

THE FAMILIES BLOUIN OF CANADA – 1956

(by Amédée Blouin)

When I began this research to find our ancestors, it was with the aim of determining if the name Blouin was the true name that our ancestors carried, because some related families wrote their name differently.

I have found that the name is, well, BLOUIN.

This research was so interesting that I decided to research and write the genealogy of the family.

It is interesting to recall the names of our ancestors given to us, to follow the development of a family within a colony such as New-France, to note and consider the increase in numbers of some of the generations as they follow one another, during the time the colony is organized and develops.

Each country has its material richness, also its human richness, not always in quantity, but in quality. Here, in French Canada, the source of our human richness comes to us from France.

One can easily understand how a family which plays a role of great importance in a country, that is to say that one of her members was a governor or discoverer, or achieves great feats of arms, can have a genealogy going up several centuries and establishing their origin. But it is rare that a family of middle class can also rise this far. It is thus a chance for our families to also have a family register rising up to the first ancestor to New-France, and in Canada.

I have endeavoured to make this work as complete as possible, not only so we can recall the names of our ancestors established in New-France, but also so that we may find the places where they settled, with whom they contracted marriage, the names and dates of birth of their children, where and with whom these children were married, where they settled in their turn, thus enabling us to follow the children of the children to us.

In order to provide proof of authenticity to the dates and the characters mentioned in this work, and to make it as interesting possible, I have registered the origin of the families with which the first Blouin families became related by marriage.

In Canada, like elsewhere, several names became popular; they have a dominating place in the history of Canada. However, one should not forget those that do not appear on the list as those that succeeded great feats of arms or played a great part in the political field. One should not forget, that these individuals also provided a considerable contribution in New-France; each one of them gave their all to support the burden.

All these French and, later these French Canadians, were to be not only colonists but also, at the same time, sailors, mariners, soldiers, architects, manufacturers of houses and boats, social and political organizers and parents of large families. It was the contribution of work, perseverance, and even the genius of these courageous and energetic people who anchored for always the French life to Canada.

While I passionately get excited of the completed centuries, I like to think of those of yesterday. This group of French, established on the edges of the St. Lawrence, was certainly a hardened group. They showed courage and great determination. How often did they think of their beautiful France?

Médéric Blouin originated from Luçon, in the province of Poitou, France, and arrived in Quebec in 1665, according to the consulted documents. He was married at Château Richer in 1669, then settled in St-Jean on the Island of Orleans and built a stone house there, in spite of the multiple difficulties of transporting the required provisions. During this period, all was to be transported by strength of arm or back, and by boat or launch.

On the island, there were several colonists but most were grouped on the Northern side. A mission had been established in Ste-Famille in 1666, but there was no priest residing on the island. Two of the first children of Médéric Blouin were baptized in Quebec and two in Ste-Famille. The parents of the wife of Médéric remained in Château Richer, on the Northern side of the river.

After becoming of age, the children of Médéric settled with their wives in either Ste-Anne, or in St-Joachim, or in one or the other of the parishes of the island. One, however, Paul settled with his wife in Pointe-aux-Trembles, Montreal. Among those in the third generation (grandsons of Médéric), several settled in Ste-Anne, today Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré (at the beginning of the colony, this place named simply Ste-Anne). As other parishes of the Southern bank bore also the name of Ste-Anne, the parish on the Northern bank was called "Ste-Anne du Nord". Several years later, the name was once again changed to the current name.

Several ancestors also worked afar. Jean Blouin, grandson of Médéric and a Master-carpenter, worked in Kamouraska, likely on the construction of the church. By consulting old papers of the parish of Kamouraska, set up in 1727, we see that the construction of the church was begun the following year. This Jean Blouin passed away here, a few years later, and was buried within the cemetery of this parish. He remained unmarried.

Among our ancestors, we find masons, traders, goldsmiths and manufacturers of boats, captains of schooners, harbour pilots, doctors and a deputy within the Legislature of Lower Canada.

By the fourth generation, we find several Blouin families on the island of Orleans, in Ste-Anne and Château Richer. They are also dispersed in various places within the province. Some children go to the College of Québec while others enter the religious faith. Others are devoted to teaching and later one even finds a Blouin as director of the important Mount-St-Louis College, in Montreal.

Several members of the Blouin line assist in the defence of New-France. Some participated in the battle of Quebec and, later, at the battle of Ste-Foye, as militiamen. Joseph-Marie Blouin, grandson of Médéric, was a captain in the army of New-France from 1750 to 1759. One can also find Charles Blouin, born in St-Jean, captain of a schooner, appointed in 1810 to represent the county of the Island of Orleans in the Legislature of Lower Canada, (Quebec), from 1810 to 1820. One also finds Doctor Blouin, attached to a detachment of "Royal North West Mounted Police". The detachment sent by the government of Canada to Battleford, Saskatchewan during the period when this place was selected to be the capital of the North West Territories (including at that time Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba) and where a fort, a temporary masonry for the Administration, and a temporary hospital were built.

More close to us, there is Jean Benjamin Blouin, doctor and surgeon, born in St-Jean, who practised on the Island of Orleans as well as in Montmagny. One of the daughters of this Doctor Blouin organized French studies in the United States and is now Director of French studies at Seton Hill College in Greensburg, Pennsylvania. She was twice decorated. First by the *Société du Bon Parler Français* and then by the *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur*, in France.

In this work, I have researched all of the Blouin families in Canada up to 1760. After this date, as the lines of the family are simply too numerous, I have stopped my research as the enterprise

would be too considerable. I have limited myself to the families from which we descend directly and the families that are connected to us up to the 5th degree. It is interesting to note the number of Blouin families descending downward from Médéric. It is all the more marvellous, and even remarkable, when we realize that the families named in this work barely represent half of the Blouin families in Canada today, descended from Médéric Blouin.

Jean Blouin, born in Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré in 1806 and son of Pierre-Paul Blouin and Marie-Joseph Gagnon, settled in St-Cyprien, in the county of Napierville. I could not retrieve the exact date of their settlement, but it likely took place when the authorities organized a great movement of colonization amongst the French Canadian, to counterbalance the movement of colonization practised among the English speaking population after the war of 1812-1815. The goal of this movement was to colonize the Cantons in the East as soon as possible in order to strengthen the position of Canada in the East and in the South, along the borders. Acting under the directives of the Drummond General, Major Hériot and his friends founded Drummondville in 1815. The parish of St-Cyprien in Napierville was founded in 1823.

This Jean Blouin, a farmer, entered into a marriage contract with Céleste Fillion, the young daughter of Jean-Baptist Fillion, in St-Cyprien, in 1836. Jean-Baptist Fillion was born in St-Joachim, close to Ste-Anne. The marriage of Jean Blouin delivered us eight children whom, later, settled in the valleys and the coasts of East Hereford and Paquetteville, some only miles from the border with the United States.

In this heavily wooded area, some colonization had already begun. These were English-speaking colonists who came from the United States (formerly New England) and had remained faithful to the crown of the United Kingdom.

There were many English-speaking families in Paquetteville and East Hereford in 1900, just as in the neighbourhoods of East Hereford, Hereford, Barford and Coaticook. Today, Barford bears the name of Ste-Herménégilde and there not many more English families in these areas.

It is at this time that started the difference in the spelling of the name. Among the children of Pierre-Paul, one is married in St-Cyprien, and is registered as Jean Belouin. It is impossible to know the reason for this, as he did not sign the document. The addition of this small vowel caused a divergence, which was accentuated when the descendants wrote their name, sometimes Blouin, sometimes Belouin. This divergence caused a kind of controversy. While some of the children kept the name Blouin, others wrote their name Belouin. One or two of the cousins even wrote their name Beloin.

The curious thing is, in spite of this divergence, none have researched this in an attempt to solve this enigma. In East Hereford, in my youth, there were Blouin's at our school, and at another school, I had cousins named Belouin. Then, I decided to try and discover the reason for the difference. Unfortunately, I left East Hereford at sixteen years of age to reside in the United States and thereafter, in the Canadian West until 1938. Being too distant to undertake the case research, this work was always delayed.

It gives me pleasure today to announce that I know the true name. One hopes that the people who write their name Belouin or Beloin may revise it. A man always has that right, as I believe that it is logical, to correct an error in the spelling of his name.

The Blouin's established themselves in the Cantons of the East and were among the first pioneers, buying grounds from the Crown. Conditions were very difficult. The first years, they battled the virgin forest. As there were very few roads, wood did not have any commercial value. It quite simply was burned. With the ash of hard wood or "frank" wood, as it was often referred to, one made potassium salt which could be sold in the city; the only income which the

colonists could draw from all this beautiful forest. A few years later, the company of "Maine Central Railway" built a railroad in this area, passing by Beecher's Falls, East Hereford, Paquetteville and St-Malo. People in this area were then able to sell the wood, but still the price was little. I remember, that in 1904, pulp from the wood was sold for \$4.00 per cord. Completely ridiculous in comparison with the \$30.00 paid today. *(Editor's note: In comparison to the prices paid in 1956, one can expect to pay about \$300.00 per cord in today's market)*

Four sons of Jean Blouin settled in this area: Jean-Baptist, Narcisse, Louis and Napoléon. They contributed in the development of, and the social organization within the area. They played their parts in the organization of the district's school and municipality and also assisted in the construction of the roads and bridges. They were elected commissioners of schools and city councilmen. Napoléon was even the mayor of the municipality of East Hereford for several years and the four sons helped in the organization and construction of the new parish of St-Henri in East Hereford in 1906.

Louis passed away in 1901. A few years later, his family settled in Coaticook. Jean-Baptist and Narcisse remained in the area throughout their lives. The sons and grandsons of this line are still in Coaticook and actively occupy themselves with the public affairs of the community. The houses built by Jean-Baptist, Narcisse, Louis and Napoleon Blouin all remain in good condition, although they were built in the years 1870-1880.

Delphis remained in Bridgeport, Connecticut, Pierre not far from the same area, close to Coaticook. Auguste stayed in Ste-Scholastique where he became the owner of a hotel, and eventually died at this place. Napoléon left East Hereford in the spring of 1909 for New Britain, Connecticut. He stayed in the area for approximately a year at which time he re-established himself in Laconia, N.H., until 1919, when he joined his three sons in Alberta. In 1929, he finally settled in Delmas, Saskatchewan.

Deceased in 1938, Napoléon rests in the main cemetery of Delmas and his descendants can be found not only in Delmas, but also in St-Paul, Alberta, and even in the area of Peace-River, Alberta and in Vancouver, British Columbia. In Delmas, two of his sons, Ernest and Alexis, maintained active roles within the parish and filled several positions in public office. Ernest was blessed with twelve children and Alexis, fifteen. Ernest died in 1946 and rests in Demas. Two others sons of Napoléon, George and Henri, remain in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Another son of Napoléon, Amédée (the author of these lines), after having stayed several years in the Canadian West (in Alberta, Saskatchewan and in Manitoba) returned and lives now in Montreal. Of his three sons, Paul, is a broadcasting director at Radio-Canada, T.V., another, Jean, is a professional engineer, and the other, Rhéal, is continuing his studies. Médérise, daughter of Napoléon, is married to Emile Gilbert and lives in Rochester, N.H. She is the mother of five children.

There is a far distance from Médéric Blouin to our family. There is also a far distance from the island of Orleans to East Hereford. It is even further from the island of Orleans to Delmas, Sask., and Vancouver, BC.

The families of the Blouin ancestry are now spread throughout Canada!