CORRESPONDANCES AUX AMÉRIQUES

In academic year 2010-2011, the director of the French Institute began collaborating with the French research group Correspondances aux Amériques (CorAm). This Paris-based research project, directed by Professor Nicole Fouché of the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales and Professor Annick Foucart of the Sorbonne, involves creation and computerized analysis of a data base of francophone correspondence in North and South America. Currently the only American partner, Dr. Choquette has attended a workshop on the data base and a subsequent organizational meeting. She will return to Paris this fall to participate in a conference on "Le temps et l’espace dans les lettres de migrants français et francophones aux Amériques, au XIXe siècle." Her presentation is entitled "Les sensibilités au temps dans la correspondance (1905-1912) de Pierre Gilbert, émigrant dauphinois vers le Canada."

FRENCH INSTITUTE COLLECTIONS

The French Institute collections continued to grow during academic year 2010-2011. In Fall 2010, we were able to add about a hundred de-accessioned monographs from the ACA Lambert Collection, now housed on the St. Anselm campus. In December 2011, we also welcomed the historical archives of ACA Assurance, the oldest and one of the most important Franco-American mutual aid societies. The ACA (formerly known as the Association Canado-Américaine) was founded in Manchester, New Hampshire in 1896 with the mission of promoting the union of persons of French Catholic ancestry in North America and the preservation of the French language and culture. The ACA archives include correspondence by the society’s board of directors and minutes of their meetings dating back to the earliest years of the association. The French Institute is deeply grateful to Betsy Holmes of the Geisel Library at St. Anselm College and Pauline Lemieux Lally of ACA Assurance for passing on these precious historical resources, which will now be available to future generations.

We are also delighted to acknowledge the contribution of Nina Tsatsinis, French Institute cataloguer and archivist, who has been working tirelessly to process our print and archival materials. Nina’s recent endeavors include cataloguing several hundred new print acquisitions, most of them rare, and developing finding aids for our archival collections, including the Jobin Collection and the historical archives of the ACA. She is currently processing the extensive Paul Chassé Collection, which includes Dr. Chassé’s diaries and correspondence from Southeast Asia in the 1960s.

Nina also works hard to find new homes for our duplicate and out-of-scope materials. In the past year, we have been able to send off hundreds of duplicate items to schools and organizations such as the University of Maine at Orono and the American French Genealogical Society. In addition, we held a French Institute book sale in conjunction with the D’Alzon Library’s annual book sale last September. Please contact us to make a donation of books or archives or if you are interested in receiving de-accessioned materials. Our collective efforts can prevent valuable works from ending up in recycling!

CITÉ NATIONALE DE L’HISTOIRE DE L’IMMIGRATION, PARIS

In March 2011, the director of the French Institute met with Marianne Amar, director of research for France’s Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration. Thanks to Dr. Amar’s generosity, Dr. Choquette and two Canadian colleagues received a private tour and learned about the development of this new museum (2007) devoted to France’s important immigration history.

INSTITUT FRANÇAIS

Volume XXII

UPCOMING HOLIDAY EXHIBIT

CHRISTMAS CARDS BY THÉODORE JOBIN

The French Institute invites you to view an exhibition of illustrated Christmas cards by Franco-American artist Théodore Jobin. The cards will be on display at the D’Alzon Library, Assumption College, between November 29th, 2011 and January 6th, 2012.

Théodore Jobin (1873-1955) was born in Quebec and immigrated to Boston with his family in 1890. His artistic nature served him well from a young age. In Boston, he worked as a window dresser for department stores while studying at the Eric Pape School and the Fenway School of Illustration. He was a member of the Rockport Art Association, the New England Print Association, and other artistic and professional organizations in the Boston area.

Many of the Christmas cards in the exhibit are from Jobin’s original handmade sample case. The majority of these prints feature rustic winter outdoor scenes which have come to typify commercial holiday greetings, but there are examples of religious themes as well. It is interesting to note that the dominant Christmas colors, red and green, are rarely used, indicating either that the trend had not yet developed or that Jobin was unconventional. Jobin’s inscriptions in French and English suggest that he cultivated both a French-speaking and an English-speaking clientele.

The Christmas cards are part of the Jobin Family Archive, an archival collection pertaining to the family of Joseph Jobin (1843-1890), his wife Marie-Flore-Eugénie Lapointe (1847-1938), and their nine children, later descendants, and other relatives in Quebec and New England from 1890 to the present day. The collection was compiled by Théodore Jobin’s grandson, Rev. Philippe Thibodeau, and donated to the French Institute beginning in 1999. Other examples of Théodore Jobin’s work, including paintings, etchings, and drawings, can be found in the Jobin Family Archive, which also features photos, manuscripts, artifacts, and a great deal of correspondence.

COMING SOON

NEW FRENCH INSTITUTE WEBSITE

We are currently working to create a new website for the French Institute, which will include useful links to our collections and finding aids as well as links to other special collections. The new site will be located at:

http://www1.assumption.edu/frenchinstitute/
The following articles by Leslie Choquette appeared during academic year 2010-2011: "Atlantic Migration," an annotated bibliography for the Atlantic History Series of Oxford Bibliographies Online, Oxford University Press, 2011; and "L’immigration française en Nouvelle-France," for the Musée virtuel du Musée de la civilisation à Québec. The Virtual Museum of New France, which bills itself as the first museum without walls in the world, was created by the Canadian Museum of Civilization to promote awareness of all facets of life in New France from the 16th through the 18th centuries. It features bilingual articles designed to make the latest scholarship accessible to a general audience.


The director of the French Institute, Leslie Choquette, participated in a number of national and international conferences during the past academic year. She made seven different scholarly presentations: "We Too Are Sons of Liberty: Ethnic Advocacy in the Novel Under Canadian Skies, by Joseph P. Choquette," at the Biennial Meeting of the American Council for Québec Studies; "Apostate or Saint? The Jesuits’ Savage in Two Recent Historical Monographs," Allan Greer’s Mohawk Saint and Emma Anderson’s "The Betrayal of Faith," at the American Society of Church History, "Un émigrant dauphinois en Alberta. La correspondance de Pierre Gilbert," at the Université de Nantes in France; "L’immigration et la question religieuse en Nouvelle-France," at the Institut des Pays-Bas in Amsterdam; "Jay Gillin’s The Bourgeois Frontier" and "Fear in New France," both at the Annual Meeting of the French Colonial Historical Society in Toronto; and "Colonized and Colonizing Women in Africa and America: Cross-Cultural Negotiations," at the 15th Berkshire Conference on the History of Women.

Dr. Choquette’s other national and international activities in 2010-2011 included lecturing on "The Impact of French-Canadian Immigration on New England" at Massachusetts Bay Community College, delivering the annual Mrs. Homer Gage memorial lecture for the French Institute and Phi Alpha Theta, and serving on a dissertation defense jury at Université Laval in Quebec. She helped organize the annual conference of the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, and she evaluated book manuscripts for the University of Toronto Press, Bedford/St. Martin’s, and the University of Pennsylvania.

In Spring 2011, the French Institute once again participated in events surrounding the New England celebration of the Journée internationale de la Francophonie. The celebration included two events at Assumption College, a lecture by the director of the French Institute and a reading by Franco-American author and Assumption Prep alumnus Joseph Simonneau. Leslie Choquette’s lecture, which was co-sponsored by Phi Alpha Theta, the history honors society, was entitled "Why Are We Sitting in La Maison Francaise? The Forgotten Story of French-Canadian Immigration to the United States." There were 85 attendees, including colleagues from St. Anselm College.

The French Institute will participate in a large-scale study of francophones in North America, which received a major $2.5 million grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in March 2011. The director of the study is Dr. Francine Martel, who holds a Research Chair in language and migration in French America at the University of Ottawa.

The French language in North America has evolved over more than four centuries, constantly being shaped by the contact between a cultural heritage brought from France and its new home. With this in mind, the goal is to study the evolution of the French language in North America in order to better understand the tension caused by the discrepancy between language and identity boundaries, both of which are constantly changing.

The research project, entitled Le français à la mesure d’un continent, a patrimoine en partage, will use innovative approaches, by presenting individuals and their language as a central factor in the changes that society undergoes and by examining the relationship between the cognitive and cultural aspects of language. Relying on extensive documentation, the study will seek to better identify the concerns of present-day francophone communities, whether in majority, minority, or multicultural settings. The research will also help produce a major corpus of French in North America, which will include informal exchanges between individuals in the form of private correspondence or spontaneous conversation. This publicly accessible tool will be useful as a starting point to systematically compare francophone communities.

Le français à la mesure d’un continent, a patrimoine en partage, which is part of the Major Collaborative Research Initiatives program, involves contributions from more than 54 team members from 39 institutions in Canada, the United States, France, and other countries working in a variety of disciplines, including linguistics, anthropology, history, geography, and computer science. The French Institute is proud to have been chosen as a partner for this important study and looks forward to collaborating in the research.