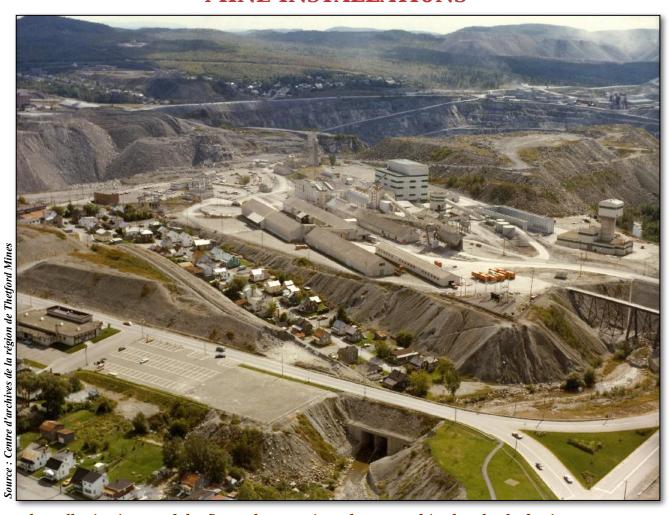
VOLUME 33 NUMBER 2 SUMMER 2017



# Le Mercien

The Voice of the Merciers of North America

## AERIAL VIEW OF THE BELL MINE INSTALLATIONS



The Bell mine is one of the first asbestos mines that opened in the Thetford Mines area. It was in operation starting in 1878 and was carried on under different company names, including Bell Asbestos Mines Ltd. in 1936, the Société nationale de l'amiante in 1980, and then the limited partnership LAB Chrysotile (from 1986 to 2008). In 1992, the mine was acquired by the Mazarin Mining Corporation, but the LAB Chrysotile Company continued to operate it.

#### HONOUR ROLL - GOVERNORS OF THE MERCIER ASSOCIATION

| Name                       | Member no. | Occupation                        | Residence                   | Admission    |
|----------------------------|------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|
| Ernest Mercier *           | 32         | Founding President of the A.M.A.N | Québec, QC                  | 1997         |
| Pierre-Paul Mercier *      | 19         | Administration                    | St-Lambert, QC              | 2000         |
| Louis Mercier              | 52         | Actuary                           | St-Bruno-de-Montarville, QC | 2000         |
| Pierre Mercier             | 73         | Engineering                       | St-Bruno-de-Montarville, QC | 2000         |
| Suzanne Mercier            | 74         | Commerce                          | Montréal, QC                | 2000         |
| Christine Mercier          | 75         | Teaching                          | Québec, QC                  | 2000         |
| Charles Mercier            | 76         | Engineering                       | Québec, QC                  | 2000         |
| Alain Mercier *            | 77         | Communications                    | Québec, QC                  | 2000         |
| Lucienne Mercier-Croteau * | 988        | Teaching                          | Bonnyville, AB              | 2001         |
| Ralph Mercier              | 1151       | Administration                    | Québec (Charlesbourg), QC   | 2012         |
|                            |            |                                   |                             | (*) deceased |

#### BOARD OF DIRECTORS FOR 2016-2017 AND SERVICES OF THE MERCIER ASSOCIATION

| <b>Board Members</b>             | Name            | Member no. | Residence       | Telephone      | Email                         |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| President:                       | Jacques Mercier | 341        | St-Georges      | (418) 228-5426 | studiocimai@gmail.com         |
| Vice-President:                  | Germain Nappert | 1480       | Boisbriand      | (450) 437-1220 | nappert@videotron.ca          |
| Secretary:                       | Aurèle Mercier  | 1573       | Ste-Marie       | (418) 387-5079 | andreegm007@outlook.com       |
| Treasurer:                       | Lise St-André   | 1572       | Ste-Madeleine   | (450) 795-3853 | famillesmercier1985@gmail.com |
| Administrators                   | Gilmond Mercier | 28         | Ste-Sabine      | (418) 383-3441 | gilmondm@sogetel.net          |
|                                  | Jean Mercier    | 1524       | St-Jérôme       | (450) 432-3223 | jean.mercier6@videotron.ca    |
|                                  | Mario Mercier   | 1544       | Québec          | (418) 903-4752 | mario.mercier@bell.net        |
| Services:                        |                 |            |                 |                | -                             |
| Archives, Web site and Facebook: |                 | 28         | Gilmond Mercier | (418) 383-3441 | gilmondm@sogetel.net          |
| Webmaster:                       |                 | 1568       | Pascal Mercier  | (418) 221-7688 | pmercier@ubeo.ca              |
| Newsletter Le Mercien: Search    |                 | 28         | Gilmond Mercier | (418) 383-3441 | gilmondm@sogetel.net          |
| Newsletter Le Mercien: Layout    |                 | 1572       | Lise St-André   | (450) 795-3853 | famillesmercier1985@gmail.com |
| Genealogy:                       |                 | 222        | Benoît Mercier  | (418) 623-0833 | benoitbmercier@hotmail.com    |
| Genealogy:                       |                 | 1520       | Laurent Mercier | (450) 678-5094 | laurentmercier@ymail.com      |
| Proofreading:                    |                 | 28         | Céline Chabot   | (418) 383-3441 | gilmondm@sogetel.net          |
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| Audit:                           |                 | 210        | Denise Mercier  |                | denisemercier@videotron.qc.ca |

#### **MEMBERSHIP FEES 2017-2018**

Annual fees are due before May 31st of each year

Annually: \$35/1 year \$65/2 years
Annually + spouse(s): \$40/1year \$75/2 years

Governor 1 000 \$

Those amounts are in U.S. currency for U.S. residents and in euros for European residents.

This newsletter is named after the Kingdom of Mercia which existed from the 7th to the 10th centuries. It was one of the seven original Kingdoms constituting England. The inhabitants of that territory must have been called Mercien. We are proud to perpetuate that name today.

Legal deposit - 2017

Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec - BAnQ Library and Archives Canada - LAC

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Opinions expressed in the published articles belong exclusively to their authors. The fact that they are published in this newsletter does not mean that the Association agrees with or supports them.

Email : famillesmercier1985@gmail.com - Website : www.famillesmercier.org
L'Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord is a member of the Fédération Histoire Québec

#### A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

#### Greetings to all the Merciers!

Here is one more Le Mercien before our gathering in Thetford-Mines on September 9 and 10, 2017. You will find in this issue, a text about the first great strike, which several historians see as the beginning of what would become known as the "Quiet Revolution" of modern Quebec. The only things left from the time of the "White Gold" Rush are the memories of a few survivors from that era, as mining production disappeared several years ago from the Thetford area. Many Mercier families took part in mining production from the very start.

L'Association des Mercier wishes to pay tribute to as many Merciers as possible who came to live in the immediate area of Thetford Mines and Black Lake, thus contributing to the region's boom. I do not really pretend to be a distinguished genealogist, but thanks to the research I am doing with the help of other Merciers to find the first ones to arrive here, I have so far identified close to 10 Mercier families from the area. All of them are descendants of Jullien and Marie Poulain. They are all cousins through Pascal, Jean and Pierre, sons of Jullien. We are planning on writing a special issue of Le Mercien for those who will attend our gathering in September and we will publish it at a later date.

After reading the story of the 1949 strike, I invite you to read the texts about two workers who died in the mines.



Only one is a Mercier and it is my uncle Gilles. The other victim was Julian George Sartoretto, husband of Ida Mercier, both originally from the Abitibi region. Ida Mercier was descended from Pierre Mercier, husband of Marguerite Lamain, who arrived in Neuville around 1665. That ancestry line has produced few descendants, representing only about 2% of the Merciers in North America. You will notice also that the information comes from the coroner's reports of the time, so the deaths are described in unadorned and unemotional terms. Those writings show how very difficult the first residents' work was.

I will close by mentioning that we are receiving a lot of comments about our upcoming Mercier gathering from more "remote" areas such as the Gaspésie and Lac-Saint-Jean. There seems to be some INTEREST about our association. The best way for you to proceed is to visit our website <a href="www.famillesmercier.org">www.famillesmercier.org</a>/ which is free and to register in large numbers. We are expecting you!

Jacques Mercier nº 341, President

Please note that because of the delay in mailing the last issue of Le Mercien, Vol. 33 No.1, the **Comfort Inn Hotel of Thetford Mines** has extended the reservation deadline for our group **to August 15, 2017**. The Group Number remains the same: **2944212** and the telephone number is **418-338-0171**.

#### Renewal of membership fees - Donations - Life Memberships [as of July 31, 2017]

| Member no. | Name                          | City - Province/State        | Fees Donation     | <b>Expiry Date May 31</b> |
|------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| 15         | Alain Mercier                 | Lévis QC                     | 35,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 151        | Gérard Mercier                | Longueuil QC                 | 35,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 261        | Rosélia Mercier               | Brossard QC                  | 35,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 321        | Guy Mercier                   | Cap Saint-Ignace QC          | 65,00 \$ 10,00 \$ | 2019                      |
| 489        | Marius Mercier                | Québec QC                    | 35,00 \$          | 2019                      |
| 605        | Benoît Mercier & Jane Buskirk | Sainte-Sabine QC             | 40,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 706        | Yves Mercier & Nicole Morin   | Sainre-Sabine Qc             | 40,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 871        | Jacques Mercier               | St-Charles-de-Bellechasse QC | 35,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 881        | Gaétan Mercier                | Sherbrooke QC                | 35,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 1524       | Jean Mercier                  | Saint-Jérome QC              | 35,00 \$          | 2018                      |
| 1624       | Simon Brouard                 | Québec QC                    | 35,00 \$          | 2018                      |

#### ASBESTOS STRIKE OF 1949

The asbestos strike of 1949 was a major event. It is considered a turning point in Quebec history and as the harbinger of the Quiet Revolution.



Let us first mention that the miners were members of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour and that since 1948 their bargaining agent was Jean Marchand; in Asbestos, the union president was Rodolphe Hamel, who was fully bilingual, a prerequisite at the time, since negotiations were conducted in English.

M. Jean Marchand, General Secretary of the Canadian and Catholic Confederation of Labour.

February 13, 1949 - the two thousand Asbestos miners, asking for salary increases and better working conditions, went on strike, quickly followed by their 3000 fellow miners in Thetford Mines; and they all believed that their union conflict would be short. Most workers were Francophones, although the owners of the mines were Americans or English Canadians. The major mine owner at the time was a multinational corporation called Johns Manville.



M. Rodolphe Hamel President of the Asbestos Workers Union and the Federation of Mining Industry Workers.



Mr. Maurice Duplessis Premier of Quebec from 1936 to 1939, and from 1944 to 1959

The miners had several demands, including the elimination of asbestos dust inside as well as outside of the plants; they wanted a wage increase of 15 cents an hour, an extra 5 cents an hour for the night shift, the creation a social security fund administered by the union, the implementation of the Rand Formula (authorizing the employer to deduct the dues from the workers' wages, which dues are mandatory for salaried members of this union, and even for those who have not opted in), and also double pay for work done on Sundays or statutory holidays. Those demands were considered radical at the time, but in fact, the salaries that were sought would have been lower than those of employees doing comparable work in the same sector elsewhere in Canada. These demands were denied by the employer.

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The Federation of Catholic Unions of Asbestos Workers

held its Annual Convention in Asbestos on August 4, 1946.



Strikes were rare then in Quebec and they were mostly declared illegal. Such was the case with this one. The premier at the time, Maurice Duplessis, chose to side with the employers, mainly because of his hostility towards any form of socialism. The provincial government assigned several hundred police officers to protect the mines. The Union Nationale had been very close to the Roman Catholic Church up to that time, but then some of the clergy chose to side with the workers. The Quebec population and the various media also sympathized with the strikers. One renowned journalist at Le Devoir, Gérard Pelletier, wrote very much in favour of the strikers. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, then a journalist for Cité Libre, had also written very favourably on the side of the strikers in the matter.



Throughout the
Asbestos strike,
police officers
and
special
constables
were assigned
to protect the
Johns Mansville
installations.

In the sixth week of the strike, the Johns Manville company hired strikebreakers (scabs). Some of the workers crossed the picket lines. The strike took a violent turn when 5000 strikers attacked and smashed the homes of some of the scabs.

- March 14 a dynamite explosion destroyed part of the railroad leading to the Johns Mansville mine,
- March 16 a company Jeep was overturned, injuring one person,
- March 18 a company official was kidnapped from his home and severely beaten.

The strikers got support from Canadian unions as well as from part of the Quebec Catholic Church. The position taken by the Catholic Church, up to then a clear supporter of the Union Nationale government of Maurice Duplessis, had a deep impact on the strike.

Some priests supported the companies, but most of them were on the side of their parishioners who now had no more income. On March 5, Archbishop Joseph Charbonneau made a speech or sermon very clearly in favour of the strikers and invited people to donate money to help them. The Archbishop eventually had to resign in 1950 mainly because of the position he took during the strike. This event left its mark on Quebec society, which slowly evolved towards what became known as the Quiet Revolution. It was indeed a first step towards the split between the clergy and politics.



The Archbishop of Montreal, Mgr Joseph Charbonneau, organized special collections in Montreal churches in order to send food to Asbestos and Thetford Mines strikers.



During the Asbestos strike, special collections for the strikers were organized in churches as requested by Mgr Charbonneau, Archbishop of Montreal. Year: 1949.

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On May 5, the strikers made one last-ditch effort to close the mine by blocking all the roads leading to it, as well as any access to the town. The police attempts to overcome those barricades ended in failure.



The government quickly decertified the union, and then the company hired scabs - offering them better wages, and that brought a reaction from the workers, who determined to have their picket lines respected. The conflict turned into a riot, and the workers picked up rocks and baseball bats to intimidate police officers and scabs. Humiliated, Duplessis reacted harshly. The strikers had to end their siege however, when the provincial police officers threatened to open fire on the strikers. The next day, the anti-riot act was read to them, and a series of arrests started, an operation during which strikers and their leaders were beaten and the local Asbestos church was sacked.

Source : Archives de la CSN

The Asbestos strike, a turning point in Quebec history.



This picture, which was seen around the world, is self-explanatory: Laurent Bernatchez, a miner in Thetford Mines, who came to help his fellow Asbestos workers, was seen being escorted away by two plain-clothes police officers after being beaten. Mr. Bernatchez passed away in 1999, the year marking the 50th anniversary of the famous strike.

Following all these arrests, the unions decided to search for a compromise and negotiations with the companies resumed.

The conflict was resolved thanks in part to the mediation of the Archbishop of Quebec, Mgr Maurice Roy, which led to an agreement. The employer recognized the union and rehired the strikers according to seniority, but the scabs kept their jobs. A 10-cent an hour wage increase was granted, with indexation. An arbitration tribunal imposed the Rand formula in Thetford Mines. The company was not however obligated to eliminate the asbestos dust. A large number of workers continued to suffer from asbestosis, a form of pulmonary fibrosis, which is well-known around the world. The Asbestos strike ended on July 1, 1949, four months after it started.

Beneficial effects were felt over the long term, since the next collective agreements were among the most generous in the mining industry. It was not until the asbestos strike of 1975 though, that measures were taken to offer workers healthier conditions in the mines.

The conflict was resolved thanks in part to the mediation of the Archbishop of Quebec, Mgr Maurice Roy, which led to an agreement.



Sources:

- 1- "La grève de l'amiante, mythe et symbolique" Jacques Rouillard in l'Action nationale, vol. 89, n°7, 1999.
- 2- Internet Site: Wikipédia.
- 3- Archives de Radio-Canada: http://archives.radio-canada.ca/sante/sante\_publique/clips/12877/

## 1949 - THE STRIKE IN ASBESTOS AND THETFORD MINES A FEW DATES

"In our mind, the strike was to last two weeks." Jean-Jacques Lafontaine, striker

February 13: in Asbestos, the workers at the Canadian Johns Mansville site decided to go on

strike, and that was followed by the workers in Thetford Mines;

**February 18:** the strikers occupied the company's offices;

February 19: 150 provincial police officers arrived in Asbestos;

March 14: some strikers blew up the company's railroad used to transport the output;

April 29: the union agreed to submit the issues to arbitration, but the government refused;

May 1: the Archbishop of Montreal, Joseph Charbonneau, requested all Quebec churches

to make special collections for the strikers;

May 2: the company resumed production, having hired strikebreakers (scabs);

May 5: strikers controlled access to the city for 24 hours; a riot ensued;

May 6: the police response was bloody; for three days, the Duplessis government invoked

the anti- riot act, allowing the arrest of anyone taking part in an unlawful assembly; strikers got beaten, and police officers opened fire when they deemed it necessary;

there were 200 arrests;

July 1: an agreement granting strikers a 10-cent increase was reached;

**July 5:** most employees returned to work, but some were called back only two years later.

The conflict lasted 138 days and was marred by violent confrontations. It brought changes to the way unions fought their battles and it also changed Quebec.



Asbestos workers strike, 1949.

Source: Société des archives historiques de la région de L'Amiante - Fonds Galerie de nos ancêtres de l'or blanc

(Donor: Philippe Roberge)

"Maurice Duplessis did not want a settlement because he did not want to see a strike he deemed illegal to have brought some gains to workers."

Gérard Pelletier, a friend of Jean Marchand and a journalist who covered the asbestos strike for Le Devoir

**"We do not negotiate with anarchists."** Maurice Duplessis

"The working class is the victim of a conspiracy to crush it." Mgr Charbonneau

"We all went back on our knees."

Léo Dusseault, striker

Source: Radio-Canada, Zone libre, Jean-François Lépine. Program aired on February 27, 2002.

#### Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord

560, rue Desbiens, Sainte-Madeleine (Québec) JOH 1S0

#### **REGISTRATION FORM**

| ame:   |
|--|
| ddress:  |
| ity:   |
| rovince/State:   |
| ostal (Zip) code: Telephone:   |
| mail :   |
| lember Nº: Number of adult(s) \$55*  |
| The package covers: the 2 guided bus tours, a brief talk, a social drink ith the group, a raffle ticket as well as Sunday lunch, taxes and ratuities included. |
| WILL TAKE PART IN THE GUIDED BUS TOUR ON:  |
| Saturday September 9 YES No. of person(s) No. of person(s) No. of person(s)  |
| Sunday September 10 YES  No. of person(s) No. of Du Centre historique de la Mine King  |
| I WILL ATTEND THE LUNCHEON:  |
| Sunday September 10 YES \( \bigcap \) No. of person(s) \( \bigcap \) NO \( \bigcap \)  |
| MENU CHOICE: Penne with vegetables and rosée sauce   |
| Fish fillet with rice and vegetables   |
| Chicken kebab with rice and vegetables   |
| MEETING PLACES:  |

#### **GATHERING**

#### **OF THE MERCIERS In**

#### **Thetford Mines**

On September 9-10,

2017

COST: \$55 / ADULT



Saturday September 9 at 1:00pm

Place: Musée minéralogique et minier

Address: 711 Boul. Frontenac Ouest (Highway 112), Thetford Mines (QC)

Sunday September 10 at 8:30am

**Place:** Parish Centre

Address: 44, rue Saint-Alphonse Sud (Highway 267), Thetford Mines, (QC)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Jacques Mercier, President at (418) 228-5426 (Saint -Georges) or write to studiocimai@gmail.com

#### FOR THE MERCIER GATHERING - 2017 HOW TO GET THERE

#### SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 9 AT 1:00PM

PLACE: MUSÉE MINÉRALOGIQUE ET MINIER ADDRESS: 711 BOUL. FRONTENAC OUEST (HIGHWAY 112)

#### SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 10 AT 8:30AM AND 13:15PM

PLACE: PARISH CENTRE
ADDRESS: 44, RUE SAINT-ALPHONSE SUD (HIGHWAY 267)



#### **COMMENT S'Y RENDRE**

#### FROM MONTRÉAL

- •Take Highway 20 East towards Quebec City
- Take Exit 228 to Road 165 South towards Princeville/Plessisville/Thetford Mines.
- •Turn left on to Road 116 East/ 165 South towards Plessisville.
- •Turn right on Avenue Saint-Louis (165 South).
- •Continue on Road 165 South to Road 112, then turn left towards Therford Mines (Boul. Frontenac).

#### **FROM QUEBEC CITY**

- •Take Highway 73 South.
- •Take Exit 81 to Road 112 West towards Vallée Jonction.
- •Continue on Road 112/269 to Thetford Mines (Boul. Frontenac).

#### FROM SHERBROOKE

- Take Road 112 East towards East Angus/Thetford Mines/Lac-Mégantic.
- •Turn left on to Avenue Champlain (112 East/263 South).
- •Continue on Road 112 East to Thetford Mines (Boul. Frontenac).

#### DEATH OF GILLES MERCIER AT THE VIMY-RIDGE MINE



Gilles Mercier 1932-1954 From 1889 until the end of operations at asbestos mines in Quebec, only one Mercier lost his life in an accident at one them. In a volume entitled <u>Au-delà de l'Amiante</u>, Mr. Lucien Gouin from Black Lake, counted at least 312 deaths. The one Mercier was my uncle Gilles Mercier, who died Sunday August 22, 1954, at the Vimy-Ridge Mine, which belonged to the Asbestos Corporation. He was a mere 22 years old.

In 1954, I was only 4 years old myself and it was the first real "drama" of my life, and my very first contact with "death". Gilles Mercier was the youngest in a family of 13 children. He was the son of Louis Mercier, organist, and a tailor by trade, and Délina (Blanche) Gagnon. Gilles had a "steady" job as an electrician at the Normandie Vimy-Ridge Mine, and he also had his own "radio repair business" on the side. He was an optimist and the very day before his death, he had told his friends he had had a good week and he would install that very night a lighted cross at the "wayside altar" for the ceremony to be held on Sunday.

It was the first time that he worked on a Sunday and he wanted to be back early enough to play with the marching band, which was to "come out" for the procession.

On that Sunday August 22, after a short banter with his coworkers, Gilles prepared to climb up a transmission line pole carrying a very high voltage (12000 volts). There was probably some confusion with his coworkers as they closed the circuit breaker of the transmission line. For some reason we will never know, probably because Gilles had "his mind on something else", he went to the wrong pole, climbing all the way to the top. Up there, "death" awaited him, and it was instantaneous. As he neared the wires, he was immediately "electrocuted", the current travelling through his body, and it even left some burn marks from his hand on the pole. After a few seconds, he fell heavily back to the ground. There was no chance of survival! His death was as quick as his time on earth.

On that Sunday morning, the parish organ remained silent, Gilles' father Louis, as well as the rest of his family, did not go to church. Louis Mercier had never missed playing the organ since he first started in 1911. The news of Gilles's death spread like wildfire. The local paper "Le Canadien" headlined on Wednesday September 1, 1954: "Impressive funeral for Mr. Gilles Mercier". Last Wednesday August 25, at 9:30 a.m. an impressive funeral was held in the St-Désiré Church in Black Lake for Mr. Gilles Mercier, who had died accidentally at the Vimy-Ridge Mine on Sunday the 22nd, at the age of 22 years and 6 months. He was the son of Louis Mercier (Blanche Gagnon) of Black Lake.

The people of Black Lake made a point of paying one last tribute to the memory of the deceased by attending in very large numbers the funeral of this devoted parishioner, who was active in various parish associations.

The funeral procession was led by Police Chief H. Alphonse Legendre, followed by the Lacordaire Flag (temperance league) carried by Mr. Gaston Dussault, and then the flag of the alumni of St-Désiré College, carried by Mr. Raymond Cloutier; then came the Black Lake Marching Band (called Union Musicale), of which the deceased was an active member; there were also several members of the Société Philharmonique de Thetford-Mines, and members of the Harmonie de Disraéli (Wind ensemble).

A magnificent landau of flowers preceded the hearse. The coffin was carried by Messrs. Luc-Gilbert Lessard, Guy Ferland, Hilarion Fréchette, André Ouellette, Damien Bolduc and Raymond Croteau, all close friends of the deceased. The four honorary pallbearers were Messrs. Paul-Émile Champagne, Gérard Gagnon, René Houle and Émile Martineau.

Father Stanislas Lord, head of the parish, presided over the removal of the body from the funeral parlor; then Father Roland Chabot, assisted by Father Henri-Paul Vachon who was born in the parish, and by Father Amédée Busque who was a parish vicar, all sang the funeral mass.

Luc-Gilbert Lessard and Guy Ferland passed the collection plate. Mr. Philippe



Funérailles de Gilles Mercier décédé le 22 août 1954 à l'âge de 22 ans et 6 mois à la mine Vimy-Ridge, appartenant à l'Asbestos Corporation.

Breton played the organ and conducted the choir, replacing the regular organist Mr. Louis Mercier, father of the deceased. Mrs. Jules Larochelle sang a hymn during the funeral mass. Burial was at the parish cemetery.

The vast majority of accidents in asbestos mines occurred around the start of the excavation work that was done with improvised tools. These accidents were mainly caused by rockslides from the cliff walls, or in the pits, and at later dates in the underground tunnels. Several men were crushed by "minecarts" rolling on wooden rails. With the use of "black powder" and later on dynamite, a number of human errors cost miners their lives. Descriptions of accidents come from coroners' reports of the time and some show up in local newspaper articles. The descriptions of the facts are not sugarcoated. The following case of Sartoretto is part of the history of Merciers in the area, because he was married to Ida Mercier.

Jacques Mercier n°341

#### DEATH OF IDA MERCIER`S HUSBAND AT THE BLACK LAKE MINE

**Julian George Sartoretto**, a resident of Black Lake, died at St-Joseph hospital in Thetford Mines, from injuries suffered in an accident that occurred on Tuesday April 10, 1951, in an underground tunnel at the mine owned by *United Asbestos Corporation Ltd* in Black Lake.

During the inquest conducted at the funeral home of J.A. Dussault Enr. by Coroner Eugène Lacerte, on Monday Avril 16, 1951, the jury rendered a verdict of accidental death, from renal failure after suffering multiple fractures of the lower right limb.

According to witnesses' depositions, co-workers of the victim, Sartoretto was digging a tunnel, 540 feet underground. He was with Mr. Marcel Charpentier, 132 rue St-Denis, Black Lake. The two men had just blasted a new section of tunnel and they were busy clearing away the rubble from the underground, so as to be able to "timber" afterwards. Without any warning, a piece of rock suddenly got loose from the roof and crashed on the victim's right leg, after landing on his hip.

After he was freed, Sartoretto received first aid from Dr. Patrick Laughrea, of Black Lake. The doctor determined that the injured's leg was completely shattered. The femur was sticking out of the thigh about 6 inches. Blood was gushing. Needless to say, the victim was unconscious. Consequently, the doctor gave him an epinephrine injection and covered the injuries with temporary dressings before having him taken to hospital.

That same evening around 8:30 p.m., after a blood transfusion, Dr. Laughrea decided to amputate the crushed leg to prevent gangrene and toxic shock. The operation was incident-free and the patient seemed to recover normally. The injured man was given three more blood transfusions. The next day, the victim's condition showed great improvement. However, it was discovered a little later that the kidneys were no longer working. From then on, in spite of all the care given, the condition of the injured man continued to worsen, until he succumbed on Saturday April 14, 1951.

The deceased left behind his beloved wife Ida Mercier and their three children, his parents and his brothers and sisters, all from Rouyn.



Genealogy: Julian George Sartoretto, born 11-11-1917. Married on 16-12-1944 to Ida Aurore Mercier in Noranda. He died 14-04-1951 in Black Lake, at the age of 33. (LE PROGRÈS, Thetford Mines, April 19, 1951, p.1)

Genealogy: Ida Mercier is a descendant from a less common branch of Merciers, that of Pierre Mercier and Marguerite Lamain. (Annex 7 of the Répertoire des Mercier, tome 2). Her husband's occupation at the time their son Thomas was baptized on June 20, 1950 in Black Lake, was as an engineer. She was the daughter of Eugène Alexandre Mercier and Amanda Maud Grosleau, born 29-07-1911 in Noranda, Quebec, and died 05-12-1982 at the age of 71, in Cobalt, Ontario.

Ida Mercier and her two sons at the start of the iron bridge in Black Lake, in the early 1950s.

Source : Mario Mercier nº 1544



### Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord

560, rue Desbiens, Sainte-Madeleine (Québec) JOH 1SO - tél.: 450-795-3853 Email : famillesmercier1985@gmail.com

| MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM   |   |  |  |  |
|---|---|--|--|--|
| For all members, annual fee   | s are due on May 31 of each year.   |  |  |  |
| Regular fee as an individual:   | \$ 35 / 1 Year Or \$ 65 / 2 Years   |  |  |  |
| Regular fee with spouse:  | \$ 40 / 1 Year Or \$ 75 / 2 Years   |  |  |  |
|   | ~   |  |  |  |
| For all members, annual fee   | s are due on May 31 of each year.   |  |  |  |
| ,   | Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord<br>leted form to the following address: |  |  |  |
| ASSOCIATION DES MERCIER DE L'AMÉRIQUE DU NORD 560, RUE DESBIENS, SAINTE-MADELEINE (QUÉBEC) JOH 1SO CANADA |   |  |  |  |
|   | * Date of birth:  |  |  |  |
| FIRST AND LAST NAME  * Date of birth:   |   |  |  |  |
| FIRST AND LAST NAME OF SPO  |   |  |  |  |
| Address:  | Telephone:  |  |  |  |
|   | te: Postal (Zip) code:  |  |  |  |
| Email:  |   |  |  |  |
| ☐ Renewal ☐ New member  | ☐ Voluntary contribution \$   |  |  |  |
| I enclose my fee as an individual:  | \$ 35/1 Year  \$ 65/2 Years  \$ \$  |  |  |  |
| I enclose my fee as a member with spouse:   | \$ 40/1 Year  |  |  |  |
| I wish to receive the newsletter " <i>Le Mercien</i> ":   | by mail D by Email D  |  |  |  |
| Signature:  | Date:   |  |  |  |
| * To improve our genealogical database.   |   |  |  |  |

#### LET'S ENCOURAGE OUR SPONSORS!







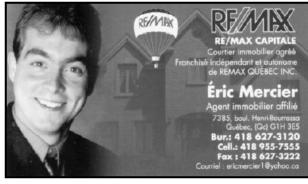




RALPH MERCIER Vice-Président DÉVELOPPEMENT

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#### REMINDER

September 2017 - 9 and 10 September Gathering in Thetford Mines

November 2017 - Le Mercien Fall Vol.  $33 \, n^2 3$ 

March 2018 - Le Mercien Winter Vol. 33 nº4

Until next time!

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