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After my graduating from College in 1975 and beginning my career, I seriously started to research my Acadian heritage. With my English Loyalist wife in tow, we visited the parishes of Baie-Egmont, Miscouche, Mont-Carmel, Wellington, Tignish, and Cascumpec. We visited «Le Village» and the Acadian Museum in Miscouche. I dragged her all over the Island, visiting graveyards and bookstores and historic sites. I started to acquire books, pamphlets, magazines and parish histories of the area. My family tree started to come together. I found out that my surname had not always been Perry, but Poirier. My grandfather changed it in the late 1920's. I found out that all of my father's brothers are named Joseph, every one of them used their second or even their third name, except the youngest; he got to use Joseph. My mother's sisters are all christened Mary, be it Mary Bertha, Mary Edna, etc. They all use their second name as their common name. My mother, luckily the youngest of the girls, didn't like her second name so she can use Mary, however she goes by Marie. The more I dug into this family history thing, the more passionate I became about it. The people in history became real and fascinating to me. Paul Arsenault, Germain Poirier, Xavier Gallant, and Jean Aucoin. The path led further back in time to Pierre Arsenault, Jehan Poirier and Jacob Bourgeois. And back to France, with side paths by way of the Melansons to England, the Caissies to Ireland, and Noiles to Holland. Who were all these people? Why did they come here? What were they like? How did they live?

At the time we were living in Truro, Nova Scotia, there was a lot to explore on that side of the Strait too : Beaubassin, Grand-Pré and

Port-Royal. I remember my first visit to Grand-Pré. A feeling came over me that something terrible had happened there, despite its pastoral setting, I could feel the loneliness and the starkness of the place. I could see the expulsion, families torn apart, never to see each other again. On my office wall at home is a print of a famous painting depicting the scene of the expulsion. It serves as a reminder not to forget. A beautiful and scenic area forever marked by a tragic chain of events. The blood of innocent people, men, women, and children, speak from the grave «we should not be forgotten», and they are not forgotten.

Later in 1978, we moved to Mississauga, Ontario, and I took advantage of some of Canada's largest libraries and bookstores to add to my information and collection. I was devouring reading material on the subject, both in a genealogical and a historical sense. Authors such as Bona Arsenault, Naomi Griffiths, Yvon Leger, Henri Blanchard, Michel Poirier and Stephen White. One day I found a copy of Georges Arsenault's *Complaintes acadiennes*². I signed it out from the library and kept renewing it for months. The librarian commented on my constant renewing and, because it was not really in great demand, she bent some of the library's rules and allowed me to keep it longer. I read most of it with a French-English dictionary in one hand and the book in the other. It was my first attempt to read more than «born», «married», and «died» in French. The chapter in the *Complaintes* on Xavier Gallant enthralled me, as he was one of my ancestors. I had to know more. I had my parents, who live in Summerside, pick up locally published books that I couldn't find in

2 Georges Arsenault, *Complaintes acadiennes de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard*, Les Éditions Leméac, Ottawa, 1980.