

## 2025 Gathering, La Prairie/St-Philippe Presentation by Raymond & Philippe Demers



(thanks to Johanne and Suzanne for their research)

### History of Raymond Demers

## A-ETIENNE AND DESCENDANTS OF ÉTIENNE DUMAY

Not long ago, When it comes to information about Etienne's life, what little we find comes from notarized contracts for transactions or paid work. He worked as a carpenter like his father and farmed his land in Cap Rouge for more than 40 years. He also engaged in eel fishing.

The most important transaction was that of 28 June 1678 when he sells the land he had acquired from M. From Avaugour to his brother Jean. It was on this land located on the Cul de Sac wharf in Quebec City that the Quebec City house was built, which can still be seen today.

Contrarily to his half-brothers, he will only go before the Council once to settle a dispute concerning a barter case with a friend.

The first five children that he had with Françoise Morin all died at a young age. There is a large age gap between him and his last 4 next sons.

They are Etienne, Joseph, Eustache and François. These 4 sons became friends with the Jesuits to the point of following them to the seigneurie of La Prairie which would become the true stock of Etienne Dumay's descendants. This afternoon, we will have more explanations of the places where his sons have settled.

### 1. Etienne Dumay, son. (To facilitate understanding, Stephen-2)

He married Jeanne Ménard in 1686 in Boucherville. He had 7 children. His descendants settled in Montérégie, Alberta and Michigan. Her lineage includes **MADONNA**, great-granddaughter of Marie-Louise Demers (1875-1929) who married Henri Fortin in Michigan. Marie-Louise's father, Eustache Demers, was born in Sainte-Martine, married in Pain-Court, in southwestern Ontario, and died in Michigan.

### 2. Joseph Dumay married Marguerite Guitaut in La Prairie in 1683. In 1681, Joseph was a servant at the Jesuit house in Sault Ste. Marie with his brother François.

Joseph was ambushed and scalped by the Iroquois. He survived and wore a wig made of horsehair that he made himself and he wore it until his death in 1728. In addition to cultivating his land, he traded furs in the Pays d'en Haut during the winter. Joseph was married 4 times. He had 14 children in all, His lineage is the most colorful of all of Etienne's descendants.

**His son Jacques**, married to Barbe Brosseau, was hired for the West but lived in La Prairie. Three of their sons, Jacques, Pierre and François-Marie, ensured the continuity of the line.

**JACQUES FILS**, born in 1719, found himself at Fort Michilimackina where he married Madeleine Chevalier. He was murdered by an Indian from the Detroit area. According to legend, his son Louis killed the murderer and returned to La Prairie with his mother. From Jacques' first marriage to Catherine Brosseau, a son **Louis-Ludovic** married to Emilie Robert gave birth to **TÉLESPHORE-JACQUES Demers**, who made his fortune in Montana and founded Demersville there. We will talk about this in more detail later. From Jacques' second marriage to Josette Caillé-Biscornet, 2 sons catch our attention: Médard Demers and his brother Pierre.

**MÉDARD**, born in 1824, married 3 times. An important figure in La Prairie, he was captain of the La Prairie-Montreal ferry and then the first owner of the La Prairie aqueduct.

**PIERRE**, born in 1814, was first a farmer and then the 2nd owner of the La Prairie aqueduct. His son Alexandre A. became the 3rd owner. We'll talk about these as well a little later.

Secondly, **PIERRE**, born in 1723, married Marguerite Lefort. They are my ancestors on my father's side. Their descendants will be found mainly in Montérégie (but also in Vermont).

Finally **François-Marie**, born in 1732, married 3 times. As a result of his marriage to Angélique Duquet, some descendants migrated to the Grande Pointe, Ontario area.

*We are fortunate to have among us one of these descendants, **Raymond Demers** and his wife Élisabeth of Dover Center, Ontario. We are also honoured by the presence of **Yolande Boyer**, from Longueuil, whose grandmother is also a descendant of François-Marie but this time, from his marriage to Marie-Anne Hervé.*

**3. Eustache Dumay** married Catherine Perras in 1688 in La Prairie. Through his marriage, he entered the wealthiest families through the fur trade.

In 1690, Eustache and his younger brother François were hired as voyageurs to the Illinois country under the command of the Sieur de Boisrondel for a trading voyage. This lineage has spread throughout the Montérégie. He is my ancestor on my mother's side.

**4. François Dumay** would join his 3 brothers in La Prairie much later, in 1697 after the death of his father. He married the young widow Jeanne Roinay in 1700. He has a son **Jean-François**, whose descendants left for Detroit and others for Fort Vincennes in Wabash, Ontario

## B – Raymond: A little bit of my personal history

My Ancestors: see page 4 my 2 ancestry lists below

On his father's side:

- Étienne L'ancêtre
- Joseph married to Marguerite Guitaut: First a servant for the Jesuits and then acquired land in La Prairie
- Jacques & Barbe Brosseau: Farmer in La Prairie
- Pierre & Marguerite Lefort: Pierre is the eldest of the family.
- Pierre & Marie-Archange Barbeau settles in **St-Philippe** de Laprairie.



On the mother's side:

- Étienne the ancestor
- Eustache

History of my parents and grandparents Demers:

- Paternal grandfather married 3 times
- Father placed in the orphanage
- Raymond's trips with his parents, including Vermont
- History of the maternal side
- Raymond's multiple professions
- His 2 children



## Paternal ancestry

Nom	Date Naiss./Bapt	Lieu Naiss./Bapt.	Conjoint	Date d'union	Lieu d'union	Date Décès/Inhum.	Lieu Décès/Inhum.
<b>VICTOR DEMERS</b>	29.4.1912	Sainte-Philomène	<b>Louissette DEMERS</b>	6.10.1949	Sainte-Martine	2002	
<b>Xénophile Zenophile DEMERS</b>	30.4.1878	Sainte-Martine	• Antonia DESGROSEILLIERS • <b>Rébecca LEFEBVRE</b> • Ida PERREAULT	• 3.10.1899 • 3.7.1911 •	• Sainte-Philomène • La Prairie •	2.5.1936	Sainte-Philomène
<b>Onésime DEMERS</b>	20.11.1842	Sainte-Martine	<b>Denise LARIVIERE</b>	27.2.1865	Saint-Joachim	18.4.1915	Sainte-Martine
<b>Constant DEMERS</b>	5.10.1810	Saint-Constant	<b>Chrystine MONDOUX</b>	17.10.1831	Saint-Joachim-de-Châteauguay	8.7.1861	Sainte-Martine
<b>Amable DEMERS</b>	21.1.1788	Saint-Philippe	<b>Marie-Isabelle BEAUDIN</b>	5.3.1810	Saint-Constant	5.4.1872	Saint-Isidore
<b>Pierre DEMERS</b>	19.7.1753	La Prairie	<b>Archange BARBEAU-BOISDORÉ</b>	15.11.1779	Saint-Philippe	< 7.1813	
<b>Pierre DEMERS</b>	11.1.1723	La Prairie	<b>Marguerite LEFORT-PRAIRIE</b>	8.2.1751	La Prairie	18.8.1789	Saint-Constant
<b>Jacques DEMERS</b>	8.6.1689	La Prairie	<b>Barbe BROSSEAU</b>	30.1.1719	La Prairie	16.2.1750	La Prairie
<b>Joseph DEMERS</b>	1658		• <b>Marguerite GUITAUT-JOLICOEUR</b> • Marguerite PERRAS-FONTAINE • Angélique BRUNELLE • Françoise PETIT-LAPRE	• 25.10.1683 • 20.9.1699 • 23.7.1708 • 27.11.1712	• La Prairie • La Prairie • Varennes • Varennes	30.11.1728	Saint-Lambert
<b>ETIENNE</b>	~ 1617	Dieppe	• <b>Françoise MORIN</b> • Françoise DUPERRON	• 28.1.1648 • ~ 1663	• Québec •	5.1.1697	Québec
<b>Jean DEMERS</b>	~ 1595		• <b>Miote LECOMBE</b> • Barbe MAUGER-MAUGIS	• • 5.9.1622	• • Saint-Jacques-de-Dieppe		
<b>Adrien DUMOYS (DUMAYS)</b>			<b>Catherine POUGNYE</b>	12.8.1594	Etoutteville		
<b>Jehan DUMOYS (DUMAYS)</b>			<b>Marguerite BERSERVOYSE</b>	17.12.1555	Autretot		

## Maternal ancestry

Nom	Date Naiss./Bapt	Lieu Naiss./Bapt.	Conjoint	Date d'union	Lieu d'union	Date Décès/Inhum.	Lieu Décès/Inhum.
<b>LOUISETTE DEMERS</b>	18.1.1928	Sainte-Martine	<b>VICTOR DEMERS</b>	6.10.1949	Sainte-Martine	1983	
<b>Henri DEMERS</b>	4.4.1903	Sainte-Martine	• <b>Bertha LABERGE</b> • Marie-Anne HEBERT	• 19.1.1927 • 19.3.1949	• Montréal • Sainte-Martine	14.7.1968	Sainte-Martine
<b>Joseph DEMERS</b>	1869		<b>Rébecca MALLETTE</b>	7.7.1895	Saint-Urbain	11.3.1951	Sainte-Martine
<b>Alexandre DEMERS</b>	18.5.1833	Sainte-Martine	<b>Esther BEAUDIN **</b>	19.11.1866	Saint-Urbain	21.9.1919	Sainte-Martine
<b>Pierre DEMERS</b>	28.6.1790	La Prairie	<b>Marie-Agnès-Louise-Josephthe BONNIER-LAPLANTE</b>	7.7.1818	Saint-Joachim	3.4.1850	Sainte-Martine
<b>Etienne DEMERS</b>	28.5.1759	Longueuil	• Charlotte GAGNE • <b>Marie-Ange Louise LAZURE-AZURE</b>	• 7.11.1785 • 29.4.1789	• Saint-Philippe • Longueuil	30.8.1833	Sainte-Martine
<b>Eustache-Laurent DEMERS</b>	21.3.1700	Saint-Lambert	• Jeanne-Marie-Agnès MARCIL • <b>Marie-Louise LERIGER-LAPLANTE</b>	• 22.1.1725 • 24.11.1751	• Longueuil • La Prairie	27.7.1787	Longueuil
<b>Eustache DEMERS</b>	1661		<b>Marie-Catherine PERRAS</b>	21.4.1688	La Prairie	20.3.1707	
<b>ETIENNE</b>	~ 1617	Dieppe	• <b>Françoise MORIN</b> • Françoise DUPERRON	• 28.1.1648 • ~ 1663	• Québec •	5.1.1697	Québec
<b>Jean DEMERS</b>	~ 1595		• <b>Miote LECOMBE</b> • Barbe MAUGER-MAUGIS	• • 5.9.1622	• • Saint-Jacques-de-Dieppe		
<b>Adrien DUMOYS (DUMAYS)</b>			<b>Catherine POUGNYE</b>	12.8.1594	Etoutteville		
<b>Jehan DUMOYS (DUMAYS)</b>			<b>Marguerite BERSERVOYSE</b>	17.12.1555	Autretot		

**\*\* André Demers = ancêtre de Esther Beaudin en ligne indirecte (par Marie, fille d'André, qui a épousé Jean Bourhis-Boulerisse en 1686)**

## C - Other Demers from La Prairie and surrounding areas

### **David Demers** (1861-1924)

Laurence McGee founded the general store with her partner and brother-in-law David Demers, a descendant of André. David died in an accident on June 13, 1924. He was ejected from his car when his horse scared into a Montreal street. An account book of the general store, preserved from a fire, was found and handed over to the SHLP. This afternoon, we will be able to see this building, which houses a restaurant.



### **Sophie** (1838-1923)

Sophie Demers, a descendant of Etienne by Joseph, married in 1856 Ambroise Hébert, a master baker on St-Ignace Street.



### **Father Jean-Paul Demers** (1910-1970)

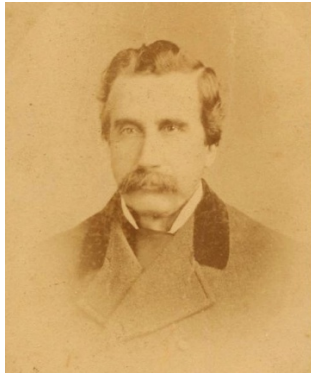
We have 5 generations together (up to the 2nd Peter).

Baptized in St-Isidore-de-Châteauguay, he was ordained a priest in 1938. This missionary met a tragic fate: On January 25, 1970, at the airport in Kampala, Uganda, three White Missionary Fathers were caught between two rival factions: the rebels of Idi Amin Dada were trying to regain power from Milton Obote. During this skirmish, Jean-Paul Demers and his colleague, Gérard Perreault, were killed by Idi Amin's soldiers. Gérard came from a large family of a dozen children, 10 of whom were religious.



## **D – Two significant stories in the descendants of Étienne and Joseph: the La Prairie aqueduct and Demersville in the USA**

### **La Prairie Aqueduct: Médard Demers & Cie**



Born in La Prairie in 1824, Médard was married 3 times. He was the captain of the La Prairie-Montreal ferry for 22 years. This role gave him a certain prestige, he took his place in the bourgeoisie and played an important political role in his city.

When the time came to organize an aqueduct, Médard Demers offered his services to the corporation of the village of La Prairie. A contract was awarded to him in 1883. To do this, Médard bought from Julien Brossard in May 1883 a piece of land on St-Ignace Street with a 50-foot frontage leading to the river at a cost of \$150 to build an aqueduct. Médard undertook to pay for all planned and unforeseen damages following the construction of the aqueduct. The system came into operation in 1885. Médard made wooden pipes and set up his pumping plant near the river, on St Ignace Street. He erected an above-ground reservoir near St-Philippe Street. Two windmills draw water and a 25 horsepower steam engine pushes the water into the reservoir.



Médard signed a 5-year lease with his son Alexandre E. concerning the aqueduct. Alexandre E. has to maintain the entire network. If urgent or very timely improvements are planned by Alexandre, Médard will determine the conditions and he alone will decide to make them. However, Médard died in July 1886. At his death, he left 4 living children: Alexandre E. from his first marriage as well as Angéline, Georgine (Georgianna) and Oscar born from his 3rd marriage.

Pierre, (uncle of Alexandre E and brother of Médard), then 72 years old, bought the aqueduct on August 4, 1886, We know, by notarial deed, that it was Pierre's son,

Alexandre A. (and therefore cousin of Alexandre E.) who was appointed clerk in 1887. In addition, his father Pierre left him in his will the aqueduct and the site of St-Ignace Street.

Already in June 1887, there was a protest from the corporation of La Prairie to Pierre Demers, then owner of the aqueduct. It is mentioned that according to the 1883 convention, Médard had to bring healthy and clean water in sufficient quantities, and to restore the pavement and the pavements of the streets to the same condition after the passage of the pipes... The corporation complains that Médard has not done the repairs to the streets and that Pierre has not yet done so either... In addition, Peter is said to have provided unhealthy, undrinkable water in insufficient quantity and water was lacking almost daily, especially at night. Problems with the aqueduct persisted until the city purchased the system in the 1920s.

Alexandre A., owner-manager of the aqueduct, bought a piece of land adjacent to Rodolphe Perron in 1899 aqueduct and had his house built there in 1911. This house and the entire water system became the property of the city of La Prairie in 1923, which installed its City Hall there.



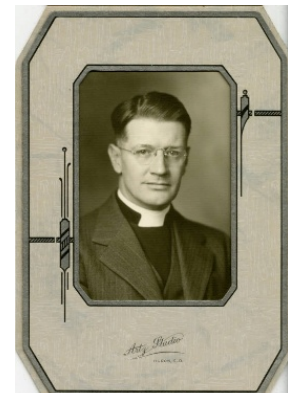
It was not until 1893 that Médard's estate was finalized. The notarial deed has 37 pages !! At the time, his son Alexandre E was living in Salem, Massachusetts, Angéline and Georgianna were in Montreal and Oscar was living in Chicago.

*Alexandre Demers House 1*

So the saga of the La Prairie aqueduct lasted a very long time!!

Ida, Alexandre E.'s daughter, married Wallace E. Frazier. Their son, Stuart Demers-Frazier (see photo opposite) became a missionary pastor sent to the American West to visit the Indigenous communities.

It was after the death of Stuart's wife that a friend of her sent documents concerning Médard to the SHLM from the depths of Wyoming.



## **Demersville: Téléspore-Jacques Demers, The story of an entrepreneur who built a city**

Born in 1834 in La Prairie, the son of a farmer, Téléspore-Jacques (also known as TJ and Jack) was no ordinary man. He has an adventurous spirit and an entrepreneurial spirit from a young age. Like generations of men in the mid-1800s, TJ arrived in San Francisco, California as part of the Gold Rush. However, nearly 300,000 people had already beaten it. TJ then ventured north into the densely forested state of Washington, where he established a property north of the city of Spokane in Colville. The influx of miners into the Pacific Northwest created a high demand for supplies. A seasoned entrepreneur and traveller, TJ has developed shops filled with milking and other items throughout the region, avoiding the most dangerous routes. In 1857, his first marriage was to Clara Rivet, who was half Aboriginal, from the Pend d'Oreille tribe on his mother's side.



Around 1862, with the opening of new roads, TJ and his family ventured into Montana, to the Frenchtown Valley where he continued to develop his businesses. This entrepreneur was able to diversify his activities: businesses on the roads between Montana and Utah, a ranch from which he sold herds of cattle and sheep as far as Texas, a liquor merchant, owner of sawmills and flour mills, supplier of equipment for miners in British Columbia, fur sales, etc.

In 1879, he is said to have been the 4th largest taxpayer in Missoula County. That same year, TJ became a widower. It is said that Clara died of a head injury caused by a horse. He remarried a little less than a year later to Léonie Garneau, an assistant teacher and music teacher. They have an age gap of more than 25 years.

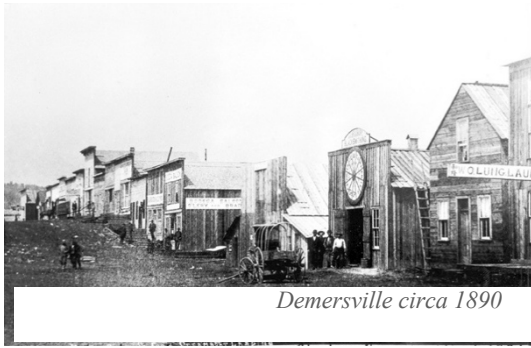
At that time, TJ learned of a place with vast untapped potential between 2 transit areas of his stores, across tribal lands and defined by a large lake and a significant mountain range, the Flathead Valley.

It was here that in 1887 TJ began to set up his goods in a tent. In 1888, the tent was replaced by a large 30 x 60 foot log store. John Clifford, who supervised this new business, married his daughter Delima.



TJ founded Demersville there, which was very prosperous: At its peak of expansion in 1891, there were 1500 inhabitants, 73 saloons (and a few brothels of course !!). Among other things, there is a hotel belonging to TJ, named the Cliff House, in honor of his son-in-law, and the Demersville Bank. In Demersville, there were also trappers, prospectors, lumberjacks, cargo ships and traders who came and went.





*Demersville circa 1890*



In 1889, TJ's health deteriorated rapidly, and on a train ride to Salt Lake City, Utah, he had to be hospitalized in Butte where he died at the age of 55.



TJ and 11 other members of his family rest in an unassuming mausoleum made of native rock. The tomb of his first wife is not there.

As for Demersville, for various reasons, including the death of Télesphore-Jacques and a deviation from the railway line, it quickly fell into decline, in favor of Kalispell. During the winter of 1892-1893, Demersville quickly disappeared. Houses, businesses, bars, the Methodist Church, and the bank of Demersville were moved to Kalispell, among other places.