸ The wording of the death record could be read as 67 years-old for either Pierre or Vincente. RPC, Curçay, 1772-1781, p. 73, and 1780-1792, p. 12, VA.

⁴⁹ The Revolutionary calendar date is 5 germinal 2. RPC, BMS, 1793-1794 (Year II), pp. 39, 43, VA. Vincente's death record seems to read that she was the widow of Jean Malécot, a deceased day laborer. There is no mention of Pierre Bibault. A Jean Malécot died December 20, 1781; he (age 68) is reported as the spouse of Vincente Briant (RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1772-1781, p. 77, VA). No marriage record for Vincente and Jean Malécot has been located.

⁵⁰ RPC, Curçay, 1736-1741, p. 26, VA. His mother's name is recorded as Marie, surely an error.

⁵¹ Death date: 9 ventose V (Republican calendar). RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1796-1799, p. 24, VA. Translation by DB.

1845) (see below for Pierre and the work of a *serger*).⁵² Perhaps André's father Pierre (about 1714-1781) also toiled as a weaver.

In André's time of the eighteenth century, prices for farm goods rose and overall national wealth expanded. But a "zigzag pattern of boom and slump" prevailed.⁵³ Epidemics struck France less frequently than in previous centuries, but a smallpox and influenza epidemic spread in 1772-1773. Famines weakened people almost every year from 1766 to 1776. Violent hurricanes devastated Vienne in 1776 and 1777, destroying walnut, chestnut, and plum production (which some peasants depended upon for income). In the town of Charroux, a priest recorded: "Drought has dried up all the rivers and reduced us and our cattle in the greatest misery."⁵⁴ In 1788, a dry spell followed by severe storms hammered villages. The next year France entered another subsistence crisis.

André certainly witnessed and may have participated in some way in the French Revolution that erupted in 1789 and continued for years. Although we do not know his political views, the turmoil engulfed Deux-Sèvres and Vienne. For example, in 1793-1796, in Deux-Sèvres's city of Thouars, anti-revolution "royalists," Catholics opposed to the Republican government's anti-church policies, and opponents of the 1793 military draft rebelled and seized districts of the commune from Republicans. In this "War in the Vendée," Paris ordered the pacification of rebellious areas. Extensive killings by both sides and the destruction of farms, crops, and villages followed. Because the Bibault family zone bordered Thouars, very likely the tumult upended and cost lives in nearby Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun and other towns. We know that rebels used the chateau in Rigny village in that commune to store flour and food seized in Thouars. Also, the fighting devastated vineyards, forcing major replanting.⁵⁵ Bibaults could not have been spared from the warfare in their midst or the wrenching changes the revolution wrought.

The triumph of the French Revolution ended the feudal system and overthrew the monarchy. Years of political strife, bloody civil war, foreign wars, and economic uncertainty followed. The power of clerics declined with the abolition of tithes and

⁵² André's occupation is described in various documents as *servetier* (serge weaver; 1771 document on birth of his son André); RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1762-1771, Saint-Gervais, p. 28, VA); *sergetier* (serge weaver; 1774 birth document for his daughter Catherine; RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1772-1782, Saint-Gervais, p. 7, VA); *fabricant* (producer of fabric; 1789 marriage record for his son André; RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1782-1792, p. 30, VA); *serger* (serge weaver; 1792 birth record for his daughter Louise; RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1782-1792, p. 77, VA); and *journalier* (day laborer; death record of his son Pierre, July 30, 1845; RPC, Ternay, Deaths, #3, p. 9, VA).

⁵³ Gordon Wright, *France in Modern Times* (New York, Norton, 1987), p. 26.

⁵⁴ "Climate in Poitiers."

⁵⁵ "Vins de Saumur," www.vins-de-saumur.com; Imbert, *Histoire*, p. 342; "Un Peu d'histoire," www.stleger.info.

the shifting of marriages from church to civil affairs (registration and town-hall ceremonies). Parental controls over marriage eased with 21 set as the age of majority. The resented dues paid to the lords ended. The sale of clerical property (*biens nationaux*) seized by the revolutionary government (about 10 percent of French soil) meant that some peasants, perhaps a Bibault, could buy land parcels.⁵⁶ The basic characteristics of a pre-industrial society dominated by the landed elite nonetheless persisted until at least the 1840s. The competition for land, intensified by speculators seeking profit rather than production, sent land prices beyond the reach of many peasants. Public authorities still collected taxes and recruited soldiers under a mandatory conscription law, prompting draft-dodging.

The “foundation” thus remained: Peasant villagers, the “vast majority” of the population, produced most of the food on the land but “received only a minimal share of this production,” earning a meager living.⁵⁷ A disappointing harvest in 1794, followed by a long, harsh winter in 1794-1795, added to the turbulence of revolutionary France. Even with what happened at the national level, such as the war-filled rule of Napoleon Bonaparte from 1799 to 1815, minimal “revolutionary” change occurred at the village level. The core elements of church rituals, rhythms of agriculture, economic tremors, hunger, childhood deaths, and extended families continued to define rural life.

Such was the world in which André Bibault (1741-1797) married, worked, and had children. On February 3, 1767, André wed Marie Guilbault in Saint-Pierre Parish, Curçay. André was probably a day laborer at that time. She was the daughter of René Guilbault. No ages or occupations are indicated in the record, but André would have been about 26 and Marie about 29 (born about 1738). The two fathers and the priest looked kindly on the Bibault-Guilbault betrothal.⁵⁸

André signed the marriage document with both his given name and surname, suggesting some literacy. Did he know how to write and read? We cannot be sure, but if he could, he would have been in a distinct minority in his nation, department, town, and class. No more than a third of French people were literate in the eighteenth century. Literacy rates were much lower in the west and south of France than in the north and east and illiteracy was highest in the countryside. Children of poor families were the least educated, their labor being more important to survival than classroom instruction. Women were far less literate than men.

⁵⁶ Liana Vardi, *The Land and the Loom: Peasants and Profit in Northern France* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1993), pp. 211, 216.

⁵⁷ Beik, *Social and Cultural History*, p. 14.

⁵⁸ RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre, , 1767-1771, p. 2, VA.

Some communities had Catholic primary schools, where priests or their appointees (masters) taught a largely religious content.⁵⁹ In 1764, for example, in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, near Curçay, such a school existed. Students' families paid the teacher and provided wood for heat in the winter. The alphabet and catechism were part of the curriculum. School rules declared that if the master repeatedly became "intemperate of wine" he could be removed.⁶⁰ There is no evidence extant to tell us if Curçay had a school. André Bibault may have simply learned to write only his name in order to sign important documents. Many illiterate French people did so.

André Bibault and Marie Guilbault had at least five children in Curçay-sur-Dive: Pierre (born 1768); André (1771); Catherine (1774); François (1778); and Catherine (1780). They are discussed here in reverse birth order so as to end with the first-born, Pierre, who continued my family line. The fifth child was Catherine, baptized August 15(?), 1780, in Curçay's Saint-Pierre Parish.⁶¹

The fourth born of André and Marie, François Bibault (baptized September 2, 1778), married Louise Poirault (born about 1786), on July 22, 1813, when he was a *serger*. Her parents were Martin Poirault and Louise Petit.⁶² François became a landowning farmer.⁶³ They had at least two children. The first, Louise, was born July 21, 1814.⁶⁴ She married Louis Criton on July 20, 1840.⁶⁵

The 1778-born François and Louise named their second child François. He was born April 29, 1816.⁶⁶ On July 7, 1846, in the small commune of Pas-de-Jeu, Deux-Sèvres, where he was a 30 year-old *domestique* (domestic), he married 27 year-old Marie-Louise Poingt.⁶⁷ Domestic workers were usually young, unmarried house servants or farm hands hired by contract on a yearly basis. They depended on their employer for food and lodging.⁶⁸ Marie-Louise was born November 1, 1818, in Pas-de-Jeu, where her father was a landowning farmer.⁶⁹ After their marriage, at

⁵⁹ Price, *Social History*, p. 309; Beik, *Social and Cultural*, p. 291.

⁶⁰ "School Rules, 1764," www.st-legerdemontbrun.fr/1er-Regement-scolaire-de-I-ecole.

⁶¹ RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre, 1780-1792, p. 5, VA. Catherine is yet to be discovered in subsequent records.

⁶² RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre, 1772-1781, p. 47, VA (François birth); RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1801 (year X)-1817, #9, pp. 56-57, VA. Poirault's age in the 1813 marriage record reads 27 and François's age is given as 33.

⁶³ RP, 1846, Curçay, p. 9, VA.

⁶⁴ André Bibault, shoemaker, age 43, appeared with his brother François at town hall to report the birth. RPC, Curçay, Births, 1801 (year X)-1817, p. 90, VA.

⁶⁵ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1818-1842, #2, pp. 110-111, VA.

⁶⁶ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1801 (year X)-1817, p. 114, VA.

⁶⁷ RPC, Pas-de-Jeu, Marriages, 1836-1892, #7, p. 46, DSA. Marie's birth day is recorded as December 1.

⁶⁸ Tessie P. Liu, *The Weaver's Knot: The Contradictions of Class Struggle and Family Solidarity in Western France, 1750-1914* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1994), p. 215; Price, *Social History*, p. 158.

⁶⁹ Her last name is spelled variously in records as Poingt, Point, and Pouan. She had at least three siblings, one of whom was a domestic. RPC, Pas-de-Jeu, Births, 1803-1835, p. 94, DSA; RP, 1841, Pas-de-Jeu, pp. 4, 11, 12, DSA.

some point between 1846 and 1856, François and Marie-Louise moved to Curçay (7.8 km or 4.8 miles from Pas-de-Jeu), where they farmed on property next to the farm of François's father François.⁷⁰ They did not have children. Marie died March 2, 1880, at the age of 62.⁷¹ François reported her death. He lived alone until he died November 8, 1892, at 76, in Curçay.⁷²

The elder François, born in 1778, died at the age of 80 on January 23, 1858.⁷³ Louise Poirault predeceased her spouse, on June 3, 1857.⁷⁴

The third child of André and Marie, Catherine, baptized June 7, 1774, in the Saint-Gervais Parish, died at the age of two in May 1775.⁷⁵

André Bibault (1771-1844) and Françoise Châlon (1768-1839)

André Bibault, André's and Marie's second child, was born March 7, 1771, in Curçay.⁷⁶ At 18 years-old, on June 16, 1789, he married 21 year-old Françoise Châlon in Curçay-sur-Dive. He was then a *cordonnier* (shoemaker) and remained so until his death in 1844.⁷⁷ Françoise was baptized February 5, 1768, the daughter of Sebastien Châlon and Françoise Vioteau of Curçay.⁷⁸

As the French Revolution carved its path through the nation, the 1771-born André Bibault and 1768-born Françoise Châlon had at least five children in Curçay: Françoise (1790); Jeanne (1792); André (1798); Marguerite (1798); and Marie

⁷⁰ RP, 1856, Curçay, p. 7, VA.

⁷¹ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1873-1889, #3, p. 32, VA.

⁷² RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1890-1902, #11, pp. 10-11, VA; RP, Curçay, 1881 (p. 6) and 1886 (p. 5), VA. In the 1892 death record, François's mother Louise is wrongly noted as Louise Martin, not Poirault. The confusion seems to stem from the fact that her father's first name was Martin. That mistaken last name for Louise first appeared in the 1856 Curçay census, p. 7, even though Louise Poirault was still alive and living with François. Her true name Poirault is used in her death document (see below). In the 1846 Curçay census (p. 4), moreover, Louise is correctly listed with her last name of Poirault and paired with François. Still further confusion derives from the 1851 census, in which a Louise Poirault (age 69; thus born about 1782; this Louise died January 14, 1864) is listed with a Pierre Bibault (age 70; thus born about 1781; he died March 19, 1860). In the 1851 census there is no reporting whatsoever of François and Louise Poirault (or Martin). Perhaps they lived in another commune at that time or were just overlooked by the census takers.

⁷³ See note above on the names Poirault and Martin. The 1858 record wrongly reports that François was married to Martin. For the 1778-born François: RP, 1836, Curçay, p. 11, VA; RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #6, p. 61, VA.

⁷⁴ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #9, p. 56, VA. Her name is correct in this record as Poirault (not Martin).

⁷⁵ RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Gervais, 1772-1782, p. 7, VA; Curçay, BMS, Saint-Gervais, 1772-1781, p. 30, VA.

⁷⁶ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1762-1771, Saint-Gervais, p. 28, VA.

⁷⁷ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1782-1792, p. 30, VA.

⁷⁸ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1767-1771, Saint-Pierre, p. 12, VA.

(about 1806). The first, Françoise Bibault, was baptized April 21, 1790.⁷⁹ At the age of 22, she married 22 year-old Louis Pichon in Curçay on December 12, 1812. His occupation is reported on the marriage record as *maréchal* (blacksmith).⁸⁰

The second child of André and Françoise, Jeanne, was baptized October 7, 1792.⁸¹ She married Louis Bastard, a day laborer, on November 23, 1813.⁸² Within a year he died at age 30, on August 27, 1814.⁸³ She remarried, on January 11, 1816, to Charles Luquel, a *cordonnier* like her father. Charles was 22 years-old and she was 23.⁸⁴ After Charles died (between 1816 and 1825), Jeanne remarried to Jacques Douteau, who was born about 1794. On March 19, 1825, they had a child they named Jacques. Jacques the elder was then a 29 year-old day laborer.⁸⁵ In 1841 he and Jeanne lived with their 21 year-old son, also a day laborer.⁸⁶ By 1846, the elder Jacques had become a *cultivateur* (a farmer).⁸⁷ He was 74 years-old when Jeanne Bibault (“Bibeau”) died at age 75 on November 17, 1868. He and their son Jacques, also a *cultivateur*, reported the death to authorities.⁸⁸ The senior Jacques himself died March 7, 1872, at 77, when he was still identified as a *cultivateur*.⁸⁹

The third and fourth children of André and Françoise were twins, born March 30, 1798: André and Marguerite. Their father André was then 27 years-old.⁹⁰ The child André lived only two years, dying on March 3, 1800. His father André signed the death record.⁹¹ André’s twin sister Marguerite survived to marry Pierre Gilloire, a *couvreur* (slater or roofer). They resided in Loudun (in Vienne, 12.6 km or 7.8 miles from Curçay) and had at least one child, Jules, born February 26, 1827. A slate roofer himself, he married Sophie Girard (born in 1833) on October 2, 1852. His father Pierre attended the wedding, but Marguerite had died at age 35 in Loudun on June 22, 1833, the year of a flu epidemic in France.⁹²

⁷⁹ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1782-1792, p. 66, VA.

⁸⁰ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1801 (X)-1817, pp. 46-47, VA.

⁸¹ RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1780-1792, p. 100, VA.

⁸² RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1801 (X)-1817, p. 59, VA.

⁸³ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1801 (X)-1814, p. 75, VA.

⁸⁴ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1801 (X)-1817, p. 69, VA.

⁸⁵ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, #3, p. 41, VA. In 1836 he remained a day laborer. RP, Curçay, 1836, p. 12, VA.

⁸⁶ RP, Curçay, 1841, p. 8, VA.

⁸⁷ RP, Curçay, 1846, p. 7, VA.

⁸⁸ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #15, p. 101, VA. Jeanne’s death record reads that she was the daughter of Pierre Bibault. Actually her father was André Bibault.

⁸⁹ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #5, p. 121, VA.

⁹⁰ RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1796-1799, p. 33, VA.

⁹¹ The death date on the Republican calendar is 12 ventose VIII. Curçay, NMD, 1799 (VIII)-1801 (IX), #11, p. 3, VA. André Bibault signed his full name to an 1814 document, suggesting that he was at least partially literate. RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1801 (X)-1814, p. 74, VA.

⁹² RPC, Loudun, Deaths, 1833-1835, #66, p. 16, VA (Marguerite); “Marguerite Bibault,” Collette Leblond Tree, Geneanet.org; “Epidemics and Famines”; RPC, Loudun, Marriages, 1847-1852, #24, p. 141, VA (Jules).

The fifth child of André and Françoise was Marie Bibault, born about 1806. She married Charles Faucillon (or Faucillion) on August 23, 1827.⁹³ He was born about 1802.⁹⁴ They had at least two children in Curçay. The first was Marie Faucillon, born on May 18, 1830.⁹⁵ The second was Louise, born about 1833.⁹⁶ Charles was a day laborer in 1836, but by 1841 he had become a farmer.⁹⁷ Marie Bibault died January 21, 1858, at the age of 52.⁹⁸ Charles died a farmer on August 13, 1869, in Curçay's village of Lourdines.⁹⁹

The 1771-born André, shoemaker and father of five children with Françoise, died in Curçay on February 4, 1844, at the age of 72. The husband of André's deceased daughter Marguerite, the slate roofer Pierre Gilloire, and the blacksmith Louis Pichon, spouse of André's daughter Françoise, reported their father-in-law's death to town hall.¹⁰⁰ Françoise Châlon died before her husband, on March 8, 1839.¹⁰¹

Remarriage and Death: André Bibault (1741-1797) and Renée Martin (about 1773-after 1797)

To return to 1771-born André's 1741-born father André: His wife Marie Guilbault, at the age of 51, the mother of his five children, died on December 8, 1789, in Curçay.¹⁰² André, a serge weaver, remarried, on February 15, 1790, at the age of 49. His new spouse was Renée Martin, a *mineure* (minor) under the age of 18, probably born about 1773. She was the daughter of François Martin, a *vigneron* (wine grower), and Renée Bidault (or Bibault).¹⁰³

André and Renée had at least three children in Curçay. Their first child was Marie, baptized February 2, 1791.¹⁰⁴ She became a *domestique*. In August 1811, for unclear legal reasons, a Loudun tribunal convened to confirm Marie's birth.¹⁰⁵ At the age of 21, on February 5, 1813, she married another domestic, 28 year-old

⁹³ The year is nearly illegible. DT, Curçay, 1792-1902, p. 38, VA.

⁹⁴ He was 34 in 1836. RP, 1836, Curçay, p. 2, VA.

⁹⁵ DT, Curçay, 1792-1902, p. 34, VA, RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #16, p. 105, VA.

⁹⁶ RP, 1836, Curçay, p. 2, VA.

⁹⁷ RP, 1836, Curçay, p. 2, VA; RP, 1841, Curçay, p. 3, VA.

⁹⁸ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #4, p. 61, VA.

⁹⁹ DT, Curçay, 1792-1902, p. 83, VA.

¹⁰⁰ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #3, p. 6, VA.

¹⁰¹ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1816-1842, #3, p. 118, VA.

¹⁰² RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre, 1780-1792, p. 83, VA.

¹⁰³ RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre, 1780-1792, p. 86, VA.

¹⁰⁴ RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre, 1780-1792, p. 92, VA.

¹⁰⁵ Such seems also to have been the case for other 1791 births in Curçay. RPC, Curçay, Saint-Pierre, Births, 1801-1817, pp. 68-69, VA (1811 confirmation).

Louis Pasquier.¹⁰⁶ They had at least one child, Louis Pasquier. In the 1836 census for Curçay, this son is listed as a 22 year-old day laborer living with his 52 year-old father, then also a day laborer, and his mother Marie, reported as 45 years-old.¹⁰⁷ None of them appear in the Curçay census for 1841, but in 1846 Louis (64) and Marie (55) are recorded with the senior Louis's appearing to have improved his economic position by becoming a farmer.¹⁰⁸ In 1851, 69 year-old Louis had become a land-owning farmer and he and 60 year-old Marie still lived in Curçay.¹⁰⁹ They are not counted in subsequent census reports and their death dates have not been located in the extensive on-line Curçay documents.

The second child of André and Renée, Louise, was baptized October 26, 1792, when André still worked as a serge weaver. Louise died at the age of 33 months on August 9, 1795.¹¹⁰ Their third daughter, Jeanne, was baptized February 23, 1793, when André was 52 years-old.¹¹¹

The 1741-born André Bibault, son of Pierre and the father of at least eight children, died on February 27, 1797, in Curçay. The record reports that he was 55 years-old. His shoemaker son André from his first marriage reported his death to civil authorities and signed the document.¹¹² Renée Martin's death date has not been discovered in Curçay records as of this writing. At the time of André's death in 1797, she was not recorded as deceased. Being about 24 years-old at the time, perhaps she remarried in another commune in the Bibault family zone.

Pierre Bibault (1768-1845), Marie Thibault (about 1773-1843), and Serge Weaving

Pierre Bibault, the first child born to André Bibault and Marie Guilbault, and the son who continued my family line, was baptized July 4, 1768, by the priest Bertrand in Curçay. The newborn's grandmother Vincente Briand and René Briand (perhaps an uncle) are mentioned in the record.¹¹³ Pierre was my great-great-great-great grandfather.

¹⁰⁶ RPC, Curçay, 1801-1817, Marriages, pp. 51-52, VA.

¹⁰⁷ RP, 1836, Curçay, p. 8, VA.

¹⁰⁸ RP, 1846, Curçay, p. 8, VA.

¹⁰⁹ RP, 1851, Curçay, p. 14, VA.

¹¹⁰ RPC, Curçay, Tables, 1792-1902, p. 1, VA (birth); RPC, Curçay, BMS, Saint-Pierre, 1782-1792, p. 77, VA; RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1780-1792, p. 101, VA. The death date is 22 thermidor III: RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1794 (III)-1801 (IX), p. 27, VA.

¹¹¹ RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1793-1794 (II), p. 8, VA. Date of 5 ventose II.

¹¹² RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1796-1799, p. 24, VA.

¹¹³ RPC, Curçay, 1767-1771, p. 13, VA.

Pierre's French nation from 1768 to 1845 was evolving from an agricultural to an industrial country, with manufacturing production topping agricultural production in value at mid-century.¹¹⁴ France in this period experienced slow economic change with a mix of bad and good harvests. A recession rocked the economy in 1826-1829 and a severe depression occurred in 1846-1851. Numerous epidemics and famines also stalked France. During 1831-1833, a flu epidemic killed many, followed in 1834 by a deadly cholera outbreak that lasted until 1837.¹¹⁵ Wars from the 1790s to 1815 meant that the government raised much resented taxes.

Considerable political turmoil continued from the French Revolution to the Revolution of 1848—and beyond. For example, consider the “Berton Conspiracy” in the summer of 1822 in and around the Bibault family zone. General Jean-Baptiste Berton spearheaded a rebellion against King Louis XVIII. (The monarchy had been restored in 1815.) Berton assembled fighters in Thouars, where he made his headquarters, and among the places he recruited rebels was Chavigny, a nearby village in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon. Jacques Civrais, the great-grandfather of Théophile Bibault's future wife Eugénie Malécot (see below), was born in that village in 1784, and her grandfather Jacques Civrais was born there in 1816. Civrais family members participated in the conspiracy. The armed Berton insurgents moved across the territory from Thouars to Saumur, a distance of 36.1 km (22.4 miles). Government forces subdued them in that Maine-et-Loire city. Berton was executed in Poitiers with several insurrectionists. Others received prison sentences.¹¹⁶

With political instability all around them, country folk in the Bibault family zone in the early nineteenth century changed less than any other social group, despite the legal abolition of feudalism. In 1814, France was still a peasant nation, with three out of four French people living by farming. The “average” peasant did not improve his lot much from that of the eighteenth century. At most, he had moved from “the level of misery to that of poverty.”¹¹⁷

A major problem in the countryside was the accelerating subdivision or fragmentation of land: (1) because of a law that required that equal shares go to heirs; (2) because of population growth; (3) and because of peasants' “eagerness”

¹¹⁴ For national events and trends: Wright, *France*; Price, *Social History*; Price, *A Concise*.

¹¹⁵ “Epidemics and Famines” and “Climate in Poitiers.”

¹¹⁶ On the list of arrested and accused conspirators appear three Civrais names. First, Jacques Civrais, *épiciier* (grocer) of Thouars, who received a sentence of five years in prison. Second, Mathurin Civrais, *ancien militaire* of Soussais, who was sentenced to prison for two years. Third, Jacques Civrais, *cultivateur* (farmer) of Chavigny, who was given his freedom without judgment. Imbert, *Histoire*, pp. 361-375.

¹¹⁷ Wright, *France*, p. 222.

and “passion” to acquire their own land, even a very small tract.¹¹⁸ The number of farms kept growing while the size of farms declined. Farms might consist of tiny parcels scattered here and there. Maps have revealed the patchwork of many long, slender strips of land and other odd shapes, contributing to inefficiencies in farming. Overall, the agricultural sector of the French economy weakened. But not all was negative. The railroads that grew by mid-century reduced the isolation of the countryside. Villagers became more aware of an expanded world of ideas and market opportunities.

Also, public education in Pierre’s time expanded and literacy spread. In 1814, France had 23,000 primary schools; in 1840, 55,300. Education was largely for boys, not girls, and teachers, many of them clerics, understood the purpose of education then: To promote nationalism, the French language, morality, and social order.¹¹⁹ Perhaps Pierre had some schooling, even if he attended only in the winter months; at other times, he likely worked on farms to augment the family’s income. No record has been discovered thus far that carries Pierre’s full signature.

Did Pierre serve in the military? Probably not. Yet it may have been a close call. In 1786, he would have been 18 years-old and eligible to enter the military, but service was voluntary then. In August 1793, not long after France and Austria went to war, compulsory service was instituted. He would have just turned 25 years-old and within the ages of 18 and 25 for the draft (see below). But we can surmise that, because he married in early 1793 and had his first child in December 1794 (see below), he did not enter the military.

On February 12, 1793, in Curçay, after the death of his mother Marie Guilbault in 1789 and the remarriage of his father André in 1790, 24 year-old Pierre wed 20 year-old Marie Thibault, daughter of Ambroise Thibault and Sébastienne Jublin. The marriage document listed Pierre’s job as *serger*—a weaver like his father.¹²⁰

Marie Thibault was a widow who suffered much tragedy in her young life. On May 22, 1792, she married François Doublet. In a few months she gave birth to Marie Doublet, who was baptized July 9, 1792. Then, on October 3, François died at the age of 28. The context and perhaps the explanation for his death may be the war

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

¹¹⁹ Price, *Social History*, pp. 308-335.

¹²⁰ Two slightly different records exist for this marriage: (1) RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1793-1794 (II), p. 8, VA; (2) RPC, Curçay, 1793-1794 (II), Depot, Saint-Pierre, p. 19, VA. The marriage date is listed as January 12 in RPC, Curçay, Tables, 1792-1902, p. 6, VA. No Curçay record has been located for Marie Thibault’s birth (about 1773, based on her age of 20 at marriage and her 1843 death record, when she was 70).

that broke out in April 1792 between France and two enemies, Austria and Prussia. Austro-Prussian forces invaded France on August 19, mauling French troops and creating many refugees. François Doublet may have become a victim of this war.

Marie Thibault soon found a new mate—Pierre. Remarriage, often within a year, for both financial and romantic reasons, became a common step for adults who had lost a spouse. Husband and wife complemented one another in a recognized division of labor; they simply needed one another to make things go. Women tended the house, swept the dirt floor, fetched the water, raised children and cared for them when they were ill, milked cows, oversaw the chicken coop, and worked in countless other ways, especially on a farm. Some observers claimed that women were managers and men producers. Women needed men's physical labor and income, especially if they had children. Widows who did not remarry often descended into poverty.¹²¹ So, Marie remarried, but misfortune hit again. Her one-and-a-half year-old child Marie Doublet died December 15, 1793.¹²² About a year later Marie Thibault and Pierre Bibault started a new family (see below).

At the time of his February 1793 betrothal, Pierre was a serge weaver who may have worked alongside his *serger* father André. Pierre remained a *serger* most of his life. Many spellings of the occupation appear in birth and marriage records that refer to Pierre and his family, including *serger*, *serges*, *sergier*, *sergetier*, *sergentier*, and more.¹²³ In 1805, when his son André was born (see below), Pierre was labeled a *sergetier*. In 1831 he worked as a *serehitier*, the spelling unclear but probably in the same category.¹²⁴ Ten years later, the 1841 Curçay census record, near the time that both Pierre (1845) and Marie (1843) died, reports both of them as serge weavers (*serges*).¹²⁵ In contrast, their sons Pierre, François, and André were day laborers (*journaliers*) (see below).¹²⁶

Serge was a twilled fabric made from smooth yarn spun from wool. In earlier periods, silk had been used. In France, the wool product was long a popular cloth for men's suits and military uniforms. By the late seventeenth century, a cotton

¹²¹ Gay L. Gullickson, *Spinners and Weavers of Auffay* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 163-166.

¹²² "Marie Thibault" and "François Doublet," Claude Suignard Family Tree, Geneanet.org (Doublet marriage and death); RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1783-1792, Saint-Gervais, p. 26, VA (Marie Doublet baptism); RPC, Curçay, BMS, 1783-1792, Saint-Gervais, p. 26, VA (Doublet death); RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1793-1794 (II), p. 26, VA (Marie Doublet death).

¹²³ "French Occupations List," Resources, Guides and Tutorials, <https://familyhistory.byu.edu>; "Les Métiers de nos Ancêtres," www.vieuxmetiers.org.

¹²⁴ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1818-1842, p. 65, VA (1831 marriage of Pierre's son François to Marie Coindreau).

¹²⁵ RP, Curçay, 1841, p. 4, VA.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 8; RP, Ternay, 1841, p. 9, VA.

serge fabric grew in fashion, its origins being in the city of Nimes in southern France (*serge de Nimes*, shortened in English to “denim”). Cotton serge became widely used in work clothes and trousers.¹²⁷ Pierre, and his father André, may have woven either cotton or wool serge.

As a weaver in a “cottage industry,” Pierre sat in his house, perhaps in a poorly lighted room or cellar, moving a shuttle through a framed loom, creating the diagonal cross-weave of the serge. The yarn may have been brought to him by a middleman, who later marketed the finished cloth. Or, Pierre himself may have traveled to Thouars, with a population of about 2,300 and just 13.7 km (8.5 miles) from Curçay, to buy yarn from spinners at a booth at the Saturday yarn market and to sell his fabric at the cloth market there.¹²⁸

Handloom weavers declined in numbers throughout the nineteenth century as the power looms of industrial mills undermined them. Because Pierre worked in a dying trade, he probably earned only a subsistence living from his toil. Weavers and day laborers were the two most poorly paid occupations in France.¹²⁹ In other places, such as Scotland, many weavers contracted bronchitis. On-line French records do not report causes of death; we do not know whether Pierre suffered the respiratory/lung illness of either acute or chronic bronchitis.

The Curçay-sur-Dive in which Pierre grew up and labored was very much an agricultural town. We can glimpse a profile of the commune from census data for 1836, 1841, 1846, and 1851. In 1836 the population stood at 631.¹³⁰ That figure rose to 663 in 1851. By that year the commune consisted of 11 villages, hamlets, and *quartiers* (districts or neighborhoods). Pierre and Marie, in the 1840s, lived in the largest, once-fortified section of town, the center market area where most of the houses sat. The 1851 census, more detailed than its predecessors, calculated that 504 of the town’s 663 people of all ages worked in agriculture and, of that 504, 209 were *journaliers* (day laborers) and 208 were *propriétaires cultivateurs* (land-owning farmers).¹³¹

¹²⁷ For serge: George S. Cole, *A Complete Dictionary of Dry Goods* (Chicago: Conney, 1892), p. 310; Paul Rodier, *The Romance of French Weaving* (New York: Tudor, 1936), pp. 6, 304; “Les Métiers de nos Ancêtres,” www.hieressuramby.fr/uploads/docs/metiers_ancetres.pdf. Connections with ancestors come in unusual ways: When I was a student at the University of New Hampshire and enrolled in its Army Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC) in 1959-1961, I wore a green serge uniform when we assembled and marched with our M-1 rifles.

¹²⁸ Liu, *Weaver’s Knot*, pp. 54-55, 64.

¹²⁹ Based on a study of Normandy: Gullickson, *Spinners and Weavers*, p. 116.

¹³⁰ The 1836 census lists Pierre with an abbreviated word for occupation. The word might be *propriétaire* (landowner). But, in no other record is he so listed. RP, Curçay, 1836, p. 8, VA.

¹³¹ RP, 1851, Curçay, p. 26, VA.

After their 1793 marriage, Pierre Bibault and Marie Thibault had at least five children in Curçay-sur-Dive: Pierre (born 1794); Marie Jeanne (1795); François (1800); André (1805), who extended my family line; and Jeanne Bibault (1807). The lives of these children will be discussed in subsequent sections below.

Pierre's wife Marie Thibault died at the age of 70 in Curçay on December 6, 1843. Their 1800-born son François reported his mother's death to civil authorities.¹³²

Some confusion about her last name appeared after Pierre's death in 1845. In Pierre's death record, Marie is mistakenly identified as Marie Ambroise. Ambroise is actually her father's first (given) name. In 1852, Jeanne Bibault, probably the 1792-born daughter of 1771-born André Bibault (Pierre's brother), filed a *demandé* in the commune of Loudon, Vienne, to correct Marie's last name to Thibault. A civil tribunal issued a *notification* on March 10, 1852, to change Marie's last name to Thibault.¹³³ The change was noted in the 1852 Curçay births list and also written on the margin of Pierre's 1845 Ternay death record.¹³⁴

After Marie Thibault's death in 1843, the widower Pierre Bibault, then recorded as 72 years-old, and perhaps retired from his work as a weaver, moved to Ternay, 3 km (1.9 miles) north of Curçay-sur-Dive, where he joined the household of his 41-year-old son André and André's spouse Anne Bonnet (see below). On July 30, 1845, Pierre died at their Ternay house. Pierre's age was inked on the record as 76 years old. Pierre's sons Pierre (age 51) and François (45), both day laborers in Curçay, reported the death to the Ternay mayor at 7:00 in the morning. They informed the official that they were unable to sign the death document.¹³⁵

Pierre Bibault (1794-1868), Madeleine Criton (1798-1876), and Family in Curçay-sur-Dive

Now we begin to chronicle the lives of the five children of Pierre Bibault and Marie Thibault: Pierre (born 1794); Marie-Jeanne (1795); François (1800); André (1805); and Jeanne (1807). The first was Pierre, born December 3, 1794. His *sergier* father, age 26, reported the birth.¹³⁶ The younger Pierre Bibault went on to

¹³² RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, p. 3, VA.

¹³³ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #4, pp. 35-36, VA (tribunal).

¹³⁴ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, # 3, p. 9, VA (Pierre, 1845); RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, p. 42, VA (1852).

¹³⁵ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #3, p. 9, VA.

¹³⁶ RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1794 (III)-1796 (IV), p. 3, VA. In the Republican calendar the date is 13 frimaire III.

marry Madeleine (or Magdeleine) Criton on February 24 (or 26), 1820. He was then 25 years-old and described as *garçon propriétaire* (son of the owner). She was 22, born in Curçay, February 5, 1798, to Pierre Criton, a 51 year-old day laborer, and Antoinette Martin.¹³⁷

Pierre Bibault and Madeleine Criton had at least three children—Madeleine (born 1821); Jeanne (1824); and François (1826). Before reviewing the lives of these three, let us first identify 1794-born Pierre’s work and household over time. In the 1820s, Pierre worked as a *journalier* (day laborer). In the 1836 Curçay census he is again listed as a day laborer living with his three children and spouse.¹³⁸ In the next census, that of 1841, Pierre, his spouse Madeleine, and their daughter Jeanne are entered as day laborers, and their daughter Madeleine is a *lingère* (a housekeeper or linen maid).¹³⁹ The following year Pierre remained a day laborer.¹⁴⁰

Although some Bibaults in our story worked as farmers and artisans or tradesmen, such as masons and weavers, many Bibaults toiled as day laborers (*journaliers*) hired by estate owners usually on a seasonal basis. These workers were often poor or on the edge of poverty. Their work could include plowing, planting, weeding, harvesting, threshing, wood cutting, brush-clearing, tending vineyards and orchards, and shepherding.¹⁴¹ Some *journaliers* became small farmers and property owners and perhaps owned a house, but most faced “the greatest insecurity.”¹⁴² For peasants, the hope for land ownership drove them. Such was no doubt true for Bibaults, some of whom acquired land over the decades.

By 1846, at the age of 51, Pierre had improved his economic position, for then he was no longer a day laborer but a *cultivateur* (farmer). His 19 year-old son François carried the same designation. His daughter Madeleine (age 25) continued to work as a housekeeper.¹⁴³ Pierre’s title in the 1851 census was *cultivateur propriétaire* (farmer-owner) and in 1856 *cultivateur*.¹⁴⁴ Five years later, at the age of 67, simply identified as the head of the household, he resided in Curçay with Madeleine.¹⁴⁵ In the 1866 census, they were recorded as still living together, and

¹³⁷ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1818-1842, #2, p. 11, VA; RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1796 (V)-1799 (VII), p. 32, VA (Republican date of 17 pluviôse VII), VA.

¹³⁸ RP, 1836, Curçay, p. 10, VA.

¹³⁹ RP, 1841, Curçay, p. 8, VA.

¹⁴⁰ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1815-1842, p. 133, VA (death of daughter-in-law Marie Coindreau).

¹⁴¹ Beik, *Social and Cultural*, pp. 43-44.

¹⁴² Price, *Social History*, p. 158.

¹⁴³ RP, 1846, Curçay, p. 2, VA.

¹⁴⁴ RP, 1851, Curçay, p. 2, VA; RP, 1856, Curçay, p. 5, VA.

¹⁴⁵ RP, 1861, Curçay, p. 6, VA.

Pierre was then labeled a *rentier* (a retired person living on an income derived from property).¹⁴⁶

On February 1, 1868, Pierre Bibault died at the age of 73. His name was spelled “Bibeau,” as it had been in some earlier records. His Curçay death document reads that he was a *cultivateur*. His son François, then 41, and his son-in-law Pierre Robin (41), both farmers, reported the death.¹⁴⁷ In the 1872 Curçay census, Pierre’s widow Madeleine Criton, at age 76, was living alone as a *rentier*.¹⁴⁸ Madeleine passed away on November 28, 1876, at the age of 79. She was living then with her daughter Madeleine Bibault and her husband Pierre Robin (see below).¹⁴⁹

We now turn to the lives of the three children of Pierre Bibault and Madeleine Criton. Their first child was Madeleine Bibault, born August 5, 1821. Her father Pierre was then a 26 year-old day laborer.¹⁵⁰ In 1841, living with her parents and her sister Jeanne in Curçay, Madeleine worked as a *lingère*.¹⁵¹ She married Pierre Robin, a mason, on July 17, 1848, in Curçay, when her father Pierre was a *cultivateur*.¹⁵² Pierre Robin was born July 29, 1826, in Curçay.¹⁵³ Madeleine Bibault died December 12, 1876, at 55 years-old.¹⁵⁴ Her spouse Pierre Robin (age 50) was alive at the time; indeed, he lived until at least 1911, when he was counted in the Curçay census of that year as an 85 year-old *propriétaire exploitant* (land-owning farmer).¹⁵⁵

The second child of Pierre Bibault and Madeleine Criton was Jeanne, born on January 16, 1824, when Pierre was still a day laborer.¹⁵⁶ Jeanne herself became a day laborer. She was only 18 years-old when she died November 15, 1842. No cause of death was recorded.¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁶ Pierre is listed as 74 years-old, but he was about 72, and Madeleine was counted as 70, but she was actually about 68. RP, 1866, Curçay, p. 5, VA.

¹⁴⁷ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1868, p. 99, VA.

¹⁴⁸ RP, 1872, Curçay, p. 6, VA.

¹⁴⁹ Reported November 29 by Pierre Robin (age 50; a mason) and André Robin (38; a blacksmith). RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1873-1889, #9, pp. 16-17, VA; RP, 1876, p. 4, VA.

¹⁵⁰ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, p. 21, VA.

¹⁵¹ RP, Curçay, 1841, p. 8, VA.

¹⁵² Pierre’s parents were Louis Robin and Jeanne Gaudré. RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1843-1872, #6, p. 27, VA.

¹⁵³ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, p. 47, VA.

¹⁵⁴ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1873-1889, #11, p. 17, VA; RP, 1876, p. 4, VA.

¹⁵⁵ RP, 1911, Curçay, p. 5, VA.

¹⁵⁶ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1815-1842, p. 35, VA.

¹⁵⁷ Reported November 20. RP, 1841, Curçay, p. 8; RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1815-1842, #18, p. 133, VA.

A son, François, was their third child, when his father Pierre was 32 years-old and a day laborer. François was born April 3, 1826.¹⁵⁸ In the 1851 Curçay census, when François was 24 years-old and living with his parents, he worked as a mason.¹⁵⁹ At age 25, on July 21, 1851, he married Marie Auré in Curçay.¹⁶⁰ Marie was born September 13, 1830. Her father Louis Auré, a farmer, signed the official birth record.¹⁶¹

François Bibault and Marie Auré had at least two children. The first, Marie Bibault, was born March 18, 1856. She married the farmer Louis Roy on September 20, 1875. He was 32 years-old (born December 27, 1842) and she was 20.¹⁶² This Marie died on May 5, 1908, at 52 years-old. She is buried in the Curçay-sur-Dive cemetery with her spouse Louis, who died September 25, 1918, at the age of 75.¹⁶³

The second child of François and Marie was Berthe Alexandrine Eléonore Bibault, born April 19, 1869, in Curçay. Her father was still a mason who lived with his family in town (*bourg*).¹⁶⁴ On November 11, 1890, Alexandrine married Louis Georges Celestin Georget, a farmer born March 1, 1867.¹⁶⁵ They lived together in 1896 with their child Gilberte, then 3 years-old.¹⁶⁶ In 1901, Louis, Alexandrine, and Gilberte resided in one household with two *domestiques*. Louis had become a *fermier*, a tenant farmer who paid a fixed rent for the use of land.¹⁶⁷ Among landless peasants he probably ranked high, but he still worked on a small-scale level.¹⁶⁸ Alexandrine died after 1912, the last year for which we have on-line Vienne data at this writing. Her husband Louis passed away June 8, 1927, at the age of 60. He is buried in the Curçay cemetery.¹⁶⁹

To return to the 1826-born François: In 1876, he was identified in the census as a *cultivateur*, perhaps no longer working as a mason, although some farmers continued to practice their trades.¹⁷⁰ François Bibault died a *cultivateur* on

¹⁵⁸ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, #3, p. 46, VA.

¹⁵⁹ RP, 1851, Curçay, p. 2, VA.

¹⁶⁰ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1793-1872, p. 41, VA.

¹⁶¹ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, #12, p. 67, VA.

¹⁶² RPC, Curçay, Births, 1843-1872, pp. 52-53, VA; RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1873-1889, #4, p. 11, VA; RP, 1876, Curçay, p. 2, VA.

¹⁶³ TGP and DB photographs of gravestone, June 2014; RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1903-1912, #3, p. 27, VA (Marie).

¹⁶⁴ RPC, Curçay, Births, #6, p. 104, VA.

¹⁶⁵ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1890-1902, #4, p. 3, VA.

¹⁶⁶ RP, 1896, Curçay, p. 6, VA.

¹⁶⁷ RP, 1901, Curçay, p. 5, VA.

¹⁶⁸ Price, *Social History*, pp., 153-154.

¹⁶⁹ His death date in DB photograph, June 2014.

¹⁷⁰ RP, 1876, Curçay, p. 2, VA

February 12, 1891, at the age of 66. His son-in-law Louis Georget reported the death to town hall. Francois's death age is etched into his gravestone as 64, and his death date is carved as February 11.¹⁷¹ His widow Marie Auré died May 26, 1897, also in Curçay, where her son-in-law, the farmer Louis Roy, visited authorities to record her death. She was 67 years-old (born September 13, 1830), although her gravestone in the cemetery reads 74 years-old and presents her death date as May 20, 1898.¹⁷²

François Bibault (1800-1882) and His Families

To return to Pierre Bibault's and Marie Thibault's children: After Pierre (born 1794), their second child was Marie-Jeanne, born September 13, 1795.¹⁷³ Research in available Curçay marriage and death records has yet to yield further information about Marie-Jeanne. Such is also the case for their fifth child, Jeanne Bibault, born September 20, 1807.¹⁷⁴

We know much more about their third child, François, and their fourth, André, who will be discussed in the next section. François was born April 30, 1800, when his 32 year-old father Pierre worked as a day laborer.¹⁷⁵ On January 25, 1831, perhaps after military service and then working as a serge weaver, the 30 year-old François married Marie Coindreau, 19 years-old, born April 11, 1811.¹⁷⁶ François had thus joined his father Pierre, then 62, as a serge weaver. Marie's father was Pierre Coindreau, a day laborer, then 64.¹⁷⁷

The occupations François held over the decades until his death in 1882 further illustrate the shifting and precarious occupational status of country people. By at least December 1831, at the time of the birth of his son François, François had shed his weaver occupation and become a day laborer. He remained such into 1844.¹⁷⁸ In the 1846 Curçay census, however, François had become a *cultivateur*.¹⁷⁹ Five years later he was both a day laborer and a farmer. In 1856, once again, he appeared in the census as a farmer. In 1861 his occupation was simply day

¹⁷¹ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1890-1902, #1, p. 4, VA; death age and date on gravestone in TGP photograph, June 2014.

¹⁷² RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1890-1902, #2, pp. 26-27, VA (her age in this record is given as 66); death age on gravestone in TGP photograph, June 2014.

¹⁷³ RPC, Curçay, NMD, 1794 (III)-1796 (IV), p. 50, VA.

¹⁷⁴ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1801-1817, p. 42, VA.

¹⁷⁵ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, # 3, p. 46, VA.

¹⁷⁶ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1801-1817, p. 61, VA.

¹⁷⁷ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1818-1842, p. 65, VA.

¹⁷⁸ His spouse Marie also worked as a day laborer in 1841 (RP, 1841, Curçay, p. 3, VA).

¹⁷⁹ RP, 1846, Curçay, p. 5, VA.

laborer.¹⁸⁰ From 1865 until François died in 1882, census recorders classified him as a farmer.¹⁸¹ Without detailed landholding and account-book records, historians cannot determine whether people such as François ever achieved what they most coveted: economic independence through land ownership.

François Bibault and Marie Coindreau had at least five children: François (born 1831); Marie (1837); Louise (1838); Pierre (1840); and Louis (1842). The first child was François Bibault, born on December 18, 1831.¹⁸² On July 3, 1865, he wed Marie Briand (born in 1835). Both were *domestiques*.¹⁸³ They lived at least until 1911, when the Curçay census reported that François was a land-owning farmer.¹⁸⁴

François Bibault and Marie Coindreau named their second child Marie when she was born March 3, 1837.¹⁸⁵ In Curçay, on July 5, 1858, she married Jacques Malécot, a domestic of Saint-Léger.¹⁸⁶ The third child, Louise, was born September 4, 1838.¹⁸⁷ The fourth child of François and Marie was Pierre, born July 20, 1840, and the fifth was Louis, born January 2, 1842.¹⁸⁸ Louis Bibault became a farmer and lived in Curçay in 1911.¹⁸⁹

Less than a year after giving birth to her fifth child Louis, Marie Coindreau died at the age of 32 years, on November 2, 1842. Her father-in-law, the 49 year-old day-laborer Pierre, informed civil officials.¹⁹⁰

In about a year, on January 17, 1844, the day-laborer François remarried, at the age of 43, to Marie-Louise Charpentier. She was 28 years-old and the daughter of François Charpentier, a day laborer in his sixties.¹⁹¹ They brought at least three of the children of François's first marriage into their household (Marie, Pierre, and Louis),¹⁹² and they themselves then had at least four children: Édouard (born

¹⁸⁰ RP, 1851, Curçay, p. 8; RP, 1856, Curçay, p. 6; RP, 1861, Curçay, p. 4, VA.

¹⁸¹ RP, 1866, Curçay, p. 6; RP, Curçay, 1872, p. 3; RP, Curçay, 1876, p. 7; RP, Curçay, 1881, p. 3. All VA.

¹⁸² RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, #19, p. 73, VA.

¹⁸³ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1843-1872, p. 101, VA.

¹⁸⁴ RP, 1911, Curçay, p. 3, VA.

¹⁸⁵ RP, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, #4, p. 94, VA.

¹⁸⁶ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1843-1872, #4, pp. 68-69, VA.

¹⁸⁷ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, #13, p. 99, VA.

¹⁸⁸ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, #8, p. 106, VA; RPC, Curçay, Births, 1818-1842, p. 112, VA.

¹⁸⁹ RP, Curçay, 1911, p. 3, VA.

¹⁹⁰ Reported November 3. RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1815-1842, p. 133, VA.

¹⁹¹ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1843-1872, p. 6, VA.

¹⁹² Two other children from the first marriage, François (born 1831) and Louise (born 1838), do not appear in the 1846 census in the household (RP, 1846, Curçay, p. 5, VA).

January 23, 1845; died after 1912¹⁹³); Marie-Louise (born March 30, 1851; died August 2, 1853¹⁹⁴); Eugénie-Béatrice (born October 4, 1854; died September 10, 1946¹⁹⁵); and Maximin Célestin (born March 25, 1857; died August 7, 1874, a domestic¹⁹⁶). Their father François was a 56 year-old farmer when his last child was born. In 1872, he (age 71) and Marie-Louise (58) still lived in Curçay, but without children in the household.¹⁹⁷ Such was the case in the census years of 1876 and 1881, when François was still listed as a farmer.¹⁹⁸

The *cultivateur* François Bibault died in Curçay at the age of 81 on August 8, 1882. His 1831-born son François (spouse of Marie Coindreau) reported his death.¹⁹⁹ The deceased's second spouse Marie-Louise Charpentier soon moved into the Curçay household of their daughter Eugénie and her spouse Jean Châlon, a farmer.²⁰⁰ An elderly Marie-Louise still lived in this extended family setting in 1911, which also included Louis Bibault, Eugénie's half-brother.²⁰¹

The Day-Laborer André Bibault (1805-1848) and Anne Bonnet (1803-1864) in Ternay, Vienne

The fourth child among the five offspring of Pierre Bibault (1768-1845) and Marie Thibault (about 1773-1843) was André Bibault, born February 21, 1805, in Curçay. André continued my family line: He was my great-great-great grandfather. His father Pierre was then a 37 year-old serge weaver (see above).²⁰² André joined his brothers Pierre (1794-1868) and François (1800-1882) and his sister Marie Jeanne (1795-????) in the Bibault household. We know little about André between his birth in 1805 and his marriage in 1832. Like many children in poor households, he almost certainly did not have the opportunity for formal education. In 1845,

¹⁹³ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1843-1872, #2, pp. 7-8, VA. Édouard (age 56) appears in the 1901 census with his wife Josephine Gouin (56) in the nearby commune of Berrie (RP, 1901, Berrie, p. 9, VA). They married September 12, 1871, in Pouançay (RPC, Pouançay, Marriages, 1843-1872, #2, pp. 86-87). Her death date of July 13, 1907, appears on a gravestone in the Pouançay cemetery (TGP observed June 2014). Édouard was alive at the time of her death. He does not appear in the death records for Pouançay or Berrie before 1912, the last year for Vienne on-line records.

¹⁹⁴ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1843-1872, p. 32, VA; RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #5, p. 39, VA.

¹⁹⁵ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1843-1872, #12, p. 45, VA. Her death date is written on the margin of her birth record.

¹⁹⁶ RPC, Curçay, Births, 1843-1872, #3, p. 56, VA; RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1873-1889, #12, p. 9, VA.

¹⁹⁷ RP, 1872, Curçay, p. 3, VA.

¹⁹⁸ RP, 1876, Curçay, p. 7, VA; RP, 1881, Curçay, p. 3, VA.

¹⁹⁹ RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1873-1889, #6, p. 42, VA.

²⁰⁰ RP, 1886, Curçay, p. 4, VA.

²⁰¹ RP, 1901, Curçay, p. 5, VA; RP, 1911, Curçay, p. 3. In 1896, Louis Bibault (age 54), son of François Bibault and Marie Coindreau, was also living in the household (RP, 1896, Curçay, p. 6, VA).

²⁰² RPC, Curçay, Births, 1801-1806, p. 31; RPC, Curçay, Births, 1801-1807, p. 28, VA.

when his young daughter Anne Bibault died, André declared that he was unable to sign the record.²⁰³

André may have served in the military. The conscription system called young, usually poor, rural men to fight France's frequent wars and to police its empire abroad (see below). He would have been 20 years-old in 1825 and thus could have been drafted if he had been tagged with a low number. That he did not marry until 1832 suggests that he served the mandatory seven years of military duty, perhaps including an overseas assignment, before his wedding.

On November 15, 1832, when he was a day laborer (see above for this occupation), André married Anne Bonnet in Curçay.²⁰⁴ She was born in Vienne's commune of Saint-Léger-de-Montbrillais, in the village of La Roche, on October 2, 1803. This town lay only 7.3 km (4.5 miles) from Curçay. When she wed André, Anne worked as a *domestique*.²⁰⁵

Many of Anne's family members worked as day laborers, had their children at home, suffered childhood deaths, and struggled to make a living while they sent their children, perhaps as early as before the age of 10, to work for wages. Hard-pressed families were always vulnerable to crisis and undernourishment. In 1832, her father Nicholas Bonnet (1769-1838), the spouse of Marie Denion (about 1765-1849), was a *sabotier*, a maker of wooden shoes or clogs. He died a day laborer six years after Anne's marriage. The first child of Nicholas and Marie, Jean Bonnet, was born May 23, 1795. The birth record used the words "*enfant mal*" to signal that the baby was born sickly, perhaps deformed, and maybe premature. Jean lived only two months, dying July 25.²⁰⁶ Anne Bonnet's other siblings, Marie (1797-1881) and Jacques (1799-1872), lived into adulthood.

Sometime during the two years after their 1832 wedding in Curçay, Anne and André settled in Ternay. She and her extended family appear in the 1836 Ternay census (see below).²⁰⁷ Anne lived in this Vienne commune much of her remaining life. This town, 3 km (1.9 miles) from "Saint-Léger" where she was born, numbered about 500 people in the 1830s.

²⁰³ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #4, p. 9, VA.

²⁰⁴ For the Bonnet family, see Thomas G. Paterson's report, "Anne Bonnet (Spouse of André Bibault and Mother of Charles Bibault) and Her Family," April 2013.

²⁰⁵ RPC, Curçay, Marriages, 1818-1842, #6, pp. 71-72, VA. Anne's date is 9 vendémiaire XII.

²⁰⁶ See Paterson, "Anne Bonnet" for her family's history. For Jean: RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrillais, Births, 1795-1801 (4 prairial III), pp. 8-9, and NMD, 1795-1801 (7 thermidor IV), pp. 33-34, VA. DB to TGP, April 4, 2013, explained the meaning of the words.

²⁰⁷ RP, Ternay, 1836, p. 8, VA.

In June 2014, during my trip to this Vienne part of the Bibault family zone with my cousin Denis Bibault, I discovered a land of rolling plains, fields, vineyards, and woods, a temperate climate, and limestone/clay soil.²⁰⁸ In the nineteenth century the area was known for its truffles, the underground-growing mushrooms coveted by chefs. But the decline of French farming also meant less harvesting of these delicacies, although today truffle growth is on the rebound. Still prominent in Ternay is the imposing fourteenth century Château-de-Ternay, now restored as a bed-and-breakfast estate.²⁰⁹ Quality wines under the Appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC) of Saumur, largely chenin blanc and cabernet franc, are produced in the Ternay area.²¹⁰ Many Bibaults and Malécots are buried in the Pouançay cemetery that serves nearby Ternay. Next to the cemetery on the hill is an old Romanesque church, Saint-Hilaire, which is collapsing.

In Ternay, André Bibault and Anne Bonnet had at least four children: André (1834); Charles (1835); Alexandre (1839); and Anne (1842). Two of them died young. Their first child, André Bibault, was welcomed on August 3, 1834. The official record reports that Anne and André were 30 years-old at the time.²¹¹ This child André died at the age of 13, on May 11, 1847, in Ternay (see below). As was customary, the public officer did not explain the cause of death.²¹²

Their second child, Charles Bibault, was born October 24, 1835, in Ternay. His 31 year-old father André was then a day laborer.²¹³ (See below for Charles's life and his carrying forward my family line.)

On December 11, 1839, Alexandre Bibault, the third child of André (age 35 and a day laborer) and Anne (35), was born in Ternay's hamlet of La Bonne.²¹⁴ (See below for Alexandre's life.) The first three children of André and Anne had the benefit of living with one of their grandmothers, Anne's widowed mother Marie Denion, who resided with the family in 1841. Nearby was Jacques Bonnet, Marguerite Debrou, and their children Jacques and Jean. And, in another neighboring household resided Anne's sister Marie Bonnet, René Morineau, and their child Eugène.²¹⁵

²⁰⁸ www.communes.com/poitou-charentes/vienne/ternay_86120; INSEE, www.recensement.insee.fr.

²⁰⁹ For old postcards of Ternay: "Les Trois-Moutiers: La Château de Ternay—Le Donjon," VA.

²¹⁰ AOC is an official designation for a particular geographical wine produced to traditional, defined standards. Today some 300 French wines carry this designation.

²¹¹ RPC, Ternay, Births, 1815-1842, #9, p. 70, VA.

²¹² RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #1, pp. 16-17, VA.

²¹³ RPC, Ternay, Births, 1815-1842, #10, pp. 74-75, VA.

²¹⁴ *Ibid.*, #9, p. 92, VA.

²¹⁵ RP, 1841, Ternay, p. 9, VA.

Anne Bibault was the fourth child of Anne Bonnet and André Bibault, born September 11, 1842, in Ternay's village of La Bonne.²¹⁶ She died when she was just two-and-a-half years-old, on August 27, 1845. The next day, her 41 year-old day-laborer father André, having just lost his father Pierre about a month earlier (see above), assumed the heart-wrenching task of informing public authorities of his young daughter's death.²¹⁷

The 1846 census listed André (day laborer, 41), Anne (41), and sons André and Charles in Ternay's village of Pavillon, which had 10 households and 19 people.²¹⁸

The “Hungry Forties”: Anne Bonnet and Family Deaths

André Bibault, son of Pierre Bibault and Marie Thibault, born February 21, 1805, in Curçay-sur-Dive, died in Ternay just short of 43 years-old on February 7, 1848, leaving his spouse Anne Bonnet a widow at 45. The official record identified him as a day laborer, a low-paying occupation he held for most of his life. Reporting his death were Antoine Charton (27, a mason) and Charles Martin (31, a day laborer), both of whom lived in the nearby village of La Bonne.²¹⁹

Anne's mother Marie Denion died at 84 years-old on April 19, 1849, in Ternay. Her 52 year-old son Jacques Bonnet took responsibility for notifying public authorities of her passing.²²⁰

We can imagine the sadness and emptiness Anne Bonnet and the extended Bonnet and Bibault families felt in such a short period because of so many deaths in the family zone in the 1840s: Anne's husband's brother François's wife Marie Coindreau in 1842; Pierre Bibault's and his wife Madeleine Criton's daughter Jeanne in 1842, at the age of 18; Anne's brother Jacques's spouse Marguerite Debrou in 1843; Anne's spouse André's mother Marie Thibault in 1843; André Bibault (brother of 1768-born Pierre, André's father) in 1844; Anne's and André's daughter Anne in 1845, at the age of two-and-a-half years; Anne Bonnet's father-in-law Pierre in 1845; her son André in 1847, at the age of 13; her spouse, 1805-born André, in 1848; and her mother Marie in 1849.

²¹⁶ RPC, Ternay, Births, 1819-1848, #6, p. 104, VA.

²¹⁷ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #4, p. 9, VA.

²¹⁸ Anne's name is incorrectly entered as “Marie.” Alexandre was not listed. He would have been about seven years-old. Perhaps the census recorder simply missed him, or maybe Alexandre had moved in with relatives in another commune. RP, Ternay, 1846, pp. 2, 12, VA.

²¹⁹ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, # 2, p. 20, VA.

²²⁰ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #2, p. 26, VA.

Family-zone death records reveal that other Bibaults and their relatives also died in the 1840s.²²¹ Some historians suggest that rural folk developed a “hard exterior shell” to protect themselves from the anguish of repeated deaths, especially of children.²²² Other scholars dispute the “hardened” thesis, considering it “condescending” to French families who suffered “great sadness.”²²³ We can understand that the grief ran deep.

The context for these deaths was the “Hungry Forties” in France. Poor potato and grain harvests proved “lethal” throughout Europe, especially in the mid-to-late 1840s. Ireland and Scotland endured the worst, but in 1845 in France, a devastating blight reduced potato yields by 20 percent. Rye and wheat yields dropped 20 to 25 percent in 1846 after a summer drought. Potatoes, high in vitamin C, enriched diets, but they became harder to raise or buy. Poor cereal harvests drove up the price of bread. By 1847, wheat prices had risen more than 100 percent since 1844. Ten-thousand French people died in the subsistence crisis and many more suffered from deficient nutrition. Conception and births declined.²²⁴ The economic depression also spurred a national political crisis—the Revolution of 1848.

We do not know the causes of the many Bibault-family deaths in the 1840s, because town officials did not record such information on death certificates. We can only speculate that food shortages hastened the demise of those individuals who suffered hunger and malnutrition. Moreover, cold (such as the harsh winter of 1844) and heat (such as the very hot summer of 1846) weakened the old and young, who became more susceptible to disease.²²⁵ Certainly Bibaults, Bonnets, and related families lived on the margin in a time of troubles. Moreover, those among them who were day laborers faced another threat as the nineteenth century unfolded: machines, such as reapers, that began to replace their labor, leaving them less able to afford basic necessities to sustain their families.

After André’s death, Anne Bonnet remarried. On July 22, 1850, the 46 year-old Anne, then a day laborer, wed Louis Bouaverture Richou, a 55 year-old day

²²¹ For example: Pierre Bibault, a 54 year-old day laborer and spouse of Marie Dixmier, died September 1, 1843. RPC, Curçay, Deaths, 1843-1872, p. 3, VA.

²²² Colin Heywood, *Childhood in Nineteenth Century France* (Cambridge, Eng.: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 39.

²²³ Monahan, *Year of Sorrows*, p. 144.

²²⁴ Eric Vanhaute et al., “The European Subsistence Crisis of 1845-1850” (Helsinki: IEHC, Session 123, 2006), www.helsinki.fi/iehc2006/papers3/Vanhaute.pdf.

²²⁵ “Climate of Poitiers.”

laborer and the widower of Louise Groleau. Born about 1795 in the department of Deux-Sèvres, he was the son of François Richou and Marguerite Helene Dubois.²²⁶ By 1851, Anne and Louis had settled in La Bonne, Ternay, while Anne's son Charles Bibault (age of 16) served as a *domestique* for the farmer-proprietor Jean Dixmier (age 62) in Curçay.²²⁷ In 1856, in Ternay, Anne and Louis lived next to René Morineau and Anne's sister Marie Bonnet.²²⁸ In 1861 Anne and Louis still lived next to Marie Bonnet, who had become a widow after her husband's death in 1859.²²⁹ Anne Bonnet attended her son Charles Bibault's marriage to Marie Naly, January 12, 1863, in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun (see below).²³⁰

At the age of 61, on April 3, 1864, Anne Bonnet died in Ternay where she lived with her spouse Louis Richou. Her son from her first marriage with André Bibault, Alexandre Bibault (age of 24), a domestic, registered her passing with public officials.²³¹ Anne Bonnet's spouse Louis Richou died 10 years later, on April 6, 1874, at the age of 79, in La Bonne, Ternay. The day-laborer Alexandre, 35 year-old son of Anne and André, reported his stepfather's death to the town hall.²³²

Alexandre Bibault (1839-1913), Madeleine Buzat (1844-1916), and the Discovery of Their Family

Alexandre Bibault, André Bibault's and Anne Bonnet's third child, and Charles's brother, was born December 11, 1839, in the hamlet of La Bonne, Ternay. André, then a 31 year-old day laborer, reported the birth. Anne's brother Jacques Bonnet (40) accompanied André to the town hall.²³³ We know little about Alexandre's youth and we do not know if he attended school. He most likely did not. In 1856, he worked as a *domestique* at the age of 16 in the Ternay household of the land-owner Vincent Boitren, and in 1861, at age 21, in Ternay's hamlet of Puy-Chaume, in the household of proprietor-farmer François (last name illegible).²³⁴ Given these occupations, dates, and ages, it would seem that Alexandre (when he turned 20) did not serve in the French military service.

²²⁶ RPC, Ternay, Marriages, 1843-1872, #4, pp. 37-38, VA.

²²⁷ The whereabouts of Anne's other son Alexandre, who would have been about 12 years-old, is unclear. He could have been living with a relative or working in a neighboring town. RP, 1851, Ternay, p. 17, VA; RP, 1851, Curçay, p. 12, VA.

²²⁸ RP, 1856, Ternay, p. 8, VA.

²²⁹ RP, 1861, Ternay, p. 8, VA.

²³⁰ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Marriages, 1836-1872, p. 170, DSA.

²³¹ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1843-1872, #4, p. 78, VA.

²³² RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1873-1899, #4, p. 8, VA.

²³³ RPC, Ternay, Births, 1819-1842, #9, p. 92, VA.

²³⁴ RP, 1856, Ternay, p. 6 (his name appears mistakenly as André), VA; RP, 1861, Ternay, p. 8, VA.

By 1865, at the age of 25, Alexandre had become a day laborer. On October 2 of that year, he married Madeleine Buzet in Ternay. She was 20 years-old, born October 8, 1844, in the commune of Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Deux-Sèvres, to the farmer Paul Buzet (born about 1810) and Madeleine Freslon.²³⁵ To illustrate once again the closeness of towns in the Bibault family zone, Ternay and Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, although in different departments (Vienne and Deux-Sèvres), are but 8.7 km or 5.4 miles apart. Among the wedding witnesses was Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun resident Charles Bibault, Alexandre's 30 year-old brother.²³⁶ Alexandre and his new spouse Madeleine moved into her 56 year-old father's household in Bois de Dive, a hamlet of Ternay with three households of 12 individuals who lived near a canal used to transport cereals.²³⁷

By 1870, the young couple had moved to Ternay's hamlet of Les Cavards Villon, where their son Émile Alexandre was born on July 5 that year.²³⁸ The 1872 census recorded that Alexandre "Bibeau" still worked as a day laborer and lived in that hamlet.²³⁹ In 1876, Alexandre, now a farmer, and Madeleine lived with six year-old Émile in Bois de Dive. Their household was the only one in that Ternay hamlet. Perhaps they inherited some or all of Paul Buzat's land.²⁴⁰

Madeleine and Alexandre had a second child, Arthur Adrien Bibault, on March 11, 1879, in Bois de Dive (see below for Arthur), when Alexandre was identified as a *fermier* (tenant farmer).²⁴¹ In 1881, census takers classified Alexandre a proprietor (landowner) and Madeleine a farmer.²⁴² Perhaps falling into hard times and even losing his property, Alexandre, in 1886, was described in the census as a day laborer living with his spouse and son Arthur in Ternay's village of Les Cavards Villon. Their son Émile, who would have been 16 years-old, was not in the household at that time, possibly working and living as a domestic in another household.²⁴³ By 1891, in the same Ternay hamlet, Madeleine (46) and Arthur (12) lived with Alexandre when he was identified as a farmer.²⁴⁴ The 1896 census revealed that Alexandre (a 56 year-old farmer) and Madeleine (51) shared a

²³⁵ Hamlet of Laveau-Fourche. RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Births, 1834-1872, #22, p. 53, DSA.

²³⁶ RPC, Ternay, Marriages, 1843-1872, #5, pp. 114-115, VA.

²³⁷ RP, 1866, Ternay, p. 9, VA.

²³⁸ Carmen Bibault's "family tree," from her June 2014, in Pouançay, Vienne (see below for her relationship to Alexandre); RPC, Ternay, Births, 1843-1872, #1, p. 106, VA.

²³⁹ RP, 1872, Ternay, p. 7, VA. The name is illegible but the first word of the two-word hamlet is "Cave."

²⁴⁰ RP, 1876, Ternay, p. 8, VA.

²⁴¹ RPC, Ternay, Births, 1873-1889, #2, p. 17, VA.

²⁴² RP, 1881, Ternay, p. 4, VA.

²⁴³ RP, 1886, Ternay, p. 6, VA.

²⁴⁴ RP, 1891, Ternay, p. 5, VA.

household and house in Les Cavards Villon with their son Émile Bibault (25, and a farmer) and his spouse Marie Alexandrine Ruficot (or Rafricault).²⁴⁵

Twenty-four year-old Émile married Marie Alexandrine Rafricault on February 18, 1895, in Pouançay, where she lived with her parents Michel Rafricault (a farmer, age 61) and Virginie Dixmier (age 54). Marie Alexandrine was born January 7, 1871, in Pouançay, and was 24 years-old at the time of the wedding. Both bride and groom signed their signatures to the 1895 official document.²⁴⁶ On August 30, 1897, Émile and Alexandrine suffered tragedy when their baby boy Alexandre Émile Bibault died one hour after birth in Ternay's Les Cavards Villon. The grandfather Alexandre, then identified as a *propriétaire*, informed Ternay town-hall authorities of the death.²⁴⁷ About two years later, adversity struck again: On July 18, 1899, Alexandrine gave birth to a lifeless (and unnamed) feminine infant (“*enfant sans vie*”). The father Émile Alexandre and the grandfather Alexandre entered the mayor's office to register the death.²⁴⁸

In 1901, Émile, a farmer, and Alexandrine Ruficot (Rafricault), each 30 years-old, lived in the village of Pouant, commune of Berrie, 5.9 km (3.7 miles) from Ternay.²⁴⁹ That year, on May 20, in Pouant, Alexandrine gave birth to a boy, Georges Émile Bibault.²⁵⁰ In 1911, the three lived in Pouançay, when Émile farmed as a *propriétaire-cultivateur*.²⁵¹ On January 4, 1932, in Pouançay, Georges married a farmer's daughter, Émilienne Beau, who was born in Pouant on April 1, 1908. They had four children (see below). Georges died May 29, 1973 (or September 21), in Pouançay, and Émilienne died January 27, 1977, in Thouars.²⁵²

Georges's parents Émile Alexandre Bibault and Marie Alexandrine Ruficot died in 1947.²⁵³

We return to 1879-born Arthur Bibault, Émile Alexandre Bibault's brother and the son of Alexandre Bibault and Madeleine Buzat. On October 2, 1906, the 27 year-old *domestique* Arthur married Ternay-born Marie-Berthe Chauvet (1883-1929) in

²⁴⁵ RP, 1896, Ternay, p. 9, VA.

²⁴⁶ RPC, Pouançay, Marriages, 1890-1902, #1, pp. 14-15, VA.

²⁴⁷ RPC, Ternay, Births, 1890-1902, #4, p. 20, VA; RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1890-1902, #4, pp. 27-28, VA.

²⁴⁸ RPC, Ternay, Deaths, 1890-1902, #1, pp. 32-33, VA.

²⁴⁹ RP, 1901, Berrie, p. 9, VA.

²⁵⁰ RPC, Berrie, Births, 1890-1902, #4, p. 52, VA.

²⁵¹ RP, Pouançay, 1911, p. 2, VA.

²⁵² Birth, marriage, and death dates on Pouançay gravestones and in RPC, Berrie, Births, 1890-1902, #4, p. 52, and Births, 1903-1912, #2, p. 24, VA.

²⁵³ Carmen Bibault's family “tree”; DB photograph of gravestone, June 2014.

Ternay.²⁵⁴ Arthur became a farmer, perhaps on his father's land.²⁵⁵ Berthe is buried in the Pouançay cemetery.²⁵⁶ Arthur lived until January 19, 1959. He died in Loudun, Vienne, and is interred in Pouançay with his wife.²⁵⁷

We turn again to Arthur's parents Alexandre Bibault and Madeleine Buzat. The 1911 census reported that Alexandre (*cultivateur*) and Madeleine lived as a couple in the same house as that recorded in 1901, in Les Cavards Villon, Ternay, a small village of 12 houses and 12 households.²⁵⁸ On August 21, 1913, Alexandre died there, "*sans profession*."²⁵⁹ Born December 11, 1839, he passed away at the age of 74. His son Arthur, a *cultivateur*, reported the death to the town hall. Madeleine Buzat died March 19, 1916, in nearby Pouançay, at the age of 72. Perhaps she was then living in that commune (5.7 km or 3.5 miles from Ternay) with her son Émile (a landowning farmer) and his family. Pouançay neighbors reported her death. Her record confirms that she was then the *veuve* (widow) of Alexandre.²⁶⁰

On June 14, 2014, I visited the Bibault family zone in Vienne in search of family roots with my Bibault cousins Bernard Garsuault of Paris, Sylvie Garsuault Deletoile of Cérans-Foulletourte, Sarthe, and Denis Bibault of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba. With incomplete information about our ancestors, we walked the Curçay-sur-Dive and Pouançay cemeteries, took notes, and snapped pictures.

In Curçay's cemetery adjoining Saint-Pierre Church we discovered the gravesites for François Bibault (1826-1891), the son of Pierre Bibault (1794-1868), and his spouse Marie Auré (1830-1897); for Marie Bibault (1856-1908), the daughter of Pierre Bibault (1794-1868), who is buried with her husband Louis Roy (1842-1918); and for Louis Georget (about 1867-1927), the spouse of Alexandrine Bibault (1868-after 1912), the daughter of Pierre Bibault and Marie Auré. With some excitement, we came across the burial site for an Alexandre Bibault (died May 1, 1903, at 51) and his wife Alexandrine Charbonneau (died December 5, 1926). We soon learned, with disappointment, after checking my research lists, that "our" Alexandre was married to a Buzat not a Charbonneau.²⁶¹

²⁵⁴ RPC, Ternay, Marriages, 1903-1912, pp. 13-14, VA.

²⁵⁵ August 13, 1913 death record of Alexandre. Mairie de Ternay to TGP, July 23, 2015.

²⁵⁶ Photograph of Berthe's and Arthur's gravestone with dates taken in June 2014 by TGP and DB.

²⁵⁷ Death date on margin of RPC, Ternay, Births, 1873-1889, #2, p. 17, VA; death date confirmed on cemetery gravestone (TGP photograph, June 2014).

²⁵⁸ RP, Ternay, 1901, p. 7 (farmer-proprietor); RP, Ternay, 1906, p. 5 (farmer); RP, Ternay, 1911, pp. 7, 9. All VA.

²⁵⁹ Document #4, August 21, 1913, sent to TGP by Mairie de Ternay, July 23, 2015.

²⁶⁰ The neighbors were Louis Bluét, a farmer, and Alexandre Olivier, a village policeman. Death record #2 for 1916, sent to TGP by Mairie de Pouançay, September 22, 2014.

²⁶¹ Later, after researching the Vienne Archives website, I discovered that the Alexandre in the cemetery was Alexandre René Bibault, born February 10, 1852. RPC, Curçay, 1903-1912, Deaths, #4, pp. 3-4, VA.

We next travelled 8.7 km (5.4 miles) through farms and vineyards (*vin de Saumur*) to the Pouançay cemetery, which has served Ternay, Berrie, Pouançay, and surrounding villages. Pouançay is a small town of 241 inhabitants (2010 figure) living in 5.46 square km (2.11 square miles). In its cemetery we found gravesites for Arthur Bibault (1879-1959), son of Alexandre, and Berthe Chauvet (1883-1929), Arthur's wife; for Josephine Gouin (about 1845-1907), wife of Édouard Bibault (1845-after 1912) and son of François Bibault (1800-1882); and for Georges Bibault (1901-1973) and his wife Émilienne (Beau) Bibault (1908-1977). At that time among the graves, we could not find this Georges in our records, but before too long, with the help of others, we placed him in our family history as the son of Alexandre's son Émile Bibault (1870-1947). After walking every row of the cemetery's monuments, we could not find Alexandre's burial ground. Perhaps he (and Madeleine) never had a marker. Maybe his (their) gravestone had collapsed, destroying its carved lettering. Or, weather may have eroded the tombstone.

At the Pouançay cemetery gate, as we were leaving, we met an elderly lady. My cousins mentioned to her that we had been searching for Bibault graves but did not find many. We then experienced a truly serendipitous moment when she pointed down the road and remarked that we should meet Carmen Bibault, a nearby *living* Bibault. Bernard listened to the directions.²⁶² Off we sped in his new Peugeot.

We entered the driveway and courtyard of a house surrounded by stonewalls and brightened by flower gardens. Bernard knocked on the door and introduced himself to Carmen as the descendant of a Bibault and mentioned that his cousins had come from Canada and the United States to witness first-hand the land of their forebears. She seemed surprised and perhaps skeptical at first, but she invited us inside. We sat at a large dining table. Her sister Marianne joined us.²⁶³ Bernard and Denis explained our lineage. The Bibault sisters did not know that Alexandre's brother Charles had departed France for Manitoba, Canada, in 1891.

Carmen, who was born in 1948 and had worked as a social worker, left for a minute and returned with a family tree illustrated with names, dates, arrows, and photographs. Written above an image of an elderly, partially bearded man with a weathered face was the name "BIBAUT Alexandre." "BUZET Madeleine" was inked next to his name. Even though birth and death dates were absent, we knew

²⁶² Although we did not record the location at the time, we learned later from the management of the Château de Ternay that Carmen's address was: 1 Allée du Haut, 86120 Pouançay. Loïc de Ternay (Loic-de-Ternay@orange.fr) to TGP, September 22, 2014. Address confirmed by Mairie de Ternay to TGP, July 23, 2015.

²⁶³ Marianne was born in 1951. Although unclear, she married Aurélie and had a child named François Bibault Dromaint. Information on the children of Georges Bibault from Carmen Bibault's handwritten notes, June 14, 2014.

that we had found Charles's brother. Lower on the tree was the image of Émile Bibault (1870-1947), Alexandre's son. And, next to him was written the name of his spouse Alexandrine. We smiled in celebration of these discoveries. Marianne made a photocopy of most of the tree. As a parting gift, the sisters gave us a bottle of wine made by their brother Bernard.²⁶⁴ In front of the house entrance, as we said farewells, our cameras captured our remarkable meeting in group pictures.

So, on June 14, 2014, we understood Carmen Bibault's family line: André Bibault (the father of both Alexandre and Charles) was her great-great grandfather; Alexandre was her great grandfather; Émile was her grandfather; and Georges was her father. We also learned from Carmen, who scribbled names on a paper, that she and Marianne not only had a brother but another sister, Thérèse, who married a member of the local Mouillé family and had four children.²⁶⁵

Given the close ages of Alexandre's son Arthur (born March 11, 1879) and Charles's son Emmanuel (born March 1, 1879) (see below) and the short distance of about 9 km (about 6 miles) between Alexandre's home in the village of Les Cavards Villon, Ternay, and Charles's home in the village of Vrères, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, these young first cousins probably played together before Charles's family emigrated from France in early 1891.²⁶⁶

Among Anne Bonnet's and André Bibault's four children, Alexandre stood alone in France at the turn of the century. His sister Anne Bibault had died in 1845, his brother André had died in 1847, and his brother Charles had departed for Canada in 1891. We can wonder how, or if, Alexandre received word from Canada about his brother's death in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, in 1905 (see below).

Charles Bibault (1835-1905), Son of André Bibault and Anne Bonnet: Childhood and the Question of Military Service

We now begin to explore the life of Charles Bibault (1835-1905), the second child of Anne Bonnet and André Bibault and the great-grandfather of my mother Suzanne and of my cousin Denis Bibault, and my great-great grandfather. Among Bibaults in my family since André in the 1690s, Charles's life story is unique because he dramatically broke tradition by departing the family zone and moving abroad to become a successful farmer.

²⁶⁴ Born in 1938.

²⁶⁵ Thérèse was born in 1934. Her children: Patric; Patrice; Anita; and Michel.

²⁶⁶ DB to TGP, July 21, 2014.

Charles Bibault was born at his parents' home in Ternay, Vienne, most likely in the hamlet of La Bonne, on October 24, 1835, at four A.M. Three hours later, his 31 year-old father André, a day laborer, went to the mayor's office to report his son's arrival. Jean Bonnet (age 27) and Joseph Criton (30) affirmed the birth.²⁶⁷

We can account for some of Charles's early life in census reports for Ternay from 1836 to 1851. In 1836, then eight months-old, he lived with his parents and brother André.²⁶⁸ In 1841, at the age of 6, he resided with his parents and his brothers André and Alexandre.²⁶⁹ Charles lived at that time a few houses from the village *charron*. As a child he may very well have watched, with some fascination, his neighbor Louis Charbonnier at work crafting wheels for wagons. By the early 1860s, Charles himself had joined that occupation (see below).

In 1846, then 11 years-old, he still resided with his father André, his mother Anne, and his older brother André, but his younger brother Alexandre lived elsewhere.²⁷⁰ Charles had to endure the death of his brother André the next year. By 1851, after Charles's father had died in 1848 and his mother had remarried in 1850, the 16 year-old Charles worked as a *domestique* and lodged in the household of the farmer-proprietor Jean Dixmier (age 62) in nearby Curçay-sur-Dive.²⁷¹

Did Charles Bibault go to school or ever study with a teacher? We do not know, and no history has been written about schools and teaching (secular or Catholic) in Ternay or Curçay-sur-Dive. "Overlapping" opportunities for education, however, did exist for rural village children in France, especially in the second half of the nineteenth century France: "learning by living" and instruction from primary school teachers (*instituteurs* and *institutrices*).²⁷²

Most village children first gained the skills and knowledge needed for everyday life by watching, listening, and helping—"learning by living." Boys especially looked to their older family members and neighbors, who taught by example to predict the weather, use a particular plant, determine the best sowing and harvesting times, and understand local soil conditions. While boys learned to repair

²⁶⁷ RPC, Ternay, Births, 1815-1842, #10, pp. 74-75, VA (Denis Bibault translation). The "1891 Census of Canada" lists "about 1836" for Charles's birth year (www.ancestrylibrary.com). The Manitoba, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes priest Dom Paul Benoit's undated (but early twentieth century) handwritten notes, from Lourdes church records, read "1836" for the birth of "Carolius" in "Cernay" (copy from DB). The date and place are incorrect.

²⁶⁸ RP, 1836, Ternay, p. 8, VA.

²⁶⁹ RP, 1841, Ternay, p. 9, VA.

²⁷⁰ RP, 1846, Ternay, p. 2, VA.

²⁷¹ RP, 1851, Curçay, p. 12, VA.

²⁷² Heywood, *Childhood*, pp. 65, 74

tools and to hunt and fish, girls learned to mend clothes and to bake. Boys especially adopted the peasants' "rough-and-ready system of measurements" and accounting without putting pencil to paper. They used thumbs, fingernails, fists, armfuls, and feet, and made calculations in their head.²⁷³ In these ways, village children gained the essentials of a rural education.

Primary education teachers—*instituteurs* and *institutrices*—offered another opportunity for learning in rural France, including Ternay and Curçay. Although we have no records to explain if or when these communes opened elementary public schools at the time Charles lived in them, the towns did have resident teachers. In 1841, Ternay did not have a teacher, but Curçay did.²⁷⁴ By 1846, when Charles was 11 years-old, both communes had an *instituteur*.²⁷⁵ Perhaps these teachers used a public or religious place for a classroom, where they taught French, basic reading and writing, the metric system, and moral standards. At mid-century, most teachers were religious (nuns or priests).

Usually paid meager wages and often inadequately trained, teachers faced a major seasonal obstacle: Farm children largely trooped to school only in the winter months—from about November to February. Even then, attendance suffered because of sometimes impassable roads and shorter daylight hours. These teachers may also have been *instituteurs ambulants* who were hired by families for a few weeks in the winter to teach in their houses and shops—in short, on-site classrooms.²⁷⁶ Whether Charles interacted in any way with local teachers, public or religious, or went to a school is yet to be discovered.

We know little about Charles between the census of 1851 (when he was 16) and his marriage in early 1863. First, by 1856, he was no longer working for the Dixmier household in Curçay. Second, he does not appear in the Curçay or Ternay census reports for 1856 or 1861. Third, there are no census reports available for 1856 and 1861 for Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun (where he married) or for nearby Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon (where he lived in 1863). It is possible that he resided in one of these communes in the 1850s. Fourth, within the years 1851-1863, Charles would have been eligible for military service, turning 20 years-old in 1855.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 74.

²⁷⁴ Antoine Jourault. RP, 1841, Curçay, p. 4, VA.

²⁷⁵ In Ternay, Antoine Tournaux, age 24 (RP, 1846, Ternay, p. 3, VA), and in Curçay, François Casot, age 28 (RP, Curçay, 1846, p. 2, VA).

²⁷⁶ Heywood, *Childhood*, pp. 64-65; Roger Thabault, *Education and Change in a Village Community, 1848-1914* (New York: Schocken, 1971), p. 68, which studied Mazières-en-Gâtine, Deux-Sèvres.

As a member of the “Classe of 1855,” Charles may have been drafted into the French military, although accessible records do not confirm that he ever donned a military uniform.²⁷⁷ The conscription system, mandated by an 1818 law, required that men, when they turned 20 years of age, register with their communes, each of which had a quota to fill. The coercive law dictated that each draftee had to serve seven years of military service. Commune mayors drew numbers from an urn, with a low (“bad”) number meaning service. A high (“good”) number meant exemption.

The recruitment system, seeking young men to maintain and defend French imperial interests abroad and to fight the wars that repeatedly embroiled France, drafted tens of thousands each year. The requirement became particularly resented in rural areas. Critics called military service *impôt du sang* (blood tax). But, those selected could find a replacement or pay the French government for an exemption. Mostly the poor filled the military.²⁷⁸ Perhaps like many of his rural neighbors, Charles disliked this system that took young men far from family and village for a long stretch of time. In his case, if he had entered the military, he would have been separated from his community for the years 1855-1862.

Assuming that Charles was conscripted, he may have fought in the Crimean War of 1853-1856, which pitted France and Great Britain against Russia and raged in the territories of the collapsing Ottoman Empire. Or, he may have been sent to one of France’s colonies. Still, it is possible that Charles did not serve in the military, unlike his son Emmanuel and his son-in-law Eugène Guéret (see below).

The Wheelwright Charles Bibault (1835-1905), Marie-Louise Naly (1847-1900), and Life in Vrères, Deux-Sèvres

Charles Bibault wed Marie-Louise Naly on January 12, 1863, in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Deux-Sèvres. He (28 years-old) and Marie (just two months shy of 16) married at nine o’clock in the morning. Marie lived with her parents in the village of Vrères in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun. Charles also resided at the time within the

²⁷⁷ On-line Deux-Sèvres and Vienne military records begin in 1867, making it very difficult to discover if Charles served in the military before then. After research, the staff of the Deux-Sèvres departmental archives could not locate Charles Bibault in its military records for the canton of Thouars, whose jurisdiction included Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon (Angélique Barbault to TGP, October 27, 2015). The staff of the Vienne departmental archives could not find any document in its military records for Charles Bibault in the canton of Loudun, where he would have been “summoned” to the army if he remained in Vienne (Pierre Carouge to TGP, October 20, 2015).

²⁷⁸ David M. Hopkins, *Soldier and Peasant in French Popular Culture: 1766-1870* (London: Royal Historical Society, 2002), p. 129; John Q. Flynn, *Conscription and Democracy: The Draft in France, Great Britain, and the United States* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 2002), pp. 16-17.

family zone in the commune of Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, also in Deux-Sèvres, 3.3 km or 2 miles away.

The marriage is recorded in the official document as that of “André Bibaud” and “Marie Naly.”²⁷⁹ Several family members attended the ceremony, “consenting to the marriage,” including Charles’s 59 year-old mother Anne Bonnet and Marie’s 52 year-old mother Marie Gambaud and 57 year-old father Jean Nallis, a *cultivateur*. These attendees served as “witnesses,” as did the “farmer” Joseph Gambaud, age 31; the “farmer” Jean Naly, age 27; and the “farmer” Jean Gambault, 40—all of Vrères. Signatures on the document represent Joseph Gambaud and Jean Gambault, but others are not clear. Charles’s signature may be the “Bibault” (no first name with it) that is circled and appears to have been written as a “laborious task,” suggesting that he was not well schooled.²⁸⁰ The name “nallis” with no first name, perhaps scrawled by Marie or Jean Naly, is also evident. All present stood before the mayor, Thermite Auguste, who declared Charles and Marie husband and wife.

After the civil ceremony, the newlyweds probably took their religious vows in the commune’s Roman Catholic church, a gray, twelfth-century, Romanesque building. Built of stone, with oak doors, the church is perched on a hill overlooking farm country.²⁸¹ After the service, most likely the wedding party moved to Jean Naly’s farmhouse to celebrate the family event with generous food and drink. In the Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun church cemetery today stand gravestones bearing the name Bibault. The three children of Charles and Marie, Théophile Bibault (1864-1932), Marceline Bibault (1871-1953), and Emmanuel Bibault (1879-1959), were probably baptized in this church.²⁸²

Marie-Louise Naly was born at home in Vrères on March 21, 1847, to the 40 year-old farmer Jean Nallis (1807-1889) and 35 year-old Marie Gambeau (1811-1887). The record is signed “jean nallis.”²⁸³ Over the years, the surname was variously

²⁷⁹ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Marriages, 1836-1872, #2, p. 170, DSA. The error about Charles’s name appearing as André may have been introduced by Ternay’s mayor in a birth record extract that he sent to the mayor of Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun before the wedding (DB to TGP, January 7, 2013). André was Charles’s father’s name.

²⁸⁰ DB to TGP, February 6, 2010.

²⁸¹ Several photographs on websites; Denis Bibault also possesses first-hand pictures of the church.

²⁸² Marceline’s name is spelled with one “l” for her life in France. When she arrived in Canada in 1894 the spelling changed to Marcelline. The lives of the three children are sketched below and in Paterson, *You Must*.

²⁸³ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Births, 1836-1872, #5, p. 68, DSA. For Marie Nally, confusion about her name occurred at some point: “Primeau” was attached to her name, as if a last name. Shirley Gilmore, after a visit to Manitoba where she heard it from relatives, included this name in her descendants’ list, and it was repeated in Paterson, *You Must*. The error—the Primeau name—may have derived from the priest Dom Benoît’s early 1900s church notes. He mistakenly identified 1882-born Juliette Diacre, wife of Emmanuel Bibault (son of Marie), as

spelled in birth, marriage, and death documents as Naly, Nally, Nallys, Nalis, and Nallis, apparently depending upon the recording officer's preference or skill level or family members' degree of literacy.²⁸⁴ Gambeau also appears as Gambault.

At the time of his wedding and long afterwards, Charles worked as a *charron* ("wheelwright" or "cartwright").²⁸⁵ Like village shoemakers, masons, and blacksmiths, Charles ranked as a much-valued tradesman in an agricultural community that very much needed his expertise. Perhaps he learned this trade during his military service—essentially a time of apprenticeship. Such was the experience of other young French men who acquired new skills during their tours of duty.²⁸⁶

A *charron* built and repaired two and four-wheeled carts, wagons, dumping or tipping wagons (for road construction), and other means of transport with iron-shod wooden wheels. Horses or oxen pulled the carts and wagons. The wheels had to withstand heavy loads and shocks from rocky and rutty roads. Charles also may have made wheelbarrows. Besides making and repairing wheels, Charles might have been his community's "wainwright," constructing cart and wagon bodies.

Charles's shop, probably attached to his house, was stocked with hardwoods and tools such as saws, axes, wrenches, mallets, braces, and chisels, many of them hanging on walls next to his workbench. A wheelwright had to *know* wood, carefully selecting pieces with natural curves. Wheels were wooden, with radiating wooden spokes and a wooden axle. No nails or glue were used. A snug-fitting metal ring—the "tire"—encased the wheel. Wheelwrighting required attention to precision, with no room for error in balancing multiple parts. With the instrument called a caliper, the highly skilled *charron* constantly had to measure dimensions, intricately checking the accuracy of size, slants, and angles.

"Julietta Primeau." Primeau was actually Julietta's mother's maiden name (DB to TGP, July 26, 2013). Somehow "Primeau" became linked to Marie. That surname does not appear in any other available record for Marie. Marie's death record (Vital Statistics Agency, Manitoba, vitalstats.gov.mb.ca) does not use that name for her.

²⁸⁴ For the Naly family over generations, see Thomas G. Paterson, "The Nallis, Naly, Nally, or Nalis Family and Relationship to the Bibault Family," March 18, 2013.

²⁸⁵ "Wheelwrighting" chapter in John Seymour, *The Forgotten Crafts* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984), pp. 78-85, 100; "Les Métiers Lies a l'Agriculture," www.hieressuramby.fr/uploads/docs/metiers_ancetres.pdf; www.Larousse.fr/dictionaries/francaise/charron/14826.

²⁸⁶ For example, my great-great grandfather Jean Monchamp (1820-1874) of Le Pertuis, Haute-Loire, who served in the French colony of Martinique during the 1840s, learned masonry in the French Navy. He worked as a mason upon his return to civilian life (Thomas G. Paterson, "Monchamp Families in France, Canada, and the United States Since the Seventeenth Century" (2016).

An historian of old crafts has noted the importance of the “great interdependence of craftsmen in the countryside. Each craftsman was dependent on his brother craftsmen of different trades in order to be able to carry on his own trade.”²⁸⁷ In Charles’s case, in Vrères, he may have relied upon village blacksmiths to forge the iron for the tires of wagon wheels. In fact, in 1886, a couple of houses from Charles’s house lived the Ragot family, two of whom were blacksmiths.²⁸⁸ At least for a few years in the 1860s, Charles either had some competition from another *charron*, 55 year-old André Cebron, or he worked alongside this tradesman. Their houses in Vrères in 1866 sat very close to one another: #37 (Cebron) and #42 (Bibault).²⁸⁹ By 1872, Charles was the only wheelwright in Vrères.

We have a photograph of an elderly Alexandre Bibault (see above) and we may have a picture of his brother Charles as a middle-aged man. The latter photograph ended up in the family collection of Gabrielle Bibault Garsuault, daughter of Théophile Bibault, Charles’s son. The picture seems to include Charles, his wife Marie Naly, and their child Marceline. The formal, staged picture may have been taken about 1875, when Marceline was about four. Wearing a colorful, trimmed dress, the child stands on a chair at the center and stares straight into the camera. Glancing away from the camera, Marie wears a dark, full-length dress and a waist-length, fitted jacket with small buttons and lace collar. A mustachioed Charles is dressed in a wool jacket. He seems at ease and projects self-confidence as he looks slightly away from the camera. Probably about 40 years-old at the time, Charles is broad-shouldered, presenting the image of a man with upper-body strength.²⁹⁰

Charles and Marie had three children: Théophile (born January 23, 1864, in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon); Marceline (January 11, 1871, in Vrères); and Emmanuel (March 1, 1879, in Vrères). They will be chronicled in separate sections below. Census, birth, marriage, and death records document where Charles, Marie, and his children lived for decades. In 1864, when their son Théophile was born, they resided in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, a town of about 500 people with a fifteenth-

²⁸⁷ Seymour, *Forgotten*, p. 13.

²⁸⁸ RP, 1886, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 18, DSA.

²⁸⁹ RP, 1866, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 5-6, DSA. Perhaps either or both of these wheelwrights bought the shop of Pierre Doc, who was the sole *charron* in Vrères in 1846. RP, 1846, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 12, DSA.

²⁹⁰ This photograph was brought in 2013 by Bernard Garsuault, grandson of Gabrielle Bibault Garsuault, from Paris, France, to Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, and shown to his cousin Denis Bibault, who made a copy. Bernard thinks it was part of his grandmother’s collection. After Denis sent a copy to me, I labeled the photograph as that of Théophile Bibault, Eugénie Malécot, and their daughter Rachel (born in 1892) and dated it as about 1894/1895. In September 2015, however, Denis closely compared the faces of the people in the photograph with other family photographs. He concluded that the photograph was not that of Théophile and his family. Facial features do not match Théophile, his wife, or his daughter. Moreover, the child in the middle has some of the characteristics of Marceline Bibault (born in 1871), daughter of Charles Bibault and Marie Naly.

century church (Saint-Martin) and cemetery on a hill near the hamlet of Mayé. Today, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, with its components of Chavigny, Mayé, and Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon (or, simply, Mâcon), numbers 338 individuals (2011).

By 1866, the wheelwright Charles, his spouse Marie, and Théophile had moved to the village of Vrères (or Vrère) in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, where they maintained their household until 1891.²⁹¹ In 1881, the census takers recorded Marie, for the first time, as a *cultivateur* (farmer).²⁹² Perhaps she inherited some family property, or, because Charles was a *charron*, he earned enough money to buy farm land, piece by piece. Statistics show that land ownership in the department of Deux-Sèvres increased steadily, especially for small owners.²⁹³ In the 1886 census report, the last one before spring 1891, when Charles, Marie, Théophile, his spouse Eugénie Malécot, and Emmanuel departed for Canada, Charles still worked as a wheelwright. Marie's occupation was also listed as *charron*. The 22 year-old Théophile toiled as a day laborer.²⁹⁴

In the Bibault family zone that included Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun (and its hamlet Vrères) and Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, wheat, oats, buckwheat, and corn fields, cattle, dairy cows, nut trees, apple orchards, and vineyards marked the landscape. With its gently rolling hills, “the area very much resembles the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes region [in Manitoba, where Charles and Marie settled in 1891], perhaps a reason why the family felt environmentally at ease” in Lourdes, explained a Canadian-born Bibault.²⁹⁵ Residents walked or rode wagons, carts, donkeys, or horses to travel the short distances from one place to another in the family zone.

Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun and Vrères changed little in population over the years. In 1866, the commune had 264 houses, 282 households, and 877 individuals. Counted in these numbers were the village of Vrères's 70 houses, 73 households, and 230 people.²⁹⁶ In 1891, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun had 273 houses, 291 households, and 914 people. In these totals, Vrères accounted for 73 houses, 75 households, and 228 individuals.²⁹⁷ Today, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, with its eight villages, including Vrères, is home to about 1,100 people.²⁹⁸

²⁹¹ RP, 1866, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 6, DSA; *ibid.*, 1872, p. 15; *ibid.*, 1876, p. 26.

²⁹² RP, 1881, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 12, DSA.

²⁹³ Thibault, *Education*, p. 147, for land ownership.

²⁹⁴ RP, 1886, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 18, DSA.

²⁹⁵ DB to TGP, January 28, 2010.

²⁹⁶ RP, 1866, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 31, DSA.

²⁹⁷ RP, 1891, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 1, 34, DSA.

²⁹⁸ DB to TGP, January 28, 2010; Google Earth map; www.France-Voyage.com.

In small towns such as Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, diseases and early deaths for families did not relent, but famines became rarer after the 1840s. France suffered major epidemics in 1871 (with a famine) and 1890 (influenza).²⁹⁹ Villagers seldom went to doctors, and women gave birth at home. In 1900, 15 percent of all babies born in France died before age one.³⁰⁰

Through the latter half of the nineteenth century, French country folk (*les villageois*) witnessed a gradual but significant transformation.³⁰¹ Rural communities became more-and-more intertwined with market-oriented, capitalist commodity production. Improved roads and railroads widened access to markets and, at the same time, facilitated a rural exodus to French cities and countries abroad. A characteristic of this evolution was the increased use of machines on farms, although, because of cost, mechanization occurred mostly on medium and large-sized farms. In 1884, 61 percent of France's farms constituted just one hectare (2.47 acres), suggesting the continuation of elements of a subsistence, small-market economy.³⁰² A strong sentiment persisted in the agricultural community during the late nineteenth century: The desire of rural people to own land in order to enjoy financial stability for their families.

Language, Literacy, and Education in the Bibault Zone

In mid-nineteenth-century France, many rural villagers such as the Bibaults were illiterate, and even those who could speak or read some French might not be able to write the language. The Bibaults may have spoken a little French, but they probably could not read nor write the language. At mid-century French was to half of the people of France a “foreign language.”³⁰³ French officials seeking to

²⁹⁹ “Climate in Poitiers.”

³⁰⁰ “Life Expectancy in France,” Institut national d'études démographiques, Paris, www.ined.fr.

³⁰¹ For French agricultural transformation and rural life through the late nineteenth century: (1) Tina Jolas and Françoise Zonabend, “Tillers of the Fields and Woodspeople,” in Robert Forster and Orest Ranum, eds., *Rural Society in France* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1977), pp. 126-151—on Minot in Burgundy; (2) Clifton Johnson, *Along French Byways* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), pp. 17, 22, 96-97—an American who traveled in France, turn of the century; (3) Edward Maslin Hulme, *Wandering in France* (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton, 1941); (4) John W. Shaffer, *Family and Farm* (Albany: State University of New York, 1982)—on Loire Valley to 1900; (5) Peter McPhee, *A Social History of France, 1780-1880* (London: Routledge, 1992); (6) Stephen J. Russell, *Agriculture, Prosperity, and the Modernization of French Rural Communities, 1870-1914* (Lewiston, N.Y.: Mellen, 2004); (7) Graham Robb, *The Discovery of France: A Historical Geography* (New York: Norton, 2008); (8) Annie Moulan, *Peasantry and Society in France since 1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); (9) Thabault, *Education*; (10) Eugen Weber, *Peasants into Frenchmen* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976).

³⁰² In 1884, 61 percent of farms were one hectare or less and another 26.5 percent were in the category of one to five hectares. McPhee, *Social History*, p. 222.

³⁰³ Moulin, *Peasantry*, p. 79.

promote national unity could implore a school-age peasant child to speak the “mother tongue” (French) as a patriotic duty. Yet, the speech of the “mother” in the rural household was not French, but rather a *patois*—a particular, unwritten, orally-transmitted local language.

What was the source of the unique *patois* of Charles Bibault and his children? The answer lies in the complicated history of languages in Roman-occupied Gaul, in northern and west central France over the centuries, and in the old province of Poitou (which contains today’s departments of Vendée, Deux-Sèvres, and Vienne).³⁰⁴ Such words as loaning, borrowing, blending, merging, imitating, meshing, melding, altering, breaking apart, and mutating help us explain the fluid evolution of language in France. The Romans introduced and imposed Latin/Romance speech when they conquered Gaul. A spoken Gallo-Latin language developed with many variations in different areas. When the Germanic Franks evicted the Romans, they added their own speech patterns to the lingual mix in their new kingdom of Franci.

As France formed in the medieval period, two Romance languages came to prominence: In the northern part of the country, the *langue d’oil* (French) and in southern France, the *langue d’oc* (Occitan). Locals, however, retained their indigenous speech habits for use in everyday life. The Bibaults of Deux-Sèvres and Vienne, where Occitan was spoken, spoke a local dialect called Poitevin. “Good morning” in French is “*bonjour*” and in Poitevin “*bén le bunjhour*.”³⁰⁵ In Vienne, where Charles Bibault was born, “wooden shoemaker” was “*sabotier*” in French and “*bottier*” in Poitevin.³⁰⁶

The Bibaults also spoke a local variety of Poitevin—a sub-dialect or *patois*, which differed in vocabulary, spellings, idioms, nuances, jargon, grammar, accents, and pronunciations from village to village, from commune to commune, “from one valley to another, from high ground to low, from one riverbank to the next.”³⁰⁷ Rural people, after all, did not travel far from their villages; so, they developed and nurtured their own localized speech. The Bibaults most likely could neither read

³⁰⁴ Andrew Dalby, *Dictionary of Languages* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); Glanville Price, ed., *Encyclopedia of the Languages of Europe* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998); Charles-Claude La Lanne, *Glossaire du Patois Poitevin* (Poitiers, 1868); Bernard Orriye, *Le Patois Poitevin de la Vienne* (Royer, 2000); Emilien Traver, *Le patois poitevin* (Chef-Boutonne, Deux-Sèvres: Imprimerie Modern, H. Classeray, 1944); Abel Hugo, *France pictoresque* (France: Delloye, 1835), p. 171 (Google Book); Adolphe Joanne, *Géographie du département de la Vienne* (Paris: Hacette, 1877) (www.gallica.bnf.fr); Pierre Guiraud, *Patois et dialectes français* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1968).

³⁰⁵ www.poitou-charentes-vacancies.com.

³⁰⁶ Orriye, *Le Patois*, p. 37.

³⁰⁷ Weber, *Peasants*, p. 86

nor write French, and were thus tagged illiterate, but they could speak and understand some French as well as a local *patois* language that had evolved from and included competing elements of Gaulish, Latin, Frankish, and Poitevin.³⁰⁸ France had a “wealth of tongues.”³⁰⁹

French, nonetheless, gradually became the dominant language of France. As the central government expanded public-school education to spur French nationalism, and as literacy rates in French improved in the second half of the nineteenth century, regional dialects declined. Paris officials deliberately sought to end linguistic fragmentation by suppressing dialects and *patois*. Young, rural villagers, moreover, caught up in the cascading migration to cities for industrial jobs, adopted French in their own self-interest. As French became the language for business, law, and politics, it seemed necessary to learn the language as a step toward social mobility. Many young Frenchmen, moreover, became acquainted with French through military service. The orders that officers barked at draftees came in French.

Still, Deux-Sèvres as late as 1881 and Vienne as late as 1879 ranked as “entrenched” areas of *patois*.³¹⁰ One scholar has noted that as late as 1944 the inhabitants of Vendée, Deux-Sèvres, and Vienne who spoke Poitevin remained “considerable.”³¹¹ Today, however, Poitevin is an “endangered” language because so few children learn it and only elderly, rural folks and linguists sustain it.³¹²

Public education became the vehicle for installing French as the national “official” language.³¹³ The Paris revolutionary government, influenced by Henri Grégoire’s pamphlet, *Report on the Necessity and Means to Annihilate the Patois to Universalize the Use of the French Language* (1794), declared French the language of schools. Preoccupied with political intrigues, wars, and financial shortfalls, the central government did not implement change for years.

In 1830 France began to build a national elementary school system, mandating that manuals had to be written in French. In 1850, when a law increased the role of the

³⁰⁸ “Dialect” and “*patois*” are often used interchangeably in discussions of language, but here, following some linguistic experts, we separate them, with *patois* referring to the most local, popular, countryside language.

³⁰⁹ Weber, *Peasants*, p. 67.

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 75 (map). Denis Bibault has written that his grandfather Emmanuel Bibault probably “conserved a lot of Poitevin words.” DB to TGP, 1/27, 2015.

³¹¹ Traver, *Le Patois*, p. 7.

³¹² “Poitevin,” www.endangeredlanguages.com.

³¹³ Public education and literacy: Isabelle Palad, “Historical Timeline of the French Language,” dualjuridik.org (2013); Price, *Social History*, pp. 308-335; Raymond Grew et al., “The Availability of Schooling in Nineteenth – Century France,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 14 (Summer 1983), 31.

church in public education and sustained non-obligatory, paid schooling (with tuition exemptions for poor families), religious instructors (priests and nuns) taught most students aged 6 to 13. In 1871, France was 96% Roman Catholic. Catholic pupils usually stayed in school until they were 11 or 12 years old.³¹⁴

A law of 1867 gave communes subsidies to fund education, an 1881 law mandated “free” education, and an 1883 law made education mandatory and non-religious and required communes with more than 20 school-age children to maintain a school. French was declared the national language. An array of boys schools, girls schools, and mixed schools—public, Catholic, and independent—characterized the educational system. Secularization steadily increased. Lay instructors assumed more of the teaching. Enrollments in Catholic schools declined.³¹⁵

In the nineteenth century, public-school education steadily expanded and literacy rates improved, although rural areas lagged behind urban centers. In 1837, about the time of Charles’s birth, France had 52,800 primary schools and in 1863, 68,800. By 1891, the number had climbed to 81,200. Teachers taught traditional reading and arithmetic, but in rural France instructors also taught the “useful” subject of agriculture. Girls learned household skills. In 1866, for the nation as a whole, 30% of military conscripts were unable to read. Deux-Sèvres ranked near that figure. About 50% of the conscripts from neighboring Vienne could not read. But, in 1896, in all of France, only 7.5% of the young men examined on the conscription list could neither read nor write. By 1909, that figure dropped to 3.2%.³¹⁶ By 1914 almost every French person could read and write in French.

We do not know whether Charles Bibault was literate or attended school (see above), and we must undertake more research to discover when and where schools opened in the Bibault family zone in the second half of the nineteenth century.³¹⁷ Census reports for Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, however, reveal that no teachers resided in the commune until 1872. Teachers did not live in the Bibaults’ town in

³¹⁴ *The Statesman’s Year-Book, 1871* (London, 1871), pp. 56, 58.

³¹⁵ For trends, discussion of boys and girls schooling, and considerable data: Raymond Grew and Patrick J. Harrigan, *School, State, and Society: The Growth of Elementary Schooling in Nineteenth-Century France—A Quantitative Analysis* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991).

³¹⁶ *The Statesman’s Year-Book, 1871* p. 59; *Statesman’s Yearbook 1913* (London, 1913), p. 786; *The Statesman’s Year-Book, 1896* (London, 1896), p. 478.

³¹⁷ Neither the town hall nor the public school today in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun hold records (“*dossiers scolaires*”) for the late nineteenth century (Secrétaire de la Mairie de Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun to TGP, February 4, 2015). Much earlier, in 1764, the Lord of Rigby created a school for children (only boys were allowed unless the teacher was a woman) in the Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun church. A teacher was hired and supervised by the priest. Parents had to pay a fee and supply oak wood to keep the school warm in winter. The teacher taught the alphabet, prayers, and the catechism (“The First School,” www.st-legerdemontbrun.fr/LA-PREMIERE-ECOLE).

1836 (the first census), 1841, or 1866. In 1872, when Théophile Bibault was about eight years-old, a female and a male teacher were counted along with three teaching nuns from the department of Puy-de-Dôme. In 1876, two teachers were listed. In 1881, when Marceline Bibault was about 10 years-old, two nuns (*soeurs*) were recorded as *institutrices* in the town. In 1886, two teachers lived in the commune. In 1891, about the time that the Bibaults were moving to Canada and Emmanuel Bibault was about 12 years-old, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun had four teachers.³¹⁸ Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, only 3.3 km (about two miles) away, also employed teachers: One in each of the census years 1866, 1872, 1876, 1881, and 1891. No teacher was present in 1886.³¹⁹

We continue to seek information on the possible schooling of Charles's children. Théophile may have been able to read and write, suggesting some formal education, but Emmanuel could not.³²⁰ The question of Marceline's education remains unanswered. The enrollment of girls increased over the decades in France, and they went to both mixed schools and girls schools. They attended for fewer years than boys and they lagged behind boys in overall enrollment. Girls schools had the reputation of being inferior to boys schools. But, literacy rates for females impressively climbed throughout the late nineteenth century.³²¹ Marceline signed some documents in 1909 in Canada (see below), but signatures alone did not necessarily indicate literacy. Many uneducated French people learned to write only a name in order to sign important documents.

The Context for the Bibaults' Decision to Leave: Challenges in Agricultural France

In the late 1880s-early 1890s, Charles Bibault, Marie Naly, their children, and their children's spouses made life-changing choices. They joined millions of other Europeans who transplanted themselves to Canada and the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, pushed out by troubled economic and religious conditions and pulled toward opportunities in North America.

Migration was not for the timid, defeated, or weak, but rather for the ambitious, energetic, visionary, and persevering. Emigrants faced daunting tasks of leaving family and possessions, traveling across rough seas to foreign lands, and starting

³¹⁸ Census data, 1836 to 1891, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, RP, DSA.

³¹⁹ Census data, 1836 to 1891, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, RP, DSA.

³²⁰ On Emmanuel: DB to TGP, May 25, 2012.

³²¹ Grew and Harrigan, *School, State, and Society*, ch. 5.

all over in every way imaginable, including learning new languages and the pressing need to make a living. They had to have a strong work ethic and an adventurous spirit. Migration was a self-selecting process, and a leading French scholar of the rural exodus of French farm folk has concluded, not without controversy, that “the best people” departed.³²²

What a difficult and transformative decision Charles Bibault and his family made to leave France for Canada. Emmanuel’s grandson Denis Bibault has posed the key question that guides the pages that follow: “What led people to abandon their homelands in order to migrate to a frontier and distant part of the world, at a time when travel was risky, when comforts were few, when migration overseas meant ‘adieu’ for most, because not many returned to see their families, friends, and acquaintances?”³²³

Historians investigate “push” and “pull” factors to explain the process of emigration from one place to another. We explore the Bibaults’ move in the context of agricultural changes and economic stress in France; Canadian government campaigns to attract settlers to Manitoba, including free homesteads; private-company and religious community advertising; communications from emigrants abroad to their families and neighbors back in France; and conversations among neighbors in French villages such as Vrères.

First, the “push” pressures. The idea of “unwinding” helps explain them. What was holding people together in rural France was changing so much—was unwinding so much—that the decline generated for some individuals a feeling of freedom, including the “freedom to go away” and the “freedom to change your story.”³²⁴

The French economy, especially agriculture, to which the Bibaults were closely tied, was undergoing measureable, negative transformation in the late nineteenth century. Villagers faced frequent economic trouble. One historian has called the period of 1870-1895 one of economic “slackness,” with grain price levels falling about 40 percent. The peasantry suffered “steady but slow decline.”³²⁵

³²² Henri Mendras, *The Vanishing Peasant: Innovation and Change in French Agriculture* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1970), p. 1.

³²³ DB to TGP, April 2, 2013.

³²⁴ This concept is developed in George Packer, *Unwinding: An Inner History of the New America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), p. 3.

³²⁵ Wright, *France*, pp. 344, 360.

Agricultural imports created unwelcomed competition for French farmers. The continued subdivision of land into smaller plots undercut productivity. Available jobs in rural communities shrunk, especially for day laborers. Outmigration to cities, notably for craftspeople such as masons and carpenters, became more common for rural people. Some had to take seasonal jobs far from home. The chances for owning land and enjoying social elevation seemed to diminish. Moreover, the improving transportation infrastructure (roads and railroads) did not always meet high expectations for economic expansion, and, although accelerating mechanization on the farm seemed promising, it was expensive and not always suited to small farms.

Massive attacks on vineyards throughout France added to the list of troubles in agriculture. First came powdery mildew, a disease detected in 1847. This plant pathogen caused severe vine damage. Just as grape growers were recovering from this infestation by applying sulphur, another invasion began in 1863 to ravage French vineyards: phylloxéra. The villain in this case was the tiny, yellow aphid or root louse that relentlessly killed grape vines. Wine production plummeted.

The invasive phylloxéra did not spare the Bibault family zone of northern Deux-Sèvres and Vienne, where vineyards grew in limestone and chalky soils in what today is called the Saumur wine region. Phylloxéra entered Deux-Sèvres in 1873 and damaged 30 hectares (74 acres) within two years. In 1882, another 4,400 hectares (10,873 acres) of vineyards died. By 1891 only 6,000 hectares (14,826 acres) of Deux-Sèvres's 30,000 hectares (74,132 acres) of vineyards had survived the insect and the mildew. As for Vienne, this department first encountered the root-eating lice in 1878. The lice persisted there for years. Overall in France, the aphid epidemic destroyed 2.5 million hectares (6.2 million acres) of vineyards. The pest did not respect rank, class, or border: Large wine producers and country peasants alike suffered. Replanting programs began, but recovery went slowly.³²⁶

³²⁶ Today, Saumur, a commune in neighboring Maine-et-Loire, part of the Loire Valley, gives its name to the wines produced in the Bibault district. ("Anjou-Saumur" is also used to identify wines from the region.) Saumur itself is located north of Ternay (34.9 km or 21.7 miles), Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun (37.5 km or 23.3 miles), and Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon (22.37 km or 36 miles), all in the Bibault family zone. The Saumur region, with the Saumur appellation, is known for sparkling white wines and dry white wines made from the Chenin Blanc grape, rosés from Gamay and other grapes, and fruity red wines produced from Cabernet Franc. Maps today show Saumur vineyards in the towns of Ternay and Pouançay, among others in northern Vienne where Bibaults lived. Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun and other family-zone towns also are close to or sit in the Vins de Thouarsais region, where white wines (Chenin Blanc grapes) and red wines (Cabernet Franc and Gamay grapes) are produced. For the destruction of vineyards: "Deux-Sèvres: Commission du phylloxéra," in G. Mason, *Le Phylloxéra* (1877), books.google.com; J. Graff, "Le vignoble..." (1959), p. 311, www.persec.fr; "Ravages of the Phylloxera," *New Zealand Herald*, XV, (November 9, 1878), 8, paperspast.natlib.govt.nz; "French Vintage of 1885," *Journal of the Society of Arts*, XXXIV (January 22, 1886), 173, books.goggle.com; Jancis Robinson, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Wine*, 3rd ed. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 521-523; Lucien Foudalou, *Les Deux-Sèvres, 1880-1930* (Editions of

In addition to the crises in the vineyards, the world depressions of the 1870s and 1890s hit France hard. A banking crisis began in 1882. Rural folk such as the Bibaults also experienced France's notorious political instability, the military draft, and a national flu epidemic (1890). France's costly quest for empire and wars did not abate. After the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-1871, interventions in Southeast Asia and Africa took many French lives and strained the national budget.³²⁷

Image of Manitoba, Canada: Spur to Emigration from France

Some village people, experiencing the process of “unwinding,” decided to break from the troubles and challenges in rural, agricultural France (the “push”) and start new lives abroad (the “pull”). For some Bibault family members, Manitoba, Canada, loomed large. When French rural people were enduring negative agricultural changes and economic strain, prompting them to rethink their futures, enticement for would-be emigrants came from the Canadian government, its province of Manitoba, transportation companies, advocacy groups, and Roman Catholic clergy. These entities sought to attract people to Canada, especially through glowing advertisements and first-hand accounts of Western prairie-land successes that popularized images of agrarian, frontier abundance, plenty, opportunity, bounty, and “virgin” and “free” land.³²⁸

Motives for this boosterism of Manitoba varied: Some promoters, such as railroads and shipping lines, hoped to make money; some nationalists wanted to advance Canada's overall economy by developing its expansive lands; some religious leaders sought to build a stronger Catholic church in Canada to counter growing anti-clericalism in France; and some Canadians of French descent reached for a cultural balance between English speakers and francophone people by wooing more of the latter to Canada.

In the late nineteenth century, the government of Canada distributed in Europe hundreds of thousands of pamphlets in several languages in a “great advertising

Boreau, 2005), p. 30, books.google.com. For wines in the Bibault family zone today: Robinson, *Oxford Companion*, pp. 408-409, 619-611; www.discover-poitou-charentes.com; www.poitou-charentes-wine.com/thouarsais.html; “Wines of France: Wine Region of Anjou-Saumur,” www.vin-vigne.com; Prosper Montagne, ed., *The New Larousse Gastronomique* (New York: Crown, 1977), p. 33.

³²⁷ For the late nineteenth century: Hugh D. Clout, *The Land of France, 1815-1914* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983); Gordon Wright, *Rural Revolution in France: The Peasantry in the Twentieth Century* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1964); Knapton, *France*; Price, *A Concise*; Wright, *France*; “Climate in Poitiers.”

³²⁸ Such positive image-making represented a North-American phenomenon, also common in the United States, as explained in Henry Nash Smith, *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1950) and David M. Potter, *People of Plenty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954).

campaign” to “lure” settlers west.³²⁹ Manitoba itself maintained an office in Liverpool, the port from which many French emigrants, the Bibaults included, left for Canada. The province also sent agents to Europe to extol prairie life and homesteads.³³⁰ The Société d’immigration française, founded in 1887 and headquartered in Montreal, promoted migration to western Canada from French-speaking areas in Europe. The group’s secretary, M.A. Bodard, himself a French immigrant, served for a time as the Canadian government’s agent in Paris.³³¹ Catholic Church clergy in Canada, seeking to expand their parishes, encouraged French priests to join them and provided funds for their travel and resettlement. The weekly newspaper *Paris-Canada*, founded by a Canadian in the 1880s, championed French migration to Canada.³³²

The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), whose trains transported immigrants to Manitoba prairie acreage and which also anticipated selling company land to them, heralded “a true promised land” in Canada. “Who should emigrate?” asked an 1890-1891 CPR French-language brochure. The company’s answer: The “simple, peasant farmer.” Why? Because Canada had no taxes, no surcharges, no “fever” (perhaps a reference to France’s history of epidemics), and no “dangerous animals.” “Why stay in old Europe,” overburdened with taxes, population, and overpriced land which make it impossible to “establish his children around him?” Why work on land you do not own, and on land “barely sufficient to feed the people who cultivate it?” Think of harvesting 4,000 bushels of wheat on 100 acres in western Canada. Bring your family, the booklet also advised, because a “man alone” will become “bored” and “anxious.” A wife at his side is “essential” to help overcome difficulties. And, daughters will marry “soon” in a territory where men outnumbered women.

As for Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba (where the Bibaults settled), the promotional brochure highlighted access to markets through railway stations, especially the one in Treherne, about 10 miles away. The “well-watered” terrain was “undulating,” partly forest and partly prairie. Because of the proximity of the

³²⁹ Bruce B. Peel, “The Lure of the West,” *Proceedings of the Bibliographical Society of Canada*, 5 (1966), 28 (jps.library.utoronto.ca).

³³⁰ William L. Morton, *Manitoba* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), pp. 252-253; Gordon D. Lewis and Lauren M. Laws, *Manitoba* (San Diego: Lucent, 2003), pp. 49-50.

³³¹ See note below on *Guide du Colon*.

³³² Alan Anderson, “French Settlements,” *The Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* (esask.uregina.ca); “French,” “Migration,” *Encyclopedia of Canada’s Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999; Paul R. Magoci, ed.).

railroads, farmers could augment their income through timber sales—including oak and ash. Overall, Lourdes ranked as a “place of the future.”³³³

“Fruitful Manitoba,” read the colorful cover of a Manitoba Agriculture and Immigration agency pamphlet that boasted: “The Best Wheat Land and the Richest Grazing Country Under the Sun” and “Homes for Millions” on 116,021 square miles. A Grand Trunk Railway of Canada pamphlet trumpeted that the company cooperated with transatlantic steamship companies serving the Liverpool-to-Quebec or Halifax lines and would transport immigrants to the “easily cultivated and rapidly productive” fields of Manitoba.³³⁴ Canada’s Agriculture Department conceded that Manitoba summers were “hot” and the winters “cold.” Nonetheless, “the cold is pleasant and bracing, and the snow ... is of the greatest benefit” to farmers. Winters “were at times severe,” but also “healthy and enjoyable.”³³⁵

We do not know who heard about, saw, or read the widespread promotional literature or met with Canadian representatives in France, but the Bibaults seem to have been among them. Surely the fundamental message reached them, maybe from multiple sources. “Can you imagine,” a Canadian historian has written, “what the words ‘The West’ suggested” to many Europeans? The words did not simply identify a geographical area; they “offered a new chance, a new life, a new freedom.” So, “in eagerly reading the pamphlets on the West, the prospective emigrant interpreted what he read in terms of his dreams and aspirations.”³³⁶

Letters sent from Canada to the “old country,” word-of-mouth, and neighborly villagers’ conversations also stimulated interest in migration. About 15 families from different parts of France preceded or coincided with the Bibaults’ immigration to the area of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba.³³⁷ Of particular note: Members of two Vrères families, Dudoué³³⁸ and Poiroux,³³⁹ emigrated from Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun. The Bibault, Dudoué, and Poiroux families were

³³³ *Guide du colon: La laiterie, l'élevage, la culture et les mines dans le grand ouest du Canada* (Canadian Pacific Railway Company, 1891; available at https://archive.org/details/cihm_06127). This 1891 publication was a reissue of an 1890 booklet sponsored by the Société d'immigration française (Montreal), which is one that the Bibaults may have read or seen. See also Canadian Pacific Railway Company, *Western Canada: How to Get There, How to Select Lands, How to Begin, How to Make a Home* (Canadian Pacific Railway Company, 1894; available at https://archive.org/details/cihm_37315).

³³⁴ Archives of Manitoba, <http://manitoba.ca/cocoon>. Manitoba pamphlet is 1892 and Grand Trunk one is 1880.

³³⁵ Department of Agriculture, Canada, *The Statistical Year-Book of Canada, 1890* (Ottawa: Brown, Chamberlain, 1891), p. 8 (“CYB Historical Collection,” www.statcan.gc.ca).

³³⁶ Peel, “Lure,” p. 29.

³³⁷ DB to TGP, August 31, 2014.

³³⁸ Also spelled in records as Dudoyh, Dudoigh, and Dandoue.

³³⁹ Also spelled Poireau and Piroux.

neighbors in a small farm community. They harvested together, they sawed firewood together, they attended the same Roman Catholic church together, and they may have gone to school together. The wheelwright Charles likely fixed their carts and wagons. These neighbors most certainly speculated with one another about their economic futures and about prospects in Canada. They may even have cooperated to plan their trips to Manitoba.

In this context, consider the story of Vincent Michel Dudoué, born April 30, 1859, in Vrères, to Michel Dudoué, a *vigneron* (wine grower). Young Michel appears in the 1872 Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun census and again in a town record for 1888, when he is identified as a Vrères farmer. Théophile Bibault, born in 1864, was only five years younger than Michel. Michel immigrated to Manitoba in early 1890 and married Jeanne Bazin on November 17, 1890, in Saint-Léon, a village 22.8 km (14.2 miles) from Lourdes. Maybe he showed Charles around the Lourdes area early that year (see below). In the 1891 and 1901 Canadian census reports, Michel is a nearby neighbor of the Bibaults. In 1891, he wrote a letter to M. A. Bodard, the head of the Société d'immigration française in Montreal, reporting that Charles and other recent settlers were well satisfied with Manitoba.³⁴⁰

Also relevant to the Bibaults' decision to depart France is the case of another Vrères family linked to Manitoba: Poiroux. Alphonse Poiroux (1865-1922) was born in the village on August 2, 1865, to the farmer Henri Poiroux (1843-1925). Alphonse was about the same age as Théophile Bibault.³⁴¹ Friendship and residence in the same small community surely brought these young men into discussions about prospects in Canada. Their fathers Henri Poiroux and Charles Bibault shared rural life, church, and work as neighbors in Vrères before both transplanted their families to Lourdes in 1891. And, Augustin Poiroux of Thouars, probably related to Henri, had migrated to Lourdes before the Bibaults. Perhaps the various Poiroux and Bibaults over the years had swapped stories and interacted to

³⁴⁰ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Births, 1836-1872, #10, p. 136, DSA (birth); RP, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, 1872, p. 13, and 1876, p. 28, DSA; RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Deaths, 1873-1896, #6, p. 92, DSA (death of Michel's uncle in Vrères, May 10, 1888); "Les Débuts de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, 1889-1892, Décrit dans les Pages du Colonisateur Canadien," <http://shsb.mb.ca/Debuts>, pp. 13-14 (letter); vitalstats.gov.mb.ca (Dandoué marriage); Census of Canada, 1891, p. 91, and Census of Canada, 1901, p. 18 (both data2.collectionscanada.ca). Michel Dudoué received ownership of a homestead (SW 16-7-9) on January 13, 1894, and Jeanne Dudoué (of Treherne) received a homestead (NW 19-7-9) on September 27, 1898 ("Western Land Grants [1870-1930]," www.collectionscanada.gc.ca). Michel's quarter was in the same section as that of Théophile (NW 16-7-9). Michel and Jeanne returned to France about 1907; they died in the commune of Montignac-Charente in southwestern France, where they are buried (DB to TGP, September 9, 2014, based on Antoine Gaborieau, *Un siècle d'histoire: Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes [Manitoba], 1891-1990* [Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, 1990]).

³⁴¹ See footnote below for Alphonse's family. He moved to Alabama in 1921 and died there in 1922. Henri died there in 1925. When they moved to Alabama, they were joining Alphonse's son Arthur.

weigh the option of migration to Canada. In any case, Alphonse and Henri, who lived a short distance from the Bibaults in Vrères, acquired homesteads in Lourdes near Charles's farm.³⁴²

For these Vrères people who contemplated transplanting abroad, one obstacle among several was the anguish they felt about leaving behind family members they might never see again. For the Bibaults, such a concern may have been alleviated somewhat by the deaths of close family members. Marie Naly's mother Marie Gambaud died in November 1887 and her father Jean Naly died in May 1889, less than a year before Charles made an exploratory trip to Manitoba in April 1890 (see below). Their deaths, and Marie's not having to feel she was abandoning them, may have eased any hesitation she may have had about moving the family so far away to Manitoba. Charles's mother and father were also deceased—Anne Bonnet in 1864 and André in 1848—and Charles had only one sibling (Alexandre) still alive in Deux-Sèvres (see above).

We can wonder, too, about the effect on Théophile Bibault and Eugénie Malécot of their baby daughter Valada's death in August 1888 in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun (see below). These young parents may have envisioned some relief from their tragedy by starting anew in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. Of course, this discussion about the impact of deaths on the Bibaults' uprooting to Canada is speculative. But, this subject is part of the context in which they made significant decisions about leaving their French family zone.

Near the end of the 1880s, Charles Bibault and his family crafted a plan: He would go alone to Manitoba, scout the territory, and assess opportunities for a homestead. If all seemed right, he would file for a tract of land. Then, he would return home to Deux-Sèvres and prepare his family for a permanent relocation. We can imagine that Charles felt considerable trepidation over what he faced, although, if he had served in the military, he might have already experienced foreign travel.

³⁴² On August 4, 1891, Alphonse married Josephine Hyacenthe Bazin (1868-1892), whose family had settled in Manitoba from France years before. Alphonse, on August 28, 1891, wrote a very upbeat letter about his new home and the affordability of starting a farm in Lourdes to M.A. Bodard in Montreal, noting that one of his neighbors was Charles Bibault. "Les Débuts de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes," pp. 17, 22-23; RP, 1881, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 12-13; Census of Canada, 1891, pp. 90-91 (for Poisant or Poirant), and Census of Canada, 1901, pp. 8, 10 (data2.collectionscanada.gc.ca); "Western Land Grants" (for Henri Piroux, NW 12-7-9, February 14, 1895, and for Alphonse Piroux, NE 12-7-9, May 6, 1898); vitalstats.gov.mb.ca (Alphonse marriage and Josephine death). Josephine died May 22, 1892, at the age of 22. Alphonse returned to France and died in Vrères on November 23, 1922, at the age of 58 (DB photograph of gravestone, June 2014).

His son Théophile and his son-in-law Eugène Guéret (married to Marceline Bibault) welcomed migration. Charles specifically mentioned Eugène's interest (see below). These young men may have "coaxed" Charles to improve the family's economic standing through a tantalizing opportunity in Canada.³⁴³ Charles also may have been attracted to the growing belief in "progress" among the French people that "the son must do better than the father and thereby raise as high as possible the family name."³⁴⁴ As a wage-paid, 26 year-old worker in early 1890, Théophile may have felt stuck, his dreams dimming. Eugène, a day laborer with an uncertain future and low wages, may have thought the same way. Young families in French rural communities who lived with or near in-laws or parents in the late nineteenth century also increasingly sought independence from familial restraints and craved "a home of one's own."³⁴⁵

Finding a Homestead: Charles's Exploratory Trip to Manitoba, 1890

In late March 1890, at the age of 54, the wheelwright Charles Bibault left his farming village of Vrères, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Deux-Sèvres, most likely by horse-drawn wagon or cart that rolled on wheels he had built. Perhaps his son Théophile drove him to the Deux-Sèvres commune of Thouars, just 8.9 km (5.5 miles) away.³⁴⁶ In the early 1870s, a viaduct designed by Auguste Eiffel had opened railroad traffic through Thouars, which built a train station in the 1880s. By 1887, the northbound Bordeaux-Paris line passed through Thouars. Chugging 325 km (202 miles), the train travelled from Thouars to Paris in about four-and-a-half hours, including stoppage for water.³⁴⁷

From Paris, Charles journeyed by rail to the city of Le Havre on the west coast of France. He then crossed the English Channel by boat. We know that Charles next made his way overland to Liverpool, on England's west coast. On April 3, 1890, in Liverpool, "Chas Bibau" boarded the steamship *Vancouver*, bound for Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada. The handwritten ship manifest indicates that his destination

³⁴³ DB to TGP, August 27, 2008.

³⁴⁴ Thabault, *Education*, p. 100.

³⁴⁵ Shaffer, *Family*, pp. 209-210.

³⁴⁶ Or, but less likely, he may have traveled farther, to Poitiers, Vienne, some 80.5 km (50 miles) away. From there, he could have caught a north-bound train to Paris.

³⁴⁷ "Chemins de Fer d'Europe et du Monde" (beprioult.free.fr); Villes et Pays d'art et d'histoire, "Thouars: Laissez-vous conter la ville cheminote" (www.vpah-poitou-charentes.org); "Express Trains in France, 1907," *The Railway Magazine*, vol. 22 (1908).

was the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and that he was taking the “CPR” (Canadian Pacific Railway) to this provincial capital.³⁴⁸

Most *Vancouver* passengers were English. A few were French, but Charles probably had no acquaintance with them before this voyage. The Chanel family of the department of Saône-de-Loire, Burgundy region, was also heading to Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, to settle permanently (see below).³⁴⁹ Charles and Claude Marie Chanel no doubt encountered one another on board and talked about the question of leaving France to farm a Canadian homestead. Claude had visited the Lourdes area a year earlier. This fellow Frenchman may have provided Charles with valuable information, advice, contacts, and reassurance.³⁵⁰

Most likely riding in steerage (see below), Charles arrived in Halifax on April 13, at 1:30 P.M. He rode the CPR to Winnipeg, where the temperature was in the upper thirties (Fahrenheit).³⁵¹ After detraining in the provincial capital, he entered Immigration Hall, where government agents inspected and processed him. Charles may have slept overnight in the building, at no cost.³⁵²

Next, he traveled southwest by CPR train to the small town of Treherne, whose railway station had been built in 1885.³⁵³ The trip by rail to Treherne covered some 129 km (80 miles). Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes lay another 20.9 km (13 miles) away, to the southeast.³⁵⁴ The distance from the capital city of Winnipeg to Lourdes is 128 km (80 miles).

Working with a government agent and perhaps representatives of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the Société d’immigration française, Charles explored, on wagon or on horseback, uncultivated, tree-covered lands in the Lourdes area, on

³⁴⁸ “Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935,” ancestrylibrary.com; “*Vancouver* 1884” in “Ship Descriptions” and “Ship Pictures,” www.theshipslist.com .

³⁴⁹ Claude Marie’s given names appear as either one or the other and seldom together in records. His age on the 1890 ship manifest is 58 (born in 1826, he was actually 64). With him were his spouse Julie Besson (age 44), her step-son Jule (16), Eugène (6), and Henri (2, but he was born in 1885; thus 5) (Library and Archives Canada, “Passenger Lists, 1865-1922,” www.bac-lac.gc.ca). For the Chanels, two of whom in 1908 married Monchamps (Eugène to Rosalie and Henri to Rosa) in Lourdes, see Paterson, “Monchamp Families.”

³⁵⁰ Gaborieau, *Un siècle*; Paterson, *You Must*.

³⁵¹ Winnipeg’s mean temperature for April 1890 was 37.76 Fahrenheit (3.2 Celsius). Government of Canada, “Climate,” “Monthly Data,” climate.weather.gc.ca.

³⁵² Robert Vineberg, *Responding to Immigrants’ Settlement Needs* (Springer Science, 2012), pp. 9-10.

³⁵³ It is possible that he traveled by rail to Rathwell, 8.5 miles (13.7 km) from Lourdes. Treherne seems more likely, however, because that is the town that he and his family traveled to in their 1891 trip (see below) and it is the place where many other settlers ended their trips. “Les Débuts de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes”; Treherne Area History Committee, *Tiger Hills to the Assiniboine: A History of Treherne and Surrounding District* (Treherne, Manitoba: Treherne Area History Committee, 1976), pp. 18, 29.

³⁵⁴ As is the case throughout this report, the distances are calculated at Google Earth.

the northeast slope of the Pembina Hills. Charles would have noticed that the elevation had “little variation.” Pembina Mountain itself “rises a mere 150 m [492 feet] above the plain.” From the area’s hilltops, he saw what today is described as “a magnificent prairie panorama”— a “landscape of rolling green hills and lush forests.”³⁵⁵

He spent a couple of months in Manitoba putting his homestead paperwork in order.³⁵⁶ Under Dominions Land Policy he had to pay a \$10 “office fee” for 160 acres (a “quarter-section”) and promise to build a house and cultivate (“break and prepare for crop”) a “reasonable portion” of the land within three years. In 1890, Canada “set out for settlement” a total of 817,075 acres of the national domain, or 5,106 homestead farms.³⁵⁷ One of those farms was Charles Bibault’s 160-acre Manitoba homestead, the quarter-section NE 16-7-9 (Northeast quarter of section 16, township 7, range 9), in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes (see below).³⁵⁸

Charles very likely met other farmers in the Lourdes area, some of whom Claude Chanel might have identified for him. Charles may also have received help from Michel Dudoué, the Vrères neighbor already in Lourdes (see above). Charles certainly learned that tough assignments lay ahead that challenged the simple, glossy image of “The West.” Besides constructing a house, a new settler had to build a barn and assemble implements to grub out the roots of trees and bush and pull up stumps. He had to plough fields, cut trees, saw wood, put up fences, and dig a well for water. He needed animals, tools, and a wagon and sleigh with a box to haul his wheat to a grain elevator for shipment to market via rail. He had to plant a vegetable garden of potatoes, beets, carrots, onions, tomatoes, and squash, and sow his first crop of grains. Many of these tasks had to be accomplished in challenging weather conditions—especially in winter’s snow storms and freezes, and by hand or with oxen and horse power.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁵ Denis Bibault and Paul Cenerini, *Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes* (St. Boniface, Manitoba: Vidacom Publications/Les Éditions des Plaines, 2014), p. 5.

³⁵⁶ The Canadian government did not keep records of people leaving the country. Because no passenger lists for departures exist, we do not know exactly when Charles returned home.

³⁵⁷ Department of Agriculture, Canada, *The Statistical Year-Book of Canada, 1891* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1892), pp. 430-434; “CYB Historical Collection,” www.statcan.gc.ca.

³⁵⁸ DB to TGP, December 27, 2007; September 2, 2014.

³⁵⁹ “Jane McCracken, “Homesteading,” *ibid.* Local histories of towns in southern Manitoba, some near Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, detail the rigors of and obstacles to starting a farm in the late nineteenth century. Among them are: Treherne Area History Committee, *Tiger Hills*; Rathwell Historical Committee, *Twixt Hill and Vale: A Story of Rathwell and Surrounding District* (Rathwell: Rathwell Historical Committee, 1970); Holland History Committee, *Holland, Manitoba, 1877-1967* (Holland: Holland History Committee, nd); Haraldine Webb and Diana Vodden, *In Rhythm with Our Roots: A History of Manitou & Area* (Manitou: Manitou Centennial Book Committee, 1997); La Riviere Historical Book Society, *Turning Leaves: A History of La Riviere* (La Riviere: La Riviere Historical Book Society, 1979). These studies are available at manitobia.ca/resources/books/local_histories.

Still, as Charles calculated, the land was extensive, the homestead “price” was very low, the potential for a profitable wheat crop was high, and, if his acres were “destitute of timber,” he could even obtain a permit to cut trees, for fuel and fencing, on government-owned property.³⁶⁰ Statistics presented by promoters claimed that little capital was needed to start a farm (see below).

We know that Charles became very impressed with what he saw in Manitoba and with the generous terms for acquisition of a homestead. We do not possess letters that Charles wrote, and no diary exists to reveal his private thoughts. But, we do have a few of his words, apparently jotted down by an agent of the Société d’immigration française as Charles was leaving Canada. Charles’s remarks later appeared in a promotional booklet for settlers titled *Guide du colon*.³⁶¹ What he uttered gives us a rare glimpse of this Bibault ancestor and his view of the future:

Ah! ... Que cette terre du Manitoba est riche, ce n'est que du fumier pourri; je ne croyais pas ce qu'on me disait, lorsqu'on me vantait la fertilité de ce pays, maintenant j'en suis convaincu et je vais chercher ma famille; il y a en Canada plus d'avantages qu'en France.

Ah! ... This Manitoba land is rich, it is pure rotted manure; I could not believe what I was told when they boasted about the fertility of this country, now I'm convinced and I'll get my family; in Canada there are more advantages than in France.

The recorder also paraphrased the “comfortable farmer” from Vrères who had traveled to Manitoba without a “fixed intention”: Charles “eloquently” lauded the “advantageous” size (160 acres) and “value of the land.” Charles also said that he would immediately return to France and “fetch his family, his son-in-law, and friends.”

Upon returning to Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, the excitement in his family, church, and village and in the Dudoué and Poiroux families, must have soared when a “convinced” Charles returned to tell his story. Marie, Théophile and his spouse Eugénie, Marceline and her husband Eugène Guéret, and 11 year-old Emmanuel

³⁶⁰ *Statistical Year-Book of Canada, 1890*, pp. 502-504. It is not likely that Charles needed such a timber permit, because his homestead was largely forested.

³⁶¹ Translation by Denis Bibault. Société d’immigration française, *Guide du colon: La laiterie, l'élevage, la culture et les mines dans le grand ouest du Canada* (Montreal: Société d’immigration française, 1890; available from “Open Library,” <https://openlibrary.org/books/OL25454791M>), p. 14. This publication was reissued in an 1891 edition by the Canadian Pacific Railway Company (see above).

surely discussed the reasons for and against resettlement in a distant place that was primarily English-speaking and showing signs of hostility to francophone people. Manitoba ranked as a very English province, with just 10 percent of its population French-speaking.³⁶² Manitoba actually had made English the official language of the province, removing French as an official language. Authorities in France, moreover, discouraged French migration to Canada in favor of settling French colonies. The Bibaults might have considered these negatives.

Also, Charles and Marie may have expressed some skepticism about undertaking such a venture at their ages of 55 and 44. After all, they were conceivably near the ends of their lives, because life expectancy at birth in France was then 45 years.³⁶³ (In Canada the figure was 47 for men and 50 for women.³⁶⁴)

Another question faced the Bibaults: Would they have enough money to start fresh in Manitoba? One promotional pamphlet, calculating five French francs as worth one Canadian dollar, emphasized how little capital was required to begin prairie farming and sowing in April. A Manitoba homesteader with 2,500 francs (500 dollars) supposedly would be able to cover most needs³⁶⁵:

Fee for homestead: 10 dollars (50 francs)
 Building materials for a house: 100 (500)
 Furniture, stove, beds, etc.: 50 (250)
 Two oxen: 120 (600)
 Cow: 30 (150)
 Wagon, plough, and harrow: 50 (250)
 Provisions for a family of five for a year: 100 (500)
 Tools, harness, and unexpected costs: 40 (200)

The Bibaults certainly possessed the necessary funds. Charles probably had savings, but important to their successful transfer from Deux-Sèvres to Manitoba was the sale of family property. Official records reveal that on March 13 and 15, 1891, just before the Bibault family emigrated from France, Charles and Marie sold their Vrères house (*maison* number 152) and 25 ares of land (equivalent to 1.6188 acres or .25 hectares) to a longtime Vrères neighbor and farmer, Pierre Vaslin.³⁶⁶ Pierre was 80 years-old in 1891; he died in 1899. His farmer sons Pierre

³⁶² 1886 figure. Communauté francophone du Manitoba, “History of French Manitoba” (sfm.mb.ca).

³⁶³ 1900 figure. Institut national, “Life Expectancy.”

³⁶⁴ 1900 figures. Government of Canada, Depository Services Program, “Healthy Aging,” <http://dsp-psa.pwgsc.ca>.

³⁶⁵ *Guide du colon* (1890), pp 21-22.

³⁶⁶ Angélique Barbault, Deux-Sèvres Archives départementales, Niort, to TGP, December 23, 2014.

and Henri lived nearby.³⁶⁷ The elder Pierre paid the Bibaults the sum of 2,744 francs. Also, Charles likely sold the contents of his *charron* shop—tools, benches, wheel parts, and hardwoods.³⁶⁸

Marie Naly, too, significantly contributed to the family’s cash-on-hand. Between 1887 and 1894, she alone sold 12 properties, some of which she most likely had inherited from her Naly and Gambeau forebears.³⁶⁹ As for Théophile: In 1890, when he was working as a wage-earning butcher, he sold his house in the small town of Saint-Cyr-la-Lande (9.8 km or 6.1 miles from Vrères) for 1,200 francs.³⁷⁰

The Bibaults also understood that Canada was helping homesteaders with more than a land grant. The government paid a “bonus” of \$10 to each head of a homesteading family; \$5 to each member of the family over the age of 12; and another \$10 to each family member who became a settler. As well, a homesteader had the “power” to “create a charge upon his homestead” up to \$600, arranged with another person or company. This possibility—in essence, an advance—would help with initial costs for passage, subsistence, erecting and insuring buildings, breaking ground, buying a wagon, and acquiring horses, oxen, tools, and seed, and other necessities.³⁷¹ The Bibaults may not have needed to exercise this option.

The Bibaults Move to Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, 1891

In Liverpool, England, on March 26, 1891, Charles, Marie, Théophile, his wife Eugène, and Emmanuel carried suitcases or boxes full of their belongings—perhaps keepsakes, clothes, hats, linen—to the gangplank of the ship *Parisian*. In hand bags they likely stuffed bread, cheese, and fruit. They had traveled a very

³⁶⁷ The house number for the senior Pierre in 1891 was 152—the same number that Charles’s house had in 1886. In 1886 and 1891 Vrères counted 73 houses (RP, 1886, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 15, 18, 33, DSA; RP, 1891, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 17, 18, 34, DSA). In the 1896 census, the two Pierres lived in house #151 with the younger Pierre’s spouse, when Vrères had 74 houses. This house may have been former Charles’s house (RP, 1896, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 17, 34, DSA). Charles’s house may have passed next to Henri Vaslin after Pierre’s 1899 death (Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Deaths, 1897-1902, #5, p. 14, DSA). In 1901, Henri lived in house #156, when Vrères had 75 houses (RP, 1901, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 17, 34, DSA). But, in the 1906 census, Henri Vaslin lived in house #132, when Vrères had 78 houses (RP, 1906, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, pp. 15, 34, DSA).

³⁶⁸ The census of 1896 reports that a *charron* (Pierre Moimot, age 31) and two other young wheelwrights lived in Vrères close to where Charles once lived. Perhaps Pierre Moimot bought Charles’s shop (RP, 1896, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 17, DSA).

³⁶⁹ No sale prices indicated in Barbault of DSA to TGP, December 23, 2014.

³⁷⁰ The house had been purchased in 1889 for 1,200 francs and sold for the same sum. Pierre Quernez (Deux-Sèvres Departmental Archives, Niort) to TGP, July 30, 2014.

³⁷¹ Over time the “charge” (advance) had to be paid back with interest. A government agent monitored fulfillment of the contract. *Statistical Year-Book of Canada, 1891*, pp. 93, 434.

long way from Vrères, most likely following the routes that Charles took a year earlier (see above). Their Canadian destination was Treherne, Manitoba, the town to which they also may have shipped trunks packed with family and household items.³⁷²

Charles's and Marie's daughter Marceline, a day laborer, remained in France with her spouse Eugène Guéret, also a day laborer. She was pregnant with their first child. In Vrères, she gave birth to a son, Arthur Alexander, on May 24, 1891, just about two months after the child's grandparents had departed Deux-Sèvres (see below). The French census report for 1886 indicates that the house in which the Guérets lived in 1891, perhaps one of Marie Naly's properties, sat not very far from the Vrères *maison* that the Bibaults sold in early 1891.³⁷³ Marceline and Eugène joined the Bibaults in Manitoba in 1894, the year that Marie Naly sold another property, perhaps her last (see below).

The *Parisian* had been launched in 1880 and made its maiden voyage the next year, ten years before Charles, Marie, Théophile, and Emmanuel boarded the steel-hulled, double-bottomed, side-keeled (to "keep her free from much of the rolling motion which is so disagreeable to passengers"), four-masted, two-funneled British ship of the Allan Line.³⁷⁴ The vessel had a capacity of 1,250 passengers, 1,000 of them in steerage (third class). For this 1891 trip, 898 passengers were on board, with 656 of them crowded with the Bibaults in the noisy, stuffy, and smelly lower-deck steerage, the least expensive booking (about \$30 for an adult).³⁷⁵ Passengers were physically divided into groups that could not intermingle: single men (409); single women (117); and married couples (180) with children (192).

For 11 days the Bibaults slept on hard bunk racks, ate stews and soups at long tables, used communal bathrooms, and probably became seasick from the churning Atlantic Ocean. Privacy hardly existed for them.³⁷⁶ On April 5, at 1:45 P.M., the ship docked at Halifax, Nova Scotia, 2,480 miles from Liverpool. The temperature

³⁷² "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," ancestrylibrary.com; Library and Archives Canada, "Passenger Lists, 1865-1922," www.collectionscanada.gc.ca; "Parisian Ship Information," ancestrylibrary.com; "Parisian 1880," www.theshipslip.com, with photograph. Théophile and Eugénie are recorded separately from the rest of the family. ("Canada Passenger Lists, 1891-1922," familysearch.org).

³⁷³ RP, 1886, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 18 (house #152 for Bibault); RP, 1891, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, p. 15 (house #122 for Guéret).

³⁷⁴ Quotation in "Allan Line Illustrated Tourists' Guide to Canada and the United States (c 1880)," jubilation.uwaterloo.ca.

³⁷⁵ Brandon Dupont et al., "Passenger Fares for Overseas Travel," eh.net/eha/system/files/weissetal.pdf.

³⁷⁶ Al Cerrachio, "Ship Travel in Third Class," www.cruisemates.com/articles/onboard/steerage.cfm; Borge Solem, "Steerage Passengers," www.norwayheritage.com/steerage.htm.

on land was about 40 degrees (F) (4.5 C). The fresh air and space must have felt invigorating after the stuffy conditions on board.³⁷⁷

After disembarking the *Parisian* in Nova Scotia, the weary Bibaults soon journeyed to Manitoba by the Canadian Pacific Railway. Perhaps they rode from Halifax in a first-class “colonist car,” which became a sleeping car at night. Or, they may have traveled in a second-class car: For \$2.50, a person could receive a blanket, pillow, and mattress.³⁷⁸ After they departed the CPR train in Winnipeg, they walked from the station a short distance to Immigration Hall. There, immigration agents examined them, helped them fill out documents, and answered questions. The Bibaults may have stayed in the facility overnight to take advantage of short-term lodging with free and clean beds.³⁷⁹

The Bibaults in 1891 counted among 82,165 immigrant arrivals in Canada (at Quebec and Halifax). Most of them were English (17,985). French and Belgian (734) constituted the smallest group. The Bibaults numbered five of about 700 French people who moved to Canada that entire year.³⁸⁰

The place where the Bibaults would settle, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, experienced four waves of immigration in the late nineteenth century. The first wave, during the years 1881-1891, included settlers from Quebec who sought escape from economic crisis there. The Bibaults were part of the second wave of 1890-May 1891, which consisted of some 40 French and Swiss immigrants seeking productive lands that Canada had promoted through advertising in Europe.

The third wave, 1891-1895, had a religious goal: The colonizing priest Dom Paul Benoît of the Canons Regulars of the Immaculate Conception led about 40 settlers in the spring of 1891 to Lourdes to found a Roman Catholic parish with a strict liturgy. Another 130 religious settlers, in six convoys, followed in the next few years. By 1892, more than 100 families lived in Lourdes. Although Bibaults attended the Lourdes church as practicing Catholics—my mother Suzanne Monchamp, daughter of Rachel Bibault and Jean Monchamp, was baptized in 1910 by Dom Benoît—they did not migrate to the community as part of his mission.

The last wave of immigrants (which included my mother’s grandfather Antoine Monchamp and her father Jean Monchamp), came between 1895 and 1910 “on

³⁷⁷ “Climate, “Monthly Data,” mean temperature for April 1891, Halifax.

³⁷⁸ Canadian Pacific Railway, *Western Canada*, p. 54.

³⁷⁹ Vineberg, *Responding*, pp. 9-10.

³⁸⁰ *Statistical Year-Book of Canada, 1891*, pp. 88-89.

their own initiative, often in response to the government campaign or their correspondence with settlers already living in the region.”³⁸¹

Altogether, in the years 1880-1910, 1,029 immigrants of various nationalities settled in Lourdes. By 1910, the year my mother Suzanne was born, the population had grown to 1,247.³⁸² Today, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes is a francophone, worldly community where English is also spoken and where the commitment to public services for its people (about 700) and surrounding villages is strong.

The 1891 Canada census for Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, which began enumeration on April 6, one day after the Bibaults arrived in Halifax, listed the “farmer” Charles Bibault and his family.³⁸³ His quarter-section homestead of 160 acres was located at NE 16-7-9. He gained full ownership of the property from the Canadian government on February 21, 1895.³⁸⁴ Like other new settlers, Charles faced the mammoth task of clearing and removing trees—oak, maple, aspen, birch, and more—that covered the land. Some farmers felled trees, chopped them into appropriate lengths, and sold them as firewood in Treherne. There, the logs were shipped to Winnipeg to heat the Canadian capital. The forests also became essential to the building of the first log cabins and houses before the tasks of farming could begin.

The Bibaults became Canadian citizens through the process of naturalization: Charles in 1894 and Théophile and Marcelline (and Eugène Guéret) in 1898. Emmanuel also became a citizen of Canada.³⁸⁵

With their grand adventure from one continent to another, the Bibaults, Charles and Marie and eventually all three of their children—Théophile, Marcelline, and

³⁸¹ Bibault and Cenerini, *Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes*, p. 9; D.M. Lyon, “Notre Dame de Lourdes,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, www.thecanadianencyclopedia.com (2013); Paterson, *You Must*, pp. 18-22; Maurice Dupasquier, “Benoît, Paul,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, XIV (1998), www.biographi.ca/en/bio/benoit_paul_14E.html; “Les Débuts.”

³⁸² Settlers included people from France, Switzerland, Quebec, Luxembourg, Germany, Italy, and Spain. Jean Perrel, “De Haute-Loire en Amérique: Coureurs des bois et colons au Canada (XVII-XX siècle),” *Cahiers de Haute-Loire* (1892); Bibault and Cenerini, *Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes*, p. 10.

³⁸³ “1891 Census of Canada,” ancestrylibrary.com.

³⁸⁴ Charles received his homestead (NE 16-7-9) in 1890 and ownership in 1895. He leased this quarter section to his son Emmanuel in 1901. Emmanuel received title to NE 16-7-9 in 1910 by the December 26, 1901, agreement with his father (see below). Charles and Emmanuel also owned the West half of SE 8-7-9 (80 acres), 1904 to 1913, when Emmanuel sold it to Jean Chabbert. See below for Emmanuel’s lands. Original homestead documents at Library and Archives Canada, “Western Land Grants (1870-1930).” Story of land ownership in Paterson, *You Must*, and DB to TGP, September 2, 2014.

³⁸⁵ 1901 Census, data2.canadiancollections.ca; “Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1916,” Library and Archives Canada (www.bac-lac-gc.ca). The spelling of Marcelline became Marceline in Canada.

Emmanuel—achieved what many French village ancestors had earnestly envisioned and sought but seldom obtained, generation-after-generation, century after-century: A substantial farm of their own that held the promise of economic gain and stability for their families.

Théophile Bibault (1864-1932) and Eugène Malécot (1869-1918)

We now begin to chronicle the lives of the three children of Charles Bibault and Marie Naly as they moved from France to start new lives in Canada—Théophile, Marceline, and Emmanuel. The first child of Charles and Marie, Théophile, was born at home on January 23, 1864, in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, at three o'clock in the afternoon. The wheelwright Charles was then 28 years-old. His spouse Marie was 16 years-old and recorded as a housewife or homemaker (*ménagère*).³⁸⁶ Théophile was my great-grandfather. We do not know if Théophile attended school but we can assume that he drew a high (“good”) number in the lottery for conscription into the French military, because he does not appear on the draft list for the “Class of 1884.” Had he entered the army, his registration record would have detailed his physical characteristics and any years of educational instruction.

Théophile wed Eugène Malécot on November 21, 1886, in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun. She was 16 years-old. He was a 22 year-old day laborer. Both signed full names to the marriage document, suggesting some degree of literacy.³⁸⁷ Eugène was born November 10, 1869, in the hamlet of Sablonnière in the commune of Louzy, Deux-Sèvres.³⁸⁸ Louzy is 10.7 km (6.6 miles) from Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, well within the Bibault family zone.

Théophile and Eugène had one child in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun: Valada, born August 16, 1888.³⁸⁹ “Valada” was not a common name in Deux-Sèvres, but appeared as both a given name and surname in the Limousin region that bordered Poitou-Charentes, the region in which Deux-Sèvres is located. The word essentially meant “valley.”³⁹⁰ This baby girl died at her grandfather Charles’s

³⁸⁶ RPC, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Births, 1836-1872, p. 111, DSA.

³⁸⁷ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Marriages, 1873-1898, #10, p. 84, DSA.

³⁸⁸ RPC, Louzy, Births, #12, p. 167, DSA; “Province of Manitoba, Official Notice of Death, South Norfolk,” filed November 13, 1918, Vital Statistics Agency, Winnipeg.

³⁸⁹ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Births, 1873-1896, #10, p. 92, DSA.

³⁹⁰ For Valada and its variants: Geneanet, “Valadas: Origin and Geographic Distribution” (www.geneanet.org/geneaologie/fr/valadas.htm).

house in Vrères on September 5 after only 19 days of life. Charles reported the death to the town hall. Théophile and Eugénie at that time worked as butchers.³⁹¹

In early 1891, with Eugénie, his parents, and his brother Emmanuel, Théophile, identified as a laborer on the passenger list, migrated to Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes (see above). Starting with a homestead of 160 acres at NW 16-7-9, he became a successful farmer with considerable acreage and hired hands—a “gentleman farmer.”³⁹² As well, about 1909-1910, he owned a multi-faceted restaurant/store near the railroad station in Rathwell.³⁹³

Théophile and Eugénie had three children in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes: Rachel Bibault (May 31, 1892-December 6, 1937); Claire Marie Bibault (March 4, 1902-May 25, 1973); and Gabrielle Marie Bibault (July 10, 1907-January 16, 1975).³⁹⁴ Their lives will be sketched in following sections.

In November 1909, Eugénie, Théophile, Claire (age of 7), and Gabrielle (2) journeyed to France for, in essence, a family reunion with the Malécot family, including Eugénie’s sister Esther and Eugénie’s mother Marie Civrais (1843-after 1906) and father Louis Malécot (1837-after 1906), who for the first time met their Manitoba-born grandchildren.³⁹⁵ Their other daughter Rachel was pregnant with my mother Suzanne and could not join them for such a long journey (see below).

On their travel document, their destination is Thouars, a city about 8 km (5 miles) from Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Théophile’s birthplace. The Bibaults stayed for about four months, most likely with Esther and her husband Ferdinand Eugène

³⁹¹ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Deaths, 1873-1896, No. 10, p. 93, DSA.

³⁹² Suzanne Paterson recorded interview with Thomas G. Paterson, Storrs, Connecticut, June 16, 1977.

³⁹³ Théophile received his homestead (NW 16-7-9) in 1891 and earned full ownership on November 12, 1896. He held that quarter until 1910, when he sold it to his son-in-law Jean Chabbert. That is about the time that Théophile opened a store/restaurant in Rathwell (on the ship manifest for a November 1909 trip to France he was listed as a merchant and upon his return in March 1910 as a farmer). He also bought the SE quarter of 15-7-9 in 1900 and farmed that land until 1915, when he sold it. On July 8, 1911, his spouse Eugénie (residing in Rathwell) purchased a 46 and 8/10-acre parcel on the south corner of quarter SE 2-7-9 (a half-mile from town) from Henri Poiroux for \$1200.75. After Eugénie’s death on November 10, 1918 (see below), Théophile sold his properties and departed for France (after November 29, 1919), where he died in 1932 (see below). For the sale of Eugénie’s land parcel in 1920 to Maxim LaFrance and the distribution of shares to Théophile (who served as the “administrator” of Eugénie’s estate) and his three children, see below. Library and Archives Canada, “Western Land Grants (1870-1930),” <http://data4.collectionscanada.ca>; Paterson, *You Must*, pp.33-35; “Border Crossings: From Canada to the U.S., 1895-1956,” ancestrylibrary.com; ellisland.org; “In the Matter of the Estate of Eugénie Bibault, Deceased,” Manitoba Probate Records, 1871-1930, Estate Files, #3218 for the Years 1919-1920, Central Judicial District (Portage la Prairie), images 96-124 (#109 for 1911 purchase), <https://familysearch.org>.

³⁹⁴ Birth date at vitalstats.gov.mb.ca and 1911 Census of Canada.

³⁹⁵ Marie and Louis appear in the 1906 census in the hamlet of Mayé: RP, 1906, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, p. 11, DSA. They are not included in the on-line 1903-1912 death records for Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon.

Legeay. The Bibaults returned, leaving on the ship *La Touraine* from Le Havre and arriving at the immigration center of Ellis Island, New York City, on March 20, 1910. They then took a train to Rathwell.³⁹⁶ We are left to wonder: Were Théophile and Eugénie thinking about relocating—to return to Deux-Sèvres?

Lourdes Schools and Rachel Bibault (1892-1937)

Here we begin to study the lives of the children of Théophile and Eugénie. The first, Rachel Bibault, my grandmother, was born May 31, 1892, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, on the quarter section NW 16-7-9, the “farmer” Théophile’s first homestead. According to Rachel’s birth certificate, no doctor was present, but the priest Dom Paul Benoît (see below) was at the farmhouse.³⁹⁷

A farm girl, Rachel attended the country school of Carnot No. 864 at the southeast corner of SE 15-7-9, located very near the property her father bought in 1900 and held until 1915.³⁹⁸ Carnot School was founded in August 1895 and began instruction in early 1896 (see below). Carnot was one of several schools in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. It did not take long for new immigrants in Lourdes in the 1890s to establish schools. The new settlers sought a better life for their family through education and a continuation of the educational experience some had started for their children in France. At the same time, the determined priest Benoît, a significant force behind the growth of Lourdes (see above), pushed to create schools in Lourdes to advance his religious purpose.³⁹⁹

A political storm swirled around the “Manitoba School Question.” Debate centered on the issues of protecting religious minorities (such as Roman Catholics), sustaining French culture and language in a predominantly English-speaking province, and denying public funds to religious schools. Compromise came in an 1897 Canadian law (based on the Laurier-Greenway Compromise): If a rural school, like those in Lourdes, enrolled 10 Catholic students, a Catholic teacher would be hired. And, if at least 10 pupils spoke a language other than English, such

³⁹⁶ Passenger List, *La Touraine*, March 20, 1910, Ellis Island (www.ellisland.org).

³⁹⁷ Vital Statistics Agency, Manitoba, vitalstats.gov.mb.ca.

³⁹⁸ Manitoba Historical Society, “Historic Sites of Manitoba: Carnot School No. 854” (www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/carnotschool.shtml) gives the location as SE 15-7-8, whereas the report, “Résultat des recherches de Norman Boisvert,” titled “École Carnot #854: Chronologie (1896-1960),” pp. 501-503, indicates SE 15-7-9 (Société historique de Saint-Boniface; shsb.mb.ca). The “Annual Report of the School Trustees” for 1906 identifies the Carnot location as SE 15-7-9 (in possession of Paul Bazin, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, 2015).

³⁹⁹ Lourdes schools detailed and illustrated in Manitoba Historical Society, “Historic Sites of Manitoba,” prepared by Gordon Goldsborough (www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites) and in “Écoles francophone du Manitoba,” *Recherches de Normand Boisvert, Société historique de Saint-Boniface* (shsb.mb.ca), vol. 2, “Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes” (PDF).

as French, instruction would be in that language and English. This “bilingual system” existed until 1916. Also, religious instruction was permitted but restricted to 3:30 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

Although Lourdes schools became “public” or “national” under the jurisdiction of the Manitoba Department of Education in Winnipeg and received provincial government grants, the schools remained, in essence, Roman Catholic schools, because the country schools came under the stern influence of Dom Benoît. For example, he would give the sacraments to a teacher only if he or she agreed to submit to the authority of the church. His schools placed significant emphasis on the teaching of religion. Manitoba education officials chose to turn a blind eye to such practices and kept the public grant money flowing.⁴⁰⁰

The first Lourdes school—*Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes School* No. 690, at SE 1-7-9, was established in May 1892 in the village. In 1895, three nuns of the Chanoinesses régulières des cinq plaies du Saviour (Sisters of the Five Wounds of the Savior) arrived as teachers.⁴⁰¹ The school building was erected in 1897 on Lourdes’s main street. A fire destroyed the structure in 1909, but a new, two-story, brick facility with a cross standing tall at the top soon replaced it.⁴⁰²

One-room country schools also opened. They enrolled students through the eighth grade. Pupils had to walk some distance from their farms each school day. Most of the buildings followed a standardized design and unembellished construction mandated by the Manitoba legislature: wood frame, gable roof, compact dimensions (as little as 20-by-24 feet), small covered porch at the entrance, three or four windows on the long walls of both sides, and a wood stove. Some schools might have a room attached at the back of the school for the teacher’s living quarters. An outhouse served as a toilet. The need for better lighting was always an issue.⁴⁰³ Many teachers were female who worked on one-year contracts. Turnover was high because many teachers quit after marrying.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰⁰ “Manitoba: Education” and “Manitoba Schools Question,” *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (2012), www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca.; “The Manitoba Schools Questions: 1890-1897,” *Manitoba: Digital Resources on Manitoba History*; Dupasquier, “Benoît, Paul.”

⁴⁰¹ Founded in 1856 in France, this religious group devoted itself to charitable work and the education of young people. W. Stewart Wallace, ed., *The Encyclopedia of Canada*, II (Toronto: University Associates, 1948), p. 33.

⁴⁰² Photograph in Bibault and Cenerini, *Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes*, p. 31.

⁴⁰³ David Butterfield, “Public School Buildings of Manitoba” (www.gov.mb.ca).

⁴⁰⁴ “A Virtual Schoolhouse” (www.collectionscanada.gc.ca).

The first country school in Lourdes, originating in August 1895, was *Carnot School* No. 854, at the southeast corner of quarter-section SE 15-7-9.⁴⁰⁵ The school welcomed its first pupils (23 in number) in January 1896. An 1896 photograph of the new school shows a white, wood-covered building topped by a bell. The structure housed not only the classroom but also a small extension at the rear for the teacher's living space.⁴⁰⁶ The 1906 Carnot annual report recorded that the school had 195 "teaching days," that the teacher Alfred Loiselle was paid \$438.15, and that 21 of 34 "school children resident in the district" attended.⁴⁰⁷ Many years later, in May 1949, the school was moved from the southeast corner to the southwest corner of SE 15-7-9.

Carnot closed in January 1960 and its remaining students began attending the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Consolidated School in the village. Today a metal sign, reading "École Carnot, 1895-1960," marks where the school first stood. The abandoned building itself was bought, moved, renovated, and converted into a residence by Paul Bazin, a farmer in Lourdes.⁴⁰⁸ Some Carnot records are preserved in the Saint-Claude and Area Archives, in the town of Saint-Claude, a short distance from Lourdes, and in the Musée de pionniers et des Chanoinesses sponsored by the Notre-Dame Historical Society.⁴⁰⁹

After Carnot, *Saint-Adélarde School* No. 912, at SE 28-6-9 (mid-south), was founded in December 1897. It enrolled its first pupils in 1898. A new school building went up in 1918.⁴¹⁰

Next, in May 1900, *Pinkerton School* No. 1074 was established at quarter-section SE 18-7-9. Being close to Treherne, this school's student population was about half-English and half-French. In 1964 Pinkerton closed. Some of its pupils transferred to Treherne and others to the Notre-Dames-de-Lourdes village school. Some Pinkerton records have been deposited in the Saint-Claude Archives.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁵ For the history of Carnot: "Écoles francophone du Manitoba;" DB to TGP, December 21, 22, 2012; 1906 Carnot School, "Annual Report [1906] of the Board of Trustees for...Carnot," and "Public School Daily Register for the Year 1906" (from Paul Bazin, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes; copies to TGP from Denis Bibault); Conversation with Paul Bazin, September 10, 2015, in Lourdes.

⁴⁰⁶ Gaborieau, *Un siècle*, p. 58.

⁴⁰⁷ "1906 Annual Report...."

⁴⁰⁸ Conversation, Bazin, September 10, 2015. Bazin acquired some Carnot records when he purchased the abandoned school building.

⁴⁰⁹ Denise Mangin, Prairie Spirit School Division, to TGP, September 23, 2015; "Historic Sites of Manitoba: St. Claude and Area Archives" (www.mhs.mb.ca); Colette Lesage, Société historique de Lourdes, to TGP, October 25, 2015 (museeen@mymts.net).

⁴¹⁰ Several Monchamp children attended this school. See Paterson, "Monchamp Families."

⁴¹¹ Mangin to TGP, September 23, 2015.

In April 1913 another one-room country school began operations—*Jeanne d’Arc* School No. 1673, at the southwest corner of SW 30-7-8. This school took its name from the French martyr Joan of Arc. Denis Bibault, born in 1940, attended *Jeanne d’Arc* in the 1950s (see below).

The Lourdes village school and most of the country schools merged in 1960, becoming the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Consolidated School. Over the years, the country-school buildings were torn down or moved. Today, monuments in the form of metal signs or plaques appear at the school sites. I visited the grounds of Carnot, Pinkerton, and *Jeanne d’Arc* in September 2015, when I toured Lourdes with my cousin Denis Bibault to identify the lands and schools of my Monchamp and Bibault ancestors.

Rachel Bibault probably first enrolled at the Carnot School in 1898, when she was six years-old. The 1906 Daily Registers reveal that Rachel, at age 14, was the only student in the 7th grade.⁴¹² She had a perfect attendance record until the end of July of that year. She did not attend for the rest of the year. Twenty-one students attended Carnot in 1906, with seven in the 1st grade, three in the 2nd grade, five in the 3rd grade, five in the 5th grade, and Rachel in the 7th grade. Among the Carnot pupils were Aglaé Guéret (Grade 1), daughter of Théophile’s sister Marcelline Bibault and Eugène Guéret; Lydia Poiroux (Grade 5), who later married Arthur Guéret, Aglaé’s brother; and Jean Chabbert (Grade 5), who later married Claire Bibault (see below).

The Carnot curriculum in 1906 included mathematics, history, geography, literature, reading, spelling, music, and language. One map and 27 square-feet of blackboard covered the walls. In “Religious Exercises,” the Bible was read every day and school ended with prayer. In the category of “Moral Training,” the ten commandments and “moral principles” were taught.⁴¹³ When Rachel left the Carnot School in August 1906, she most likely never went back, although records for 1907 have yet to be located.

Rachel Bibault, Jean Monchamp (1884-1918), and Family

On November 27, 1907, then 15½ years-old, Rachel married 23 year-old Lourdes resident Jean Monchamp in Lourdes. He was born October 21, 1884, in the village of La Chomette, commune of Le Pertuis, in the department of Haute-Loire, France.

⁴¹² “Public School Daily Register for the Year 1906.”

⁴¹³ 1906 Carnot “Annual Report of the Board of Trustees.”

His parents Antoine Monchamp and Virginie Ballon and their children had migrated to Manitoba in early 1895, settling on quarter SW 34-6-9.⁴¹⁴ Jean Monchamp was my grandfather.

In several photographs, an attractive Rachel appears small-waisted and slender, her face sculpted with high cheeks. Her face grew fuller over the years. The mustachioed Jean's rugged good looks are evident in his medium but strong build. He appears to have been a short person compared to other men in the pictures. In a surviving photograph, a handsome Jean grips the reins of a stallion he appears ready to ride.

The wedding ceremony most likely unfolded in the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Roman Catholic Church, where Dom Paul Benoît served as the "informant." Jean's sister Rosa Monchamp and Arthur Poirier served as witnesses.⁴¹⁵ The Bibaults, Monchamps, and friends probably next gathered to celebrate, as was customary, at the home of the bride's family—in this case Théophile's and Eugénie's two-story, wood-frame house at SE 15-7-9. Some sadness must have weighed on the newlyweds that day because Charles and Marie Bibault, Rachel's grandparents, had died a few years before (see below).

The first farm of Rachel and Jean, which they bought in 1907, was located at quarter-section SE 19-7-9 (160 acres). In 1912 they purchased another quarter-section of 160 acres (SW 11-7-9).⁴¹⁶ In 1915 they sold SE 19-7-9 to the Erkins brothers. Perhaps that year or in 1916, Jean took work in Welland, Ontario, in a wartime steel factory that produced ammunition (see below).

Rachel and Jean had three children, all born in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. We will sketch the lives of the first (Louis) and third (Jeanne) here, and the second, my mother Suzanne, in the next sections. Rachel gave birth to their first child, Louis Antoine Monchamp, on February 1, 1909.⁴¹⁷ Ten years later, he moved to Oregon with his siblings, mother, and his new stepfather Auguste Fix (see below). Louis married Clare Augusta Lee (1915-1997) and had five children, all born in Oregon.

⁴¹⁴ See Paterson, *You Must*, and Paterson, "Monchamp Families."

⁴¹⁵ An Arthur Poirier appears in the 1906 Canada census as 26 years-old, but no occupation is indicated (Library and Archives Canada, "1906 Census of the Northwest Provinces," p. 16 (www.bac-lac.gc.ca). The marriage document spells "Monchamp" as "Mautchamp," and "Bibault" is rendered as "Bibeault." Basic marriage information recorded in municipality of South Norfolk (vitalstats.gov.mb.ca, #1907-002353). Marriage certificate No. 754, Form 10, received from Vital Statistics, Manitoba.

⁴¹⁶ Rachel and her second husband Auguste Fix (see below) may have sold SW 11-7-9 in the early 1920s.

⁴¹⁷ Their children: Jeanne (December 31, 1939); Kathi (July 22, 1943); Davy Lee (February 26, 1945); Terry Lee (November 1948; he died shortly after birth on November 6, 1948); and Vicki (August 6, 1951). For Louis and his family: Paterson, *You Must*, pp. 192-197.

He attended college and became a medical technician. Louis died October 29, 1965, in Tacoma, Washington, from complications associated with his chronic, painful disease of muscular dystrophy.

Jean and Rachel's third child was Jeanne Clara Monchamp, born December 22, 1913.⁴¹⁸ She, too, moved to Oregon in late 1919 from Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes and settled with her family in Oregon City (see below). On July 2, 1936, Jeanne married a man of Scottish descent, William (Bill) David Anderson (born January 20, 1914). He worked for 43 years at the paper mill in West Linn, across the Willamette River from Oregon City, especially tending the newsprint machines. They had a son, David Daniel Anderson, on July 1, 1942. After retirement, Bill Anderson died on December 12, 1993, in West Linn after being hit by a car when he was taking a walk. Jeanne died January 11, 2005, in nearby Gladstone. Both are buried in the Mountain View Cemetery, Oregon City, Oregon.

Suzanne Monchamp's Childhood in Lourdes, 1910-1919

The second child of Rachel Bibault and Jean Monchamp was my mother, Suzanne Virginie Monchamp, born June 10, 1910, in their farmhouse at SE 19-7-9. Suzanne's birth certificate lists "Lamont" as the "doctor in attendance" and Father Paul Benoît as "informant."⁴¹⁹ Fifty-two year-old Thomas Lamont was born in Scotland and lived with his family in Treherne village.⁴²⁰ Suzanne was baptized at the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Church on June 26, 1910, by Benoît himself.⁴²¹ This baptism must have been one of his last duties, because his order's superiors in Rome had removed him as the Lourdes parish priest on March 28. They had grown critical of the strict Benoît's repeated questioning of their "modern errors."⁴²²

A picture of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes in the year of Suzanne's birth shows the church as the prominent structure in the town, which has a dirt main street, what appears to be a plank walkway on one side, and several houses and other buildings.

⁴¹⁸ Jeanne's life is detailed in Paterson, *You Must*, pp. 197-200.

⁴¹⁹ Vital Statistics, Manitoba, Registration No. 1910-06-007530.

⁴²⁰ Library and Archives Canada, "1901 Census" (www.bac-lac.gc.ca).

⁴²¹ "Extrait de baptême," Paroisse de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, dated March 21, 1938.

⁴²² Benoît's words in Dupasquier, "Benoît." His religious order was Canons Regulars of the Immaculate Conception. He retired to Saint-Léon (22.8 km or 14 miles away from Lourdes) and then moved back to France, where he died in 1915. In 1925, his remains were transferred to Lourdes.

Gardens occupy the flat, almost treeless village area, while poles, perhaps for electricity, line the main street.⁴²³

Like her mother Rachel, Suzanne lived on farms for much of her Canadian life, not only on her parents' land but also in her grandparents' houses on numerous occasions. The rhythms of her life were dictated by an agricultural environment and farm routines.⁴²⁴ Her parents' house, if typical of others in the region, was a small two-story, wood-frame structure with a wood stove, an ice box, a well, and perhaps a water pump. No doubt, like other farm women, Rachel milked the cows (if they had any), tended the vegetable garden and prepared its bounty for storage, made and mended clothing, ironed with heavy flatirons, baked batches of fresh bread, and helped make the farm function in countless other ways. Perhaps she also managed the farm accounts. Her garden yielded an impressive array of vegetables, some of which were stored in the cool cellar dug in the basement: potatoes, rhubarb (also used to make wine), pumpkin (for both soups and pies), onions, cabbage, turnips, and carrots. The summer garden also yielded tomatoes and beans. Planted fruit trees produced apples.

One can imagine young Suzanne and her siblings picking sweet strawberries and raspberries, as well as sour chokeberries, as they wandered here and there in fields, marshes, and woods. Her father no doubt hunted deer and ducks. Wild areas also provided some medicines. The buds of black poplar trees when cooked with pork fat made a soothing healing ointment. Wild strawberry leaves could be made into a medicinal liquid that treated childhood diseases.

Burr-oak firewood was used for heating. Coal was not available locally. The steam engines used at times of harvest were powered by oak, too. The kitchen wood stove burned poplar and aspen, a quick source of heat, but of short duration. For relief from hot temperatures in the summer, house windows were thrown open, only to let in the black flies. Goopy stickers and poison plates trapped some. Plentiful mosquitoes also pestered farm folk.

The Monchamp and Bibault families gathered together on occasion, perhaps after Sunday services, for special religious events, for family celebrations, or for picnics,

⁴²³ Photograph, "Notre Dame de Lourdes," Archives de la Société historique de Saint Boniface, www.shsb.mb.ca/paysriel/decouvertes/md303-notre_dame_lourdes/md303-contenu.html.

⁴²⁴ For farm life and food: "Women in the West," "Immigration and Settlement: 1870-1919," in "Manitoba Life and Times," <http://manitoba.ca/cocoon/launch/en/themes/ias/6>; DB to TGP, February 6, 2008; Mary Kinnear and Vera Fast, *Planting the Garden* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1987), p. xvi.; Rathwell, *Rathwell*, pp. 111-113, 351.

perhaps with foot races, tugs of war, and football (soccer).⁴²⁵ Some group pictures show the women wearing light-colored, high-collar blouses and dark skirts or full dresses and the men sporting white shirts, ties, and suits. Three 1910-1911 group photographs that have survived include baby Suzanne in her grandmother Eugénie Malécot's lap while other family members pose outside of Théophile Bibault's house; in Rachel's lap at a family gathering; and in her father Jean's arms at a family event.

Suzanne once recalled staying at both the Bibault and Monchamp farm houses, especially enjoying the apples the Bibault grandparents kept in the dirt cellar and gave to her as treats on Sundays. Her sister Jeanne fondly remembered apples placed on the steps and the jumping on her grandmother's feather bed.⁴²⁶ Suzanne said that she fought "like cats and dogs" with her aunt "Gaby" (Gabrielle), the source of the trouble usually being jealousy over which child got the most attention from Théophile Bibault. Suzanne thought her grandfather Bibault "strict."⁴²⁷ She called her other grandfather, Antoine Monchamp, a "jolly" man.⁴²⁸

Rachel Bibault's young Monchamp children felt the excitement of the harvest season that began in September, a time when family, neighbors, and friends helped one another. A 1907 photograph taken on the farm of Antoine Chabbert, for example, demonstrates this team effort of "BEES," who moved from one ripe crop to another, farm to farm.⁴²⁹ In the photograph, about 20 people, men, women, and children stand beside several horses and before many wagons loaded with the grain crop. Jean Monchamp is perched atop a machine. Oats and barley became animal feed. The wheat went to market. A steam engine used to drive a stationary thrashing or "treshing" machine sits prominently in the scene. Farmers and hired hands shaped and stacked sheaves for drying into a "stook." Pulled by two horses, the wagons ("racks") would then carry these sheaves to the machine for thrashing. The machine blew left-over straw into a pile in the farm yard near the barn—to be eaten by cattle and horses in the winter months. Someone else owned the

⁴²⁵ For social activities in rural Manitoba, see Morton, *Manitoba*, pp. 261-262.

⁴²⁶ Rick Anderson, "Family History Notes" (in his possession, Portland, Oregon).

⁴²⁷ Suzanne Paterson to TGP, April 2, 1989.

⁴²⁸ Suzanne 1977 interview.

⁴²⁹ Antoine Chabbert (b. 1856 in Saint Laurent d'Olt, Aveyron, France; d. October 1, 1921) and his wife Émélie Delpueche Chabbert (b. 1859; d. July 10, 1940), both in the picture, migrated from France to Manitoba in 1891. He received a homestead (NO 10-7-9) in 1893. They had four children: Louis (b. 1886-d. 1970), Émile (b. 1888), Auguste (b. 1890-d. 1958), and Jean (b. 1893). All four children are in the photograph. Jean married Claire Bibault, sister of Rachel. For the Chabberts, see "Famille Chabbert," in Gaborieau, *Un siècle*, pp. 371-372, and "1891 Census of Canada," www.ancestrylibrary.com.

equipment, rented it for a fee, and took it from farm to farm. These harvest days became “good times for banquet-style feasts and story-telling.”⁴³⁰

The Bibaults and Monchamps attended the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes parish church that Benoît had founded. They went to church on Sundays for confessions and mass. The church also held numerous celebrations through the year, with processions, decorations inside and outside of religious buildings, and special masses. These festive events were times of both social intermixing and religious devotion. They included Ascension Day, May 25; the Saint Jean Baptiste celebration of June 24; the Feast of Corpus Christi, June 25; the Assumption of Mary, August 15; the celebration of Saint Augustine on August 28; and Christ the King, October 27.⁴³¹ In 1910, Théophile Bibault’s name appears on the list of parishioners for Saint Monica Catholic Church in Rathwell, where he owned a store and may have lived at that time.⁴³² As a child, perhaps Suzanne may have attended services there, too.

Suzanne took her first communion in June 1916 at the Lourdes church, according to what she wrote on the back of a souvenir of that special occasion, a 5 x 3-inch card printed in Paris, France. Until her death in 2001 she treasured this card—a painting of a bare-footed Jesus, chalice in hand, gently offering a communion wafer to a kneeling woman in robes and head veil. Another, smaller souvenir card for her communion is a “Prayer for Peace” by Pope Benedict XV. World War I was then raging, and the Catholic pope, “dismayed by the horrors” of “this fearful scourge,” appeals to Jesus, “our last hope” to “bring men together once more in loving harmony.” This little card, with a painting of Jesus releasing a dove over a ravaged battlefield, she also kept until her death and is now preserved in a family album. It seems that Suzanne practiced as a devout Catholic.

Suzanne attended the same school her mother did, Carnot (see above), but apparently only for a short period. She may have visited the school as a five year-old in 1915 to become acclimated. Or, on occasion, she simply accompanied her older brother Louis. Suzanne recalled that in the winter she and Louis went to and from school over deep snow in a horse-drawn sleigh. Heated bricks and blankets helped fight off the cold.⁴³³ Carnot records for 1915 in the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes

⁴³⁰ DB to TGP, December 21, 2007.

⁴³¹ Religious, farm, and town life are documented with photographs in an exhibit at the Musée des Pionniers et Chanoinesses in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. The photographs appear on-line at the Virtual Museum of Canada Community Memories Program (www.virtualmuseum.ca).

⁴³² Rathwell, *Rathwell*, p. 54.

⁴³³ Suzanne 1977 interview.

Museum are missing. Available records for the 1916-1917 school year, however, reveal that Suzanne Monchamp, age of 6, attended Carnot in the 1st grade—but for only two weeks in October of 1916. Francis Legeat was her teacher. Twenty-two pupils occupied the one-room school, including her aunts Claire Bibault (6nd grade, age 14), whose October attendance was nearly perfect, and Gabrielle Bibault (2nd grade, age 9), who missed half of her classes that month.⁴³⁴ Registers for the years 1916-1919 do not record Suzanne’s attendance at Carnot School except for that very short period. Maybe she was only on a two-week trip to Lourdes from Welland, Ontario, where she *was* going to school, and her parents wanted her to continue studying even for that short time (see below).

Living and Working in Welland, Ontario, 1915/1916-1918

The years 1915-1919 became unsettling for the three Monchamp children. First, Jean and Rachel sold one of their quarters (SE 19-7-9) in 1915 (month unknown) to Pierre Joseph and Victor Erkins.⁴³⁵ Perhaps Jean, Rachel, and their children then moved for a time to their other land at SW 11-7-9 (if a house sat on it), stayed with their Monchamp or Bibault parents, or moved to Welland, Ontario (see below). The 1916 Canada census, conducted in June 1916, did not list Jean, Rachel, or the children for any household in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

In 1915 or 1916, Jean began to work in the industrial city of Welland. Home to the Welland Canal, Welland sat about midway between Lakes Ontario and Erie and not far from Niagara Falls. Wages ranked high during the World War I years, because Welland coveted laborers who would man its busy steel and munitions plants.⁴³⁶ Jean Monchamp became an overhead crane operator, probably at the Page-Hersey steel mill. He worked seven days a week. Such employment in a strategic war industry exempted him from military service. The Page-Hersey company, located next to the Third Welland Canal, produced six-inch ammunition shells. Suzanne remembered that Jean’s plant produced ammunition.⁴³⁷

Suzanne had mostly good memories of Welland. Although Rachel and the three children may not have joined Jean immediately in Welland, they eventually did.

⁴³⁴ “Public School Daily Register...Pupils in Carnot, For the Year 1916-1917,” Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Museum; Colette Lesage (Société historique de Lourdes) to TGP, October 26, 2015. For reasons yet unknown, Louis Monchamp did not sit with them at Carnot at that time.

⁴³⁵ Gaborieau, *Un siècle*. Erkins is Erkens in this book.

⁴³⁶ “1914-1918: Effects of World War I on the Canadian Economy,” www.canadianeconomy.gc.ca.

⁴³⁷ The Welland Public Library website lists Page-Hersey as the only steel mill that produced ammunition (“History of Industry,” www.welland.library.on.ca); Suzanne 1977 interview.

But, they made trips back-and-forth between Lourdes and Welland. In Welland they likely rented a small company-owned house located in row-after-row of different colored boxes, as Suzanne described them.⁴³⁸

On Sundays she went to a Catholic church, St. Andrew, at the corner of Hellems Avenue and Griffith Street.⁴³⁹ At this church, she helped nuns prepare wafers, and she took catechism. She enjoyed her first communion there on August 11, 1918, when she received a “Souvenir de ma première communion,” a small, 283-page book of prayers titled *The Catholic’s Pocket Manual or Guide to Salvation*. Suzanne saved this remembrance for the rest of her life.⁴⁴⁰

Also surviving in her family collection were at least two dozen holy cards with images of Jesus and saints. These “souvenirs,” some given by nuns for good school or church work, reminded the children who carried them of the need for sacrifice and prayer. The colored cards also had brief sayings, some in French and some in English. One 1916 card of a young Jesus with a halo was inscribed “a ma Chere petite Suzanne” by Tante (Aunt) Léoncie, her father’s sister. Another card, tattered from considerable handling, depicted Mary with a lamb; it is signed “Souvenir of Mother Mary Martha” for “Suzy Monchamp.”

Suzanne recounted an unpleasant stay at a Catholic “orphanage” in Welland. Her mother took Louis and Jeanne for a time to the Bibault farm in Lourdes and placed Suzanne in the orphanage. Decades later Suzanne held her mother responsible for this unwelcome separation of the family. In a 1977 interview, Suzanne’s memory of the orphanage was vivid. She recalled that her father would come to visit with a bag of oranges in hand—one for her and the rest for the nuns. Once he brought her a gift of a green wool scarf, which she treasured for decades. She slept in a room with several other children. Often served red cabbage for a meal, she came to dislike the vegetable intensely, especially after she found a worm in one serving.⁴⁴¹

⁴³⁸ These houses may have been the “Cortage homes” built by Plymouth Cordage Company for its employees. The houses were sold to Page-Hersey, which moved them to Sixth and Seventh Streets with the intent to sell them to their workers. There is no evidence extant that Jean Monchamp bought a house. “Italians,” “Ethnic History of Welland,” www.welland.library.on.ca/industry/Ethnic.

⁴³⁹ In 1926, St. Andrew was renamed St. Mary’s. In 1939, during a trip east, Suzanne visited Welland. A photograph shows her standing on the steps of a brick church which matches the architecture of St. Mary’s today. Roman Catholic Diocese of St. Catharines, “St. Mary’s, Welland, Celebrates 75th Anniversary,” *Vineyard*, December 17, 2001, www.romancatholic.niagara.on.ca; *Evening Tribune* (Welland), May 21, 1960; Nora Reid (Welland Historical Museum) to TGP, January 8, 2008.

⁴⁴⁰ Published in Lodnon, Canada, by *The Catholic Record*, in 1915.

⁴⁴¹ Despite research, the location of this facility remains a mystery, although, according to one Welland source, “there was a place run by nuns at one time on Aqueduct Street.” Church Secretary, St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church, Welland, to TGP, January 15, 2008; Suzanne interview, 1977.

In Welland, Suzanne and her brother Louis most likely attended Central Public School, which opened in 1912. A large, two-storied, brick building with a grand arched entrance, the school housed eight classrooms that could accommodate 40 pupils each.⁴⁴² The size, look, and experience contrasted dramatically with the small one-room Carnot School in Lourdes.

Before her father went off to work, she often sat with him for a breakfast of mush (cornmeal boiled in water to make a porridge). When not in school, at noon, she carried her “daddy’s” lunch box toward the steel mill, meeting him half way. She sat on his lap in the evening as he read the newspaper. In a 1918 photograph of Suzanne, Louis, and Jeanne in Welland, Louis is outfitted in a military uniform, typical for children in wartime. The girls are clad elegantly in white dresses and shoes, with bows in their hair and wide ribbons wrapped around their waists.

The Deaths of Jean Monchamp (1918) and Eugène Malécot (1918) and Rachel’s Remarriage to Auguste Fix (1919)

Young Suzanne’s mostly pleasant life in Welland, Ontario, ended abruptly in late October 1918. Her father Jean suddenly became sick and went to the hospital, where Dr. W.K. Colbeck attended him. Word of Jean’s illness reached the Monchamps and Bibaults in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, where Suzanne was visiting her grandparents with her mother. Rachel hurriedly departed for Ontario, but by the time she arrived in Welland, Jean had died while still in the hospital.

Jean Monchamp’s gravestone in the Lourdes church cemetery reads that he passed away on October 21, but the Ontario death record reports that this “laborer” died October 24 from pneumonia after contracting the Spanish influenza virus.⁴⁴³ His gravestone gives his age as 35 years, but the death record reads 33. With a birth date of October 21, 1884, he was actually 34. When Suzy heard the news, she was devastated. She had been “very close” to her father, whom she described as “wonderful” with a “good disposition,” seldom getting mad or scolding.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴² Photographs of the building provided by the Welland Public Library. A surviving photograph of Louis’s 4th grade class may have been taken at this school. Description of the school: “Welland’s New Public School,” *Welland Telegraph*, August 13, 1912 (events.wellandhistory.ca).

⁴⁴³ “City of Welland Deaths,” p. 383, “Ontario, Canada Deaths, 1869-1934,” ancestrylibrary.com. The death record names him “John.” TGP photograph of gravestone in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

⁴⁴⁴ Suzanne 1977 interview.

The flu pandemic of 1918 ranks as the most catastrophic disease outbreak in recorded history. The virulent flu that hit Canada and the United States, especially in the fall of that year, eventually claimed some 50 million dead worldwide. With a 1918 population of six million, Canada witnessed 50,000 perish in the pandemic. (At least 675,000 died in the United States.) Whereas most flu viruses assault infants and the elderly, this serial killer largely attacked healthy young adults between the ages of 20 and 40.

Like people stricken everywhere, Suzanne's father no doubt suffered a horrible death. Many people endured a mild flu, with cough, stuffy nose, and aching joints and muscle, and they recovered in a week, as Suzanne and Louis did. A good number of the afflicted developed pneumonia, and many, like Jean, died from the combination. People in essence choked to death with pulmonary edema. Lungs filled with blood, foam, and mucous. In great pain, victims gasped for breath, feeling as if they were drowning. Faces turned grey and puffy. Without therapeutic drugs, doctors and nurses could only prescribe rest and drink, such as a glass of warm milk, ginger, and soda.⁴⁴⁵

Rachel accompanied Jean's body by train back to Lourdes. He was placed in a coffin and buried quickly in the churchyard with only a graveside service. Rachel returned to Welland for a short time to close out the rented house. Contemporary photographs of the family in black mourning dress reveal a saddened but stoic Rachel. Jean's children appear resigned and forlorn, with looks of uncertainty and anticipation.

Another tragedy soon struck after Jean's death. On November 10, Suzanne's grandmother Eugène Malécot, Rachel's mother, died at the age of 49 at her "abode" on quarter SE 2-7-9. The death certificate cites the same cause as that for Jean: "Pneumonia following an attack of Spanish influenza." Eight-year-old Suzanne was near Eugène's bedside that morning at 8:00 A.M. Théophile informed authorities of his wife's death.⁴⁴⁶ Eugène is buried next to her son-in-law Jean Monchamp in the Lourdes church cemetery.

⁴⁴⁵Margaret Munro, "Researchers Bring 1918 Flu Virus Back to Life," www.canada.com; "Influenza 1918," www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/influenza/peopleevents; "Tragedy on the Home Front," Library and Archives of Canada, www.collectionscanada.ca/education/firstworldwar; CBC News Online, "1918 Flu Epidemic," www.cbc.ca/news/background/flu/flupepidemic.

⁴⁴⁶ Province of Manitoba, "Medical Certificate of Death," November 12, 1918, Vital Statistics of Manitoba (copy in album with "Official Notice of Death"). The Manitoba newspaper *La Liberté* reported her death on November 13, 1918 (<http://manitoba.ca/cocoon/launch/newspapers/LLT/1918>; copy in album); Suzanne 1977 interview.

Rachel felt the need to remarry. Suzanne recalled that Rachel had told her that Jean had left Rachel the sizeable sum of \$8,000 (a figure which may or may not have included the value of the quarter of land). Still, Rachel had three children to raise, a household to maintain, and property to manage.⁴⁴⁷ In France, a young, widowed woman with children customarily remarried soon after the death of a husband.

Rachel selected for her mate, Auguste Fix, whom she had come to know as a worker on her father Théophile's farm at NW 16-7-9. Auguste was identified in the 1916 census as a 29 year-old "servant" and "cultivateur" living in Théophile's household.⁴⁴⁸ Auguste was born March 3 or 4, 1887, in the small mountainous town of Grendelbruch in the Alsace region of northeastern France, department of Bas-Rhin.⁴⁴⁹ In 1914, Auguste was living with his parents in the small commune of Moyenmoutier, department of Vosges, Lorraine region of France—about 43 km (26 miles) from his birthplace. As World War I loomed, he decided to migrate to Canada. He entered St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, on March 29, 1914, having sailed from Le Havre, France, on the *Sicilian*.⁴⁵⁰ He may have chosen the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes area for work because a family with the name Prevôt (his mother's last name) had lived there for a time.⁴⁵¹

In late December 1916, a "laborer" and single, Auguste traveled from Lourdes to San Francisco, California, via Vancouver, British Columbia. He declared that he was carrying the good-sized sum of \$1,000 in cash "in his possession," which suggests that he intended to stay or was scouting property to buy.⁴⁵² Perhaps in this trip he also journeyed to Oregon City, Oregon, where resided Jack and Marie Charriere, whose family had long lived in Lourdes.⁴⁵³ Auguste did not speak English, but did speak French.⁴⁵⁴ Auguste did not remain in the United States. He returned to Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes to continue his work on Théophile's farm.

⁴⁴⁷ Suzanne 1977 interview.

⁴⁴⁸ The census was conducted in June. Claire and Gabrielle are also listed. Fix's name is spelled "Tisce" and Bibault is spelled "Bebsault" ("1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," ancestrylibrary.com). Height is reported in "U.S. Border Crossings from Canada to U.S., 1895-1956," for Auguste's 1916 trip to the United States (ancestrylibrary.com).

⁴⁴⁹ Auguste's father was Charles Fix (born September 25, 1837, in the department of Lorraine) and his mother was Reine (?) Prevôt, both of Moyenmoutier, France (Déclarations de Citoyenneté, Alsace-Lorraine, 1872, Collection des Optants, ancestrylibrary.com). Auguste's birth records report March 4 (Grendelbruch, TD, 1883-1892, Department of Bas-Rhin Archives, <http://archives.cg67.fr/>). His 1935 U.S. "Declaration of Intention" and 1942 Draft Registration Card indicate March 3. "Declaration of Intention," No. 17400, November 27, 1935, "Selected U.S. Naturalization Records—Original Documents, 1790-1974, ancestrylibrary.com; Serial Number 102, "U.S. World War II Draft Registration Cards, 1942," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁴⁵⁰ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁴⁵¹ DB to TGP, April 29, 2012.

⁴⁵² "Border Crossings: From Canada to U.S., 1895-1956," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁴⁵³ They were of Swiss origin. DB to TGP, April 12, 2012.

⁴⁵⁴ "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta," ancestrylibrary.com.

On October 25, 1919, 32 year-old Auguste Fix and 27 year-old Rachel Bibault (“widow of Jean Monchamp”) married in the elegant Romanesque-style Cathédrale-de-Saint-Boniface, Saint-Boniface, Manitoba. In a beautiful setting, the Red River separates Saint-Boniface from Winnipeg, of which Saint-Boniface is now a part. The church is known as the mother church of Western Canada. The cathedral, the fifth at the site, was dedicated in 1906. Fire destroyed it in 1968, but the ornate façade of the old church, with its three round arches and stone walls, still stands today near the current cathedral, as I saw in a visit in September 2015.⁴⁵⁵

The handwritten church marriage record for Rachel and Auguste noted that the requirement of the “trois bans” had been satisfied—the announcement in church on three successive Sundays of an intended marriage. On this sacramental document, Rachel signed her name as “Rachel Fix (Bibault).”⁴⁵⁶ The priest D. Sylvio Caron presided at the ceremony. Lucien Senez and Donat McDougall served as “Witnesses.”⁴⁵⁷ No other names appear on the record, but we can assume that many Bibault family members attended, as well as Rachel’s and Jean’s three children.

No group photographs of the wedding party have been located. But, Suzanne kept in her files until her death two formal pictures of the couple Rachel and Auguste. Mustachioed, blue-eyed, wavy-brown-haired, standing 5 feet, 7½ inches tall, weighing about 165 pounds, and of “dark” or “ruddy” complexion, Auguste is dressed in a vested suit with white tie and shirt.⁴⁵⁸ Bespeckled Rachel, several inches shorter than him, is wearing an ankle-length satin skirt topped by a matching tunic with extensive embroidery. A white lace-enhanced bib, collar, and cuffs complete her attire. She holds a cloth purse.

The Auguste-Rachel betrothal was one part of a major Bibault family transformation at the time. The family was “in turmoil.”⁴⁵⁹ Rachel was getting a new husband. Her children Louis, Suzanne, and Jeanne had a stepfather they barely knew. And, all of them were about to depart for the state of Oregon in the United States to live. Rachel’s father Théophile, having lost his spouse to the flu

⁴⁵⁵ “Mother Church of Western Canada,” History and Tourism, Saint-Boniface Cathedral”

(www.cathedralesboniface.ca); “St. Boniface Cathedral,” Canada’s Historic Places (www.historicplaces.ca).

⁴⁵⁶ Marriage record, M. 52 (“Auguste Fix et Rachel Bibault, Veuve de Jean Monchamp”), Paroisse Cathédrale, St. Boniface (copy provided by Pascale Dalcq, April 2012). Also, there is a brief entry in the church register (Julie Reid, Centre du patrimoine of the Société historique de Saint-Boniface to TGP, April 10, 12, 2012).

⁴⁵⁷ The Canadian Lucien Senez was a 23 year-old Catholic seminary student (“1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta,” ancestrylibrary.com). He was probably just an available witness with no relationship to the Fix or Bibault families. McDougall’s profile is unknown.

⁴⁵⁸ Physical features and appearance in “Declaration of Intention,” 1921 and 1935; “U.S. Border Crossings, 1895-1956” (for 1916 trip), and photographs in possession of Thomas G. Paterson.

⁴⁵⁹ DB to TGP, April 10, 2013.

pandemic, was preparing to leave with his daughter Gabrielle (age 12) for Deux-Sèvres, France, to reside there permanently. On October 24, the day before the wedding, Théophile received his French passport in Winnipeg. He was then also filing legal documents to sell property in Lourdes, because he was leaving for France “very shortly” (see below).

In this family upheaval, moreover, Théophile’s brother and Rachel’s uncle, Emmanuel Bibault was demobilized on May 26, 1919, by the Canadian army. His wife Berthe and three children (Marie, André, and Maurice) had been living in Saint-Boniface and she had their fourth child, Léon, born December 23, 1916 there (see below). After demobilization, Emmanuel returned to the family at Victoria Street, Winnipeg, which was no doubt the gathering place for the entire family during Rachel’s wedding event. The Saint-Boniface Cathedral was Emmanuel’s church. For months, he was in the process of buying property in Lourdes, closing the deal on October 31, 1919, just a few days after the marriage (see below).

Emmanuel’s sister Marcelline Guéret and her family, making the time-consuming trip from Lourdes, likely attended the wedding. She was in essence saying “goodbye” to a large part of her family that she might never see again: her brother Théophile, Gabrielle, Rachel, Louis, Suzanne, and Jeanne. Théophile’s daughter Claire Chabbert and her spouse Jean probably made the journey to the wedding, too. After all, already bereft of her mother, Claire was losing her father and one sister to France and another sister to Oregon.

At that wrenching time, too, Antoine Monchamp and Virginie Ballon must have suffered aching grief. They had to bury a young son after a tragic death—a hardworking, responsible, family man whose future looked bright. They had to wave farewell to three young grand-children, Louis, Suzanne, and Jeanne, wondering if they would ever see them again. (They did not.) But, Antoine never forgot his son or his grandchildren. Twenty years after Jean’s death and the departure of his children to Oregon, Antoine honored him and them in his 1939 last will and testament by leaving part of his estate to Jean’s offspring.⁴⁶⁰

Relocation to Oregon City, Oregon (1919)

Auguste (who dropped the “e” in his name), Rachel, Louis, Suzanne, and Jeanne departed Winnipeg in late November or early December 1919 on a Canadian

⁴⁶⁰ Antoine gave \$200 to each of Jean’s children. Simone Tait sent a copy of the will to TGP, January 2008.

Pacific Railway train. In Winnipeg, the family probably paid their “head tax,” or immigration fee, and received the “Alien Certificates” required to enter the United States from foreign contiguous territory.⁴⁶¹ Pulled by a steam locomotive, the Fixes’ car crossed Canada, through Regina, Saskatchewan, and into Calgary, Alberta. Perhaps they rode in a Pullman sleeper-diner car or in one of the so-called “emigrant sleepers,” which had cushioned seats, tables, and fold-down bunk beds.⁴⁶²

The train slowed as it chugged into the Canadian Rockies and through the steeply graded, and nearly a mile high, Kicking Horse Pass near Lake Louise. At that point the train had carried them more than 960 miles. The travelers looked out from their passenger coach at beautiful, wind-swept, bitterly cold, snow-covered mountains. The Fixes traveled through several tunnels. They crossed bridges over Kicking Horse River and gradually worked their way down the mountainous slopes. After entering British Columbia, the train traversed Glacier National Park, dominated by ice flows and high peaks.⁴⁶³

The CPR train ended at Vancouver’s Pier D, where the weary family boarded the CPR-owned *Princess Victoria*, a three-funnel steamer with a capacity of 1,152 passengers.⁴⁶⁴ That vessel carried them to Pier A in Seattle, Washington, where they disembarked on December 8 or 11.⁴⁶⁵ For the Fixes, the notation “Month of Dec. 24th” appears on the Canadian list of “Alien Passengers Applying for Admission to the United States from Foreign Contiguous Territories.” But, that date may be the day a monthly summary was compiled.⁴⁶⁶ Rachel and Auguste, and the Monchamp children, surrendered their certificates to an immigration official in Seattle. If they had not been pre-screened for issues of health in Winnipeg, in Seattle they may have had a physical examination required for entry.

⁴⁶¹ These certificates were handwritten on U.S. Immigration Bureau forms. “Certificates of Head Tax Paid by Aliens Arriving at Seattle from Foreign Contiguous Territory, 1917-1924” are located on microfilm at The National Archives, Washington, D.C. (www.archives.gov/genealogy).

⁴⁶² Don White, Jr., *The American Railroad Passenger Car* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978).

⁴⁶³ W. Kaye Lamb, *History of the Canadian Pacific Railway* (New York: Macmillan, 1977); Freeman Hubbard, *Encyclopedia of North American Railroading* (New York, McGraw Hill, 1981), p. 55; Pierre Berton, *The Impossible Railway: The Building of the Canadian Railway* (New York: Knopf, 1972), p. 467.

⁴⁶⁴ Photograph of Vancouver’s Pier D: www.theshipslist.com/pictures/vancouver.htm. Photograph and description at “Canadian Pacific Railway Steamer *Princess Victoria*,” Transportation Photographs, Digital Collections, University of Washington Libraries (<http://content.lib.washington.edu>).

⁴⁶⁵ Seattle is the arrival port “on or about” December 11, 1919, on August Fix’s “Declaration of Intention,” Case #0870, May 6, 1921, Intention/Naturalization, Oregon State Archives, <http://genealogy.state.or.us/detail.php?id=557432>. The date of December 8 appears on August Fix’s “Declaration of Intention,” November 27, 1935,” Selected U.S. Naturalization Records—Original Documents, 1790-1974,” ancestrylibrary.com.

⁴⁶⁶ “Border Crossings: From Canada to U.S., 1895-1956,” ancestrylibrary.com.

Next, the five headed on a train south (Great Northern, Union Pacific, or Northern Pacific) from Seattle to Portland, Oregon—a trip of about 175 miles. In Portland, they changed trains to a Southern Pacific “Red Electric” or to a local interurban electric service (Portland Traction Company or Oregon Electric). Their destination was Oregon City, about 15 miles from Portland.⁴⁶⁷ With a population of 5,686, the city sat at the confluence of the Willamette and Clackamas Rivers, where timber and wood products industries flourished.

As the crow flies, Winnipeg to Oregon City is a distance of 1,220 miles, but the Fixes surely traveled at least 1,500 miles by train before their journey ended and nine year-old “Susie Fix” became a resident of the United States, just before Christmas in 1919.⁴⁶⁸

Suzanne remembered in detail her arrival in Oregon City. Severe weather of extreme cold (in Fahrenheit, the teens and lower) and deep snow had just hammered Oregon. The worst snowstorm hit on December 10, when Portland recorded 17.5 inches.⁴⁶⁹ Suzanne recalled that when they disembarked from the train the snow was stacked high around them.⁴⁷⁰ They walked from the Southern Pacific station to the nearby municipal elevator on Seventh Street. For free, and in just about three minutes, the elevator lifted people 90 feet from the lower (river) level of the city to the “bluff” or “hilltop” residential area. The elevator car ran on water power. Opening a valve connected to the city water system sent the car up, and when the valve closed, the elevator dropped. When Suzanne first visited Oregon City, however, the elevator was not working because of the frigid weather. So, the five travelers, weighed down by luggage, trudged up steep wooden stairs to the bluff. “Friends” picked them up and brought them to their home, where they stayed for a time.⁴⁷¹

The “friends” were the Charriere family. The 1919 “Alien Passengers” list notes that the destination of the Fix family was “Marie Charriere” of Oregon City. That is, Mary Charriere (April 30, 1893-September 17, 1966), Canada-born of Swiss parents, and her husband Jack (Irénée) Charriere (1887-1949), Swiss-born, and a

⁴⁶⁷ For possible routes from Winnipeg to Oregon City: Gary Tarbox of the Northern Pacific Railroad History Association (nprhresarch@hotmail.com), Tarbox to TGP, January 11, 2008; and Hilding Larson of the Union Pacific History Society to TGP, January 10, 2008.

⁴⁶⁸ Her name appears as “Susie Fix” on the immigration record: “Border Crossings: From Canada to U.S., 1895-1956” (ancestrylibrary.com).

⁴⁶⁹ Weather in December 1919: National Weather Service, www.wrh.noaa.gov/pqr/pastsnowstorms/snow/php. Also www.oregonphotos.com/Portland%20Cold.html and www.salemhistory.net/natural_history/weather_records.htm.

⁴⁷⁰ Suzanne 1977 interview.

⁴⁷¹ *Ibid.*

paper mill worker.⁴⁷² Their son Gabriel (born in 1914), lived with them on 16th Street.⁴⁷³ His parents had left Lourdes for Oregon City in 1906. Mary's maiden name was Dupasquier; members of this family also lived in Oregon City.⁴⁷⁴ Mary was just a year younger than Rachel and surely she knew Rachel in Lourdes. Mary may have encouraged Rachel to move to Oregon.⁴⁷⁵ We can speculate further that during his 1916 trip to the United States, Auguste stopped to see members of the Charriere, and perhaps Dupasquier, families. He would have had acquaintance with some of them in Manitoba.

On January 2, 1920, soon after the Fix family arrived in Oregon City, the U.S. Census collected data. August Fix reported French as his mother tongue. The enumerator wrote "No" for him in the column asking whether the person was able to speak English. Rachel, Louis, Suzanne, and Jeanne all received a "Yes" in that category.⁴⁷⁶ August also told the census taker that he was a farmer who owned his own farm. In fact, at that time, he and Rachel were in the process of buying land. On January 15, 1920, they purchased 25.5 acres in Oregon City.⁴⁷⁷

About a year later, on March 15, 1921, August, age 34, entered the Oregon City Hospital for surgery. Just three days later, Rachel, age 28, was admitted to the same hospital for the birth of Raymond Fix. The baby came home from the hospital, but, on March 20, he died. The *Oregon City Enterprise* reported: "Raymond Fix, two days' old son of Mr. and Mrs. August Fix, died at the family residence at 121 Jefferson Street Sunday morning. A brief funeral service was held at the funeral chapel of Brady & DeMoss on Monday morning. Interment was in the Catholic cemetery."⁴⁷⁸ Where Raymond is buried remains a mystery.⁴⁷⁹

As of May 1921, August was a "laborer."⁴⁸⁰ He and Rachel still owned more than 25 acres. But they lived in the city. August may not only have farmed his acreage but also worked elsewhere for wages. In early 1923, August and Rachel Fix bought

⁴⁷² "Oregon Death Index," ancestrylibrary.com; "Social Security Death Index," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁴⁷³ "United States Census, 1920," familysearch.org.

⁴⁷⁴ "United States Census, 1940," familysearch.org.

⁴⁷⁵ DB to TGP, April 12, 2012.

⁴⁷⁶ "U.S. Census of Population and Housing, 1920 Census" (www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/1920.htm). The 1930 census reported that August could speak English (www.ancestrylibrary.com).

⁴⁷⁷ The cost was 10 dollars on the notarized document (Land Records, Book 159, pp. 634-635, recorded September 21, 1920, Clackamas County Clerk's Recording Office, Oregon City). "By state law, something had to be written in the space for selling price, any amount...[T]he parties might not have wished the exact amount to be known." (Judy Chambers, Clackamas County Family History Society, April 17, 2008, to TGP).

⁴⁷⁸ Hospital death certificate #60. Stan Clarke, "August Fix Family Research," January 26, 2008, to TGP.

⁴⁷⁹ St. John the Apostle Cemetery in Oregon City has no listing of a burial for Raymond and no marker exists there.

⁴⁸⁰ August Fix's "Declaration of Intention," Case #0870, 1921, Record Type: Intention/Naturalization, Oregon State Archives, <http://genealogy.state.or.us/detail.php?id=557432>.

a farm on Warner Parrott Road in Mt. Pleasant, a part of Oregon City. To pay for this property of about five acres they sold some of their land. And, some purchase funds also could have derived from the 1922 sale of the quarter-section that Rachel owned in Lourdes (SW 11-7-9). Rachel's sale of the quarter probably earned the Fixes between four and five thousand dollars.⁴⁸¹ The Fix family became poultry farmers, producing large quantities of eggs and chickens.

Suzanne attended Catholic and public schools in Oregon City.⁴⁸² She did not complete high school because of her need to work. She married the talented millwright, carpenter, and musician Thomas Paterson, Jr. (Tommy) (March 24, 1909-May 1, 1997), on November 2, 1934, in Oregon City. When they resided in the adjacent town of Gladstone and my father worked in the West Linn paper mill, my mother had two children in Oregon City: Shirley Jeanne Paterson (May 9, 1936) and Thomas Graham Paterson (Tom) (March 4, 1941).

Rachel Bibault Monchamp Fix died of breast cancer in Oregon City on December 6, 1937. She was only 45 years-old. She is buried in St. John the Apostle Cemetery, Oregon City.⁴⁸³

August soon remarried on November 24, 1938, to Marie Rosset, another member of the francophone community in the Oregon City area. It seems unlikely that Rachel's three children (Louis, Suzanne, and Jeanne) witnessed the ceremony at St. John's Catholic Church in Oregon City. There is no mention of them in the newspaper article that covered the wedding.⁴⁸⁴ They may not have been invited. This absence is not surprising given the children's difficult relations with August Fix and their negative feelings toward him. There is no mention of Rachel in the newspaper, either, or of August as a widower. August Fix died in Gresham, Oregon, August 20, 1969.⁴⁸⁵

Sue and Tommy lived and worked over the years in Oregon, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Alabama, and California. On August 24, 1960, Suzanne proudly

⁴⁸¹ Emmanuel Bibault paid \$4,400 for his quarter in 1919, for example. DB to TGP., January 26, 2008.

⁴⁸² The lives of Suzanne and Thomas and their children are covered at length in Paterson, *You Must*. Shirley married Billy Gilmore (born February 18, 1933) in 1957 and they had three children: Billy Graham Gilmore (1958-1958); Jeanne Suzanne Gilmore (1960); and Michael Thomas Gilmore (1961). Tom married Elizabeth Cain (born 1941) in 1958 and they had three children: Thomas Graham Paterson, Jr. (1959); Rebecca Virginia Paterson (1960); and Stephan William Cain Paterson (1968). In 1975, Tom married Holly Izard (born 1951) and they had two children: Aaron Matthew Paterson (1979) and Colin Graham Paterson (1981).

⁴⁸³ Block 5, Lot 40, #B (www.interment.net/data/us/or/clackamas/stjohnapostle/stjohn). Rachel's story in Thomas G. Paterson, "August(e) Fix and Rachel Bibault Monchamp Fix" (2012) and Paterson, *You Must*.

⁴⁸⁴ *Oregon City Enterprise*, November 25, 1938.

⁴⁸⁵ He is buried in Forest Lawn Memorial Park, Gresham, Oregon (www.findagrave.com).

received a “Certificate of Citizenship.” August’s becoming a naturalized citizen in 1939-1940 apparently had had no effect on Suzanne’s citizenship.⁴⁸⁶ Until 1960 she had to register each year as an “alien.”⁴⁸⁷

Thomas Paterson, Jr., died of cancer in Grants Pass, Oregon, April 1, 1997, after a life of music and work as a carpenter, cabinet maker, and builder of fiberglass boats and amusement park rides. Suzanne, Shirley, Tom, and Tom’s daughter Rebecca placed his ashes in the ocean at Gold Beach, Oregon. That was his wish, because Gold Beach was his favorite site on the Pacific coast. A homemaker most of her adult life, Suzanne died of cancer on December 7, 2001, in Newport, Oregon. At her request, her ashes were scattered at the same spot in the Pacific Ocean, at the North Jetty, Gold Beach, where her beloved Tommy’s ashes had been distributed on the water in 1997.

Théophile Bibault’s Property Issues, Repatriation to France, and Remarriage, 1919-1932

Here we resume the story of Rachel’s father Théophile Bibault. Because his wife Eugène died in 1918 “intestate”—that is, she did not leave a will—extended legal proceedings followed her death.⁴⁸⁸ The disposition of the parcel of land at SE 2-7-9 in Lourdes that she purchased in 1911 became an issue for the family. Théophile hired a law firm in Somerset (20 km or about 13 miles from Lourdes), and, on July 18, 1919, he asked the Surrogate Court of the Central Judicial District to “grant” him Eugène’s estate.⁴⁸⁹ The judge instead ruled that under the Succession Duties Act the property had to be divided among Théophile (one-third of the value) and his three daughters Rachel, Claire, and Gabrielle (two-thirds of the value in equal shares). On August 15, Théophile became the “Administrator” of the estate, which

⁴⁸⁶ “Petition for Naturalization,” November 28, 1939, No. 14458 (“Selected U.S. Naturalization Records,” ancestrylibrary.com). In the 1940 U.S. census, August is a naturalized citizen (familysearch.org).

⁴⁸⁷ “Certificate of Citizenship,” No. 8035101 (Petition No. 14833), August 24, 1960. She received her citizenship the next day in a ceremony at the Hillsborough County Court House in Manchester, New Hampshire. She received a booklet for signing by friends and family. She lived at that time with Thomas at 71 Water Street in Manchester.

⁴⁸⁸ The legal documents: (1) “In the Matter of the Estate of Eugène Bibault, Deceased,” Manitoba Probate Records, 1871-1930, Estate Files, #3218 (images 96-124) for the Years 1919-1920, Central Judicial District (Portage la Prairie); (2) “In the Matter of Gabrielle Bibault et al., and the Estate of the late Eugène Bibault, Deceased,” Manitoba Probate Records, 1871-1930, Estate Files, #3344 (images 2449-2484) and #3345 (images 2485-2523) for the Years 1919-1920, Central Judicial District; (3) Théophile Bibault Affidavit, “In the Matter of Gabrielle Bibault et al., and the Estate of the late Eugène Bibault, Deceased,” Manitoba Probate Records, 1871-1930, Estate Files, #3344 and #3345 (images 2501-2502) for the Years 1919-1920, Central Judicial. All at <https://familysearch.org>.

⁴⁸⁹ The property value in 1911 was either \$1200.75 or \$1420.00.

was put in “trust” to the Somerset law firm of Fromet and Champagne until Claire and Gabrielle reached age 21.⁴⁹⁰

On October 10, 1919, in a flurry of legal documents, Théophile and his daughters Rachel, Claire, and Gabrielle “petitioned” the surrogate court judge to issue a ruling acceptable to all: The immediate sale of Eugène’s SE 2-7-9 property. The farmer Maxime Lafrance had offered \$3,150 in cash for the parcel of about 47 acres. The petitioners deemed the price “beneficial” and urged sale “at once.” The petition included the statement that Théophile Bibault “desires to sell the said land & apply the proceeds” to the benefit of the estate. He “is leaving very shortly for France..., where he intends to reside permanently for the rest of his life.” A Théophile affidavit of November 29, 1919, claimed that the estate’s debt was \$219.25 and that the value of the estate had increased in value (from 1911) because he had erected buildings worth about \$2,000 on the property.

In that November 1919 document, with Eugène’s land unsold and just before he and Gabrielle departed Manitoba for France, Théophile declared that he had not been compensated for “the care, pain and troubles” expended by him on behalf of the estate, including administrative costs and taxes. To the surrogate court, he also submitted receipts for bills he had paid for medical, interment, and legal costs before and after Eugène’s death.⁴⁹¹ He apparently wanted these costs to be reimbursed to him from Eugène’s estate after the sale of the land. The judge “disallowed” compensation to Théophile for most of these expenses.

Then, on March 12, 1920, the judge approved the sale (Théophile was “at liberty” to sell Eugène’s land) and ordered him to pay \$619.49 to Gabrielle and the same amount to Claire. These amounts had to be deposited in The Trustee Company of Winnipeg Limited, drawing five percent interest. When Claire and Gabrielle turned 21, the money (with added interest) must be dispersed to them. As of May 17, these deposits had been made. We can assume that Rachel, already having reached the age of 21, received her share of \$619.49 directly from Théophile. We do not know if Claire and Gabrielle received their shares, but Claire’s June 1929 appeal to her father for money suggests that she had not (see below).

⁴⁹⁰ Eugène Guéret (husband of Marcelline Bibault and with an estate valued at \$10,000) and Jean Chabbert (husband of Claire Bibault and with an estate valued at \$8,000) served as “sureties” for the administrator.

⁴⁹¹ Among the costs: \$47.50 for professional services from Dr. Thomas Lamont; \$10.00 to Raphael Gour for digging Eugène’s grave; \$63.50 to Joseph Theroux for funeral expenses; \$25.00 to D. Aug. Roux for interment expenses; and \$27.00 to Dr. Joseph Rocan of Somerset for professional services rendered. This doctor had visited Eugène on September 2 and 10 and again on November 8. For the first and last visits, he added an extra fee of \$2.00 for “Brandy.” Such may have been administered to relieve her pain because no therapeutic drugs existed to combat the influenza. Rumors circulated during the pandemic that liquor would stop the virus.

At some point after November 29, 1919, when the issues surrounding Eugène's property seemed resolved after he signed a legal document in Somerset, Théophile and his 12 year-old daughter Gabrielle departed Canada and moved to his birthplace of Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Deux-Sèvres.⁴⁹² Both of his parents had died, and his wife had perished in the flu pandemic. His eldest daughter and recent widow Rachel had remarried and was about to resettle with his grandchildren in Oregon. His second daughter Claire had married in 1917. And, his young daughter Gabrielle needed parenting. So, we may speculate, this widower journeyed to France to find a mate.⁴⁹³ More, he intended to stay, because, before he exited Canada, he sold all of his properties.

The Manitoba newspaper *La Liberté*, recognizing Théophile Bibault's prominence in the francophone community by its very mention of his trip, wished him a good voyage, but asked why he would not want to return to Manitoba after breathing the air of his native land. After all, although the air was good in France, it was also good in Canada.⁴⁹⁴

Théophile and Gabrielle packed their belongings in a large dark-colored trunk strapped with a wooden band. This piece has been preserved in the family by Gabrielle's granddaughter Sylvie Garsuault Deletoile (see below). At Sylvie's home in Cerans-Foulletourte, department of Sarthe, in northwestern France, on June 14, 2014, I viewed the trunk, stamped "T·B" in large white letters. The faded words on the tattered label could still be read:

From Théophile Bibault Notre Dame de Lourdes Manitoba to Théophile
Bibault Thouars (Deux-Sevres) France via Winnipeg →St John→Le
Havre→Paris

When Théophile and Gabrielle arrived in France in late 1919, perhaps by the same route as indicated on the trunk,⁴⁹⁵ the country was still reeling from the destruction of World War I. After raging since August 1914, the Great War had ended on November 11, 1918. Perhaps Théophile learned from relatives and friends that Deux-Sèvres had been spared wrenching devastation. The German military advance never reached the department. Although French war casualties were staggering (1,357,800 dead, 4,266,000 wounded, and 533,000 prisoners or

⁴⁹² His French passport was issued October 24, 1919.

⁴⁹³ DB to TGP, January 6, 2008. Claire wrote to Théophile on June 19, 1929, and addressed the letter to "Dear Parents."

⁴⁹⁴ *La Liberté*, October 28, 1919 (<http://manitobia.ca/cocoon/launch/newspapers/LLT/1918>).

⁴⁹⁵ "St John" is the major port city in New Brunswick, Canada, which had a Canadian Pacific Railway terminal.

missing—a total of some six million), Deux-Sèvres, in the west central part of the country, did not have to endure the German occupation and heavy bombardments that pummeled 12 departments of northern and eastern France.⁴⁹⁶

Not that the war left the department undisturbed. German forces had sought to destroy the entire French economy, leveling churches, houses, factories, schools, and public buildings. German troops occupied 3,524 communes; the French evacuated another 804 communes. The French transportation system was disrupted, agriculture was chewed up by trenches, munitions, and debris, and millions of refugees fled into unoccupied territory, some reaching Deux-Sèvres. Still, comparatively unscathed, the department to which Théophile returned held promise for recovery as the French government began reconstruction.⁴⁹⁷

In January 1919, moreover, the victorious nations, including France, Britain, and the United States, had convened a peace conference in Paris at Versailles. The Treaty of Versailles of June seemed to promise peace and a brighter French future. In short, Théophile may have felt optimistic about postwar France when he headed there with Gabrielle in the late autumn of 1919. Such optimism soon waned. Inflation, recession (1920-1921), reparations problems with Germany, and fiscal crisis beset France in the 1920s. By the early 1930s, depression rocked the country.

After arriving in France, mustachioed Théophile and Gabrielle likely stayed at first with Eugénie's sister Esther Malécot (1874-1970) and her husband Ferdinand Eugène Legeay (1871-1945) in the village of Mayé, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon. Esther's and Eugène's immediate neighbors, as listed in the 1906 French census, were Désiré Hayault and Berthe Virginie Aillault (see below), whom Théophile (accompanied by Eugénie, Claire, and Gabrielle) no doubt met during his four-month visit to the area in 1909-1910 (see above).⁴⁹⁸ Or, perhaps Théophile and Gabrielle initially resided for a time with another Eugénie sister, Marie-Louise Malécot (1864-1951) and her spouse Pierre Nauleau (1860-1935) in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon's village of Mâcon.⁴⁹⁹

⁴⁹⁶ "WWI Casualty and Death Tables," www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath-pop.html.

⁴⁹⁷ William MacDonald, *Reconstruction in France* (New York: Macmillan, 1922), chs. 1-2.

⁴⁹⁸ RP, 1906, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, p. 10, DSA (Legeay residence). Théophile named Legeay for the passenger list. Paterson, "Eugénie Malécot...and Families."

⁴⁹⁹ RP, 1906, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, p. 7, DSA. On November 21, 1886, an hour apart, Eugénie and Théophile and Marie-Louise and Pierre married (RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Mariages, p. 85, DSA). Death dates for Pierre (February 27, 1935) and Marie-Louise (April 28, 1951) appear on their gravestone in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon cemetery. He died at 76 years and she lived to be 86 years-old (photograph by Bernard Garsuault, June 2014).

Théophile soon remarried. When 56 year-old Théophile wed 60 year-old Berthe Virginie Aillault of Mayé, on April 26, 1920, the Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon town-hall officer recorded him as a farmer and her as a housewife. Witnessing the ceremony was Pierre Nauleau.⁵⁰⁰

Théophile's new spouse Berthe Virginie Aillault was born in Mayé on March 1, 1860, to the farmer François Jacques Aillault (age 42) and Marie Jeanne Henneau (age 40).⁵⁰¹ Berthe Virginie's mother was born about 1819 in Cersay; she died July 12, 1864, in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon.⁵⁰² After her death, Berthe Virginie's father François remarried on August 21, 1865, to Josephine Roy.⁵⁰³ This remarriage may carry importance in explaining Théophile's choice of a new mate and in the care that Gabrielle received. That is, Berthe Virginie had had some experience with a step-mother (Josephine) and may have been particularly sensitive to the needs of a step-child.

On June 9, 1879, in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, 19 year-old Berthe Virginie had married Désiré Auguste Hayault, a farmer born December 8, 1853, in Cersay.⁵⁰⁴ He died April 30, 1918, leaving Berthe Virginie a widow living in Mayé.⁵⁰⁵ No children are reported for them in the 1886, 1891, or 1906 censuses. We can wonder if Berthe Virginie might have been willing to marry Théophile because, having had no children of her own, her becoming a step-parent to Gabrielle gave the 60 year-old an opportunity to "mother" a child. What is more, Théophile was financially well-off and could support her as she aged. As for Théophile's reasons for marrying Berthe Virginie: He had met her years before and surely had learned that she was a recent widow, and both had lost their spouses in 1918. He had heard at least some of her life story from Esther Malécot and Marie-Louise Malécot. The newlyweds were also close in age. She seemed a good choice to help him raise Gabrielle into womanhood.

Théophile Bibault, after his 1920 marriage to Berthe Virginie Aillault, may have bought a farm with a house or simply moved into her house in Mayé. We do not know if he resumed farming or opened a business. He undoubtedly attended the wedding of Gabrielle and Raphaël Garsuault on June 23, 1926, and welcomed his

⁵⁰⁰ Message from Mairie of Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon to TGP, June 10, 2013, reported March 29 as the day . The marriage record, a copy of which I received directly at the town hall in June 2014, reads April 26.

⁵⁰¹ They had at least four children. RPC, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Births, 1836-1872, p. 93, DSA.

⁵⁰² RPC, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, #3, Deaths, p. 102, DSA.

⁵⁰³ RPC, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Marriages, #7, p. 110, DSA.

⁵⁰⁴ RPC, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Marriages, 1873-1896, #4, p. 31, DSA; RPC, Cersay, Births, 1836-1872, #22, p. 111, DSA.

⁵⁰⁵ 1920 Bibault-Aillault marriage record, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon town hall.

new grandson Gérard, born July 3, 1930 (see below). About two years later, on August 7, 1932, Théophile died at home in Mayé, Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, at the age of 68 years. Raphaël Garsuault, then of the same commune, employed as a *represent de commerce*, reported the death to authorities.⁵⁰⁶

When, on June 13, 2014, Bernard Garsuault (Gabrielle's grandson), Sylvie Garsuault Deletoile (Gabrielle's granddaughter), Denis Bibault (grandson of Emmanuel Bibault, Théophile's brother), and I (great-grandson of Théophile Bibault and grandson of Rachel Bibault, Gabrielle's sister) searched through the Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon cemetery next to a crumbling fifteenth-century church on a small hill, we were unable to locate Théophile's gravestone. Perhaps it collapsed, or the carving of his name eroded, or he never had one.

Berthe Virginie Aillault died at home in Mayé on March 29, 1934, at the age of 74. Gabrielle's spouse, 37 year-old Raphaël Garsuault, *voyageur de commerce*, informed the town hall.⁵⁰⁷ She may be buried next to Théophile or in an Aillault family plot.

Théophile never went back to North America. His grandchild Suzanne (1910-2001) recalled that she “did not know my grandfather very well. He was a very private man, and when my mother visited him [at his home in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes] I usually stayed with the Monchamps. And, for some reason, my mother [Rachel] did not speak about him much after my father died [in 1918] and she remarried and moved to Oregon [in 1919]. She never mentioned him nor did they write [after he moved to France in 1919].”⁵⁰⁸

Claire Bibault (1902-1973), Jean Chabbert (1892-1928), Eldon Reveal (1901-1958), and Their Families

To return to Théophile Bibault and Eugénie Malécot: Their second child (after Rachel) was Claire Marie Bibault, born March 4, 1902, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.⁵⁰⁹ She attended the Carnot School, overlapping for a time with her sisters Rachel and Gabrielle (see above). On August 1, 1917, in Lourdes, Claire married

⁵⁰⁶ Death record, #5, sent by Mairie of Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon to TGP, June 10, 2013.

⁵⁰⁷ Death record, #2, copy presented to TGP in Mairie of Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, June 13, 2014.

⁵⁰⁸ Suzanne Paterson to DB, June 27, 1989.

⁵⁰⁹ Claire's baptism certificate (Certificat de Baptême, Paroisse de Notre-Dame de Lourdes), naturalization intention document, and death certificate (Vital Statistics Section, State Board of Health, “Certificate of Death,” June 4, 1973), give her birthday as March 4, 1902.

Jean Marie Emmanuel Chabbert (August 3, 1892-December 17, 1928). His parents Antoine Chabbert and Émélie Delpueche migrated with their two children Louis and Émile to Manitoba about April 1891, after becoming fascinated by announcements which championed the advantages of life in Canada. In 1894, Antoine Chabbert received and developed a homestead at NW 10-7-9.⁵¹⁰

Jean Chabbert and Claire Bibault had three children in Lourdes: Léon Albert Chabbert (March 25, 1921-May 15, 2010); Emilie Eugenie Marie Chabbert (born August 12, 1922); and Martha Louise Chabbert (June 26, 1924-February 23, 1925). In December 1924, after Jean's farm (NE 16-7-9, which he bought from Emmanuel Bibault in 1916) failed in a bad winter, and the bank foreclosed on him, he and his family moved to Oregon City near Rachel. Jean found work at the locks of the West Linn paper mill along the Willamette River. Their infant daughter Martha Louise had become sick with pneumonia on the train trip from Manitoba to Oregon. She died in Oregon City on February 23, 1925, at the age of seven months and 28 days.⁵¹¹ Both Jean and Claire filed for naturalization in 1925, but neither became U.S. citizens.⁵¹² Tragedy struck again. Jean Chabbert died from pneumonia, December 17, 1928, at age 35.⁵¹³

After her spouse's death, Claire soon fell into desperate financial straits. She placed Leon and Emilie in separate Catholic homes for about three years.⁵¹⁴ (The accent in Leon's first name was dropped in Oregon.) Claire moved into the St. Agnes Baby Home in Park Place, Oregon City, where she worked for the Sisters of Mercy, who cared for orphaned babies and foundlings. In June 1929, Claire wrote to her father Théophile in France appealing for money. Claire mentioned that she had just met with her sister Rachel to discuss "some money" that Théophile had apparently promised before. This money may have been related to the 1920 legal

⁵¹⁰ Antoine was a *sabotier* (clog or wooden shoemaker) from Saint-Lauent d'Olt, Aveyron, France. He was born there in 1856 and died in Lourdes in 1921. Gaborieau, *Un siècle*, pp. 371- 372; "Western Land Grants," April 12, 1894 (collectionscanada.gc.ca); "Les Débuts de Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes." Jean's 1892 birth in vitalstats.gov.mb.ca.

⁵¹¹ She is buried in St. John the Apostle Cemetery, Oregon City. Oregon State Board of Health, Certificate of Death, Clackamas County, February 24, 1925; Michael Chabbert to TGP, March 25, 2011; Oregon State Archives, "Death"(<http://genealogy.state.or.us>).

⁵¹² "Intention/Naturalization," Oregon State Archives; Darwin Reveal to TGP, March 24, 2011.

⁵¹³ Jean Chabbert is buried in St. John the Apostle Cemetery, Oregon City (www.findagrave.com).

⁵¹⁴ Leon became a "ward" of St. Mary's Home for Boys in Beaverton, Oregon, under the guidance of the Sisters of St. Mary. Emilie entered the Christie School for Girls on land named Marylhurst, between Lake Oswego and West Linn, Oregon. The orphanage was managed by the Sisters of the Holy Names. Leon Chabbert to TGP, January 5, 27, 2009; Conversation with TGP, August 21, 2008; "1930 U.S. Federal Census," ancestrylibrary.com; Charles G. Herbermann, *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (New York: Encyclopedia Press, 1911), XI, 292.

document regarding the sale of Eugène Malécot's property (see above). "I end by embracing you very strongly. Your daughter who loves you very much, Claire."⁵¹⁵

Claire's daughter Emilie liked staying with "Aunt Rachel" (Claire's sister) in the summer. Emilie especially enjoyed playing with Rachel's son Louis. When Louis went hunting, he would rest a pillow on Emilie's shoulder and then shoot, a great help to him because of his muscular dystrophy (which everybody thought was polio).

In 1931, in Portland, Claire remarried, to Eldon Ross Reveal (April 17, 1901-March 12, 1958).⁵¹⁶ On February 27, 1920, when he worked on an Ohio farm, Eldon married Avis Lucille Greshel (born July 26, 1899), a bookkeeper. She died after surgery on February 9, 1927. They had four (perhaps five) children: A premature baby boy who did not survive birth on December 12, 1920; Rachel Ellen Reveal (December 8, 1921-June 9, 1983); Chloe Louise Reveal (November 30, 1925-July 1990); and Lawrence Allen Reveal (born March 25, 1924).⁵¹⁷ According to his daughter Rachel, after the death of Eldon's wife Avis in 1927, Eldon "abandoned" his family, alcoholism contributing to the split. The children moved between relatives and also into children's' homes/orphanages in Ohio and West Virginia. A family adopted Chloe. Eldon moved to Portland, Oregon.

Claire's marriage to Eldon enabled her to move Leon and Emilie out of the orphanages. In the years ahead Claire was employed as a house cleaner. Eldon worked as a machinist and tool-and-die maker. When Claire's two Chabbert children were teenagers, Claire and Eldon had a child, Darwin R. Reveal, born January 1, 1937, in Multnomah County Hospital, Portland, Oregon. Darwin battled pneumonia for several weeks his first year and was hospitalized. His sister Emilie served as his care provider as the family moved from place to place in Portland.

⁵¹⁵ A copy of this June 19, 1929, letter was sent in 2008 from Paris by Bernard Garsuault, grandson of Claire's sister Gabrielle. Denis Bibault translated it. DB to TGP, January 4, 2009.

⁵¹⁶ He was born in South Charleston, Ohio, to William Reveal (born 1844) and Martha Owens Reveal (born 1861). Eldon served in the U.S. Army in 1919. One source, indicating that the information derives from "Ohio County Marriages, 1790-1950," gives a birth date of April 17, 1898 ("Eldon Ross Revele [sic]," wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com). For Eldon's life and family here and below (including Avis Lucille Greshel, Rachel Ellen Reveal, and Chloe Louise Reveal): *ibid.*; "Eldon Ross Reveal," records.ancestry.com; "Descendants of Michael Riley Reveal," #107 and #205, familytreemaker.genealogy.com; Darwin Reveal to TGP, November 30, 2013.

⁵¹⁷ Rachel Reveal served as a military nurse in World War II (1943-1946). She sent her earnings regularly to her grandmother in Ohio, only to discover upon return that the money had been spent. She moved to Alaska, and in 1946 married Kenneth Harry Lea (b. 1920) in Juneau. They had four children: Kenneth (1947), John (1948), Mary (1952), and Sue-Jane (1963). Rachel died from cancer and is buried in Evergreen Cemetery, Juneau. Chloe was adopted by the Hankel family. She married Elmer Crane in 1947 and had six children. The website "Descendants...Reveal" indicates that Eldon and Avis also had another child: Robert Reveal (born 1926). No information has been found for him.

Emilie did not complete high school “because of rough times.”⁵¹⁸ Eldon Ross Reveal long suffered from alcoholism, but, in 1951, he began attending Alcoholics Anonymous. He never drank again. Eldon Reveal died on March 12, 1958, from coronary thrombosis and coronary arteriosclerosis. He is buried in Lincoln Memorial Park, Portland.

Darwin Reveal attended St. Lawrence Catholic School and Lincoln High School and earned a B.S. degree in Psychology and an M.B.A. from Portland State College. He married Betty Acker (born 1939) and had two daughters, Debra (born 1963) and Catherine (1966).⁵¹⁹ He married his second wife Marge (born 1947) in 1987, and they had a son Jeffrey. Over time, Darwin grew closer to his brother Leon Chabbert, describing him as “always honest and straightforward,” a man of “energy.”⁵²⁰ In 1992, after 22 years, Darwin retired as an academic administrator, with the title of Associate Professor in the School of Dentistry, from the Oregon Health Sciences University in Portland. He traveled widely, did volunteer service, and supported progressive causes. “Dar” died while playing his much-loved game of golf at the age of 77 on February 17, 2014, in Flagstaff, Arizona.⁵²¹ Shortly before his death, Darwin had decided to join Denis Bibault and me in a trip to France to search for our Bibault ancestors and villages.

Before retiring, Claire worked as the food manager of the Fred Meyer corporate headquarters restaurant in Portland.⁵²² Claire died from heart disease, May 25, 1973, in Portland and is buried in Lincoln Memorial Park.⁵²³ Just before she died, she enjoyed a special reunion with her sister Gabrielle in Oregon, whom she had not seen for more than half a century (see below).

We now return to the stories of Claire’s children. Her son Leon Chabbert left home in his early teens. He politely recalled that life with his new stepfather Reveal “was not the greatest.”⁵²⁴ At the age of 14, in 1935, Leon worked at the Portland Brewing company, pasting labels on bottles. In the years 1936-1943, he labored as a choker setter, fastening chains around wood logs for dragging by a tractor, and as a gas station attendant. He had little or no high-schooling, but during his military

⁵¹⁸ “Emilie Eugenie Marie Chabbert As Told to Anita Nork, with Nork’s Additions, 2002 and 2013” (2013).

⁵¹⁹ Debbie married Don Arnsten and Cathy married Doug Teece. Jeff married Jacqueline. When Darwin died he had four grandchildren.

⁵²⁰ Darwin Reveal to TGP, March 24, 2011, November 25, 2013.

⁵²¹ Darwin’s life in *The Oregonian*, February 23-26, 2014.

⁵²² Darwin Reveal to TGP, March 24, 2011.

⁵²³ Claire is buried in Birchwood Garden, lot 38, space 5 (Lincoln Memorial Park to TGP, September 11, 2013). See Paterson, *You Must*, for further information on Claire.

⁵²⁴ Chabbert to TGP, January 21, 2008.

service he received a General Educational Development (GED) credential certifying that he had passed tests demonstrating high-school-level skills.

From February 1943 to October 1945, during World War II, Leon served first in the U.S. Army Air Forces in the 27th Photographic Reconnaissance Squadron, whose mission was photographing potential bombing targets and assessing bomb damage. He became a medical technician (medic), earning the rank of sergeant. Leon spent the war in England, France (Normandy), and central Europe. While in Plymouth, England, in June 1944, he received U.S. citizenship papers.

Leon married Faye Rose Steinberg (July 31, 1928-March 31, 2001) on February 2, 1948, and they had two children. Their first was Michael Gene Chabbert, born December 31, 1948, in Portland, Oregon.⁵²⁵ Their second was Steven Chabbert, born April 16, 1956, also in Portland. He died July 17, 1956, at age three months, during surgery in Portland. Leon Albert Chabbert had a successful career as a truck mechanic in the Portland, Oregon area. He died at the age of 89 on May 15, 2010. As a military veteran, he was buried in Willamette National Cemetery, Portland (Section CC, Site 2453), next to Faye.⁵²⁶ When I met Leon in 2008 in Fairview, Oregon, outside Portland, I came away from our conversation with appreciation for his character, for his understanding of his mother's story, and for his pride in his French and Canadian roots.

Leon's sister Emilie Chabbert worked different jobs in the 1930s, including governess for a senator and sewer of sleeping bags in a woolen mill. In 1942, during World War II, she worked at the Lincoln Tavern in Portland. There she met a U.S. Merchant Marine sailor, Frederick Lewis Gibson (born November 21, 1921). On August 7, 1943, she married Fred. Her mother Claire and brother Darwin attended the wedding in Seattle. Fred soon shipped out again, but he later spent most of his career as a baker at various bakeries. Through the years, Emilie worked for a number of businesses, mostly in their receiving departments. Emilie and Fred had four children: Leon Frederick (born November 30, 1944); Jack Lewis

⁵²⁵ Michael Chabbert married Carleen Christie and they had two children: (1) Monica Rae Chabbert was born May 9, 1967, in Portland. She married Richard Beck and had two children, Tyler Richard Beck (May, 8, 1991) and Preslie Renae Beck (October 9, 1992), both born in Portland. (2) Jeffrey Chabbert was born November 15, 1970, in Portland. He married Reyna (born June 19, 1981) and had two children, Audrey Faye Chabbert (born October 28, 2008) and Claire Katherine Chabbert (born December 31, 2010). Michael remarried to Teresa Marie Brock (born May 4, 1951).

⁵²⁶ Sources for the Leon Chabbert family: U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, "Nationwide Gravesite Locator" (gravelocator.cem.va.gov); "U.S. Veterans Gravesites, ca. 1775-2006," ancestrylibrary.com; www.findagrave.com; conversation with TGP at Léon's home, 22153 NE Chinook Way, Fairview, Oregon 97024, August 21, 2008; Michael Chabbert (235 Oda Knight Rd., Lyle, Washington 98635) to TGP, September 13, November 30, 2013, November 18, 2015; Thérèse Lasage's handwritten Chabbert and Bibault tree, September 9, 2015.

(December 21, 1950); Anita Marie (September 24, 1955); and Paul Joseph (February 15, 1957).⁵²⁷ These children gave Emilie and Fred ten grandchildren. Fred Gibson died of lung cancer on September 13, 1997. He is buried in Portland's Willamette National Cemetery (Plot Z, O, 490). In 2015, 93 year-old Emilie was living near her daughter Anita Nork in Sweet Home, Linn County, Oregon.⁵²⁸

Gabrielle Bibault (1907-1975), Raphaël Garsuault (1899-1964), and Their Family

The third child of Théophile and Marie was Gabrielle Marie Bibault, born July 10, 1907, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. She attended the Carnot School, at times with her sister Claire and my mother Suzanne (see above). After Gabrielle's mother Eugène Malécot died in November 1918, her father decided that he needed help in raising his young daughter. In late 1919, 12 year-old Gabrielle and Théophile left Canada for permanent residency in Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon, Deux-Sèvres, France. Théophile remarried soon thereafter. Berthe Virginie Aillault became Gabrielle's stepmother (see above).

On June 23, 1926, 18 year-old Gabrielle married Raphaël Garsuault (February 5, 1899-February 28, 1964) in Missé, a town 14.5 km (9 miles) from Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon.⁵²⁹ They lived in the commune of Luzay (15.7 km or 9.8 miles from Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon) when their only child, Gérard Garsuault, was born July 3, 1930, in Luzay. Raphaël became the manager of a pork processing factory while Gabrielle became a store manager and the owner of a pressing/cleaning (clothes) shop in Thouars. Thouars sits about 12 km (7.5 miles) from Saint-Martin-de-Mâcon. Raphaël died February 28, 1964. He is buried next to Gabrielle in Thouars.

⁵²⁷ Leon married Gloria Gaudio (born 1944) in 1965 and they had twin boys: Tone' Gibson and Billy Gibson, born June 8, 1975. Jack married Russana Fast (born 1952) and they had a daughter Tina Gibson, born September 1, 1972. He remarried to Roxann Carulli (born 1952) and they had two children: Rocco Gibson (born May 15, 1978) and Joe Gibson (April 24, 1980). Anita married James Edward Nork (born December 3, 1950) and they had two children Patrick Ryan Nork (born October 22, 1976) and Douglas Edward Nork (born May 24, 1978). Paul married Kim Morris (born 1962) in 1989 and they had two children: Stephen Gibson (born November 30, 1990) and David Gibson (June 6, 1993). Paul remarried to Diane Failmezger in 1997 and they have a daughter Hannah (born May 20, 2000). Information from Anita Nork to TGP, October 18, 2015.

⁵²⁸ Sources for the Emilie Chabbert Gibson family: Leon Chabbert to TGP, January 6, 2009; "Social Security Death Index" and "U.S. Public Records," ancestrylibrary.com; TGP telephone conversation with Emilie Chabbert, March 10, 2011; Anita Nork to TGP, December 29, 2013 (with "Emilie Eugenie Marie Chabbert As Told to Anita Nork with Nork's Additions 2002 and 2013"); Anita Nork to TGP, October 18, 2015; Lasage's Chabbert and Bibault tree (2015); "Frederick Louis Gibson" (Willamette National Cemetery, Find A Grave Memorial #695049).

⁵²⁹ Data on the Garsuault family here and below in Bernard Garsuault to TGP, July 19, 2012; Sebastien Garsuault to TGP, July 6, 2012.

Their son Gérard worked for a building company. He and his wife Marie Thérèse Basset (April 4, 1927-December 11, 1997), whom he married December 31, 1950, had two children, both born in Thouars. The first was Bernard Garsuault, born May 30, 1951. As a child, Bernard often stayed with his grandmother Gabrielle.⁵³⁰ He went on to become an insurance broker in Paris. He married Frederique Penager (born June 20, 1960) on June 29, 1985, and they had two children in Paris: Sébastien (born August 26, 1986), who earned a master's degree in biomedical engineering, and Delphine (born March 28, 1989), who achieved a degree in agronomic engineering. As of this writing, Bernard lives in Paris with his wife Fatou Diawara (born November 20, 1972, in Dakar, Senegal). They married February 2, 2008, and their child, Jade Aminata Garsuault was born in Paris on June 24, 2011. In June 2014, Bernard generously introduced me and my cousin Denis Bibault to his family, Paris, and Normandy (on the 70th anniversary of D-Day). Bernard's father Gérard died September 8, 1974, and is buried in the cemetery of Arnage, about 16 km (10 miles) from Le Mans.

The second child of Gérard was Sylvie Garsuault (born April 5, 1958). Sylvie married Jean François Deletoile (born May 2, 1954) on August 3, 1991, in Le Mans. They have two children, both born in Le Mans: Jonathan Deletoile (born May 9, 1990) and Audrey Deletoile (born April 4, 1993). In 2014, when I first met her, Sylvie lived with her family in Cerans-Foulletourte, department of Sarthe, region of Pays-de-la-Loire, in northwestern France, not far from Le Mans.

We turn again to Gabrielle. In 1973, Gabrielle, knowing that her sister Claire was very ill, took a long journey from Thouars to Oregon. My father Thomas and my mother Suzanne (who grew up with "Gaby" in Lourdes), drove Gabrielle from the Oakland, California, airport to Portland, where she and Claire Bibault Chabbert Revel embraced for the first time in more than 50 years. Gabrielle and Claire visited St. John the Apostle Cemetery in Oregon City. In essence, the event was a reunion of the offspring of Théophile Bibault and Eugène Malécot, when all three Bibault sisters came together. Claire, age 72, and Gabrielle, age 66, gathered near the headstone on the grave of their big sister Rachel, who, had she not died in 1937, would have been 81.⁵³¹ Shortly after Gabrielle returned to her home in Saint-Jacques-de-Thouars, she heard that Claire died, on May 25, 1973.

Gabrielle herself died on January 16, 1975, in Thouars, and was buried in the Arnage Cemetery. My mother Suzanne received a telegram from France that her

⁵³⁰ Conversation, Thouars, France, June 2014.

⁵³¹ The reunion in Oregon is detailed in Paterson, *You Must*, p. 45.

“Gaby” had died. “It hit me pretty hard,” my mother soon told me, especially because her aunt’s death was so unexpected. Gabrielle’s granddaughter (most likely Sylvie) had informed Suzanne by letter months before, in September, that Gabrielle was getting better after surgery. As well, Suzanne expressed sadness about the diminishing number of Bibault relatives now that Rachel (1937), Claire (1973), Gabrielle (1975), and her brother Louis (1965), had passed away.⁵³²

After Gabrielle’s death, Suzanne wrote a letter of sympathy to Gabrielle’s son Gérard Garsuault in Le Mans. He thoughtfully answered, addressing the letter “Dearest Sue and Tommy.” Gérard explained that Gabrielle had been in the hospital since September and “didn’t suffer.” She “never realized” how ill she was with cancer. “She often spoke of you and of her wonderful voyage” to the United States in 1973. Gabrielle described the trip as “a dream.” Gérard added: “You were so very kind to her. We thank you so much for making her happy.”⁵³³

Gabrielle was interred in Thouars on January 18, 1975, next to her husband Raphaël. I visited her cemetery gravesite in June 2014, noting the elegant picture of her on the dark stone. Her grandson Bernard Garsuault of Paris also drove me and my cousin Denis Bibault to see her beautiful walled home, with interior gardens, on Saint Jacques Street, in the commune of Saint-Jacques-de-Thouars, just across the Thouet River from Thouars.

Marcelline Bibault (1871-1953), Eugène Guéret (1864-1936), and Family

We now return to Charles Bibault and Marie Naly. After Théophile, their first child, their second was Victorine Marcelline Bibault, born at home in Vrères, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, on January 11, 1871. The *charron* Charles reported the baby’s birth to the mayor’s office. Charles was then 32 years-old; Marie was 21. The birth document registers Marcelline’s mother Marie as a farmer (*cultivateur*).⁵³⁴ (The spelling of her name became Marcelline in Canada.)

On December 29, 1889, in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Marcelline Bibault of Vrères married Eugène Célestin Guéret, born in the village of Rochefou, town of Cersay,

⁵³² Suzanne Paterson to TGP, January 20, 1975.

⁵³³ “Gérard’s family” (La Corde, Route d’Isaac, Le Mans) to Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Paterson (Sunnyvale, California), undated (but 1975). Suzanne saved this letter.

⁵³⁴ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Births, 1836-1872, #2, p. 202, DSA.

Deux-Sèvres, on April 25, 1864.⁵³⁵ Cersay lay 23.7 km (14.7 miles) west of Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, qualifying it as a member of the Bibault family zone. Twenty-five year-old Eugène then worked as a *domestique* and lived in Vrères. Eighteen year-old Marceline was not employed. The groom's mother Madeleine Naud, a 54 year-old day laborer, attended and consented to the betrothal.⁵³⁶ Eugène's father Jean Auguste Guéret, a farmer, had died in 1879 in Bouillé-Loretz, Deux-Sèvres, a small commune 21.4 km (about 13 miles) from Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun.⁵³⁷

Before his marriage to Marceline, Eugène Guéret had limited but persistent interaction with the French military as a member of the "Class of 1884."⁵³⁸ When men turned 20 years of age they became subject to the military draft. Unlike his brother-in-law Théophile Bibault (see above), who apparently enjoyed the luck of the draw, Eugène was summoned to serve in the infantry. The usual path for a draftee over several years was active service followed by reserve service and then assignment to the territorial forces near his home area. But Eugène was "dispensed" from service under a provision (Article 17) that exempted draftees who had a brother serving on active duty at the time ("*frère au service*").⁵³⁹

Eugène's "Class of 1884" document recorded Eugène's height as 1 meter and 63 centimeters (5 feet and 3 inches), his face as "elongated," his eyes as gray, his mouth as average, and his nose as small. The military clerk also inked on the document a "0" for "instruction," meaning that Eugène had not gone to school. His "profession" was "farmer."

In 1888, the military contacted Eugène once again, placing him in the reserves but exempting him from "exercises." The words "*pour cause d'épidémie*" ("on account of the epidemic") appear as an explanation for his exemption this time. Cholera

⁵³⁵ Vital Statistics Agency, Manitoba, lists Eugène's date of birth as April 24, 1863 ("Eugène Guéret," vitalstats.gov.mb.ca).

⁵³⁶ Madeleine then lived in Bouillé-Loretz, village of Petit Ursay. Her death date and place have not yet been located in the available documents. RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Marriages, 1873-1896, #9, p. 103, DSA.

⁵³⁷ Jean Auguste (born May 3, 1834, in Clénay, Deux-Sèvres) died January 12, 1879. RPC, Bouillé-Loretz, Deaths, 1873-1896, #1, p. 53, DSA.

⁵³⁸ Registres matricules militaires, Bureau Parthenay, Class of 1884, Registration # 915, p. 421, DSA.

⁵³⁹ Eugène had two brothers: Louis Augustin Guéret, born February 17, 1859 (RPC, Cersay, Births, 1836-1872, #3, p. 144, DSA) and Jean Henri Guéret, born June 29, 1862 (RPC, Cersay, Births, 1836-1872, #12, p. 182, DSA). They were in the Classes of 1879 and 1882. Louis was exempted from active service in 1879 because of the death of his father Auguste in January 1879 (Registres matricules militaires, Bureau Parthenay, Class of 1879, Registration #1364, p. 365, DSA). On the other hand, his brother Jean Henri entered active service in late 1882 and passed into the reserves in July 1888 (Registres matricules militaires, Bureau Parthenay, Class of 1882, Registration #409, p. 411, DSA). Jean Henri must be the "brother" referred to in Eugène's military document. Eugène also had twin sisters: Marie and Augustine, born June 27, 1867 (RPC, Cersay, Births, 1836-1872, #19 and #20, p. 208, DSA).

and typhoid “ravaged” France in the 1880s and 1890s.⁵⁴⁰ Did the military’s statement of exemption for Eugène mean that he himself had contracted one of these deadly bacterial diseases, or that dispersing or separating soldiers from their close quarters counted as a way to deal with the epidemics? In either case, Eugène remained in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, where he resided when he married Marceline in late 1889.

Even after his exemptions and marriage, and even after the Guérets’ emigration to Canada in 1894 (see below), French military officials kept track of Eugène. In the period March 14-April 10, 1892, as a member of the 114th Infantry Regiment, Eugène participated in training exercises. Yet he was released because of a health (circulatory) problem. In 1895, already in Canada, he received an exemption from exercises, and in 1897 and 1898 he did not respond to notices of forthcoming exercises. In November 1898, on paper, he passed to the 67th Infantry Regiment of the Territorial Army and in November 1904 to the reserves of that army. Along the way, military authorities located him. They penned his addresses as Rathwell (for July 19, 1898) and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes (for August 4, 1905), on his “Class of 1884” military record, #915. Finally, through a declaration dated October 1, 1910, the French military informed Eugène Guéret that his military service had ceased (“*libération*”). In short, for more than 25 years, he had been entangled in some way with France’s military establishment.

Eugène and Marceline had four children, one in Deux-Sèvres and three in Manitoba. The first, Arthur Alexandre Guéret, was born May 24, 1891, at home in the village of Vrères.⁵⁴¹ Eager to join the Bibaults in their April 1891 migration to Manitoba, having taken part in the family discussions leading up to that event (see above), Eugène and Marceline, and their son Arthur, had to wait until 1894 to touch Canadian soil in the Lourdes area for the first time.⁵⁴² In that year, Eugène obtained a quarter-section homestead (NE 22-7-9) of 160 acres.⁵⁴³ One can imagine the utter elation he and his family felt over Eugène’s change in status from a lowly domestic to a landowning farmer in five years. Marceline, Eugène, and Arthur became naturalized Canadian citizens in 1898.⁵⁴⁴

⁵⁴⁰ Martha Lee Hildreth, *Doctors, Bureaucrats, and Public Health in France, 1888-1902* (New York: Garland, 1987), p. 121. Cholera was an infection of the intestine, causing severe diarrhea, vomiting, and dehydration. Typhoid or typhoid fever caused emaciation.

⁵⁴¹ RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Births, 1873-1896, #9, p. 108, DSA.

⁵⁴² The year of their immigration is listed as 1894 in both the 1901 Canada Census and the 1916 Canada Census (data2.collectionscanada.ca). The year 1893 is recorded in the 1906 Census of the Northwest Provinces (www.bac-lac.gc.ca). Gaborieau, *Un siècle*, writes 1895 as the year.

⁵⁴³ DB to TGP, February 18, 2015.

⁵⁴⁴ Their name is entered as “Geuret,” Census of Canada, 1901(www.bac-lac.gc.ca).

On April 18, 1899, having satisfied the requirements to improve the land, the Guérets received title to NE 22-7-9 and held this land until they sold it in 1916.⁵⁴⁵ In 1904 they bought a half-quarter of 80 acres (SE 8-7-9), which was nearer the village. The Guérets also owned NE 5-7-9 (1912-1951) and SE 5-7-9 (1916-1951). At some point after Eugène's death in 1936, Marcelline moved to a house at NW 36-6-9 in the Lourdes village, where she died in 1953 (see below).⁵⁴⁶

In Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, on November 11, 1912, their first child, Arthur, married Lourdes-born Lydie (or Lydia) Poiroux.⁵⁴⁷ Their child Georges Robert Guéret was born there, June 15, 1916. In December 1920, the three moved to Irvington, Mobile County, Alabama, where Arthur became a farmer. Another child, Marcelle Angelica Madeline Gueret, was born March 4, 1923, in Irvington. Arthur Gueret, the accent in his name having long been removed, died February 25, 1970. His spouse Lydia died April 10, 1984.⁵⁴⁸

Eugène and Marcelline had three other children, all born in Lourdes. Their second (after Arthur) was Rachel Hortense (Aglaré, Aglaée, or Aglai) Guéret, born June

⁵⁴⁵ Library and Archives Canada, "Western Land Grants of 1870-1930," www.bac-lac.gc.ca.

⁵⁴⁶ They owned SE 8-7-9 from 1904 to 1951, when it went to their daughter Aglaée. DB to TGP, December 12, 2007 (with map); January 22, 2008); Conversation with Denis Bibault, September 14, 2015.

⁵⁴⁷ Marriage: vitalstats.gov.mb.ca.

⁵⁴⁸ Lydia Poiroux was born May 4 or 6, 1895, to Alphonse Poiroux (1865-1922) and Ursule (or Ursula) Maria Pilloud (1872-1960). On December 4, 1920, Arthur, Lydia, and Georges, losing the accent mark in their surname, crossed the border into the United States at Rainer, Minnesota, on the Duluth, Winnipeg & Pacific Railway (Declaration of Intention, No. 2676, January 18, 1939, "Selected U.S. Naturalization Records, 1790-1974," Ancestrylibrary.com). Another record identifies Emerson, North Dakota, as their entry point on the Canadian Northern Railroad (Declaration of Intention, No. 2307, December 8, 1928, *ibid.*). In July 1921, Lydia's father Alphonse and eight other members of the Poiroux family left Lourdes and transplanted to Irvington. Arthur farmed and Lydia became a nurse and midwife. Arthur gained U.S. citizenship, December 3, 1941 (U.S. Petition for Naturalization, No. 1458, "Alabama Naturalization Records, 1909-1991," *ibid.*). At the age of 78, Arthur died of a heart attack, February 25, 1970, in Irvington. A funeral service was held at St. Margaret's Catholic Church, in nearby Bayou La Batre. Members of the Poiroux family served as pallbearers. Lydia died April 10, 1984, in Daphne, Alabama, at the Villa of Mercy Hospice Center at 88. Her burial service was celebrated at St. Margaret's, with pallbearers from the Poiroux, Gueret, and Lingle families. Lydia and Arthur are buried in St. Michael's Cemetery, Bayou la Batre. Their son Georges married Mobile-born Sophia Theresa Morseiff (1920-1978) on June 18, 1938, in Bayou La Batre. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen, December 18, 1939, when he was listed as a "common laborer." Georges died December 29, 1978, in Mobile. Arthur's and Lydia's daughter Marcelle Angela Madeline Gueret, born March 20, 1923, in Irvington, married Harvey L. Lingle (1920-2006), September 24, 1942. Marcelle worked as a seamstress and clerk for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. At age 60, she died from cancer, September 4, 1983, in Daphne's Villa of Mercy Hospice Center. She is buried next to her parents. In 2015 half of the Gueret farm property was still in the family. Sources: "Garry Lingle," trees.ancestrylibrary.com/tree (with photographs); Garry Lingle to TGP, February 22, 2015; DB to TGP, August 31, 2013; "Border Crossings: From Canada to U.S., 1895-1956," ancestrylibrary.com; "Alabama Deaths and Burials Index, 1881-1974," ancestrylibrary.com; "Gueret Clark Family Tree," trees.ancestrylibrary.com; "Alabama Marriage Collections, 1800-1969," ancestrylibrary.com; "Lydia P. Gueret" and "Arthur Gueret," Find A Grave "Flowers" (obituaries, *Mobile Register*), www.findagrave.com; "Ancestors of Marc Warren Lingle," www.familytreemaker.genealogy.com; "Gueret" and "Poiroux," www.geni.com/people; Gaborieau, *Un siècle*.

27, 1899. In 1917, she married a farmer, Pierre Joseph Erkins (born in Belgium, March 23, 1883). He had bought property from my grandfather Jean Monchamp in 1915. Aglaé and Joseph had three children: Madeleine (1918-after 1972); Joseph Alexander Roger (1919-1990); and Elise (1921-after 1958). Pierre-Joseph died May 26, 1958, and Aglaé passed away on February 24, 1971.⁵⁴⁹ Both are buried in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.⁵⁵⁰

The third child of Eugène Guéret and Marcelline Bibault was Emmanuel, born November 3, 1902.⁵⁵¹ He married Marie-Rose Bosc (1904-1996), February 12, 1923. He became a farmer and they had four children: Marcel (1924-before 2014); Raymond (1927); Yvette (1930-2014)⁵⁵²; and Damien (1932). Emmanuel and Marie-Rose retired to Lourdes village. A few years after Emmanuel's death on June 14, 1950, Marie-Rose remarried to Joe Laliberté and moved to the Winnipeg area. Joe died in 1973. At the age of 76, she died April 15, 1996.⁵⁵³

The fourth child of Eugène Guéret and Marcelline Bibault was Juliet Madeline (Madeleine) Guéret, born April 12, 1904. She married Raphaël (Ralph) Brick (1898-1956) in 1923, and they farmed quarter NW 1-7-9 in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. Madeleine and Ralph had six children: Cécile (1924); Roger Jules

⁵⁴⁹ The "1906 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta" (ancestrylibrary.com) lists Emmanuel as five years-old. The "1916 Canada Census of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta" (*ibid.*) lists him as 14 years-old.

⁵⁵⁰ Aglaé Guéret married Pierre-Joseph Erkens (1883-1958), July 23, 1917, in Lourdes. In 1911 Joseph arrived in Quebec via Liverpool, June 11, 1911. For a few years he worked for others named Bégou and McCreary near Lourdes and Rathwell. In 1915, Joseph and his brother Victor (who died in France in 1975) bought quarter SE 19-7-9 from Jean Monchamp. Daughter Madeleine lived to at least 1972 as a "Miss." Pierre-Joseph died at age 75 on May 26, 1958, in St. Boniface Hospital. At the time he lived in Treherne. A church service was held in the Treherne Catholic Church. Aglaé died at age 71, February 24, 1971, in Misericordia Hospital, Winnipeg, when she lived at Lot 1, La Salle Road. Their son Joseph Alexander Roger Erkens of Fort Whyte, Winnipeg, died January 24, 1990, in Misericordia Hospital. He is buried in the Lourdes parish cemetery. Daughter Elise (1921-after 1958) married John H. Budd. "Rachel Hortense Guéret," vitalstats.gov.mb.ca; "Manitoba Marriage Index, 1879-1931," ancestrylibrary.com; obituary, *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 25, 1971, message board (CAN-MB-WINNIPEG-L Archives) by Parmley (archiver.rootsweb.ancestry.com); Gaborieau, *Un siècle*; Paterson, *You Must*, p. 36; *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 27, 1958, January 25, 1990; "Canada Voters Lists, 1935-1080," ancestrylibrary.com; "Pierre Joseph Erkens," gw.geneanet.org.; "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁵⁵¹ Emmanuel Guéret's birth and death dates on gravestone, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

⁵⁵² Yvette Guéret was born February 10, 1930, in Lourdes. She married Marcel Dufault in 1952 and settled on a farm five miles northeast of Somerset. They had 11 children: René (Heather); Luc (Sherri); Evelyne (Terry Vermeire); Adrien (Barb Andrews); Alfred (Florence Routhier); Simone (Raymond Syganiec); Marie; Jeanne; Monnique (Guy Badiou); Michelle (Ken McEwan); and Annette (who died in 1988). After Marcel died in September 2011, Yvette returned to Lourdes. She was known for her devotion to Catholicism and her expert knitting, sewing, bread-making, and quilting. She died November 9, 2014, at the age of 84, and was interred in the Somerset Parish Cemetery. Obituary, *Winnipeg Free Press*, November 13, 2014 (passages.winnipegfreepress.com).

⁵⁵³ Marie-Rose Bosc was born November 12, 1904, in Rathwell. Her mother was Geneviève Ducret, who died in 1960, and her father was François Bosc. Marie-Rose died in the Lorne Memorial Hospital, Swan Lake, Manitoba. A service was held at the Catholic Church in Somerset and she was interred in the Lourdes parish cemetery. Gaborieau, *Un siècle*; *Winnipeg Free Press*, April 18, 1996, p. 31; "Manitoba Marriage Index, 1879-1931," ancestrylibrary.com; "Marie-Rose Bosc," vitalstats.gov.mb.ca.

(September 21, 1927-January 16, 2013); Raymond (1929); Roland (1933); Maurice (1937); and Marcel (1943). In 1945 Ralph became a dairy farmer in Fort Whyte, near Winnipeg. He died on August 6, 1956, and Madeleine died of cancer on July 15, 1972, in Winnipeg.⁵⁵⁴

Over the early years of the twentieth century, Eugène Guéret and Marcelline Bibault travelled between Manitoba, Canada, and Deux-Sèvres, France. With their four children, in 1910, they visited France, perhaps just after Eugène heard that he no longer had to serve in the French military.⁵⁵⁵ The next year, they again travelled to France. Eugène (a “farmer,” age 49), Marcelline, and their child Madeleine returned to Manitoba, first stopping, on October 22, 1911, in New York after their transatlantic journey from La Havre on the ship *Rochambeau*. The ship passenger manifest lists Eugène’s “brothers” in Thouars as the commune in which they had resided. Their three other children remained in France. The manifest reads “children in Thouars.”⁵⁵⁶

The Guéret parents surely intended to return to Thouars. But when? And, how long did they stay in Manitoba, and for what purpose? They may have spent the whole period October 1911-June 1914, or certainly some of it, in Lourdes. Their son Arthur definitely returned from France to Manitoba by November 12, 1912, the day of his wedding in Lourdes. Perhaps his parents attended the ceremony and then went back to France to be with their other children. In any case, Eugène (a “farmer,” age 51), Marcelline, Aglaé, Emmanuel, and Madeleine (but not Arthur) traveled on the ship *La Touraine* from Le Havre, arriving in Quebec on June 22, 1914.⁵⁵⁷ Their destination was Lourdes. With World War I about to break out in Europe (it erupted in August), and with France a certain battleground, the Guérets escaped just in time to avoid the heavy casualties their homeland soon suffered. In 1917, they retired to Lourdes village and thereafter remained in Manitoba.⁵⁵⁸ In

⁵⁵⁴ Madeleine married Ralph January 29, 1923. He was the son of Nicolas Brick (1867-1943, born in Ontario) and Françoise Weicker (1876-1945), who married in 1893, had eight children, moved to Lourdes in 1909, and farmed. At a young age, Ralph and the other children learned to speak French, English, and German. Madeleine is buried in Fort Garry, Saint Vital Roman Catholic Cemetery, Winnipeg, next to Ralph. Their child Roger (1927-2013) married Margaret Muys, had five children, and worked as a foreman at Canada Cement Lafarge for 40 years. A child Eugene, born July 15, 1951, died November 21, 1951, and is buried next to Madeleine and Ralph in the Saint Vital cemetery. This may be the son of Raymond (son of Ralph and Madeleine) and Catharina Buis Brick, because “son of R and C” appears on the headstone. Sources: “Juliet Madaline Guéret,” vitalstats.gov.mb.ca; “Manitoba Birth Index, 1866-1912” and “Manitoba Marriage Index, 1879-1931,” ancestrylibrary.com; Gaborieau, *Un siècle*; *Winnipeg Free Press*, July 18, 1972, January 25, 2013; DB to TGP, January 16, 24, 2013; “Madeleine Brick,” Canada Gen Web’s Cemetery Project (photograph at geneofun.on.ca); “Eugene Brick,” billiongraves.com.

⁵⁵⁵ Gaborieau, *Un siècle*.

⁵⁵⁶ ellisland.org.

⁵⁵⁷ “Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935,” ancestrylibrary.com.

⁵⁵⁸ Gaborieau, *Un siècle*.

1940, Denis Bibault was born in Marcelline's Lourdes village house and today, at 45 Tache Street South, lives across the street from that very house (see below).

Eugène Guéret died in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, June 15, 1936, at the age of 72.⁵⁵⁹ Marcelline Bibault died September 17, 1953, at the age of 82. Two days later her funeral was held in Lourdes.⁵⁶⁰ They are buried in the same plot marked by a gravestone in the Lourdes church cemetery.

Emmanuel Bibault (1879-1959), Juliette Diacre (1882-1910), and Family

The third child of Charles Bibault and Marie Naly was Emmanuel Joseph Bibault, born on March 1, 1879, in Vrères. Emmanuel probably did not attend school. He could not read or write. At the age of 12, in 1891, with his parents, he emigrated from his Deux-Sèvres village to Manitoba (see above). In 1901 he lived with his widowed father in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

On December 26, 1902, Charles Bibault signed a "Statutory Lease" agreement with Emmanuel. Charles rented his homestead, quarter section NE 16-7-9, to his son for \$140 a year. Through this arrangement, Emmanuel agreed to provide his father with a garden plot of half an acre. Each year, moreover, Emmanuel had to supply Charles with wood (seven cords), flour (seven sacks), meat, and eggs, and other items. Upon Charles's death, according to the legal document, Emmanuel would obtain clear title to the land.⁵⁶¹ Charles died in June 1905, but not until December 1909 did Emmanuel, with his sister Marcelline's help, take steps to gain ownership.

Between December 21 and December 31, 1909, Marcelline signed and filed documents with the Surrogate Court of the Eastern Judicial District of Manitoba in Winnipeg.⁵⁶² She had searched "in all places where the deceased usually kept his papers," but could not find a will. Charles did not leave a will; he died "intestate." She petitioned for "Grant of Letters of Administration" to name her the personal representative of Charles's "real estate and effects" valued at "not more than" \$6,000.⁵⁶³ Marcelline's attorney noted that it would be "impracticable" for her

⁵⁵⁹ "Eugène Guéret," vitalstats.gov.mb.ca.

⁵⁶⁰ Paterson, *You Must*; DB to TGP, July 26, 2013 (based on Lourdes municipal records).

⁵⁶¹ DB to TGP, April 12, 2012; December 30, 2014. Document in the possession of Denis Bibault.

⁵⁶² "In the Estate of Charles Bibault," The Surrogate Court of the Eastern Judicial District of Manitoba (Winnipeg), Probate Records, #5642, Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg. Copies of documents sent to TGP by Archivist Idelle Talbot, January 21, 2015.

⁵⁶³ This amount may not have included the value of the land, which Charles had essentially given away in 1901.

brother Théophile to “renounce” administration because he was then in France and was not expected to come back to Canada until the summer. (He actually returned on March 10, 1910.) Emmanuel, who was living on the homestead, in a statement of December 17, “expressly” renounced “all my right and title to Letters of Administration of the Estate and Effects” of the property at NE 16-7-9. Marcelline promised to pay Charles’s “just debts.” A question arises: Did Charles leave debts when he died (possibly because of rust disease that ruined wheat crops in 1904), and Emmanuel, just 30 years-old and with a young family, lacked the funds to retire them, thus complicating the 1901 legal document?

Marcelline’s husband Eugene Guéret (estate at SE 8-7-9, valued at \$9,000 and worth \$9,000) and their farming neighbor Louis Riveleau (or Rivaleau) (estate at 16-7-9, valued at \$10,000 and worth \$8,000) together “bind ourselves” through the deposit of \$12,000 with David Marr Walker, Judge of the Surrogate Court, to ensure the “faithful administration” of Charles’s estate.

The law firm of Atkins, Robson, Fulleron & Croye of Winnipeg informed the Surrogate Court on December 30, 1909:

Emmanuel Bibault appears to be entitled to all the late Charles Bibault’s real estate, consequently we think there will be very little question raised as to the administration of this Estate by Mrs. Gueret.

In 1910, five years after his father’s death, Emmanuel finally gained full title to Charles’s land at NE 16-7-9. Emmanuel went on to own other acreage in Lourdes, farming until his death on October 2, 1959.⁵⁶⁴

When Charles Bibault was still alive, on January 7, 1903, in Lourdes, his son Emmanuel married a farmer’s daughter, Juliette Alexandrine Marie Diacre (1882-1910), who had immigrated to Canada as a child with her parents in 1892.⁵⁶⁵ Emmanuel and Juliette had two children: Marie Bibault (born January 26, 1904)

⁵⁶⁴ In 1904, Emmanuel bought with his father the west half of quarter SE 6-7-9 (80 acres). Emmanuel sold that land in 1913. In 1916 Emmanuel sold NE 16-7-9 to Jean Chabbert before joining the Canadian army (see below). In 1919, Emmanuel acquired SW 31-7-8. Emmanuel’s son Maurice inherited the quarter in 1959. When Maurice died in 1972 that land went to his wife Anne-Marie and then to her son Alphonse, who remained the owner as of 2008. Sources for Emmanuel property: RPC, Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun, Births, 1873-1896, #4, p. 140, DSA; DB to TGP, January 22, 25, 2008; January 30, 2010; September 2, 2014; “1901 Census of Canada,” ancestrylibrary.com; Gaborieau, *Un siècle*, pp. 351-352; Paterson, *You Must*; vitalstats.gov.mb.ca (1903).

⁵⁶⁵ Her father was Louis Alphonse Diacre, born about 1850, and her mother was Marie, born about 1860. She died March 3, 1917. In 1896, Louis took possession of NW 14-7-9 (“Western Land Grants [1870-1930]”). After his wife’s death, Louis repatriated to France and remarried. He never again saw his grandchildren Marie and André. DB to TGP, August 31, 2014.

and André Louis Charles Bibault (1906-1983). On October 29, 1930, Marie married Ontario-born Joseph Mathieu Omer Gour (born February 17, 1904). They had three daughters in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes: Denise Juliette Thérèse Berthe Gour (born March 24, 1932); Lea Agnes Madelline Gour (November 1, 1935); and Thérèse Gour (September 22, 1937). Omer Gour died December 16, 1968. His wife Marie Bibault died March 22, 1992.⁵⁶⁶

The second child of Emmanuel and Juliette, André Bibault (October 3, 1906-1983), married Anne-Marie Pilloud (1923-1987) in 1940.⁵⁶⁷ In 1958 they lived on SE 25-7-8 near Lourdes. They had six children: Emmanuel (1942-1957); Juliette (1945); Alice (1946); Bruno Maurice Jean (1949-2008); Diane (1950); and Robert (1956). André Bibault died in 1981 and Anne-Marie Pilloud Bibault died May 19, 1987, at the age of 64.⁵⁶⁸

On December 14, 1910, at age 29, Juliette Alexandrine Marie Diacre died from complications from her pregnancy for a third child. Her full name is on her gravestone in the Lourdes church cemetery⁵⁶⁹

Emmanuel Bibault, Berthe Eugène Giraud (1892-1967), Family, and Military Service

After Juliette's death, Emmanuel traveled to France in search of a new spouse to help him raise his two young children. A local doctor, Albert Gailliot, had mentioned to Emmanuel that he knew about a maid working for his in-laws (the Fayolle family) in the area of Saint-Étienne-sur-Usson, a commune in the

⁵⁶⁶ *Denise* married Antoine Daudet (born in 1928), October 15, 1952, in Lourdes. Their children: Bertrand (born 1953); Denis (1956) Claude (1958); Lucille (1961); Guy (1966); and Marie (born and died in 1969). *Lea* married Patrick Edward Beaulieu, November 24, 1957, in Notre Dame de la Clarté, Cotes d'Armor, Bretagne, France, and they had two children, Diane and Paul. *Thérèse* married Rudy Robitaille (about 1933-December 7, 2003) in Lourdes on June 12, 1961. For Marie and Omer: vitalstats.gov.mb.ca; "Gour Family Tree," trees.ancestrylibrary.com. For Gour children: "Bibault, Charles & Nalie, Marie," handwritten notes from Léon Chabbert; "Gour," gw.geneanet.org; "Beaulieu," *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 9, 2003; "Ontario Births, 1869-1912," familysearch.org; Thérèse Lasage's handwritten Bibault tree, September 9, 2015.

⁵⁶⁷ The birth year on her gravestone in the Lourdes cemetery reads 1922.

⁵⁶⁸ Anne-Marie was the daughter of Joseph Pilloud (May 8, 1923-March 26, 2009) and Rachel Lee. Anne-Marie was interred in the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes parish cemetery on May 21, 1987. André's and Anne-Marie's daughter *Alice* married Raymond Gorrie and they had four children. Daughter *Diane* married Andy Martend (or Martin) and they had two children. Son *Bruno* was born August 17, 1949; he died in Vermillion, Alberta, January 17, 2009. Son *Robert* married Sandra Friesen. Sources: DB to TGP, January 20, 2009; "Bibault, Charles & Nalie, Marie," handwritten notes from Léon Chabbert; Gaborieau, *Un siècle*; "Manitoba Birth Index, 1866-1912," ancestrylibrary.com; vitalstats.gov.mb.ca (André's is "Bibeault"); *Winnipeg Free Press*, May 20, 1987, March 28, 2009; www.obitsforlife.com (Bruno).

⁵⁶⁹ Juliette is "Diacie" in the official death record (www.vitalstats.gov.mb.ca); June 2015 photograph of gravestone.

department of Puy-de-Dôme, France. She had been engaged to another man, but he died in an accident. Dr. Gailliot recommended that Emmanuel journey to France to meet her and propose to her.

Emmanuel decided to launch this adventure out of a sense of necessity and with considerable courage and physical endurance. He left Marie and André in the care of his sister (and their aunt) Marcelline and set off on a very long trip. He had to cross the Atlantic Ocean, disembark at Le Havre on France's west coast, and then travel 618 km (384 miles) southeast to Saint-Étienne-sur-Usson.

Twenty year-old Berthe Eugénie Giraud was born in Saint-Étienne-sur-Usson on March 30/31, 1892. She saw opportunity in Emmanuel's visit. Her fiancé had died and she was unhappy in her job, feeling poorly treated. Marrying a Canadian farmer with 160 acres seemed very attractive. In early 1912, Emmanuel and Berthe married, probably in nearby Issoire, 18.8 km (12 miles) from Saint-Étienne-sur-Usson. They travelled to Le Havre, and then crossed the ocean to Canada, landing at Quebec City on May 6, 1912, on the ship *Ionian*.⁵⁷⁰ The newlyweds took the train to Manitoba, settling in Lourdes.⁵⁷¹

Emmanuel and Berthe had three children: Maurice (1914-1972), Léon (1916-1969), and Thérèse (born 1932). We will discuss them out of order, reporting on Léon's life last. The first child, Maurice, was born November 27, 1914. In about 1926, when he was 12 years-old, his mother Berthe took him to live with her parents in the hamlet of Berme Bas, Saint-Étienne-sur-Usson, where he attended school. Berthe and Maurice returned to Lourdes after about a year.⁵⁷²

Maurice married Jeanne Payette in 1940 and farmed on quarter NW 26-7-9 until Jeanne's death in 1949.⁵⁷³ At that point he moved with his four children, Gisèle (born 1942), Henri (1944), Adèle (????), and Gilbert (1948-2008), to live with his parents, Emmanuel and Berthe.⁵⁷⁴ In 1958, Maurice remarried to Anne-Marie Émond (1918-2008). He inherited Emmanuel's farm (SW 31-7-8) in 1959 upon his

⁵⁷⁰ "Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁵⁷¹ DB to TGP, January 27, 2010; November 22, 2014, for the remarriage.

⁵⁷² DB to TGP, January 10, 2013.

⁵⁷³ Jeanne Payette was born about 1918. "1921 Census of Canada," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁵⁷⁴ *Gisèle* Bibault married Maurice Deleurme in 1960 and they had five children. *Henri* married Anita Deurbrouck in 1964 and they had four children: Raymond (1965); Monique (1967); Sheri-Lynne (1970); and Nadine (1972). In 1968 Henri was a "laborer" in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes ("Canada, Voters List, 1935-1980," ancestrylibrary.com). *Adèle* married Allan Young. *Gilbert* Raymond Jean Joseph Bibault was born December 26, 1948, in Lourdes. Gilbert, after his mother's 1949 death, was raised by his Aunt Marie Bibault Gour and Uncle Omer Gour. Gilbert married "Chickey" (Bernice Lowe) and they had a son, Shain. Gilbert died July 21, 2008, in Brandon, Manitoba, where he is interred. "Gilbert Bibault," www.memorieschapel.com; Denis Bibault list of August 2, 2011.

father's death. Maurice and Anne-Marie had a son, Alphonse (Tracey), born in 1961. For the years 1962-1968, Maurice worked as a "blacksmith" in Rathwell on the paternal farm.⁵⁷⁵ After Maurice's death in St. Claude on April 17, 1972, Anne-Marie continued to live on the farm in Rathwell with her son Alphonse. She died in the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes Foyer, a personal-care home, at the age of 90 on December 27, 2008.⁵⁷⁶

The second child of Emmanuel and Berthe Eugène was Léon Bibault, born December 23, 1916, when his father was serving in the Canadian military during the First World War. We will chronicle Léon's life in the next section. Here we relate Emmanuel's military story, the life of his third child Thérèse, and the deaths of Emmanuel and Berthe.

Despite having moved to Manitoba in 1891, Emmanuel was drafted under the 20-year-old rule into the French infantry, with registration number 2077, as a member of the "Class of 1899."⁵⁷⁷ At first, in 1899, he received an exemption under Article 50 of the French civil code, which stated that a person who moved to another country before the age of 19 was excused from military service *if* he filed a claim for dispensation to a "court of revision." Emmanuel most likely did not submit such a document. He was French-born, moreover, and France insisted, under Article 17, that a person liable to military service did not give up his French nationality by moving abroad, even if he became a naturalized citizen of another country.⁵⁷⁸

On December 7, 1914, a few months after the beginning of the First World War, the French military ordered Emmanuel to report to Montreal in preparation for service in France. The French consul general in Canada supplied to the French Ministry of War the addresses of not only Emmanuel but also of many other French-born men. Emmanuel did not report. On October 20, 1915, the French military summoned him to France. He did not go. On January 21, 1916, French authorities declared him a draft dodger ("*insoumis*"), subject to prosecution.

⁵⁷⁵ "Canada, Voters List, 1935-1980," ancestrylibrary.com.

⁵⁷⁶ Anne-Marie Émond was born September 6, 1918, in Cantal, Saskatchewan. A Funeral Mass was held in the Notre Dame Roman Catholic Church, December 31, 2008. She is buried in the Lourdes parish cemetery. "Maurice Bibault," www.mundia.com/us; <http://trees.ancestrylibrary.com>; "Anne-Marie Bibault," obituary, Adam's Funeral Home, Lourdes (www.afh.ca); *Winnipeg Free Press*, December 30, 2008; Gaborieau, *Un siècle*.

⁵⁷⁷ Details of his relations with the French military in Registres matricules militaires, Bureau Parthenay, Class of 1899, Registration #2077, p. 127, DSA.

⁵⁷⁸ Articles 19 and 50 (1889) of the French civil code summarized in U.S. Department of State, *Papers Related to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1894* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1894), p. 301 (Google Books).

Emmanuel soon sold his quarter-section of land and departed Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. In April 1916, he was living with Berthe and their family at 64 Victoria Street in St. Boniface near Winnipeg.⁵⁷⁹ On April 18, he enlisted in the Canadian army. “What was it,” his grandson Denis Bibault has asked, “that would compel a 37 year-old man to leave behind” his three children and his pregnant wife? “He may have been afraid of not ever being able to set his foot in France again, if he did not do some military service.”⁵⁸⁰ (Not until March 1, 1932, did the French military finally close its record book on Emmanuel.)

Emmanuel may also have wondered about his chances of becoming a war casualty as a soldier in the French army. Allied costs in the Great War against Germany mounted as trench and gas warfare decimated his birth country. In the 1916 Battle of Verdun alone, soldiers’ deaths reached 300,000 (161,000 French and 142,000 German). France recorded tremendous losses in the war of 1914-1918: 1,357,800 soldiers dead, 4,266,000 wounded, and 537,000 missing or taken prisoner. War casualties totaled 6,160,800, or 73.3 percent of the nation’s armed forces.⁵⁸¹

As the news from the war front spread across the world, grey-eyed and brown-haired Emmanuel, standing 5-feet and 9-inches, and with a girth of 39 inches, passed his Canadian military physical examination and began training in Calgary, Alberta, with “regimental number” 292375 inscribed on the metal tag worn on a chain around his neck. Private Emmanuel became a member of an ambulance unit which deployed to England with the Canadian Expeditionary Force, departing St. John, Newfoundland, on December 19, 1917. He spent two years in Sunningdale, Southampton, a very busy English port for transport, munitions, and ambulance/hospital ships. When his war service ended, Emmanuel boarded the ship *Caronia* in Liverpool on May 13, 1919, and arrived in Halifax on May 22.

After demobilization on May 26, 1919, Emmanuel rejoined his family (Berthe, Marie, André, Maurice, and Léon) and returned to farming. On May 1, 1920, the Soldier Settlement Board of Canada granted Emmanuel 160 acres at quarter-section SW 31-7-8, between Rathwell and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.⁵⁸² The Board

⁵⁷⁹ Address listed on “Attestation Paper, Canadian Over-seas Expeditionary Force,” for Emmanuel Bibault, April 18, 1916. Canadian Genealogy Centre, Library and Archives of Canada, “Soldiers of the First World War—CEF,” www.collectionscanada.gc.ca.

⁵⁸⁰ DB to TGP, February 17, 2015.

⁵⁸¹ “WWI Casualty and Death Tables,” www.pbs.org/greatwar/resources/casdeath_pop.html.

⁵⁸² The 1921 census lists him at 31-7-8, with Berthe Eugène (age 29), Marie (16), André (14), Maurice (6), and Léon (5). Census of Canada, 1921, Macdonald Sub-District 15, p. 12, ancestrylibrary.com.

also loaned him money.⁵⁸³ The Board sent field supervisors to monitor progress, keeping track of the “Settler’s Inventory.” Emmanuel’s inventory in spring 1920 included a stock pump and pipe, a five-year-old blue roan milking cow (valued at \$80.00), a four year-old red roan cow in calf (valued at \$80.00), a three-year-old black cow in calf (valued at \$60.00), harrow and plows, bushels of feed, seed oats and barley, and a building (valued at \$1,000). Théophile helped build his younger brother’s house on that property.⁵⁸⁴

Emmanuel’s military experience is but one example of his “adventurous” side.⁵⁸⁵ To summarize his adventures: The first, of course, was his sharing as a child in his father Charles’s and his family’s momentous 1891 departure from Deux-Sèvres for settlement in Manitoba. Another adventure came in 1911-1912, when the young man traveled a great distance from Canada to France in the hope of remarrying. He successfully returned with a new spouse and a stepmother for his two children. Still another adventure: In 1915-1916, Emmanuel entertained the idea of moving to Brazil and starting a plantation in that South American nation.⁵⁸⁶ Also counting as an adventure is Emmanuel’s starting anew in farming after World War I.

In the early 1920s, moreover, Emmanuel seriously considered leaving the Lourdes area for Manitoba’s Interlake region. In February/March 1924, he obtained a new homestead, a quarter section at SE 34-25-7, Meridian W1, some 251 km (156 miles) to 296 km (184 miles) from Lourdes, depending on the route taken.⁵⁸⁷ The agricultural Interlake region of Manitoba sits between Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg. Emmanuel’s quarter section, located in the township of Ashern, was

⁵⁸³ The “Settler’s Inventory” (see below) listed loans of \$1,500, but another document in the possession of Denis Bibault reports a figure of \$4,400.

⁵⁸⁴ Emmanuel’s Canadian military story and data from Denis Bibault (who lived with his grandfather Emmanuel, 1952-1958, and heard wartime stories) to TGP, January 30, 2010, February 17, 2015; 1916 “Attestation Paper” and “Item Display” for “Emmanuel Bibeault,” in “Soldiers,” Library and Archives of Canada; “Canadian Passenger Lists, 1865-1935,” ancestrylibrary.com; The Soldier Settlement Board of Canada, File No. B.614, “Settler’s Inventory,” stamped July 7, 1921, but 1920 is indicated for the inventory (in possession of Denis Bibault); Conversation with Denis Bibault, September 10, 2015, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

⁵⁸⁵ DB to TGP, December 1, 2014.

⁵⁸⁶ In 1915-1916, Emmanuel communicated with three others to explore economic opportunities in Brazil. Although Emmanuel himself never visited Brazil, the others did. One was his friend Louis Delaquais, who traveled to Brazil in the fall of 1915 but soon returned, later becoming a veterinarian and dairy farmer near Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. Gabriel Nivon was another in Emmanuel’s Brazil circle; he moved to Brazil in June 1916 but died there in March 1921 at the age of 37 from pneumonia. His stranded wife and four children returned to Manitoba with the help of funds sent by Charles Labossière. Another “member” of Emmanuel’s Brazil cohort was the European Aurelien Eirado, who lived for a time in Lourdes, met and married a Labossière, and took her to Brazil in late June 1915. He sent at least one postcard the next month from Brazil to Emmanuel. DB to TGP, November 11, 13, 2013.

⁵⁸⁷ “Emmanuel Bibault,” “Western Land Grants (1870-1930),” SE 34-25-7, Liber 948 (covering February 23-March 20, 1924), Library and Archives Canada (<http://data4.collectionscanada.ca>). Also at “Land Records,” “Emmanuel Bibault,” Library and Archives Canada (<http://www.bac-lac.gc.ca>).

very near provincial road #6. In this case, Emmanuel’s search for a “greener pasture” failed to materialize. His wife Berthe, who did not speak English, balked at moving to a place where she feared she would be secluded.⁵⁸⁸

Emmanuel and Berthe stayed on their farm, about three miles south of Rathwell and near Lourdes. Their third and last child was Thérèse Bibault, born November 5, 1932. “I was a mistake,” she told me with a laugh on September 9, 2015, when I visited with her in Winnipeg. After all, her parents were a bit old to have a baby—Emmanuel at 53 and Berthe at 40. “Terry” married André Lesage on October 21, 1950. He was born on a farm near Lourdes on April 30, 1924, to Pierre and Hélène Lesage. In nearby Rathwell, André and Thérèse lived with her parents while André worked on Pierre’s farm. About 1957, André bought his father’s farm. André and Thérèse had five children: Isabelle (1952); Jean (1953); Albert (1954); Roger (1954); and Donald (1957).⁵⁸⁹ In 1969 André and Thérèse moved to Winnipeg, where he worked for the St. Boniface School Division. André died at age 82 on April 10, 2007.⁵⁹⁰ As of this writing in 2016, a spirited and engaging Thérèse lives in a retirement community in Winnipeg.⁵⁹¹

Thérèse’s father Emmanuel Bibault, son of Charles Bibault and Marie Louise Naly and brother of Théophile and Marcelline Bibault, farmed in Rathwell with his second wife Berthe Eugénie Giraud until October 2, 1959, when he died at his house with family members around him. A funeral church service was held for Emmanuel three days later in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. His obituary in the Saint Boniface newspaper *La Liberté et le patriote* reported that Vrières-born Emmanuel passed away at the age of 80 years and 7 months. His survivors numbered five children, 21 grand-children, and three great grand-children.⁵⁹² Emmanuel was buried in the Lourdes church cemetery.

⁵⁸⁸ DB to TGP, December 1, 2014.

⁵⁸⁹ *Isabelle* Lasage married Florent Desrochers and they had three sons: Richard, Patrick, and Daniel. *Jean* Lasage married Roselie Webber and they had three children: The twins Adam and Nicolas and Darcy. *Albert* Lasage married Glenda Hobey and they had three children: The twins Tanya and Trent and Bradley. *Roger* Lasage married Elaine Barlow and they had two girls: Tena and Jenna. *Donald* Lasage married Carol Fowler and they had two children: Andrea and Quinn. Thérèse Lasage handwritten Bibault tree, September 9, 2015; Chabbert handwritten notes—these notes were written by Thérèse Lasage during a trip Léon Chabbert took with his wife Faye to Manitoba in 1975 (date on photograph of the Lasages, Chabberts, and Bibaults—Denis and Géraldine Sibilleau).

⁵⁹⁰ For André Lesage, a mass of celebration was held in St. Emile’s Church on April 16, 2007, and he was interred after cremation at Glen Lawn Memorial Gardens. Obituary at passages.winnipegfreepress.com.

⁵⁹¹ On September 9, 2015, Thérèse hosted a large gathering of Bibault family members at a Winnipeg restaurant when I and my daughter Rebecca Putnam traveled to Manitoba in search of our Bibault and Monchamp roots. Terry had thoughtfully prepared family “trees” for us. Her wonderful spirit made the evening a rewarding experience.

⁵⁹² *La Liberté et le patriote*, October 23, 1959, p. 7.

Emmanuel's spouse, Berthe Eugène Giraud, died February 3, 1967, at the age of 74, in the St. Claude hospital. She suffered a heart attack. Family members described her as a strong-willed, "very wonderful person," "an example of devotion and charity."⁵⁹³ Her grandson Denis has remarked that his grandmother "earned her heaven" by spending "a very important part of her life raising other people's children"—Emmanuel's two (Marie and André) from his first marriage and then the children of two of her sons (Maurice and Léon) after the deaths of their wives. When all of these children had grown up and moved on, Berthe declared: "I have accomplished my task in life. I am now ready to die."⁵⁹⁴ Berthe was also interred in the church cemetery in Lourdes.

Léon Bibault (1916-1969), His Son Denis (1940-), and Experiences in Ontario, Alberta, Belgian Congo, and Manitoba

We now take up the life of Emmanuel's and Berthe's second offspring, Léon, born on December 23, 1916, in Lourdes. On April 26, 1938, he married Marie-Ange Labossière, who was born January 17, 1917. Marie-Ange suffered long-term illness due to an enlarged heart that developed after a bout with rheumatic fever as a child. They had five children: Albert (1938-1945); Gilles (November 27, 1940-January 10, 2015); Denis (also born November 27, 1940); Joseph (1945-1995); and Lucille (May 5, 1949-May 12, 2005).⁵⁹⁵

Léon and his family lived on farms in the Lourdes region, including Saint-Lupicin (30.3 km or 19 miles away). In 1944, they moved to Haywood, 40 km or 25 miles from Lourdes. Léon owned a cheese factory there for several years. Marie-Ange's illness became aggravated with the premature birth of their daughter Lucille on

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.*, February 23, 1967, p. 6; DB to TGP, December 14, 2014.

⁵⁹⁴ DB to TGP, October 9, 2015.

⁵⁹⁵ *Albert* died from a childhood accident. *Gillis* (Gilles Leopold Joseph) joined the army in September 1958, serving with the 22nd Regiment (VANDOOS). In 1962, he worked as a laborer and lived in Calgary, Alberta, at 605 16th Street North with his father Léon and Mrs. Eva Bibault, the proprietor of a child's nursery. In 1963 *Gillis* lived at the same address and worked as a taxi driver. In 1965, he moved out after marrying Deana Hardcastle. They had one child. *Gillis* lived in British Columbia in 2002. In 2014, he lived in Tumbler Creek, B.C., where he suffered a heart attack in October. *Gillis* died January 10, 2015, at Dawson Creek and District Hospital, in Dawson Creek, B.C. The full name of *Denis* is Joseph Denis Claude (see his life story below). His brother *Joseph* married Betty Fingus in 1965, and they had four children: Edward (1965); Darcy (1967-February 8, 2000); Lee (1972); and Dorian (1985). Denis and Géraldine Bibault were godparents to Darcy, whose full name was Darcy Burke Joseph Bibault, and who married Tanys and served as a stepfather to Ashlee. *Lucille* married Robert Harper and they had three children: Robert, Leslie, and Angel. Sources: Handwritten Chabbert notes; DB to TGP, January 31, 2009, August 31, November 11, 2013; December 30, 2014; January 22, 2015; Gaborieau, *Un siècle*; "Canada Voters Lists, 1935-1980" and "Telephone Directories," ancestrylibrary.com; *Winnipeg Free Press*, February 11, 2000: "Gilles Leopard Joseph Bibault," Reynars Funeral Home (<http://reynars.reynars.com>).

May 5, 1949. Léon began in 1951 to work as a truck driver hauling pulp in Red Lake, in northwest Ontario. The family joined him, but the living conditions in the lumber camp proved unsuited for a sick person. Marie-Ange died March 15, 1952. Léon made arrangements to transport his children to relatives in the Lourdes area and then moved to Alberta to work on pipelines.

For five years, Léon's sons Gilles and Joseph stayed with his half-brother André Bibault and his wife Anne-Marie. The other two children, Denis and Lucille (Lucy), lived with their grandparents and godparents Emmanuel Bibault and Berthe Giraud—Denis for the period March 1952-July 1958, and Lucille for March 1952-Summer 1964. André's and Emmanuel's farms were a half-mile from one another. In the 1950s, before television, Denis's "entertainment" included listening with fascination to stories his grandfather told about his life and experiences in France, England, and Canada.

Denis attended, through the eighth grade, the small country school Jeanne d'Arc at SW 30-7-8 (see above). He joined about 20 students, most of them "orphans" like him. Similar to other such schools, "École Jeanne d'Arc" had one room and small quarters for a teacher. Denis walked a mile to school from his grandfather Emmanuel's farm and earned a little cash by putting wood in place for the stove before classes began each day. Today a simple sign marks the school's location, which I visited in September 2015 with Denis, his wife Geraldine, and my daughter Rebecca Putnam, riding on four-wheelers through the overgrown site.⁵⁹⁶

In July 1958 Denis departed the Lourdes area and reunited with his father Léon, a truck driver for a cement factory. In their household was Léon's common-law spouse Eva, in the hamlet of Exshaw, Alberta, at the entrance to the Rocky Mountains. Denis attended school in nearby Banff for a few months. Léon moved his family to Calgary (also in Alberta), where Denis registered at the Saint Mary's Boys' School, a Catholic institution. In the holiday period of the summer of 1959, Denis worked as a flagman with a highway construction crew in western Alberta, about halfway between Lake Louise and Jasper.

Denis lived with Léon and Eva until early September 1959, when he enlisted in the Canadian military, hoping that he would be stationed in Quebec with his twin brother Gillis, who had joined a year earlier. His sister Lucille continued to reside with her grandparents until the summer of 1964, when she moved to Calgary,

⁵⁹⁶ For basic information and photograph: Manitoba Historical Society, "Historic Sites of Manitoba: Jeanne d'Arc School No. 1673," <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/jeannedarschool.shtml>.

Alberta, to join her father. Records report that Léon lived with Eva at 605 16th Street North, Calgary, in 1962-1965. He still worked as a truck driver while Eva operated a children's nursery. Léon died in Alberta on October 5, 1969.⁵⁹⁷

In September 1959, Denis Bibault began a three-year stint in the armed forces. He became a member of the Royal Canadian Signal Corps and received training as a radio, telegraph, and teletype operator in Kingston, Ontario. At that station, he learned about his grandfather Emmanuel's death. On his next furlough (February 1960), Denis traveled to the family farm, where he had lived in the 1950s, to tell his grandmother Berthe that he would buy her a small house in the Lourdes village. He used his military pay to purchase the house, where Adèle (Maurice's daughter) and Lucille (Denis's sister) lived for the next few years with Berthe, who remained in the house until her 1967 death.

In September 1960 Denis was assigned to the United Nations and, in March 1961, was ordered to the Belgian Congo, where he handled communications with United Nations peace-keepers for six months. Missing the "richness of life provided by the forces of nature" in Manitoba—the "windy music," the "dances in the wheat fields," and the "flows and waves that give the impression of seas," he later recalled that at the Equator, he "found every day to be identical to every other, with sunup at 6 and sundown at 6, a rainstorm at about 10 in the evening.... I felt that I was simply existing and not living."⁵⁹⁸ In the fall of 1961, Denis returned to Manitoba—first to the capital city of Winnipeg and then to Camp Shilo in the western part of the province.

After his release from military service on September 10, 1962, Denis began to act on his goal of becoming a teacher. He completed his junior and senior high school education in Lourdes. During that period, he resided for a year with his grandmother Berthe, Adèle, and Lucille in the house he had bought. Then, he obtained a 26-foot travel trailer to live in, parking it on an empty lot.⁵⁹⁹ For income, Denis drove a school bus. In the summer he worked on a pipeline. As always, his work ethic and determination returned success. After graduation in 1964, Denis worked in Winnipeg for a finance company, making loans and

⁵⁹⁷ For Denis's life and his father's life: DB to TGP, August 19, 31, October 2, November 11, 2013, and October 7, 2015; Gaborieau, *Un siècle*; "Canada Voters Lists, 1935-1980," for 1962, 1963, 1965, ancestrylibrary.com.

⁵⁹⁸ DB to TGP, December 18, 2011.

⁵⁹⁹ Photograph of Denis next to his trailer given to TGP, 2016.

collecting bills. In September 1965, he married Géraldine Sibilleau, whose parents' house sat not far from where he parked his trailer.⁶⁰⁰

Denis then entered the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg to start the process of becoming qualified as an elementary education teacher. He broke with local tradition, because it was uncommon for Lourdes high schoolers to go on to university. In 1966, he began teaching at the Lourdes elementary school—the start of a 39 year-long career as an educator. Driving regularly between Lourdes and the capital city, he took summer and evening courses at the university, eventually earning degrees in the Faculty of Arts (History, with a minor in Geography) and Faculty of Education in 1973. In 1967 Denis had begun teaching at Collège Régional Notre-Dame. He led this high school as its principal from 1970 to 2005, when he retired.⁶⁰¹ He also served some 20 years on the Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes council and 10 years as the town's mayor (see below).

Denis and Géraldine had five children: Nanette (born April 25, 1961, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes)⁶⁰²; David Joseph Leon (October 31, 1966, in Lourdes)⁶⁰³;

⁶⁰⁰ Géraldine Sibilleau was born May 23, 1946, in the nursing home in Treherne, because that is where her doctor was located and because there was no hospital in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes at that time. However, her parents resided in Lourdes. The Sibilleau family came from Deux-Sèvres, France. Géraldine's grandfather was Pierre Célestin Bérard, who migrated to Lourdes from Le Pertuis, Haute-Loire, where the Monchamp family also originated. But Pierre was a latecomer, arriving with 28 of his relatives in the environs of Lourdes in April 1912, having left Le Havre on a ship March 28, 1912. In France he had been a cabinet maker and farmer, but better economic opportunities in Canada beckoned. Pierre and his wife Marie first worked on the farm of Vital Magne. After a few months, Pierre bought his own farm. The Bérards became successful farmers. In the 1916 Manitoba census, Pierre and Marie and their four Manitoba-born children are listed as living very near Antoine Monchamp and his family in Lourdes. Marie died in 1952 at the age of 62; Pierre died in 1960 at the age of 86. They had 10 children. Treherne Area History Committee, *Tiger Hills*, pp.115-116; DB to TGP, November 12, 15, 2013; Library and Archives Canada, Census of the Prairie Provinces, 1916 (data2.collectionscanada.ca).

⁶⁰¹ Among the subjects Denis taught were Canadian history, geography, biology, and mathematics. The mission of the school included: To encourage students to go “beyond conformity”; to be “creatively involved”; to develop “a positive francophone identity” through French language training; and “to respect diversity in society.” In 2012, Denis received a “Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal” for outstanding and exemplary contributions to his community. For Denis's life and education: Gaborieau, *Un siècle*, pp. 351-352; DB to Rick Anderson, January 19, 2007; DB to TGP, December 20, 2007, September 7, 2013, November 11, 2013, October 7, 2015; “Collège Régional Notre-Dame,” www.notre-dame-de-lourdes.ca; Manitoba Historical Society, “Manitoba Recipients of the Queen Elizabeth II...Medal,” www.mbs.mb.ca.

⁶⁰² Nanette Bibault married Paul Magne, August 24, 1991. He was born June 23, 1963, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. Their children: Jessica and Sasha.

⁶⁰³ David Bibault married Nicole Cecile Noella Bourrier, May 9, 1992, in Lourdes. She was born September 15, 1969 in Lourdes. Their children: Tyler Joseph Gerald Bibault (born July 19, 1995, in the St. Boniface Hospital, Winnipeg); Alyssa Nathalie Maxine Bibault (May 17, 1997, St. Boniface, Winnipeg); Kae-Lynn Sherri Marie Bibault (January 17, 2000, St. Boniface, Winnipeg); and Mikaylie Jolyne Angel Bibault (October 17, 2003, Lourdes).

Christine (December 16, 1967, in St. Claude)⁶⁰⁴; Nathalie (July 16, 1974, in Lourdes)⁶⁰⁵; and Albert (June 20, 1977, in Lourdes).⁶⁰⁶

History's Long Reach: From Charles Bibault to Denis Bibault

We return to the early years of the Bibaults in Canada: In Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Marie Naly died on June 23, 1900, at the age of 53, after working beside her spouse Charles Bibault to turn a new homestead into a productive farm on the Manitoba prairie land that Charles had obtained about a decade earlier. Her funeral was held June 24. Her son Théophile served as the witness, and the founding priest of the Lourdes church, Paul Benoît, celebrated Marie's life at the service.⁶⁰⁷

After Marie's death, Charles Bibault thought about repatriating to France, perhaps to Vrères, the village in Saint-Léger-de-Montbrun where he and Marie lived before their momentous 1891 emigration to Manitoba. The year that he apparently contemplated a return to France was 1904, a very cold time when "wheat leaf rust" devastated Manitoba. The fungus attacked wheat stems and leaves, turning them from a golden to a "dirty green" color. Farmers had no choice but to plough under their crops. Because there was no harvest that year, some sunk into debt because of the "severe epidemic."⁶⁰⁸

As part of his preparation for a possible departure from Canada, Charles hired the legal firm of Jehan de Froment to prepare a document about his and his family's character. The notarized statement of July 14, 1904, affirmed the Bibault family's "irreproachable conduct and honesty." With an exemplary work ethic, the attorney declared, the Bibaults had succeeded in Manitoba.⁶⁰⁹

For reasons unclear (maybe he was ill), Charles remained in Manitoba with his children Théophile, Marcelline, and Emmanuel. On June 30, 1905, at the age of 70, Charles died at his home.⁶¹⁰ His funeral service followed on July 1.⁶¹¹ We can

⁶⁰⁴ Christine Bibault married Gilles Durupt. He was born in St. Boniface Hospital, Winnipeg, June 5, 1969. Their children: Karina, Justin, and Eric.

⁶⁰⁵ Nathalie Bibault married Steven Sydorko. Their children: Alex, Joshua, and Zackary.

⁶⁰⁶ Albert (Bert) Bibault married Jolyne Martel (born in St. Boniface, Winnipeg, June 12, 1981) on February 25, 2006, in Lourdes. Their children: Kayla and Noah.

⁶⁰⁷ Vitalstats.gov.mb.ca; DB to TGP, March 14, 2013 (based on Lourdes municipal archives).

⁶⁰⁸ Rathwell Historical Committee, *Twixt Hill and Vale: A Story of Rathwell and Surrounding District* (Rathwell: Rathwell Historical Committee, 1970), p. 339; Brett F. Carver, *Wheat* (Ames: Iowa: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 111 (quotation); *Canada Year Book 1904* (www.66.statcan.gc.ca), p. 171.

⁶⁰⁹ Copy of the original in the possession of Denis Bibault. Gaborieau, *Un siècle*, p. 350, mentions the document.

⁶¹⁰ A legal document gives his death date as June 24, 1905. "In the Estate of Charles Bibault" (December 21, 1909).

imagine this “*pionnier*” (pioneer) surrounded at the end of his life by his three children and his eight grandchildren. Charles is buried next to his spouse Marie Naly in the church cemetery, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.⁶¹²

We close this study of the Bibault family by identifying a direct link between the French past that began with André Bibault in the 1690s and the Canadian present with Denis Bibault. In late 2014, Denis closed out his 10-year service as the mayor of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, the very place where his great-grandparent Charles Bibault, French-born descendant of André, ranked among the very first Europeans to settle in the Lourdes area.⁶¹³ A teacher, a school administrator, an historian, a public servant, a compassionate, tolerant, progressive person, and my cousin, Denis has contributed a great deal to this telling of our shared family history. He is a Manitoba treasure because of his unmatched, deep knowledge, his insightful interpretations of the past, his sharing of tales, photographs, and data, his research guidance, his deciphering and translating of old French documents, and his sensitive appreciation of the Bibault family’s multifaceted story, especially in Vienne, Deux-Sèvres, and Manitoba.

My appreciation for Denis rose when I traveled with him in France in June 2014 as we explored the places where our Bibault forebears lived. Although for about a decade we had exchanged e-mails and documents, essentially working as a team to discover records and collect stories, we had never met before this remarkable trip. In person, at the Winnipeg airport before our flight to Paris, we quickly grew closer as cousins and friends, discovering shared social and political perspectives and intellectual interests and our deep curiosity as historians about why people, in this case our French and Canadian ancestors, made the decisions they did, especially to leave the Old World for the New World in the late nineteenth century.

During our journey through Haute-Loire (for the Monchamp side of my family) and Deux-Sèvres and Vienne (for the Bibaults), Denis, comfortable and highly competent in both French and English, generously and patiently interpreted and translated for me when my meager language skills fell short. After the trip, he captured my own feeling with these kind words: “It was as if we had known each other all along and we got along marvelously well, like brothers.”⁶¹⁴

⁶¹¹ DB to TGP, July 26, 2013 (based on Lourdes municipal archives).

⁶¹² In September 2015, a search of the cemetery gravestones did not discover ones for Marie and Charles.

⁶¹³ Denis became the last mayor of Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes (incorporated as an independent municipality in 1960) because the Manitoba government in 2014 mandated the merger of municipalities with a population of less than 1,000. Lourdes (population of 683 in 2011) amalgamated with neighboring St. Claude (population of 590).

⁶¹⁴ DB to TGP, July 22, 2014.

We renewed our kinship and friendship in September 2015, when my daughter Rebecca (Becki) Putnam and I traveled to Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes to meet his family and explore the farms and other ancestral places in beautiful Manitoba. We learned even more about Denis’s educational and political leadership in his community and also about his talents as a cabinet-maker. We enjoyed Geraldine’s excellent cooking and the family gathering when their children and their families gathered with us for a fine, spirited evening. Rebecca even drove Denis’s restoration project, a prized 1963 red, 2-door convertible Mercury Monterey S-55.

On September 11, 2015, Becki and I joined Denis and Geraldine on all-terrain vehicles to explore the original homestead (NE 16-7-9) of Charles Bibault, Denis’s great grandfather. The farmhouse no longer existed, but the outlines and cavern of its basement revealed where the house once stood. Becki jumped into the brush of the hole and stumbled upon a ragged, rusty piece of metal, no more than a foot around. Etched on it was a *fleur-de-lys* (lily flower), once the symbol of the Kingdom of France. Could this fragment have been part of a stove in the original Bibault house? We thought so, and, with small cups of brandy, we toasted our wheelwright-farmer-pioneer ancestor Charles Bibault and recorded the moment in a photograph. The artifact is now preserved in Denis’s Lourdes home.

We spent a full day in the four-wheelers crossing agricultural fields and country roads to identify where other Bibaults and Monchamps had lived more than 100 years before. Touching the earth of the place where Rachel Bibault’s and Jean Monchamp’s farmhouse once stood at quarter-section SE 19-7-9 —where my mother was born June 10, 1910—counts as one of the most heartwarming, fulfilling experiences of my life.

Denis once explained his profound interest in our family’s history in this way: He has sought to “stretch my ‘arms’ into the worlds” of the people who “set the game plans for our lives.”⁶¹⁵ When Géraldine once told him that “I continually live in the past,” he agreed: “I always have an extension of my person in the past,” while “enjoying the moment” and “imagining the future.” For Denis, past, present, and future make up the “emotional spectrum” that is informed and enriched by discoveries about his Bibault ancestors.⁶¹⁶

⁶¹⁵ DB to TGP, February 2, 2010.

⁶¹⁶ DB to TGP, March 27, 2013.

Explanatory Notes

This history, completed in April 2016, replaces previous editions and presents new information compiled by Denis Bibault (DB) and Thomas G. Paterson (TGP) *after* the publication of my family history book, *You Must Remember This*, in 2011. Corrections and additions are needed to that book. See also my separate reports/notes on the Monchamp, Naly (Nallis), Bonnet, and Malécot families, and their relationship to the Bibault families. Many of the documents referenced in this study appear on the on-line Deux-Sèvres Departmental Archives (archives.deux-sevres.com/Archives79) and the on-line Vienne Departmental Archives (www.archives-vienne.cg86.fr). This report's footnotes show how much I relied on these fine archives and their archivists. Also essential for my research were the helping hands of family members, librarians, town offices, museums, local historians, scholars, authors, universities, churches, funeral homes, Google Earth, genealogy websites, and historical societies. Their contributions are cited in the footnotes. I thank them very much.

This report also incorporates considerable new data and reflections on Bibault family members learned in my June 2014 visit, with my Bibault cousins Denis Bibault, Bernard Garsuault, and Sylvie Garsuault Deletoile, to the family zone in the departments of Deux-Sèvres and Vienne in France. This report is also informed by my extraordinary trip with my daughter Rebecca Putnam in September 2015 to the 1910 birthplace of my mother, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba, Canada. Denis and Geraldine Bibault generously hosted us as we explored the lands and culture of my ancestors. I especially thank Denis for his impressive knowledge of local, regional, and global history, his family stories, his translation skills, his research, and his warm friendship.

Abbreviations in the Footnotes

BMS=Baptêmes, Mariages, Sépultures
 Curçay=Curçay-sur-Dive
 DB=Denis Bibault
 DSA=Deux-Sèvres Archives (on-line)
 NMD=Naissances, Mariages, Décès
 RP=Recensements de population (census)
 RPC=Registres paroissiaux et d'état civil
 TGP=Thomas G. Paterson
 VA=Vienne Archives (on-line)

About the Author

I was born March 4, 1941, in Oregon City, Oregon, to Suzanne Virginie Monchamp (daughter of Rachel Bibault and Jean Monchamp, born June 10, 1910, in Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Manitoba) and Thomas Paterson, Jr. (born March 24, 1909 in Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario). I earned my B.A. from the University of New Hampshire (1963) and my Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley (1968). I taught at the University of Connecticut for 30 years, and now hold the title of

Professor Emeritus of History. As of this writing, I also serve as Affiliate Professor of History at Southern Oregon University in Ashland, Oregon, where I live. I have authored or edited 16 books, including *Explaining the History of American Foreign Relations*; *Contesting Castro*; *On Every Front*; *Kennedy's Quest for Victory*; and *Meeting the Communist Threat*. I have also written college textbooks, including *A People and a Nation* and *American Foreign Relations: A History*. Besides the United States, I have lectured in Canada, China, Cuba, Colombia, Venezuela, Puerto Rico, New Zealand, and Russia, and I have traveled to France and Scotland in search of my family's origins and heritage. The Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations elected me its president and honored me with the Graebner Award for "lifetime achievement." The Guggenheim Foundation granted me a research fellowship and the New England History Teachers Association recognized me with its Kidger Award for teaching and mentoring excellence. I am pleased to continue to mentor students and to research and write about my family's history in France, Scotland, Canada, and the United States.

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I welcome corrections and suggestions for improving this historical report.