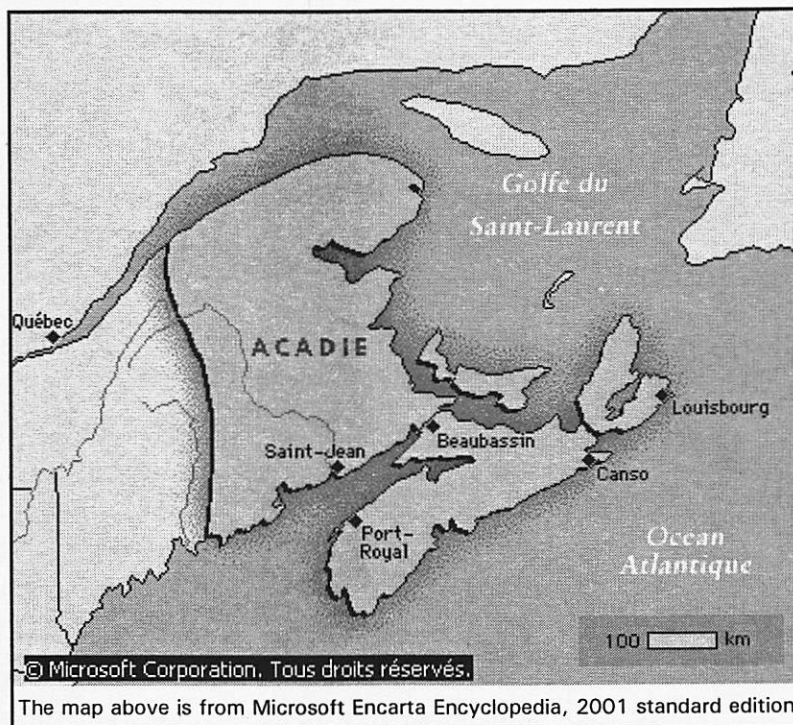




# *Le Mercien*

*The voice of the Merciers of North America*

## **ACADIA 1604-2004**



**Site of the first permanent establishment  
by French people  
in North America**

**Celebrations are planned  
to mark the 400th anniversary**

**Info-AMAN**

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Le Mercien – Deadline		
No.	Season	Date
1	Spring	February 1st
2	Summer	May 1st
3	Fall	August 1st
4	Winter	November 1st

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**HONOUR ROLL  
COMMANDERS OF AMAN**



Coat of arms of the Merciers of North America registered by Mgr Jean-Paul Gelin in 1986



Coat of arms of the Merciers of England in the 15th century published in the Burke Armorial of London



Coat of arms of Ernest Mercier registered by the Drouin Genealogical Institute in 1954

Name	Occupation	Residence	Admission
Ernest Mercier			1999
Pierre-Paul Mercier	Management	Saint-Lambert, Que.	2000
Alain Mercier	Communication	Sillery, Que.	2000
Charles Mercier	Engineering	Québec, Que.	2000
Christine Mercier	Education	Québec, Que.	2000
Louis Mercier	Actuary	Saint-Bruno, Que.	2000
Pierre Mercier	Engineering	Saint-Bruno, Que.	2000
Suzanne Mercier	Commerce	Montréal, Que.	2000
Lucienne M-Croteau	Enseignement	Bonnyville, Alta.	2001

**The newsletter committee**

Pierre-Paul Mercier, Saint-Lambert (450) 671-1455  
 Claudine Mercier, Sainte-Foy (418) 527-3384  
 Isabelle Mercier, Sainte-Foy (Events) (450) 651-3839



This newsletter is named after the kingdom of Mercia which existed from the 7th to the 10th century. It was one of the seven original kingdoms constituting England. The inhabitants of that territory must have been called Mercians (or Mercien in French). We are proud to perpetuate that name today

**Membership dues**

Annually: \$25.  
 Life membership, 65 years and older: \$250.  
 Life membership, less than 65 years of age : \$400.  
 Commander: \$1,000.  
 Those amounts are in U.S. currency for U.S. residents

**AMAN,**  
 P.O. Box 6700, Sillery Branch,  
 Sainte-Foy, Québec, Canada, G1T 2W2

**Association des Mercier d'Amérique du Nord**  
 Internet: « [genealogie.org/famille/mercier](http://genealogie.org/famille/mercier) »  
 Email: « [aman@videotron.ca](mailto:aman@videotron.ca) »

## EDITOR'S PAGE

**T**he year 2004 marks the 400th anniversary of the establishment of a permanent French settlement in America.

The first site was located in Acadia and festivities will take place during the Summer months and into the Fall in order to celebrate the event. To refresh our memory on the history of that territory, we offer you an article written by Claudine Mercier of Sainte-Foy, Quebec, who traced the events back to 1524, the year that Giovanni Verrazano first explored that area and gave it its name. It has now become part of the provinces of Nova-Scotia and New-Brunswick.

To continue our odyssey and bring you the history of Mercier ancestors who came from France to settled the land, we centre our attention in this issue on Pierre Mercier alias Caudebec who once lived in Acadia. In the first of two articles about him, we will learn that he arrived in Quebec 1665, but he was married in Beaubassin where he lived from 1676 to the end of the 17th century and raised his six children. He returned to Quebec with two of his offspring and settled on a piece of land in the parish of Saint-Pierre-du-Sud. We are grateful to Roland Mercier of La Pocatiere, Que., who provided Le Mercien

with a very valuable contribution to the material required for this article. He is a 9th generation descendant of Pierre alias Caudebec and his photo appears on page 6.

We initiate in this issue a new series of feature articles under the heading **"How Can I Help AMAN . . . Build its future"**.

Our association is still very young and needs to build its future on solid foundations. In our first series of thoughts, today, we bring your attention to succession planning as a means of helping AMAN. In future issues we will discuss other topics and ideas aimed at helping **AMAN build its future**.

Our annual meeting is coming soon. It will take place on Saturday August 28 in Sainte-Marie-de-Beauce. Raynald of that area has already planned a very interesting program for you. Luc Mercier of Longueuil has favoured us with a very charming article on his native Beauce region aimed at making that region more friendly to each of us. So, please do not miss this invitation. The complete program and registration form appears on a separate sheet in this issue. The "Beaucerons" will be there and expect you.

Pierre-Paul Mercier

## JUST A REMINDER

We have books (in French only) on sale for you:

- Mercier Depuis des Siècles, by Ernest Mercier, \$25.
- Honore Mercier, by Gilles Gallichan, \$20.
- Le Temple du Bonheur, a novel, by Luc Mercier, \$20.
- Le Livre de famille, par the Fed. Of Ancestral Families, \$10.

We also have laminated mosaics of the Mercier first settlers, \$25.

A charge of \$5. Is added for postage and handling.





# PIERRE MERCIER ALIAS CAUDEBEC

This year marks the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first permanent French settlement in North America, at Riviere Sainte-Croix. We take the opportunity to recall the crossing over of a Mercier ancestor who passed through Acadia.

Eighteen years after Julien left France, two men by the name of Pierre Mercier came to America in 1665 to start a family. We have

already mentioned the one from Saint-Denis-la-Chevasse (Vol. 19, no.2); today we will talk about Pierre Mercier alias Caudebec, born in 1644 in Barneville-sur-Seine in Normandy, a lovely village of about fifty houses located some thirty kilometres West of Rouen...

## Normandy

Barneville is situated in Higher Normandy, in the Seine valley where the river flows sinuously to the English channel, a few kilometres North.

The most important cities are Rouen and Caën inland, as well as Dieppe and Le Havre on the sea shore. Proximity to the ocean provides the region with a marine climate. Temperatures are relatively stable year round: summers are not excessively hot, and there is seldom frost. Haze and fog are quite frequent.

Many villages and resorts line the seacoast, such as Deauville, Trouville, Honfleur, and Fecamp. Normandy's beaches were used by Allied forces to land in Europe during the Second World War.

Normandy became a province following the Roman invasion of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD. From the 5<sup>th</sup> century onwards it was plagued by barbaric invasions, notably from the Franks. Shortly after, it was raided by Viking warriors from Northern Europe.

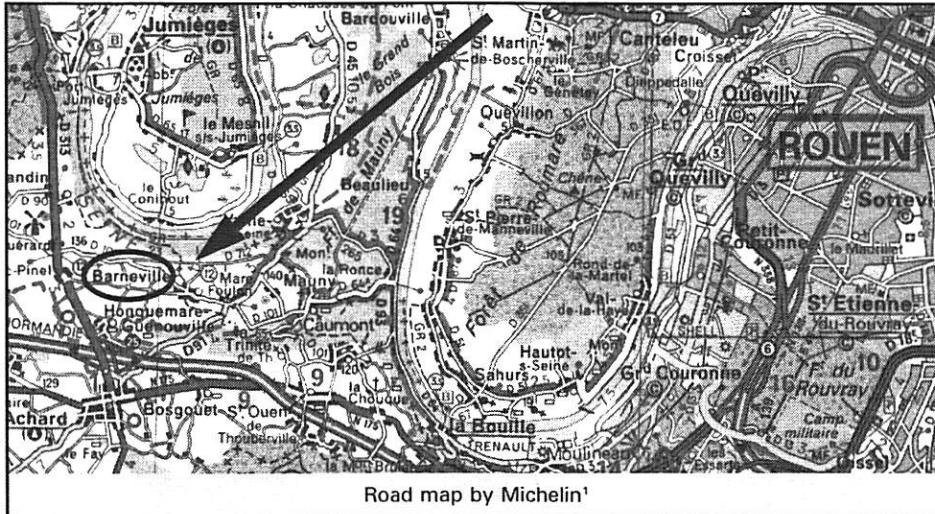
In 945, the kings of France officially recognized the existence of the Duchy of Normandy. It developed rapidly under feudal rule, to the extent

that William, the Duke of Normandy, became the King of England.

Normandy was once more part of the French empire in 1450.

The land is mainly used for agriculture and stock breeding. The culture of vines is almost absent, but the area is world renowned for its spirits, cider and calvados, as well as for fine cheeses like Camembert and Pont l'Éveque.

From June 6 to mid-August 1944, 3.5 million



Road map by Michelin<sup>1</sup>



Allied soldiers landed on the beaches of Normandy to free Europe from German rule.

### First Stay in Quebec

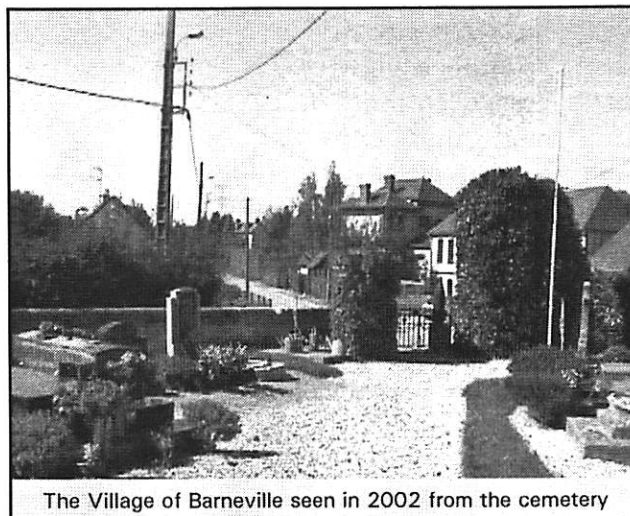
Here is the story told by Roland Mercier<sup>2</sup>, one of Pierre's descendants:

« The story of my ancestor, Pierre Mercier dit Caudebec, is a beautiful one which becomes more and more interesting as we learn more of the life of a likable adventurer we believe was born in 1644 in Barneville-sur-Seine, Normandy, France. He was the son of Nicolas and Jacqueline Tienneau Picard. »

« Although born in Barneville, Pierre lived mainly in the city of Caudebec-en-Caux, some fifteen kilometres North, in the district of Yvetot, on the shores of the Seine. At the time, the city was known for its hat-making industry. »

« The conditions under which he came to New France are not known with certainty. According to Adrien Bergeron<sup>3</sup>, Pierre arrived in Quebec City as a soldier of the King, with the Carignan-Salières regiment, which was at the time the only regiment recruiting for service in New France. A historian, Benjamin Sulte<sup>4</sup>, has written that after fifty years of research, the papers of the Carignan-Salières regiment are still missing and that the list of officers and soldiers has not been traced. We have established that companies of the Regiment arrived in 1665 on June 19, August 19 and 20; they included soldiers and officers from the lower Seine. It is plausible to think that Pierre was among them, as he did not arrive bound by contract. »

The Regiment was called back to France in 1668 and 1669, but the majority of the 400 soldiers decided to live here, take to the land and marry. The name of Pierre appears in civil registers for the first time when he signs a marriage contract with one of the Filles du Roy, Jeanne Labbé of Ile d'Orléans, on October 22, 1669<sup>5</sup>. However, the marriage was



The Village of Barneville seen in 2002 from the cemetery

not celebrated because a month later, November 28, Jeanne Labbé married Jean Hélié, widow of Jacquette Choret, in the Sainte-Famille church of Ile d'Orléans.

Why such a sudden change of heart? Jeanne Labbé might have preferred an already established widow living on a partly cleared land to a recently demobilized young military man working most probably as a domestic for Guy Joseph Després, a blacksmith and edge-tool maker in Quebec City.

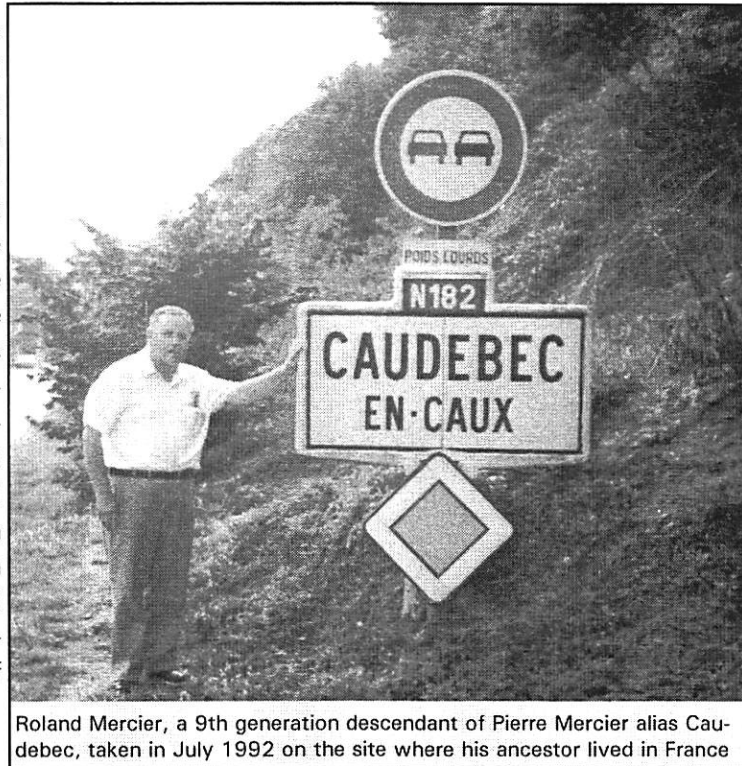
On February 5<sup>th</sup>, 1673, Pierre Mercier signs a new contract in front of the notary Duquet of Quebec City, to become a domestic with Jean Maheust. He may have had other employers before leaving for Acadia, but he was still single, in his early thirties, and did not possess land. Why take the surname of Caudebec? Was it a nickname given to him during his military career as was often done in those days, or did he wish to distinguish himself from another Pierre Mercier that might have arrived in Quebec City at the time? Who can guess three centuries later... He had lived for a time in Caudebec-en-Caux, and the surname was loyal to his origins.

### Adventure in Acadia

The historian Adrien Bergeron<sup>3</sup> hypothesized that Pierre Mercier left for Acadia to forget his marital misadventure of October 1669. How-



ever, his departure wasn't until seven years later. Isn't it more likely that he was waiting for a lull in the war that beset the territory at the time, and that he was moved by the same adventurous spirit that had accompanied his crossing of the Atlantic in 1665? It is believed that Pierre arrived in Beaubassin between 1676 and 1678 and that he was employed by the Lord of La Vallière.



Roland Mercier, a 9th generation descendant of Pierre Mercier alias Caudebec, taken in July 1992 on the site where his ancestor lived in France

We learn from Bergeron's writings<sup>3</sup> that Pierre Mercier alias Caudebec married Andrée Martin, daughter of Pierre and Catherine Vigneau, and widow of François Pellerin, on April 24, 1679.

Andrée Martin's sister, Marie, married to Pierre Morin, had a son named Louis who had a love affair with Marie Josephte Le Neuf, then sixteen years old, daughter of the Lord of Beaubassin. The Morin family was banned from Beaubassin, and Pierre Mercier's family, related to the Morins, was under social pressure to leave the area.

According to the writings of Bona Arsenault<sup>6</sup>, there was only one Mercier family in Acadia and it was Pierre dit Caudebec's. The population census of 1693, 1696, 1698 and 1700 confirm the information. In the latter, «Pierre and Andrée were aged respectively of 56 and 60 years and possessed a rifle, 40 acres of tilled land, a horse, some sheep, pigs and fruit-trees<sup>2</sup>. »

« Pierre's six children were born in Beaubassin. However, I was only able to find three birth certificates: Magdeleine Michèle, Alexan-

dre and Marie Josephte. » The first was born in 1682 and Alexandre followed in 1683. They both followed their parents to Côte-du-Sud and were married in Saint-Thomas de Montmagny. Marie Josephte was born in 1685 and died in infancy. Agnès, another daughter, followed the family to Saint-Pierre-du-Sud and cultivated part of her father's land. Joseph, most likely

the eldest, born in 1680, was twenty years old according to the 1700 census. He did not follow his parents to the seigniory of Rivière-du-Sud. Given the war that threatened the survival of Beaubassin, Joseph who was of combat age was likely killed in battle or made prisoner. It's a likely hypothesis for an unmarried twenty year old that we lose track of after the battle.

Bona Arsenault tells us that in September 1696, the Anglo-Americans, in retaliation, send colonel Benjamin Church at the command of 500 men and some fifty Massachusetts Indians who arrive without warning at Beaubassin. They kill the beasts, destroy the harvests and burn the houses. Fortunately, the population had time to take refuge in the woods as the enemy was approaching, bringing with them their most precious belongings.

This is probably how the Beaubassin registers were saved; they can be found in part today in the Chancellery of the Archbishopric in Quebec City.

→ Continued on page 15



# ACADIA - 400 YEARS OF HISTORY

## Origin of the Name

**A**cadia is the name given to the first French settlement in North America. At the time of his first voyage to America in 1524, Giovanni de Verrazano apparently gave the name Acadia to a land that extended along the Atlantic coast. His choice of name was inspired by the beauty of the Peloponnese in ancient Greece. Sixteenth century cartographers used the term "Arcadie" for the region which now comprises the Maritime provinces. The letter "r" quickly disappeared.

## Before 1604

Two aboriginal tribes inhabited the region: the Malecites and the Micmacs, who shared the land that would later be known as Acadia. The Malecites lived in the south and the west of present day New Brunswick and the Micmacs lived in the rest of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Île Saint-Jean (now Prince Edward Island). Fishermen from various countries came to visit the region, filled their boats with the riches of the sea, traded their wares for furs and explored the area. The best known of these visitors to Acadia remain Verrazano, who came in 1524, and Jacques Cartier, who came in 1534.

## The French Colony

In 1603, Henry IV gave Pierre Dugua, Seigneur of Mons, the task of establishing the first French colony in North America, and appointed him Lieutenant-General in Acadia and New France. He pledged that he would build a viable colony at his own expense. The Seigneur of Mons, Champlain and Poutrincourt, and another 80 men, arrived in Acadia in the

spring of 1604. They settled on Île St-Croix. In the winter of 1604-05 they experienced enormous difficulty as scurvy took the lives of almost half the people. In the summer of 1605, the colony was moved to Port-Royal to establish a fort with the same name. In 1606, Marc Lescarbot, a lawyer, came to join a client and travelled throughout Acadia to check the possibilities for colonization, and to observe how the aboriginals of the region lived. He was also a poet and a playwright. He put up the first theatrical production in North America. After his monopoly was rescinded in 1607, Dugua de Mons had to shut down Port-Royal, since the king had just withdrawn his exclusive fishing and fur trading privilege. He could no longer finance the colony; he returned to France with all his staff while Champlain went on towards Quebec City. In 1610, Poutrincourt came back to Port-Royal with Louis Hébert, Claude and Charles de St-Étienne de la Tour, as well as with farmers and craftsmen.

## Invasions

Samuel Argall, an adventurer from Virginia, destroyed Port-Royal and St-Sauveur in 1613. The same year Charles de Latour was appointed Lieutenant-General of Acadia and built forts at Cape Sable and at the mouth of the St. John River. In 1614, Acadia was managed by Charles de Biencourt and Charles de Latour. With the revenues from fishing and fur trading, they were able to rebuild Port-Royal. In 1629, William Alexander's Scottish settlers had settled for good in Acadia. His settlement project was stopped short by the 1632 Treaty of St-Germain-en-Laye, which allowed France to recover Acadia.

The rebound of French colonization failed at the hands of the new Governor of Acadia, Isaac de Razilly, who arrived in 1632. With 300 elite men, he moved the capital from Port-Royal to La Hève on the east coast of present day Nova Scotia. It may be noted



that de Rezilly was a cousin of Richelieu. He died in 1635 and a conflict arose between the French leaders about the future of the colony. Should they favour agricultural development or fishing and exporting cod to Europe? The capital was brought back to Port-Royal by Charles d'Aulnay, the new governor.

In 1654, Major Robert Segewick undertook an expedition against Acadia with 4 ships and 500 men. The colony fell to the English without a fight. Le Borgne was named governor of Acadia by Mazarin. The English named Sir Thomas Temple governor of Nova Scotia. England promised to return Acadia to France in the Treaty of Breda in 1667. Louis XIV named Sieur de Grand Fontaine governor of Acadia. He ordered the first census to be conducted. There were 500 people. Beaubassin and Grand-Pré were established about that time. In 1689, the Bostonians attempted once again to capture Acadia, taking advantage of the war between England and France.

Joseph de Villebon, the new governor, captured Captain Tyng and took him prisoner. He then had Fort Naswaak built, thinking that Port-Royal was too much at risk. In 1690, Sir William Phips captured Acadia, which was returned to France in the Treaty of Riswick in 1697. In 1710, the English showed up at Port-Royal with 3,400 men, which was 10 times the number of men available to defend Acadia. Port-Royal surrendered after a ten day siege. Hostilities finally ended only with the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) which confirmed the cession of Acadia to England. There was a dispute over the placement of the border. Following the loss of Acadia, France decided to start a second phase of colonization at Île Royale (now Cape Breton) and at Île St-Jean (now Prince Edward Island). Louisbourg became the new capital. The construction of an impressive fortress started in 1720.

The English worried that the Acadians would

take up arms against them, so they attempted several times to get them to swear allegiance to the King of England. Lawrence Armstrong, the English lieutenant governor, granted lands to Bostonians, while refusing to do the same for the Acadians. Around 1738, a good number of Acadians left Nova Scotia to settle in French territory (present day New Brunswick) and at the fortress of Louisbourg. This splendid fortress fell to the English in 1745 but would be returned to France in the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle. Nova Scotia remained an English possession. In 1749, Edward Cornwallis arrived in Nova Scotia with 2,500 Englishmen, Irishmen and Germans. Halifax was thus founded. Three thousand Acadians emigrated to Île St-Jean (now Prince Edward Island).

In 1750, Major Charles Lawrence landed at Beaubassin to build a fort. Across from there, the French built Fort Beausejour and Fort Gaspareau, and they strengthened the old forts. In 1753, Charles Lawrence, then governor of Nova Scotia, was planning a massive deportation of Acadians with the help of Colonel Robert Monckton. In his mind, that project was justified by the fear of being encircled by Louisbourg and Canada to the north and Beausejour to the west. The issue of the oath of allegiance would haunt the Acadians for a number of years. They refused to take an unconditional oath, as they insisted on keeping their freedom of religion and be exempted from having to bear arms in case of war.

*To be continued in the next issue.*

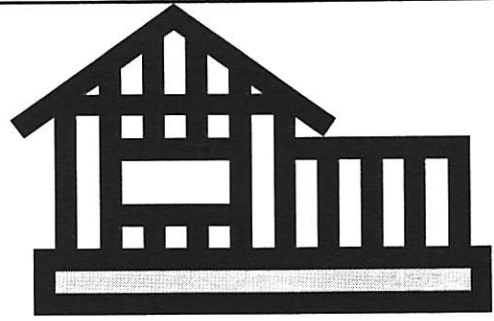
Original text written in French by Claudine Mercier of Sainte-Foy, Quebec.

Translation and adaptation by Lucie Mercier and Ian Campbell of Ottawa, Ontario.



**How can I  
help AMAN...**

***build its future***



### **Succession planning**

**Y**our family is probably all grown and your children well established in their lives and are not anticipating an inheritance from you in order to do so. While planning your estate why not consider making a bequest to a worthy organization of your choice.

You need not be a millionaire to be a benefactor. A simple bequest in your Last Will and Testament could greatly help a charitable organization or a non-profit organization such as AMAN. With your gifts, the financial future of AMAN could be assured and would guarantee that our organization would be there for future generations to continue its work of immortalizing the MERCIER name.

Any gift or bequest, however modest is very important to the long-term survival of our as-

sociation. All such moneys will be deposited in the **AMAN Development Fund** and may be used in future projects designed to perpetuate the memory of Merciers in North America.

You will have the satisfaction of knowing that you have done your part in securing the future of AMAN.

Another consideration would be to name AMAN as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy. To do this please consult your insurance company or agent. You may also contact us and we will direct you to the right people.

A sincere thank you for your generosity.

Pierre-Paul Mercier,  
President

Translated from French by Eugene A.N. Mercier

## **WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS**

1467 Daniel Mercier  
1468 Jean-Yves Mercier  
1469 Raymonde Mercier

Sainte-Marie-de-Beauce, Quebec  
Saint-Romuald, Québec  
Laval, Québec

## **YOUR E-MAIL ADDRESSES PLEASE**

We have started collecting your e-mail addresses, in order to communicate with you at a later date and keep you informed of what's happening at AMAN between two issues of Le Mercien. So, please, let us know your address through Benoit, who has agreed to coordinate the collection of information. You can reach him at: "benoitbmercier@hotmail.com"

Thank you for your cooperation.

Le Mercien



# BEAUCE, THIS BEAUTIFUL LAND!

**R**abelais (1483-1553), Benedictine and Franciscan monk, writer and physician, author of *La vie inestimable du grand Gargantua*, tells in his own whimsical fashion why the muddy plain of the Parisian basin, between Chartres and Orléans, is called Beauce.

Gargantua's enormous mare stops near Orléans, facing a forest, assailed by flies and hornets. Vindictive, with a wide sweep of the tail, the mare levels trees as a reaper would grass thereby uncovering a beautiful land which inspires its rider to boast to his own people:

*Je trouve Beau ce.* (I find this beautiful)

But a serious historian evokes rather the memory of François 1<sup>er</sup> (1494-1547) who is also riding near Orléans. He sees a magnificent plain and exclaims:

*BEAU CE pays!* (Beautiful this land is!)

The two first words of the exclamation refer to the said French plain, and also, to a region about 40 miles from Quebec City that stretches to the American border following the Chaudière River.

For a long time native Indians journeyed through the territory on their way to Quebec City, not settling there until the eighteenth century. In 1700, Abenaki Indians organize their first village at the junction of the Le Bras and Chaudière rivers.

After 1734, French settlers from Côte de Beaupré, Ile d'Orléans or Lévis establish themselves in the Beauce valley. Some even mix with the Indians. People bearing the Mercier surname choose to settle in Saint-Joseph or Saint-François.

A man from Côte de Beaupré named Allard, whose family came from the French region of Beauce, suggests the name of Beauce in Quebec.

Important names appear on the Beauce toponymical map, such as:

- Sainte-Marie whose first Lord, emigrated from Touraine, Thomas-Jacques Taschereau (1680-1749), Head Counselor, founded an illustrious dynasty which includes the first Cardinal of Quebec City, Elzéar-Alexandre Taschereau, and a Quebec Prime Minister, Louis-Alexandre Taschereau.

Marius Barbeau, anthropologist and folklorist of international reputation, was born in Sainte-Marie. He is the author of *La merveilleuse aventure de Jacques Cartier*, *Les Brodeuses*, and numerous essays. His museum is located in Saint-Joseph.

In Sainte-Marie as well, visitors can admire the house of Arcade Vachon who founded in 1923 a bakery and biscuit factory whose renown extends beyond our borders.

-In Saint-François de Beauceville stands the house where William Chapman (1850-1917) was born, author of *Fleurs de givre* and many other books of poetry, first Quebec poet to be honored by l'Académie Française.

-In Saint-Côme, a museum devoted to antique cars attracts tourists.

-L'Enfant-Jésus de Vallée-Jonction is located between Sainte-Marie and Saint-Joseph to reconstruct, in toponymical terms, the image of the Holy Family, popular and venerated since the French Regime.

Beauce residents are known for their hospitality, their joie de vivre, their entrepreneurial

spirit, their resourcefulness and the success of their businesses in many spheres: agriculture, ceramics, bakery, maple products, and many other industrial and commercial activities.

Their *Bruyante* River, so-called by Champlain (1567-1635), Quebec City's founder; *Ombra-geuse* or *Sartigan*, according to the Abenaki nation; finally, the *Chaudière*, so-called because when it merges with the Saint-Lawrence river it forms a pail from which steam rises. It is no longer a transportation

route: a road now lines its shore.

I imagine that Rabelais and François 1<sup>st</sup>, leaving their tombs, journey today over the Chaudière River valley with its green hills, adorned with lovely homes, populated by jovial Beaucerons. Full of admiration, they gladly repeat:

BEAUCE CE PAYS! (This beautiful land!)

Luc Mercier, Longueuil  
Retired Judge and author

Translated by Marie-Claude Mercier

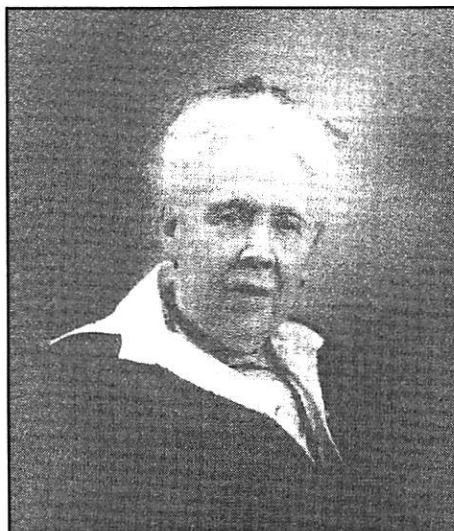
## A DOUBLE CONTRIBUTION

George Stuart Laurence of Jupiter, Florida, a life member in AMAN, has published on his ancestors.

It is a major work of 800 pages describing in detail the history of his family and of his ancestors, accompanied with photographs and copies of official documents. A whole chapter is devoted to the Merciers of Tourouvre. Mrs Gertrude Caroline Mercier Blouin is a 6th generation descendant of Julien Mercier and the great great-mother of the author.

George favoured us with a copy of his book, but he also made an important donation to our **Development Fund**

towards the erection of a monument or a plaque at the birthplace of Julien at La Grandiniere, near Tourouvre. This one of the five projects which we hope to achieve within the next few years, and we invite other members to send us similar contributions.



Picture of Mrs Paul Blouin (Gertrude Caroline Mercier) taken on January 20, 1917, at age 80. It come from George's book, on page 223

Those interested in obtaining Georges's book are invited to contact him directly at: 161 Village Circle, Jupiter, Florida, 33458 Tel.: (561) 744-0307. The price is \$49. plus mailing and handling charges of \$9.

Le Mercien

### Sincere condolences

Yvonne Anctil Mercier  
Henriette Mercier Langlois  
Yvette Mercier Villeneuve  
Napoleon Mercier  
Robert Mercier  
Raymond Mercier  
Marie-Claire Mercier  
Denise Mercier Lamarre  
Eva Marie Dupont

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April 27, 2004  
April 23, 2004  
April 24, 2004  
April 29, 2004  
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May 5, 2004  
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Levis, Que.





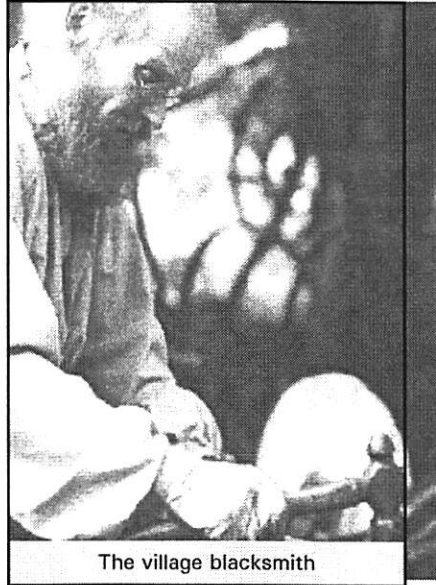
## JEAN-FRANÇOIS MERCIER

**M**ERCIER, JEAN-FRANÇOIS, farmer, merchant, and perhaps blacksmith; b. 23 March 1699 at Quebec to Louis Mercier and Anne Jacquereau; d. 1769 or 1770 at Cahokia (East St Louis, Ill.).

In 1725 Jean-François Mercier first visited Illinois, where he had relatives in the various villages. At Fort de Chartres (near Prairie du Rocher, Ill.) he purchased the Canadian inheritance of one of them, and, as a young man of property, returned to his father's Quebec home. On 17 Feb. 1726 he married Catherine Lafontaine at Sainte-Foy. Soon after, his elderly father turned over his home and blacksmith shop to him and to a son-in-law, and for a few years Jean-François apparently practiced the trade of blacksmith in Quebec.

The memory of the fertile lands of the Illinois remained with him, however, and some time between 1732 and 1735 he went to Cahokia to stay. He was one of the first to bring a wife to the mission settlement. His brother Jean-Paul had been serving there since 1718, when he and another priest accompanied their superior, Goulven Calvarin\*, to the Sainte-Famine mission to the Tamaroas. By 1735 Jean-Paul was in charge, and his plan of the mission seigneurie, made in that year, shows the house and barn of Jean-François on the mission property. By 1752, except for the mission itself, his was the largest single property in Cahokia. That he was the only head of a household called "Sieur" in the 1752 census indicates the social status he had achieved. He resided on three acres with his wife and three children, and with two hired

workers and four slaves cultivated about 70 acres of land. Documents which refer to him as a *voyageur-négociant* reveal that he was also active in trade.



The village blacksmith

Jean-Paul Mercier died in 1753; his successor, Jacques-François Forget Duverger, fled when the region was ceded to Britain in 1763, and the mission was left without its own priest. Sébastien-Louis Meurin\* of Prairie du Rocher, who visited Cahokia at intervals to officiate, wrote in 1769: "I usually have living with me there the brother of Monsieur Mercier, the very worthy deceased missionary. . . It is he who cares for the church in my absence." Jean-François Mercier, bereft of immediate family, apparently

spent his last days serving his late brother's church. By June 1770 he was dead. His will, naming his sister-in-law Marianne Dornon, *née* Lafontaine (the widow of Antoine Giard), as his heir, was contested by Joseph-Marie Mercier, his half-brother, who had moved to Illinois about 1743.

Kathrine Wagner Seineke

ANQ, Greffe de J.-É. Dubreuil, 17 févr. 1726; Greffe de François Rageot, 9 janv. 1728. Henry E. Huntington Library (San Marino, Calif.), LO 426. Randolph County Courthouse (Chester, Ill.), Office of the circuit clerk, Kaskaskia mss, Commercial papers, VII, VIII; Private papers, I, V; Public papers, I. St Louis University Library (St Louis, Mo.), Archives paroissiales de Notre-Dame de l'Immaculée-Conception des Cascaskias (Kaskaskia, Ill.). *Old Cahokia: a narrative and documents illustrating the first century of its history*, ed. J. F. (Continued on page 13) →

## OUR GENEALOGICAL DICTIONARY



Thank you to all those of you who have forwarded up-dated information regarding your families, to assist us in the publication of our forthcoming dictionary on Mercier families. Work is progressing. Robert of Valleyfield is perusing the last parish records, Benoit of Charlesbourg and Pierre-Paul are reviewing every record to make sure that each person is linked to one the ancestors having come from France. We hope that the publication will coincide with the celebration of our 20th anniversary in 2005.

Le Mercier

## HELP US TRACE THEM

Please, keep us informed of your change of address. Two of our members have moved without giving us a forwarding address. They are:

**Mrs Jeanne M. Bedard, 303-474 Wilbrod St, Ottawa, Ont., K1N 6M9** and

**Mr Jean-Charles Mercier, 846 South-Shore Drive, Saint-Roch-de-l'Achigan, Que. J0H 3H0**

Their latest issue of *Le Mercien* has been returned. If you have any information about those two who are life members, please ask them to contact us. We will be pleased to hear from them.

(Continued from page 12)

McDermott (St Louis, Mo., 1949). *Recensement de Québec, 1716* (Beaudet). *Trade and politics, 1767-69* (Alvord and Carter). Belting, *Kaskaskia*.

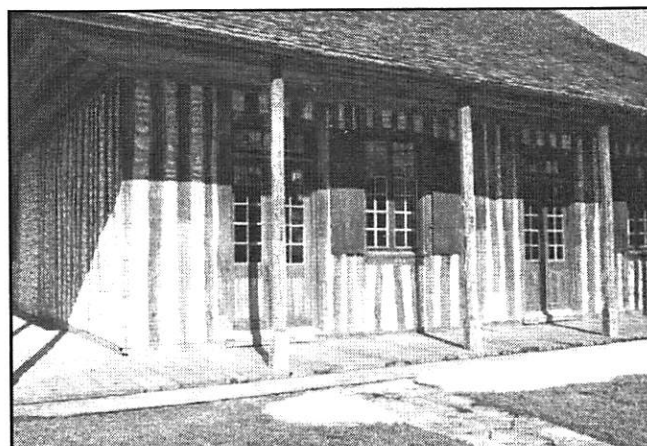
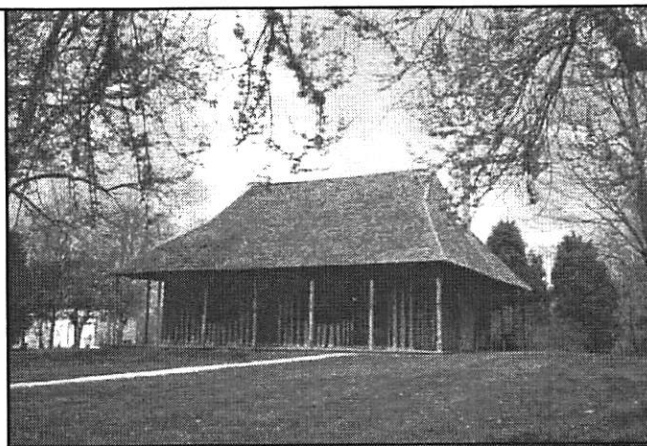
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Le Mercien

The pictures to the left show the oldest building erected under the French regime in 1730. It served as a court building from 1793. It gas dismantled and reconstructed on its original site in 1901.

The pictures have been extracted from the State of Illinois website: "<http://state.il.us/hpa>"



# GREAT SUCCESS FOR OUR SUGAR PARTY



On April 17, the Merciers gathered at the Sucrerie d'Antan maple shack in Plessisville, to celebrate the arrival of spring. The weather cooperated and favoured us with warm temperature to make that day a very pleasant occasion, in a rustic environment like there are few remaining in Quebec these days. The

name of this establishment is most appropriate. The installation has survived many years to accommodate us very warmly.



In the picture to the left, Lucie of Plessisville (to the right) deserves full credit for the success of the day. She was assisted by Cecile Mercier Nadeau who has been a keen supporter of AMAN's activities in the past. She was a member of the board of directors at one time.



Sugar party (continued)

The highlight of the day was provided by Sister Marie-Paule Mercier of Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupre. She had brought many articles she had made and gave them as door prizes. We see her in action, drawing lucky numbers, accompanied by our president Pierre-Paul.



On this occasion, we were gratified by the presence of some members from out-of-town.

Lucie Mercier and her husband Ian Campbell of Ottawa joined us for the day.

We were also pleased to see Georgette Mercier of Washington D.C. pictured here on the left.

The story of Pierre-Mercier alias Caudebec from page 6 will continue in the next issue.

Pierre-Paul Mercier

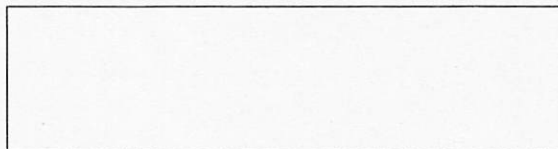
- 1- Michelin des Voyages, 46, ave. De Breteuil, Paris CEDEX 07, France
- 2- Mercier, Roland,  
Généalogie de Roland Mercier,  
Filiation paternelle;
- 3- Bergeron, Adrien,  
Le Grand Arrangement des Acadiens au Québec,

- Éditions Élysée, Montréal, Qué., 1981;
- 4- Sulte, Benjamin,  
Histoire des Canadiens-Français (1608-0880)  
Wilson & Cie, Montréal, Qué., 1882;
- 5- Tanguay, Cyprien,  
Dictionnaire Généalogique des Familles Canadiennes,  
Eusèbe Senécal, Montréal, 1871-1890, 7 vol.;
- 6- Arsenault, Bona,  
Histoire et Généalogie des Acadiens,  
Le Conseil de la Vie Française en Amérique,  
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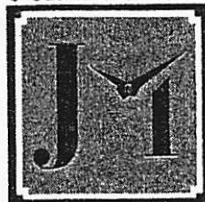
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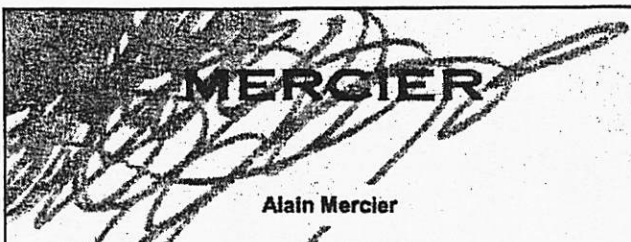
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