

# Le Mercien

The Voice of the Merciers of North America

### Isle-aux-Coudres



Located about two hours' drive from Quebec City, Isle-aux-Coudres remains one of the best kept secrets of Charlevoix. This charming little island with around 1200 inhabitants is however the perfect place to unwind and to forget about the daily grind for a few days!

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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

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#### **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.

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#### **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

A Word from the President	3
Gathering (August 19th, 2018)	4
Sugar Bush (April 1st, 2018)	4
Catherine Mercier	5
François-Xavier Mercier	7
Membership Renewal and Donations	10
Ancestral Couple: Pierre-Simon and MRenée	11
Family Names throughout Quebec	12
Membership Renewal Form	15
Our Sponsors - Checklist	16

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L'Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord is a member of the Fédération Histoire Québec

#### A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hello Everyone!

"Ah! How the snow has snowed!"

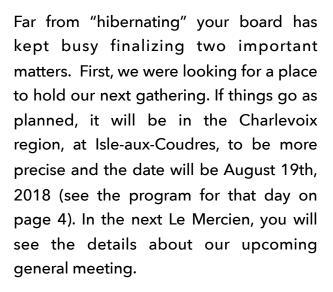
(Émile Nelligan)

"Ah! Winter never seems to pass"

(Gilles Vigneault)

The groundhog has seen his shadow

(Fred or Phil)



Secondly, we have worked on rebuilding our Internet site so as to make it state of the art. In this era of on-line commerce, rapid communications and fast searches, we strongly believe that the future of our association requires this. I was quickly "overwhelmed" myself by this medium. We have to adapt and make this modern tool work for us. If we use it efficiently, we will certainly be able to reach a long sought-after clientele. In March 2018, the new website of our Association will be on



line, and the address will remain unchanged: famillesmercier.org.

We do want to reach a new audience, so I am asking those of you who are grand-parents, "grandpas or grannies", to forward our address to your grandchildren, a generation very enthusiastic about the Internet.

We regularly reach out to our members, reminding them to renew their membership by May 31st each year. You could think of offering a membership as a birthday present for one of your grandchildren. Thank you for reading our newsletter and for sharing it as much as you can.

"Proud of our Ancestors"

Jacques Mercier n°341,

President

studiocimai@gmail.com

## THE ASSOCIATION INVITES YOU TO THE 33RD GATHERING ON SUNDAY AUGUST 19<sup>th</sup>, 2018 AT ISLE-AUX-COUDRES, IN THE CHARLEVOIX REGION

#### PROPOSED SCHEDULE \*

7:30am Breakfast (included in the room rate)

8:30am Welcome and registration 9:45am Annual general meeting

11:30am Three-course banquet lunch at Hôtel

Cap-aux-Pierres

1:30pm Tour of the island by bus

Visit to the Mills and to Verger Pedneault, a cider producer, and including a brief history of the business and the tasting of 4 products, as well as a cocktail hour before

our visit ends

5:00pm Return to the hotel.

End of the gathering and looking

forward to seeing you all again.

- \* Parents and friends enjoy the same rate as members. Registration fees include the luncheon (taxes and service included), the guided bus tour of the island, the 4 tastings and door prizes.
- \* This schedule could change depending upon the number of registered participants and the availability of the sites.
- \* You will be informed of any changes by email, through the Association's website and in the next issue of Le Mercien.
- \* Upcoming: Suggestions for activities for August 18th.

### DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? GET IN TOUCH WITH:

Jacques Mercier, President at (418) 228-5426 studiocimai@gmail.com

or

Gilmond Mercier, Director at (418) 383-3441 gilmondm@sogetel.net

## ALL THE MERCIERS ARE INVITED TO THE ANNUAL SUGAR BUSH FEAST AT EASTER ON APRIL 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2018



This year, the event will take place on Sunday April 1st, 2018 from 10:30am to 12:30pm at the sugar bush shack Au Sentier de l'Érable, 440 rang Montcalm, Sainte-Julienne, OC J0K 2T0.

How to get there: Take Highway 25 N towards Saint-Esprit (QC-125 N/QC-158 E), turn left onto QC-125 N (road signs show Sainte-Julienne/Rawdon/Saint-Donat), turn left on Laviolette Street, then turn right onto Rang Montcalm, and the sugar bush shack will be on the left. (it's about 30 minutes drive from Montreal).

The price for the meal is \$21 per adult (reduced price for children). Those who are interested should make a reservation by March 21, 2018 by contacting:

Denise Mercier no 210 at 450-439-2004 denisemercier@videotron.qc.ca

or

Lise St-André no 1572 at 450-795-3853 famillesmercier1985@gmail.com

#### **CATHERINE MERCIER**

#### **An Exceptional Communicator**

The dynamic host of the show "La semaine verte", on ICI Radio-Canada Télé shown on Saturdays at 5:00pm, is part of the 11th generation of the Mercier line starting with Julien to Pascal to Jean... Daughter of Serge-Éric Mercier and Annette Lévesque, she was born in Rimouski in 1977 and she spent her childhood at Bic by the Saint Lawrence estuary. She has one brother named Jacques-Éric. Showing early signs of her future talent, Catherine proudly represented her high school Paul-Hubert of Rimouski on the "Génies en herbe" television program. As a teenager, she was already concerned about eating right, protecting the environment and taking part in physical activity, such as cycling.



She first studied music, playing the cello and then she received a B.A. in Russian and German Studies at McGill University. Catherine is a polyglot, speaking seven languages, including Mandarin.

She started her career at **Radio-Canada** in 2002 as a researcher, before hosting **RDI Junior**, a news program for the 9 to 12 year-old audience. In 2007, she was part of the very first season of the program "**Une heure sur Terre**" and then she went to Beijing for the 2008 Summer Olympic Games, with the team of "**À l'heure de la Chine**". After that for more than two years, she covered the United Nations for Radio-Canada and CBC television.

In December 2010, the CBC announced that Catherine would be following in the footsteps of Jean-François Lépine and Don Murray in the demanding task of Bureau Chief and correspondent in Beijing, allowing us to discover this fascinating country better. Her one-year sabbatical in the Celestial Empire certainly proved to be an asset in her new position.

Catherine was also the host of a six-episode documentary series entitled: "Love, Hate and **Propaganda**", the first one broadcast in 2010. The documentary series deals with the role played by propaganda during the Second World War and the Cold War.

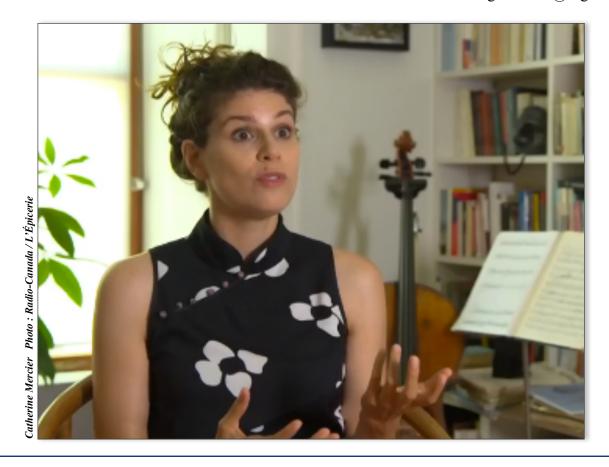
"Passionate about the planet", Catherine found herself in 2013, hosting at Radio-Canada a television program covering her fields of interest and her taste for discovery: "La Semaine verte". She reports on various subjects related to agriculture, food production, forestry, fisheries, fauna and the environment.

More than 600,000 viewers have been following Catherine every week over the last five years and she has taken only a short leave to become a mother.

#### References:

- 1- Wikipédia Catherine Mercier
- 2- Therrien, Richard, Le Soleil, 1a juin 2013
- 3- Radio-Canada: <a href="http://ici.radio-canada/tele/La-Semaine-Verte">http://ici.radio-canada/tele/La-Semaine-Verte</a>

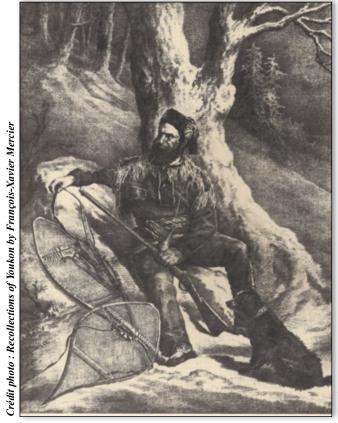
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#### "THE KING OF THE FUR TRADE IN THE NORTH" EXPLORER FRANÇOIS-XAVIER MERCIER

François-Xavier Mercier was born in June 1837 in Repentigny. He was the son of Victoire Therrien and François Mercier, who was the grandson of the ancestral couple Charles Mercier also known as Lajoie and his wife Marie-Anne Lahaise. There were six sons and four daughters in his family. Two of his sisters, Sophie and Marie-Hermine, joined the Congregation of Notre-Dame. His brothers, Joseph and Félix, excelled at building wooden cars in Montreal, while Moïse worked like him as a fur trader in the North.

An adventurer at heart, François-Xavier left his father's home at the age of 18 to go to the American Midwest. In Saint-Louis, Missouri, he was hired by the North West Company and worked in the fur trade. His imposing stature, at 1 metre 90 (6 feet four inches) and his uncommon strength, made quite an impression on the Indians living in the region between the Missouri River and the Rocky Mountains. Fort Benson in Montana and Fort Union in North Dakota served as bases for the company's commercial operations. His first campaign lasted three years of striving to avoid the traps set by the Sioux and the Blackfoot who were traditionally hostile to white men.



François-Xavier Mercier and his dog

In 1866, he came back to Canada, where he went to work for the Hudson's Bay Company. He then left for San Francisco where he founded the Pioneers Company with an American friend. Meanwhile, in 1867, Russia sold the huge territory of Alaska to the United States for an amount that would be the equivalent today of 1.7 billion dollars.

In June 1868, the two men embarked on a maritime expedition all the way to the Bering Sea, reaching as far as St. Michael, Alaska, a former Russian trading post. Inland from the Yukon River, they set up the Noukelakayet trading post, which survived only one year. In 1869, François-Xavier joined Hutchinson Kohl and Company, which soon became known as the Alaska Commercial Company. He became the general agent of the company. Based in St. Michael, he supervised the creation of trading posts, operating in a vast territory equal to two thirds of the area of the province of Quebec, with 34 white men scattered in various trading posts, including his brother Moïse at Fort Yukon and other French Canadians in strategic places for the fur trade. In the October 31st, 1881 edition of **Le Journal des Trois-Rivières** one can read: "Mercier went far beyond St. Michael, he even reached the 71st degree of longitude (sic). He traded with the people of Northern Siberia."



At the time the Mercier brothers arrived in the region, the border between American Alaska and the Canadian Yukon was not well defined. In 1869, an American Army officer determined the exact position of Fort Yukon, which then became part of the American territory. François-Xavier established the Belle Isle trading post right at the border between the two territories.

In 1874, wanting to cover the broadest possible territory, François-Xavier undertook with his crew the epic voyage of 1500 miles (2400 kilometres) on the Yukon River aboard a small steamship that had to be supplied with wood for fuel every six hours. They crossed the Canadian border during the summer. With Jack McQuesten, he founded Fort Reliance, the very first post in the region that would become the famous Klondike. "The post was located about six miles (9.7 kilometres) from the present location of Dawson City in the Yukon. He chose that site because it shortened the distance the aboriginals had to travel to sell their pelts. François-Xavier wrote in his journal that the location he had chosen fostered the discovery of several gold lodes since miners tended not to venture too far from supply posts while they were prospecting."



The white men of St. Michael and the Yukon River – 1885

His brother Moïse worked with him for 6 years in the Alaska Territory, from 1868 to 1874. Two years following his return to L'Assomption, he married Alida Mercier and they had three children: Hector, Philippe and Arthur. Moïse became an innkeeper in Sainte-Véronique (Rivière-Rouge) in the Laurentians and he is considered to be one of the founders of that parish, and he was its mayor at the start of the 20th century.

"François-Xavier Mercier has been described as the king of the fur trade in the North. He devoted seventeen years of his life to that endeavour (1868 to 1885). Mercier inspired respect, due to his giant-like stature, his dynamism and his shrewdness. He managed to gain the trust of independent traders as well as the First Nations' peoples." He gave a less than glowing description of the 'savages' of the region. The very rough life and the too short summers certainly contributed to making human relations much harder in a region where people were constantly in survival mode.

"François-Xavier was responsible for getting the first catholic missionaries to come to the territory. He indeed wrote to his family in the early 1870s, telling them that there should be catholic priests in the region. His family forwarded his request to the Superior of the Oblates in Montreal. Soon afterwards, Monseignor Clut and Father Lecorre embarked on an expedition on the Yukon River which took them to Fort Yukon." François-Xavier was single, but he became godfather to several Amerindians baptized during the prelate's visit.



Moïse and his wife Alida He became an innkeeper in Sainte-Véronique (Rivière Rouge) in the Laurentians.



"In 1885, as the fur trade was starting to be replaced by prospecting, Mercier left the territory to return home and set up his residence in Montreal. He then travelled to the United States and to France, where he made a presentation at the **Société géographique de Paris**." It is in fact on behalf of that society that he travelled, accompanied by some aboriginals, from Alaska to Siberia via the Bering Strait. He thus gave credence to the hypothesis that the American Indians' ancestors might have travelled that way to come from Asia to America.

François-Xavier died of a heart attack in Montreal on January 4th, 1906 at age 68. He was described grandly in the newspaper **La Patrie** as the "well-known explorer" and a cousin of the former Premier of Quebec: Honoré Mercier. That last statement was obviously erroneous because, although they lived around the same time, the former was a descendant from the line of Charles also known as Lajoie, while the latter was a descendant from the Julien line.

François-Xavier died in Montreal at the age of 68, on January 4th, 1906.

#### Bibliography:

1-Mercier, François Xavier "Recollections of the Youkon" Memoires from the Years 1868-1885 The Alaska Historical Society, Anchorage, Alaska.

2-Mercier, Ernest "François Xavier Mercier (1838-1906)" Le Mercien, volume 8 numéro 3, juillet 1992.

3-Mercier, Ernest "Des Mercier pionniers de l'Arctique" Le Mercien, volume 12 numéro 3 automne 1996.

4-Guay Francine "Mémoires de François-Xavier Mercier", L'Aurore boréale (Whitehorse), 20 novembre 1987.

5- Bédard, Maurice "Mémoires de François Xavier Mercier" Le Mercien, volume 4 numéro 3, juillet 1988.

6-WEBB, M "The Yukon and its History", Alaska Geographic: The Middle Yukon River, vol. 17, n° 3, 1990.

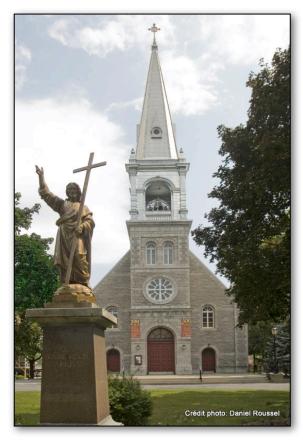
Gilmond Mercier #28 gilmondm@sogetel.net

Renewal of membership fees - Donations [as of February 15, 2018]

Thank you for your support!

## THE ANCESTRAL COUPLE PIERRE-SIMON MERCIER AND MARIE-RENÉE PINEAU

Parisian Pierre-Simon Mercier came to New France before 1725. The date of his marriage to Marie-Renée Pineau, on July 30th of that year is the first proof of his presence on North American soil. It is estimated that he was born around 1693 in Saint-Jean-en-Grève, located in Île-de-France, Paris. He was the son of Pierre Mercier and Catherine Baudo.



Pierre-Simon was a sacristan for the first church in the Saint-François-Xavier parish in Verchères, which was built between 1725 and 1730. This picture shows the present church of the parish.

Pierre-Simon may have had a peculiar place of birth, but he was also special because of his trade. He was one of the very few Mercier ancestors who arrived in New France before 1765 not to have settled on a plot of land. He was a sacristan in the parish of Saint-François-Xavier in Verchères.

His wife Marie-Renée Pineau was born in 1707 in Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pérade. She had ten brothers and sisters and her parents were Michel Pineau and Simone Beaudet. During her marriage with Pierre-Simon, she gave birth to two sons and five daughters: Joseph, Pierre-Simon Jr, Marie, Marie-Renée, Marie-Thérèse and two Marie-Louises.

The couple seems to have had an uneventful life and Pierre-Simon died in Verchères at the age of 47. Seven years later, his widow married Daniel Tétrault. Marie-Renée's passing was recorded on July 13th, 1789 in Verchères.

There are now numerous descendants of Joseph and Pierre-Simon Jr in the United States, particularly in Michigan and other Midwestern states. In Quebec, these descendants are mainly concentrated in the region to the South and East of Montreal.

#### **References:**

- 1- Mercier, Ernest. Mercier depuis des siècles, Sherbrooke 1987.
- 2- Mercier, Ernest. Généalogie et lieux, *Le Mercien*, La voix des Mercier d'Amérique, vol 10, numéro 2. 1994.
- 3- Généalogie québécoise et acadienne: www.nosorigines.qc.ca.

#### **FAMILY NAMES IN QUEBEC**

This article is largely based on a publication from the Institut de la statistique du Québec. See the complete reference for it at the foot of page 14.

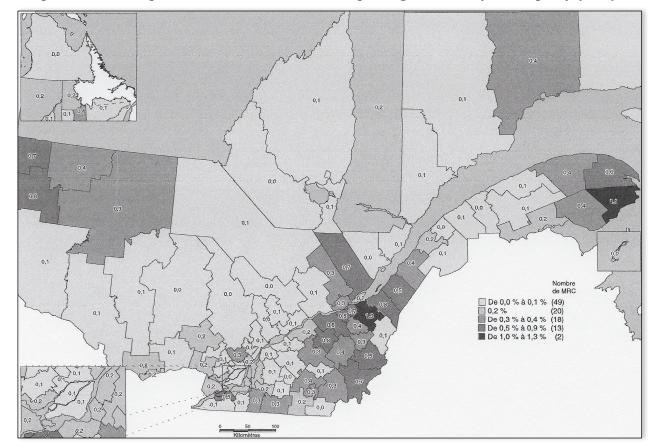
Family names are part of a society's heritage and they reflect its history. They already existed at the time of the Romans, but they disappeared with the decline of the empire. In European countries, they reappeared between the 13th and the 16th centuries. In Catholic countries, the Council of Trent (1545-1563) made family names mandatory. The system of the passing on of the family name was thus already well established in France by the time the first settlers from there arrived in Canada.

The origin of the **Mercier** surname has been thought to have arisen in two different ways. Most genealogists believe the origin of the name **Mercier** is linked with a trade. Merchants of haberdashery products were given the name **Mercier**. In his book entitled "**Mercier** depuis des siècles", Mr. Ernest Mercier however raised another hypothesis. He suggested that the name **Mercier** derived its origins from the Kingdom of Mercia, located in England. In the 11th century, following the conquest by William of Normandy, the English were forced to use a surname and that is probably how the people of the Kingdom of Mercia came to adopt the family name **Mercier**.

The origin of family names often comes from place names, for example Lallemand, Lafrance, Champagne, Breton, Durand... Or they may relate to the physical appearance of an ancestor: Leblanc, Leroux, Legrand, Petit... Or they may come from trades: Boucher, Boulanger, Marchand, Pelletier... They may even derive from their moral qualities: Labonté, Lesage, Ledoux, Latendresse... Then again they may be honorific titles: Roy, Prince, Leduc, Cardinal, Lévesque... One may also wonder about names that may have originated from terms of derision. We could go on and add the names derived from flowers, trees or animals.

Tremblay, Gagnon, Lavoie, Gagné and Boulanger are the most common names in Quebec. The name **Mercier** comes in 62nd place, with 15,000 members, while there are 83,000 Tremblays (see the table on page 14). In France, the name **Mercier** is ranked 31st and they are concentrated mainly in the North-West. In the country of our ancestors, the names Martin, Bernard, Thomas, Robert and Petit are at the top of the list. Among the names of English origin in Quebec, the Smiths are in first place as is also the case in the United States as well as in Great Britain.

Although the name Tremblay is the most common, Pierre Tremblay is not the French pioneer with the greatest number of descendants; that honour goes to Zacharie Cloutier. The name Cloutier ranks 23rd amongst the first original names. Master carpenter Zacharie Cloutier and his wife Xainte Dupont are the grandparents of Anne Cloutier, who married Paschal, the son of Julien and Marie Poulain, the original couple from whom the majority of **Merciers** are descended. The Paschal Mercier and Anne couple had four sons, three of whom had a good number of descendants.



Proportion of the Population with the Name Mercier per Regional County Municipality (RCM)

The proportional distribution of **Mercier** families shows a certain concentration on the South Shore across from Quebec City, particularly in the Bellechasse RCM, where 1.3% of the population is a **Mercier**. Two remote regions catch our attention: the RCM **Le Rocher-Percé**, with 1.1% and the RCM Rouyn-Noranda, with 0.08%.

In all of Quebec, about 20% of the population does not have a French origin. The most common name without a French origin is Nguyen, which is ranked 130th. We see around us more and more people originating from other parts of the world. In some cultures, the naming system includes using the father's first name with a suffix as surnames. Among the English, Johnson means "son of John"; for the Scots, Macdonald means son of Donald; for the Irish, the O in O'Connor means son of Connor; among the Slavs, Stravinsky means the son of Stravin, while a **ska** ending is used for a daughter; in the same way, for Israelis, a name starting with Ben, like Bensimon, means son of Simon.

Until 1981, there was no law regulating how people could name their children in Quebec. It was customary to give the children of a couple, the father's last name. The family law reform in the Civil Code has allowed parents to give a child the last name of either of them, or a combination of the mother's last name and the father's last name. Members of the same family may thus have different last names.

A trend seems to have developed and from 1980 to 2005, almost one child out of five was given a hyphenated last name. However, this fashion now seems to be on the decline. The hyphenated last name is most often made up of the mother's last name followed by the father's. The new Quebec law states that women must keep their maiden name their entire life.

The descendants of the Julien and Marie Poulain couple account for more than 90% of the Merciers, and they are relatively numerous in the Bellechasse, Montmagny, Lévis and Plessisville areas. The Merciers also known as Lajoies, descendants of the Charles and Marie-Anne Lahaise couple are found mainly in the Etchemins and Assomption RCMs. In the Gaspé, Bas-Laurent and Côte-Nord regions, there is a concentration of descendants of Pierre also known as Caudebec and Andrée Martin. The descendants of Pierre and Marguerite Lamain as well as those of Pierre-Simon and Marie-Renée Pineau, less numerous, live mainly in the regions of Quebec City, Saguenay and the Richelieu Valley respectively. In absolute numbers, the greater areas of Montreal and Quebec City contain undoubtedly the largest numbers of Merciers.

Rang	gNom I	Nombre	Ran	gNom	Nombre	Rang	Nom 1	Nombre	Ran	g Nom	Nombre	Rang	gNom	Nombr
1	Tremblay	81 500	21	Caron	24 300	41	Richard	17 200	61	Dion	14 300	81	Villeneuve	12 50
2	Gagnon	59 800	22	Beaulieu	22 700	42	Michaud	17 000	62	Mercier	14 300	82	Rousseau	12 40
3	Roy	57 000	23	Cloutier	22 500	43	Hébert	16 900	63	Bolduc	14 100	83	Gravel	12 40
1	Côté	52 300	24	Dubé	22 400	44	Desjardins	16 900	64	Bérubé	14 100	84	Thériault	12 30
5	Bouchar	d 40 100	25	Poirier	22 300	45	Couture	16 700	65	Boisvert	14 100	85	Lemay	12 10
5	Gauthie	39 500	26	Fournier	22 200	46	Turcotte	16 700	66	Langlois	13 900	86	Robert	11 90
7	Morin	37 700	27	Lapointe	22 000	47	Lachance	16 500	67	Ménard	13 700	87	Allard	11 90
}	Lavoie	34 800	28	Leclerc	21 500	48	Parent	16 300	68	Therrien	13 400	88	Deschênes	11 80
)	Fortin	34 000	29	Lefebvre	21 200	49	Blais	16 200	69	Plante	13 400	89	Giroux	11 80
0	Gagné	33 900	30	Poulin	20 300	50	Gosselin	16 000	70	Bilodeau	13 400	90	Guay	11 80
1	Ouellet	33 800	31	Thibault	20 300	51	Savard	15 900	71	Blanchette	13 400	91	Leduc	11 80
2	Pelletier	32 900	32	St-Pierre	20 000	52	Proulx	15 800	72	Dubois	13 300	92	Boivin	11 60
3	Bélange	32 500	33	Nadeau	19 500	53	Beaudoin	15 700	73	Champagr	ne 13 200	93	Charbonne	eau 11 60
4	Lévesque	e 31 200	34	Martin	19 400	54	Demers	15 400	74	Paradis	13 000	94	Lambert	11 50
5	Bergeror	30 200	35	Landry	19 200	55	Perreault	15 300	75	Fortier	12 900	95	Raymond	11 40
6	Leblanc	27 800	36	Martel	18 900	56	Boudreau	15 100	76	Arsenault	12 900	96	Vachon	11 40
7	Paquette	27 400	37	Bédard	18 900	57	Lemieux	14 700	77	Dupuis	12 800	97	Gilbert	11 20
8	Girard	26 900	38	Grenier	18 800	58	Cyr	14 600	78	Gaudreau	t 12 800	98	Audet	11 20
9	Simard	26 800	39	Lessard	18 000	59	Perron	14 600	79	Hamel	12 800	99	Jean	11 20
20	Boucher	25 800	40	Bernier	17 700	60	Dufour	14 400	80	Houle	12 800	100	Larouche	11 00

<sup>.</sup> Il s'agit d'une estimation effectuée à partir des proportions calculées dans le corpus de 2,5 millions de noms de parents d'enfants nés de 1986 à 2000 appliquées à la population de 7,6 millions estimée en janvier 2005.

Source: DUCHESNE, Louis (2006) <u>Les noms de famille au Québec: aspects statistiques et distribution spatiale</u> -- Institut de la statistique du Québec.

Gillmond #28

gilmondm@sogetel.net

Source : Institut de la statistique du Québec. L'effectif estimé des 1 000 premiers noms est sur le site Web de l'Institut de la statistique du Québec.



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

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Regular fee with spor	use:		\$	6 40 / 1 Year	or	\$ 75 / 2 Years			
						<del>&gt;</del>			
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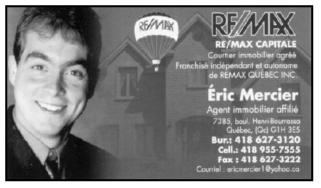
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#### **CHECKLIST**

**April 2018** - Le Mercien Spring Vol.  $34 n^{\circ}1$ 

May 2018 - Annual Membership Renewal.

**July 2018** - Le Mercien Summer Vol.  $34 n^{\circ}2$ 

August 2018 - Gathering, August 19th at Isleaux-Coudres

Until next time!

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