Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 1

The story of Arctic's Birth and Growth and The Tragedy That Pursued Its Founder Albert K. Barnes

It was April 13, 1900. A man standing in the hallway in the Lily of the Valley Hotel on Pond Street, Arctic, knocked at the door of Room 12. "Hello! Hello in there. Are you all right?" There was no answer. Again the man called. Again there was silence. Hurrying down stairs he got the master key to all the rooms in the house and came rushing back upstairs and opened the door.

There stretched out on the bed was the occupant, an old brown shawl around his shoulders. His trousers were thread bare. There were holes in the taps of his shoes. His cheap shirt was soiled. His hair was long, disheveled and needed a trimming. His flowing beard was stained and matted. It was beleived that the man had risen early, dressed and next moment collapsed on the bed. The man did not need to be told that life had gone out from the figure on the bed several hours ago. He drew the shawl over the man's face and went out.

In a few moments the news of this man's death went out to every corner of the town. "A. K. Barnes is dead!" And it was no wonder that the report stirred such comments. This man was the founder of that section of West Warwick known as Arctic. Friendless and alone in a cheerless back street hotel, he had departed this world, his end in sharp contrast to the spectacular life he had lived. The world had forgotten him. But in a better day the world - the small world around him - knew him well.

Born in South Scituate Sept. 29, 1823, Barnes was one of four sons of Thomas and Eliza Barnes. As a boy he went to the local schools and afterwards became a teacher. The work lacked something that his surging spirit needed. He quit teaching in search of something else. Soon he was buying cattle and stock and driving them to the Brighton Market. This was something he had liked. It enabled him to get around, meet people. It was fascinating, intriguing fun. He was his own boss. There was no clock to watch, nobody around to tell him what to do. Thus he became a drover.

One day he rode into the farm yard of Daniel Potter in Sterling, Conn. Potter kept a few cows, and there were some he wanted to sell. Barnes appraised them and a bargain was made. Just as he was riding out, he turned around to wave, and there on the porch stood a young woman. She smiled and seemed to want to wave but something held her back. In the next few weeks Barnes came back again and again to see that young woman. Her name was Deborah. They were married. Their married life was a happy one. For a while they lived in Sterling. There not too many months after the marriage Deborah Barnes died. There were no children. Albert K. Barnes packed up and moved out of town.

Now he was lost. He couldn't get over the loss. He quit being a drover and tried other occupations, thinking it would help him forget. But it didn't work out. In his wandering around, he came into western Warwick and made the acquaintance of Whitman Tibbits. Tibbits had a big piece of land he was eager to sell. It consisted of 100 acres. A deal was made and Barnes became the new owner. He was thinking in terms of a farm. But developing events changed the whole course of his life.

That 100 acres lay on the west side of the road leading from Arctic village to Centreville and joined land of John Greene. This was land formerly included in the estate of Dr. Stephen Harris, founder of Riverpoint. Barnes was now in the land business. In this section he became the pioneer land developer. In 1868 he purchased the Sion Arnold Farm which extended from a point beyond Warwick avenue to Gough avenue.

The following year he bought another tract from Ray G. Andrews. This lay to the west of the previous tract. Now Barnes owned the entire area from what is now or was the Ray Andrews bridge to the site of the present Riverpoint Advent Christian Church. People started coming to him to buy land.

This was known as the Arctic section of Warwick. Across the Pawtuxet River the A. & W. Sprague Manufacturing Company had erected a large new stone mill. Near the mill they erected a village. It was called Arctic. The Spragues had Baltic in Connecticut; Quidnick in Coventry; Natick on the lower stream. Now they had Arctic. Here it was cold, frosty. These mill owners liked a certain uniformity in their mill names. It seemed poetical as a name and rhymed with the names of their other mills.

By 1872 two other real estate men were already on the scene. They were Michael English, formerly a mule spinner in the valley mills and a veteran of the Civil War. He had wounds inflicted in the battle of Vicksburg. The other was Alpheus Fenner Angell of Lippitt. His partner was Wm. H. Arnold, an attorney.

Angell and Arnold joined by Barnes bought of John Greene at Centreville a large tract running from the present St. Mary's street at Arctic Square almost to what is now Ottawa Street and back to Robert Street. But almost immediately Barnes sold his interest in the land to his partners and withdrew.

There was in this vicinity a road now called Route 117. This road had many names. Mostly it was called the Country Road and led from Shawomet and cut across Coventry following the route of the present 117. It had been a main road of travel since colonial times.

Now Barnes cut a new road from what is now Arctic Square to the Ray Andrews bridge, the present Washington Street. Angell and English cut a road from Arctic Square to Centreville. Thus this section became linked with the main route of travel. Arctic was placed at the crossroads.

What were they going to call this place,? That was easy. It would be called Arctic Center. It would be the center of Arctic.

At the same time Barnes built a stable on Arctic Square. It stood on the site of what is now the Industrial Trust. Back in the rear was the town pound. Here Barnes held forth, buying, swapping horses, cows, wagons, harnesses and saddles. Here traders for miles around assembled. Around the pot bellied stove they talked business, politics, told stories. It was a kind of club. Barnes' congenial ways attracted men here.

Even now Barnes suffered greatly from attacks of bronchitis. When he started coughing, he bent over and seemed ready to expire from choking. For this reason he never smoked, but he loved to chew. There was always a fire in the stove. Barnes lived in fear of cold. Every time he went out in the rain he wore his rubbers. By now he had let his beard grow, thinking it would protect his throat. "Anybody with bronchitis has a cross to bear," he said. Yet his sickness did not make him sad, cynical, somber. On the contrary he was jovial, witty with a fund of anecdote. He liked music, and he even liked to sing, though his voice was not the best. And he had a great store of Bible knowledge. As a matter of fact he could deliver a fair sermon.

Barnes' big love was politics. In western Warwick he was a figure to be reckoned with in this field. His advice was sought, his patronage was sought. Barnes knew everybody. Everybody knew him. Months ahead he could tell which way the wind was blowing politically. For a time he was associated with Angell politically.

Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 2

The story of Arctic's Birth and Growth and The Tragedy That Pursued Its Founder Albert K. Barnes

As a matter of fact Barnes became so powerful politically that one year Benedict Lapham, wealthy mill owner at Centreville and Franklin Treat, son-in-law of Amos Lapham, Benedict's brother made an agreement with him enliting his aid in defeating the power Harris regime of Warwick. Barnes gloated over this victory.

Now at that time there was a great influx of French-Canadian people into the state, drawn here first by the tremendous production of the Spragues during the Civil War but now by the great expansion of Benjamin Brayton Knight and Robert Knight. (B.B. & R. Knight). These people liked Barnes. He liked them.

Being all catholic, these French families attended the only Catholic Church then open in central Rhode Island - St. Mary's Church in Crompton. The pastor here was the Rev. James P. Gibson, an English convert to Catholicism. French people struggled with English and Rev. Gibson struggled with French, both trying to make themselves understood.

It wasn't until the Providence diocese had been set apart from the Hartford Diocese in 1872 that something could be done about catering to the spiritual needs of the growing number of French families in what was now called the Pawtuxet Valley.

It was the day of company farms, company stores, company mills, company politics - a fabulous era unparalleled in the history of America. It was a day when foreign names twisted the tongue of mill superintendents - Lemoine, Boisvert, Beausoleil and many more; days when French names were anglicized - Boisvert to Greenwood; Paquin to Perkins; Leduc to Duke.

And in the middle of it was Barnes, his stable, his flowing beard, his deals. Five dollars down and two dollars a week. "Sure, you can have a piece of land," he was saying, sometimes throwing in a few French words he had picked up. "This is America. Everybody's entitled to a piece of land."

Now most of us never having been to Canada and having no understanding of the way in which old French villages of the dominion have come to flourish have no idea of the importance of a church in a community. In Canada all life is centered around the church.

Suddenly the creation of this new French church in western Warwick heralded a new day. For the church brought crowds of faithful on Sundays and on festive days. Hoping to capitalize on these crowds which came to this church morning, noon and night,

Arctic Square as it looked in the 1880's. To right stood the stable of Albert K. Barnes, in background is spire of St. John's Church.

At the urgent plea of Fr. Gibson, Bishop Hendricken created a separated parish for all the French families.

Immediately a site was sought. Where were they going to build the church? Lawyer Angell and Michael English sold to the trustees of the proposed French church - Maxim Godin (later Gorton) and Narcisse Fournier - three lots of land. Here St. John's Church was erected. It cost $40,000. And Barnes owned all the land across the street.

The year 1873 was a hard one. It has been called the Business Panic Year - the year of business collapse. In Rhode Island that year is memorable because it brought on the collapse of the famous house of A. & W. Sprague. Mills shut down. Banks closed up. People were going hungry. Jobs were hard to find.

Yet the French families scraped up the money, and their church was completed. It was entirely of wood with a full basement. On July 4, 1875 the new St. John's Church was dedicated. The event was milestone in the annals of the Roman Catholic Church in Rhode Island.

This was now the largest French-speaking parish in the diocese - in fact, in the state. From the province of Quebec they had poured into this section of the state, the flow of them keeping pace with the mushrooming cotton textile industry. Tenement houses were filled.

stores opened up on main street facing St. John's Church. And Barnes from his stable sold the land.

And Barnes was a showman. Pond Street in Arctic was truly what its name implied - a pond. But Barnes, perhaps taking ideas from the life of Phineas T. Barnum, knew how to whip up interest. One of his favorite stunts was to have band concerts on the sites of his land developments. That's what he did on Pond Street.

Crowds came and Barnes was there, "parleying vooing" a little and getting names on the dotted lines. Once he had a prominent French lecturer come here. Suddenly Arctic was booming as a business center.

Barnes sat around in his stable, joshing with his cronies, proud of what he was doing and prouder still of what they were saying about him - that he was the "father of Arctic."

In the midst of all this Barnes had gotten over the loss of Deborah Potter of Sterling. He got acquainted with another woman. Her name was Emily Kenyon, daughter of Peleg and Eliza Kenyon of Providence. She was 46, a brunette, pink cheeked, gay, a lover of horses and social life. She and Barnes were married. But the marriage didn't last. They were divorced.

Emily Kenyon died May 5, 1888 and was buried in Phenix.

Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 3

The story of Arctic's Birth and Growth and The Tragedy That Pursued Its Founder Albert K. Barnes

In the meanwhile the French merchants of Arctic got together and had handbills printed by the thousands. Wagon loads of these were taken into nearby villages and adjoining towns. By leaps and bounds Arctic grew. Some of the land that Barnes had sold for two and three hundred dollars rose in value into the thousand dollar figure.

Arctic got to be the largest shopping center in western Rhode Island. Everybody, it seemed, thought they could buy it cheaper and get better quality in Arctic.

Now a new name for Arctic began to be heard. That new name came from Barnes' own lips in this way: One day a Phenix man came into Barnes' stable on Arctic Square and said: "Barnes, I've just made a purchase here, and I've been robbed." Barnes looked up at the man and said: "Why, my friend, haven't you ever heard the little story from the Bible about the man who came down from Damascus and journeyed to Jericho and fell in among the forty thieves and was relieved of his possessions? Well, this is a second Jericho."

The story stuck. Arctic had a new name. It was heard as much in Westerly as in Pascoag. Barnes thought it was a better name anyway. What better name for a village that owed its growth to a church?

In his story telling at his stable, Barnes often recited to his cronies a story known to all Christians - a story from the Old Testament - the story of the capture of Jericho by the Israelites under Joshua.

"So the people shouted when the priests blew with their trumpets: and it came to pass . . . that the wall fell down flat . . . And they utterly destroyed all that was in the city . . . with the edge of the sword. (Joshua 6: 20-21).

James P. McNeilis, a newspaper reporter in the valley and a master of satire, picked up the story and published it - all about Jericho. Now McNeilis started calling Arctic Jericho. People liked it. It had greater meaning than Arctic.

When the electric cars finally appeared, conductors pulling in at Arctic Square shouted - "Jericho! Jericho! Everybody out!"

Joseph Bouchard who ran a furniture store in Arctic and had moved his business here from Natick, waged a one-man crusade against the name - Jericho. He waited for the electric cars when they stopped and went up into the car to reprimand the conductor.

"This is not Jericho. This is Arctic Center. If you don't stop calling this Jericho I'll report you to the company."

Barnes was always good for a soft touch from friends down and out. The people he had helped were legion around Warwick. As a matter of fact, Barnes was not as iron-hearted as he might appear. His name in Scituate still endures in the A. K. Barnes Fund which he set up to help the poor of his native town.

Meanwhile he traded horses with Bill Cole, John Wade and ever so many others. A hog for a plow. A plow for a team wagon.

But Barnes was slowing down, growing old, losing his pep. He had aches and pains and tired easily and was always out of breath. And there was always his fear of catching cold haunting him. Now he wore an old brown shawl over his shoulders, guarding abainst the cold. And there was always a fire in the stove in his stable.

All in all, Barnes didn't think life had treated him too kindly. He had the knack of making money, but in matters of love he had been unfortunate since the beginning. First he had lost Deborah. Then he had divorced Emily. Now he had no children.

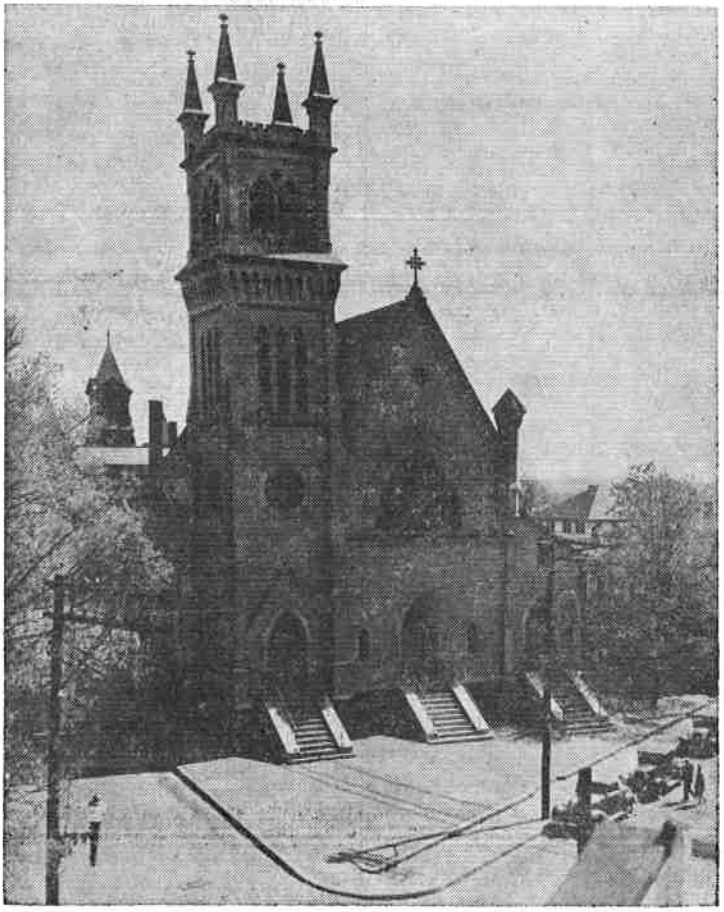
"I've got no kith and no kin around me," he said in his somber moments. "Why should I hoard up a lot of money?"

Barnes finally sold his stable and grew poorer and poorer. Soon he was forgotten. People saw him some times walking around Arctic, his flowing beard, old brown shawl wrapped around him, and some of the newer generation were already saying: "Who's that man?" He was lonely and despairing and melancholy. Hardly anybody came to see him.

Finally he took a room in the Lily of the Valley Hotel - an upstairs room, too. Once in a while he came down to the bar. But this wasn't the Barnes of the old days; only the skeleton of him; the crushed spirit, the fallen idol. And it was in this hotel that he was found dead.

The body was taken to the Epworth Chapel on Washington Street - the Epworth Chapel which had been opened up here as a mission of the Centreville Methodist Church largely at the instigation of Lewis Williams who had the carriage repository next door.

Bearers were: William C. Tibbitts, John Tiffany, Orrin and Clarke Kinne.



Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 4

"Monsieur Lapomme" and His Influence; The Flood of French and Their Hopes to Establish a Little Canada in Western Rhode Island

Continuation of part three.

After the services and in accordance with his wishes, his body was taken to Boston for cremation and the ashes were returned to Arctic and thrown upon the wind over this town, there to mingle forever with the place he had been instrumental in building.

Years later McNeilis, the reporter and Col. James Ray, sexton at the Knotty Oak Baptist Church, got together. They thought that something should be done to perpetuate the memory of this man.

Through their efforts a granite memorial was erected in Knotty Oak cemetery in memory of Albert K. Barnes. On it were chiseled the words:

ALBERT K. BARNES
"Founder of Jericho"
Born Spt. 29, 1823
Died April 13, 1900
"Behold, dear friend, as you pass by
Beneath this granite rock my ashes lie.
My life's work is ended."

End of part three.

"Monsieur Lapomme" early established close personal ties with the French, speaking their language, though broken and visiting with them, while the Spragues dealt with the French on a pure corporate basis. In any event the Spragues personally had little time to cultivate close relationship with these workers, being too much engaged with their own affairs. Thus "Monsieur Lapomme" became the idol of the French in this region. More of them wanted to work for "Monsieur Lapomme" than they did for the Spragues whom they seldom saw in person.

The Rev. James P. Gibson, pastor at St. Mary's Church in Crompton, soon had a problem on his hands. There was already a Catholic Church in Phenix—SS Peter and Paul's or the Rock Chapel—but no church in between Crompton and Phenix where so large a number of Catholics were concentrating. He asked for and obtained assistance to take care of these people. A priest was sent here. His name was the Rev. Henry Spruyt who spoke French.

Permission was granted to say Mass in Odd Fellows' Hall at Riverpoint, and for the time being the situation was under control. In the meanwhile the French made application for the construction of their own church to be called St. John the Baptist. When the basement of this new church was finished, Masses in Odd Fellows' hall were abandoned and services were transferred to the church. Fr. Spruyt stayed until 1878. He had become ill and was aging.

Weave shop operatives at the Centreville mill in the 1880's when the great tide of French-Canadian immigration got underway. Note the derbies and the dinner pails.

Benedict Lapham in 1852 had come to Centreville and bought a mill site on the Pawtuxet River from the heirs of John Greene. By 1871 he had erected a new mill here. It was 300 feet long and had 40,000 spindles. In 1852 also the A. & W. Sprague Manufacturing Company had purchased a mill site down-stream at Arctic and launched the construction of a new mill that was 312 feet long; 70 feet wide and four stories high. By March, 1865 the mill burned down and was immediately rebuilt on an even larger scale. It had 22,000 spindles.

These two firms set off the wave of immigration of the French from the Province of Quebec. Soon they filled every tenement house that the two companies owned. Lapham played a more important role in the development of French immigration. The French thought he was originally French; that his name was not truly Yankee Lapham, but "Lapomme", meaning "the apple." That was the way they pronounced the name. And in their own minds they built up a closer kinship with this man and his brother Enos Lapham.

The services were taken over by Fathers Lanegan and Perkins. Then came the Rev. George Mashony from Central Falls and finally on Aug. 28, 1879, the Rev. James Smith assumed the pastorate assisted by the Rev. Henry Kennedy and Henry Couboy. And of course these priests were chosen because they could speak French, for priests of French extraction were not then available. Finally in September, 1887, the Rev. Charles P. Gaboury arrived to assume the pastorate.

Fr. Gaboury's assistant was the Rev. L. C. Massicotte. By this time the parish had swelled to a staggering total of 4500, and all French. Soon for the first time this section of western Warwick was treated to still another strange spectacle—the sight of Catholic nuns who arrived from Canada to teach in the parochial school.

Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 5

"Monsieur Lapomme" and His Influence; The Flood of French and Their Hopes to Establish a Little Canada in Western Rhode Island

Now the nuns marshalled all the boys and girls into classrooms, often singing the French national anthem—"O Canada" as they filed two-by-twos into the school. Overnight the school was filled. Little English was spoken or studied in this school. All lessons were conducted in French. All textbooks were French. The history of Canada dwelling on all the glorious traditions of New France, not the history of the United States, was studied.

For higher education, boys and girls, especially boys, were sent to schools in Canada. Boys went to St. Cesaire, St. Hyacinthe or Sherbrooke and elsewhere. These schools were called "colleges", girl's schools, convents. It was something for a boy or girl to be sent to these schools. Only the well-to-do could afford such a luxury. But for the most part boys and girls joined their parents at work in the factory, sometimes quitting even at eleven and twelve years old.

Thus it could be readily seen that this large group of immigrants intended to take over this promising frontier of western Rhode Island and impose upon it their old world culture. In short they were going to absorb this region, and not permit themselves to be absorbed by it. This was going to be another Little Canada. Even now one section of North Centreville was called" le Manitoba." Even when boys and girls spoke English parents reprimanded them, urging them to speak French. Parents were urged by their clergymen to speak French in the homes, to keep alive their mother tongue.

And by the advent of the 80's the French took further steps to strengthen their hold on this section. March 15, 1885 the Societe St. Jean Baptiste de Centreville was organized and on Jan. 12, 1886 was incorporated. Meetings were held in the basement of St. John's Church for the time being. This organization was for mutual aid, to help the French, promote their advancement, preserve their culture.

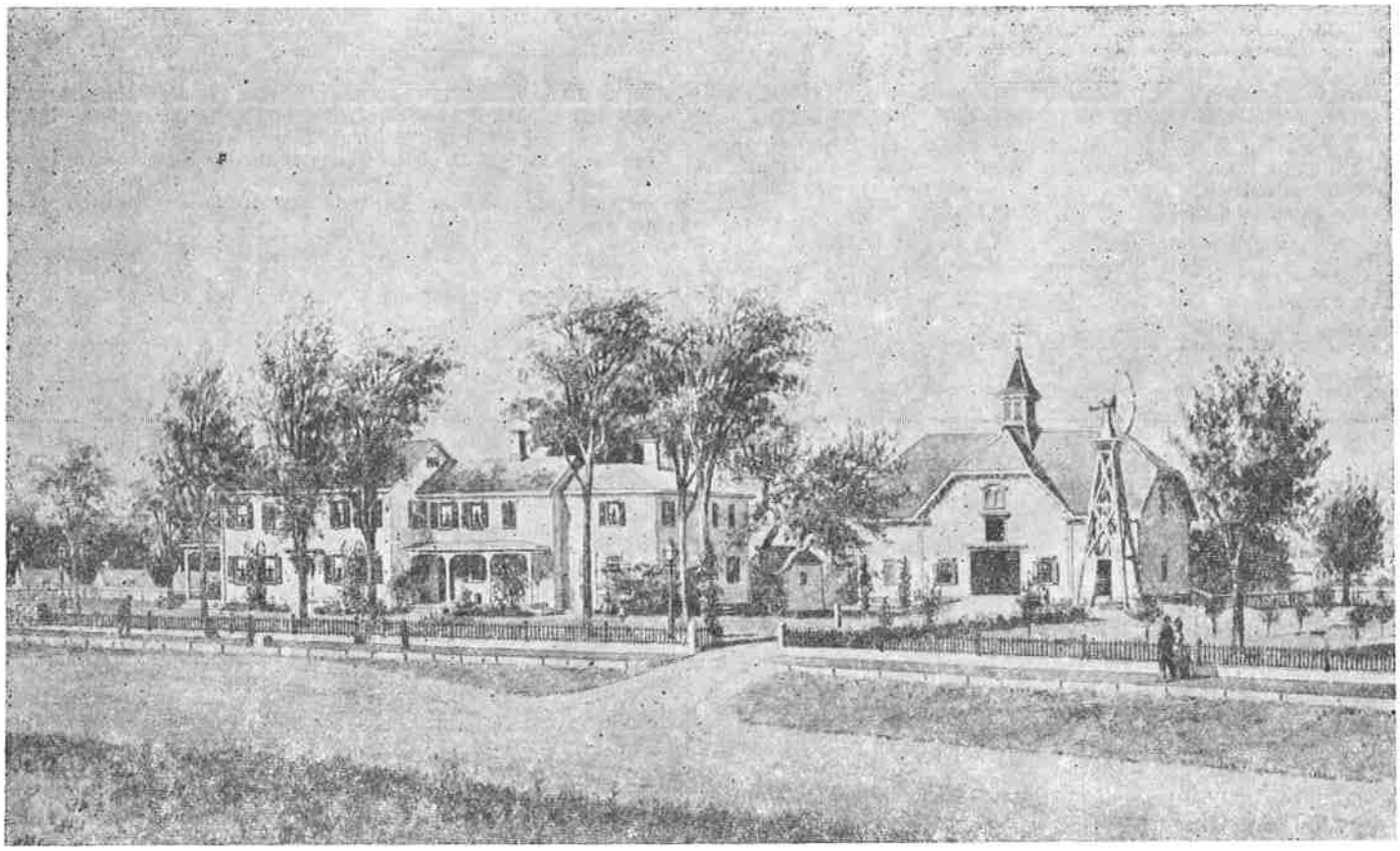
At one of these meetings Pierre Bedard, a merchant and the church organist, made a motion seconded by Edouard Hebert that a sum of money be set aside for the purchase of land on which to build a hall, and on March 2, 1886 Leonard Love Jr., transferred title to three lots of land near Centreville depot to this society. St. John's Hall was soon constructed .And in the peak of this buiding over the front entrance a hand-carved beaver, emblem of French Canada, was placed. This building was to become the Anthenaeum of the French in western Rhode Island.

Around this hall, the church and the parochial school all life for the French revolved. From here started the parades marking the feast of St. John the Baptist. Here they never opened a meeting but what they saluted the French flag and sang, "O' Canada." On these grounds were the lawn parties and various religious fetes. Inside were the bazaars, lectures, concerts, whist parties, wedding receptions.

A Frenchman felt as much at home here as he did in Canada; more so, at times, in fact, for here besides the new freedom was the additional security stimulatd by the feel of money.

In the interim stores that were springing up across from the French church displayed signs written in French. French, not English, was the language spoken.

Why were these people from over the border so perfectly fitted to the cotton textile industry? There were several reasons. First there was the character of the French. That character had been formed for the most part in humble surroundings on Canadian farms. Thus they were not unlike the native Yankees occupying farms in outlying areas of the Pawtuxet Valley. Traits of character were much the same. The differences was in language. This similarity accounted for the ability of the two—Yankee and French—to get along.



Sunny-Side, residence of Enos Lapham, which reminded the French of "le manoir"—the manor—around which so much of French society in the seigniories of Canada revolved.

Next there was the native ability of the French. On Canadian farms the French had their own looms, their own spinning wheels. They raised their own wool, raised flax, made their own linen. Thus they were already quite familiar with some of the elementary processes involved in cotton manufacturing.

Moreover, the women for the most part sewed beautifully knitted perfectly, their hearts in such work of creation. It was the way in which they had been brought up.

Now before them were opportunities to do this same sort of thing in a modern factory and be well-repaid for the effort. No wonder they loved the work. Cotton manufacturers admitted that these French people were God's gift to the cotton mills. Even today in the few surviving cotton mills there is a preference for the French.

Small wonder then that these people, soon spreading out all over New England, became the backbone of cotton manufacturing.

Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 6

"Monsieur Lapomme" and His Influence; The Flood of French and Their Hopes to Establish a Little Canada in Western Rhode Island

In the meanwhile, Arctic was not Arctic yet. It was North Centreville. Arctic at this time was a suburb of Centreville. Since the beginning it was felt that Centreville would become the business center of the Pawtuxet Valley. The Laphams hoped it would be that way, at any rate.

Benedict Lapham, a power in western Warwick, was trying to keep everything under the name of Centreville. It was Benedict Lapham of Centreville who persuaded the railroad to open a depot at North Centreville. Arctic Center was not to come as a name until the overflow from the factory villages at Arctic was to strike headlong into Centreville—a development that was hastened by Albert K. Barnes.

In the meanwhile the mills at Centreville and Arctic were running at full capacity. Work began at seven a.m. and stopped at noon. Work resumed at one o'clock and ended at 6:30. Saturdays the mills opened at the usual time in the morning and shut down at 3:30 in the afternoon.

The Laphams had their company store and farm and village at Centreville; the Spragues theirs at Arctic. Wagons made deliveries to the homes. All purchases were charged and deducted from the wages. Payday was Saturday.

And from these villages — Arctic and Centreville —letters poured out to Canada, praising life here and urging relatives and friends to come and join them. In this way was the flood accelerated.

All mail went out from Centreville. Centreville had the first post office in the Pawtuxet Valley. The Arctic post office was still to come.

Factory goods — raw and finished—moved in and out of the depot at North Centreville. Likewise too, immigrants arrived here from Canada on the trains. This little piece of ground by the railroad tracks was the port of entry to a new life.

For our further understanding of these French immigrants, we ought to have a knowledge of their historical background. For this reason we must go back briefly to the founding of Canada. In 1665 there arrived in New France 24 companies of elite troops. They formed the famous regiment of Carignan-Salieres. The troops numbered close to 1300 men. It was a total greater than the whole population of Quebec. Most of the officers were young noblemen, among them the captains de Contrecoeur, de St. Ours, de Saurel (Sorel), de Valrennes, de La Valtrie, all having distinguished themselves in the recent wars on the continent of Europe.

Enos Lapham

With them came a vice-roy- the Marquis de Tracy; Daniel de Courcelles, veteran general who was to serve as governor and Talon, the intendant. As these troops put down Iroquois uprisings, they erected forts on the Richelieu River. De Saurel and de Chambly built two forts which carried their names while Salieres built the third which was called St. Therese.

Talon's name in the history of New France remains outstanding as the "father of French colonization". Chief among his works was the granting of some 60 seigniories to the officers of the famous regiment.

Insofar as our study is concerned, we need interest ourselves only in the seigniory granted to Pierre de St. Ours, founder of St. Ours for it was from this place largely that this section of Rhode Island (and Woonsocket too, for that matter) was to draw so great a population, the first immigration stemming from within this hemisphere that was to take place in the United States.

Eager to reward his young noblemen for their service in the recent Indian wars, His Majesty granted seigniories to these men, thus transplanting the feudal system from the old world to the new. This system was to provide the social organization which spurred the moral and material development of New France.

The structure of this feudal hierarghacy comprised the company which was vassal to the king; the local lords or squires who received their fiefs from the company and the serf who obtained his fief in turn from the lord. The lord owned the grist mill, the saw mill and the land and obliged the tenant to pay rent and to have his grain ground in the seigniorial grist mill. For this service the lord retained a 14th part of the meal. Also the lord exacted from the tenant hours of labor which he required to be performed during the three principal seasons of agriculture - spring, summer and fall.

The lord built and maintained the fort (later to become the manor house) opened roads, built bridges and maintained them. Thus the "seigneur" became the protector and the father of what the French called "le censitaire" or "roturiers". Still another class was "l'engage" or paid pioneer.

In this dim period the population of New France increased but slightly. However, soon Versaille shipped prisoners tc settle the land. But largely the population at this early period was increased by the extraordinary fecundity of the colonists.

Life for the French colonist on these farms was no different than on the American colonial farm. The colonist devoted his time to agriculture raising of wheat, corn, barley and flax chiefly. Further he raised beef, swine, sheep and horses. His great specialty was pork provided him with ham and bacon and sausage. His home was a log cabin. His cooking was done in the fireplace. In between chores on the farm he hunted and fished. Some of his hunting trips took him by canoe often as far away as Lake Michigan.

Along with these colonists came Catholic missionaries to establish churches and schools. By 1749 each village had its own school. Instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. Thus most all learned to read and write the purest French. In addition a model farm was established at St. Jaochim de Cap-Tourmente. This served as a school of agriculture. Trades were taught at Montreal by an order of brothers founded by Jean Francois Charon. Elsewhere painting, sculpture and architecture was also taught. The Jesuits were especially outstanding as teachers.

Such a splendid start toward the establishment of a new nation was interrupted, however, by repeated wars which in the end destroyed French institutions and terminated finally with the total defeat of the French and the imposition of absolute English rule.

Then the French were driven into a struggle for survival. This challenge was felt on two fronts - civil and religious. In the meanwhile the colonists were deserted by France and left alone to carry on against the world's most formidable power. Thus were the French placed in the same position as the American colonies. Some of the aspects were different perhaps but the struggle was the same.

And about this time the American colonies plunged into a struggle for independence. And the heart of the French Canadians turned to the American patriots. At the same time the first Continental Congress representing the thirteen colonies appealed to the French Canadians to join in the revolution, promising that if they helped Canada would become a fourteenth colony. Hundreds of French Canadians began to pour across the frontiers to volunteer in the Continental army. In the interim hundreds remaining in the French settlements were thrown into jail on the least suspicion of sympathy with the Americans.

Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 7

Background of French-Canadians; Feudal System The Seigniories; St. Ours; American Hopes For Canada as 14th Colony

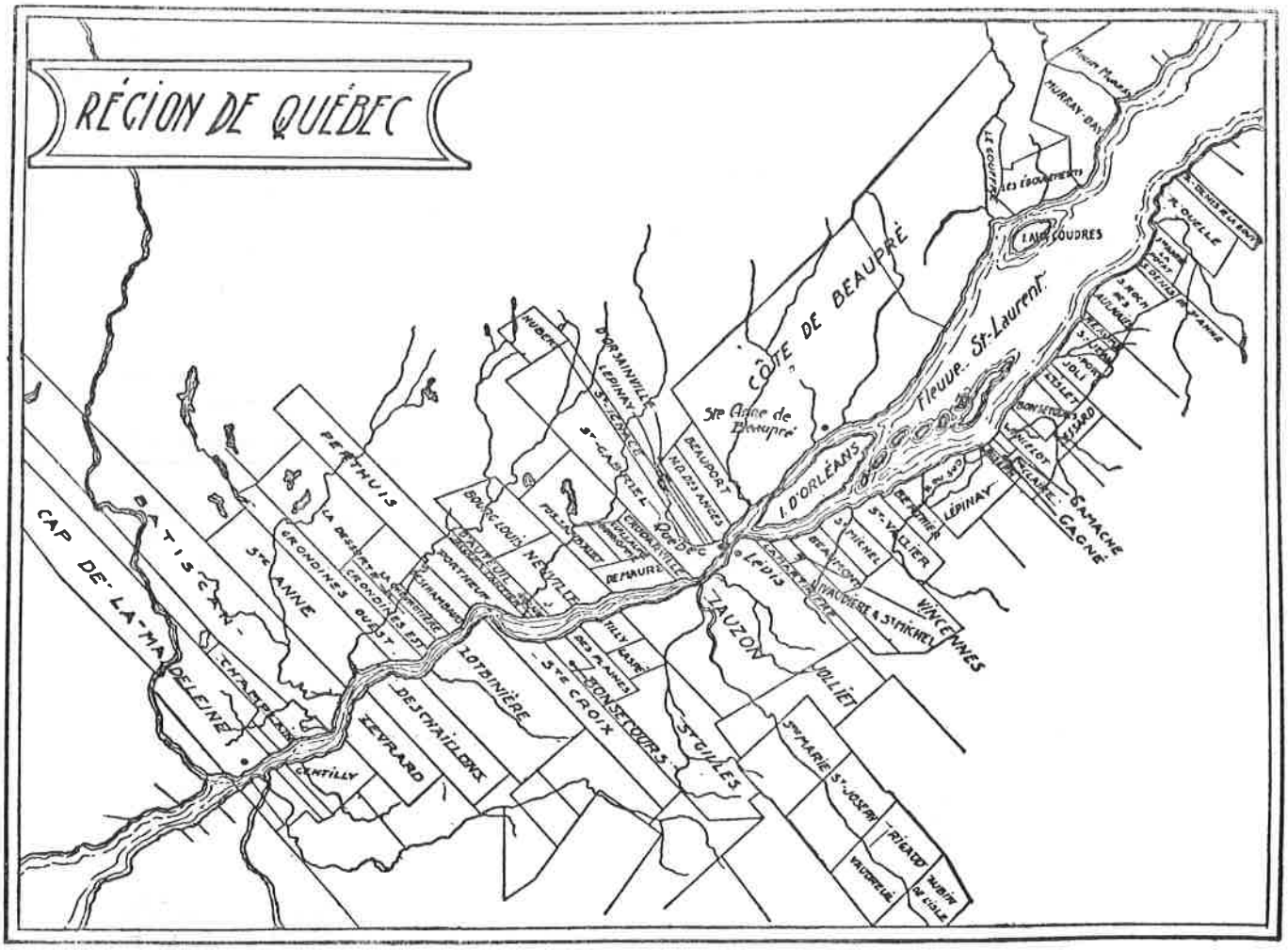
Thus while the French Canadians stood poised in indecision, Gen. Washington dispatched Montgomery and Arnold into Canada—the first going to attack Montreal; the latter, Quebec. In the latter expedition, Col. Christopher Greene of Warwick and many more from Rhode Island were enlisted.

In the ensuing battle at Quebec Arnold was wounded and Montgomery was killed. It was estimated that in these battles, only a handful of French took part, leaving more than 2000 British to do the actual fighting.

France watched the progress of the war for independence in America with interest. Its interest was intensified with the arrival of Benjamin Franklin at Versailles. He won sympathy for the American colonies. However, the feeling did not mount until the battle at Saratoga in which the British were defeated. The French alliance was signed in 1778, making France America's first ally and giving France the opportunity it had long sought to even the score with its old enemy.

With the American revolution settled, French Canada now was further torn apart with the problems of the Loyalists who poured in from the New England colonies. These people, hundreds of them from Newport, felt duty bound to their King. Their estates had been confiscated and they had fled from the wrath of the Sons of Liberty. Now the English King came to the aid of the Loyalists, giving them lands and money. Thus Canada became even more English to the utter despair of the French.

To further complicate matters, the issue of religion soon engulfed the land as the English sought to absorb the Canadian French into the Church of England. Even the French language by now was virtually outlawed. Thus the French were again confronted with a new struggle, one more intense than ever. It was the struggle of this period which brought to the fore the French Canadian patriots—Jean Antoine Panet. Joseph Papineau. Pierre Bedard and others.



The Seigniorial country near Quebec City showing the many dividing lines of land grants made to Seigneurs.

On his arrival at Newport with the first wave of French forces — army and navy — the Count D'Estaing appealed to the French to rise up against the British, an appeal that was further voiced by the Marquis de Lafayette. But the clergy aided by the local "seigneurs" promoted the neutrality of the French Canadians. greatly with the reminders that the American guarantee of religious freedom was false.

Finally Rochambeau arrived, heralding the coming of still larger forces—army and navy. He landed at Newport and marched from here to inflict a crushing defeat upon the British at Yorktown. Without the aid of the French the American revolution would certainly have ended in defeat, for at the very moment of the arrival of French aid, the American patriots were utterly exhausted in spirit and finance. It was with all this in mind that General Pershing landed on French soil at the start of the first World War cried out, "Lafayette, we are here"

Then came the War of 1812. Henry Clay, Jefferson and other great American patriots now felt certain that the United States could easily annex Canada. for the latter had but 50,000 from which to form an army while the former had 7,000,000. And of the Canadian population there was the dissatisfied French Canadians. Again it was felt the French would support the Americans.

I am sorry that my history of Arctic had to end so abruptly. I had not counted on writing at such length on the subject. However, the more I studied the subject, the more my interest deepened, growing eventually into book length. The story will be continued next Spring. Meanwhile thanks to all our members for their many letters showing their sustained interest in this work.

Mathias P. Harpin, editor.

Western Warwick's Spectacular Era

BY MATHIAS P. HARPIN

PART 8

Background of French-Canadians; Feudal System The Seigniories; St. Ours; American Hopes For Canada as 14th Colony

When the war was over we had driven the English from the Great Lakes but had failed again to annex Canada. Surprisingly, the French had again failed to rally to America's call—even at the moment when the American army pushed its campaign to Chateauguay. Once more the French strove for political reform, gaining but little, their chief spokesman being Louis Joseph Papineau, son of the famous Joseph Papineau. Civil war soon swept across Canada.

In the meanwhile public education so perfectly planted at the very outset of colonization of New France had been interrupted by other more pressing national problems. To be sure a system of public school education was inaugurated as early as 1841 with the establishment of school districts much like those in New England about the same time, but the French rebelled against the system greatly because of heavy taxes, but mostly because the spirit of these schools was Angelican. So intense did the spirit of opposition to the system grow that some of the schools were even set on fire by some of the French rebels.

So while the issue of parochial schools awaited solution illiteracy seized the people.

Thus the great spirit of the French found expression in the picturesque folklore—stories and song. Old men and women seated before the fire at family gatherings recited tales of "loup-garous" (human beings changed into monsters) of "feux fallets" (souls sent to earth from Purgatory to expiate their sins); "chasse-galerie" (chariots riding through the heavens). Small wonder that the French became such story tellers!

To add to the festivities, there was always the fiddler, his instrument hand-carved from maple. He provided the accompaniment for a vocal soloist (un chanteur) in which the whole gathering joined.

One of these songs. "Alouette" has won its way into American song books. But this was not the only one. There were many others, among them—"A Saint Malo, beau port de mer"; "C'est la belle Francaise" and "a la claire fontaine." some of these exquisite verse. There were many more drawn from the times and expressive of Fernch temperament.

It wasn't until 1850 that public and parochial school was allowed. Then a great wave of French educators poured into Canada from abroad to establish primary and secondary schools. The immigration of the French Canadian into the United States became a trickle at this time but grew into a torrent after the Civil War.

Climatic conditions too had its influence on the French—the severity of Canadian winters drove the "habitants" to woolen clothing. Sheep abounded on Canadian farms—to be sheared, spun and then woven on hand looms into fabric. Neither did the French housewife forget her needlecraft, an art in which she proudly excelled. Her weaving and braiding and hooking too revealed her further talent in gay floor coverings. Her bedquilts too showed a beauty of design much like those in New England. And her linens too were something to behold.

"L'habitant" was a colorful figure in his heavy overcoat with hood, with belt of gay colors. Winters he wore a blue toque with a pompom. Summers his head was covered with wide-brimmed straw hat. His shoes were moccasins Women wore skirts of "etoffe du pays." Summers they wore calicoes, muslin aprons and knitted shawls. Their bonnets were not unlike those worn by housewives in the New England colonies.

French Canadian economy centered around potash and maple sugar which came from the forests. Then there was butter, milk and eggs. Most of the farmers lived in log huts with thatched roofs, except the more enterprising who lived in homes built of stone. Log huts were eventually replaced with regular dwellings upon the advent of sawmills. Homes and barns were erected at "raising parties," neighbors for miles around joining in the work and participating in the festivities which followed. A barn raising was "une corvee."

The fare was simple and much like that in New England. Yet for all its lack of fine cuisine, the food was rich. No tea, no coffee was found in the early years. Then tea became popular. One of the popular beverages was "biere d'epinette." Furniture was home made and strong, mostly maple with chair seats covered with woven deer hide.

To be sure some of the French immigrants were from urban Canada, but mostly they were from the seignorial districts, especially from St. Ours. Strong forces worked to create immigration. These were: 1 — the restrictions of seignorial system; 2 — limitations of British rule; 3 — the desire for freedom.

We must understand that cotton manufacturing was founded on cheap labor, and of necessity, for cotton fabric was ever the poor man's raiment. As cheap labor passed through the system and perfected itself for managerial capacity or more skilled work, a great shortage of ordinary operatives was created. American capital began its search to fill the gap.

The Sprague, owners of the greatest textile chain of the period, were first to enter the rich French-Canadian labor market. Agents were sent to Canada by the Sprague to enlist workers. These agents arriving in the seignorial districts recruited whole families and moved them bag and baggage to Rhode Island. Shortly the French Canadians became themselves the agents, and the tide kept pace with the extraordinary advancement in cotton textile production, reaching its peak under the most fabulous cotton factory titans of America—Benjamin Brayton Knight and his brother Robert, (B. B. & R. Knight).

Now another subject that deserves reviewing in connection with our study is the French name. To begin with we should know that the French outside of nobility wherein his name and coat of arms was registered in heraldry made light of his name, changing it at will. Now then each soldier, or nearly all, who settled in Canada upon the establishment of the seigniories had a nickname given him perhaps by his buddies. Let us look at some of the names of the soldiers who settled at St. Ours. Louis Charbonnier was known as Sergeant St. Laurens; Francois Larose is La Rosee. Pierre Lancougne is also known as La Croix. And so on the records St. Laurens became Louis Charbonnier alias St. Laurens; Francois Larose, alias Deguire; Pierre Lancougne alias LaCroix. So it went endlessly. Then the soldiers married and had children and the children in turn married.

Some of these now married preferred one part of their name; some another. Thus new branches of the same families became established, though all brothers and sisters. This eventually became very confusing to families looking up their family tree. But then the genealogists were not abroad. And it doesn't matter. At all events this habit helped the French to become rapidly absorbed into the stream of America. Let us create a hypothetical situation by way of illustration: "What's your name?" asked the mill boss of the applicant, speaking through an interpreter.

"Moise Paquin," replied the applicant in French.

"Moses Paquin," replied the interpreter.

"Did you say Perkins?"

"Yes, Moses Perkins."

As another example and another applicant.

"What's your name?"

"Ambroise Vertefeille."

"Spell it."

"Call him Ambrose Greenleaf," replied the interpreter. "That's what name means in English."

In such ways as this old French names became Anglicized-Boisvert to Greenwood; Benoit to Benway; Arpin, Harper, Boudreau, Budrow; Geoffroy, Jeffrey; Hebert, Herbert. So it went without end. Many of these French names were lost entirely while some eventually reverted back to French.

The large wholesale revision awaited the arrival of French clergymen, especially the Rev. Joseph R. Bourgeois.

Here is a small list showing how old French names were changed:

FRENCH	ENGLISH
Lariviere	Rivers
Forcier	Foster
Charron	Wright
Foisy	Fossett
Dumas	Morse
Bourdelais	Butler
Girouard	Ward
Lapierre	Stone
Rochefort	Stone
Guy	Gee
Lemair	Lemoor
Beaudoin	Borden
Lemoyne	Young
Moison	Miner
Geoffroin	Jefferson