



### The Drouin Collection

In 1899 Quebec lawyer Joseph Drouin saw the importance of genealogy and its market potential. He founded the Drouin Genealogical Institute which researched and sold genealogies of French-Canadian families.

His son Gabriel took over the Institute in 1938 and began the awesome job of microfilming and indexing all the church registers in Quebec and a number from other provinces and states that had a significant French-Canadian population. This recording preceded the microfilming by the Mormons and therefore included a number of records that perished between the two events. Their index of marriages fills 113 large volumes and is available at many archives and large libraries.

Originally all this work was to support their own research but when Gabriel died in 1980 the collection was purchased by genealogist Jean-Pierre Pepin and he undertook to make the material more publicly available.

Researchers and libraries could now purchase microfilm copies of the individual parish registers that interested them. Only a few institutions bought a full set of the reels because the cost, as I estimated it, was \$118,300. Pepin then began to digitize some of the reels and they came on the market as CD-ROMs at a price of between \$50. and \$75.

I bought two of these and enjoyed being able to research the church records on my own time and in my own home.

The most recent development in the history of the collection is that Ancestry.ca acquired the right to host the collection online. They worked in partnership with the University of Montreal to index the collection and make it fully searchable. The years 1850-1967 have now been indexed and they launched that version on April 8, 2008. They anticipate completing the index for the years 1621-1849 by mid 2008.

Regular readers will know that I am not normally enthusiastic about subscription websites but this is truly an incredible resource and I would love to have easy access to it.

### Flooding at LAC

The recent flooding at Library and Archives Canada has brought renewed calls for better and safer storage for our national treasures. I am not unsympathetic to these calls because the building does seem prone to problems.

The auditor general reported that between 1988 and 2003 there were 116 'environmental incidents' including flooding and excessive heat that damaged 30,000 documents. This is apparently the first flooding since the roof was repaired a few years ago.

A water pipe burst on the second floor near the men's washroom in the Wellington Street facility a little after 2 a.m. on Tuesday May 20 triggering an alarm that brought the fire department within minutes. When they arrived water was cascading down to the first floor and the several basements.

They responded with tarp chutes to divert the water outside, pumps to clear out the accumulation and fans to speed up the drying process. The LAC emergency response team moved in to assess the damage and found that it was restricted to some 20<sup>th</sup> century books. There was no structural damage from the flooding.

The most damaged books were placed in frozen storage for later restoration and the rest were removed to be air dried.

By 10 a.m. the following morning researchers were allowed back in the building. I think the LAC staff deserve our congratulations for the fast, professional and efficient way they handled the incident, containing the damage and minimizing the 'down time' for researchers.