

The Franco-American Community

A Brief History

Because Franco-Americans make up to close to 40% of Biddeford's population, understanding their cultural history is essential in putting together the Biddeford/Saco cultural inventory. Today's Franco-American community is the descendants of seventeenth¹ century French explorers and colonists who settled Canada. These early settlers led a rural existence, carving out small family farms on the rugged landscape of the Province of Quebec. In 1713 with the Treaty of Utrecht, France ceded Acadia to England. The war for North America continued and after the defeat of the French by the English in 1759 on the Plains of Abraham, these families were pushed into an even smaller corner of what was supposed to be "New France." They were restricted to the land as *habitants*, a role just above serfdom. Within sixty years, forced to subdivide their land among family members, their existence became even more difficult, making emigration to America a viable alternative.²

"The decline in American markets for Quebec farm goods, the decrease in productivity of the soil and the reduction in the availability of winter jobs in the lumber camps persuaded the Canadians to migrate. Crucial in convincing habitant (farming) families to emigrate was the limited amount of productive land accessible to the French. Furthermore, between 1870 and 1930, Quebec cities were not developing fast enough to absorb the surplus rural population. Emigration was a response to these problems."³

The English ascendancy in Canada also helped shape an emerging French-Canadian identity and created "an exaggerated concern with ethnic survival and an emotional opposition to all things English"⁴ The idea was termed *La Survivance*, a worldview that champions the French language, culture and the Catholic religion.⁵

By the nineteenth century, French-Canadians began to head south, first working in logging camps and farms and then later in textile and pulp mills and shoe factories. By the time the textile industry was established in Biddeford, over one million French-Canadians were flooding into New England.⁶ In Maine, French Canadians took the Grand Trunk Railroad to Portland and then ventured on to find work in Waterville, Augusta, Lewiston, Brunswick, Sanford and Biddeford:

¹ Giovanni de Verrazano and later, Jacques Cartier explored North America in the 16th century but the first, lasting settlements were initiated by the explorer Samuel de Champlain in the early 17th century. Champlain visited the coast of Maine and probably sailed into the Saco River.

² Giguere, Madeline, "To Make A Living: Franco-American Work Traditions" Exhibit Catalogue, Lewiston-Auburn College, 1994.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Guignard, Michael J., *The Franco-Americans of Biddeford, Maine*, 1982, p.2

⁵ Ibid, p.4

⁶ Exact numbers are impossible to determine. Estimates vary from between one-half and 1.5 million persons. See "Migration of French Canadians to the Northeast of the U.S. (New England and New York). What numbers and what do they reveal? by Julien Olivier. This article appeared in the FORUM (Univ. of Maine) in May 2001.

“The arrival of the immigrants came just after developments in the technology of textiles, which made for an abundant number of jobs. The 18th century had witnessed the ‘golden age of invention’ in textiles: the flying shuttle in 1733, the spinning jenny in 1767, and the spinning mule in 1779. Eli Whitney revolutionized the processing of cotton with his cotton gin and Samuel Slater created the first mill in New England in 1790. All the mills needed after these developments were workers.”⁷

When the Pepperell Manufacturing Company opened its doors in 1850, Biddeford was a small, rural community of 2,574 people. As the first French-Canadians arrived to work in the mills, Biddeford was transformed into one of Maine’s leading industrial and commercial centers. Its textile mills produced world-famous cotton as well as machine shops that made other textile equipment used in factories around the country. By 1880, one out of every three residents in Biddeford claimed French heritage.⁸ Settling close to the mills and the Saco River in a neighborhood known as *Petit Canada* (“Little Canada”), French-Canadians were determined to keep their own cultural identity. While starting a new life in the United States, such enclaves provided a haven for the newly arrived.

For generations, life in Franco-Biddeford revolved around three points: home, church and the mill. Each helped shape their core values: devotion to the French language and the Catholic religion and hard work. At church, families followed their daily devotions, at work, the rigors of mill, but at home, people could be creative. As a result, Franco-American culture is, to a certain extent, a familial and a private one; a culture not entirely comfortable with being in the spotlight.

Like many other early residents of the Biddeford and Saco region, the original French-Canadian immigrants were from farming stock. Many came from the counties of La Beauce and Arthabaska with the village of St-Ferdinand in Arthabaska was the most common birthplace of Franco-American immigrants in Biddeford.⁹ Today’s Franco community’s “cultural DNA” is linked to that area.

The story of Adelard Cote, a Franco-American woodcarver and blacksmith illustrates part of the deep connections to the land, language and faith that runs deep through Franco identity. Biddeford writer Normand Beaupre’ explores in his book, “L’enclume et le couteau: The Life and Work of Adelard Cote, Folk Artist” the life of Maine’s best-known Franco-American woodcarver. Adelard Cote was born in St. Sophie, Quebec in 1889 and emigrated to the United States in his early twenties. He settled in Biddeford where he ran a blacksmith shop for thirteen years, working primarily for the mills. He later moved his family to a farm in nearby Saco and in the 1940’s began carving. His work reflects memories of a Quebecois rural setting at the turn of the century or as some Franco-Americans would say, *the old fashioned lifestyle*.

⁷ Giguere, Madeline

⁸ Guignard, Michael, p.19

⁹ Beaupre, Normand, “L’enclume et le couteau: The Life and Work of Adelard Cote, Folk Artist”, p.4

“Un foyer ou l’on chate est un foyer heureux.”

(A home where people sing is a happy home.)

La Bonne Chanson

The Family

The stereo-typed notion of the single male mill worker going it alone and living in a boarding house with other newly arrived immigrants didn't happen in Biddeford's French community. People moved to Biddeford as families. According to the 1860 census, less than five percent of the Franco-American community lived in boarding houses. Instead they lived in mill owned apartments or small houses close to the factory. According to Dane Yorke, the Biddeford historian, Pepperell Manufacturing built only one boarding house in Biddeford because the French workers preferred to live in single-family dwellings.¹⁰ In addition, most families traveled the 200-mile trip together, unlike other immigrant's long journey across the Atlantic. As a result, almost ninety percent of the Franco families were in tact when they arrived.¹¹

These factors help contribute to maintaining tight knit families and cultural traditions that are largely family based. Even today, the family remains the primary source of personal and cultural identity. Much of what goes on in the Franco community can be found around a kitchen table or in the living room:

“We sometimes read that the French-Canadians were a passive people. This is not so; in fact they were very active. To realize this, all one had to do was to sit in their kitchens and listen to them talk. They knew exactly what they wanted, and their conversations reflected their aspirations and goals: a better life for themselves and, especially, for their children.”¹²

The atmosphere in the Franco-American home helped nurture French-Canadian culture. Because it was customary for French-Canadians to socialize primarily with family members, Franco families would often gather for soirees, occasions where people would talk, tell stories, sing and cook.¹³

Home entertainment took on a whole different meaning as everyone was expected to sing, play an instrument or recite a verse. Many knew traditional songs and families sometimes wrote down their favorites to create family songbooks. In 1949, *La Bonne Chanson*, a publishing company dedicated to the dissemination of French, published their first volume of songs. Based in St-Hyacinthe, Quebec, the songbooks were a result of the 1937 French Language Congress, which emphasized the value of song as a vehicle for the preservation of culture, and language. These songs had a profound impact of the cultural education of Franco-Americans and in Biddeford, a whole generation grew up singing from *Madeleine et Pierre* or *La Bonne Chanson a l'ecole*.

¹⁰ Guignard, Michael, p.16

¹¹ Ibid

¹² The Franco-Americans of Sanford by Gerard J. Lamontagne, Sanford Historical Committee, Sanford, Maine

¹³ Brault, Gerard, p. 85

**Venez, garçons et filles,
Chantez la Bonne Chanson.
Ca se chante en famille,
Le soir a la masion.**

**Come, boys and girls,
Sing the Good Song.
It's sung in the family,
In the evening at home.**

“Chantez la Bonne Chanson,” Charles-Emile Gadbois

Some families hosted regular Sunday afternoon house soirees during which friends and family members assembled to play music, sing and dance. Many of these songs were passed on from one generation to the next. Bonnie (Bonita) Porthier's family still sings when they get together. Both her mother, Lorette Porthier and cousin, are accomplished singers. Growing up, Bonnie remembers her mother telling her a cautionary tale at bedtime about “Bonhomme Sept Heures”:

Bonhomme Sept Heures:

“Personne ne voit le Bonhomme Sept Heures. Il voyage la nuit. Il va de maison en maison. Il punit les enfants desobeissants.”

(No one sees Old Man Seven O'Clock. He travels at night. He goes from house to house. He punishes disobedient children.)

“*Au pays des legends: Le Bonhomme Sept Heures,*” Normand Dube

The Quebecois form of *chanson repondre*, in which a singer elicits choral responses, is still popular in Biddeford. At the recent 2004 La Kermesse Festival, a large crowd enjoyed a round of such favorites as Alouette and M'en revenant de la jolie Rochelle.

Instrumental music is also an important part of Franco-American family gatherings and social events. *Veillees* were held wherever Little Canada's existed and evidence shows that the merrymaking on Saturday evening, anniversaries and holidays even included dancing. Appropriated by the Quebecois, the jig was first introduced to Canada by Irish and Scottish settlers. By 1900, the dance had become distinctively French-Canadian.¹⁴ At the traditional *veillee*, complete with dancing, drinking, singing and storytelling, the fiddler was the *danse master*. Extended families would gather in the kitchen, push the furniture back against the walls and dance. Master fiddler Ben Guillemette of Sanford recalls winter days on which his family would carry the stove out of the kitchen to make room for dancing.¹⁵

Southern Maine, in fact, is home to many renowned fiddlers including the late Lucien Matheir and his nephew Don Roy, as well as an emerging generation of new fiddlers like Ben Guillemette's grandson, Daniel Guillemette. For several years, Ben Guillemette had a band called “Ben and Toots” with accordionist Dickie Morneau and

¹⁴ Brault, Gerard J., *The French Canadian Heritage in New England*, McGill University Press, Montreal, 1986. p.34

¹⁵ Graves, James Bau., “*Kitchen Music: Franco-American Dance Music Traditions in Southern Maine,*” Exhibit catalogue from “Franco-American Music Traditions” Lewiston-Auburn College, 1995.

guitarist Toots Buothot. Lionel “Toots” Buothot still plays regularly at the Biddeford Senior Center to an appreciative audience.

Today, perhaps an extension of *veillées* is La Kermesse, which is the big, social gathering for Biddeford’s Franco-American community. Held every year in June, the festival is now 22 years old. The three-day celebration features music, food, lumberjack competitions as well as tents on genealogy and history. Although simultaneously loved and scorned for the “party” atmosphere, La Kermesse is one of the very few public events where the French community gathers to celebrate its heritage.

“One common tradition that all cultures possess is the gathering of family and friends to enjoy food, laughter and music. This is the custom that La Kermesse has cherished for the last 22 years.”

Priscille Gagnon, President of La Kermesse

Holidays:

**“Venez, garçons et filles,
Manger la soupe aux pois.
Ca se mange en famille,
Pres du grand feu de bois!”**

Come, boys and girls,

Come eat pea soup.

It's eaten in the family,

Up near the big fire.

“La soupe aux pois,” Albert Larrieu

Holiday gatherings, family reunions, worship services, and seasonal songs express joy and solidarity, giving sustenance to a shared identity. In the Biddeford Franco community, holidays are festive social occasions. New Year’s Day is particularly important as a time when friends and relatives are expected to visit. Members of the family are usually asked for the blessing of the father or grandfather. Camille Bolduc of Biddeford still partakes in this custom. On January 6, the Festival of the Three Kings, *La trios rois*, *ma mere* would bake a pea or a bean into a cake. Whoever found it was then declared King or Queen for the day.

On Christmas Eve, Franco families attend midnight mass at either St. Joseph’s or St. Andre’s church. Afterward, many families hold a traditional *reveillon* (a expression that refers to people staying awake long past their bedtime). Traditionally, the tree would be trimmed after mass and candles lit in windows. Families would finally go to sleep around 4:30 am and awake at 9:00 to open gifts. Relatives would drop by to partake of a meal, which includes *tourtiere*, pea soup and turkey. Other foods might include *tarte au sucre* or pig’s feet for New Year’s Eve.

Tourtiere is the traditional meat pie served at *reveillon* or family party after Midnight Mass. *Tourtiere* takes its name from the *tourte* or deep pie plate in which it was originally baked. Traditionally, they are served only in winter, especially for the holidays when there is a great deal of visiting.

True to traditional foodways, recipes for *tourtiere* vary greatly. There are as many different ways to prepare and season the meat filling, as there are Franco-American families who eat them. Collecting these recipes and preparing *toutiere* is a powerful touchstone for many Franco-Americans. For many, just the smell evokes memories of holiday celebrations and “*Ma mere les preparait au temps des fetes...*”

Tourtiere

1 pound lean minced pork

¼ cup chopped onions

½ teaspoon salt

Dash of pepper

¼ teaspoon savory

Dash of cloves

1 small bay leaf

¼ cup boiling water

Pastry for 2 pie crusts

Mix pork, onion and seasonings. Add bay leaf and water. Simmer uncovered about 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf, cool meat and skim off fat. Line 9-inch pie plate with pastry and fill with meat mixture. Cover with pastry, seal edges and cut small steam vents in top of pie. Bake at 425 degrees until lightly browned (about 30 minutes). Serves six.

Crafts:

“Chaque sou compte”

Every penny counts

Thriftiness is an important Franco-American value especially when people had large families to feed and clothe. Franco-Americans, believers of recycling before it was fashionable, prided themselves on using what was available and not wasting anything. Most clothes and items for the home like quilts, afghans, rugs and bed covers were usually made at home by using scraps of cloth, old coats, sweaters, etc. Worn out sweaters, socks and shirts were unraveled, cut up, carded and re-spun for knitting and weaving. Almost every woman in a Franco-American household knew how to knit or crochet.

Georgette Sutton of Biddeford Pool grew up in a large family of 13 children, her mother, who was French-Canadian, sewed all her children’s clothes. Like many contemporary quilt makers, Georgette Sutton learned to sew from her mother at an early age but did not actively quilt until after she raised her family and semi-retired from her job. With more time and resources, she made up for the years not quilting by producing over 200 quilts in 5 years.

Like many Franco American women, her family is the center of her creative world. Georgette raised eight children sewing all their clothes. After her husband died, she took up quilting and took on the role of family archivist. Her quilts are a reflection of her family life. Because many of her children now live outside of Maine, making quilts for them unites members of her extended, separated family. Stitched together from pieces of fabric from her daughter and granddaughter’s dresses and other scraps of material collected and saved over many years – the quilt is a patchwork of family history.

Georgette rarely sells a quilt. They are made as a matter of course to give away to family members and friends. She also gives quilts in recognition of special achievements, occasions or activities including births, graduations, weddings and anniversaries.

La Survivance:

“Once bolstered by a formidable network of churches, media, schools, and societies dedicated to the ideal of *survivance*, or loyalty to the French-Canadian heritage, the Franco-American group today is not what it used to be....But Franco-Americans still have a great reserve of strength, and in recent years, a resurgence of their ethnic awareness and pride appears to be gaining momentum and scope after a period of steady decline.”

Gerard J. Brault, *The French-Canadian Heritage in New England*

Biddeford’s Franco- Americans continue to honor their roots, as evident in a strong interest in genealogy and Quebecois history. La Kermesse festival showcases what is important now and that now, is rooted in a deep love of the past. At the 2004 festival, The Regiment Saint Onge devoted one whole entire section to a historic reenactment. One of the more crowded tents was the genealogy tent where people perused through books and notebooks containing family trees and genealogical charts.

Camille Bolduc of Biddeford was instrumental in helping get La Kermesse off the ground. Over twenty years ago, he traveled to Lewiston to see the Franco’s community’s festival, *Le Festival de joie*. He was also one of the first people to suggest having a frog as the La Kermesse mascot. Deeply interested in family history and genealogy, Camille Bolduc is currently the secretary of the Franco-American Genealogical Society. His passion has taken him all the way to St. Genevieve, Missouri to the Bolduc House to traces his ancestor’s roots.

Mr. Bolduc had to quit high school in Canada when he at 14 and much later finished high school at the age of 50, becoming one of the oldest graduates of Biddeford High School . From a large French-Canadian family, Mr. Bolduc emigrated from St. George, Quebec at age 29 to marry a “Biddeford girl.” For many years, he ran his own electrical business. His love of the past is reflected in his office area where he displays a myriad assortment of his collections, including an impressive array of antique irons, which he says, reminds him of his Canadian roots and his mother. Such artifacts, saved because of the memories connected to them, are a means for Mr. Bolduc to share stories. Mr. Bolduc’s collections, and other collections of family photographs and memorabilia, can help indicate what is important to the larger community. Collections and genealogy feed into the Franco-American connection to community and family history, referencing the past as an important part of the present.

Another avid genealogist and historian is Ralph Courtois who has devoted his time to recording the history of the Franco-American Parishes of Biddeford and Saco. Many of his articles can be found at the Franco-American Genealogical Society of York, Maine at the MacArthur Library.

The past is also a source of creative expression through historical fiction and literature. *Survivance* remains the chief organizing principle in Franco-American historical literature, placing a great value on language, faith and kinship as compared to issues of class, labor or ethnic history. This year at La Kermesse a section of the tent was devoted to Franco-American writers. One such writer is Doris Provencher Faucher of Biddeford. When Ms. Faucher retired from teaching at Biddeford High School, she embarked on a life long passion, writing historical fiction, a practice that combines her love of teaching and her connection to Franco-American culture. Originally wanting to write her family story in French, Faucher wound up writing her novels in English, the language her children understand: “My husband and I were raised speaking French and English in Biddeford... The more I discovered about Franco-American ethnic history, the more I realized how little our children have an opportunity to learn what I was uncovering, unless I told them the story in English.”¹⁶

First in a series of books that details the history of the early French settlers of Canada, “Le Quebecois: The Virgin Forest” begins in 1674 with the emigration from France and describes the first settlers who left France to seek a new life in North America. “Le Quebecois: The Virgin Forest” is part of the “Le Quebecois Series” and charts the history of the St. Lawrence River Valley, telling the story of a French peasant couple who left feudal France to live in the New World.

Another Biddeford writer who has championed the French language is Normand Beaupre. A long time cultural activist and supporter of French culture, Beaupre grew up speaking French in Biddeford, Maine. As a young man, he returned to Biddeford for undergraduate studies at St. Francis College in Biddeford Pool and then moved on to Brown for a Ph.D. in French literature. He is now a retired Professor of Francophone and World Literature at the University of New England. His first book, *L’Enclume et le couteau – The Life and Works of Adelard Cote.*” He has also written two novels in French, *Le petit manageur de fleurs*(1999), *Lumineau*(2002).

The Church

Qui perd sa langue perd sa foi.

The person who loses his language loses his faith

According to Michael Guignard: “Franco-Americans believed that there was an almost mystic bond between their faith, language and culture –*Our language safeguards our ethnicity and our ethnicity in turn safeguards our faith and customs.*” The early Francos of Biddeford and Saco devoted themselves to their parishes and their cures (pastors). For generations, preserving the French language and perpetuation of the Catholic faith remained two vital concerns.

The first Francophone parish in Biddeford was St. Joseph’s. Originally located on the corner of Bacon and Alfred Streets, a new church was built on Elm Street and boasted 8,000 parishioners in 1870. A sister parish, Saint Andre was established in 1899.¹⁷

¹⁶ From book review by Juliana L’Heureux

¹⁷ Normand Beaupre, p.13

Meanwhile in Saco, another Franco-American church was established, *Notre Dame de Lourdes*. Originally a Baptist church, it was blessed and dedicated on June 30, 1929. It had 1,800 parishioners and 270 students in the school. St. Joseph's parish numbered 6,800 and St. Andres 6,500. Each of their schools numbered some 1,300 students.¹⁸

Both St. Joseph and St. Andre provided a bilingual education based not only subject matter but also on "moral principles and good manners." These parochial schools helped shape generations of Biddeford residents and played an important role in keeping the Franco community in tact. Well into the 20th century, Franco-American parents avoided sending their children to public schools.

But by 1960, Franco parish schools began closing at a steady pace. Only a few years after Vatican II, St. Josephs and St. Andres began conducting religious ceremonies in English. According to Michael Guignard, many clerics in Franco-American based communities in New England, encouraged the use of English and saw ethnic parish schools as an unhealthy separation from the larger community. By 1970, there was very little difference between the French parish schools in Biddeford and parochial schools around the country except that almost all the former students bore French surnames. Losing their distinctive ethnic flavor, they no longer pursued a major goal for which they had been formed - La Survivance.

The Language

"The record in Biddeford is clear – because of historical, cultural, demographic, social, religious, geographic, institutional and economic-Francos in the Mill City were able for over a century to retain almost unimpaired their faith, language and culture...Francos of my generation have forgotten much of their French. Few of our children speak French. We have forgotten much of our heritage, culture and history. In short, our commitment to la purveyance is, at best, weak."

Dr. Michael Guignard, The Franco-Americans of Biddeford, Maine

At one time, Biddeford's French speaking community boasted their own schools, social clubs, newspapers, theater companies and musical groups. The weekly journal *La Justice* championed the cause of French language and culture until 1951. But years of assimilation, have contributed to the erosion of the French language and the culture. Michael Guignard suggests in his book "The Franco-Americans of Biddeford, Maine": That the following factors have made an impact on Franco-American culture:

- Decline in Franco identification with Quebec
- Phasing out of textile mills and low wage scales
- No new waves of French-speaking migrants
- Closing of parochial schools and French language programs

¹⁸ Normand Beaupre

Because the vitality of Biddeford's Franco-American community was somewhat dependent on the health of the textile industry, as the mills began to close throughout Biddeford and New England, the population dispersed. Many people learned English and quickly looked for new work opportunities outside of Biddeford, like the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard. Among younger Franco-Americans there is a desire to assimilate and downplay cultural difference. Older Franco traditions are breaking down as people become more transient and are forced to follow jobs. The French language is dying out as young people literally buy into more mainstream culture.

Such cultural lineages do not continue effortlessly. The unbroken chain of language and heritage over the generations is the exception rather than the rule. Barriers of language and culture often deprive the elderly generation of their natural audiences. Their knowledge of how to survive in the new country becomes irrelevant to the second and third generations who now possess the knowledge needed for survival in the new country, an inversion of the traditional order.

Some Franco cultural activists believe that the French language is one way of "waking up" this generation of Franco-Americans to their hidden identity. To accomplish this, Biddeford's French community needs to organize and reconnect with each other, rediscovering their language and cultural heritage while also developing cultural leadership and new community institutions, such as language clubs, that can revitalize this culture.

According to Julia Schulz:" There are approximately 400,000 people of French descent in Maine of whom approximately 150,000 still speak French and an equal number knew it as children. We have actively tried to suppress the French and they have survived longer than any other immigrant group of their time. Imagine what could be accomplished if we actively supported their cultural expressions."

Each generation has a part to play and a perspective to voice. Today's Francos express what this heritage means in diverse ways, depending on the situation and whether they are acting as individuals, families or as members of a larger community. It is a more fluid ethnic identity but being Franco-American is still very much a presence in many people's lives. The challenge is to keep these forms and their meanings, present, in the living culture of today.

Resources:

Music

- Laurette Pothier, singer, Biddeford, Maine 284-4955
- Irene La Flamme, singer, Biddeford, Maine 282-1498
- Denis Dutremble, singer, Biddeford, Maine, 282-6729
- Helen Fortier, singer, choir director, 283-4791
- Raymond Boissonneulat, traditional music, Biddeford, 934-0815
- Lionel "Toots" Bouthot, guitarist, Biddeford, 284-7692
- Roland Gagne, fiddler, Biddeford, 282-4397
- Armand Paquette, fiddler, Saco, 284-7686

Crafts

- Marie Laverriere Boucher, calligraphy, Biddeford, 282-4288
- Georgette Sutton, quilter, Hills Beach, 283-3253
- Paul Dorais, woodcarver, Saco, 282-1354
- Bay View Gift Shop, Bayview Convent, Saco, 283-3636

Writers

- Normand Beaupre, Biddeford, 282-2626
- Doris Provencher Faucher, Biddeford, 282-2123

Foodways

- Norm Sevigny, cook for La Kermesse, 284-5876
- Reilly's Bakery, Biddeford, 283-3731

Genealogy & Community History

- Camille Bolduc, Biddeford, 284-4167
- Ralph Coutois, Biddeford, 282-3773
- Normand Beaupre, Biddeford, 282-2626
- Franco-American Genealogical Society
McArthur Public Library, Biddeford
Jane Rossignol, 646-0814

Festivals

- La Kermesse, Priscille Gagnon, President

Social Clubs & Community Centers

- Biddeford Community Center, Biddeford, 282-8418
Deb Lizotte, 282-5005
- Club Richelieu, Biddeford,
- Club Voltigeur, Biddeford,
- The Rochambeau Club, Biddeford
- St. Jean's Hall, Biddeford
- St. Joseph Parish Hall, Biddeford, 284-5590

Churches & Convents

- St. Joseph's Parish, 282-9352
- St. Andre's Parish, 282-3333
- The Catholic Center, Biddeford, 282-9352
- Bayview Convent, Saco, 283-3636
- St. Joseph Convent, Biddeford, 283-9051

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Suggestions for future projects:

1. Organize performances by traditional musicians and singers at community events like the Farmer's Market, the Pumpkin Festival and La Kermesse.
2. Have La Kermesse sponsor a Southern Maine Franco-fiddlers contest
3. Have a tourtière bake off (possibly at La Kermesse?) collect recipe and stories associated with the recipes. Ask people at Christmas time to come in with their favorite recipe and record people associations/recollections. Possible photographic exhibit at Museum
4. Organize Franco-American History and culture walking tours
5. Sponsor a Franco-American writers/speakers series include Normand Beaupre, Doris Faucher, Julien Olivier, Rhea Cote Robbins, Kerry O'Brien, Filmmaker Ben Levine and community activist Julia Schulz.