PART 3 – QUEBEC GENEALOGY RESOURCES

The previous two sections covering Quebec Genealogy Research, included general research strategies and finding your French Quebec ancestry. Part 3 covers finding Protestant Quebec ancestry.

Five Steps to Successfully Finding Your Protestant Quebec Ancestry

1.   Look for previously researched family data.
2.   Identify your ancestor in as many of the census records as you can.
3.   Identify if your ancestor was Catholic or Protestant
4.   Identify the Protestant or Catholic Parish or village where your ancestor lived.
5.   Use birth, marriage, and death indexes to find names, dates, and other relationships.

The previous newsletters explained how to complete steps 1 through 3 and hopefully from those steps you were able to identify the religion of your ancestor and in the process have added more generations to your family tree. In Step 4 we will look at some resources that will help us to identify the name of the Protestant Parish or village where your ancestor lived. This article will focus primarily on online research for your Protestant ancestors of Quebec.

Good News and Bad News

The good news is that most Protestant Church records go back to around 1760 after the conquest of Quebec. And, Protestant churches were required to make copies of their registers and to send them annually to the office of the District Protonotary which was usually the regional courthouse. The bad news is many clergyman did not comply and the church records frequently did not include valuable data like the parents' names of the couple being married. Though, another piece of good news is that with a few exceptions Protestant church records are usually in English not French.

The Huguenots were French Protestants

French Protestant church records which are written in French of course are the exception to the good news above.

As early as 1540 Huguenots were present in New France. Their numbers diminished when in 1627 Huguenot emigration from France was forbidden. An interesting article *Lost, Forgotten and Suppressed History – The Huguenot origins of Québec* written by Bob Goodnough states that, *"The first explorers and settlers of New France were Protestants...The first Huguenot colony was established in 1540...The first permanent colony was at Port Royal, Nova Scotia in 1604, led by Samuel de Champlain. His religious affiliation is uncertain, but he later*

married *Hélène Boulé, a Huguenot...his expedition was financed by Pierre de Gua, Sieur des Monts, a Huguenot, and the only clergy on this expedition were Huguenots...Huguenots in France, held a monopoly on the fur trade in New France until 1627...and then France in an act of Huguenot religious persecution caused...The fur trade monopoly to be transferred to the Company of a Hundred Associates, all Catholics...and at the same time...Huguenot emigration from France was forbidden".*

Finally in 1787 *"the Marquis de Lafayette, who was impressed by the fact that so many of the American leaders of the Revolutionary War were of Huguenot descent, persuaded Louis XVI and the French Council to adopt an Edict of Toleration guaranteeing religious freedom to all in France"* and the embargo to Huguenot emigration was lifted.

Step 4: Identify the village or parish where your Protestant ancestor lived

If you completed step 3 and have found your ancestor in as many censuses as possible you have more than likely identified the town or parish in which your ancestor lived as well as determining if they were Catholic or Protestant. Researching Protestant genealogy records in Quebec is more difficult than Catholic records.

The civil copies of some Protestant records were microfilmed by the Institut généalogique Drouin and so the [Drouin Collection](#) may be helpful to you for locating a Catholic or Protestant marriage in church records. This would also help you to find the Protestant church to which your ancestor belonged. A few helpful tips are:

- If your ancestor was French, he probably was a Catholic.
- If your ancestor was English, he probably was a Protestant.
- If your ancestor settled in the Eastern Townships section of Québec just north of the Vermont border, he probably was a Protestant

There were only a few Protestant churches that were legally recognized by civil authorities. One was the Anglican Church (the Church of England), which was established about 1766 in Montreal. The Presbyterian Church kept records dating from about 1770 in the city of Québec and about 1779 in Montreal.

The baptisms or marriages performed by some non-Catholic clergy were not recognized by civil authorities. But beginning in 1825, the registers of these non-Catholic denominations were made legal by the legislative assembly and therefore copies became part of the vital records collection that have been microfilmed.

FamilySearch.org has images but no index for [Quebec, Non-Catholic Parish Registers, 1763-1967](). You can browse these images to find the information pertaining to your ancestor but it will be a bit time consuming. FamilySearch.org provides some [tips and instructions for searching the images.](). Here is a list of the names of [non-Catholic parishes]() included in the FamilySearch.org digital collection.

To search the collection by image, you will need to follow this series of links:

- Select "Browse through images" on the initial collection page:
- Select the appropriate "City/Town"
- Select the appropriate "Denomination/Parish"
- Select the appropriate "Record Type and Year Range," which will take you to the images.

Then you may need to look at several images and compare the information about the individuals listed in those images to your ancestors to determine if this is your ancestor. Remember there may be more than one person in the records with the same name as your ancestor and that your ancestor may have used a nickname.

This searchable database contains nearly 60,000 [birth, marriage, and death records]() from the 19th century Châteauguay valley Protestant Church registers in Southwestern Quebec. If your ancestors are from that area it might be worth a look.

Can't Find a Church Record?

Library and Archives of Canada have a [database of Marriage Bonds for Upper and Lower Canada for the years 1779-1858.]()

In a marriage bond the groom with one or two people called sureties guaranteed to the Crown that there was no legal impediment to the marriage. After the bond was approved a marriage licence was issued and the actual marriage ceremony usually took place a few days later. Marriage bonds were only required for Protestant marriages.

Library and Archives Canada has another database, [Immigrants at Grosse Île Quarantine Station, 1832-1937](#) that may prove helpful in finding your ancestors whether Catholic or non-Catholic. It is the. This database contains data on 33,026 immigrants who, at the time of their arrival in Canada, stayed at the Grosse-Île Quarantine Station which is near Quebec City.

One of the advantages of this database is that certain immigrants and the members of their family can be traced from their departure from Europe through their voyage across the Atlantic. The database then makes it possible to journal their stay at the Grosse Île Quarantine Station, and then lists their final destination.

Have You Looked At Notary Contracts?

Since the earliest years of Quebec, notaries were employed to registered contracts including deeds, wills, marriage contracts, and other important records. The legal profession was not recognized in Quebec until about the mid-1700s.

Check to see if your ancestors made a marriage contract through a Notary. About two-thirds of the marriages before the mid-1800s had marriage contracts. Each marriage contract includes the name of the notary, the date and place the document was prepared, the names and addresses of the persons involved, and the names and addresses of the witnesses.

Sometimes the ages and relationships of the witnesses and the persons involved are included.

The main purpose of the marriage contract was to detail the property that each party had brought into the marriage, and how their property would be divided upon the death of one of the spouses. Early deaths and remarriages were common in New France and so the disposition of property was of paramount interest to the couple. A more detailed explanation of marriage contracts can be found in an article by Suzanne Sommerville, *[The Marriage Contract in New France According to The Custom of Paris](#)*.

FamilySearch.org has a set of [Québec Notarial Records, 1800-1900 Images](#). These images have not been indexed but a researcher can view the images which are arranged first by locality, then notary, then time period.

At the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (Library and Archives Canada) you will find a searchable database of [Québec notaries' records, up to 1933](#), including registers, indexes, and other acts of notaries

from all Québec regions. Unfortunately much of the website is in French. In order to read this wonderful site use the Google Translate tool. This tool does a fair job of translating even entire paragraphs into the target language.

The Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (Library and Archives Canada) also has several searchable non-Catholic vital record indexes:

- Non-Catholic marriages in the Montréal area, 1766-1899
- Marriage contracts in the Québec City area, 1761-1946
- Marriage contracts in the Charlevoix region, 1737-1920, and the Saguenay region, 1840-1911
- Non-Catholic baptisms in the Montréal area, 1766-1835
- Non-Catholic burials in the Montréal area, 1768-1899

It might be easier to find your Quebec Protestant ancestors listed in Ancestry's database Québec City Area, Marriage Contract Index, 1761-1940. As indicated in the previous paragraph, this database is searchable at Library and Archives Canada but you might prefer the speed and fuzzy searches of Ancestry's search engine.

More Helpful Links for Quebec Research

There is a wealth of genealogy information online for Quebec researchers. I have only scratched the surface and there are a few subjects I feel I was not able to cover and still keep this newsletter article a manageable size. A prominent Canada researcher Chuck Filteau has posted a webcast, *"Finding Your Ancestors in French Quebec, Canada"*. He has also posted research handouts from the webinar. This webcast is quite informative. Mr. Filteau does a great job of covering many Quebec research subjects and his handouts will be a resource you will use again and again.

First Nations Canada

The website First Nations Canada - Québec Abenaki census records 1822-1852 will give you a start in researching from the census records for your Abenaki ancestors.

Five More Resources

1. Historical Canadian Newspapers Online: Quebec
2. The Quebec GenWeb volunteer team offers lookups in over 1000 parishes!
3. Land Petitions of Lower Canada, 1764-1841

4.   [Wesleyan Methodist Baptismal Register 1828-1910](#)

5.   If your ancestor is located in the Eastern Townships you may find it helpful to visit [Marlene Simons](#)' website, a well-known researcher of the Eastern Townships. For a $7.00 fee she *"will provide you with the transcription of one record for the name you are researching".* If you want genealogy research done, she posts her hourly fees schedule.

Note: Ms. Simmons has continued to add to her database and it now contains an index in excess of 630,000 church, cemetery, census, and newspaper articles. Her website also includes an additional resources page which contains addresses to numerous organizations that provide genealogical helps for Quebec Eastern Township researchers.

Source: [MyTrees.com](#)