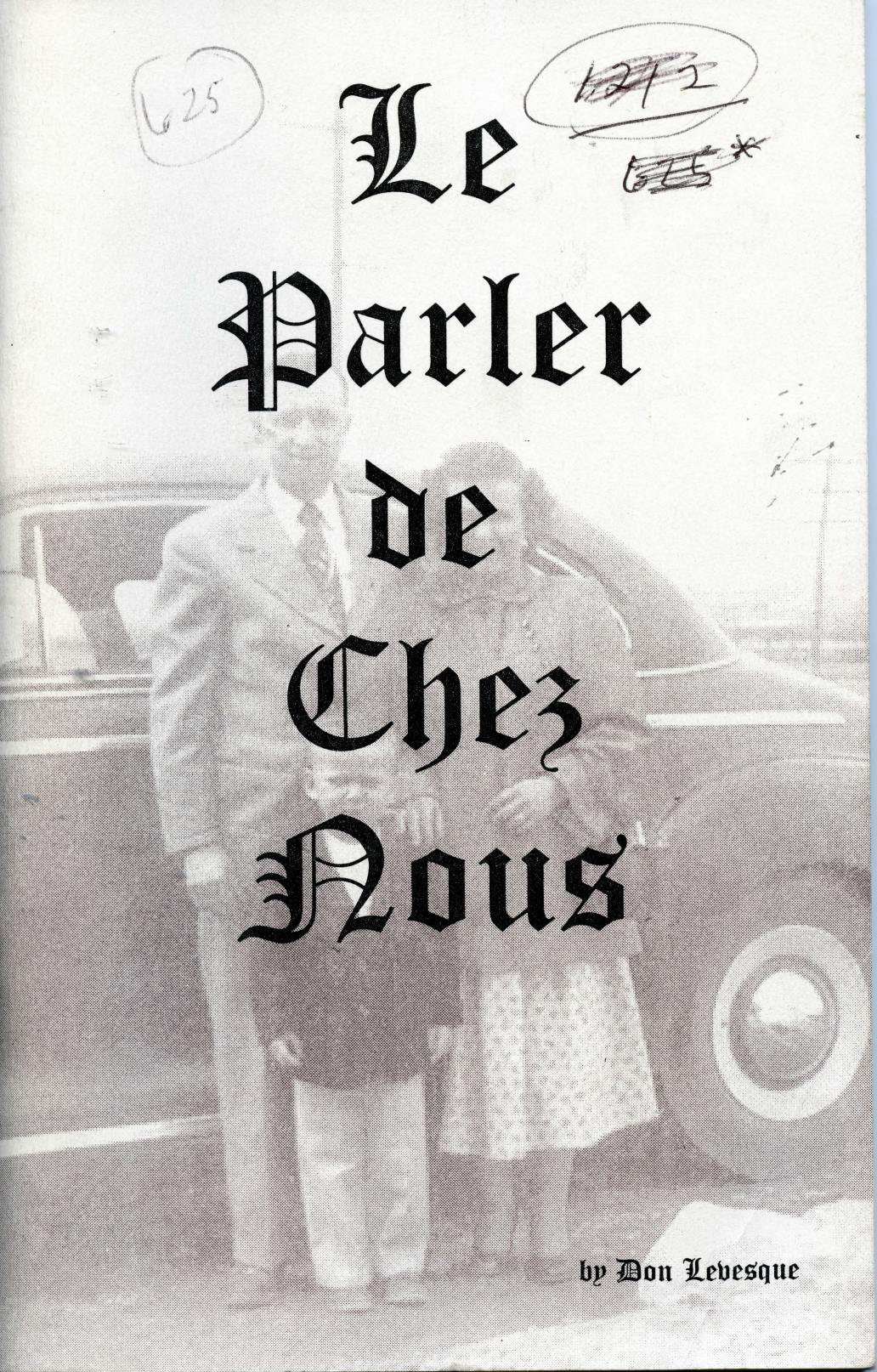


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Le Parler de Chez Nous



by Don Levesque

"C'est d'même
qu'on parle
par icitte"

(des fois)

Dictons, patois, expressions de la
Valleé Saint-Jean, Maine

Collected and compiled by Don à Gilbert à
Joseph à Louis à
Jean-Charles à Jean-Baptiste à Pierre-Joachim
à Robert Levesque,
un p'tit gahs de Grand Isle who works at the St.
John Valley Times

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Introduction

All living and vibrant societies have unique colloquialisms and expressions that make their use of the language special. The northernmost part of the State of Maine, comprised of about 20,000 souls residing in the crux of the Maine-Québec-New Brunswick borders, is an area that is especially rich in local expressions.

The 75 miles or so of the St. John River that serves as a small portion of the border between the U.S. and Canada is made up of about a dozen small communities, located like a string of pearls along the south shore of the U.S. side of the river. The area was settled in the late 18th and early 19th century by a mixture of French-Canadians, Acadians, Scots and Brits. Of course there were also the Malecites, who, after all, had been here for thousands of years before anybody else. However, even until the mid-1980s, a survey showed that more than 85% of the residents considered themselves Franco-Americans who still spoke French at home and with friends. Many still do. It is important to remember that approximately 90% of those living on the U.S. side of the river now speak English first and French as a second language. Conversely, approximately 95% of those living on the Canadian side of the river speak French first and English as a second language.

Because the area was isolated from the rest of North America for so

long (decades) the residents of the St. John Valley gradually evolved their own variation of French, based on a mixture of 15th century France French, Acadian French, Québec French, English and Malecite. The result is a rich and colorful language loaded with colorful and imaginative expressions, some of which are very similar to those found in long-ago Québec, others similar to those found in long-ago Acadia and France, some that appear to be translations of common English expressions, and many others that are original and locally produced. But even when they are "borrowed" from elsewhere, St. John Valley expressions typically have their own twist, meaning, connotation and especially their own pronunciation. It is not a pronunciation that is found in most French dictionaries but one that was born of strife, elation and everyday use. Is the so-called St. John Valley French even French at all? This is like asking, "Is so-called Texas English even English at all?" The same is true of the differences between so-called Mexican Spanish and Spain Spanish, "Is it even Spanish?". The answer to all three questions is, of course it is French, of course it is English and of course it is Spanish. The languages simply evolved differently due to an infinite number of factors.

As you travel from one St. John Valley community to the next, you will find that some expressions can have different meanings to the inhabitants of different towns. There may even be a slight difference in the pronunciation of certain words and some words may be

substituted. In addition, a very common expression in one small town may never have been heard in the neighboring towns. So, you see, in the early days of the St. John Valley the isolation was not only from the outside world but also sometimes within the boundaries of a few neighboring small communities or within the sections of a settlement.

Prior to 1842, most of the St. John Valley was a homogenous French-speaking region. The Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 designated the river as the international border and "drew" a line through the small French-speaking communities, making some residents instant U.S. citizens and others, usually blood relatives, Canadian citizens. Those close family blood ties are just as common and just as strong today.

Those on the U.S. side of the river were eventually forced to speak English-only on school grounds and were punished if caught speaking French. Dealing with almost anyone outside "the Valley" required a use of English-only. This was especially true when attempting to deal with any level of government or bureaucrat. The Maine Department of Education policy of English-only on school grounds was very effective and nearly succeeded in wiping out the unique culture of the St. John Valley on this side of the border. However, local efforts started in the late 1980s and continuing to this day have produced a new surge of pride in the French language,

a resurgence of its usage and have led two St. John Valley school districts to form one of the few French immersion school programs in the United States.

But, enough politics. This is not a political document, it is a labor of love: Love of a language, love of a people, and love of a lifestyle that refuses to lay down and die.

In the following pages, the local expressions or words are on the left, spelled phonetically (the vast majority of the early inhabitants were illiterate and therefore the language survived mostly in its oral forms only), and the meaning of the expression follows to the right. It is important to remember that the majority of the meanings given here are not translations, they are, instead, an indication of how the expression was used. For example, "mette la charru en avant du beu" means "to place the cart before the horse", although, if it were literally translated, it would read "to place the plow ahead of the ox". Horses were not generally used for farmwork in the St. John Valley, oxen were more the rule, therefore, our expression denotes this fact.

The following dictions, patois, metaphores and expressions were collected over several years by myself through a weekly bilingual (French and English) column in the *St. John Valley Times*, the local weekly newspaper. What began almost as a nostalgic review of

expressions used by our parents and grandparents immediately took on a life of its own with readers from all over the United States. All were former St. John Valley residents forced to move "away" in order to earn a living. The lure of the Valley and special place it holds in the hearts and souls of its sons and daughters cannot be denied. To say that those who are forced by circumstances to live "away" from the Valley miss the richness and the cadence of speaking Valley French is an understatement. After all, French is the language we heard in the cradle, the softly whispered words of love uttered by our mothers was in French, our grandparents, neighbors, friends and our entire world, was in French. Then, at the age of 5, we were all taught a foreign language - English. So, French is in our hearts, in our souls, in our genes and in the deepest part of who we are as human beings. It is a breath of fresh air. If you have not been fortunate enough to have experienced this pre- and immediate-post-natal immersion into the French language, it may be as difficult for you to understand as it is for me to explain.

Neither is this a scholarly undertaking and I did not study patois and dictions formally. This is not my doctorate's thesis (cosse ça mange l'hiver, ça?) and it is not related in any way to academia. I did not receive a local, state, federal or any sort of grant to do this. I did it because I love the language, its expressions and its great ability to construct mind pictures through a few choice words, such as, y niége des liève to describe how hard it is snowing.

I want to stress again that the French in this collection is written phonetically, for example, "mort" is written as "môre" and "bien" is "b'en" and so on. You'll get the hang of it pretty quick and even quicker if you read the expression aloud.

Thanks to all of those who submitted dictons and patois and who still sometimes do when they meet me at the post office or around town or through e-mail. I'm positive that not all of the old patois, dictons, expressions and metaphores are in this collection. As soon as it is on the press, I'll probably think of half a dozen that should have been included here. As well, reading this collection will most probably jar your memory and many very old or uncommon expressions may pop suddenly into your mind. If that happens - drop everything immediately and write it down. If you don't write it down immediately, it will vanish within a few seconds and it may be gone forever. Write it down and add it to this collection or start your own.

Many of you have asked when these were going to be put in book form.

Tchien, c'est faite!

Yainque Pour l'Grand Monde!

You will notice a small number of BLUE pages at the end of this book. This is the ADULT SECTION of this collection of patois, dictons, expressions and metaphores. These pages are perforated so that they can be easily removed by parents if they wish to do so.

I warn you that some of the Adults Only expressions are pretty crass and pretty graphic and also pretty sexist. The section contains swear words, the nicknames for various body parts (mostly genitalia), and slang expressions describing various bodily functions.

These expressions were included in this collection because they were and are a real part of St. John Valley life. Our ancestors were not as sainte-nitouche as some local histories would have us believe, many of them loved life and all of its pleasures and they expressed those things - sometimes quite graphically and even quite enthusiastically.

Don't say I didn't warn you.

**Reminder: Because the French is written phonetically as it was and is sometimes spoken, it often helps to read a local expression aloud in order to "hear" it.*

A

aboutire a rien: a waste of time, effort
accent drette: ˘ (used in spelling orally)
accent gauche: ˘ (used in spelling orally)
achaler: outspoken, outgoing
accoter: living together outside of marriage
adésamain: not at hand
adrette: handy
agraffe!: shut up!
ah b'en!: cut it out!; other expression of protest or surprise!
ajeuve d'arbouter: stop dragging your feet
à la gandle: be topsy-turvy
à la grasse: put on weight
à la poussiere: parking and smooching in a car
à la royure: see you!
aller aux Fort: going to town (Fort Kent)
aller au moving: go to the movies
aller au portrait: go to the movies
aller au train: at a steady pace
aller donner du foin au coq: do farm chores
amanchure: badly or sloppily dressed
amârer: tie with rope or a string
amiôler: lure
a pas frette aux yeux: she's brash; outgoing

à plein vente: fall flat on your face
à pié: on foot; walk there
à première abôrre: all of a sudden
après Noël, les journée relongise par un pas d'coq: after
Christmas, the days get longer by a rooster's step
aracher des naveau savage: pull weeds by hand
aracher d'la moutarde: pull weeds by hand
aracher la laine su'l'dos: take everything a person has
aracher les nerres du nez: take everything a person has
amouère: closet; cupboard
aryette: small pillow
assis su' l'thrône: sitting on the toilette
asteur: now
atahton: blindly
à tous bout't'chan: every once in a while
attend après'lune: wait a long time
attendon que l'curé s'mouche: don't be in such a hurry
au blanc: out in the open
au boute: at the end; dead tired
au large: on one's land far from the house
autant comme: as much as
avec une langue on va à Paris!: speak up!; don't be shy
aveulle de débouler: about to give birth
awoire d'la djuelle: outspoken; brash

avoir d'la gréboulle: quarrel

avoir l'aire beu: appear obstinate or stubborn

avoir l'aire puteu: appear sad or pensive

avoir une dent tsu: hold a grudge

avoir un vers salulaire: agitated; uneasy

B

baïne basse: downcast; sad

babine pendante: to be ashamed; pouting

babineu: one who talks too much; a bore

bafouer: tossed around like a ship on a rough sea

bagatelle: easily done

bagosse: homebrew; moonshine

balancinne: porch swing

balançûère: porch swing

baliser l'ch'min: decorate or clean the roadside

baloxer: confuse(d)

banc d'néige: snowbank

banc d'toilette: a nasty person; disagreeable

baratte: an old car

baratte à beurre: butter churn

bardasser: make a lot of noise by banging things or hammering

bargerie: where sheep are kept

barlan: container (of apples); game using apples instead of money

barnique: corrective lenses; eyeglasses

barreau d'France: bossy person

barrer à trente: slow person; slow driver; inhibited

barouette: small wagon

bavasser: scold

baveu: one who talks too much; insolent

bazou: old car
beau fin-fin: show off person; braggart
bébelles: toys
bédenne: stomach; tummy
belle atout: well-dressed
belle crotte: a pretty baby girl; young girl
belle de loin, loin d'être belle: unattractive woman
belle pouline: pretty girl
bête à corne: cow; ox
bête à patates: potato picker (by hand)
bête puante: skunk
b'en amanché: well off; wealthy
b'en amanché: in trouble; trapped
b'en attelé: well-married
b'en dans sa peau: comfortable with oneself
b'en farder: wear lots of makeup
bétôt: soon
binne à deux sièges: lima bean
blanc comme un drah: pale; white
blême comme un drah: pale; sickly looking
blême comme une vesse du mi-carême: pale; look sickly
blie: doubtful story
bobeau savage: coldsore
bois cotis: rotting lumber

boîte à tous mette: all-purpose box
bombe: kettle
bonbarbe: mouth organ
bonne femme: old lady; wife; mother
bonne homme: old man; husband; father
bonne homme ça tut: legendary Rte. 11 character (Fort Kent)
bonne homme sept heures: boogeyman
boucanne: smoke
boucher des deux boutes: hard-headed; stubborn
boucher des deux boutes pi l'mittant: very hard-headed;
stubborn
bouette à cochon: pig slop (inedible food)
bouleau braillarre: weeping willow
bouluses: pills
bourasser: be irritable
bourbatter: mumble
bourdasser: make noise; be in a bad mood; slam things
bourdon: bee
bourer la tête: brainwash; deceive
boureau: bully
bout d'temps: quite a while
boutoner en jaloux: place the wrong button through a
buttonhole (skip a button)
boiyô: outhouse

boiyô boucher: constipated
bonyenne: mild curse word (as might be used by a mémère)
bozwelle: misbehaving child
brane dans'manche: unsteady; unsure
branleux: wimp; pest
brasse les oui: give a scolding; tell off
breteux: whiner; deadbeat
bricolles: suspenders
brise-fer: one who breaks things
broque: large fork (four tines)
brouillarre: badly dressed; rough sketch
bremasser: drizzle
bûche dans l'ta: help yourself; go right ahead; do vigorously
bouille lucke: unexpected good luck
buttin: clothing

C

cabane: ^ (used in spelling orally)
cabane à smelle: ice fishing shack
caboché: head
ça brûle un trou dans ses poches: anxious to spend money
cacasser: chatter; whine loudly; gossip
cache-cache: child's pacifier
cachez'es beaux, v'la's'anglais: unwelcome visitors (hide the oxen,
here come the English)
ça fait parler l'djobbe: incredible; unbelievable
café assez fôre pour porter un clou: very strong coffee
cajou: hypocrite
cailler: nod off
calle ton casse!: we're in a hurry!
callôt pleumer: baldheaded
calline de beaux: mild curse word
calline de binne: mild curse word
ça monte comme dans l'frond d'un beaux: very steep
ça monte comme dans l'visage d'un singe: very steep
canaille: mischievous; sly
cançon a grand manche: longjohns
cannes de tchêteux: skinny legs
capabbe comme un joul: very strong person
ça prend pas goûtinette: it won't take long; it doesn't take very long

ça rente par une oreille pi ça sôrre par l'autre: to ignore; not a fast learner

carriolle: horse-drawn carriage

cartouche de cartouche: mild curse words

ça sent la morue: anything foul smelling

casse à palette: baseball cap

casser b'en raide: penniless

casser sa pipe: disappointed

casser comme un clou: penniless

casvell: weak

ça tchien pas d'boute: nonsense

catin: lose woman

catiner: play with dolls; waste time

cause a'fêve: stringbean

ça vien t'ces andré: where storms come from; from an easterly direction

ça y'a passé par su'a'tête: missed the point; didn't get it

ce gêler les argôts: very cold

c'est bonyenne: it's no good

c'est bracke ça!: that's stupid!

c'est djiggy-dou: okay

c'est d'la rapasse: worthless person

c'est don d'valeur: that's too bad

c'est pas dissabe: can't be explained or understood

c'est pas la première fois qui fait ça: to be skilled

c'est pas des farces: no kidding

c'est pas la mer a bouère: it's not that bad

c'est pas les chars: it's not that great; not that wonderful

c'est pas lui qui a inventé les boutons a quatte trous: he's not that smart

c'faire claquer ça: get scolded; spanked

c'faire coller: get cheated; taken advantage of

c'faire pleumer: tongue lashing; to be scolded

chacoter: gossip

chahyère à dîner: lunch pail

chaire de poule: goosebumps

chamin du roi: main road

chamin du roué: main road

chamoller: all messed up

changer d'toune: changed a story or opinion or outlook

changer son fusil d'épaule: change one's mind

chanter comme un coq: one who sings well

chanter la pomme: sweet-talk

chaque chaudron a son couvert: there's someone for everyone

charru: a plow

chasse gallerie: kids making noise upstairs

chassi double: corrective lenses; eyeglasses; storm windows

chatouiller: tickle

chaud comme un lapin: very drunk
ch'min comme une bouteille: icy road surface
chemailler: whine
chevreu: deer
chialleux: whiner
chiarre: sauteed mixture of leftover potatoes and leftover meat
and onions
chicô: dead tree; skinny person
chien d'dents: garden weed
chien d'poche: unwelcomed tag-along
chique de tabac: wad of chewing tobacco
choquer b'en noire: very angry
chuchotte: whisper
clanche la porte: shut the door firmly
clagues: low-cut snow "rubbers" for dress shoes
clou dresser: use something that's been used before; straightening
out something used
clutche: get outta here!; leave in a hurry
cochonerie: plenty of something not really wanted anymore
coeur de poule: easily grossed out
coeur s'u'l'boute des dents: easily grossed out
cogner des clous: nod off
collant comme une mouche à miel: annoying person
comme arracher des dents: difficult to do

comme un coup d'masse: suddenly; hit very hard
comme un jeu s'a soupe: unexpected event
comme un oiseau s'une branche: nervous; unreliable; indecisive
compter un chapite: tell off; tell a long story (not necessarily true)
concession de liche larre: Belanger Settlement
(off Rte. 11, Fort Kent)
concession d'poche d'our: Marquis/Rioux Road
(off Rte. 11, Fort Kent)
conter des peurs: tell tall tales
contraireux comme un cochon dans'chan d'pois: hard-headed;
stubborn; obstinate
contraireux comme un cochon s'a glace: hard-headed, stubborn,
obstinate
côre d'abbe: fallen tree trunk
corne au talon: corn, as on a foot
cornifleux: nosey person
cornoiller: butted
cortons: pork paté
cosse ça mange l'hiver ça?: what the heck is this (it)?
cosse tu connais dans l'pette d'un ours?: to one who is
uninformed
cosse tu connais dans'panse du bédeau?: to one who is
uninformed
cosse tu penses d'la guerre?: silence breaker; conversation starter

coucher soure la corde à butin: wear wrinkled clothing

couenne de larre: pork rind

couleurs:

ti bleu: light blue

gros bleu: dark blue

ti vert: light green

gros vert: dark green, etc.

couleurer: to color

coup d'botte: kick

coup d'pouce: helping hand

couper d'la pitoune: harvest lumber

couper l'sifflette: cut off speech; interrupt

coupe gorge: cutthroat

courir l'ventre à bas: run fast; hurry

court y'use qui'a pas d'maison: hurry!

coûter des bidoux: very expensive

couvarte: blanket

crache en l'aire, tombe su l'nez: do unto other, etc.; don't boast

crache pitoune: spitter

crampé: drunk; squeezed tightly together

crainquer la bombe: begin to heat the kettle

crapotte/crapôt: frog

craquer: crazy

cremeuse: water-well creamer; old car

crêpe de farine blanche: not buckwheat pancakes

crêve fain: bum; one who refuses to work

creu d'estomac: hungry

cri: get; fetch

crigne de jueux: handful of hair; "bad" hair

croche: curve in the road; crooked (liar, cheater)

croquer des noisettes: break hazlenuts with your teeth

crotte de nez: worthless person; diminutive person

D

dâh dicher: spoil a baby
dahs dishe et dou-dah dishé: lullaby
dans l'grenier: upstairs; in the attic
dans l'fondement: where hemorrhoids hurt
dans pas d'temps: soon; in no time at all
danser dans l'ôge: younger sibling married first penalty
darnier: darn; sew
débiter: cut up (wood or meat)
débrêler: sloppily dressed
débricoller: sloppily dressed
décrotter: thorough cleaning; overdue clean up
défrichter: sort out; clear land for cultivation
démangeaison: obsession
demi ors: half pint
dents d'lait: baby teeth
descende au bôrre: go to the village
descende par en bas: head south
décoller su'une gosse: leave in a big hurry
denishter: leave home; take someone from their home
dépenseux(se): spends money quickly
des mittennes pas d'pouce en hiver: be poor
des ouefs de jument: cantalopes
des raquette apres'tête: have large ears

détarauder: unscrew

deuxième litte: offspring from a second marriage
deuxième violon: second fiddle
dévisager: hit head-on; completely ruined
d'l'abbe a cochon: weeds
d'l'amour en branche: celery
d'l'argent comme du pouelle: wealthy
d'la motcher d'trop: too many by half
d'la trempette: bread dipped in gravy or sauce or milk (with sugar)
d'l'eau d'Paques: water drawn before dawn on Easter morning
d'linyenne: hard to believe
des yeux dans l'chignon: eyes in the back of the head
des yeux tous l'toure d'la tête: doesn't miss anything
deux pattes gauches: awkward; not handy
djuelle carré: very cold outside
djeulle de bois: hungover
djeulle de traverre: pout
djetter les savages: about to give birth
dit à machine qui disse à chôse: tell whatisname to tell
whatchamaycallit
dit moué pas!: tell me it isn't so!
dit pinotte sans rire: are you telling the truth?
djèppe: wasp
djibou d'nuite: nightowl

doller up: well-dressed
donner l'djjobbe: scold
dône su tes deux oreilles: don't worry
dorioter: linger; waste time
dorlotter: linger; waste time
dormir par sur-saut: uneasy sleep; toss and turn
dropper comme un casse: dropped like a hot tomato;
fall suddenly
drette: straight
du fil à r'teurdre: long hard road ahead; not an easy task
du pain s'a planche: busy
dure comme du fer: hard as a rock
dzigger: to dig potatoes; a potato harvester
("er" pronounced as in English)

E
ébourifler: messy hair; uncombed
écartant: it's easy to get lost here or there
échappé: speak too soon; speak out of turn
échaprier d'la laine: cord raw wook; get the dirt out
écornifleux: nosey
écourtichoner: wearing a short dress
écreuisse: long-legged or long-armed person
écrit s'a glâce: lost with time; forget about it!; you don't owe
me anything!
éffaroucher: a little too excited
étchoeur moué pas!: leave me alone!
élever par coup d'botte: rough childhood
éligner: off to a good start
elle est agrémentée à toute éreinte: she is all dolled up or
shapely
elle est pour acheter: about to give birth
embâcler: burden with (problems)
empâter: not too intelligent
empester la baratte: bad body odor; to smell of old booze
enbarder: scold
encarcaner: trip (someone)
en famille: pregnant
enfant d'côcô: brat; misbehaving child

enfant d'coeur: altar boy
enflé la tête: overly praise
en parlant d'la bête, on y'oué la tête: we were just talking about
you; speak of the devil!
ent'e tchien et loup: between a rock and a hard place
entêter: stubborn; obstinate
en ti'pépère: very; much; many; angry
entommer: to use a little liquid from a container
enwoyer une shique: tell a lie; verbal insult
épouvanter: frighten
eqouelle de bois: wooden set of dishes, forks, spoons for children
or old folks
équioller: appear unhealthy
ésarbé: weed by hand
escarés: bedsores
escougriffe: filthy person
estomac d'poule: light eater
estropier: cut with a knife; wounded
être flamber: be in serious trouble
être gaillarre: drunk
être su' son 36: well-dressed; good-looking
étchoeurant: gross
évacher: lounging; stretched out
évangander: excited

évangonder: not too intelligent
èxcite toué pas l'poelle des jambes: don't get too excited

F

face de carême: homely person; pale person
faibe comme un pou: weak
fain comme un joual: hungry as a horse
faire dépeinne: have your photo taken
faire des acaires: lie; tell tall tales
faire des acraires: lie; tell tall tales
faire dô-dô: go to sleep
faire du boudin dans l'coin: pout
faire du sang d'cochon: be upset; steam about something
faire d'la twelle: feel like fainting
faire du pouce: hitch hike
faire la lippe: pout; about to cry
faire langire: waste time; make someone slow down
faire l'bardah: do chores
faire les coins ronds: sloppily done; incomplete
faire manger d'la'woine: steal a boyfriend or girlfriend
faire parler les curieux: why something is the way it is;
none of your business
faire l'train: do farm chores in the stable
faire sa besogne: do chores
faire son samedi: clean the house
faire une belle façon: have a pleasing manner; flirt
faisseux-waireux: all talk and no action; braggart

faite à mitaine: hand-made
faite au pinseau: shapely; beautiful
faite sec: done suddenly without warning
fait une pisse: get outta here!; leave quickly
famme ta boîte: shut up
fanale: lantern
fanfarlou: veering from the norm
fanfaron: impolite; insolent
fantasse: impolite; insolent
farlagne: man's fur-lined coat
farmer la porte au nez: threw me out; slammed the door;
refused with a passion
farouche: scared; overly excitable
fatiquant: tiresome; pest
faut chanter pour pas brailler: it's better to laugh than to cry
faut pas barlander: there's no time to waste
fesse su l'ferre quant y est chaud: strike while the iron is hot
feu follette: a fire that lights and then extinguishes and then
lights itself, etc.
filippina: two nuts in a single hazlenut
flacatoune: moonshine
flame en neuf: brand new
flamber: shot (killed)
flanmou: whiner; deadbeat

floune: girlfriend; loose woman
fonde comme du beurre dans'poêle: easily done; spend money freely
font d'tchulotte bas: short person
fôre comme un ours: very strong person
fou comme l'ballette: real crazy; unstable; very funny
fou comme un fouette: real crazy; unstable; very funny
fouler: shrink
fourche: large fork (three tines, used for hay)
fremille: ant
frette: cold
frette bleu: very cold
frissons: goosebumps
frisson des veaux: cold chills
frôler: rub up against like a cat would
fronteau: treeline
front tous l'tour d'la tête: be brazen; show-off
foule pinne: to the max; all out; completely; 100%
fûme: stay awhile

G

gahdeshedeluk: mild curse word
gahdole: mild curse word
gahdole de gahdole: mild curse words
gaisser: put gas in the car
galafer: munch; snack
galletah: small messy bed
garce: floosie; loose woman
garçonner: well-dressed woman
gaspyeux: spends loosely
gâsse: intestinal gas
gigot: big chunk of meat
glancinne: porch swing
glaçon au boute du nez: very cold
glisser s'a croute: snow sledding
godolier: mild swear word
gommé: tipsy; not too smart
gorgotton: adam's apple; throat
gorlôt: small potato
gornouille: frog
gosser: waste time; loiter
graphing fôr': phonograph player
graine de mille: hayseed mix

graisse la patte: embezel; skim money off the top; make an excessive profit

graisse tes bottes!: hurry!

grand comme ici-dans: very tall person; to indicate moderate height

grand comme ma main: not very large

grande demande: marriage proposal

grand djette: tall person

grand parche: tall person

grand parleur, 'ti faisseur: all talk, no action

grand yien-yien: silly person; immature

gratteux: stingy; miserly

grémen: an indescribable object; "thing"

grémière: squeeze someone tightly (lovingly)

grichou: pesky person

grillades: fried lard

grillades avec d'la sauce blanche: fried lard with a white sauce

gripette: perky person

gros bédacke: big and tall and mean bully

gros comme un coup d'botte: small person

gros comme une vache: fat as a cow

grosse djeulle: big mouth; to pout

grosse poche: wealthy person

grosse tête: hungover

grosse torche: overweight person

grosse trâler d'monde: lots of people there

gros zéro: useless person

grouille toué: hurry

gruger: eat between meals

guenille: rag

H

hache à deux taillants: double-edged situation; no-win situation

halle la langue: short of breath; tired

halle tes bottes: hurry!

halle tes flancs!: hurry!

halle tes hanches!: hurry!

halle toué une bûche: sit down; pull up a chair

harbes d'ognion: salted onion stems

harser la vérité: stretch the truth; mix up the facts

harser l'parking lot: make tailspins with a car

haut comme trois pommes: not very high or tall

heureux comme un cochon dans'bou: very happy

heureux comme un cochon dans un cham'd'wennes: very happy

heureux comme un pape: very happy

heureux comme un poison dans l'eau: very happy

heureux comme un roi: very happy

hâtte: anxious

huile de castôre: castor oil

huile d'ouvrier: ammonia

I

il faut pas dire, fontaine j'boirer jamais d'ton eau: never

say never

il néige comme des peaux d'liève: it's snowing hard

il y en manque: not too intelligent

il y reste juste assez d'jueux pour aller à basse messe: almost

bald

iou: where?

îtou: also

ivarner: endure the winter

J

jasser: chat

jaune comme une boule de beurre: very yellow

j'donne ma langue au chat!: I give up!

j'en anoit a faire: worried about completing

j'en ai a sawoire: I have a lot to learn

j'en ai en batége: I have plenty

j'en ai en masse: I have plenty

j'en ai en maudit: I have plenty

j'en ai en p'tit Juliette: I have plenty

j'en ai en 'tit pépère: I have plenty

j'en ai plein mes bottes!: I've had enough!

j'en ai plein mon chapeau!: I've had enough!

jingeuse: playful woman or girl

j'mangerais un joual: very hungry

j'm'en lave les mains: I give up; I don't care

jongler: ponder

joual: horse

joualette: sawhorse

joual verre: mild curse word

jouer a cachette: play hide 'n' seek

jouer a poste office: young teens' kissing game

jouer aux carreau: hop-scotch

jouer aux cartes:

astiner: signal your partner by slamming your card on the table

cogner: signal your partner by slamming your card on the table

couper: cut the deck

dame: queen

faire la p'tite: lowest bidding win

faire l'Charlemagne: win the bid

faire une bedinne: win after losing three hands

gager: bid

gros jacke: bid suite jack

l'atou: trump

l'beu: the 9 of trumps

prend'l'Charlemagne: game winning bid with no losses

p'ti jacke: same color as the bid suite jack

r'noncer: not play suite called for when you have it

s'faire batte: lose

s'faire setter: not make a bid

une bête: make no points during a game

une souri: not make the lowest bid

une suite: best cards, same suite

jouer avec l'feu: play with fire; doing something dangerous

j'va v'nire back: I'll return

L

- la banque à piton:** rich person
- lâche comme un ane:** be lazy
- lâché loose:** let go; set free
- la barre du jour:** sunrise
- la bête à deux (sept) têtes:** monster; homely person
- la brou dans l'toupette:** working hard and sweating
- la chatte a tu mangé ta langue?:** cat got your tongue?
- la chienne su l'dos:** be lazy
- la djeulle comme un shoupaque dans'slosh:** toothless
- la falle basse:** hungry
- la gazette:** the newspaper
- lait bleu:** skimmed milk
- la lucke pendu au bout du nez:** be lucky; fortunate
- la lune est sarnée:** pale moon; change in the weather
- la lune est grande comme un fond'carre:** full moon
- la lune est l'vée:** have lots of blond hair
- la manière basse:** downcast; sad
- lardjer:** let go; set free
- la marigoulette tremblante:** on the verge of crying
- la mine basse:** ashamed; sad
- lançonner:** toss a ball
- la p'tite menteuse:** St. John Valley Times
- la place des menteux:** sit in a staircase

la premiere apparcevance!: all of a sudden!

larre anglais: store-bought salted pork fat

la r'levée: waking from a midday nap

la tête y vire: dizzy; drunk; confused

la vache a velé: a calf was born

laver à main: handwash

laver à mitaine: handwash

l'bôrre en avant: livingroom

l'boume est cassé: very heavy traffic

l'canot: Caron's Poolroom (Lille)

l'darrière y traîne a bas: exhausted; very tired

l'djjobbe au côre: crazy; daredevil (can be an endearing term)

l'djjobbe bas'sa famme: raining while the sun is shining

l'djjobbe s'en mêle: string of bad luck

le coeur a ses raisons que la raison ignore: the heart has a mind
of its own

le 6 (janvier) les journées relongis par un pas d'oie: on the 6th
(January) the days get longer by a goose's step

les chamins sont boullants: rough roads

les cloches s'promenne à Rome: where church bells go between
Holy Thursday and Easter

les cochons ont mangé d'l'aire: when bragging is suspected

les cochons'gratte', on va awoire du temps doux: nice weather is
coming

les cochons'gratte', y va mouiller: it's going to rain
les érabes coule': runny nose
l'estomac dans'talons: very hungry
les capûches: nuns
les dents nous pettes dans y'eulle: very cold temperatures
les deux yeux dans l'même trou: drunk; sleepy-eyed
les moutons vont passé: missing front tooth
les nuée s'écartille' pi l'temps'torche: the sky is clearing
les oreilles dans l'crin: apprehensive
les oreilles grandes comme des panneaux d'grange: ears like
barn doors
les peids dans un plat: be in trouble; trapped
les pieds g'lés jusqu'au nombri: very cold feet
les quattes fers en l'aire: dead
les savages ont passé: gave birth
les signeaux: northern lights
les yeux comme des boutonnières d'can'çons: wear too much
mascara; have long eyelashes
les yeux comme une souri dans une chauyiére neuve:
bright-eyed
les yeux comme une souri qui tette: sleepy-eyed
les yeux comme des fonds d'carre: bleary-eyed
les yeux comme des nombris d'cowboy: beady-eyed
les yeux grand comme des 50 cennes: wide-eyed; bug-eyed

les yeux plus grand q'la panse: bite off more than you can chew
**lette comme y est, chapeau comme y'a, qu'a rise
don'd'elle avant qu'a rise des autres:** putting down a
woman who shows off or brags about her husband or
boyfriend
l'frette est pas chaud: it's cold (outside)
l'feu au darrière: in a hurry
l'feu pi l'eau: opposites
l'fond du carre: none left; slim pickings
l'fond t'chulotte bas: a short person
liche comme un p'tit chien barbette: good licker; flatterer
licheu(se): flatterer; brown-noser
ligne à butin: clothes line
**l'ivrogne r'gardé sa bouteille pi y dit, "Plein j'te vide; vide j'te
plaint":** the drunkard looks at his bottle and says, "full, I
empty you; empty, I beg you"
l'lac est callé: ice out on the lake
l'lac est pris: solid ice on the lake
l'long pi l'court: the long and short of it; the whole thing
l'nez fin: finely tuned smeller; busybody
loge: mental health institute
long comme d'icitte à d'main: very long, far
lougarou: werewolf
l'pays des échalottes: South & North Perley Brook Roads (Fort Kent)

l'p'tit canot: Roland's Rendezvous (Madawaska)

l'red front: A & P store (Madawaska)

l'restant d'la piasse: the person needed to complete a set or a team
or a group

l'soleil s'couche l'darière à l'eau: rain tomorrow

l'vé les pattes: die

l'vé une poche: leave

lutins: elves who braided horses tails during the night or caused
other mischief

l'ventre à bas: in a hurry

l'vente y traine à bas: short-legged; very tired

l'zéro prend l'chamin: cold weather has arrived

M

machante accoutumance: bad habit

machine-chôse: what'shisname; whoever

macreau: lady's man

magâné: tired; wore-out

maige comme un manche à ballette: very thin, skinny

maige comme un clou: very thin; skinny

maige comme un coin: very thin; skinny

maison d'pièces: log house

maisonner d'monde: household gathering; lots of people there

maison ronde: mental health institute

mal adrette: clumsy; not handy with tools

mal amancher: hard up

mal au bloque: hangover; headache

mal aux cornes: headache

malengeullé: spoke badly about

malisé: difficult

mal mené: badly managed (as a business); abused

mange comme un bossu: heavy eater

mange des ners!: leave me alone!; mind your own business!

manger comme deux hommes pi un anglais: very heavy eater

manger comme une poule: eat little

manger des pisses-en-litte: eat dandelions

manger la galette: have a meal

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mange ta main pi garde l'autre pour demain, garde ta tête pour les fêtes pi tes pieds pour danser, ta bedenne pour ti-Ken, tes bras pour Mardi Gras: answer to a person who always asks "what should I eat?"

manger d'la tremblotte: eat Jell-o

manger d'la vache enrager: very poor

maniganser: to scheme (against someone)

manquer sa shotte: to miss completely

marabou: ill-tempered; in a bad mood

marcher à quatre pattes: crawl

marcher s'a tête: step lightly on a clean floor

marcher su des oeufs: step lightly

marcheuse: midwife

marigoulette: child's game

marmotter: mumble

Marie Quatte Poches: busybody

matillon: horseman

matiner: afternoon

matou: male cat

mener par l'boute du nez: henpecked

menteux comme un arracheu d'dents: liar

meque'yalle: when he goes

met d'l'eau dans soupe: unexpected visit; you're exaggerating!

mette d'la mine dans l'crayon: to excite; arouse; stimulate

mette d'la pesse su'a terre: spread fertilizer

mette la charue en avant du beu: put the cart before the horse

mette d'l'eau dans l'vin: slow down; take it easy

mette d'l'eau dans ton vin: don't exaggerate; calm down

mette les ailes aux mouches: a know-it-all

mette les bois d'dain roues: impede progress

mette les patates au feu: begin to cook a meal

mette les pattes aux mouches: a know-it-all

mette ta patte de mouche: sign here

met une paille à ta place (pi brule les): you're blocking my view

Mina la Crème/Grand Mina: hateful woman

misère d'arriver: poor

misère noire: very difficult

mois d'mor: month of March

mon doux seigneur: my sweet lord!

mon pitou: endearing nickname

monter en bateau: tell a lie

mon'ti morné: misbehaving child

mon tchoeur s'élance ver toué comme un belier dans'porte d'grange: my hearts beats for you like a ram into a barn door

montée: driveway

monter à tête: swelled head; believe flattery

monter par en haut: go north

mon verras: you imp!; misbehaving child

mordu: fanatic (really liking something)

morveux: worthless young person who thinks highly of himself

motte de neige: snowball

motton: lump

mouche de moutarde: mustard patch (to treat colds)

moulati: sawdust

mouille à sciau: heavy rain

mouiller à boère deboute: hard rain

moyen fricasseu(se): creative person

moyen gibier: misbehaving child

moyen marle: lovable misbehaving child

moyenne embarder: messy

moyen patois: nonsense

moyen plan: nonsense

musique à bouche: harmonica

N

narrines à l'aire: ready to go; anxious to leave

naveau: shaved head; bald head

naveau sauvage: wild mustard (weed)

nettayer: clean (housework)

nez en l'aire: snob

nez fouré partout: busybody

nez pincé: snob

nez plusse proche que l'docteur: to be too close for comfort

nez rouillé: have freckles

nicke: nest

nishon/nioshon: ignorant person; worthless person

noir comme dessoure la terre: very dark

noir comme soure le poêle: very dark

nombrï noir: immature

nuit blanche: up all night; didn't sleep

O

obéissait: to fit snugly (as a pane of glass in a window frame)

ordieu: proud (excessively)

on engraisse pas les cochons à l'eau claire: eat more meat

on graisse pas les cochons à l'eau claire: don't be afraid to pitch
in & get your hands dirty

orgayeux: proud (excessively)

ornial: moose

oubaindon: or else

oubédon: or else

outarde: Canada goose

P

paillasse: thin straw mattress

pain d'famme: homemade bread

pain sucré: favorite child; teacher's pet

palotte: clumsy

palotte comme une vache s'a glace: very clumsy

panse de vache: overweight person; soft and soggy spot in the
ground

pansu: pot-bellied

pansu comme un cochon: pot-bellied

pansu comme une vache: pot-bellied

papineau: vagabond; old man

Pâques de r'nârre: late annual confession or communion

parde la boule: go out of control

parde la carte: go out of control

parde l'bouchon: have many children

pardessus'à tête: overwhelming; too hard to understand

parent d'la fesse gauche: distantly related

parler à travers de son chapeau: spoke too soon; not know what
he or she is talking about

parler comme un live ouvert: use big words

parler dans l'nez: speak directly to

parler du nez: nasal voice

parler yainque de t'ça: repeat oneself continuously

parqueter: fall on someone
par saut pi par butte: on and off; uneven progress
partir en virant: cruise; joy ride
partir s'une djagge: on a drinking spree
pas allabbe: can't get there
pas assez fou pour mette l'feu, pas assez fin pour l'éteinde:
borderline crazy
pas barré à quarante: fast talker or driver; outgoing; brash
pas d'gahling-galagne!: do it now!
pas faire vieux os: not stay long
pas gagner son arvène: does not earn his keep
pas la langue dans ses poches: outspoken
pas l'nombrì' sec: immature
pas marriabbe: not marriageable
pas pensé plus long q'son nez: not plan ahead
pas pire: not bad
passe moué la crûche: I want a drink
passer au cotton: receive a harsh scolding
passer au peigne fin: close scrutiny
passer au smotte: scold
passer entsoure d'la table: late for a meal
passer l'hiver soure la néige: freckled (rusted)
passer pas su Noré: go the long way around
pas tchicane dans cabane!: no fighting!; try to get along

pas t'busse: have no talent
pas su l'pìton: not too intelligent or alert
pas un cadeau: hard to handle; obstinate; misbehaving
patente: "thing"
patinoire à pou: baldhead
pauve chien va!: poor thing!
pauve comme braque: poor
pauve comme du sel: poor
pauve comme d'Jobbe: poor
payer avec des graines de poche: have no money
payer pour ses péchés: atone
payer une coche: expensive; pay a lot
pas mangé ces môts: be outspoken; direct
peigne de corne: miser
perron: porch
pelle à feu: small shovel to remove stove ashes
pelle à stime: steam shovel
pelte: shovel
peltrie: fur
pelteux d'brou: con artist
péssé comme une plume: very lightweight
pésse s'a canisse!: hurry!
pettarre: an attractive person
petter d'la bré: uncalled for advice

petter d'la brou: tell tall tales; pester
pette écarté: unusual stomach ache (minor)
pichou: slippers
Pierre Lam'lasse: very slow person
pigras: mess
pigrasser: make a mess
pilotter: pace
pilotter en place: walk in circles (get nowhere fast)
pin-bec: picky person
piocher des vers: dig for earthworms
piocher des awchets: dig for earthworms
piquants: thistles
pique-noche: flic of the finger against an ear, for example
pisse-potte: endearing nickname
pitouche: flic of the finger against someone's ear, etc.
placotter: gossip; talk a lot
planche: level or even or flat
plan d'nege: nonsense
plan d'nigô: nonsense
plan pour coucher d'hôre: nonsense
platte comme une galette: very flat
platte comme une ploye: very flat
plâtrer: deceive
plein coeur de jour: middle of the day; in broad daylight

plein d'binne: full of "it"
plein d'colle: liar (full of "it")
plein d'vent: conceited (full of "it")
pleinne épouvante: in a hurry
plien mes bottes!: I've had enough!
ployes au levain: sourdough buckwheat pancakes
plusse qu'un tour dans son sac: lots up his sleeve; multi-talented
poigner l'djibbe: get a scolding
poli comme un chien d'prête: very polite; well-behaved
porter les paquettes: gossip
potte-en-potte: multiple-meat dish
pouderie: blowing snow
pouiller comme un tchêteux: have lice; be filthy
poule mouillée: coward; whiner; not macho
poulette grasse: garden weed
pour l'amour du bon djieu: oh, no!; for God's sake!
poutine: pudding made by boiling cocoa, flour and water
porter s'a main: first-class treatment
premier litte: offspring of the first marriage
prend'l'aire: pick up speed (to make the next hill)
prend'une surrie: brief spell of hard and sweaty labor
prende l'beu par les cornes: take the bull by the horns
prende d'l'avant: get a head start
prende l'casse: difficult task; hard to accomplish

prende l'chamin: leave

prende ses jambes a son cou: run fast

promesse de putain: insincere promise

promesse d'ivrogne: insincere promise

punaise de sacristie: church sexton's helper

pürge: induced diarrhoea

Q

quantchême: birthday

quand les cochons auront des ailes: never

quand s'que l'cochon est plein, la bouette est sure: not hungry anymore (to find something distasteful in food after eating quite a bit of it)

quatron: quarter pound; cardboard

quatte poches: sports jacket

qu'est que tu brette?: what are you waiting for?

queue d'veau: very active person

qui choisi prend pire: don't be hasty to choose

R

rabâte: tell a tale or story (which may not be true)

rabô: small wood planer

raboudiner: crumbled; cramped; squished

racke à patates: potato warehouse conveyor belt

racker: sort potatoes on a conveyor belt; tired

rafistoler: mend

raide comme une barre: very rigid; stiff

ramoter: repeat oneself continually.

râsé: almost did or said something

rasse-motte: short-legged person

rat d'église: overly pious person

rattatiner: crumbled; wrinkled

ravigoter: revitalize

r'buter: hesitate; be reluctant

rebitcher: defend oneself

reliqua d'la grippe: symptoms of a cold

reparation d'honneur: public apology

rester avec sa gouine: live with a mistress

rester l'bec a l'eau: disappointed

rester bête: be embarrassed or insulted or speechless

r'garder par su'a clôtüre: flirt

rippe: wood shavings

rire comme une corde de bois qui débouille: odd and unique
laughter

rire comme une corde de bois qui débouille en montant: odd and
unique laughter

rire jaune: embarrassed laughter

r'mede: cure

r'niffler: sniffle

robbe de dimanche: Sunday dress

roger bon temps: happy go lucky

rond comme un oeuf: drunk; very round

rondin: short section of a large branch

rongeux d'balluse: overly pious person

rotter: burp

rouge comme une tomate/bette: red as a tomato/beet

r'sourde: arrive

S

sac ton can!: get outta here!

sa crabbe de chien: mild curse word

sa fait honte: shameful

saffe: selfish

sage comme une image: very well-behaved

sainte apostrophe: mild curse word

sainte ni-touche: prudish person; to turn up one's nose at something

salle comme un cochon: very dirty

sanfarger: stumble

sansu: leech; bloodsucker

s'a pas d'allure: nonsense

s'a planche: full speed; full throttle

Saint Thomas: skeptic

santchier: lumber camp (place where trees are or were cut)

saucer du pain: dip bread in gravy

sauter dans ces hardes: get dressed

sauter par su'a'clôture: commit adultery

savon d'pays: homemade soap

sawoire à travers les branches: hear rumors; hear second- or third-hand

sawoire l'court pi l'long: know everything about

s'bourer a'face: eat heartily

s'coucher en cuilliere: spoon-sleeping

s'd'échanger: changes clothes

sen connaissancè: unconscious; very angry

s'enfarger: trip and fall

sentire l'canni: mildewy odor

Séraphin: miser

serieux comme un pape: very serious

s'faire baisser's oreilles: get a haircut

s'faire engeuler: sassed

s'faire engongler: false promises

s'faire parler dans l'portait: spoken directly to

s'graiyer: get dressed; prepare for something

sifleu: groundhog

silence su l'boute d'la planche, les cochons danse'!: quiet!

Sire-o-Buck: Sear & Roebuck catalog

shawl barré: gossip

sh'fil pas: I don't feel good; I don't feel like it

shique la guenille: nag; pester; whine

shu pas à vende: stop staring at me

singe botté: copy cat; imitator (in the negative sense)

si ç'adonne: if it's convenient

si jeunesse savait, si veillesse pouvait: if only I wasn't so old

si s'aurai'té un ours, y t'arais manger!: it's right in front of you!

si s'aurai'té un ours, j'l'arais vu!: answer to the previous expression.

T

tabarjouère: mild curse word
tabarnouche: mild curse word
tabarsac: mild curse word
tâche don'!: stop it!; don't let it happen again!
tappe la ratte: annoying
tapon: many; much; lots of something
taponer: fondle; knead
taquiner: tease; annoy
tareau: screw
tareauder: screw a screw
tasse toué une fesse: move over
tâter l'terrain: appraise a situation beforehand
tchequé: well-dressed
tcheu d'veau: overly active person
tchubutter: stumble; somersault
tchulotte: pants
t'é'bebelles, dans ta cour!: get outta here!; leave me alone!
tempête dans un verre d'eau: much ado about nothing
tempêté: throw a tantrum
temps d'canârd: about to rain
temps des foins: hay season; autumn
temps gris: cloudy sky
temps pire: too bad

tes pas achetabbe: answer to "shu pas a vende"
tes possédé: you're impish or rascally
tête b'en: perhaps
tête carré: English speaking person
tête comme un naveau: baldheaded; closely cropped hair
tête de pioche: stubborn; hard-headed
tête de jeux: head of hair
tête de robyole: stupid
tétoué!: shut up!
têtu: stubborn; hard-headed
thé d'Saint-David: weak tea
ti bas du cu: short person
ti carre de lard: short and stubby person
ti gramant en dessoure du c: ç (oral spelling)
ti grandpère: dumplings
ti Jean Levesque: troublemaker; short-tempered person; bully
tirer des fleurs: compliment
ti train va loin: slowly but surely
tombe comme une poche: fall suddenly
tombé s'a tête: crazy
ton (son) chien est morre: it's all over; hopeless
ton gein-gein: your brain
tonnerre de tonnerre!: mild curse word
toques: burrs

torchon: lowlife; bum
tôse dorer: French toast
tôpatte: foot trail
tousca: umbrella
tous les roses ont des épines: every rose has its thorn
tout nouveau-tout beau: everything new is nice
tout nu comme un verre: naked
toute à la gandole: topsy-turvy (as in a house)
toute allumiéré: all lit up; many lights on
toute chrômer: well-dressed
toute dans même poche: all in it together
toute la sheebaing: everything included
toute l'kitte: everything included
toute r'gricher: tussled hair
toutes sortes de bebittes: a wide variety of things (pests; junk)
toute un numero: quite a character
traîn d'char: train
traîne: child's sled
traîneau: child's flat wooden sled
traîner les pieds: lag behind; not very quick
traîner's'ailes: linger; loiter; waste time
transbotter: a mess
transbouetter: a mess (as would be fed to pigs)
transporter: a very excited person

travailler comme un fou: work very hard
travailler comme un joual: work like a horse
travailler comme un nege: work like a slave
trembler comme une feuille: tremble and shake
triqueu comme un r'nard: sly as a fox
trou à dré: where bad weather comes from; from the east
trou à malo: southeasterly wind; rain is coming
tsi minou: pussywillows
tsique 'n' toque: tight squeeze
tu m'dit pas!: don't tell me!, you're kidding!
tu va awoire mon nombre quinze!: I'll kick your butt!
tu va awoire un chien d'ma chienne: I owe you one
tu va monter au large, toué!: you better behave!

U

- un bloode:** wealthy person
une battée: a lot; many; much
une bonne femme de perron: gossip
une brosse: get drunk
une chance du bon djieu: luckily; thank God
un chapeau parti en peur avec un homme: a man wearing a hat
that is too large for him
une mer de vinaige: mass inside old vinegar
une piasse et trente sous: \$1.25
une ronde de lard: pork rind
une vite d'approche: magnifying glass
union suit: longjohns
un our mal liché: sloppily dressed
un vrai déluge: hard rain, flooding
un vrai manzarre pour manger: excessive eater
un vrai mouton: sheepish; milktoast

V

- vacarme:** noise
va cri ça: go get that
va jouer dans l'traffique!: stop bothering me!
varge: yard (3 feet)
varloppe: hand-planer
varmine: lower animals (rats, etc.)
varnouser: putter around aimlessly; do chores
vas t'assir: you're kidding! get out of the way!
vas-vite: diahrea
**va t'laver les mains, visage sale, comme ça t'aura les pieds
nette:** go wash you hand, dirty-face, then your feet will be
clean; get outta here!
vielle tourloune: a lady who's been around
veler dans son effôre: fruitless attempt
venu au djiobbe: the ends justify the means; ruthless
vert comme un pôrôt: appear ill, sickly
vesse de loup: dried up wild mushroom
viande de croche: mild swear word
vielles savattes: old pair of shoes
vieux comme l'chamin: very old
vieux petteux: old man
vire bratchette: hand-drill
virer à la besase: ended wrong (did not turn out right)

virer en basse messe: fruitless attempt; come to naught
virer en jeu d'tchien: take a turn for the worst; lead to a fight
virer la toupie: spin
virer l'darrière à crêche: be obstinate; uncooperative
virer son capôt de bôre: change one's mind
virer son quatte poches de bôre: change one's mind
visage à deux faces: two-faced; hypocrite
vite comme un ton: very quick
vive dans l'air du temps: penniless
vive s'a brûme: penniless
vive su des pinottes: penniless

W

waginne: wagon
watch toué: be careful; watch out
wayons!: stop it!
wayons woire!: stop it!
wésins: neighbors

Y

y'a des cornes s'a tête!: stay out of his way!; he's in a bad mood

y'a des p'tites oreilles: the children can hear us

y'a d'la houle: drunk; staggering; dizzy

y chante pu su l'même ton: his mood has changed

yainque ça: only that

yainque s'une gosse: precariously

ya l'aire foireux: he looks guilty

ya pas d'face: no shame; no conscience

y'a pas faite ça avec son visage: a man with an attractive offspring

y'a pas la langue dans ses poches: outspoken

y'a rien à son épreuve: he'll do anything; daredevil

y'en a assez pour les fous pi les fins: to have plenty of something

y change d'idée comme y change de ch'mise: easily swayed

y'en a pas long d'découzu: not fully awake

y'en casse pas grand: he's lazy

y'est'apique: he's in a bad mood

y'est dans l'néan: lost or confused person

y'est pas fou pi y'est pas fin ... on dirait qui s'en va mais y s'en

vient: confused person; not too intelligent

y'est t'aveugle d'un oeil pi y woué pas d'l'ôte: blinded

y mange l'bon djieu l'matin pi y mange son prochain

l'après-midi: hypocrite

y manque du bardeau: not too intelligent

y'r'sembe d'un môre en vacance: sickly looking

y sais su quel bôre son pain est beurré: he knows what's best
for himself

y sais su quel bôre son pain est graissé: he knows what's best
for himself

y's'barre les pieds su les fleurs du préla': very clumsy

yeux su l'dime: sleepy-eyed

y failli qui metti son cin' cennes: unwelcome comment

y grouille tout l'temps: fidgety

y manque 5¢ s'a piasse: not too intelligent

y nage yainque avec un bra: not very intelligent

y r'semble à son litte: sleepy

y's'graffing pas les yeux avec des branches: wealthy

y's'mouche pas avec des éplures d'oignon: wealthy

y sorte toute d'la même poche: they're all alike

y pette s'une roche pour sauver'a graisse: miser; tightwad

y peut pas s'passer une vesse que tout l'monde l'save: life in a
small town

y vaut pas une claque: worthless person

y vente pour écorné'es beaux: very strong wind

y vaut pas une pitouche: worthless person

Z

zabrorite: hard to believe

Miscellaneous

1.

Un, deux, trois, quatre

Tic à tac à ma patate

Capeton mon péton

Capitaine a ma bédene

Poof!

Un, deux, trois, quatre

Ma p'tite vache à mal aux pattes

Tirons les par la queu

Elle reveindra mieux

2.

J'te béni j'te consac'

En shoupac

Su l'bôre du traque, etc.

3.

bonjour lundi,

comment ça va mardi,

très bien mercredi,

j'irai boire jeudi

pour dire à vendredi

de s'préparer samedi

pour aller à la messe dimanche: method used to teach children the days of the week

4.

I speak Galishe

Better than

N'importe quel Chrisse

Allentour d'la batisse, me

5.

child's nursery rhyme:

il y avait un jeune veillarre

assis s'une roche de bois franc.

il r'gardait la température

les yeux farmés b'en dure.

S'cria sans parler,

"J'aimerais mieux mourir

que perde la vie."

ADULTS ONLY

A

agousse pissette: cockteaser

B

batême: swear word

batard: swear word

bidoune: male or female genitalia

blague: female genitalia

blasphême: swear word

bonne viarge: swear word

bou't'chrisse: swear word

braoule: a small spoon used to eat shit (figuratively)

C

calice de chrisse de calvert de tabarnac: string of swear words

canarre a l'aire: open zipper or fly

cannoille: male or female genitalia

ça vaut pas d'la marde: worthless person or thing

c'est crü pour l'trou du tchu pi pas chau pour la pompe

a l'eau: very cold

chi carré: hard cream of wheat

chi tasse: nasty person

collant comme une mouche à marde: annoying person

cosse tu connais dans l'trou du tchu d'un ours?: to one who is
uninformed

crosseux: worthless person

D

dans ses fleurs: menstruating

débande!: hurry!; leave me alone!

E

enfant t'chienne: son of a bitch

en flagrant delicté: caught in a sexual act

enmarder: scold; get into trouble

F

faire broiller la veuve: urinate

faire broiller l'aveugle: urinate

faire un jobbe: defecate

famme au famme: lesbian

fend l'tchu: very annoying; aggravating; insulting

fifi: gay man

H

homme au hommes: gay man

L

- lâcher une vesse:** emit a silent fart
lâcher un pette: emit a loud fart
la lucke pendu au trou: be incredibly lucky or fortunate
la rais fendu jusqu'au chignon: to be kicked in the butt real hard
larger d'l'eau: urinate
les dent m'flotte: I have to pee
les gosses m'flotte: I have to pee
lette comme un trou: very homely person
l'nez m'demanche, d'la peau pour dimanche: my nose itches,
I'll get laid Sunday
l'tchu à crêche: obstinate, ill tempered
l'temps'crosse, on va awoire une orage de plotte: looks like rain

M

- mange d'la marde!:** eat shit!
ma tante rose: menstruating
mouche a marde: pesky person
musique su l'terrain: several farts in a row; one long fart

N

- noir comme la poche du djiobbe:** very dark
noir comme l'trou du tchu du djiobbe: very dark

P

- pape crotté!:** swear word
pince plotte: pesky person
petter plus haut que l'trou: biting off more than you can chew
pinotte: penis
pisser comme une maitresse d'école en vacances: timid; shy
pissette: penis
plotte: female genitalia
**plusse tu donne à un cochon, plusse qui shi su ton
perron:** no good deed goes unpunished
poche molle: gay man
pommes de route: horse shit
porte-crotte: male fannies
pouce-crotte: gay man

Q

- quand qui'a d't'quoi dans l'tchu, il a pas dans'tête:** obtinate;
stubborn
que les quatte poteaux du ciel teumbe!: swear word

R

- racke a joes:** bra
rare comme d'la marde de pape: very rare

S

s' 'a jobbe: having sex

saint ciboire: swear word

slobbe: ???

souri: penis

suceux: gay man

T

tappette: gay man

trop tard moins quart, trou du tchu moins dix: get a watch!

trou d'cu: asshole

trou du tchu: asshole

trou du tchu moins quart: get a watch!

U

une crotte a cacher: secrets to hide

une crotte de travers: ill tempered; in a bad mood

un jeux d'travers (dans rais): ill tempered; in a bad mood

un pouelle de travers (dans rais): ill tempered; in a bad mood

V

va chier une brique!: get outta here!

va pisser une brique!: get outta here!

va su l'djobbe!: go to hell!

Y

y'a d'la marde la't'dans: something's fishy; something's wrong



Don Levesque is a St. John Valley native: He was born in Grand Isle, attended elementary school in Grand Isle; high school in Van Buren; university at the University of Maine at Fort Kent; he resides in Edmundston; and works in Madawaska.

This collection of patois, dictons and expressions is an ongoing project started in 1988 through a weekly column in the St. John Valley Times, published in Madawaska, Maine.

French words are written phonetically and readers are advised to read out loud in order to "hear" them as the people of the St. John Valley do. A French dictionnaire is of little use, however, a good ear for French is essential. The meanings of the patois, dictons and expressions are in English.

Enjoyez vous pi grayer vous pour vous faire chatouiller la
memouère pi l'funny bone.

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