

News from Old Mines

**The Newsletter of the Old Mines French Project
No. 11, Fall 2019**

Philippe-François Renaut Commemorated in His Hometown in France

The Old Mines connection to France stretches back to the 17th century, when the first soldiers and colonists left France for the New World, settling in what is now Quebec. Some of them and many of their descendants eventually ended up in the *Pays des Illinois*, which included modern-day eastern Missouri and of course, the Old Mines area. In terms of the mining operations in Missouri, perhaps the key figure in that history is Philippe-François Renaut, and his name remains known in the small town of Cousolre in north-eastern France, as the celebrations in his honor, described in this issue on page four, will attest.



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WHAT'S NEW IN OLD MINES?

Here's the most recent list of new materials relevant to the study of Old Mines and the French history and heritage of the region around it. These are either new publications or ones just discovered, reported, or consulted. All of the works listed above also appear in the Bibliography on the [Old Mines French website](#). Readers are welcome to send references to any works not in the Bibliography to the editor!

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What's New in Old Mines (continued from p. 3)

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A Celebration of Philippe Renaut in France!

This year the town of Cousolre in north-east France celebrated the 300th anniversary of the departure of Philippe-François Renaut from his home town in 1719 (with his final destination being the Illinois Country and the lead mines of present-day Missouri). The community held a conference and reception, which featured photos provided by Kent Bone to Jean Heuclin, the organizer of the events. According to Mr. Heuclin, a commemorative plaque will be placed on Renaut's original home sometime in 2020. The event was sponsored by the Association Renaissance du Patrimoine de Cousolre.



Joseph-Médard Carrière

Editor's note

Until recently, my knowledge of Joseph-Médard Carrière, undoubtedly the foremost expert on the French language and culture of Old Mines, was limited to the few scholarly works he published in the late 1930's and early 1940's. I was therefore delighted to come across an entire chapter devoted to Carrière and his legacy in an anthology of French folktales from Detroit which he collected, but which was only edited and published decades later by the *Prise de parole* publishing house in Sudbury, Ontario. The chapter on Carrière, by Marcel Bénéteau, is in French, and below you will find a selection of passages translated into English.



Carrière was an accomplished scholar, and we are very fortunate that he chose to dedicate part of his career to studying the French language and culture of the Old Mines community. A full list of his publications about Old Mines can be found in the bibliography on the [Old Mines website](#). The photo on the left was taken during one of his visits to Old Mines (he is rather easy to identify on the right!)

My gratitude to the Editions *Prise de parole* for graciously allowing me to publish this translation of the French text which originally appeared in *Contes du Détroit*, collected by Joseph-Médard Carrière and edited by Marcel Bénéteau and Donald Deschênes, published in 2005.

“If we know anything about the language and culture of the old French settlements deep within the American continent—places like Vincennes in Indiana, Prairie du Rocher in Illinois, Old Mines in Missouri—it's due in great part to the work of one man, Joseph-Médard Carrière. Born in Ontario into a French-speaking family, this passionate researcher spent his professional life in the United States and dedicated much of his work to documenting what remained of the language and culture of the small communities, isolated in the heart of the continent, where the last vestiges of the French empire in North America survived.

There is no formal biography of Carrière, but the important moments of his life are accounted for in various sources. Born in 1902 in Curran, in eastern Ontario, he passed away on December 1, 1970 in Charlottesville, Virginia, where he had been a French professor since 1942. If we know little of his early years, we do know that he began to distinguish himself in the 1920's over the course of a decade of extraordinary studies: B.A. from Laval University in Quebec in 1921, Master's from Marquette University in Milwaukee in 1925, then another from Harvard in 1926. There he received the Sheldon Travelling Fellowship from 1929-1930, which allowed him to spend a year in Paris, where he studied at the Sorbonne and other institutions, after which he received a doctorate in Romance philology from Harvard in 1932. He first taught at Northwestern as an instructor, later becoming a professor and receiving tenure in 1939. In 1942 he accepted a position at the University of Virginia, where he remained for the rest of his career. In 1938 Carrière was elected an Officer of the Académie française in recognition of his work on Missouri folklore, and in 1949 he was named a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur for his work promoting French literature in America. In addition, he received an honorary doctorate from Laval University in 1947, the first ever awarded by that institution.

Carrière left behind a copious bibliography of scholarly publications on language and literature, but his work on the French speakers of the American Midwest are what interest us most, and have made him known. In 1934 and again in 1935, he spend the summer among the Franco-Americans of Old Mines, Potosi, and Racola in Missouri. On wax disks he recorded about 80 folksongs and wrote down 73 traditional folktales. The collection of tales appeared in 1937 as *Tales from the French Folklore of Missouri*; the book remains a major work of French folklore in North America (the songs, however, remain unpublished). Until 1939, Carrière continued his research among the last people who spoke the French language and practiced the French traditions, visiting Francophone communities in Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Michigan, and Louisiana, publishing the results of his research in various scholarly publications.”

Upcoming Events

December 31: [La Guiannee at Fort de Chartres](#)

December 31: [La Guiannee in Ste. Genevieve](#)

April 4, 2020: Old Mines Area Historical Society Annual French Heritage Seminar

October 2020 (dates TBA): Center for French Colonial Studies Conference, St. Louis

2020 Events in Ste. Genevieve

www.visitstegen.com

King's Ball, February 1

French Heritage Festival, June 12-13

Jour de Fête, Second full weekend in August

2020 Events at Fort de Chartres

www.fortdechartres.us/events/

Colonial Trade Faire and Musket & Rifle Frolic, April 4-5

Kids' Day, May 2

50th Annual Fort de Chartres Rendezvous, June 6-7

Cannon Firing Demonstration, July 4 & August 1

Friends of the Fort Summer Ball at Prairie du Rocher American Legion, July 18

Artillery Safety School, September 12

Annual French & Indian War Encampment, October 10-11

Fort de Chartres Winter Rendezvous, November 7-8

Prairie du Rocher La Guianne at Fort de Chartres, December 31

The Old Mines French Project

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