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The Archambault in Saint-Césaire *200 years of history*



*This first church of Saint-Césaire was completely destroyed by fire on
September 29, 1985*

Photo: Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec



Bulletin

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The Archambault in Saint-Césaire

The 39th general assembly of the Association des Archambault d'Amérique (if we except the fact that the 37th and 38th assemblies did not take place due to the pandemic) will be held this year on September 18, in the small town of Saint-Césaire, which is celebrating its 200th anniversary of foundation.



Photo: Ville de Saint-Césaire Website

Located on Route 112 in the Montérégie region, between the well-known towns of Rougemont and Saint-Paul-d'Abbotsford, about 50 kilometers south of Montréal, Saint-Césaire doesn't look like much. So, you may ask, why did we choose this place to hold the general meeting of the association? It is because Saint-Césaire has a particular importance for the Archambault family.

In fact, it is from this small town that all the members of an Archambault family left for the United States, where their many descendants still live. Here is their story.



The town of Saint-Césaire and the family of Paul Archambault

The town of Saint-Césaire in the early 19th century

The town of Saint-Césaire is located in the administrative region of the Montérégie, near the Yamaska River. It covers an area of more than 84 square kilometers and has a population of approximately 5500 people. It is part of the Rouville County Municipality.

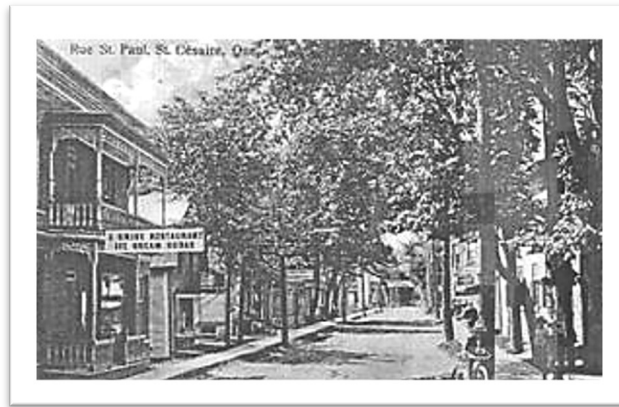


Photo: Ville de Saint-Césaire Website

In the past, the town was known as Burtonville. This name was given to the municipality, at the beginning of the 19th century, by Lord Pierre-Dominique Debartzch, in memory of his English friend Burton, member of the provincial Parliament. The present name of the city recalls that of Saint-Césaire (470-542), who was Bishop of Arles (France) in 503 and Primate of the Gauls in 514.



The family of Paul Archambault, farmer

Paul Archambault's first wife was Onésime Barrière dit Langevin, who gave him two sons, both of whom died in infancy; she herself died in April 1847, at the age of 19.

As was the custom, two years later, Paul took as his second wife Marie Ménard, who gave him 13 children. Unfortunately, in April 1873, Paul died at the age of 50 years and seven months, leaving Marie alone with a large family.

Let's imagine her, as she mourns the death of her husband and thinks about the future.

Marie Ménard Archambault sits in her chair near a second floor window in Saint-Césaire, Québec, her eyes swollen and red, her heart filled with great sadness.

The last of her acquaintances and friends who came to comfort her have left and the last of her eleven surviving children has been put to bed. For the first time, she is alone since the funeral of her husband Paul. She prays her rosary, but the Hail Mary's come out mechanically.

She thinks that she should no longer think about the past, but look forward. But every plan she makes falls flat because she is a single woman with a large family, most of whom are not old enough to hold a job.

That's when she makes a big decision: move to the United States. A year later, Marie is residing in Natick, Rhode Island, where she runs a boarding house for the A & W Sprague Manufacturing Company.

Her eleven surviving children (Marie Léopoldine and Césaire died in infancy), Paul Hypolite, Lucien, Jean François Elvé, Marie Louise, Rosalie, Jean-Baptiste Godefroi, Marie Céline, Émilie Arzélie, twins Joseph Césaire and Amédée, as well as Marie Arziana all remain with her. *You must all help me*, she tells the children. *Mama can't do it alone.*

In the 1875 census of Natick, Marie is listed as head of the household and housewife.



There are also six children living with her: François, 22, a clerk in a store, and the other five working in a textile factory: Louise 21, Céline, 15, Arzélie, 11, and the 10-year-old twins, Joseph and Amédée.

It is an indisputable fact in Natick that Marie Ménard Archambault is an excellent cook. The proof is that the French-speaking people living in the area come to buy her pea soup, her pork roasts, her *ragoût*, her *tourtières*, her baked beans and her donuts.

But it is her courage, her boundless energy and her religious faith that earn her the admiration of her fellow citizens and that distinguish her from other women.

If Marie is an exceptional mother, her children are strongly bound together. People consider them so united that they say no power can separate them.

From an early age, Marie taught them to love God and to help each other. Under her guidance, the family is a tight-knit clan that has spread to Jericho and has become the most extraordinary single-parent French family in Western Rhode Island. The members of this large family, along with those who have joined them through marriage, have become a true aristocracy in the area.

Like many others, these people have asserted their right to settle on the North American continent. Their progenitor, Paul Archambault, is, after all, one of the descendants of Jacques Archambault, who was born in Saint-Xandre, in Aunis (France), and who around 1646 came to settle in *Nouvelle-France*.

After leaving their mother's side, the Archambault brothers, one by one, made a career for themselves and became fine examples of Francophone entrepreneurship and achievement in North America.

In May 1898, their mother, Marie Ménard Archambault, left this world, leaving the reputation of one of the most honorable women in Jericho.



*Family tree of
Paul Archambault (1822-1873)*

Jacques France about 1629 Françoise Tourault

Laurent Notre-Dame, Montréal 01/07/1660 Catherine Marchand

Pierre Pointe-aux-Trembles 11/21/1701 Marie Lacombe

Jean Rivière-des-Prairies 11/17/1727 Marie Marguerite Hogue

Joseph Amable Saint-Charles-sur-Richelieu 10/18/1762 Desanges Meunier Lapierre

Joseph Saint-Denis-sur-Richelieu 07/05/1784 Marie Louise Lussier

Joseph Louis Saint-Hyacinthe 02/10/1806 Marie Rose Racine

Paul Saint-Césaire 02/19/1844 Onésime Barrière Langerin

Paul Remarriage: Saint-Césaire 03/07/1848 Marie Ménard



The children of Paul and Marie Ménard Archambault of Jericho, Rhode Island (now West Warwick)

Paul

Paul, born Hypolite on February 6, 1849 in Saint-Césaire, married Elmire Lebeau in Saint-Damase on September 4, 1866. He became a tavern keeper in Howard, Rhode Island, where he died on August 30, 1926, at the age of 87. The couple had four children: Alma, Joseph Henri, Laura and Roseline. After Elmire's death, Paul remarried to Zoé Bonin at Sainte-Anne parish in Fall River on November 24, 1895.



Lucien

Lucien, born August 7, 1850, in Saint-Césaire, married Marie Anne Gareau on November 18, 1872, in that city. However, this marriage took place only after a series of adventures. Indeed, Lucien left Wauregan, Connecticut, and went to Natick with the intention of proposing to Marie Anne. When he arrived, however, Marie Anne was no longer there, so his mother handed him a letter postmarked in Saint-Césaire. It was from the girl he wanted to marry.



*Lucien Archambault
Photo dated 1907*

Lucien was able to read the letter, but he did not know how to answer it. He had become friends with Stanislas Arcand, who had moved to Natick from Oneco, Connecticut, so he asked him if he could write to Marie Anne in French. Arcand, who had just returned from a stay in Canada, replied that he could.

Lucien then said to Arcand:



I would like you to write letters for me. In exchange, I will find you a job.

The same day, Stanislas Arcand wrote Lucien's first letter to Miss Gareau. After a sustained correspondence, Lucien finally proposed. When Anne Marie accepted, Lucien took the train to Saint-Césaire.

After the marriage, Lucien and his wife lived in Saint-Césaire until 1887, and then settled in Jericho where Lucien soon became as well known as his brother Jean-Baptiste Godefroi (see below). He owned the largest horse boarding facility in Western Rhode Island and operated a grocery store and saloon on Quidnick Street. A brick mansion built at the corner of present-day Crawford and Washington Streets, just across from his grocery store and saloon, is a testament to the size of his fortune.



Lucien Archambault's building in Artichoke Center, Rhode Island, located at the corner of Washington and Crawford Streets in West Warwick.



François

François, born June 16, 1852, in Saint-Césaire, married Delia Phaneuf on July 25, 1881, in that city. He ran a bakery in Jericho where he died in December 1906. The couple had three children: Albert Florian, Marius and Béatrice, who later became a nun in the congregation of *La Presentation de Marie*.



Marie Louise

Marie Louise, born March 5, 1854 in Saint-Césaire, married Alfred Desjardins on December 24, 1881 in Warwick, Rhode Island, where she lived until her death.



Rosalie

Rosalie, born February 5, 1856 in Saint-Césaire, married Pierre Labrèche on September 15, 1885 in that city, where she lived until her death.



Jean-Baptiste Godefroi

Jean-Baptiste Godefroi, born on December 10, 1857 in Saint-Césaire, married Rose de Lima Lévesque, originally from Sainte-Anne-de-la-Pocatière, on July 16, 1882, in Warwick, Rhode Island. His story is very interesting.



At the age of ten, Jean-Baptiste was employed as a sweeper at the Natick Mill. Later, he worked part-time in the grocery store of Kate O'Donnell, owner of O'Donnell's Block in Natick. Each week he brought home his earnings and gave them to his mother, who invested some of the money in the Centreville Bank for her son's education. *If you can afford it, she used to say, you must go to college.*

So Jean-Baptiste was enrolled in Saint-Césaire College, where he studied. When he returned to Natick, he continued to work as a clerk for Kate O'Donnell. He familiarised himself with the trade and decided that he would become a merchant himself.

After his marriage to Rose de Lima, he left his job in Natick and opened a shoe business in Jericho. After a few months, he had other types of businesses and eventually moved into selling furniture.



J. B. Archambault Homelovers Paradise
West Warwick, R. I. Edgar A. Archambault, Mgr.
The most beautiful Furniture Store in New England



He founded a store, which he named Homelovers Paradise. All the French-speaking couples came to buy their furniture there, because Jean-Baptiste allowed them to pay in installments, as long as they had a job.

Rhode Islanders did not call Jean-Baptiste by his baptismal name, but by his initials, J.B. These were the most famous initials in the state, and his store was known as J.B.'s.

With his sleeves rolled up, and his jacket pockets full of pencils and notes, J.B. was the most prominent businessman among French speakers. He was always outside his door, greeting customers by their first names. His cash register was in the back of the store, so customers had to walk between the exposed furniture when they paid for their purchases.

J.B. bought directly from the manufacturers and kept the merchandise in various warehouses around Jericho. In that town, it was said that you could only get a job at J.B.'s if you were an Archambault or related to the Archambault, or if you were a French-speaking friend in close relationship with an Archambault.

At J.B.'s, it was an Archambault who smiled and shook hands with customers, an Archambault who waited on customers in each department, an Archambault who prepared invoices, and an Archambault who reminded customers by phone not to forget their payments.



Camel Bettez Archambault (left) and Marielle L. Archambault (right), two saleswomen at J.B. Archambault for 20 years.



J.B. was in charge of purchasing the furniture and of controlling the installment payments. He knew how to manage his fortune. His store's delivery trucks crisscrossed the streets of Jericho and went as far as the western region of Rhode Island. Some people called him Archibald, which made him laugh.

Some competitors who came to Jericho hoping to capture a share of the furniture market were forced to give up after a few months, unable to compete with J.B., his French-Canadian customers and his flexible payment methods.

Some say that the Archambault family and friends were large enough to sustain a business as large as J.B.'s, and that this was the secret of the store's success.

J.B.'s built a beautiful home on McNiff Street in Jericho where he installed a hot water heating system. When the automobile became popular, he acquired a Pierce Arrow, which allowed him to distinguish himself from other member of the community.

J.B.'s picture hung on the wall of his office and in various places on the walls of the business, and it was reproduced in the local newspapers. His name shone in bright letters on the front of his store and was on all his delivery trucks. Rose de Lima Lévesque gave Jean-Baptiste Godefroy seven children: Rose de Lima, who died in infancy; Alfred and Joseph Paul, who both worked with their father; Lionel, who became a doctor specializing in eyes, ears and throat and who died in the prime of his life; Léonie, who became Sister Rose de Lima in the *Les petites franciscaines de Marie* Community, and Yvon and Élianna.

Upon the death of his first wife, J.B. married the widow of Paul Dufresne, known as Paul Ash. The second Mrs. Archambault did not want to leave Coventry, so J.B. sold his house in Jericho and went to live in the town of his new wife. He passed away on September 13, 1928 after having left a strong impression of a wise businessman in Jericho.



Marie Céline

Marie Céline was born on August 28, 1859, in Saint-Césaire and married Jean-Baptiste Denommé on January 7, 1889, in Warwick. Together, they built a store complex in Jericho.



Marie Léopoldine

Marie Léopoldine, born on June 13, 1861, in Saint-Césaire, died on July 10, 1863, in the same town.



Émilie Arzélie

Émilie Arzélie, born June 13, 1863 in Saint-Césaire, married Joseph Viens on July 28, 1884 in that same town, where they both lived until their respective deaths.



Joseph Césaire

Joseph Césaire, born on December 3, 1864 in Saint-Césaire, married Virginie Choquette. He built the Majestic Hotel, which was nicknamed the Empire State of Western Rhode Island. Here is the history of this illustrious building.

The night of November 3, 1900 is one that Jericho residents still remember today. a fire broke out in the main living room of Joseph Archambault's "block" in the center of Jericho. By the time it was discovered, the fire had grown to such proportions that the Warwick and Coventry Fire Departments were unable to control it and by dawn, the Archambault complex had been reduced to ashes.

Miraculously, the Jericho center was spared, as the wind had pushed the flames and sparks beyond the business district. Joseph Césaire estimated his loss at \$17,000, and all of Western Rhode Island wondered what he would do, sell or rebuild? It wasn't long before Joseph Césaire became the subject of curiosity.

For some time there had been long discussions about the desirability of uniting the Pawtuck Valley with Jericho into a single city like a municipal district. Many merchants, including Joseph Césaire, were convinced that this was inevitable. One morning, while directing the cleanup of what was left of his building, Joseph Césaire was visited by a merchant who asked him what he was going to do.

I'm going to build the biggest building in all of Western Rhode Island, said Joseph Césaire. A building that fire will not destroy. It's going to be a skyscraper.

Some time later, Joseph Césaire began construction of an all-brick and cement building, which he called the Majestic Hotel. This building was 75 feet high and had five floors. In the heart of the building, Joseph Césaire had a movie theater built, proving that he was very enterprising and *avant-garde*.





The Majestic Theater, owned by Joseph Césaire Archambault, brother of Lucien, located in West Warwick, Rhode Island.

Joseph Césaire died on June 30, 1913 in Warwick, at the time when Jericho became a town. His wife kept the Majestic until July 15, 1920, when she sold the building to Helen R. Duckworth.



Amédée

Amédée, born December 3, 1864 in Saint-Césaire, was the twin of Joseph Césaire. He became a Dominican friar. He died on June 26, 1925 in Ottawa, where he resided.



Father Archambault Point

At its meeting on September 24, 2003, the *Commission de toponymie du Québec* made official 655 place names, including *Pointe du Père-Archambault*.



La Motte, Abitibi, Québec
Photo: Municipalité de La Motte Website



This point is located in the locality of La Motte, in Abitibi, and recalls the memory of Reverend Father Louis Archambault, a Dominican, named Amédée at his baptism which took place in Saint-Césaire on December 4, 1864.

Amédée did his classical studies at the seminary of Saint-Hyacinthe where he entered the Dominicans in 1887 and took his vows in 1888 under the name of Brother Louis; he then left for Corsica, where he was ordained a priest in Ajaccio, on June 24, 1892.

After a final year of studies in that city (1892-1893), he returned to Canada, to the convent of Saint-Hyacinthe, where he was professor of apologetics (1893-1895), of ecclesiastical studies (1895-1896) and of moral theology (1896-1897).

He was then assigned to St. Anne's parish in Fall River, Massachusetts, as curate (1897-1900) and then became a missionary (1900-1903). In Wisconsin, he was the founding pastor of Blake (1903) where he built a church in 1904; at the same time, he was a missionary in Frederic (1903-1907), where he built a chapel, and in Pomme-de-Terre, where he completed another one. He was then a missionary in Ottawa (from 1907 to his death in 1925), during which time he stayed several times in the missions of Abitibi.

A formidable speaker, he could be vehement, colourful and an apostle at heart; in the pulpit, his whole being came alive. As he was often animated by an enthusiastic fervor, he made fun of the oratory technique and often lacked taste and measure. He was too rich a nature, which could hardly contain his ardor. However, he never lost his lively piety and his beautiful spirit of poverty.



Césaire

Césaire, born on May 2, 1867 in Saint-Césaire and buried on May 23, 1867 in this city.



Marie Arziana

Marie Arziana, born on July 17, 1868 in Saint-Césaire, married Achille Daragon on September 15, 1885. The couple settled in Saint-Césaire.



Sources:

Trumpets in Jericho, Mathias P. Alpin, privately published in 1961

Dictionnaire biographique du clergé canadien-français, L'Abbé J.-B.-A. Allaire



Editor's note

The children of Paul and Marie had themselves many children and grandchildren who still live in the United States. We will follow their story in a subsequent bulletin.

Obituary

Paul Archambault of Lacolle, member no 729, husband of Louise Legault and brother of Roger, of Abbotsford, British Columbia, member no 403 and translation volunteer for many years, passed away on June 24 at the age of 79. He is survived by his sons Albert and David and his daughter Melissa.





Current Church of Saint-Césaire, 1385 Notre-Dame Street

The groundbreaking ceremony took place on July 30, 1986, the blessing of the cornerstone and the bells on April 5, 1987 and the blessing of the temple on Easter Day, April 19, 1987

Source: Ville de Saint-Césaire Website

Photo: Monique Bellemare

