

A Melding of Cultures

Ancestors of George Turner and Bernadette Joanis

Volume 2
Our Lapointe and Joanis Ancestors
Four Hundred Years of French Canadian Heritage



Mark L. Cullen

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Volume 2: Our Lapointe and Joanis Ancestors
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Dedicated to my children Lesley and John and my grandchildren Beth and Quinn
May they enjoy this chapter of their ancestry

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Preface

This is the third and final volume of my family history trilogy. When I started this genealogy journey, I set out to create a complete family tree, a record that family members could use to go back in time. But, when I completed the task, I realized it was of little historical and practical value. It was merely an ancestral skeleton, without the flesh. Many facts, but without providing any semblance of how our people lived and their place in the community. It was then I decided to produce a family biography for my children, cousins and future generations.

Little did I realize 20 years ago, that the timeline would stretch as long, and that the project would transform from a pastime and hobby to, at times, an all-consuming passion. Countless

hours have been spent on research, analysis puzzle-solving, guesswork and writing, in trying to understand and convey the setting and lives of many of our forebears.

It has been a satisfying task. The more I immersed myself in the research, the more I became enthralled with our family stories. Now that I'm finished, I feel elated, privileged to have been the family chronicler, and pleased that future generations will be able to learn something of their past. For our history is extensive, and colourful, and our ancestors made major contributions to the growth of their communities, and to the country's development as a whole.

I am pleased to be a footnote in our Cullen, Turner, Lapointe and Joanis history.

Introduction

Our Turner family is a melding of two cultures: the Methodist/Presbyterian Scottish Turners, and through links by marriage in two generations, our French Canadian Lapointe and Joanis lines. Volume 1 chronicled our Turner line of transportation players from horses to stagecoaches to railway engineering.

In Volume 2, we turn to our Lapointe and Joanis ancestors. The breadth of our French Canadian ancestry will be surprising to many readers. Before I began my research, I was unaware of our rich Francophone history. All we had was an Audet dit Lapointe family tree dating back to the 1670s and a brief bio of great-great grandfather Alexandre Lapointe. Nothing on the Joanis line.

My research augments knowledge of our ancestry. When we include ancestors of all branches of the family trees of our grandmother Bernadette Joanis and great grandmother Emma Lapointe, the extent of our French Canadian history becomes more evident. The fact is that our ancestry is interlaced with the first decades of New France in the 1600s, and the formation of our country. Our early background is centred primarily in Quebec City and environs, with a sprinkling of ancestors in the Montreal area and a few in Acadia.

I have identified about 350 of our great-grandparents of all surnames who were the first of their line in New France. Mostly they are my 7th or 8th great grandparents, and all are ancestors related by blood. These ancestors are listed in Appendix 1.

In this book, I focus on our Lapointe and Joanis great grandparents and their families. Family tree charts for these ancestors are included in Appendices 2 and 3. Family tree data for all our ancestors can be found on my website at www.cullenancestry.ca.

To set the scene for the story of our ancestors, I have provided in Chapter 1 a historical overview of New France in the 17th century. Early explorers, Champlain's efforts in the early days of New France, the fur trade economy, the role of government, the Church influence and the semi-feudal seigneurial land tenure system, all are described as background to considering the life of our early ancestors.

A few ancestors settled here some 400 years ago and are among the first colonists of Canada. Furthermore, they were associates and friends of Samuel de Champlain. Our earliest ancestor in Canada was Louis Hébert, the country's first non-native colonist farmer. He is my 12th great grandfather, making my first cousins and me 15th generation Canadians. There are no earlier generations in our age group.

Chapters 2 and 3 are biographical sketches of our Lapointe and Joanis families, drawn largely from researching church records, censuses and notarial documents. The notary in French Canada was equivalent to the English Canadian lawyer. All transactions of importance (marriage, land, debt obligations, disputes, wills, estate inventories, etc.) were evidenced by notarial contracts handwritten in French. I have included in the appendices selected notarial documents for many of our principal ancestors.

Thousands of these documents are housed in the Quebec Archives (*Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec*). As recently as two years ago, most of BANQ's stored documents remained in paper format or microfiche and digitized indexing was limited or non-existent. The process is improving quickly, however. Now, BANQ and *ancestry.com* are working together to digitize indexing and documents. The benefits for

French Canadian ancestral research will be immense and in the future only limited by one's facility with the French language and ability to read early writing styles.

There are errors of fact and misinterpretation in this book, for which I take full responsibility. Although my French comprehension has improved immensely as this book progressed, deciphering New France and Quebec writing styles of the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries can be difficult at best,

even for fully bilingual readers. Notwithstanding, I believe I have made sense of most of the relevant documents and that the family stories presented are essentially accurate. More information will become readily available in the medium term, and my hope is that other family members will make any needed corrections and expand further the rich history of our French Canadian ancestry.

Acknowledgements

The research and writing of this book took place over a 20-year period with concentrated effort during the past four years. I have many people to acknowledge for their assistance. First and foremost, I must thank Barbara, my wife of 48 years and stalwart supporter in this genealogy journey. Many days I was cooped up in my office, head down at my laptop, entranced in the world of our dead ancestors. I know she wished I would have spent more time with “the living”. However, she knew the importance of the project to me and gave me much encouragement and support. Also, she was keen to accompany me on many trips to visit ancestor residences in Île d’Orléans, La Malbaie, Rivière-du-Loup, Dégelis, Masson-Angers, Rockland and Clarence Creek to tramp cemeteries searching for tombstones, etc. I owe her a lot.

As in Volume 1, several cousins were of great assistance. *Jo Hamilton* continued her long-standing interest in the project and took the time to proofread a late draft, adding useful comments and corrections. In my search for other Joanis family members, I was fortunate to meet *Denise Joannis* of Ottawa, a grandchild of Amédée Joanis, brother of our great grandfather Jules. She grew up in Clarence Township and has been a fountain of knowledge with many Joannis family contacts. She also supplied family photos, obituaries and colour on Clarence Creek and Rockland, and proofread a draft. She has agreed to be a distribution point for book copies for her cousins and family members. Also my thanks to *Gil Joanis* of Saskatoon, son of Lionel, brother of Grandma Bernadette. He supplied family tree data for the Saskatchewan branch

of the Joanis family, including the Dinelles. Many thanks also for his many family photos and for his warm biography of his family’s life in St. Denis. And thanks also to our author cousin, *Matt Hart*, for his unwavering support and counselling throughout my journey.

The genealogy data services *ancestry.ca* and *familysearch.org* have been an important source of information. Genealogists today can now discover 90% of their ancestral data while sitting in front of their computer. Long gone are the days spent in library and archive reading rooms viewing scratchy microfilms. Thank God for technology.

Special thanks to Al Lewis, the dean of Bytown and early Ottawa genealogy. His website, *bytown.net*, is the go-to source for such data and family history, and a connection point for meeting other researchers. Al’s personal support, data and suggestions have helped in researching our Joanis ancestors, who lived in Bytown in the 1840s, and on French Canadian migration patterns from the area west of Montreal to Bytown and surroundings in the mid-1800s. Al is currently researching French Canadian settlers in Bytown.

I would be remiss without mentioning the helpful staff at Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ). BAnQ has been central to this book since much of the biographical sketch information is derived from notarial documents pertaining to marriage contracts, land transactions, mortgages, wills and asset inventories. More than 150 documents were accessed. Special thanks to BAnQ staff Geneviève Vezeau and Claire Nadeau in Rimouski, Nancy Bélanger and Sylvie Bédard in Quebec and Marc St-Jacques in Gatineau.

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