Finding Hidden Materials

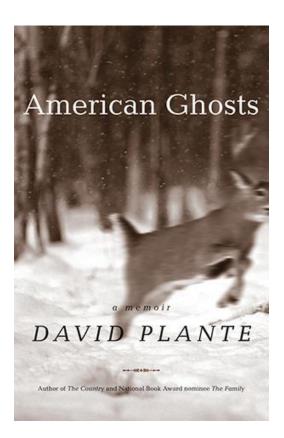
Three Case Studies of Inadvertent Erasure

Jacob Albert and Susan Pinette FADA/PFA and UMaine

Abstract

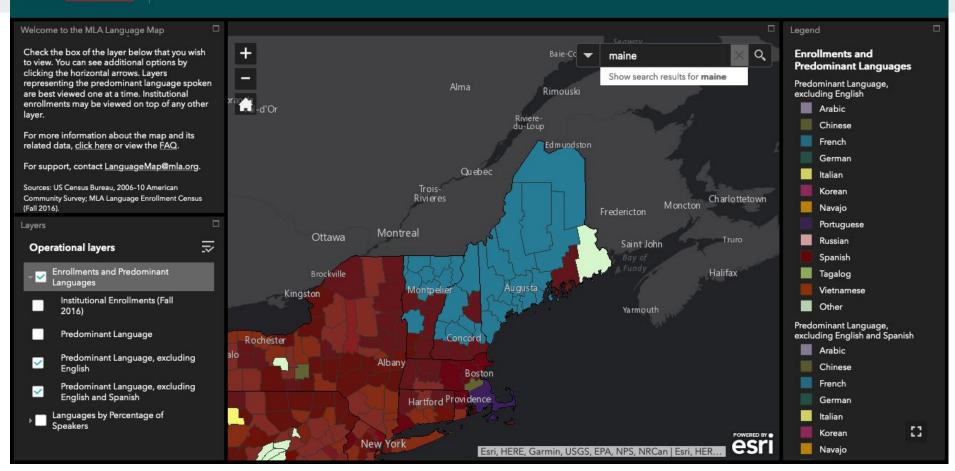
The study of French Canadian and Acadian heritage communities in the United States is burdened by a lack of awareness of and access to source materials. The neglect of Franco-American source materials is rooted in longstanding structural inequality stemming from a history of language discrimination, marginalization and lack of cultural heritage funding and support. Though this cultural denigration has subsided as Franco Americans have become more "white," traces of this history are indelible. A 2012 Maine State Legislature poll found markedly lower economic and educational achievement within this community, and 20% of Franco Americans said they or someone they knew had suffered ethnic discrimination. This history has also affected the discovery and preservation of Franco American source materials.

This presentation will walk through three specific cases of inadvertent erasure that we have found as we work to build FADA/PFA, a bilingual portal to Franco American archives. We will also explain how we aim to address these erasures and make these collections available to a wide range of users on both sides of the border both inside and outside of our communities.

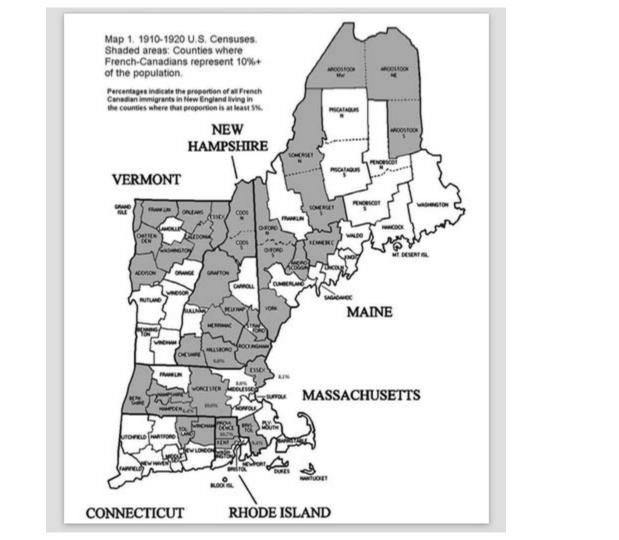


"When at the French consulate in Boston, I had applied for a visa to study in France, I wrote in the space on the form where 'nationality' was asked for, 'French,' for that is what I thought my nationality was" (78).

- The term Franco-American refers specifically to people of Québécois and Acadian heritage living in the United States. Composed of rural francophone settlements in northern Maine that date back to the eighteenth century and communities of French Canadians who started immigrating to industrial New England towns in the late nineteenth century, Franco-Americans constitute the largest concentration of French speakers in the United States. In New England, Franco-Americans account for 6% to 26% of state populations.
- According to the United States census, respondents claiming Canadian/French/French Canadian ancestry constituted 24% of Vermont, 26% of New Hampshire, 25% of Maine, 16% of Rhode Island, 8% of Massachusetts, and 11% of Connecticut populations.*



*Map is from MLA Language Map, http://www.mla.org/map_main



First example: LCC and LCSH headings

The term "Franco-Americans" was designated a Library of Congress subject heading only in 2008, nearly 80 years after the Johnson-Reed Act essentially closed the border to new migrants.

In terms of organization and access, libraries are sites constructed by the disciplinary power of language...The idea that language has meaning only in context, an idea articulated abstractly in fields like philosophy, comparative literature, and anthropology, was made very materially evident: subject headings, often cast by catalogers as a kind of pure, objective language, are not; where and when and by whom subject headings are used makes all the difference in terms of meaning...In both their activism and their scholarship, librarians have convincingly made the case that Library of Congress Classification (LCC) and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) fail to accurately and respectfully organize library materials about social groups and identities that lack social and political power ("Queering the Catalog: Queer Theory and the Politics of Correction," Drabinski, 95)

Chinese of the East

"The third objection to the ten-hour law is the presence of the Canadian French. Wherever they appear, there their presence is urged as a reason why the hours of labor should not be reduced to ten. The reasons for this urgency are not far to find.

With some exceptions the Canadian French are the Chinese of the Eastern States. They care nothing for our institutions, civil, political, or educational. They do not come to make a home among us, to dwell with us as citizens, and to become a part of us; but their purpose is merely to sojourn a few years as aliens, touching us only at a single point, that of work, and, when they have gathered out of us what will satisfy their ends, to get them away to whence they came, and bestow it there. They are a horde of industrial invaders, not a stream of stable settlers. Voting, with all that implies, they care nothing about. Rarely does one of them become naturalized. They will not send their children to school if they can help it, but endeavor to crowd them into the mills at the earliest possible age. To do this they deceive about the age of their children with brazen effrontery.

Now is it not strange that so sordid and low a people should awaken corresponding feelings in the managers, and that these should feel that, the longer the hours for such people, the better, and that to work them to the uttermost is about the only good use they can be put to."

From "Uniform Hours of Labor" in Twelfth Annual Report of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor Statistics, published by Col. Carroll D. Wright (1881).

Portland Transcript, editorial in 1858

"About twenty miles north of Ft. Fairfield are the famous Madawaska settlements, where the descendants of the ancient Acadians preserve in all their primitive simplicity, the manners and customs of their French ancestors. Like their kindred of Canada, they cling to the river bank, each farm having its river front and extending in a long narrow line to the forest. They are a light-hearted, improvident, unenterprising people, more fond of the fiddle than the hoe, and content to remain stationary while all around them is progressing. Knowing nothing of our political institutions, they readily sell their votes to politicians, and he who bids highest carries the day. At the polls the inquiry is, 'How much do you give for a vote this year?' and a nine-pence turns the scale. But we cannot do better than to copy what our friend Dingley, of the Maine Evangelist, says of this peculiar people: '... They are generally ignorant and unambitious, each generation contenting themselves with simply existing. They subsist chiefly on pea soup and other vegetable food which is raised on their patches of land. A gentleman who visited them a few years since, informs us that he stopped at a small cabin in which there was but one room, where the instances with good results. They are, however, a peculiar people, distinct in tastes, habits and aspirations from the Anglo-Saxon race."

The New York Times, editorial on 5 July 1889

"The [French Canadian] immigrants, tempted by a more genial climate than their own and a higher rate of wages, have swarmed into the factories and taken up the farms abandoned by the natives as unprofitable... Whether this immigration is a good thing or bad thing for the country is a question ... It may be summed up ... that immigration is a source of strength to the country in so far as it is capable of being readily assimilated and Americanized. It is not only, in some cases it is not mainly, our English-speaking immigrants who fulfill this condition best. Of course a foreigner who arrives in this country at a mature age, entirely ignorant of its language and its customs, can be come but a very imperfect American. But if he means to become an American his children may be as good citizens as if their ancestors for generations had been born upon our soil...Tried by this standard, it must be owned that the French Canadians do not give promise of incorporating themselves with our body politic.... The danger has scarcely yet become imminent in any American community, but it is fore-shadowed distinctly enough to make it a patriotic duty for all Americans, in communities in which the French Canadian population is considerable, to insist upon maintaining American political principles against all assaults."

Portland ME, 1923



Laws of Maine relating to public schools, 1919

"...the basic language of instruction in the common school branches in all schools, public and private, shall be the English language."

5

SCHOOL LAWS OF MAINE.

ciations, approve rules of government therefor, and to supervise the conduct of conventions held by such associations. He shall also conduct summer training schools for teachers, whenever provision is made by the legislature for holding such schools.

V. To prepare and cause to be printed and distributed such portions of the proceedings of state institutes or teachers' conventions as he deems important in the furtherance of education.

VI. Biennially, as soon as practicable after the adjournment of the legislature, to compile and distribute, in pamphlet form, to the municipal and school officers of the several towns, three thousand copies of the amended school laws of the state; and to prepare and issue thus biennially, such circulars of information and advice to school officers, relating to new school enactments, as he shall deem necessary for the intelligent and effectual enforcement of such enactments.

VII. To prescribe the studies to be taught in the public schools and in private schools approved for attendance and tuition purposes, reserving to superintending school committees, trustees or other officers in charge of such public or private schools the right to prescribe additional studies, and the course of study prescribed by the state superintendent of public schools shall be followed in all public schools and in all private schools approved by the state superintendent for attendance or tuition purposes; provided, however, that upon the approval by the state superintendent of any course arranged by the superintending school committee of any town, or by the trustees or other officers of any private school, said course shall be the authorized course for said town or private school; provided, further, that the basic language of instruction in the common school branches in all schools, public and private, shall be the English language. Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the teaching in elementary schools of any language as such.

VIII. To furnish to the school officers of each town, proper blank books in which shall be kept complete and itemized records of all matters relating to moneys appropriated, received and expended for schools, which said books shall remain the property of the state.

IX. To assume the control and management of all free public schools established and maintained by gifts or be-

The Invention of New England

Tourism helped to forge a new landscape out of the economic and social crisis that loomed over much of the Northeast in the late nineteenth century. Before the Civil War. tourists who had contemplated a trip to New England had envisioned it as a great hive of invention and progress. They had hoped to get a look at the imposing educational edifices at Harvard and Yale, to tour the technological and social innovations of Lowell...By the last quarter of the century, an entirely new kind of tourism was shaping the region. This new tourism was driven by a profound "sentimentalization" of New England...out of these diverse cultural movements emerged a mythic region called Old New England – rural, preindustrial, and ethnically 'pure' – a reverse image of that was most unsettling in late nineteenth-century urban life. Much of New England by the last quarter of the century was in fact highly urbanized, industrial and ethnically diverse. Its city landscapes were dominated by huge brick factories where immigrants from every part of Europe sought work. But tourists sought out the isolated or remote parts of New England, looking for an imagined world of pastoral beauty, rural independence, virtuous simplicity, and religious and ethnic homogeneity(Brown, Inventing New England, 8-9)



New England Early Winter, by Samuel Gerry, 1849



Old Christmas in New England by Charles Russell, 1918



Brunswick, 1900



Bangor, 1901



Pepperell Mills, 1894



Mill workers, 1900 in Lewiston



Eastport, 1909



Sanford, 1909

Ignored communities

These ignored communities constitutes one of the largest concentrations of French speakers in the US.

Linguist Cynthia Fox writes, "Although Americans are generally aware that there is in the US today a numerically significant, culturally distinct, and historically French-speaking population in Louisiana, many are surprised to learn that the same statements also apply to another subset of the population, the Franco Americans of the Northeast."

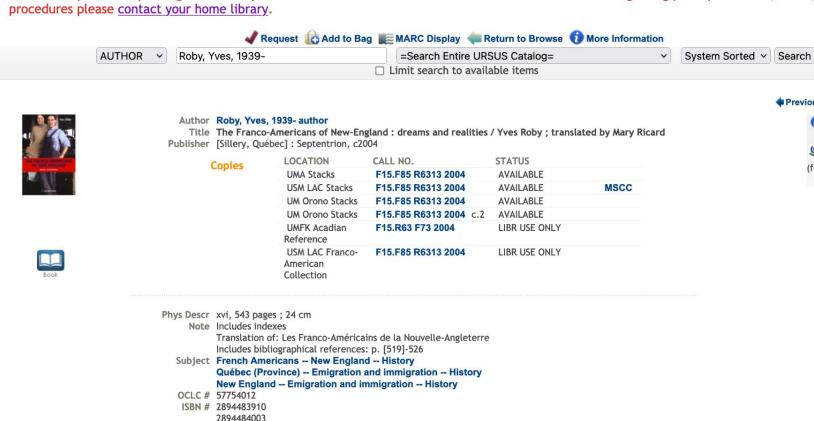
Bruno Ramirez called the borderland region between the US and Canada an "historiographical desert."

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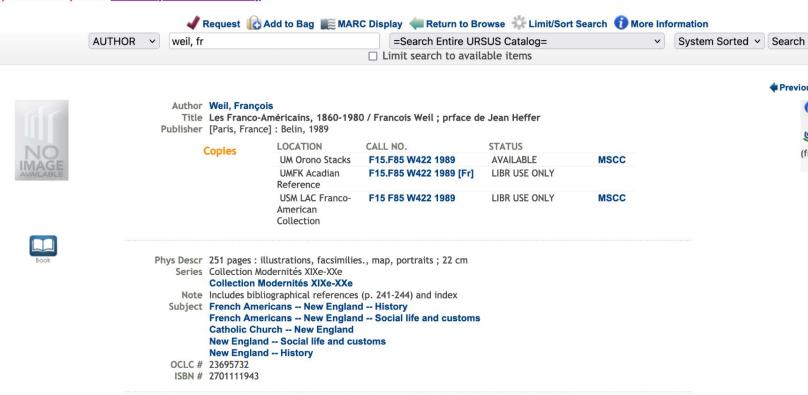
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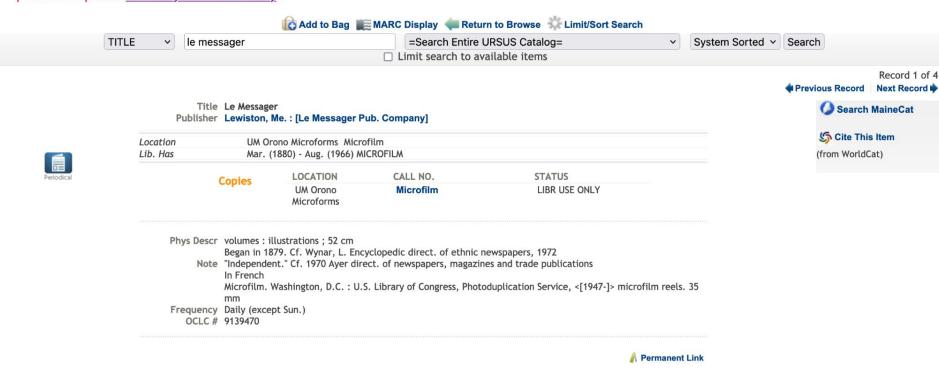
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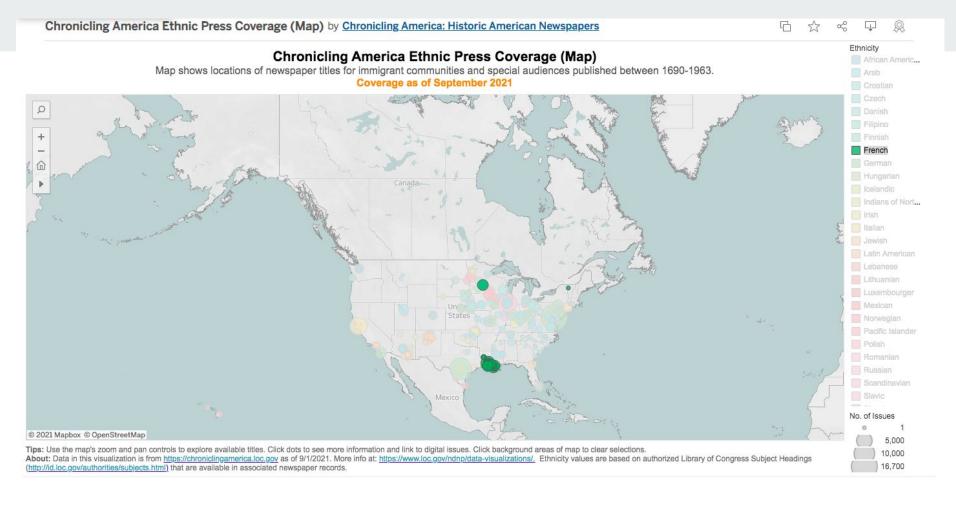


Second example: NDNP's inadvertent barriers

Through limiting technical, geographic, and funding specifications, the National Digital Newspaper Program has inadvertently constructed barriers to preserving and representing Franco-American newspapers.

The key program for funding historical newspaper digitization in the US is the Library of Congress' and National Endowment for the Humanities' National Digital Newspaper Program (NDNP). NDNP funds this digitization through state-led, state-limited projects. Yet the NDNP inadvertently constructs barriers to digitizing Franco-American newspapers:

- States with the highest number of Franco-American newspapers (New Hampshire and Massachusetts) do not currently receive NDNP funding.
- NDNP requires that newspapers be digitized from master microfilm.
- Many titles are not completely held even in one state, and many complete runs are not held where they were published.
- BAnQ holds many master microfilm of Franco-American newspapers, yet BAnQ's work focuses on current-day Quebec, not the publications of their US-based diaspora communities.

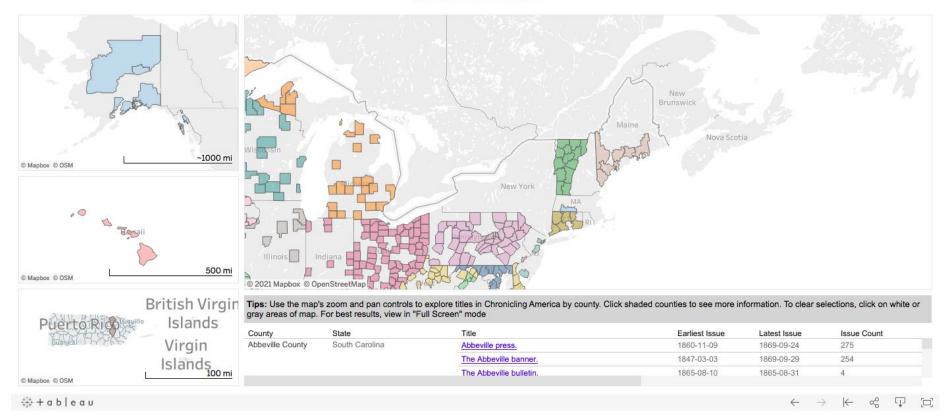


Map from Tableau Public, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/chronicling.america

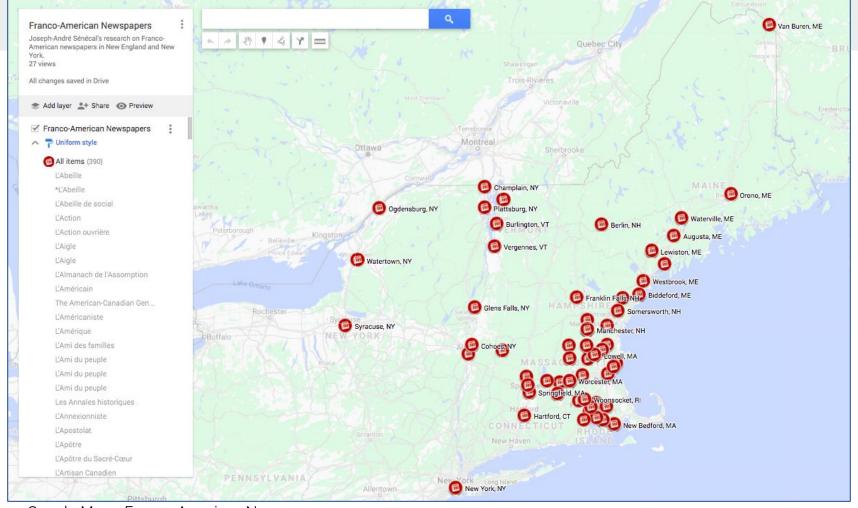


Chronicling America: Digitized Titles by County or County-Equivalent Area (Map)

Coverage as of June 2020



Map from Tableau Public, Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers, https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/chronicling.america



Map from Google Maps, Franco-American Newspapers, https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?mid=10RQrCeJXD-2AW6ARFcEMiKZvSAsd9Cpo&usp=sharing

Total number of states publishing Franco-American newspapers 7 (ME, NH, VT, MA, CT, RI, NY)

Coverage period of Franco-American newspaper publication 1828-present

Total number of Franco-American newspaper titles ca. 390

Total number of extant Franco newspaper titles ca. 175

Total number of Franco newspaper titles with serial records in Library of Congress's *Chronicling America: Historic American Newspapers*

Longest publishing periods for Franco-American newspapers

80 years (Le Messager, Lewiston ME)

77 years (L'Indépendant, Fall River MA)

75 years (Le Travailleur, Worcester MA)

71 years (*L'Étoile*, Lowell MA)

Most prolific cities publishing Franco-American newspapers

Manchester, NH - 55 titles

Lowell, MA - 37 titles

Worcester, MA - 29 titles

Woonsocket, RI - 26 titles

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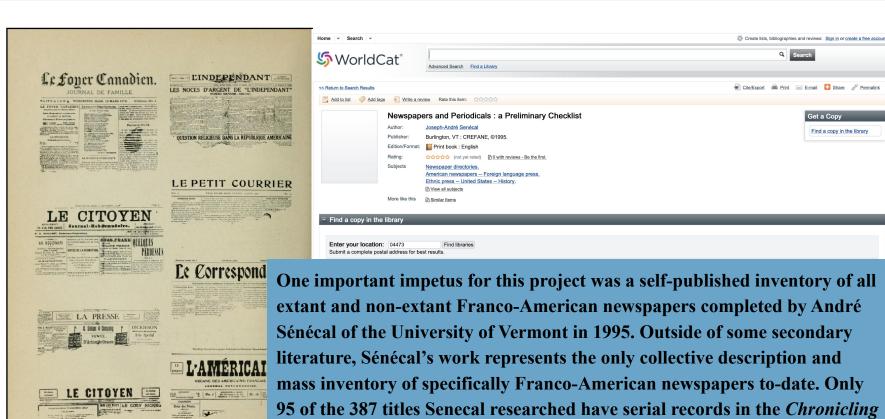
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Third example: Insufficient metadata

Catalog records for Franco-American publications, digitized records, and processed manuscript collections lack sufficient and consistent metadata for discoverability and access.

Part of our project focuses on hard-copy newspapers, master negative microfilm, master positive microfilm, and microfilm service copies from 165 different newspaper titles held by nine different institutions in the US and Canada. Many newspaper issues from single titles--often the only extant issues of these papers--are scattered among locations in various formats. Other newspapers exist uniquely at single institutions, sometimes the only extant copies of a newspaper title, in whatever format they remain.

Our second example comes from the Alien Registrations from the State of Maine Digital Commons, where all the metadata is the same for every record.



extant and non-extant Franco-American newspapers completed by André Sénécal of the University of Vermont in 1995. Outside of some secondary literature, Sénécal's work represents the only collective description and mass inventory of specifically Franco-American newspapers to-date. Only 95 of the 387 titles Senecal researched have serial records in the *Chronicling* America US Newspaper Directory.

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LE MESSAGER

Religion et Nationante LE MESSAGER, LEWISTON, MAINE LUNDI, 22 OCTOBRE 1917 38e Anné Publić treis feis la semaine: Lundi, Mercredi, Vendredi J. B. COUT La faute

des parents

Un juse de West-Rochery, Mess, en présence de la départation tous plus et par les soules du mêmes par les soules de mêmes que mêmes par les soules de mêmes que mêmes t avis. On s'effare tous les jours à la vue On s'effare tous les jours à la vue Généralix russes SOUTHERN MAINE DigitalCommons About FAQ My Account Search Home > FRANCO > Publications > Le Messager > FAC-LE-MESSAGER-PRINT Enter search terms: messager Search LE MESSAGER NEWSPAPERS in this collection \$ Advanced Search Notify me via email or RSS **Author Corner** Author FAQ Switch View Wiew Slideshow Browse All Collections Disciplines Links USM Libraries Digital Commons in Maine

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Home > Maine Communities > Lewiston > Le Messager

LE MESSAGER

Le Messager was a French language newspaper that served the large Franco American community in Lewiston, Maine from 1880 to 1966.

The Maine State Library has a collection of original newspapers that we would like to make available here in digital form. We are seeking volunteers or funding sponsors to make this project possible. For more information, contact the <u>Maine Newspaper Project</u>.

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Submissions from 1917

PDF Le Messager : December 28, 1917

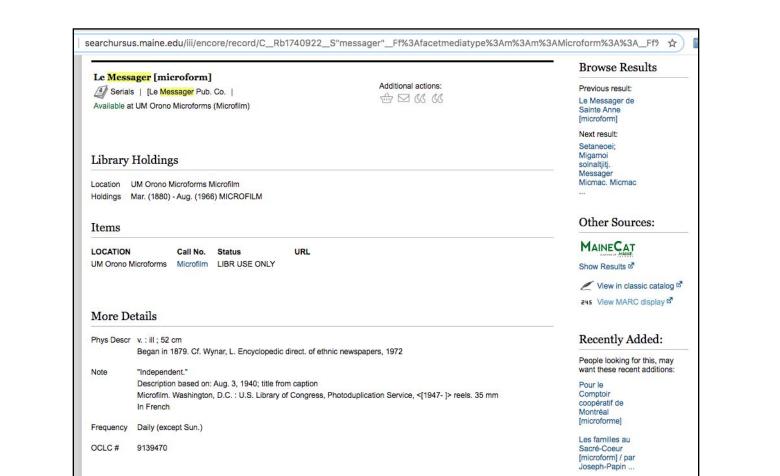
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▶ PDF Le Messager : December 12, 1917

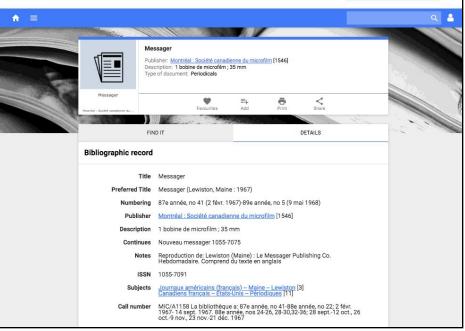


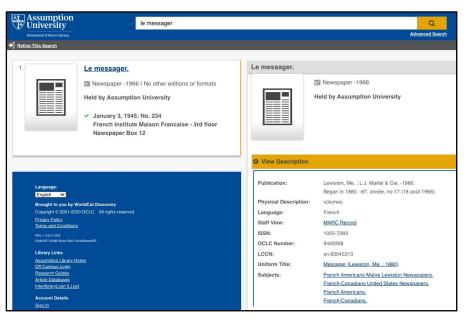
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	Rating:	☆☆☆☆ (not yet rated) ② with reviews - Be the first	st.	
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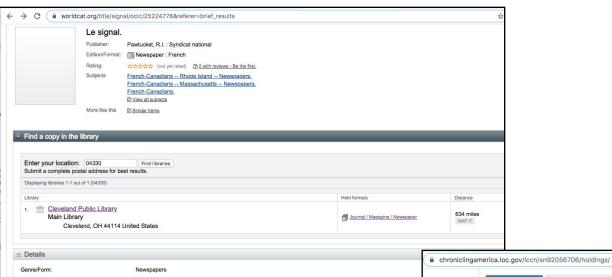


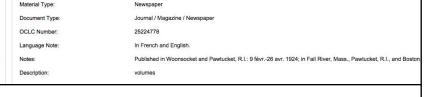


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STATE OF MAINE

OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL AUGUSTA

ALIEN REGISTRATION



Alien Registration- Aalto, Jaakko (Saint George, Knox County)

Jaakko Aalto

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Description

The registration of adult alien residents in the State of Maine directed by Executive Proclamation, dated June 14, 1940. Registrations include place of birth, period of residence in this State and Country, information as to the family, occupation, education and employment.

Exact Creation Date

1940

Language

English Location

Saint George: Knox County

Recommended Citation

Aalto, Jaakko, "Alien Registration- Aalto, Jaakko (Saint George, Knox County)" (1940). Registrations. 11884.

https://digitalmaine.com/alien_docs/11884

Alien Registration- King, Joseph W. (Fort Fairfield, Aroostook County)

Joseph W. King

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Text

Contributing Institution

Maine State Archives

Document Type

Identifier

28535

Description

The registration of adult alien residents in the State of Maine directed by Executive Proclamation, dated June 14, 1940. Registrations include place of birth, period of residence in this State and Country, information as to the family, occupation, education and employment.

Exact Creation Date

1940

Language

English

Location

Fort Fairfield; Aroostook County

Recommended Citation

King, Joseph W., "Alien Registration- King, Joseph W. (Fort Fairfield, Aroostook County)" (1940). Registrations. 35416.

https://digitalmaine.com/alien_docs/35416

STATE OF MAINE

OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL

AUGUSTA

ALIEN REGISTRATION

Ft. Friffield Maine
Date July, 13, 1940
ManneJoseph W. King.
Street Address Rural
City or Town
How long in United States15. Mrs How long in Maine15. Mrs
Born in. Sagas, N. B. Date of Birth. Apr. 16, 1902
If married, how rany children
Name of employer. Daniel Christie (Present or last)
Address of employerFt. Teirfield.
EnglishX95SpoakX95ReadX98riteX98
Other languagesTranchreadwritespeak
Have you made applicathen for citizenship? yes
Have you ever had military service?
If so, where?When?
Signature Joseph to King
Witness. MSR.

Third example: Insufficient metadata

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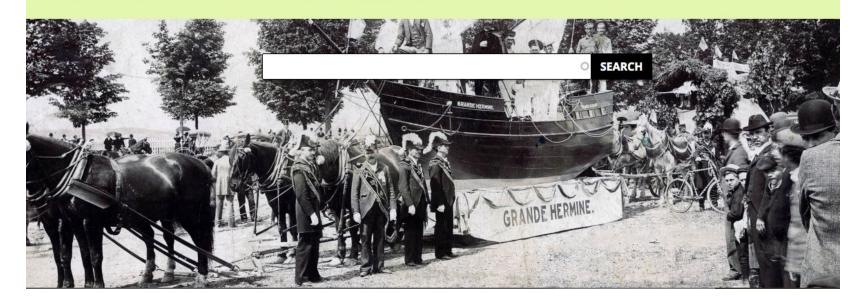
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catalogue.

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"Alien Registration- Aalto, Jaako..." and "Alien Registration- King, Joseph W." Maine Alien Registrations. Digital Maine. Various links.

"Home." Franco American Digital Archives/Portail franco-américain. https://francoamericandigitalarchives.org.