

A Tribute to Jean Baptiste Dumouchel – Patriote of 1837

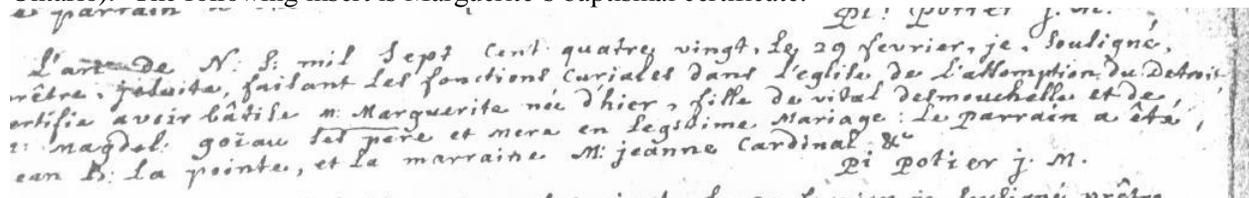
Part II (continued MHH, Vol. 28, #2, from April 2007)

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The first part of this article reproduced the 1836 letter that Jean Baptiste Dumouchel wrote to his sister, Marie Marguerite. The article also discussed the Dumouchel and Goyeau ancestry of the family. This part of the article will discuss Marie Marguerite Dumouchel, the recipient of the letter from her brother, Jean Baptiste, and her descendants. Once again, I have inserted information regarding the history of the Essex County, Ontario and Detroit, Michigan area. Part III will discuss Jean Baptiste and Ignace Dumouchel and their roles in the 1837 *Patriote* Rebellion as well as discussing the ancestry of their fellow *Patriotes* in Deux-Montagnes.

Marie Marguerite Dumouchel and Charles Ouellette

Marie Marguerite Dumouchel, daughter of Vital Dumouchel and Magdeleine Goyau, was born 28 February 1780 and baptized the following day at Assumption in Sandwich (present-day Windsor, Ontario).¹ The following insert is Marguerite's baptismal certificate:



Marguerite grew up on lots 81 and 82 in the “Settlement of L’Assomption” or the “South Shore” of the Detroit River in the area which would become the central part of the future city of Windsor. The Dumouchel family’s neighbors were **Madame Baby (Suzanne Réaume)**, who owned lots 79 and 80 and **Louis Goyau**, Marguerite’s uncle, who owned lot 83.

During the period of 1792 - 1794, virtually all of the lots in this settlement were owned by French Canadians; the exceptions were William Hands (lot 61); Francis Pratt (lot 64), John Askin (lot 128), Michael Wool (lot 147), and B. Bruce (lot 77 of the second concession). In prior years, many British Loyalists, including members of the Indian Department, were granted lands in the future Essex County, but most of those grants were made in the townships of Gosfield, Colchester and Malden.² Although Detroit and the Northwest Territory had been granted to the United States as part of the treaty negotiations ending the American Revolution, the British retained control of the fort until they ceded control to the Americans in July 1796. The following year, many French and “English” families signed declarations that they wished to remain British citizens, leading to the movement of many families from the future state of Michigan to the future Essex County on the Canadian side of the River.³

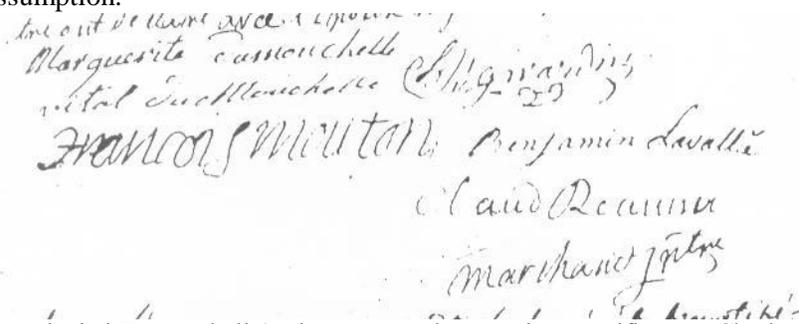
¹ FHL film # 1312030. Assumption Records. This film is on permanent loan at the Bloomfield Hills, MI FHC. Drouin Collection, U. S. Records, Michigan, Detroit, L’Assomption de Sandwich de Windsor, 1767-1783, Image 38 of 62:

<http://content.ancestry.com/Browse/view.aspx?dbid=1111&path=Michigan.D%c3%a9troit%2c+L%60Assomption+de+Sandwich+de+Windsor.1767-1783.38&sid=&gskw=&cr=1>

² Reverend Christian Denissen, *Genealogy of the French Families of the Detroit River Region* (Detroit: Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, revised edition 1987), Vol. I, pp. 32-33, 546-547; Ernest J. Lajeunesse, C.S.B., *The Windsor Border Region* (Toronto, Ontario: The Champlain Society for the Government of Ontario, University of Toronto Press, 1960), pp. 357-358.

³ Clarence Burton, editor, *The City of Detroit Michigan 1701-1922* (Detroit: The S.J. Clarke Publishing Company, 1922), pp. 275-276. These two pages contain a list of the “English” families who declared that they wished to be British citizens, as well as the families who wished to be American citizens. Le Roy Barnett and Roger Rosentreter, *Michigan’s Early Military Forces*. (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2003), pp. 34, 48.

Although there is no evidence that Marie Marguerite traveled to Montréal to study as did her brother Jean Baptiste, she received a basic education, perhaps from her father, as she was able to sign the register when she married **Charles Ouellette**, fourth son of **Jean Baptiste Ouellette** and **Suzanne Putelle/Patel**,⁴ on 11 February 1801 at Assumption.⁵



The image shows a close-up of handwritten signatures in cursive ink on a document. The most prominent signature is 'MARGUERITE OUELLETTE' in all caps. Below it, another signature reads 'VITAL DUMOUCHELLE'. To the right, there are other names: 'FRANCOIS MILLET', 'Benjamin Lavallee', 'Claude Deanna', and 'Marchand J...'. The handwriting is somewhat faded and the document appears to be aged paper.

Marguerite's and Vital Dumouchelle's signatures on her marriage certificate to Charles Ouellette.

Movement between the two communities not only involved the movement of families from one community to another, but also trade. **François Baby**, who had inherited lots 79 and 80 from his mother, leased his wharf, located in a creek outlet near the east edge of his farm, to **Jean Baptiste Bonvouloir**, ferryman in 1809.⁶ At some point between 1812 and 1818, Charles Ouellette, who had been a farmer in Belle River prior to his marriage, purchased his father-in-law's farm.⁷

Charles and Marguerite were the parents of seven children, six of whom survived to marry: **Jean Baptiste** married **Eleanore Lemay** on 4 October 1830 at St. Jean Baptiste in Amherstburg. The other children were married at Assumption: **Vital** married **Marie Émilie Cécile (Antoine and Julie Campeau)** on 21 October 1830;⁸ **Euphrosine** married **Cyrille Joseph Janisse** on 29 November 1835; **Madeleine**

⁴ Sharon Kelley, editor, *Marriage Records Ste Anne Church 1701-1850*, (Detroit, Michigan: The Detroit Society for Genealogical Research, Inc., 2001), p.18. Although Jean Baptiste Ouellette and Suzanne Putelle/Patel were married at the Church of the Hurons, the marriage was recorded in Ste. Anne's register. Denissen, Vol. II, p. 906.

⁵ Drouin Collection, US Records, Michigan, L'Assomption de Sandwich de Windsor, 1781-1808: image 225 of 323. <http://content.ancestry.com/Browse/View.aspx?dbid=1111&path=Michigan.D%2c%20L%20Assomption+de+Sandwich+de+Windsor.1781-1808.225&cr=1&sid=&gskw=>; Société Franco-Ontarienne d'Histoire et de Généalogie. *Mariages Paroisse L'Assomption de Windsor, Ontario 1700-1985*, (Ottawa, Ontario: SFOHG), 450. All future references to this group will be abbreviated: SFOHG, p. 446.

⁶ R. Alan Douglas, *Uppermost Canada The Western District and the Detroit Frontier 1800-1850* (Detroit, Michigan: Wayne State University Press, 2001), p. 138.

⁷ Dave Connery, "How Ouellette Avenue Got its Name," *Border Cities Star* (Windsor, Ontario: November 1932), the page number was cut off the copy. The article was partially based on an interview with Wilfred Langlois, pastor of St. Rose and great-grandson of Vital Ouellette. Lajeunesse, p. lx. Author's note: Fr Lajeunesse's explanation for present-day Ouellette Avenue passing to Vital Ouellette through inheritance from the Goyeau family is mistaken. He mistakenly identifies the parties involved and their relationships on page lx, even though on p. 358, Vital Dumouchel was identified as the owner of lots 81 and 82. Dumouchel had purchased these lots on 15 November 1782 from Jean Baptiste Campeau, Jr. (p. 326). It should be kept in mind that at the time Lajeunesse published his book (1960), Denissen's manuscripts had not yet been published. The exact date of Charles Ouellette's purchase of the Dumouchel farm is not known. In his discussion of the War of 1812, R. Alan Douglas who was the former curator of the Windsor Community Museum, refers to the mortar placements on the creek between the Baby/Ouellette farms. However, Vital Ouellette's obituary (Michael Gladstone White and Faye Coleman, *Reflections of Windsor* (Windsor, Ontario: Self Published, 1989) p. 10, printed in an unknown newspaper on 26 October 1882, states that he did not move to this farm with his parents until he was about 16. Vital was born in 1802, placing the date in 1818. Since Vital died at the age of 80, it's understandable that there could be a discrepancy in the dates.

⁸ Drouin Collection, US Records, Michigan, L'Assomption de Sandwich de Windsor, 1820-1838: image 218 of 411. <http://content.ancestry.com/Browse/view.aspx?dbid=1111&path=Michigan.D%2c%20L%20Assomption+de+Sandwich+de+Windsor.1820-1838.218&sid=&gskw=&cr=1>

married (1) **Charles Cloutier** on 18 February 1828 and (2) **Daniel Anicetus Goyau** on 28 October 1844; **Agathe** married (1) **Jacques Réaume** on 22 October 1834 and (2) **Edouard Boismier** on 2 February 1857; **Thérèse** married **Basil Pepin** on 30 April 1842.⁹

With the outbreak of the War of 1812, cousins on one side of the Detroit River found themselves at war against their cousins on the other side. Those who lived in the central area of the future city of Windsor were forced to endure additional stresses when they were surrounded by American and then British troops who made their headquarters in the area. On 12 July 1812 **American General William Hull** took over **François Baby's** farm, immediately to the west of the Dumouchel/Ouellette farm, as his headquarters for directing operations in Essex County. The American troops remained on the Canadian side until 7 August, when Hull returned to Detroit because he feared that he had left the city vulnerable to British attack. British troops took over the abandoned headquarters on 13 August. The Royal Engineers installed two widely separated sets of gun emplacements. An eighteen-pounder and two long twelves were hidden behind the walls of an abandoned house near the west edge of the Baby farm (near the foot of modern day Church Street). On the east, two five-and-a-half-inch mortars were concealed in a creek bed located near the boundary with the Dumouchel/Ouellette farm. The ships *Queen Caroline* and *General Hunter* transported munitions, supplies and siege equipment to the British, while their guns protected the operations.

British Major General Isaac Brock's troops began firing on Detroit on August 15. The onslaught started the next day at 6:00 a.m. Many of **Tecumseh's** 600 Indians had already landed on American soil. The remainder of Brock's forces, consisting of 400 militia and 300 British regulars embarked in boats, canoes and barges; they worked their way downstream and landed south of Detroit at a point where Springwells was located. Brock's forces would have been easy targets for the battery of 24-pounders which were aimed at the British troops and Tecumseh's Indians; however, Hull ordered the troops not to fire. Brock sent Hull another order to surrender. Hull's son, Abraham, emerged from the fort shortly thereafter carrying a white flag. Hull also ordered a white flag hung over the Detroit fort. British officers entered the fort to negotiate surrender terms which included surrendering the fort and the city of Detroit, powder, cannon, ammunition and 2,500 troops – twice the size of Brock's. Detroit was returned to American control following the American defeat of the British at the Battle of the Thames or Moraviantown on 5 October 1813.¹⁰

On 11 January 1820, **Jean Baptiste St. Amour** was granted a license to operate sail-driven row boats from a landing on the front of Charles Ouellette's farm to the foot of Woodward Avenue in Detroit. St. Amour's ferry service competed with **Jean Louis Biron**, who took over the ferry service operating from Baby's wharf in 1818. The first steam ferry began operation from Baby's wharf in 1830, followed by one from Ouellette's wharf in 1832.¹¹

In June 1832, when news of the arrival of the cholera epidemic to Canada and the United States reached the Western District of Upper Canada and Detroit, officials began to take immediate action.¹² On 25 June, the Detroit Board of Health issued printed instructions for the prevention and cure of cholera. The

⁹ Denissen, p 910. The descendants of the Ouellette family can be found in my database at RootsWeb.Com: <http://wc.rootsweb.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?includedb=wolfordsheppard> .

¹⁰ Carl Morgan, *Birth of a City* (Tecumseh, Ontario: TravelLife, 1991), pp. 23-26; Douglas, pp. 48-49; David S. Heidler and Jeanne T Heidler, editors, *Encyclopedia of the War of 1812*. (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2004), pp. 153-154, 508). For a fuller discussion of the War of 1812 and the Michigan residents who fought in the war, see Barnett and Rosentreter, pp. 71-161.

¹¹ Douglas, pp. 138-140.

¹² Douglas, p. 224. Douglas states that cholera had already been reported in the area, but it is obvious from other sources cited below that the June orders in both communities were precautionary in nature.

instructions included a list of medicines and specific dosage amounts for adults as well as children. The mayor of Detroit attached to the instructions regulations regarding boat and ship traffic in the Detroit River. The regulations forbade ships from any other port to come closer than 100 yards to Detroit's shores, passengers could not disembark until after they had been inspected by a health officer, and prohibited anyone from crossing from the Canadian shore to Detroit.¹³ The following day, the magistrates in the Western District of Upper Canada held an emergency session where they issued a number of ideas designed to stop the epidemic's outbreak. Although the orders revealed that they had a basic understanding of conditions that spread diseases, they also revealed their ignorance of the specific causes and treatments for cholera. The magistrates ordered residents to clean and whitewash their homes, while the cleaning of privies added the additional step of adding lime to the whitewash. Property owners were also ordered to clean their yards, fill or drain stagnant pools and cut ditches which would allow the Detroit River to flow into low lying inland marshes. St. Amour was ordered to remove and scuttle his horseboat; no "tippling" was allowed in inns and taverns closed at 8:00 p.m.¹⁴ Guards were placed on Baby's wharf to prevent anyone from crossing the Detroit River.¹⁵

On 4 July 1832 the *Henry Clay*, a steamer carrying 370 troops to Chicago for the Black Hawk War, stopped in Detroit. One of the soldiers died the following day. Detroit officials reacted by ordering the ship to leave the area. It moored on Belle Isle for a few days before proceeding to Fort Gratiot (the future Port Huron), Sault Saint Marie, Michilimackinac, and eventually Chicago.¹⁶

Throughout the settlements in Southeastern Michigan, officials and residents took whatever steps they thought would protect them from cholera, including building fences, stopping all visitors, inspecting passengers in coaches, posting armed sentries on all roads to a community and throwing strangers out of inns.¹⁷ Since it was impossible to stop people from crossing the Detroit River as long as the River front residents owned any kind of watercraft, on 14 July 1832, all owners of any kind of watercraft on the Canadian side were ordered to bring their boats and canoes to Sandwich.¹⁸

On 3 August 1832 Charles Ouellette, died of cholera.¹⁹ By 15 August, 96 people had died in Detroit which "could be traced in most instances to intemperance and carelessness."²⁰ **Fr. Gabriel Richard**, pastor of Ste Anne's who cared for the sick, died of cholera on 13 September 1832.²¹ On the Canadian side of the River, the worst of the cholera epidemic had ended by the end of the summer; therefore, on 11 October the magistrates of the Western District ordered that all remaining medical equipment in the hospitals be stored in the jury room for safekeeping. A total of 53 cases of cholera, resulting in 29 deaths or 55% of those infected in the area from Sandwich to Dover Township on the Thames, had been reported to the Board of Health.²²

¹³ Silas Farmer. *The History of Detroit and Michigan* (Detroit, Michigan: Silas Farmer & Co, 1884), p. 48; Douglas, p. 225.

¹⁴ Douglas, p. 224.

¹⁵ Douglas, p. 225.

¹⁶ George Paré. *The Catholic Church in Detroit* (Detroit, Michigan: The Gabriel Richard Press, 1951), p. 380; Farmer, p. 48. During the trip from Belle Isle to Fort Gratiot, so many soldiers had succumbed to cholera that they were all ordered to disembark and to return to Detroit. While en route to Detroit, almost 220 soldiers died; the remaining 150 soldiers reached Detroit on 8 July. They embarked on the *William Penn*, but cholera continued to ravage the group, so they camped at Springwells until the epidemic subsided.

¹⁷ Farmer, pp. 48-49.

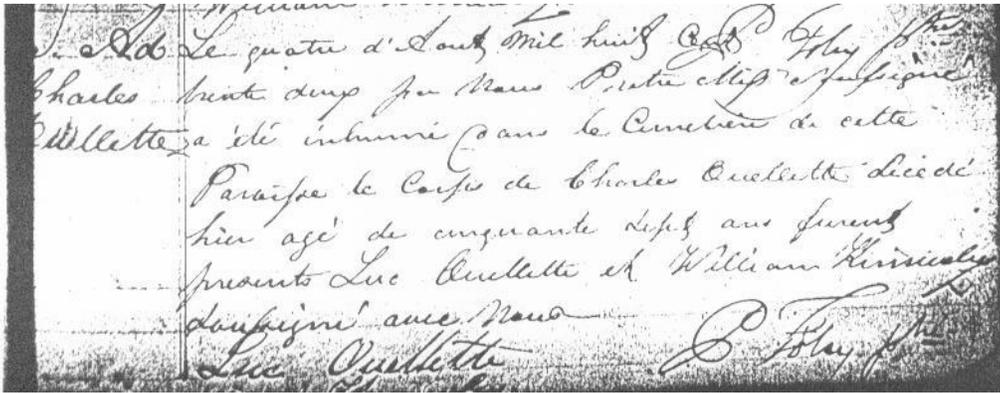
¹⁸ Douglas, p. 225.

¹⁹ Denissen, Vol. I, p. 441 – he gives the burial date of 4 August; SFOHG. *Sépultures Paroisse L'Assomption de Windsor, Ontario 1768-1985*, p. 198.

²⁰ Farmer, pp. 48-49.

²¹ Paré, p. 384.

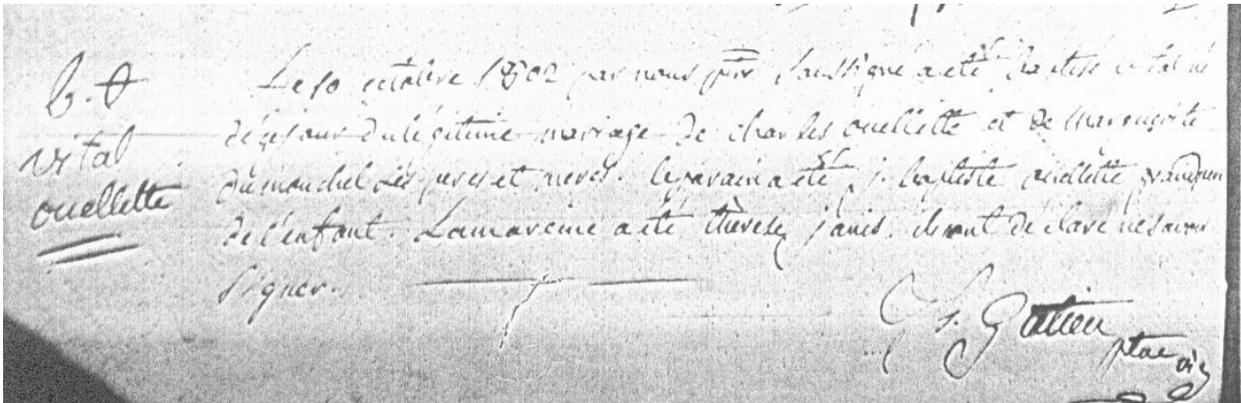
²² Douglas, p. 226.



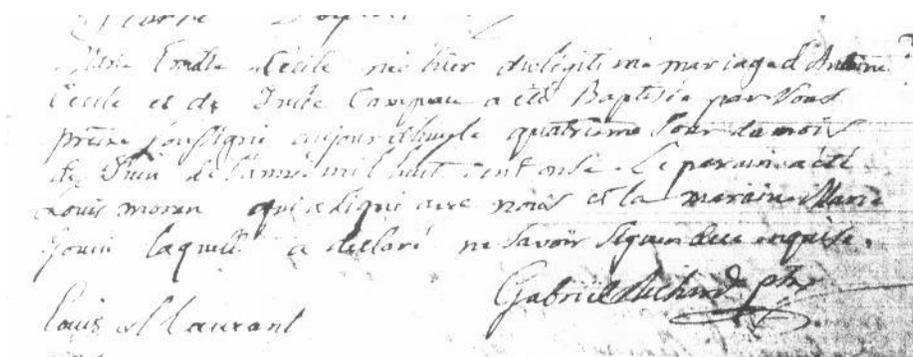
Charles Ouellette's burial record from Assumption, 4 August 1832.

Vital Ouellette and Marie Émilie Cécile

While it is speculative, it is possible to infer that **Vital Ouellette**, born 10 October 1802,²³ was named after his maternal grandfather, **Louis Vital Dumouchel**, since it was with his birth that the name Vital was first used in the Ouellette family in Sandwich; nor had the name been used for any of his ancestors or their siblings in Québec.



Baptism of Vital Ouellette at Assumption Sandwich, 10 October 1802.



Baptism of Émilie Cécile at Ste. Anne de Détroit, 4 June 1811. The priest was Father Gabriel Richard.

²³ Drouin Collection, US Records, Michigan, L'Assomption de Sandwich de Windsor, 1781-1808: image 249 of 323 <http://content.ancestry.com/Browse/view.aspx?dbid=1111&path=Michigan.D%2c%20a9troit%2c+L%20Assomption+de+Sandwich+de+Windsor.1781-1808.249&sid=&gskw=&cr=1> ; Denissen, Vol. I, p. 440.

In spite of the cholera epidemic that brought international trade in the area to a virtual standstill, on 6 August 1832 François Baby sold the first village lot near the ferry landing to **James Austen**, a blacksmith, wheelwright and wagon maker. **Vital Ouellette**, who had inherited the Ouellette farm following his father's death in August 1832, sold a riverfront acre plot subdivided from lot 81, to **Joseph McDougall** on 24 December 1832. The subdivision of the Baby and Ouellette farms ultimately led to the birth of the future city of Windsor.²⁴

Although less fatal than cholera, the following year a smallpox epidemic broke out in the French-Canadian communities of Amherstburg, Sandwich, Windsor and Dover and eventually spread to other areas in the southwestern part of Ontario. By mid December, approximately 100 cases, resulting in about 12 deaths, had been reported in Amherstburg.²⁵

Cholera returned to the Windsor/Detroit area in 1834. Governor **George Porter** was the first to die on 7 July, but the residents were not alarmed until August. Shortly before the outbreak, **Alpheus White** purchased the old Presbyterian Church and moved it to Cadillac Square in Detroit so that he could remodel it as a new Catholic Church for the Irish community. In late July, **Fr. Martin Kundig**, who had arrived in Detroit the previous year to minister to the slowly growing German population, asked for the temporary use of the church as a hospital. White agreed to Fr. Kundig's request because at that time there were no hospitals in the city to care for cholera victims. White and his workers helped convert the Church into two rooms, one for the men and the other for the women. Fr. Kuhn, Alpheus White, his workers, the Sisters of St. Clare and members of the Catholic Female Benevolent Society cared for the sick. Although we cannot identify these brave women precisely, some of them came from the following French-Canadian families: **Beaubien, Campeau, Dequindre, Desnoyers and Moran**.²⁶

The first case of cholera in the Western District of Upper Canada was reported in Sandwich on 10 August; six days later the disease had spread to Dover. The boards of health hastily convened and started the immediate purchase of medicines. All doctors were authorized to dispense medicines. The poor were given medicines *gratis*, and the local priests were given medicines to dispense to their poor parishioners, although all others were required to pay for the medicines. The second epidemic was far worse than the first; newspapers reported 62 deaths in Sandwich and 26 in Amherstburg alone.²⁷ By the end of September, 700 people had fallen ill with cholera in Detroit. Although we do not know the total number of deaths in Detroit, 7% of Detroit's population died in one month. During the previous three months, business was virtually suspended, grass grew in the streets and lit tar barrels, which were thought to disinfect the air, illuminated the streets.²⁸

A reconstructed 1835 map of the future village of Windsor showed that 16 residences and 27 businesses were located on both sides of Sandwich (future Riverside Drive) from lot 75 (the western boundary of the village, present day Crawford Avenue) to lot 87 (the eastern boundary, present day Glengarry Avenue).²⁹ Analysis of the map reveals a number of interesting facts: from 1832, when François Baby and Vital Ouellette first subdivided their farms, businesses had increased from the two ferries to a total of 27 businesses and French Canadians no longer owned the majority of the homes or businesses. The last fact implies that the other French Canadian landowners rapidly followed Baby and Ouellette's lead by selling at least portions of their own properties to business owners. The only French Canadian businesses were the **St. Amour** tavern and ferry, a storehouse owned by **Narcisse Antoine Letourneau dit Janette** and a

²⁴ Douglas, pp. 141-144.

²⁵ Douglas, p. 226.

²⁶ Paré, pp. 396, 403, 410-411, 658.

²⁷ Douglas, pp. 226-227.

²⁸ Paré, p. 409; Farmer, p. 49.

²⁹ Morgan, p. 37.

store owned by **Mr. Morin**. The only French Canadian residences were those owned by **Daniel Goyeau, Théotiste Goyeau**, widow of **Pierre St. Amour, Vital Ouellette, François Baby, Jean Baptiste Letourneau dit Janette**, his son, **Narcisse Antoine Letourneau** and **Mr. Normandie**, although all of these lots had been owned by French Canadians in 1792-1794. In 1836, the village of Windsor, Ontario had a population of 200. The community officially received its name during a meeting on 6 September 1836. Prior to the meeting, the community had been known as Richmond, The Ferry, Sandwich Ferry, South Detroit, L'Assomption Settlement and the South Side.³⁰ Although the Americans invaded Essex County during the rebellions of 1837-1838, the discussion of these events will be deferred until the next installment which discusses Jean-Baptiste and Ignace Dumouchel (Marguerite's brothers) and their role in the rebellions.

When sparks from the steamer *Hastings* ignited cedar posts on Francois Baby's wharf on 16 April 1849, fire almost destroyed the village of Windsor. Seeing that the bucket brigade could not extinguish the rapidly spreading fire, Baby took his ferry, the *Alliance*, across the River and returned with a Detroit Fire Company and its pumper. While he was in Detroit, Baby convinced another ferry operator to cross the River with additional Detroit Firemen and equipment.³¹

Marguerite Dumouchel died on 22 August 1849 and was buried the next day at Assumption on 23 August 1849 under the name of Catherine.³²

On 4 August 1851 **Daniel Goyeau**, grandson of **Jean Baptiste Goyeau** and **Marie Louise Delierres** and brother-in-law of Vital Ouellette,³³ sold the entire front of lot 83 in Windsor to The Great Western Railroad in exchange for the Railroad building their depot on the property. Vital Ouellette differed with Daniel about the proper strategy with the Railroad; he refused to sell his riverfront property to them, choosing to lease it, instead. Vital believed that his property would be attractive to merchants because it was located next to the railroad depot and the ferry to Detroit.³⁴ Three years later, in 1854, the newly chartered and incorporated village of Windsor, Ontario had a population of 750-1,000 and only "one long irregular street," Sandwich (now Riverside Drive). That same year, Vital Ouellette laid out the plans for the further subdivision of his land, with lots extending on both sides of the 50' wide Ouellette Street, fronting on Sandwich, Pitt and Chatham.³⁵

Two years later, **Fr. Peter Point** realized that a Catholic chapel was needed for the growing community of Windsor, especially those who did not own carts or ponies to take them Mass at Assumption. Daniel Goyeau sold one and a half acres of land on the corner of Goyeau and Park to the diocese of London for the sum of one dollar. Goyeau and **John O'Connor** headed and promoted the building fund. By 1857, the chapel had been built and dedicated under the patronage of St. Mary. Once a week, **Fr. Bruyere** traveled from his residence in Sandwich to the little chapel for weekly Mass, but the residents continued to go to Assumption in Sandwich for baptisms, marriages and funerals.³⁶

³⁰ Morgan, pp. vii, 28-29; Lajeunesse, pp. 358-359.

³¹ Morgan, p. 57.

³² Denissen, p. 441. SFOHG. *Sépultures Paroisse L'Assomption de Windsor, Ontario 1768-1985* (Ottawa, Ontario: SFOHG), p. 73.

³³ Denissen, p. 547

³⁴ Neil F. Morrison, *Garden Gateway to Canada* (Toronto, Ontario: The Ryerson Press, circa 1954), pp. 41, 70; Connery, Nov 1932.

³⁵ Morgan, p. vii. (750); White and Coleman, p. 8 (about 1,000). This page also contains a map of the Ouellette Subdivision.

³⁶ White & Coleman, Faye, p. 65.

Although 1790 legislation in Upper Canada prohibited the acquisition of new slaves, the potential impact of that legislation was not widely known to African Americans until after the War of 1812. Immigration to Essex County began slowly, but didn't gain momentum until the United States passed the Fugitive Slave Act in 1850 which gave bounty hunters sweeping powers to round up fugitive African Americans anywhere in the country. Most African Americans who settled in Essex County came by way of the Underground Railroad from Detroit. It is estimated that by 1859, Windsor's population stood at 2,500 – 3,000; including 700-800 former African Americans. Most of the immigrants lived in the area bounded by McDougall, Assumption, Pitt and Goyeau. Although many of these immigrants were tradesmen such as barbers, coopers, blacksmiths, shoemakers and masons, most of them were extremely poor.³⁷ During the 1850's and 1860's, Windsor residents operated the Soup House, on Goyeau Street for the benefit of the African Americans who had fled to Windsor. Émilie Cecile, wife of Vital Ouellette, visited the Soup House on an almost daily basis, bringing food or clothes she had purchased for those in need, especially the children.³⁸

On 3 June 1865, **Bishop Pinsonneault** directed **Fr. James Theodore Wagner** to organize a new parish for the 500 Catholics in Windsor. The new parish and church would replace the chapel that had been built in 1857. That same year, Vital Ouellette and Daniel Goyeau each donated an acre of land to the Diocese of London that would be used as the site for Saint Alphonsus Church. The cornerstone for the church was laid on 3 September 1871. Although a considerable sum had been raised for the church's construction, a mortgage remained of \$5,000. Vital Ouellette assumed the mortgage, allowing the church to be dedicated and consecrated on the same day. Vital also donated land for the construction of Saint Alphonsus School.³⁹ In 1866, Vital Ouellette donated a parcel of land located on the corner of Ouellette and Park for the construction of the second building known as St Mary's Academy. In the late 1920s this property was sold for \$1,000,000 to the Detroit and Canada Tunnel Company.⁴⁰

On 12 October 1871, the "Great Windsor Fire" destroyed or severely damaged several buildings in a three block radius. Although the fire greatly damaged a large portion of the area, ultimately, it led to several improvements, including the widening of Ouellette from 50' to 75'; several buildings were rebuilt with brick; and the existing waterworks delivery system, which consisted of water carts that delivered door to door, was replaced with a pipeline. Following this fire, Vital Ouellette further subdivided his farm adding additional lots on the west side of Ouellette fronting on London (present day University) and Park.⁴¹

Although Vital and Émilie Cecile were the parents of seven children, as a result of the tragic deaths of four of their sons (Louis Noë, Charles Evariste, Honore and Hercule Ferdinand) in March-April 1872 from smallpox, only two married: **Félicité Arthémise** married **Noë Dominique Langlois** 15 January 1851 and **Hercule Ferdinand** (one of the sons killed by smallpox) married **Zoë Boismier** (my great-great grandparents) on 25 November 1859. Both couples were married at Assumption.⁴² Émilie Cécile died on 11 July 1881 in Windsor. Vital died on 23 October 1882.⁴³

(To be continued)

³⁷ Morgan, pp. 38-41.

³⁸ Dave Connery, Nov. 1932.

³⁹ White and Coleman, p. 65; Connery, Nov. 1932.

⁴⁰ Morrison, p. 71; Connery, Nov. 1932; Morgan, pp. 3, 56.

⁴¹ Morgan, p. 57.

⁴² Denissen, p. 910.

⁴³ *Ontario Death Records*. Province of Ontario. Available from Ancestry.com. Year. 1881, p. 51. #001468.

Connery, Nov. 1932; White, p. 8. A French obituary for Vital Ouellette can be found on the Windsor Public Library's digital archive of hundreds of articles printed in *Le Progrès*:

<http://209.202.75.197/digi/progres/detail.asp?id=w10.02>