

Bonhomme

The Bonhomme Family 1632 to 2015



BY: H.E. JOSEPH BONHOMME. O.M.I.

AS TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND APPENDED BY SUZAN SCHMEKEL

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DEDICATION

The book was given to me in trust by my mother-in-law, Stella Paquette to translate the original text of Bishop Bonhomme, and to make what corrections I could to the original text. The copy Stella had is the copy originally given by Bishop Bonhomme to his eldest sister, Elodia Bonhomme Gosselin: Stella's mother. It had been given by Elodia to her son Florien (Bob) to preserve it for the family. Before Bob moved to Florida he passed it to Stella to preserve it as he was concerned about its being damaged or lost if he took it to Florida. Bishop Bonhomme said many times that he had written this book so that all the members of the Bonhomme family could be familiar with their heritage, with the pioneer spirit that runs so clearly through the family's blood, with the entrepreneurial spirit that is a mark of the Bonhomme. Recognizing that the original book, typed on onion-skin paper, brittle, and quite hard to read, might not survive many more years (and would be unreadable to many of the family), Stella took on the task of getting the book translated, edited, and printed. It is to her pride in her lineage and her own sense of worth and strong family values that the Bonhommes today are enjoying this beautiful family history. We all owe her a debt of gratitude.

EDITOR/TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

In addition to this Editor's Note, there is quite a long Historical Note which was written to make the genealogy more accessible to the modern reader. I am providing information which Bishop Bonhomme left out because what might have been obvious to a French Canadian reader in 1952 is no longer as obvious to an English-speaking reader, possibly an American, in 1995. I believe that the book was written about 1952 because he refers to the birth of Margu rite Bonhomme X, daughter of Wilfred IX, son of Delphis VIII, as having occurred the previous summer. She was baptised in May, 1951.

The last date for him in his own autobiography is his departure for the Canadian West in 1950. He died at Ste Agathe des Monts, August 6, 1973 at the age of 84. His funeral was held at the Church of Saint Pierre Ap tre in Montreal celebrated by the Right Reverend Albert Sanschagrin, o.m.i., the Bishop of St. Hyacinthe, assisted by 35 other celebrants. The homily was pronounced by Father Albert Lachance, a missionary to Lesotho. He is buried at the oblate cemetery in Richelieu.

The Prime Minister of Lesotho, LeLabua Johnathan, sent a representative to his funeral. His message of sympathy was read then:

Bishop Bonhomme gave the selfless devotion of the best years of his life to the spiritual upliftment of the people of Lesotho. He leaves behind him a rich legacy of achievement which will forever be enshrined in the history of our nation. He will be remembered with gratitude and affection. He goes to a well-deserved rest.

The same day, the Very Reverend Alphonse Morapeli, o.m.i., Archbishop of Maseru, surrounded by priests, and in the presence of the King, Moshoeshoe II, Queen Mamohabo and many others, celebrated a special mass for the Bishop. The next Sunday, all the Lesotho missions offered special prayers for Bishop Bonhomme. Radio Lesotho reported specially on his death, a special that was repeated several times. It spoke of the role that Bishop Bonhomme played in the area of social programs and emphasized the many benefits of his great vision for Lesotho.

In his homily, Father Albert Lachance, a veteran missionary who was a witness to Bishop Bonhomme's missionary career in Lesotho, said:

Bishop Bonhomme will remain in history, a great missionary of the continent of Africa, of Basutoland, today called Lesotho... In all the different moments of his missionary life in Africa in the service of a poor country, serving the sick, establishing seminaries, founding a University, our deceased Bishop was untiring in his efforts, a man of deep faith, illumined by a fervent interior life with He who had called him late in life to a life so absolutely apostolic in the depths of the dark continent... History will look back on his time there and give it the full merit it deserves, and that, for the benefit of all the people of Lesotho as well as all those who knew him and loved him.

There is no room in this book for a biography of Bishop Bonhomme. One is available in French which, while brief, does justice to his extraordinary work in Africa and in Canada on behalf of

needy people. A more complete book on his life is planned to be available in English by December, 1997. See the back of the book for further details. He was certainly an unusual man for his time and was an original thinker. Most of all, he was a doer. He was the type of man who just made things happen around him, no matter how impossible they appeared to be. In fact, the more impossible the challenges, the greater seemed his desire to accomplish. It is a trait I have noted in many other living members of the family, both in the men and the women. His personal motto speaks for itself: *Impendar et superimpendar* which means I will expend myself and expend myself totally.

I also wrote the Historical Note in order to put as much information as possible outside of the text and at the beginning in order to prevent me from having to make excessive footnotes. Some readers may feel they are still excessive and I could not argue with that. I have gone to the Canadian National Archives and consulted various documents there to verify the statistics provided by the author.

There is much more information collected and accessible today than there has ever been. There is more genealogical material available. In addition, there is more historical material available. I used the genealogical works of L'Abbé Tanguay which are famous. I also consulted the large tomes by Gouin of marriages in French Canada. For historical background, I am indebted to the many works of Marcel Trudel which cover the period of the Ancien Régime to 1663. I also consulted Lanctot and Emile Salone. I translated these authors where that was necessary.

I found that there were many errors with respect to dates, names, etc... At first, I made footnotes but there were just too many of them. Therefore, I simply corrected these without making a note to the reader.

I must admit that I began this work with some reluctance. However, I soon caught the spirit of what Bishop Bonhomme was trying to get across to his readers, his family. He himself states in his Preface that he is genuinely proud of his heritage and wants to share this with his extended Bonhomme family, and perhaps awaken in them, or reinforce in them, this same pride. As I wrote and researched, I felt him at my elbow from time to time, urging me on and especially urging me to be as thorough as I could be to make this the best book that it can be and so meet with his original objectives. That also has been my goal in my research.

So, some 40 years after the book was originally written, it is still important, if not more so, for people to know their heritage and to feel the pride that comes with that. Especially in these times of anonymity, cultural homogeneity (especially in the U.S. melting pot), financial trauma, times when our sense of worth can be shaken, it can indeed be important to be reminded whence we have come and what kind of blood runs in our veins. And the Bonhomme family have much to be proud of. I think if this book has the power to awaken only one Bonhomme to the greatness of who he/she is, it will have been worth the efforts of all of us who have kept this book alive, especially its present owner, Stella D. Paquette.

I have made every effort to preserve the language and style of the author in my translation to the point of sometimes being repetitive or archaic. I wanted to make sure that the members of the Bonhomme family who read this would be as touched as I was by the author's heroic desire to communicate to his family their great proud heritage. I resisted the temptation to temper some of his more excessive opinions on the perils of (then) modern life and the need for a return to some of the more old-fashioned virtues. I know that the reader will understand who this man was and the culture from which he came.

I admit that there is emphasis on the first two generations. I believe that it was important to know who these people were, this Nicolas Bonhomme and his family because they exemplified all the virtues of this courageous family and set the tone for the generations to come, generations which may have forgotten, in the words of the French proverb, what kind of blood "sings in their veins".

I would have liked to provide similar historical background on the other stages in the history of the family, including the Bonhams of Ontario and Western Canada, but to prevent further delay in the release of this translation and updating of this book, further detail is being omitted at this time. Rather, a second edition of this book is planned for release in a few years, and in the meantime, there are plans for a yearly Bonhomme Newsletter which would give additional information for this family pending completion of the second edition, as well as the biography of Bishop Bonhomme. More information on this can also be found in the back of the book.

Before you begin on your journey through this book, a point of clarification may be in order. In order to keep some sense of order in who belongs to what generation, Bishop Bonhomme used a convention of adding a Roman numeral to the name of each individual of whom he wrote. The Roman numeral indicates to which generation the individual belongs. For example, Nicolas I is the founder of this family, while Alexia Paquette XIII is of the thirteenth generation of the family. Thus when you see these Roman numerals it is not an indication that we use Roman numerals for names, but that the individual belongs to a particular generation.

EDITOR'S PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION (2015)

THE FIRST EDITION TO 1995

In the first edition of the genealogy of the Bonhomme family in Canada, we learned a number of important things.

The text that Bishop Bonhomme wrote in French was largely based on a text and other information he received from Aline Bonhomme, who was the daughter of Joseph Philorum Bonhomme of the eighth generation married to Rachel Daoust. Philorum was an important and famous French Canadian from Montreal, son of Jean-Baptiste Bonhomme of the seventh generation. He was responsible for starting an insurance company for French Canadians that was very successful. He was also involved in saving the French-language newspaper of the Ottawa-Gatineau area, *Le Droit*. He was also involved in supporting Montreal's French language newspaper *Le Devoir*.

Bishop Bonhomme added to the Montreal information with information on the families of Guillaume II and Ignace II obtained from two cousins who were living in New Brunswick at the time, Miss Violette Comeau and her sister, Reverend Sister Lacasse of Campbelltown.

This edition of Bishop Bonhomme's book is not only a translation. Additional information was added as a result of research done by the author. It was the Bishop's niece, Stella Paquette, Daughter of Élodie Bonhomme, his elder sister who asked that the book be translated.

I updated the information provided by the Bishop using two main sources: Abbé Tanguay who did a monumental work of tracing French-Canadian families through the baptism and interment records of the churches. This work makes it very easy to do genealogical research on French-Canadian families who inter-married and stayed in the same area in the past.

I connected with a number of important members of the family. We started with the descendants of Elodie Bonhomme Gosselin.

I connected with the family of DuLacs now residing in Lebanon, New Hampshire and who are descended from the Of Guillaume II through his son Nicolas who married Louise Cloutier.

We connected with Suzanne Bonhomme who worked at St Paul University and was a

descendant of Égésippe Bonomme VIIth generation, son of Égésippe Bonhomme VIth generation.

We connected with Jeanne Lalonde who was of the ninth generation as was Bishop Bonhomme and 99 years of age when we spoke. She was the daughter of Joseph Théotim Bonhomme of the eighth generation, the son of Jean-Baptiste Bonhomme of the seventh generation, son of Égésippe of the sixth generation and Ignace of the fifth generation. Théotim was a famous industrialist in the region of Papineauville, close to Ottawa. Jeanne Lalonde helped bring the information on the family up to date. The Bonhomme family still operates Bonhomme Lumber and Bytown Lumber in the area with many offices in the Ottawa-Gatineau area.

I did not attempt to go beyond the scope of Bishop Bonhomme's book to look at the other branches of the family in other areas of the country, children of the first Nicholas Bonhomme, nor have I attempted to trace the women in the family. That is still to do.

NEED FOR A SECOND EDITION

It has now become necessary to update the second edition of the book, the Bonhomme Family 1632-1995 for the following reasons:

This will bring the information on the Elodia part of the family up to date to 2012.

I have also reviewed the information in the first edition using the tools available on Ancestry.com and made any changes that were necessary. On the whole, the information in the first edition, based on the French Canadian sources cited earlier were fairly accurate.

There have been other additions to the first edition that needed to be made, especially with respect to the dedication of the Place Bonhomme at the Bishop's ancestral home.

We have more photographs to add to the book.

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HISTORICAL NOTE

WHO ARE THE NORMANS?

In his Book, Bishop Bonhomme speaks with pride of the great tradition the Bonhommes have, being Normans. The question for the modern reader then crops up, who are the Normans?

To answer this question, I consulted the Encyclopedia Universalis. The Normans were the people who lived in Norway in the early centuries of the Common Era (C.E.). They were famous as the Vikings - explorers, conquerors and traders. They moved out of Norway in search of new lands to settle because they had surplus population. They could do it because they had superior ships and a well-developed military organization.

It was in these ships that they were able to visit North America, well before Columbus or any of the other explorers. They went as far South as Florida and there is evidence of their going as far inland as Minnesota. Mostly, they kept to the shore line of North America. They discovered Iceland in 870 and what is Canada shortly thereafter. Two of their famous explorers were Eric the Red (983) and his son Lief Ericson who went west in 1000. The years 800 - 1050 were known as the Viking Age.

At the same time as some Norsemen were exploring and discovering new countries and trading with them, other Norsemen were conquering established countries. They successfully attacked Ireland, Scotland, Britain, France, the Shetlands, the Orkneys, the Hebrides, the Isle of Man, the Faero Islands, Iceland and Greenland. One of the main reasons for this exploration and conquering in addition to finding space for their growing population was, of course, financial. The Norse were excellent traders and grew rich and powerful.

It is the Norsemen who established themselves in France and became the Normans who are of interest to us here. For some time, they had been attacking the Northern coast of what is now France. In 911, Charles the Simple, the last Carolingian King (descendant of Charlemagne), conceded to the Viking Chief Rollon, the region of the lower Seine. This became the duchy of Normandy. The people who lived there at the time were probably mostly Celts, and according to Frank Delaney¹ the Belgae, the Bellovaci, and the Parisi. He quotes the following account by Julius Caesar about the Belgae:

descended from tribes which long ago came across the Rhine from Germany, and settled in that part of Gaul on account of its fertility, expelling the former inhabitants. The Belgae, they said, were the only people who, half a century earlier, when all the rest of Gaul were overrun by the Teutoni and the Cimbri, prevented the invaders from entering their territory - the recollection of which made them assume an air of such importance, and pride themselves on their military power.

¹ Frank Delaney, *The Celts*, Little, Brown & Company, Boston and Toronto, 1986, p. 34-35. Mr. Delaney is also responsible for a recent television series on the Celts.

Nevertheless, they were conquered by Caesar in 58 B.C. As can be seen from the quote directly below, the Celts were basically a tribal people (for example, even today, the clans are important in Scotland). Perhaps, this pride of family that the Normans have, comes from this Celtic origin.

In order to give the readers an idea of why the Normans were so successful, I will quote Delaney (p. 56) at length:

Much of history is geography. The Celts, tribal and traveling, could never have established a political entity. They fought too frequently among themselves; in a kindred system too intensive and too introverted, the collective personality remained too individual, too undisciplined, too lacking in organization, to permit the global ambition necessary to found an empire. They never created a lasting political nation...

The Norman system of feudalism, with a central power deriving from the kingship and government, dealt the final blow to a society which had been founded on the triumph of the individual. Where the Roman Empire had been a machine which cut deep into the civilisation, changing the face of great tracts of it, and where the Norse invaders had been a series of detonations which fundamentally altered the sites where they exploded, the Normans moved straight and smooth through all existing structures, leaving nothing unaltered in a thorough and deep colonization. The power was visible; the manner undeniable; the culture irresistible; the effect irredeemable - and all from the moment that William of Normandy killed Harold of England at Hastings in 1066, and from the moment that Dermot McMurrrough invited Henry II to consider Ireland.

As can be intuited from the quote above, from 911 to 1204, Normandy became a true state, one of the best organized and most dynamic in all medieval Europe. In 1130, Roger II of Normandy united Southern Italy and made Palermo its capital. In 1186, King Henry VI of Burgundy married the Norman heiress Constance and inherited the Norman Kingdom in 1194. In 1204, it became a part of France. During those years, it played an important part in the political life of Europe. In the later centuries, the late 1500s and early 1600s, it played a pivotal role in the development of Canada from its "discovery" by Jacques Cartier in 1534 until today.

There is an irony to the fact that Canadians were among the first who landed on the beaches in Normandy in 1944 and made the names of its towns famous: St. Lo, Caen, Dieppe, Fécamp, Honfleur, Le Havre, Cherbourg, Bayeux, etc... Many of the Canadians who landed there and many of the Americans too, were Normans simply "coming home". A number of men from the family were present there. Those who were buried there, in a sense, were buried on home soil.

The *Encyclopedia Universalis* says, agreeing with Bishop Bonhomme:

Normandy was strongly influenced by the values of the Vikings, and inherited their organizational abilities. The Normans of the Middle Ages owe them their pioneering spirit, their ability to adapt, and their keen business sense.

In the book by Vaillancourt, *La Conquête du Canada par les Normans* (the Conquest of Canada by the Normans), the author of the Preface, Aegidius Fauteux, retells a story of once having a drink with the author of the book and a few companions after a late night at Quebec's National

Assembly. He says (again, my own translation): “Normandy was really the Alma Parens of Canada”. The Latin, “alma parens” can be translated as nourishing parent, or foster parent. He adds an interesting note about the psychology of the Norman which seemed to me could have been written by Bishop Bonhomme himself:

The Norman has a reputation for holding grudges. This legend is false. By this, we want to say that he simply has a good memory. Of all Canadians, there are none to whom Quebec’s motto fits better: *I Remember*.²

Bishop Bonhomme wrote a book about a visit to Europe’s sacred places, *Les Merveilles du Vieux Continent, Attraites de ses Sanctuaires* (The Marvels of the Old Continent, the Appeal of its Sanctuaries). In this book, (p.15), he describes visiting Normandy, “the country of the ancestors”:

We cannot adequately describe our impressions when we trod for the first time on the soil of our Mother Country. ... The Normandy that we are crossing is very dear to me as it is for my Secretary, Father Armand Veilleux, because it is the country of the ancestors. It appears to us that we are more affected than the other travellers by something that draws our admiration.

The 11th Century was a brilliant one for the Normans. In 1066, William (the Conqueror) took the throne of England from his cousin Edward the Confessor at the latter’s suggestion because he was dying and had no heirs. A number of people were competing for the kingship within England, and the winner among the English was Harold. William defeated him at Hastings October 14, 1066 and became King on Christmas Day. Until 1204, England and Normandy were one state with an efficient and centralized administration.

His famous descendants were Henry I and Henry II. Henry II married the famous Eleanor of Aquitaine and greatly enlarged his Kingdom to include almost all of what is France today. This was the apex of Norman power in Europe. The empire collapsed with the advent of his three sons. The first was Richard the Lion-Hearted (1189-1199) who was celebrated as the Richard who went to the Crusades. He is the one referred to in the stories of Robin Hood, including the recent movie with Kevin Costner. He has a reputation for goodness which is not supported by historical fact. For example, he was probably responsible for his own father’s death. The reader may remember the fights at that time between the Anglo-Saxons and the Anglo-Normans.

Richard was followed on the throne by his infamous brother, John, whose cruelty and evilness is legendary. He remains one of the most hated of English Kings. When Normandy became French in 1203-04, the managers to whom the Duchy owed its success and good fortune disappeared. The state then went into a decline. There was a division between French and English allegiances which continued for many years. We still hear the echoes of this rivalry today, in Europe and in Canada.

² This is a reference to the motto of Quebec which can still be seen on license plates - Je me souviens. What is being remembered is the conquest of French Canada by the English in 1759. Both commanding generals (Wolfe and

FÉCAMP

We know that Nicolas I came from the parish of Ste. Croix in Fécamp. Please refer to the map of Modern France in the Maps at the back of the book. As can be seen from the map, Normandy was well-suited to both political conquering of England as well as trade. The City of Fécamp, was right on the Sea, across from Portsmouth, England and south of Dieppe.

Normandy is made up of 5 “départements”, or counties: Seine-Maritime, Eure (in the Region of Upper Normandy), Manche, Calvados, Orne (in the region of lower Normandy). Fécamp is in the Seine Maritime Département, in the Caux region. Caux means chalk and the coast there resembles Dover with its white chalk cliffs.

From earliest times, Fécamp was a very important center. Much of the information I got about Fécamp, I got from travel guides and the important archaeological work by Annie Renoux entitled *Fécamp: Du Palais Ducal au palais de Dieu: bilan historique et archéologique des recherches menées sur le site du château des ducs de Normandie* (Paris: Éditions du Center national de la recherche scientifique : Diffusion Presses du CNRS, 1991). A rough translation would be: “Fécamp: From the Ducal Palace to God’s Palace: historical and archaeological outline of the research undertaken on the site of the Palace of the Dukes of Normandy”. In the book, there is an outline of the monastery and the place where the Church of Ste. Croix once stood. This was no doubt the Church where Nicolas Bonhomme and his family worshipped.

Beaudri of Bourgueil, Archbishop of Dol (in Brittany), visited the Monastery there in 1181-82 and called it “a paradise”. And in fact, it is a beautiful place, on the coast, in a valley. One mountain is farmed and the other is woods. It is a rich country, with trees, opulent gardens, orchards. The waters are full of fish and the port is calm. So, it was inhabited very early. There is archaeological evidence of its being inhabited in pre-history by Celts of the La Tene period. At the time, of Charlemagne, there was a monastery there which was fairly rich and which increased its size as time went on. By 850, the raids by Norsemen increased. The Monastery was abandoned but the other people there seemed to have stayed and have enjoyed a comfortable style of life.

Contrary to other regions, in France, in Normandy of the 1000s and 1100s there was practically no serfdom. The local farming communities achieved a level of independence which led them to rebel against any form of authority at the beginning of the reign of Richard II of Normandy (not Richard the Lion-Hearted). Their rebellion was easily put down by Richard II but I mention it here as it throws more light on the type of people who were our ancestors.

It is the Middle Ages that Fécamp comes into its own. Duke Richard I rebuilt it as a simple country

Montcalm) died in the decisive battle in the Plains of Abraham near Quebec City. Bishop Bonhomme makes allusion to this conquest in the book. As well, when I spoke to Jeanne Lalonde, she also made reference to it in her comments about fighting England’s wars. Americans sometimes do not understand why Quebec wants to separate. The mystery is now solved. The answer to the question lies back here in this conquest which was never accepted by the French in Canada. They are, in fact, still today, remembering. And, of course, wanting to change that. That, to them, today, means independence from Canada.

retreat. By 1001, he had also rebuilt the monastery. Then during the time of Duke Richard II, it became an important ducal palace on a level with the palaces at Rouen and Bayeux. Then, after the Conquest, it serves less as a palace and more as a place of worship. In 1067 William the Conqueror, returning to Normandy, received a triumphant welcome and then went to Fécamp to celebrate Easter. And then he returned there often to celebrate various special holidays.

During the next centuries the Monastery was rebuilt and expanded several times. It became a very famous monastery. Some say that for a time, it housed the Holy Grail which had been transported there from Arthur's England according to Norma Lorre Goodrich, in *The Holy Grail*, (Perennial Library, Harper, New York, 1992).

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NORMANDY IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES

So, what was life at Fécamp like when Nicolas Bonhomme left for Canada in 1633, 1637(?), 1640, and 1645? By then, Fécamp was a port and fishing was a main source of income. This fishing was not limited to France. Fishermen from the French coast as far as the Basque country were fishing off the coast of Newfoundland in Canada and continued to do so until the decline in the cod population recently forced the Canadian government to forbid fishing there until further notice. This fishing had begun in the early 1500s.

The period from about 1400 is known as the Renaissance. It started in Italy and spread throughout Europe. It advocated the unhampered intellectual development of man, who was considered to be able to perfect himself through the study of classical literature. This was a reaction to the scholasticism of the Middle Ages which had strict forms. This created a great renewal in architecture, literature and the arts. It was also the beginning of capitalism which would eventually mean the end of serfdom because it made for the rise of merchants which formed a new class, the middle class. It resulted from the gradual change from a barter economy to a money economy. Talent and ability became more important than origin and estate. This new philosophy and culture found its greatest expression in the North American colonies which were unhampered by an existing hierarchy or class system. The greatest gift that America gave the world was this concept of a classless society, where everyone had the potential to become whatever they chose to be and the freedom of expression and religion. It profited from the self-exile of many people fleeing the persecutions of the religious wars of the 1600s.

The beginning of the 1600s in Normandy, was a time of contrasts. There were atrocious famines, repeated epidemics, and the financial pressures and abuses of an administration which was more and more controlled from Paris as successive Kings and prelates sought for power over all of France. This would lead to the revolt of the nobles in France in 1648; this was called the War of the Fronde. In Normandy, it led to the Barefoot Revolt (my translation) of 1639, the year before Nicolas I was married. This revolt was cruelly repressed by the agents of the famous Cardinal Richelieu (this was the combination of Church and State that became so hated by the

new colonists in America who were fleeing that tyranny). Those of you who saw the recent movie *The Three Musketeers* will remember him as the villain. I mention these revolts because I see a continuation of it in the work that Bonhommes have done to improve the condition of the French Canadian working poor. I am thinking of people like Bishop Bonhomme, Philorum Bonhomme, Théotim Bonhomme. This Edition's patron, Stella Paquette spent many years working for the betterment of workers in her Union.

In 1610, at age 9, Louis XIII became King of France after his father, Henry IV was assassinated. He is the young King featured in the *Three Musketeers*. He would be King throughout this turbulent period until 1643 when he is succeeded by his 5 year-old son, the great Sun King, Louis XIV. Louis XIII did not rule alone. His mother, Maria de Medici, of the powerful Italian de Medici family of the Renaissance was always present and plotting for more power. Richelieu was the other plotter. He was exiled in 1618 for plotting with the Queen Mother. The next year, the King recalled him to put down a revolt of nobles and defeat the Queen Mother. He was able to secure his position as advisor to the King, being made Cardinal in 1622 and then First Minister of France in 1624, an office he held until his death, one year before his King in 1642. He was succeeded by Cardinal Mazarin. Royalty quelled all the revolts and it would find the height of its powers with the reign of the Sun King, Louis XIV. However, the revolts would eventually lead to the French Revolution in 1789.

The Renaissance also led to an Age of Discovery. It had started with the various trips by explorers such as Columbus in 1497. Feudalism was dying and the new merchant class was rising. This new "middle class" and the lesser nobility were becoming rich from trading and this included trading in the new colonies. With their wealth, they built estates in the cities, villages and in the countryside. There was also the birth of a brilliant intellectual movement.

This was also the time of the religious wars. The Reformation was sweeping Europe starting with Martin Luther who died in 1483. In England, Henry Tudor had begun the conversion to Protestantism (1536). He died in 1547 and was eventually (1558) succeeded by his Protestant daughter, the Great Elizabeth I, a Protestant. She followed her sister, Mary I, a Catholic. She would have a brilliant reign until her death in 1603.

There were those in other countries (especially the Latin countries such as Italy, Spain and France) which remained Catholic. Spain initiated the Inquisition. This was the Counter Reformation. It was a time when many of the religious houses were established including the Jesuits. At no other time in Normandy's history were there more convents established. Normandy gave the world brilliant and famous preachers such as Saint Jean Eudes, mystics, and Canadian missionaries.

This period in history was especially difficult in France because many noble families including the Royal family were on either side of the religious question; Protestants in France were called Huguenots and they became a political party. It led to the religious wars (1562-1598) with Spain and England taking part. This, in turn, led to the famous Council of Trent (1545-1563) that set the parameters for Roman Catholicism for many years to come.

Over the years, there were treaties which gave the Huguenots freedom of religion; however, they were revoked, then reinstated, then revoked again. there was much bloodshed. In 1593, the new King of France, Henry IV (of Bourbon), a Huguenot, converted to the Catholic faith. He said "Paris is well worth a mass". As a result, France remained a Catholic country but integrated the Protestant minority politically and culturally. The Crown was victorious over the nobility, at least for a time. The King united the country into a state. His Minister Sully put agriculture and the finances of the state into order; trade and the crafts improved; and, of course, the first French colony was established in Canada. These wars would have an effect in Canada because religion would remain the strongest unifying force for centuries until the Quiet Revolution of the 1960's.

The Huguenots were not supposed to be allowed into Canada. When he finally took notice, and took charge, Richelieu conceived Canada as a Catholic colony. decided it was to be a Catholic country. Even though they were greatly in need of colonizers and were finding it difficult to find them, the stipulation was that they be Catholic. Protestants were required to "abjure". Most did so before leaving France but there are instances in the records of some doing so only once they reached Canada. Champlain himself was one of these abjurers. This we know from a variety of sources; but we would know anyway from his name alone. Catholics apparently took their names from the New Testament and Protestants from the Old Testament. It would seem then that Nicolas, named after the Saint had probably always been Catholic. This seems to be a family trait. The Bishop's family were very devout Catholics. Many of the family are still staunch Catholics today, even to the 12th generation.

In England, Queen Elizabeth reigned until 1603 and was succeeded by her cousin James VI of Scotland who became James I of England and Ireland. He was followed upon his death in 1625 by Charles I of England and Scotland who is famous as the Charles who was beheaded in 1649. Charles I is crowned King of Scotland but loses to the forces of Cromwell who becomes Lord Protector. Cromwell rejects the title of King and is given increased power in 1656, dies in 1658, and is succeeded by his son Richard who resigns the next year. Charles II returns in 1660 and is crowned in 1661.

As Champlain was settling Canada, Europe was in the middle of the Thirty-Years War (1618-1648). It started as religious conflict between Catholic and Protestant States and ended up as a European power struggle. It reached Canada when the Kirke brothers attacked Quebec in 1627.

1600 is usually considered the beginning of the Baroque Period. It grew out of the Renaissance and proceeded from Italy as had the Renaissance. It was an epoch of courtly style. It started in Southern Italy (Michelangelo) and proceeded into the Netherlands. It was obvious in the painting and art of the time in these two countries. There was increased construction of Churches and princely palaces.

In 1633, Rembrandt, Poussin, Velazquez, Van Dyck, Jan Vermeer, and Rubens were painting. Christopher Wren, Inigo Jones, and Bernini were building churches and palaces. The composers

of the time were Corelli, Vivaldi, Lully, Bach, and Handel. In France, Boileau, Corneille, Perrault, Molière, La Fontaine, and Cyrano de Bergerac, were writing. In England, it was the time of the great Elizabethan dramatists with Shakespeare at their head. Also writing in England were Beaumont, Ben Jonson, Lovelace, Donne, Bunyan. Cervantes was writing *Don Quixote* in Spain.

Science was just at its beginnings. We are in the process of moving into the Age of Enlightenment of the 18th century. Already in the 1600s, largely because of the freer thinking as a result of the Protestant Reformation, philosophers started to write and to be influential. Francis Bacon in England founded empiricism. René Descartes, the French philosopher asserted the rationalism for which France is still so well known today. It was also the time of Leibnitz, Hobbes, and Spinoza. Hobbes was developing his social contract. St. Francis of Salles was writing, as was Böhme, Henry More, Galileo, and Blaise Pascal. The first authorized version of the Bible, the King James Version, was published in 1611.

Meanwhile, in what is now the United States of America, colonization was going much faster than in Canada, perhaps because of the milder climate in terms of temperature but also in terms of religious freedom. The first settlement was in Jameston in Virginia in 1607, established by Sir Walter Raleigh, a favourite of Queen Elizabeth I but who was later beheaded. Emigrants persecuted for religious reasons established the New England States during the 17th Century. This included the Pilgrims but also there were Jansenists, Huguenots and others. The Pilgrims crossed the Atlantic on the *Mayflower* in 1620 and established themselves in Plymouth, Mass. In 1632 Maryland was established by Catholics. In 1640, Connecticut was settled. In 1664 New Netherlands became English; this included New York, New Jersey and Delaware.

During 1633, the year that Nicolas Bonhomme I arrived in Canada for the first time, Charles I is crowned King of Scotland in Edinburgh (and the future James II of England is born). The French army occupies Lorraine. Edward Winslow is named Governor of the Plymouth Colony. John Ford's play *'Tis a Pity She's a Whore* was presented as was Christopher Marlowe's *Jew of Malta*. Samuel Pepys, the famous diarist is born. Galileo is forced by the Inquisition to abjure the theories of Copernicus. The First Baptist Church is established in London. John Cotton becomes a religious leader in Boston. Rembrandt painted Saskia, Van Dyck painted Charles I. An English trading post is established in Bengal and the Dutch settle in Connecticut. A wind saw mill is erected in London.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF NEW FRANCE (CANADA) IN THE EARLY 17TH CENTURY

I got most of my information about this section from a book by René Le Teneur, *Les Normans et les Origines du Canada Français* (Imprimerie OCEP, Coustances, France), Marcel Trudel's *Histoire de la Nouvelle-France III, La Seigneurie des Cents-Associés 1627-1663, Tome 2, La Société* (Fides 1983, Montreal), Jean Hamelin's *Histoire du Quebec*, (Edisem, St-Hyacinthe, - Quebec, Canada, 1976). Marcel Trudel, Professor Emeritus at the University of Ottawa, has written several books on Canadian history, especially the period before 1663 and all of them are interesting and

most contain allusions to our ancestors. A few of them have been translated into English and should be available through inter-library loan.

Trudel took 1663 as a watershed year in New France as it was the beginning of its governance by King Louis XIV and studied the data from the census, and other sources to paint an interesting picture of New France in the years up to 1663. Our ancestor, Nicholas Bonhomme, and his children are mentioned many times in these books: their marriages, their land, their arguments with neighbors, etc...

Although Jacques Cartier had “discovered” Canada in 1534, there was not much colonization done in Canada, even a century later. I place the word “discovered” in quotes because Canada had been discovered long before by the Vikings, some say the Irish (St. Brendan), Cabot in 1497, the Englishman John Rut in 1517, John Hore in 1527, Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524, the Portuguese from 1500-1520 and there is considerable proof mounting that the Scots led by the explorer Henry Sinclair, a Scots nobleman from Eastern Scotland had sailed to Canada and established themselves in Nova Scotia. Jacques Cartier, however, is the one who found an opening which might lead to the desired passage to the East. This was the purpose of most of the exploration at the time. It was also Champlain’s dream. This breach in the solid North America continent was the great Saint Lawrence river which now is part of the border between Canada and the United States.

The King sent few missions. They sold fur trading rights to trading companies which had little interest in settling the country. As a matter of fact, they did not want anyone knowing about their lucrative trade with the Indians. There was a plan for colonization of Canada drawn up as early as 1538 and modified in 1541-42; however, nothing came of it.

The new merchant class was busy on the shores of North America. When the discoverers came, the fishermen were already there. There was a Norman presence there in 1506-1508. In 1527-29, there were at least five separate trips to the “new lands”. In 1527, when John Rut arrived, there were 11 Norman fishing vessels in St. John’s Harbour. Some of these fishing vessels would have left from Fécamp. In 1578, there were 150 Norman boats in Newfoundland.

Fur trading began in 1580 because it was found to be even more profitable than cod fishing. This should have helped colonization because it became necessary to establishing trading outposts. The first large trading center was established in 1598 by the Marquis de la Roche who brought 100 men and 50 women to Sable Island on the Atlantic coast side of Nova Scotia. The real purpose was not colonization but fur trading. This initiative as well another one at Tadoussac failed because there was no provision made for adapting to the Canadian climate. There was simply not enough incentive for these merchants to colonize Canada. These were businessmen interested in making a large a profit as possible. There is a book which explains the complicated history of the fur trade in these years and the different individuals and companies given trading rights by the King of France, *Nouvelles Glanes Historiques Normands*, by E. Gosselin (Rouen, 1873).

In 1627, Cardinal Richelieu stepped in, revoked the existing rights and awarded it to a new company made up of French Catholics, called Les Cent-Associés, and it became directly responsible to him. Of the hundred associates, 30 of them were Norman. The Catholic Counter-Reformation had given new life and power to the Catholic Church and generated missionary fever. Jesuit missionaries left for Canada. Their struggles have been portrayed in the recent popular film, *Black Robe*.

SAMUEL DE CHAMPLAIN

The colonization of New France owes much to Champlain who gave his name to the great Lake between northern Vermont and New York states. He was an explorer and sailed to Canada with the de Chastes expedition in 1603. From 1603-1607, he traveled the coast of North America from Nova Scotia to Martha's Vineyard and was the first to draw its map as the King's geographer. In 1608, he left Honfleur on April 13 and arrived at Tadoussac June 3. From there, they went to a place the Indians called Kébec. The major goal was to set up a trading post for furs. In so doing, he founded the City of Quebec.

From then on, Champlain seems to have a passion to colonize and evangelize. He remained in Quebec to live, traveling often between Canada and Europe. From there, he continued his explorations. In 1613, he went up the Ottawa River and there lost his Astrolabe. It was later found and can be seen in Ottawa's national Museum of Civilization. Near the Parliament Buildings is an open theatre named the Astrolabe in its honor.

In 1611, Champlain brought the first priests. In 1617, he brought the first real "colon", colonizer or pioneer, an apothecary from Paris, Louis Hébert. The first colonizing expedition undertaken by the Compagnie de la Nouvelle France established by Richelieu was sent in 1628 with 400 men, "the flower of Norman youth" but was stopped by the English Kirke brothers, fighting the Thirty-Years War on these shores. Perhaps Nicolas Bonhomme was on one of those ships.

In July 1628, Champlain was writing about how sad he was to have been abandoned by France. In Quebec, at that time, there were 55 starving people including men, women, and children; of these 18 were workers. On July 20, 1629, the Kirkes were at Quebec with 18 English vessels and won an easy victory. Champlain was forced to surrender Quebec July 21, 1629. A prisoner, he left for London July 24 on a Kirke boat. There were about 10 men, 4 women and 7 or 8 children left. In all of North America in 1627, from Newfoundland to Virginia, there were about 2600 colonizers, "colons", of which only 100 were from New France.

For three years, Quebec was English. With the Treaty of Madrid ending the French-English War in 1630, New France reverted to the French. Champlain then returned in triumph to New France as its new Governor, either in April or May, 1632. It is estimated that there were about 40 people on this boat of which many were Normans.

The Compagnie des Cent Associés was smart in its method of developing Canada. First, it allocated fiefdoms to people on condition that they bring in people. These fiefdoms included not only large parcels of land but also a noble title. Their land were “seigneuries” and they were “seigneurs”.

NICOLAS BONHOMME AND HIS TIME

So, Champlain got to work rebuilding. In 1633, he organized a new trip. This boat left Dieppe March 23, 1633 with three Norman ships: *Saint Jean*, *Saint Pierre*, and *Don de Dieu*. He brought with him, 200 people, many of whom were Normans, and two Jesuit priests, Massé and Bréboeuf. Nicolas Bonhomme was among the people identified.

The Le Tenneur book (p.66) goes on to name some of the nobles who were on these boats. He then adds:

Of young Normans, Aubuchon of Dieppe, Gilles Bacon of Caen, Antoine Brassard “born in Normandy”, Nicholas Bonhomme of Fécamp, Guillaume Couture of Rouen, Pierre Drouet and Antoine Damien of Rouen, René Mezeray of Thurry, Claude Poulin of Rouen, Paul de Rainville of Touques.

These Normans and these folk from Perche got to work with courage. They cleared the land, erected buildings, and organized the new colony. For more than 30 years, they devoted themselves and participated in the development of the country.

We can imagine the type of men these must be, to be one of the first boat load of people to come to Canada with the purpose of building a country. What pride we can feel to know that this same blood runs in our veins today! I am not sure why these “young Normans” were named rather than others of the 200 men on board. Perhaps they distinguished themselves in some way.

In the same way as the descendants of the pilgrims are aware of their forefather’s contribution to American history so do these families have a similar right to the respect and consideration of a grateful nation. We can now all understand the pain to be felt in Bishop Bonhomme’s writing that so few of the ninth generation were inflamed in the same way as he was with the pride in his roots. This is even truer of succeeding generations. We are already today into the thirteenth generation in many of our families while some from the ninth generation are still alive as of this writing; for example, George Antoine Goodman of Malone, N.Y., and Jeanne Lalonde of Papineauville.

The prolific historian, Marcel Trudel does not include Nicolas Bonhomme in his list of arrivals in 1633. I am not sure why his information is different from that of Le Tenneur. Le Tenneur is writing in France and Trudel is writing in Canada. I have briefly checked both their lists for 1633 and I have found that none of the people on the Le Tenneur list were in fact on the Trudel list.

Trudel guesses that Nicolas Bonhomme arrived on or before 1640 because of the marriage contract he signed that year. Bishop Bonhomme assumes that he came in 1637 because he had

to have been here for some time before his marriage. In fact, that makes sense because the normal work contract was for 36 months. Trudel is of the opinion that Nicolas Bonhomme came to Canada in 1640. He then feels that Nicolas traveled with his wife to La Rochelle in 1642. He states categorically that the two older sons were born in La Rochelle in Aunis in France. He then says that the family returned to Canada in 1645. At that time, Guillaume was about 1 year of age and Ignace Bonhomme was less than a year of age. I have no idea why they went to La Rochelle. It is on the coast and many ships left from there bound to Canada. Many immigrants came from this tiny province.

It may be that Nicolas Bonhomme did come in 1633, working his 36 months, returning to France in 1636, then returning in 1637 to Three Rivers (as Bishop Bonhomme guessed), or between 1637-1640 meeting Catherine Goujet there, signing a marriage contract, going to Quebec City to work, returning to France probably in 1642, living at la Rochelle from which he returns on or before 1645.

1633 - 1640 IN THREE RIVERS

Where did these immigrants come from? The largest percentage of immigrants to Canada came from Normandy. Of the population of 1663, 282 came from Normandy, 204 from Aunis and 142 from Perche (considered today to be part of Normandy).

Where did these immigrants go? Some of them had a contract whereby they worked off the debt of their passage and expenses as well as received a salary. Some returned to France, then. After the contract was finished, most of the colonizers were given land, then as the clearing of the land progressed, they were married.

In the Le Tenneur book quoted above, we learn that the Normans on the boats in 1633 went to Quebec and Three Rivers while those from Perche established themselves at Beauport. If indeed, our ancestor went from the boat to Three Rivers, it would explain what he was doing there in 1640 when he contracted a marriage his Catherine Goujet. It is easy to guess what Nicolas Bonhomme was doing in Three Rivers, especially if he was handy with a hammer and saw. When the 1633 boatload arrived, they started the rebuilding of the country, some in Quebec and others in Three Rivers.

Three Rivers was a traditional trading place with the Hurons and the Algonquins. In 1633, Champlain built a small house there for fur trading and a platform with a canon. Then they start building fortifications. That December, they start giving out the fiefs. In 1634 workers arrived to build a fort. The Jesuits built a small Chapel "The Immaculate Conception" and a house. In 1640, more men arrived to help rebuild it. In his Book, Bishop Bonhomme seems to feel that his ancestor was working the land while he was in Three Rivers. He may have been, It is more likely, he was helping build the fortifications or assisting with the fur trade. Trudel also mentions (*Histoire de la Nouvelle-France III, La Seigneurie des Cents-Associés 1627-1663, Tome 2, La Société*, p.143) that there were only men there in 1635 and that during the winter, there had

been a terrible attack of scurvy as well as Indian attacks. It seems to be miracle that our ancestor survived.

By 1663, the population of New France had risen to 3,035 persons:

Quebec region	1,976	65.1%
Three Rivers region	462	15.2%
Montreal region	597	19.7%

Of these, more than a third were born in Canada. Immigration continued to be slow. We are told (Douville) that unlike the English, the French had little interest in going to Canada. I have already mentioned that the major motivation for the large New England immigration (religious freedom) was not present. I can't help but assume that the weather had a lot to do with it. The freezing temperatures and scurvy might have deterred many. How much more hardy and courageous therefore were those who did come! And this is even truer about those who remained.

In 1663, the population already includes two generations including a first generation of 1,030. The average age is 20.6 years: for men 22.2 years and for women, 18.2 years. Women are married as young as twelve. Often, they are 14 or 15, as is the case of Marie Bonhomme, Nicolas' daughter. Trudel (p. 514) brings it to our attention, not because she is so young but because her husband is so young. Jean Neau is only 19 years old. One woman, 18 years old, was already on her third marriage! Though the women marry young, the men are older because they must first find a way of supporting a family. Some men married native women. There are 940 couples. A tenth of them are in second or third marriages. There are 3.2 children per family. A larger percentage (44.3%) than expected are literate, though neither Nicolas nor Catherine are literate.

THE MARRIAGE

In the years 1638-1642, there were only 19 marriages in Canada, not counting those to Canadian native people, 17 in Quebec and 2 in three Rivers. Our ancestor therefore was unusual in his early marriage. There does seem to be some questions and confusion around this marriage.

Under the Ancien Regime in New France, a marriage was essentially a religious occasion and a contract was not required. Why one was undertaken between our ancestors, no one seems to know. In fact, the authority in the field, Marcel Trudel (*La Seigneurie des Cents Associés* p. 518) finds the contract strange. He finds the statement that there was "no notary present" strange; there are only two such contracts in all of the history, our ancestors being one of the couples. He also finds the fact that the contract was drawn up after the marriage a strange thing. Most contracts were written before the marriage took place. The Quebec ratification of the marriage contract by Piraubé, the Notary, was done not 1640 but 1641. This means that they had some kind of private contractual ceremony in Three Rivers on September 2, 1640. There was probably no notary in Three Rivers at the time.

I can find no record of their marriage. It appears that the civil records for this time are in considerable disarray in Three Rivers. There are no marriage records before May 1654. They may have been married in Three Rivers sometime between September 1640 and January 1641. In fact, Trudel assumes they were married shortly after their oral contract in September 1640. There seems to have been a secular priest in Three Rivers at the time in addition to the Jesuits.

There is also a strange reference in Vaillancourt's book (p.119). For the entry on Catherine Goujet, it mentions the September 2 1640 contract and then adds that she marries Nicolas Bonhomme only on April 9, 1679 at Quebec, 39 years after the contract. There is a mystery here that I have been unable to unravel.

It was not until the Council of Trent in 1563 that the Roman Catholic Church obliged Catholics to marry in the presence of a priest and at least two other witnesses. This was more to ensure that consent had taken place; consent was always the important issue. By then, a liturgy already existed. Still, Roman Catholic "Canon Law still requires only their consent from couples wishing to marry in an area where priests are unavailable"³, as may have been the case with Nicolas Bonhomme and Catherine Goujet. However, there seems to be evidence that a priest was available in three Rivers then. Later, when they went to Quebec, perhaps to live, perhaps just to see the notary, they had their oral contract formalized.

I then looked for clues from Catherine Goujet. Her parents are Léonard Goujet and Catherine DuFrançois from Thurry Harcourt. This is in the see of Bayeux in Normandy. In Trudel's book on the Immigrants (p. 96), we are told that she is the daughter of a "bourgeois", a member of the growing middle class, probably a merchant. There is no evidence for a Goujet in Canada for many years. I did however find a reference to her father, Léopold, in the Vaillancourt book (p.119). It is the only reference I can find. It says that he was in Canada in 1641. The reference is to Ferkand, *Histoire du Canada I*, (p.511).

If Léopold was in Three Rivers, then we can understand why his daughter was there at the time. It was common for men to bring a female member of the family to be their servant. This may have been her role. If he was middle class, he may have been a fur trader and that would also explain why he was in Three Rivers.

THE NAME

There also arose a custom that needs some explanation. Many people, including our ancestors began having an appellation after their names, the word "dit" followed by a name. This is true of the Bonhommes. There is a lot of speculation about why this happened. It is usually to identify people and to ensure that there is no confusion. This probably became necessary for the Bonhommes after the birth of the third generation with its proliferation of Nicolas and Ignace in each generation. According to census records, there was only one Bonhomme family in Canada

³ John Kevin Coyle, O.S.A., "Marriage Among Early Christians: a Consideration for the Future", *Église et Théologie*, 8 (1977), p. 73-89 quoting *Codex Iuris Canonici*, can.1098. "The same canon also recognizes the validity of

in various generations until at least 1794. However, it seems that Nicolas Bonhomme I and Ignace Bonhomme II came to be also be known as Beaupré, as did Nicolas II. However, Nicolas III (born 1665), son of Guillaume II is also known as DuLac whereas Nicolas III, son of Nicolas II (born 1680), was also known as Beaupré. It is understandable that there would be a need for this distinction as soon as there were two Nicolas who were active adult members of the community. I could find no record that definitely explained when the practice started.

The Beaupré was chosen I am assuming because when they moved to Ancienne Lorette, they were considered to be in the Beaupré region. This move occurred in the early 1700s. The DuLacs seemed to have moved to the Beauce region from where they emigrated to the United States.

According to the Trudel, In 1663, the family Bonhomme dit Beaupré is comprised of:

- I Nicolas Bonhomme & Catherine Goujet Bonhomme
- II Marie Madeleine Bonhomme (deceased)⁴
- II Guillaume Bonhomme
- II Ignace Bonhomme
- II Marie Bonhomme
- II Pierre Bonhomme⁵
- II Nicolas Bonhomme
- II Catherine Bonhomme

THEIR LANDS

I am assuming that Nicolas Bonhomme arrived in Canada as one of the people who are on contract. This was a contract whereby colonists worked for the person who sponsored them for a period of time, usually, thirty-six months. For this they received their two-way passage to and return from Canada, a salary, and their living expenses. From 1632 to 1637 there are only records of 5 contracts in Quebec and Three Rivers. From 1632-1662, there are only 20 contracts for women, of these only 12 are single women.

What about these lands? As I mentioned above, the lands were divided into Seigneuries in order to entice people to come. In return, the seigneurs had to find people to come to Canada to develop the estates. They ceded land under the quit-rent system. The grants were three or four acres in width and thirty to forty in depth, usually with a frontage along the Saint Lawrence or some other river, the only means of communication. Some of the Bonhomme properties fronted the St. Charles River.

the vows exchanged in the absence of priest or witnesses when one of the two parties is in danger of death.

4 This includes two children, Marie Madeleine and Pierre which Bishop Bonhomme does not mention.

5 *ibid.*

The freeholders paid a very modest rent. The “habitant” had the right to this land and to fishing along its shore, and could obtain a license from the governor to hunt and fish elsewhere. the company also made concessions of land under the quit-rent system direct to freeholders in the suburbs.

Again, a quote from Lanctot (p.324):

All these emigrants were people who had a very hard time making a living in France, where they were belittled and exploited; they were delighted with life in Canada. They adapted themselves quickly to a country where all taxes - *taille, corvée and gabelle* - were unknown, and where they owned their own land freely and openly subject only to the most insignificant of charges. Their lands soon yielded abundant harvests of wheat, fruit and vegetables, and the forest supplied their wood for home-building, furniture-making and heating. Harsh to the pioneer in early stages, the land soon rewarded the hardy and conscientious farmer....

Large game such as moose and elk abounded, as did wild birds good for eating, particularly wild pigeons which were shot down by the hundreds; but eels proved the real manna from heaven. In August, the colony enjoyed large salmon catches, which were shortly followed by the sturgeon catches, and in September innumerable shoals of eels came downstream from lake Ontario. All along the St. Lawrence, fishermen were after them constantly for two months...kept the larders full for a year...Finally, freedom to barter in furs enabled the habitant to acquire a few luxuries for himself..

Canada was a healthful country. Even five months of glistening winter, clear and invigorating, frightened none, for each could attain “ease” within four or five years and be “well content” within the limits of his station. The immigrant settled down in his home quickly and happily. He usually lived in a wooden or a stone house, and his home had a quaint, high-peaked cap of a board roof. Little square cut windows were covered with heavy linen or oiled paper as there was no glass. The furniture included a table, beds, linen-chests, and a few rustic chairs. A huge chimney dominated the kitchen which was the main room, and over the fire, pots either stood on tripods or hung from chimney hooks. Candles supplied the only artificial light; consequently, the people went to bed early and arose at daybreak. Mass was sometimes sung at four and weddings celebrated at five o’clock in the morning. Owner of his land yielding an abundance of cereals, of the garden where his wife raised vegetables, and tucked away in some protected corner, roses and carnations as well, eating game and white bread, the colonist soon fell in love with this “Paradise on earth”, and gave up any thought of returning to France, even in the days when the Iroquois raids rose to their greatest pitch.

The system had a lot in common with the fiefdoms of the middle ages though, of course, the middle ages were dead and we are now in full Renaissance. In North America we see the advanced French feudalism of the seventeenth century adapted to a new country as yet a complete wilderness, cut down to a minimum the various duties required under the different forms of tenure.

From earliest days the Seigneuries or fiefs took the form of elongated rectangles fronting on the Saint Lawrence River. They had a common lay of northwest-southeast. In 1663, there were 69 Seigneurs, 62 individuals and 7 religious orders. Seigneuries began to be distributed in 1627 but

concession of land to “censitaires” began in earnest only in 1644.

Nicolas Bonhomme and his sons took full advantage of this freehold system. In his book, Bishop Bonhomme has the impression that Nicolas Bonhomme I had a small property near what is now Ste Foy which was not very arable and for that reason moved on to the more fertile Ancienne Lorette towards the end of his life.

In my research, I saw quite a different pattern emerge. I did indeed find the land of which he spoke near Ste. Foy. I also found other land. The property around Ste. Foy was in what is considered to be the suburbs of Quebec, then and now. It was in the suburb on the Cap-aux-Diamants. It goes from that cape also called Côteau Ste. Geneviève and the St. Charles River to the Seigneurie of Sillery. This is where Nicolas Bonhomme owned three separate properties between the St. Charles River, the Châtelleine de Coulonge on the South, the properties of the Veuve Delaunay and Vincent Poirier, properties numbered 5, 24, and 23 (See map # 3).

He was conceded Property #5 on May 12, 1646 (about 40 acres). In 1667, he declared there was a house and a barn. The property #23 (about 40 acres) is the one closest to the river and bound on two sides by non-conceded properties. This one was promised Nicolas Bonhomme by Governor Argenson but he did not get official title until 1667; on that date, perhaps to help him get his title, he says that he is about to build a house on the property and the wood for the construction is already there. He sold it to Guillaume Fagot in 1672. Between #5 and # 23, is property #24, a smaller property (about 20 acres). It was conceded to Nicolas Bonhomme in July 1651.

In addition to these properties in the suburb of Cap Diamant, Nicolas Bonhomme owned property in town, in Quebec’s Haute Ville. This is interesting since the properties that he owned are in very choice land, next to the Ursuline convent which still exists today. This land usually reserved for nobles or gentry. Nicolas Bonhomme owned two properties there, smaller than his suburban properties.

In addition, his two sons owned property. The eldest, Guillaume Bonhomme owned lot 46 in the Seigneurie of Sillery (See Map# 6). The lot is about 60 acre size on the Côte Ste. Geneviève between properties owned by Hubert Simon and Pierre Maufay. It was conceded to him February 18, 1663. He still occupied it in 1678.

Guillaume Bonhomme was a Lieutenant in the militia in 1693 and a Captain at Côte St. Michel at Ste. Foy in 1706-1709. He was conceded a Seigneurie which was known as the Seigneurie Bonhomme or Bélair (behind St. Augustin) on November 24 1682. A part of the document of concession appears on p. v (above) and on the maps. I been not been able to find out why he was promoted to Seigneur. I am assuming it was for some feat of bravery during the Indian wars.

This Seigneurie was an important one in the parish of Ancienne Lorette to which the family belonged for many years. The parish was made up of five different seigneuries. It was one of the smaller ones, limited on one side by the Seigneurie of Gaudarville, between the Seigneurie of Maure and Fossambault on the west side and St. Gabriel on the East. In 1712, two years

after Guillaume's death, the land is still virgin forest. One writer says that it was still woods and mountains. The people who were working the land did so on the first line. Three properties were conceded from this seigneurie in 1872 to establish the parish of Ancienne Lorette.

To Bishop Bonhomme, the Bonhommes left *Ancienne Lorette* after the conquest by the English in 1759. The historical facts do not bear this out (Allard, Lionel, *L'Ancienne-Lorette*, Montreal: Leméac, c1979). In 1762, the English government ordered a census. Living in the parish at the time were the families of Nicolas Bonhomme, and Michel Bonhomme as well as Noël Beaupré and Charles Beaupré. By the end of the 19th century, however, there were no longer any Bonhomme families in Ancienne Lorette although there were 11 Beaupré families.

In 1721, when the limits of the parish were established, it was decided to consult the people in order to prevent any conflict. When the survey takers arrived at 7:00 a.m., the parish priest and many of the parishioners had not responded to the request made by none other than a certain Ignace Bonhomme who was the Sergeant of the militia. They waited for two hours and then were able to get the information from a number of people there. Among them were Ignace and Michel Bonhomme. I am not sure who these two were because of the great number of Ignace and Michel.

Lot #58 was conceded to Jean Neau dit Saint Crispin on February 24, 1663 who also was occupying it in 1678 (See Map# 6). This is the Jean Neau who married Marie Bonhomme at the age of 19. Trudel believes that Jean Neau arrived in Canada in 1655 at the age of 13. He is from the Brittany region and we first hear about him at a trial in April 2, 1656 in Three Rivers. He goes then to Quebec and buys land July 18, 1660 and marries Marie Bonhomme in July 1661. He qualifies as a shoemaker in 1666.

Also on the same map is a larger piece (about 80 acres) of non-conceded land just below lot #42 which belonged to Antoine Le Bohême. This is land which was conceded to Ignace Bonhomme and Jacques Berthiaume April 6, 1664. Please note that Jacques Berthiaume is the husband of Catherine Bonhomme.

THE INDIAN WARS

About 1639, began rivalries between the Iroquois and Hurons. The Iroquois wanted to control the fur trade. The Indian wars were to preoccupy the settlers for years to come. At Montreal, the colonists never went out to till their land unarmed and they always posted a sentry to stand guard. Fur traders were constantly ambushed and the flow of beaver pelts stopped, severely affecting the economy of New France.

The Iroquois were a Five Nation Confederacy which included Mohawks and Senecas armed by the Dutch colonists. The Hurons and other tribes loyal to the French did not have weapons. It was on March 16, 1649 that occurred the famous attack on St. Ignace which resulted in a terrible slaughter and where perished the Canadian Martyrs, the Jesuit Fathers, Brébeuf and Lallement.

Not only were the men brave. So were the women. In July 1652, Martine Messier wife of Antoine Primot was attacked. I like to believe that our ancestresses were like her. We read in Lanctot's history:

When she let out a cry the men struck her several blows, but using her hands and feet to good effect, she clutched at the more sensitive parts of her assailants. Her attacker could deliver only a faint tomahawk blow upon her skull and all the Indians fled when they heard the French settlers coming to her rescue. One of the habitants bent over Martine and, seeing her alive, embraced her in relief and joy. She slapped him. When the onlookers expressed their astonishment at her behaviour, she exclaimed: 'Parmanda, I thought he wanted to make love to me.' Ever after, everyone called the courageous woman 'Parmanda'. (p.206)

PIERRE BONHOMME

Before concluding this note, I want to say a word about Pierre Bonhomme whom many members of the family believe to be a relative.

Pierre Bonhomme was not a Canadian. He was French. He was born at Gramat in Lot in what is now the Burgundy area, July 4, 1803 of a modest and honorable family of crafts people. He was ordained in 1827, was Superior of the college, parish priest of Gramat and diocesan missionary. After 10 years, he had to leave the missions because he had worked too hard and affected his health. In 1833, he founded the female order of the Our Lady of Calvary. He died at Gramat, September 9, 1861.

He was proposed for sainthood; however, I do not have any additional information on him. I am told that Bishop Bonhomme knew of him and perhaps considered him a relative and approached Pope Pius XII about his beatification, the first step to sainthood. I don't know how he might have come to this conclusion. He certainly sounds like a Bonhomme in the tireless way he devoted himself to a cause.

The purpose of the Order he founded was to come to the need of his parish especially with respect to the education of the young and to assist people who were ill in their own homes. The order was patterned after that of the Jesuits. The Order still exists today with Chapters in France and in Brazil and an associated group in Argentina. There are about 300 religious involved.

There are a number of other Bonhommes who are well-known in France and whose names figure in a number of Biographies and books. There are a number of clerics as well as a number of artists.

CONCLUSION

Life in the colony was not always bleak. In Lanctot's history, quoted earlier, we have entertainment. First there was the Church. The Jesuits did what they could to add brightness to religious services with music and ceremony to help relieve the tedium. First, there were

viols, then a choir was organized. In 1650, an organ was added. That year, at midnight mass on Christmas Eve “was so well attended that the church could scarcely contain the faithful despite a cold so intense the Fathers had to keep a portable stove on the altar.” Lanctot also tells of a different kind of entertainment by the same Piraubé who made up the marriage contract between Nicolas Bonhomme and Catherine Goujet, and in the same year. No doubt, the newly married couple were in attendance. “Sometimes there were theatrical performances - remarkable at a post containing only some hundreds of people. A tragi-comedy was staged in 1640 and Martial Piraubé, secretary to the Governor and ‘several good actors’ scored a popular success”.

What kind of people were these new immigrants? Again, I refer to Lanctot’s history:

All these men possessed one trait in common - courage. Indeed, bravery of no small order was needed to choose exile from “gentle France” and venture across the seas to unknown and distant lands. They came because they wanted to make a new life for themselves in a new, growing country where a ploughman could acquire and hold land under his own name and the artisan ply his trade freely. Fiercely determined, these men were daunted neither by the hard work needed to clear the land nor by the fear of Iroquois ambush. The women displayed equal determination and equal bravery. (p.315)

SOUVENIR ALBUM OF THE
BONHOMME FAMILY IN CANADA
1640-1940

BY: H.E. JOSEPH BONHOMME. O.M.I.
AS TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY SUZAN SCHMEKEL

HONOUR AND GRATITUDE
TO THE GENTLE AND HONOURABLE MEMORY OF NICOLAS BONHOMME & CATHERINE
GOUJET NINE GENERATIONS REMOVED FROM THEIR SONS

PREFACE BY H.E. JOSEPH BONHOMME. O.M.I.

I had wanted to give an overview of the Bonhomme family in Canada on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the first marriage of the family in Canada. This first marriage took place in Quebec City September 2, 1640. Unfortunately, I was unable to do so because of my missionary activities in South Africa and the Second World War. As a result, I had to put off this important work until today.

For various reasons, I had to limit my work to only nine generations, from our first forefather, Nicolas, down nine generations. Anyway, as of 1940, the tenth generation is still in full development in most of the families. It was therefore useless to go beyond the ninth generation and risk doing an injustice to certain of the families by incomplete statistics.

Despite all of my good will, I was not able to find in the registries, the complete history of the Bonhomme family in Canada. I had to restrict myself to the branch of the family sired by Nicolas, and to two branches of that



OUR LADY OF THE CAPE
 QUEEN OF CANADA
 PROTECT OUR FAMILIES

family. I only have a part of the family of Guillaume II and Ignace II, brothers of Nicolas II. In this genealogy, I only indicate the names of the girls from the Bonhomme families and their husbands because the succession is traced through the male line of the Bonhomme family.

With respect to the families that are not of the branch of Nicolas II, I only mention the first generations, because of a lack of information on them.

It is because of my active ministry that I have not been able to personally do the necessary research on the family. I owe most of the statistics to the devotion of a cousin, Aline Bonhomme of Longueuil, daughter of the deceased Philorum Bonhomme, who established the "Sauvegarde" in Montreal. She was so kind as to share her research with me, on the occasion of my consecration as bishop on June 28, 1933. I am most grateful to her for this. I am sure that the

readers of this book are as grateful to her as I am. These statistics relate only to the family of Nicolas II which is that of Miss Aline Bonhomme as well as ours.

I owe the information on the families of Guillaume II and Ignace II, brothers of Nicolas II, to research done by Miss Violette Comeau and her aunt, Reverend Sister Lacasse at the Hôtel Dieu of Campbellton, New Brunswick. They are descendants of Ignace II through his daughter, Catherine Bonhomme. I therefore thank them also for their generosity and assistance. The value of their contribution by far surpassed the methods at my disposal.

It is possible that some errors occurred during the writing of this work because of incorrect information or through false conclusions drawn from events or statistics that lacked clarity. Because of this lack of clarity at times, I had to make sense of the information based on my own knowledge.

I have to say most sincerely, though, that it is with a son's respect for his ancestors that I have done this work. I am conscious of having accomplished a duty of gratitude to the Bonhomme family in Canada. I am proud to be an heir of this family. There are many others in the family which I am sure, will share my happiness.

H.E. Joseph Bonhomme. o.m.i.

INTRODUCTION

Before beginning to retell the story of each of the Bonhomme families in Canada, it is important to give an overview of the origins of the family in France, in particular of its birth place, the Province of Normandy. In order to better understand the inheritance, both national and religious, that our ancestors brought with them to Canada and their contribution to the establishment of New France on the shores of the majestic Saint Laurent, we need to understand the religious, social, and patriotic values of our first fathers. Each French family brought us something of its place of origin and of the province where they were born. When we know this, it helps us to understand its development and activities in the midst of other families that were also a product of their milieus.

ORIGIN OF THE FAMILY OF NICOLAS BONHOMME IN FRANCE

The family of Nicolas Bonhomme, also named Beaupré¹, comes from Sainte Croix de Fécamp, in Caux, in Normandy in France.² Our ancestor Nicolas I's father was also named Nicolas Bonhomme from St. Croix. His mother's name was Marie Gayon and she was from the same parish.

Nicolas I was therefore of Norman origin both on his mother and father's side. He himself married a young Norman girl at Quebec City on September 2, 1640³, Catherine Goujet. She had been residing in Canada for some time and came from the city of Thury in Normandy.

All the descendants of this family of Nicolas I are inheritors of all the qualities, virtues and faults of Normandy through their two ancestors.

We know that the Normans have, through the centuries, been famous for their spirit of subduing the seas and the continents. We know of their glorious conquests by the force of arms, as well as their cruel defeats. We only need to be aware of the name of a William the Conqueror and his successors to know what it is to be Norman. William the Conqueror conquered England and Normans governed it for several centuries. Their activities in France and other places are also witnesses to the fact that we belong to a nomadic race with the great desire to establish an empire and a reputation among other nations.

Through the pages of this genealogy, we will see our family evolve in Canada in the pattern of their ancestors, always in search of new territories, traveling from one region to the other. There

1 I can find no evidence that the beginning of naming Bonhomme by Beaupré or DuLac began this soon. It seems to start in the second generation.

2 Fécamp has been discussed in the Translator's Note. Abbe Tanguay also mentions that it was in the Le Havre Arrondissement and the See of Rouen.

3 Please see the Translator's Note for an explanation of the marriage. Her name is also spelled Goujet in some of the documents. Abbe Tanguay tells us that she came from Thury Harcourt in the Arrondissement and Sea of Bayeux, Normandy (Calvados).

seems to be no other reason for these travels but a spirit of adventure and the need to conquer. We will therefore not be surprised to see the family, over three centuries, cover just about all of Canada, New England, and to see it establish itself in the far regions of the great American Republic, in Chicago and Detroit.

It is through its Norman character that we explain the family's spirit of adventure, its daring, its success in business, its ambition to match and surpass its fellow Normans and strangers where it has decided to put down roots. The Norman is not rooted to the soil as is the Breton⁴. The Norman does not tire of travel and moving, even at considerable distances as long as these travels will help him realize his goals of conquest and play an honorable role among his fellow Normans. Ordinarily, he is attached to money as well as all the honors and comforts that material goods can bring. The Norman is a man of faith and solid devotion wherever we find him.

THE BONHOMME FAMILY IN CANADA

Very early, we will see the family of Nicolas I, in full development, first on the road to Ste. Foy in Quebec where today we find the Church of the Blessed Fathers of the Saint Sacrament. After his marriage in 1640, the second generation will emigrate near Beaupré, in Lorette⁵ and in the area. As early as 1705, Charles Ignace III, son of Ignace II, is already in Montreal where he enters into a marriage with Thérèse Goulet of Terrebonne. They will people the region with a very large family.

After the deportation of the Acadians in 1755, the Branch of the family of Nicolas II, our forefather, will establish itself in Lachine and will be followed by other members of the family after the fall of Quebec in 1760, which signaled the conquest of Canada by England. From Lachine, we will see the family spread itself to Île Perrot, the dioceses of Valleyfield, in the Eastern Townships⁶, in Ontario, in the Canadian West, and in New England. Two sons of Michel VIII will leave Île Perrot to seek their fortune in Detroit where they will die, multi-millionaire bachelors, owning the greater part of what is Detroit today.

The Bonhomme family from the Nicolas II branch remained on their farms until the end of the nineteenth century. From there, it began to immigrate into the cities, especially to Montreal. Very few were farmers. Their resourcefulness, their business success in commerce and industry, attracted them to the great business centers. The Bonhomme family contributed perhaps more than any other to the exodus from the country to the city especially since the end of the last century.

Most of the families that established themselves in the cities were well known for the success

4 The author here is referring to a native of Brittany in France. New France was populated largely by immigrants from these two coastal provinces. The natives of Brittany were largely Britons from Britain who had been persecuted by the Saxons in the 4th to the 10th centuries in Britain. There was much traffic to and fro between Britain (Wales and Cornwall) and Brittany.

5 See the map of the Quebec City Region in the back (Map# 8).

6 See the Map of Montreal at the back, for all of these places (Map# 9).

of their businesses. Many of them had a great reputation in the world of business. On the other hand, only one person with the name of Bonhomme is on the lists of Canadian clergy⁷. There is no evidence of a Bonhomme in the lists of professionals known in the country. In the process of our research, the name Bonhomme was not found among the lawyers, doctors, or notaries. Our legislatures do not reveal the name of a single Bonhomme among the representatives of the people. Neither is there any evidence of the name among the magistrates and judges of French Canada.

One exception is Philorum Bonhomme, the founder of the “Sauvegarde”. He was famous in the social economic and patriotic area thanks to his great work for the benefit of all French Canadians.

The world of business is of greater interest to the Norman than any other sphere. He is a practical man who goes straight to his goal. His spirit of conquest requires capital and he takes every method possible to achieve his goal. He contributes to the common good after serving first his own needs. This confidence he has in himself, and his tenacity in business make him willing to make great sacrifices. This is the principal reason he does so well in business.

I will be able to point out the happy business successes of the Bonhomme family across nine generations which will bring to the fore, his Norman character.

The courage and the energy of the Bonhomme family in all of its undertakings will explain the sacrifices made by our ancestors for the survival of the race in the Canada. The families are almost all numerous. One of them had the honor of giving the country and the Church, 21 children.

Only one Bonhomme was raised to the priesthood in three centuries; however, the sacrament of marriage was very popular in the family. In the course of the first five generations, many of the men and women were married twice and sometimes three times. We should not see these multiple marriages as out of the ordinary. For the most part, a second marriage was the only way to solve certain family problems. We see for example, the situation of an individual whose marriage partner dies prematurely, leaving a large family at a time when there were not the institutions we have today to take care of orphans. At the time, our ancestors were all living on farms that require the services of a well-organized family to assure its operation and the family’s continued prosperity. If one of the partners dies prematurely, there is no other alternative for the surviving spouse but to marry again in order to keep what they have and ensure a future for their children. Many children have often been born of these second and third marriages. At a time when the country was not well populated, God blessed these homes with fertility and the spouses with courage to face their important mission and be true to the will of God.

We see too that terrible epidemics ravaged our ancestors’ homes in these ancient times. Doctors

⁷ As he indicates in a separate section at the end of the book, there are clergy in the family with names other than Bonhomme, largely relatives through marriages with Bonhomme daughters. For example, Stella Paquette pointed out to me that the Émélie Bonhomme VIII, sister of Delphis VIII and daughter of Damase VII who married Joseph Lefebvre in 1876 had two sons who became priests. She met them at the 25th Anniversary of Bishop Bonhomme’s ordination.

were rare and people had to go far distances to find one. Contagion was restricted to certain areas and whole families were seriously affected. This was another reason for remarriages.

We will follow our ancestors through the centuries in their journey through the vast territory of Canada, in all the provinces as well as in the United States. We will stop at each generation up to the ninth one. In so doing, we will try to understand their lives in that time, the value of their sacrifice, and to discover the value of their basic existence through the three centuries of the history of the Bonhomme family in Canada.

I will give the picture of each family of Canada with their descendants. I will mention the families that peter out either because there is a fertility problem or because they are families with only female children.

It will not surprise you to learn that the families are less numerous as time goes on. Most of the Bonhomme families escaped to the cities where our Christian homes met with so many obstacles in the daily fight for survival. It is an evil that menaces all of the country and the world because of the social upheaval that has affected all of the countries in the universe.

Bonhomme

The Bonhomme Family 1632 to 2015

BY: H.E. JOSEPH BONHOMME. O.M.I.

AS TRANSLATED, EDITED, AND APPENDED BY SUZAN SCHMEKEL