Canadian Genealogy - Quebec Research Resources (Part 1)
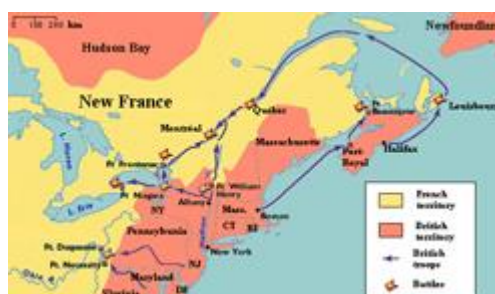

Quebec Joined the Confederation of Canada in 1867.

The area that now comprises Quebec has been known by a variety of names throughout history, with the earliest being Canada (1536), New France (1608), Province of Quebec (1763-1790), Lower Canada, Canada East (1848) and finally in 1867 when the area joined the Canadian Confederation the name officially became Quebec.

Though in the past the name Quebec may reference a geographic area, for the purposes of this article, the term "Quebec" will be generally used to refer to the areas of Canada in which French Canadian genealogy are prevalent.

Five Steps to Successfully Finding Your French Quebec Ancestry

1. Look for Previously Researched Family Tree Data.

2. Identify Your Ancestor In Census records.

3. Identify Your Ancestor's Religious Affiliation

4.   Identify the Catholic Church Parish or village where your ancestor lived.

5.   Use birth, marriage, and death indexes to find names, dates, and other relationships.

Step One: Look for Previously Researched Family Tree Data

Many of the families that hail from Quebec have been extensively researched and the pedigrees are available online. Cyprien Tanguay's seven volume work: *"Quebec, Genealogical Dictionary of Canadian Families"* can be viewed online at several websites. It gives the genealogy of most of the French Canadian colonists and many of their descendants.

To freely view the images of Tanguay's book visit the National Library and Archives of Québec.

Since the instructions to understanding this valuable work are in French, included below are links to websites that have the instructions in English. Plus they have examples to help you understand how to read this incredible resource.

- The Maple Stars and Stripes has an excellent example of reading one of the entries in the Tanguay books.

- FamilySearch.org also has an explanation in English of how to read the entries in the Tanguay Books.

- Ancestry.ca (a fee based resource) has posted online a searchable database of the (Tanguay Collection), 1608-1890.

There were many additions and corrections needed for Tanguay's work and fortunately, J. Arthur Leboeuf labored to create these corrections when he developed his 1957 work, "*The Complement au Dictionnaire Genealogique Tanguay*". The first book of this three-volume series is a master alphabetical index. To enhance the corrections, Leboeuf's book has printed in the right-hand corner of each page the page number to the volume of the Tanguay books that it references. Each corrected entry also references the page number on which the corresponding entry can be found.

Unfortunately Leboeuf's work is not available online but there are several libraries that have copies of this three-volume work. Go to the WorldCat.org page and scroll to the bottom of the page to find the six libraries that have the Leboeuf's work.

Ancestry.ca website has posted their searchable database of the Quebec, Vital and Church Records (Drouin Collection), 1621-1968 which is very helpful in identifying research that has been done with regard to your family tree. Their records appear to cover a broader time period and the images are from the original parish records. You might want to try their 14-day Free Access or get 20% OFF an annual subscription. A subscription would also give you access to their selection of researched family trees.

Both MyTrees.com and Rootsweb.com have sizeable collections of searchable genealogies. Don't forget to search these sites for your family connections.

If you are able to find a Quebec genealogy that takes you back to before 1900 then the next step will be much easier. But even if you weren't able to find researched genealogy online, the next step will help you to find the biggest pieces of the puzzle and that is the name of the parish or village in which your ancestor lived and their religion.

Step Two: Identify Your Ancestor in Census records

Generally, Quebec records for both civil registration and censuses include a wider range of years than most of the other Canadian provinces. Early Quebec census data is a bit fragmentary prior to 1851 (also note that prior to 1861, most are only heads of household censuses). Following are a list of census years that may contain helpful information:

1666 Census

All members of the household were listed in the 1666 Census which boasted a population of approximately 3236. You can view a transcript of this Census at Hugh Armstrong's Genealogy Site. According to the statistics page at the same site, certain groups of people were not included in the 1666 census such as the Royal troops, nuns, and other ecclesiastical leaders.

1792, 1795, 1798, 1805, 1806 Census of the City of Quebec

This searchable database is presented by the National Library Archives of Quebec. From 1666 to 1766 the population had grown to over 70,000. By 1806 the population had grown to over 250,000.

The 1792, 1795, 1798, and 1805 censuses were head of household only but it does include the occupation of the head of household and you can view the actual image, too.

1818 Parish census of Notre-Dame-de-Québec

The searchable database includes the members of the household and is presented by the National Library Archives of Quebec

1825 through 1851 Census for Lower Canada

This is a heads of household census and is searchable including views of the images at Library and Archives Canada.

FamilySearch.org has the 1825, 1831, and the 1842 Lower Canada Census images with a searchable index for each.

A fee-based resource which provides a search over several census years in a single search is Ancestry.ca.

There are at least two other sites that provide a large searchable database of Quebec Census records for the years 1851 and forward. They are:

FamilySearch.org has indexes and images to these census records.

- Canada Census Mortality Schedules, 1871
- Canada Census, 1851
- Canada Census, 1871
- Canada Census, 1881
- Canada Census, 1891
- Canada Census, 1901
- Canada Census, 1906
- Canada Census, 1911
- Canada Census, 1916
- Canada, Lower Canada Census, 1825
- Canada, Lower Canada Census, 1831
- Canada, Lower Canada Census, 1842
- Canada, Upper Canada Census, 1842

Library and Archives Canada has indexes and images to the following census records:

- Census of Lower Canada, 1825
- Census of Lower Canada, 1831
- Census of 1842, Canada East
- Census of 1851 (Canada East, Canada West, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia)
- Census of 1861
- Census of Canada, 1871
- Census of Canada, 1881
- Census of Canada, 1891
- Census of Canada, 1901
- Census of Canada, 1911

Step 3: Identify Your Ancestor's Religious Affiliation

If you have completed steps one and two above, you will be able to identify the religion of your ancestor quite easily. The pedigrees that you investigated in step one often will give the name of the church in which the couple was married or where their children were baptized. This should give you an indication of the religion of the couple. Most likely they were Catholic since in Quebec the Catholic Church held a position of dominance and controlled education, health services and charitable institutions until after 1960.

You can use many census returns to determine the religion of your ancestor. Most census returns, included a place on the form for your ancestor to state a religious affiliation.

Steps 4 and 5 will be covered in part two of this three-part series on the Province of Quebec Research Strategies. Step 4 will identify the Catholic Church, parish or village where your ancestor lived and Step 5 will cover using birth, marriage and death indexes to find names, dates and other relationships will be covered in part two.

Part three will look at Protestant research records and strategies.

Source: MyTrees.com