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Le Mercien

The Voice of the Merciers of North America

MERCIER GATHERING AUGUST 24th and 25th 2019 AT LAC-MÉGANTIC



The Lac-Mégantic marina in the downtown area, at the mouth of the Chaudière river, between Veterans Park on one side and J.-Émile Cloutier Park on the other.

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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	Communication	Québec, QC	2000
Lucienne Mercier-Croteau *	988	Teaching	Bonnyville, AB	2001
Ralph Mercier	1151	Administration	Québec (Charlesbourg), QC	2012
				(*) deceased

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	Mario Mercier	1544	Québec	(418) 903-4752	mario.mercier@bell.net
	Gaétan Mercier	881	Sherbrooke	(819) 346-6160	gamerc62@hotmail.ca
Services:					
Archives and Faceb	book:	28	Gilmond Mercier	(418) 383-3441	gilmondm@sogetel.net
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Newsletter Le Merc	cien: Layout	1572	Lise St-André	(450) 795-3853	famillesmercier1985@gmail.com
Genealogy:		222	Benoît Mercier	(418) 623-0833	benoitbmercier@hotmail.com
Genealogy:		1544	Mario Mercier	(418) 903-4752	mario.mercier@bell.net
Proofreading:		28	Céline Chabot	(418) 383-3441	gilmondm@sogetel.net
Translation, revisio	n and research:	337	Lucie Mercier		merccamp@gmail.com
Audit:		210	Denise Mercier		denisemercier@videotron.qc.ca

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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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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,

Here we are with a second issue of Le Mercien in less than a month. We are making up for lost time. In this issue, you will be reading about a variety of subjects, such as the legend of Donald Morrison which will prepare you for our gathering at Lac-Mégantic this coming August. You will also find "People are Snapping up his Saws" by Jean-Pierre Mercier from Sainte-Agathe de Lotbinière, then a tribute to Brigadier-General Christian Mercier, descendant of the Mercier also known as "Lajoie", as well as the true story about Catherine Mercier, a forgotten martyr like many others from the times of the beginning of the colony, and finally, an astonishing fact concerning the distribution of Merciers around the world: more than 50,000 in France, a little over 14,000 in Quebec and 9,000 in the United States.

For details concerning our upcoming gathering at Lac-Mégantic, please refer to



the previous issue of Le Mercien volume 34 no.4 or check our website homepage (famillesmercier.org). You will also then be able to read our special issue of *Le Mercien* dedicated to the 2018 Gathering.

June 1st is an important date, it being the deadline to renew your Association membership. Also, please add to your agenda the general meeting for the Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord, which is to be held next August 25th at Lac-Mégantic.

Hoping to see you there, Enjoy reading this issue! Jacques #341 President

INTERAC PAYMENT For those who are interested, it will be possible very soon to pay the Mercier Association's Membership Fee and other services electronically. To be continued ... 2019 GATHERING Our annual Mercier gettogether will be At Lac-Mégantic, August 25, 2019.

Information is available on our website and in Le Mercien Vol. 34 no. 4 Winter 2019

Newsletter of the Merciers of North America

THE LEGEND OF DONALD "ROBIN HOOD" MORRISON (DONALD MORRISON)

Donald Morrison was born in 1858 at Lac-Mégantic, in a family of Scottish settlers. Around 1876, he went to Western Canada and then to the United States, where he worked as a cowboy. In 1881, he came back to the Eastern Townships. In 1886, Morrison lost his family's farm following a financial dispute with Major Malcolm MacAulay, a strong man in the region.

Donald Morrison then started a personal crusade against crooks and new landowners. He later committed acts of vandalism and arson. As there were no police services in Mégantic, the municipality hired an American named Lucius "Jack" Warren, at \$2.50 a day, plus a \$25 bonus, for Morrison's arrest. However, Morrison ended up killing Warren on June 22, 1888.

Eyewitnesses (except one), claimed that Morrison had fired in self-defence. One must however recognize that Warren was doing his duty as a policeman by arresting a man who was presumed guilty of crimes.

The "crusader" managed to avoid being arrested thanks to the solidarity of the farmers. Some four hundred and fifty officers of the Provincial Police force were looking for him and a very high \$3,000 reward was offered for his arrest.

Canadians avidly read the newspapers covering the saga day by day.

Public opinion was divided: most French language newspapers and magazines considered Donald Morrison to be a bandit, while almost all English language newspapers portrayed him as an innocent man protected by his Scottish neighbours - somewhat like a modern-day Robin Hood. The Montreal Daily Star published two interviews by journalist Peter Spanyard with Morrison, which became a media sensation.

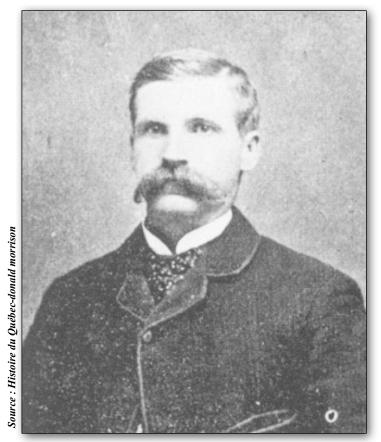
In the meantime, large-scale searches were organized to find him, and the surrounding woods, ditches and even some houses where he might have found refuge were searched thoroughly. Justice Dugas proclaimed martial law in the district and strictly prohibited anyone from providing shelter or food to the outlaw.

Some residents spent a few days in prison for having broken that law or for having declared their support for Morrison. For instance, D. K. MacDonald, a Canadian Pacific Railway operator, had posted on the ticket box at the Spring Hill train station a picture of Donald with the words "a good man".

On Easter Monday, April 21, 1889, Constable McMahon and a guide named Pierre Leroyer injured Morrison in the leg and caught him when he came to visit his parents. He was tried in Sherbrooke and was sentenced to 18 years of hard labour.

In the Montreal prison, Donald Morrison refused food and medication. Following a petition signed by several hundreds of citizens, the minister of Justice granted him his freedom and Morrison was released on June 19, 1894. He was taken to the Royal Victoria Hospital, where he succumbed to a pulmonary disease that was then called consumption (tuberculosis).

Donald Morrison has become a legendary character in the Eastern Townships, in Quebec. His story was told eloquently in the poem entitled *Donald Morrison, the Canadian Outlaw*, by Oscar Dhu, known as Angus Mackay (written in 1892). Several more works have been written about Morrison's life, among them a novel by Bernard Epps, The *Outlaw of Megantic*.



Portrait of Donald Morrison, Photograph from the era.

Source: Site Histoire du Québec, toute l'histoire du Québec depuis ses débuts. <u>http://histoire-du-</u> <u>quebec.ca/donald-morrison/</u>

LOGGERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD ARE SNAPPING UP HIS SAWS

A SAW MAKER IN CHAUDIÈRE-APPALACHES IS INTERNATIONALLY RENOWNED

At the age of 62, Jean-Pierre Mercier divides his time between designing saws and taking part in international competitions.

Well hidden in the middle of the forest in Sainte-Agathe-de-Lotbinière, some Québec saws are coveted by the most skilled lumberjacks on the planet, but they must be patient, having to wait more than two years to get their hands on one of them.



Competitive lumberjacks all over the world know Jean-Pierre Mercier's address, whether they live in Belgium, Australia, the United States or the rest of Canada. Orders have been coming in non-stop ever since the man started making saws full-time in 1997.

Almost one hour's drive from Québec City, on Road 271, a small sign bearing the name "Mercier" is barely visible among the trees; the sign is one of the rare indications that marks the hidden location where those competition tools are designed.

From Electronics to the Woods

Jean-Pierre Mercier worked in electronics for almost 20 years before heeding the call from the woods for good.



Mr. Mercier in the process of making a saw.

"My goal was to produce between 20 to 30 saws per year, and after that I thought would only repair the saws I had sold. The problem was that orders would not stop coming in", said the man whose family has a rich logger tradition.

After some sixty world championship titles and thirty world records, "Mercier" saws are in such demand that competing lumberjacks have to wait "at the very least" two years before getting their hands on the coveted tool.

Each saw requires about fifty hours of meticulous work to make and sells for somewhere between \$2000 and \$3000. The number of craftsmen who produce such high-performance saws can be counted on the fingers of one hand.

Interest for lumberjack competitions remains great elsewhere in the world, as well as in Western Canada and in the Maritimes, but in Quebec it has dropped drastically over the last ten years or so.

"It is no longer popular. This sport is mostly practiced by farmers and it has become difficult to reconcile both activities." said Mr. Mercier.

A Seasoned Competitor

This sexagenarian has used his own saws to win the biggest world competitions. He has accumulated some twenty world titles since he started competing in 1975, with his most recent victory occurring this past summer in Wisconsin. His passion for the sport is not waning.

"As long as one can, one continues!" he asserted.

<u>Reference</u>: Arnaud Koenig-Soutière, Le Journal de Québec, Monday, October 8, 2018.

BRIGADIER-GENERAL CHRISTIAN MERCIER, OMM, MSM, CD DEPUTY COMMANDING OFFICER, 2ND CANADIAN DIVISION AND JOINT TASK FORCE (EAST)



Her Excellency the Right Honorable Julie Payette, Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of Canada, presided over, on November 6, 2018, an investiture ceremony for the Order of Military Merit at the Canadian War Museum. The Governor General presented Christian Mercier with this distinction.

The Order was created to recognize meritorious service and devotion to duty by members of the Canadian Armed Forces and their exemplary commitment to Canada.

Brigadier-General Christian Mercier is Deputy Commander, 2nd Canadian Division and Joint Task Force (East) and Commander 34 Canadian Brigade Group, which is part of the Army Reserve of the 2nd Canadian Division, with headquarters located in Montreal.

He is the son of Marius Mercier (a descendant of Jean-Louis, Edmond, Louis, Jean-Louis and Charles Mercier also known as Lajoie) and Jacqueline Chabot. He is married to Caroline Gauthier and they are the parents of Alexandra, Stéphanie and Frédéric. Here is a summary of his military and civilian career.

Brigadier-General Christian Mercier enlisted in the Canadian Armed Forces in 1986 and he started his career with the Royal 22^e Régiment. From 1988 to 2002, he was at the same time Commanding and Staff Officer 3rd Battalion Royal 22^e Régiment, at the Infantry School, at the Canadian Forces Recruiting Centre in Sudbury and at the Battle School of the Royal 22^e Régiment 33 Canadian Brigade Group Headquarters.

In June 2003, he was transferred to Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu where he became Deputy Commanding Officer of the Canadian Forces Leadership and Recruit School. Two years later he became Commanding Officer until the summer of 2008. He then became G3, at Land Forces Quebec Area Headquarters until December of that year, when he was transferred to the First Reserve.

From the time of his transfer until 2016, he acted simultaneously as Deputy Chief of Staff at 34 Brigade Headquarters, Commanding Officer 6th Battalion Royal 22^e Régiment and Deputy Chief of Staff at 2nd Canadian Division. He had the privilege to lead 34 Canadian Brigade Group from 2016 to 2018. He has been Deputy Commander 2nd Canadian Division and Joint Task Force (East) since September 2018.

His civilian career started as Director General of *Corporation du Fort St-Jean* from January 2009 to April 2016. Since May 2016, he has been working at Union-Vie, a mutual insurance company with headquarters in Drummondville. He has been CEO of the company since December 2016.

He has a BA in Political Science from the University of Ottawa and a Master's degree in War Studies from the Royal Military College in Kingston. He is a graduate of the Canadian Army Command and Staff College and has two diplomas in advanced military studies from the Canadian Forces College in Toronto.

Brigadier-General Christian Mercier was one of the honorary presidents at the ceremonies celebrating the 150th Anniversary (1869-2019) of the *Régiment de la Chaudière* that his ancestor Captain Louis Mercier co-founded.

<u>Reference</u>: websites of the Royal 22nd Regiment and National Defense (The Maple Leaf).



Gilmond Mercier #28

Brigadier-General Jennie Carignan signs the Transfer of Command Document at the Change of Command Ceremony.

THE WORLD REMEMBERS





The world remembers the First World War from 1914-18. It was a bloody war and we marked the one hundredth anniversary of the armistice on November 11th of last year. More than eighteen million people died in that war, including 66,944 from Canada, 117,465 from the United States, 1,697,800 from France, 104,944 from Belgium and 994,138 from the United Kingdom. Among those apocalyptic numbers, how many of the lost soldiers were named Mercier? We can argue that there were almost a thousand of them, even without including the women and the men whose mother was a Mercier. Who were they? Among the Americans, there was an Ernest, Henry, Joseph, Napoléon and Steven; and among the Canadians, an Arthur, Boatswain, François-Xavier, Joseph and William, and finally there were 793 Frenchmen, 18 Belgians and 6 British named Mercier.

Gilmond Mercier #28

Reference: lemondesesouvient.org/rechercher-les-noms

REMINDER: Do not forget to renew your Annual Membership for the year 2019-2020

Membership fees and donations are our only resources to pay for the costs of Le Mercien, and the costs for the administration and the organization of our Association's activities. The Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord is a non-profit organization and is managed by its members, who are all volunteers.

FORGOTTEN WOMEN: MARTYRDOM OF CATHERINE MERCIER

We know about a dozen men named Mercier who came from France, but we must add to that at least two women whose family name was Mercier. At the time, girls (women) had a very small place in genealogy research, and so it is unfortunately not that easy to trace their lineage in France. It has been done in the case of Jeanne Mercier, Claude Poulain's wife, whose wedding took place in Quebec City on August 8, 1639, and whose daughter Marie Poulain married Julien Mercier in 1654. Here we will talk about Jean Boudart's wife, Catherine Mercier, who was martyred by the Iroquois in the summer of 1651.

MARTYRDOM OF CATHERINE MERCIER

The abduction and martyrdom of Catherine Mercier has been mentioned in several books about New-France. She married Jean Boudart in Larochelle, France, in 1642. Did the young couple arrive in Montréal at the same time as its founder, Mr. de Maisonneuve? Perhaps!

The first time Jean and Catherine are mentioned as being in North America was in 1649. On August 29th, they had a child named Marie baptized in Montréal, but she died soon after and was buried on September 1st of that year.

It was in 1651, in full view of the Fort at Villemarie, that Jean was brutally killed and Catherine was suddenly taken by the Iroquois. On May 6, eight or ten of them surprised "Grand-Jean" Boudart and one of his neighbours, Jean Chicot, while they were clearing the land at the edge of the woods. The Iroquois started chasing the two settlers. Chicot fled and hid under a tree they had recently taken down, while Boudart ran toward his house. As he neared it, he met his wife and he asked her if the door was open.

- "No, she said, I closed it.

- Ah! replied Boudart, we shall both die! Let's run quickly!"

Jean and Catherine ran as fast as they could toward their house. The Iroquois seized the woman, who could not run as fast as her husband. Arrived near their home and almost safe, Grand-Jean could not help but respond to Catherine's voice screaming and he turned around to go to defend her against their enemies. He jumped on the Iroquois with his fists, but they killed him on the spot, because they could not get rid of him nor make him a prisoner. They chopped his head off, taking it with them as a war trophy. They took his wife as a captive and then went in search of Jean Chicot.

When Grand-Jean's unfortunate companion was discovered, he offered a strong resistance to his aggressors. He defended himself with great vigour against all those barbarians, even though he was unarmed. He hit them so hard with his feet and his fists that his attackers could not manage to drag him with them or make him prisoner. Fearing a counter-attack by the French trying to rescue Chicot, the Iroquois decided to scalp Grand-Jean's companion.

Victorious in this furtive attack on pioneers of this new colony of Villemarie, the assailants hurried towards the St. Lawrence River, towards what is now the Old Port of Montréal, with Jean Chicot's scalp, including a small part of his cranium, plus Grand-Jean Boudart's head and the unfortunate captive, Catherine Mercier. What a haul for those barbarians returning to their country!

The funeral for Jean Boudart was held the day after his decapitation. The death certificate was written in Latin and translated by Father Adrien Pouliot S.J. and it contained the following details.

"In the year of our Lord 1651, on May 6, Jean Boudart was killed by the Iroquois (Hirocis); his wife, Catherine Mercier, was abducted. Both were of great virtue and had recently been given the sacraments, which they received quite frequently. The following day, May 7, the same Jean Boudart was buried in our cemetery by me, Claude Pijart, Priest of the Society of Jesus".

Where was the Jesuits' cemetery located on the island of Montreal? Where was the headless body of Jean Boudart buried? It was impossible for the author to pinpoint the exact location of the burial.

According to Faillon, Chicot survived almost 14 years after being scalped, living without his hair and part of his cranium, which the Iroquois had taken on May 6, 1651.

Poor Catherine Mercier was killed about two months after being abducted. She was still alive on July 5, 1651. The Iroquois inflicted on her "the usual torments" including mutilation and burning of the victim. On October 28, 1651, Father Paul Ragneau described her martyrdom as follows:

"A French woman was abducted at Villemarie, in the month of May, by some fifty Iroquois, in full view of the fort, and taken captive. She has since been burned in a cruel way by those barbarians, after they had cut off her breasts, her nose and ears, unloading their rage onto that poor innocent lamb, to avenge the death of eight of their men during a battle this past summer. God gave that poor woman courage and piety; throughout her torments, she continued imploring him. She kept her eyes turned towards heaven and her heart remained faithful to God until she died. With her last breath, she kept saying Jesus's name, as long as her pains lasted."

According to Faillon, the Iroquois war against the French and their Amerindian allies was "motivated as much by religion as by politics". Most of the aboriginals of the Trois-Rivières Residence had recently converted to Catholicism and were saying in the same circumstances: - "We are willing to risk our lives fighting the enemies of prayer and should we die fighting, we believe we would be dying to defend our Faith."

Had the European war mentality which was prevalent for centuries overseas been brought over to North America by the French and the English? Why has Catherine Mercier not been granted Sainthood at the same time as the Jesuit priests and their "lay helpers", who were martyred about the same time in North America and canonized early in this century? It was probably because she was a woman and she was married.

<u>Reference</u>: Ernest Mercier, Mercier depuis des siècles, Aman - Association des Mercier d'Amérique du Nord.

Various sources enabled us to make lists, as exhaustive as possible, of all the French who were killed or captured by the Iroquois between 1608 and 1662. Marcel Trudel noted that in and around Montreal killings caused by the Iroquois were not continuous; the variations in killing rates reveal the evolution of the relationship between the French and the Iroquois. The war between the various aboriginal nations in New-France territory was continuous throughout the period, but the French were mixed up in it only periodically. History shows that the Iroquois war started in 1641 and continued for 26 years. According to the Registries of Notre-Dame in Montreal, Trudel noted nine deaths that can be attributed to the Iroquois in 1662. We have been able to find only six deaths in Montreal and another one in captivity.

Marcel Trudel recently proposed a new chronology of events: a first war between 1647 and 1653, followed by a second one starting in 1657. However even this chronology does not account properly for the attacks on the French. An analysis of the chronology of events suggests six distinct phases (See Table I).

TABLE I - Chronology of events							
Period	1608-41	1642-49	1650-53	1654-59	1660-61	1662-66	TOTAL
Killed	4	18	32	19	58	22	153
Captive	2	14	25	32	59	11	143
Total	6	32	57	51	117	33	296

<u>Reference</u> : La guerre Iroquoise et la mortalité en Nouvelle-France 1608-1666 John N A. Dickinson - Département d'histoire Université de Montréal. Volume 36, Number 1, juin 1982.

MERCIERS AROUND THE WORLD

In the mid-1990s, according to various censuses, the number of people around the world named Mercier was estimated to be almost 100,000. The largest concentrations were in the following places:

Country:
Administrative Division with the largest
Concentrations:
Population Estimate:

France Paris 53,622

Canada Québec 14,300

United States Massachusetts 9,000

Switzerland Waadt 1,500

Germany Baden 300

Great-Bretain London 300

The name Mercier has been given to various locations in Quebec. According to the Commission de toponymie du Québec (Toponymy Commission of Quebec) in:

- 1998, there were 177 place names and

- 2018, there were 218 place names bearing the name Mercier.

1998	PLACE NAMES	2018	
63	streets	78	
28	lakes	31	
16	roads	22	
19	creeks	14	
8	coves	8	
8	avenues	8	
1	highway(s)	8	
7	farm streams*	7	
3	public parks	6	
4	bridges	5	
5	islands	4	
	salmon pools*	3	
2	nicknamed places*	3	
	hill	3	
2	points	3	
2	rivers	3 3	
2	bays	2	
1	dam(s)	2	
2	boulevards	2	
1	township(s) Mercier	2	
	hamlets*	2	
	houses (heritage place)	2 2 2	
	beach*	2	
	arrondissement	1	
1	post office	1	
	camp	1	
	canal	1	
	hydroelectric plant	1	
1	electoral riding	1	
1	building	1	
1	pond	1	
	line	1	
1	mount	1	
1	pass	1	
	neighbourhood	1	
1	lane	1	
1	summit	1	
1	town	1	
1	welcome centre		
1	strait		
1	municipality	1	
177		218	

Source: Commission de toponymie du Québec, <u>http://www.toponymie.gouv.qc.ca</u>



Association des Mercier de l'Amérique du Nord

560, rue Desbiens, Sainte-Madeleine (Québec) JOH 1S0 - Tel.: 450-795-3853 Email : <u>famillesmercier1985@gmail.com</u>

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	our cheque payable to: <u>4</u> ward it with this compl						
and forward it with this completed 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:							
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	Address:						
City:    Province/State:    Postal (Zip) code:      Email:    Member Nº:							
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I enclose my fee as a m	ember with spouse:	\$ 40/1 Year		\$ 75/2 Yea	rs 🗖	\$	
I wish to receive the ne	ewsletter " <i>Le Mercien</i> ":	by mail		by Ema	ail 🗖		
Signature:		D	Date:	,			
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