

Unit 28-55 Bairdmore Blvd.
Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3T 5Y9
E-mail- vlmollot@mts.net

April 25, 2010

Written by: Vic Mollot, Winnipeg, Canada

Researched by: Pascal Pierre, genealogist, Trouans, France, and Vic Mollot, Winnipeg, Canada

(Research in genealogy continually uncovers new information. If you have a previous dated edition of this document, *please* discard it. This latest dated edition is much more detailed and comprehensive.)

DEDICATION: to my wife Lucille

I wish to dedicate this document to my wife Lucille for her enthusiastic support for my passion in discovering and retracing our family roots. During the last fifteen years, this search has brought us numerous times to France where we have spent many days at various archival departments and in various little hamlets and cities in search of our family ancestry which I must say brought great success and enjoyment. Lucille's commitment and contribution has also given us the opportunity to successfully pursue and fulfill other family projects. These activities would not have occurred without the great support of my loving wife.



Vic and Lucille Mollot – touring France and Italy

A JOURNEY INTO THE MOLLOT AND BENOIT FAMILY TREE - a perspective of our ancestry.

A study of family ancestry is always interesting but this story is even more fascinating because it is about the times, events, successes and failures of our ancestors. A strong sense of family history enhances our knowledge of who we are as individuals. We are so grateful that much is known about our ancestors, especially about Fortuné Louis Joseph Mollot and his family because he left us with his written memoirs. We also have many artifacts, photos, paintings, etc. We even have letters dating back to the early 1860's that have been passed on by numerous generations. It is incredible what we have been able to find about our ancestry. To date, we have researched our family ancestry back to the year 1613...some 395 years or four centuries or thirteen generations past with certificates and records....c/w names, dates of births/baptisms, marriages, occupations, deaths, etc. Family gratitude also goes to some wonderful friends in France: M. Pascal Pierre, our researcher and genealogist who is originally from the village of Trouans, the cradle of the Mollot family; Yves and Martine Marquié from Lyon and Michel and Arlette Auclerc who presently own Château de Molinière, formerly Château Blandin, the home of my great grandfather. All have taken a real interest in our family heritage and have contributed enormously in research, time and effort.

We are also most fortunate that our family records in France still exist after having survived horrendous events such as the Religious Wars of the 16th century, the French Revolution of 1789-1793, the Napoleonic Wars of the 1800's and the two World Wars of the 20th century. Unfortunately during these conflicts many records were destroyed.

EVENTS AND CIRCUMSTANCES

The following events and circumstances, both in North America and France, unearthed some very interesting findings which greatly enhanced our family genealogy.

In the summer of 1988, our son Marc was involved in a Rotary International student exchange. As fate would have it, his exchange would be with a French family from Lyon, France. His hosts were Yves and Martine Marquié from the very city where Fortuné Mollot was born. The Marquié family took great interest in Marc's ancestry by reading the memoirs of Fortuné Mollot and touring him in and around Lyon. They even went to the village of Blandin and visited Château Blandin.



*Yves & Martine Marquié with Marc Mollot,
August 2008, 20 years later after the 'exchange' visit.*

Then in 1993, Lucille and I went to France and we had the opportunity to meet the Marquiés. Yves was so intrigued with the family history that he transcribed the 93 page handwritten manuscript of the memoirs of Fortuné Mollot into printed text so that we could all read it more effectively. European handwriting at times can be difficult for North Americans to read. Since that time, the Marquié family have visited us in Canada and we have developed a very close family bond. This event was really the beginning that spirited on our interest in our family roots!

Another event occurred in September 1999. Lucille and I were visiting Châlons en Champagne in France with our cousins Marcel and Louise Mollot. We were looking for the village of “Chouan le Grand” as it was spelled in the transcription of the Memoires of Fortuné. We were pouring over a map in a cathedral in Châlons en Champagne and were simply unable to find “Chouan”. An elderly volunteer supervisor in the church came to our rescue explaining that she knew of no such a village as “Chouan”. Explaining to her that it was on the river L’huître, she surmised that we were likely looking for the village of Trouan le Grand and not Chouan le Grand. Upon examining both the handwritten memoirs and the transcribed copy from which we had been working, she showed us that in the transcribed copy, a “T” had been mistakenly written as a “C”, thus creating the non-existent village of “Chouan le Grand”. This lady saved the day for she set us on the way to “Trouan le Grand” and on the right track in our family research.

Credit goes to our cousin Louise Mollot for her perseverance with the map that day, thus leading us to the discovery of the small village of Trouan le Grand, (population 207 in 1999), the cradle of the Mollot family. On that day the rest of us had virtually given up finding Trouan le Grand but thanks to Louise’s tenacity, on a beautiful, summer Saturday afternoon we drove to this tiny, typical, quiet, French village where, among other things, we even toured an old abandoned 13th century St. George’s church. What an awesome experience that was! At the time, little did we know that our family ancestry in Trouan le Grand would date back to the year 1613! From the memoirs of Fortuné Mollot, we only knew that *his* father’s family originated from this tiny village.

An event which bonded our “large family” occurred in July, 2002. We held a three day Mollot Family Reunion in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the city to which our ancestors Fortuné and Léopoldine first emigrated from France in 1892. Some 160 relatives from all across Canada, the U.S. and New Zealand got together where, for many of us, acquaintances were made for the first time. That weekend was a great success for all.

In the year 2004, prior to leaving for France in August of that year, Lucille and I received a phone call from our friends Michel and Arlette Auclerc, who are the present owners of Château Blandin. They suggested that rather than meeting them in Blandin, we should meet them in a little village called L’huître (population 261 in 1999) which is close to Châlons en Champagne. Michel told us, “I want you to meet some people there whom you will find most interesting”! We accepted without having any clue as to what this was all about. On Aug. 31, we drove from Brussels, Belgium, to L’huître, France. Little did we realize at the time that the town of L’huître was only a few kilometers away from the village of Trouans, the village to which we had journeyed in 1999 with our cousins Marcel and Louise Mollot. There, we met our friends from Blandin at the summer home of an elderly couple by the name of René and Yolande Rosez. After about six bottles of French wine and a six course meal that lasted, in the real French fashion, for several

pleasant hours, we discovered how Michel and Arlette had come to know Yolande and to invite us to meet them at L'huitre.

The story goes this way! A few months prior, a friend of Yolande's was going to Blandin (population 200 in 1999) to visit some friends. Yolande, with interest, asked her friend to go to the château to inquire on her behalf whether some Mollot family members were still living there. Michel and Arlette Auclerc indicated to her friend that the Mollot family, who had previously owned the château, had been gone for over a century.....some 110 years that, in fact, they had sold the château and had immigrated to Canada in the year 1892. However, Michel explained to Yolande's friend that they knew of some Mollot descendants in Canada and that, coincidentally, they would soon be in France for an autumn holiday. Michel and Arlette Auclerc and Yolande's friend exchanged particulars which were then passed on to Yolande Rosez. A week or so later, the Auclerc and the Rosez families made arrangements for all of us to meet together in the little village of L'huitre, France. Through that circumstance, we got to know the Rosez family. But the story did not end there. This was just the beginning!

After dessert and, yes, more wine, Yolande showed us some most interesting photos of Château Blandin, as well as numerous letters and postcards from Fortuné Mollot and his aunt Francoise Collet, née Mollot, and other relatives. Yolande had preserved these artifacts after inheriting them from her parents Gabriel and Suzanne Gombault of L'huitre. These letters, photos and postcards now indicated a possible connection between our families! The intriguing puzzle presented to us was: Where, if any, in our ancestry was the connection? At that time, the genealogy of both our families was not too extended so we could only go back a few generations. However, Yolande also had documents to indicate an ancestor by the name of Marie Angélique Mollot. Our family genealogy only went as far back as Pierre Mollot whom Fortuné Mollot had indicated in his memoirs as his grandfather. The possible connection seemed to centre on Marie Angélique Mollot of Yolande's family tree and on Pierre Mollot in ours.

The next day, Michel and Arlette Auclerc left but we stayed with the Rosez in L'huitre for a few more days to tour various historical sites in the surrounding area. With the intent of resolving our family connection, we visited M. Jacques Caillot, the mayor of the neighboring village of Trouans, the cradle of the Mollot family. He recalled that there had been some Mollot families living in this area in the past but there had been none in recent times. Interestingly, when we were at his office, M. Caillot related an interesting anecdote. He remembered that in his childhood, there lived a man in Trouans by the name of André Mollot. André had lost a hand (the left one?) in WWI. The grandfather of M. Caillot had also lost a hand (the right one?). Each fall, the two gentlemen would laughingly go to the store together to purchase a pair of gloves for the winter.

M. Caillot was keenly interested in the various archival documents of Yolande and the memoirs of Fortuné. He indicated that there were numerous archival documents (birth, marriage and death registers) about the residents of Trouans in the Mayor's office. These went back a number of centuries. He further indicated that the village of Trouans utilized the services of M. Pascal Pierre, architect and genealogist, and that he would request M. Pierre to dig into our family history. What a discovery that was for our family as you will see later in this document!

Another event which also greatly enhanced our knowledge about Léopoldine Mollot, née Benoit, family roots occurred in Sept. 2004. Lucille and I had the opportunity to visit the little Gallo Roman city of Die, France, located in the French Alps. The origin of the Benoit family can be traced to Die. At the Tourism Office, we indicated that my great grandparents, the Benoit family, were the original founders of “le Martouret”, a health spa and healing centre located just on the outskirts of Die. Immediately, the tourist agent suggested that a local historian would be interested in sharing information about “le Martouret” with us. That very afternoon, after touring “le Martouret”, we met with the local historian by the name of Christian Rey. The next day Christian introduced us to the city museum director, Jacques Planchon. We were given the entire history of “le Martouret” which was founded by Léopoldine’s father, Dr. Alexandre Benoit. In the museum, we examined a display of the thermal process that Dr. Benoit utilized in order to treat patients with arthritis and rheumatism. Since that time, we have exchanged information with M. Rey who has also written and published articles in a provincial magazine about the history of Fortuné and Léopoldine, “le Martouret” and the Benoit family.

Our friends from Die, however, told us that if we really wanted to gain more information about the Benoit/Croze family, we would have to go to a small city called Privas, Ardèche, where the Departmental Archives of Ardèche are located. The next day, we headed out to Privas. We were certainly not disappointed with our findings; in fact, we were fascinated. We found documents related to the family of the mother of Léopoldine (Croze and Azémar families). As well, a genealogist working at this archival center gave us the names of history books and other documents outlining the entire Azémar family tree which is the ancestry of Léopoldine Mollot, née Benoit. That was a major find! The Azémars were a very influential family with roots in French aristocracy and nobility. As I grew up, I had been told by various relatives that Léopoldine’s family was from such a background but that they had no hard evidence. The documents that we obtained that day now confirmed the stories that we had been told. We could now easily trace Léopoldine’s ancestry to the Azémar family!

On our return home that year (2004), I started to rummage through all the documents that I had and, surprisingly, did find letters and cards postmarked from L’huître and Trouans, as well as antique “glass” photos of a church which we later identified as Eglise St Tanche in L’huître. This just further aroused our curiosity and interest.

The following September in the year of 2005, we found ourselves back in France in L’huître with Yolande and René Rosez and M. Pascal Pierre, our genealogist. The fact that Pascal Pierre had grown up in Trouans, the cradle of the Mollot family, was a bonanza for us because he could access relevant documents in the local archives available in the office of the mayor of Trouans.

Pascal Pierre explaining his research. L. to R. Yolande Rosez, Pascal, Vic Mollot & René Rosez.



By this time, Mr. Pascal Pierre had done further research and developed a detailed and extensive Molloy family tree which he presented to us. He also obtained a large number of birth, marriage and death records for a number of our ancestors. This provided information about their occupations, parents, god-parents, etc... an incredible amount of data on our family history! The family tree could now go back to the year 1613 when a Georges Molloy was born in Trouans. To give you some perspective of the data, we were given four large sheets of printed paper of approximately 3 ft. x 12 ft with a total of 1200 names of our family tree. And, oh yes, we did make the connection between our ancestry and Yolande's! Pierre and Marie Angélique Molloy go back six generations. They were siblings in a family of seven children, their parents being Georges Molloy and Sire Beaurieux. We could now celebrate our family connection with "un repas du midi" beginning with an 'eau de vie' drink (a distilled liqueur made from plums), followed by a three and a half hour, stupendous lunch which included, of course, a few bottles of French wine. That French life can be pretty tough to take!

Since that time, I have developed an excellent working relationship with M. Pascal Pierre who keeps finding new information about our family roots. We have also incorporated in the data file the names of the most recent generations. By checking on the web site Molloy.ca, one is be able to follow our roots back to the year 1613.

What is truly amazing also is that M. Pierre, the person who has really found all this information about our family, was born and raised right across from the St Georges Church in Trouans, the location which, to date, our family can be traced the furthest. We really do live in a small world! Without all of the above events and circumstances, the wealth of knowledge of our family history would not be as comprehensive as it is today. We, as a family, are most fortunate.

Not only did we amass a large amount of knowledge of our ancestry but the above events and circumstances gave us an opportunity to organize a twelve day guided bus tour, nicknamed the Molloy "Tour de France" in August of 2008.



Aug, 2008
Tour de France
At Eglise
St. Georges,
Trouans, Fr.

The tour included some forty-eight family members from Canada, the U.S.A. and New Zealand. Given our contacts and friends in France, we were able to tour our various ancestral roots in different parts of France in cities and towns such as Trouans, L'huitre, Châlons en Champagne, Lyon, Die and, finally, Blandin. We were extremely well received in the various villages and cities that we visited. It was an incredible and memorable family experience for all!

I would like to acknowledge our relatives John and Cecile (née Theriault) Mestan who inspired me some years ago to pursue our family genealogy. In the year 1988, I had had the opportunity to attend a conference in Orlando, Florida, where the Mestans live. I took it upon myself to meet and visit these cousins.... and what a visit it was! Besides enjoying their great warmth and hospitality, I witnessed a beautiful home with numerous archival family items including the paintings of Fortuné on the walls. I felt as if I were at my Aunt Alice Mollot's apartment which was decorated with the furniture and paintings of Fortuné and Léopoldine. Over the years, Cecile and I have exchanged artifacts of our ancestors. Our families have become very close and enjoy visiting.

As well, our heartfelt thanks go to Louise Mollot (the spouse of Marcel Mollot) who for the past fifteen years has diligently compiled, developed and maintained all our family data in a family tree program. Her many hours of dedication have been invaluable in maintaining the family history.

A debt of gratitude also goes to a number of people who safeguarded and kept numerous family documents, letters, memorabilia, photos and paintings and passed them on from generation to generation. Names that come to mind, besides Fortuné and Léopoldine, are Gabrielle, their eldest daughter with whom they lived at times in Winnipeg, and my Aunt Alice Mollot who took great interest and pride in our family roots and traditions. Both of these ladies, who made Winnipeg their home, preserved our family history. Neither ever married and both were music teachers and travelled frequently to France. Most of the family correspondence and documents which Alice had saved, she gave to me before her death in 1997. In my early childhood, at family gatherings, numerous stories about the family were told by my parents, uncles and aunts but especially by my aunt Alice. We learned about our grandparents and great grandparents. We learned also from the memoirs of Fortuné and from his paintings that we had hanging in our homes. The family maintained traditions such as making quenelles and rum cake at Christmas time. These are recipes, brought from Lyon, that have been passed down generations to the present. "Quenelles" are a Lyonnais fish dumpling in rich sauce and "gâteau au rum," is a delectable Lyonnaise trifle.

All these experiences aroused my curiosity to discover our roots.

Furthermore, I am very grateful to numerous other relatives who have shared various photos, documents, etc. which provided me with information for this treatise.

One of the goals of this document is to share the wealth of information that we have about our most interesting and fascinating family roots.

ORIGIN OF THE NAME-MOLLOT

There are some indications that the Mollot family name may have originated in the 4th century in the French region of Auvergne, located in central France. The people of Auvergne had come from Gaul. An ancient family named Mollot was seated with lands, estates and manor in Auvergne. As with most surnames, slight spelling changes occurred throughout the early centuries as a consequence possibly of political or religious adherence. Many spelling changes were errors; many were deliberate. Another variable is that usually a person gave his version phonetically to a scribe, a priest or a recorder. Prefixes or suffixes also varied. Hence, there are variations in the name Mollot: Mollet, Mallot, Malo, and Molot to name a few! The search here pertains to the surname version "Mollot".

THE MOLLOT NAME

The Mollot name is not exclusive to France even though it is a French name. In the research done to date, the name exists in England and Russia. In fact, in the United States and primarily in New York State, there is a large Jewish Orthodox Mollot family that immigrated from Minsk, Russia. In one of their family newsletters, they have attempted to link their family roots to the soldiers of the 'grande' army of Napoleon Bonaparte at the time of the invasion of Russia in 1812! Historically, this would not be the first time that war has given a name a new beginning in a new country. It is a fact that Napoleon's disastrous invasion of Russia did leave behind many French soldiers.

There is also another Mollot branch that is presently established in Colorado. The origin of their roots is not known.

A third Mollot family lives in the province of Quebec and the Ottawa region. By contacting them, we learned that this branch originated in a northeastern region of France which, in fact, is very close to the area in which our family has roots.

However, of the three above mentioned Mollot branches in North America, to date, we have not been able to link them to our ancestry which now goes back to the year 1613.

From phone books and the internet, we know that there are numerous Mollot families in France. Do we have distant relatives there? Two large mailings have been made in the last twelve years to Mollot families throughout France. Contact has been made with some twenty-five of them. We have, however, yet to make any concrete links with the exception of René and Yolande Rosez. As described earlier, Yolande is connected to us six generations back.

Another reason why we do not have many distant relatives in France today is that, for two consecutive generations in the eighteenth century, there were very few offspring in our family tree. In observing our comprehensive family tree, you will note that Pierre Mollot and his wife had only two children, Their first, Francoise, married Capitaine Collet and and they had no children. Their other child was Louis Mollot who married later in life (53 years old) to Thérèse Annequin and only had one son, Fortuné, who

immigrated to Canada and a stepdaughter by the name of Pauline. Thus, most of our ancestry in France dates back prior to the 1700's!



THE MOLLOT ROOTS

Going back 400 years, our MOLLOT roots can be traced to a little village called GRAND TROUAN, later called TROUAN LE GRAND and now called TROUANS, in the Department of AUBE, in the region of CHAMPAGNE. Trouans is located approximately 150 kms. east of Paris on a small river called 'rivière L'huitrelle' or 40 kms southwest of Châlons en Champagne. Prior to consolidation in the year 1973, Trouan le Grand was on the north side of the river L'huitrelle and Trouan le Petit was on the other side. Historically, during the 14th and 15th centuries, the river L'huitrelle acted as a boundary between the territories of the powerful Dukes of Burgundy and the Kingdoms of France. Credit goes to Joan of Arc who in the year 1477 rallied the French to unite these two areas and establish France, including the former Kingdom of Burgundy, as we know it today.

Going back a few centuries, the Trouans area was quite forested but today it is a very rich agricultural area providing crops such as potatoes, sunflower and cereal grains. Agriculture has become the dominant industry. The population of the village of Trouans

today is approximately 200. The area greatly resembles the Canadian prairies or the American midwest.

The majority of the Mollot families of the 16th and 17th centuries were farmers. In our archival studies, we have observed that, at one time, there were also many Mollot families in the surrounding small villages or ‘communes’. Other than in TROUAN LE GRAND, Mollot families lived in DOSNON, POIVRES, GRANDVILLE, L’HUITRE and TROUAN LE PETIT, all of which are within a radius of 10 kilometers of each other. Today, however, the actual Mollot name is virtually non-existent in the area but some existing families such as Noblet, Gombault and Milliat, who have roots on the maternal side of the Mollot family many generations back, still live in the area. A very extensive and detailed family chart has been developed outlining these family connections to the Mollot family from 1613 to 2010.

As previously mentioned, Champagne is the region to which we can accurately trace our furthest ancestry. It is a very rich, picturesque and diversified province in northeastern France. The department of Aube is within this region. The strategic location of Champagne has made it a battleground for centuries whenever France was invaded. Our Mollot ancestors lived in the heartland of conflict and wars throughout the centuries: the Hundred Years’ War of 1337-1453, the Thirty Years’ War of 1618 to 1648, the Franco Prussian War of 1870 to 1871 and the two World Wars of the Twentieth century.

Also of interest, the first king of France, Clovis, was crowned in the year 507 A.D. in the magnificent cathedral of Reims, which is one of the main cities of the region. Throughout the history of France all the Kings were crowned in Reims.

The terrain varies considerably throughout the region; some parts are quite flat, some quite hilly, some forested, some open plains. Some parts are very fertile where they grow various cereal crops as well as potatoes, corn and sugar beets. However, the region is world renown for its beautiful “Cote des Blancs”, a range of limestone hills lush with vineyards for the production of its famous sparkling wine, *Champagne*, which originated here! The “route touristique du Champagne” which includes “La Côte des Blancs” is one of the most picturesque areas in the region of Champagne and of France. One can understand why this “sparkling wine” took the name of the region we call Champagne!

Important commercial cities in this region are Reims, Epernay, Châlons en Champagne and its capital, the medieval city of Troyes.

OUR MOLLOT FAMILY BEGINNINGS IN NORTH AMERICA

FORTUNÉ LOUIS JOSEPH MOLLOT (1845 – 1924) (8) and his wife, MARIE ANAÏS LÉOPOLDINE BENOIT, (1852 – 1944) (10) immigrated to Canada on August 25, 1892, with four children: Gabrielle, Ernest, Marcel, and Marie Louise (Lili). Thérèse was born in Canada one year later in 1893.

In order to give a clearer perspective of the MOLLOT and BENOIT ancestry which follows, the historical family backgrounds of Fortuné Mollot and Léopoldine Benoit have been described separately at the outset.

TIMELINE

For the following ancestors, please refer to the small attached Molloy Family Tree Chart to understand their genealogy. The number following each name gives the position on the chart. It is highly recommended that you follow the family tree chart, for traditionally, given names were passed from generation to generation and this can become very confusing. Example- Georges Molloy (1) and Georges Molloy (4) as per the family tree chart and the following:

1613 – 1693 GEORGES MOLLOT (1) – To date, Georges is the relative we have been able to trace the farthest back from various documents. He was born in the year 1613 and at the age of 35 in 1648, Georges married JEANNE GOMBAULT, all in the village of TROUAN le GRAND. They were both baptized at l'Eglise St. Georges, the local church that was built in the 13th century and which is still standing today. To date, we have not yet been able to identify any of his brothers and sisters. Georges and Jeanne had at least one child, a son named Claude Molloy, our direct ancestor. We also to date have not attempted to determine how many other children Georges and Jeanne had. They lived during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648) which has been described by historians as one of the most destructive conflicts in European history. A major impact of this war was the extensive destruction of entire regions, denuded by the foraging armies. Episodes of famine and disease significantly decreased populations while also bankrupting most of the combatant powers such as King Louis XIII of France.

In terms of an occupation, Georges was a wheelwright, 'le charron' of the town: one who builds wheels, chariots, wagons, and carriages. As you can imagine, this trade no longer exists in our day. Georges died on Nov. 20, 1693, at the age of 80 in Trouan le Grand.

*Eglise St. Georges built
in the thirteenth century in
Trouan le Grand.*



1645 – 1727 CLAUDE MOLLOT (2) – According to the local St. Georges Church records, Claude was born in the year 1645 and died at the age of 82 on May 26, 1727, also in the village of TROUAN le GRAND. At the age of 26, Claude married LOUISE GOMBAULT, age 19, on Nov. 4, 1671. His wife, Louise, was born July 4, 1652, and died Feb 12, 1733, at the age of 81. Claude was the “Juge de Garde” for the Justice Department. All of this occurred in TROUAN le GRAND. Both had been baptized in the local church, Église St. Georges, which was built in the 13th century and which is still standing today. Claude and Louise had eleven children that we have been able to identify to date – one of which is LOUIS MOLLOT, our direct ancestor.

1674 – 1747 LOUIS MOLLOT (3) – Louis was born in the year 1674 and died at the age of 73 on Dec. 21, 1747, also in the village of TROUAN le GRAND. According to their marriage certificate, he married JEANNE MILLIAT on Nov. 23, 1701, at the age of 27. This lengthy certificate gives all kinds of interesting information as to who were the witnesses at the wedding ceremony, their relationship and occupation. Jeanne had been born on April 28, 1682, in DOSNON, a neighboring village. We can also account for eight children which they had in twelve years. One of these children is (another) Georges, our direct descendant. The childrens’ names and particulars can be found on our extensive Mollot family tree. Jeanne died on March 22, 1721, at the age of 39. Louis and his children were all baptized in the 13th century Église St. Georges in Trouan le Grand. Louis’s occupation is unknown but likely he was a farmer, given that we know a number of his offspring were farmers. Farming in those times was in sharp contrast to today. Peasant farmers would produce enough for themselves and their families, some of which was used to barter in order to purchase limited goods and some of which would be given as a form of tax to the King and Crown for security and protection from potential invaders. However, this form of taxation was regularly abused and advantage was taken of the peasants. History books tell us that French rural life in those times was harsh and very unforgiving!

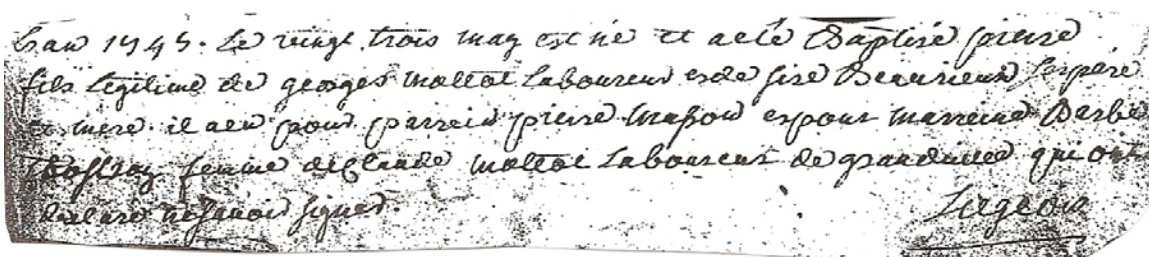
1706 – 1769 GEORGES MOLLOT (4) - Georges was the third child of Louis Mollot and Jeanne Milliat. He was born in TROUAN le GRAND and baptized in the Église St Georges on April 18, 1706 according to the church records. It was most customary in those days to baptize newborns the same day they were born since many did not survive due to birth complications, disease, etc. As stated on their church marriage certificate, Georges married SIRE BEAURIEUX of DOSNON, the neighboring village approximately 5 kms. away, on Nov. 26, 1742, at the age of 36 in Trouan le Grand. His new bride was 28 years old. She had been born on June 7, 1714. The date of her death is unknown at this time. Georges and Sire had seven children, all born in Dosnon and baptized in the local Eglise St. Pierre as their birth registrations indicate. The childrens’ names were Sire born in 1743, George Dominique born in 1745, our direct ancestor Pierre born in 1747, Marie Jeanne born in 1749, Marguerite born in 1750, Marie Tanche born in 1754, and Marie Angélique born in 1758. To date, the only direct relative in France that we have been able to connect to our family tree is the offspring of Marie

Angélique. Since 2005, we have established a Mollot family connection between me, Victor Mollot, and the great, great granddaughter of Marie Angélique, Mme Yolande Rosez. Our branch of the Mollot family is descendant of Pierre Mollot. Pierre and Marie Angélique were brother and sister. As previously mentioned, when we first met the Rosez family in 2004, Mme Rosez showed us photos of Château Blandin, postcards and letters from Fortuné and Léopoldine Mollot but, at that time, we could not make the family connection.

Georges and Sire Mollot lived during the time when there was great conflict between France and England primarily because of competitive colonial interests throughout the world. Ultimately this led to the Seven Years War of 1754 and as a result, England under the Treaty of Paris of 1763 gained a colony then called New France. The British would rename it Canada.

Georges Mollot died Oct. 26, 1769, also in Dosnon at the age of 63. Given that Georges died in Dosnon, that his wife was from there, and that all his children were born and baptized in Dosnon, we can assume that he had moved from Trouan le Grand and established himself in Dosnon which is approximately 5 kms. away. According to the birth certificates of his children, Georges was a farmer in the area of the village of Dosnon.

1747 – 1810 PIERRE MOLLOT (5) – Pierre was born in DOSNON and baptized in the local Église St. Pierre on May 23, 1747. Pierre was the third of seven children. Following are his church birth/baptism records as obtained from the Departmental Archives of Aube, microfilm number 5MI 101P and 5MI 102P located in Troyes, France. It was found in the parish register of St Pierre-es-Liens Church of Dosnon, France. This same proof of birth/baptism is also found in microfilm # 1897626 of the Family History Centre of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. This sample illustrates the documentation of births, marriages and deaths of those times and typifies many others found.



Transcription and translation of the above are as follows:

L'an 1747, le vingt trois may est né et a été baptisé Pierre, fils légitime de Georges Mollot, laboureur et de Sire Beauvieux, ses père et mère. Il a eu pour parrain Pierre Masson et pour marraine Barbe Geoffroy, femme de Claude Mollot (Frère de Georges), laboureur de Grandville qui ont déclaré ne savoir signer.

Signature:

Liégeois (curé de Dosnon)

The year 1747, the 23rd of May was born and was baptized Pierre, legitimate son of Georges Mollot, farmer, and of Sire Beauvieux, his father and mother. He had for godfather Pierre Masson and for godmother Barbe Geoffray, wife of Claude Mollot (brother of Georges) farmer from Grandville whom they declared not knowing how to undersign.

Signature:

Liégeois (Priest of Dosnon)

Pierre is the first of our ancestors for whom we can ascertain personality, character, ambitions, etc. From letters, birth and death records and from the memoirs of Fortuné Mollot, (Pierre was the grandfather of Fortuné), we have established that he was an entrepreneur...a person with drive and ambition, determined to succeed! As a single man, he left his native village of Dosnon, likely not interested in farming, and moved to CHALONS sur MARNE (now Châlons en Champagne) where he established a small business in clothing of new styles, fabric and accessories such as buttons, needles, thread, ribbon, etc. (Commerce de nouveautés et mercerie.) At the time, Châlons was an important commercial center for manufacturing and trading in wool and textiles. It was known mainly for the production of the finest wools. Hence, the origin of the word “shawl” (in French “châle” from Châlons). European merchants gathered at trade fairs in Châlons. There, Pierre Mollot had his start in business and met his bride-to-be, FRANCOISE MARIE JOSEPH FREMINET.

Françoise Marie Joseph Mollot

née Freminet circa 1840. This is the oldest photo brought to Canada in the family collection. Note that she is wearing a shawl.

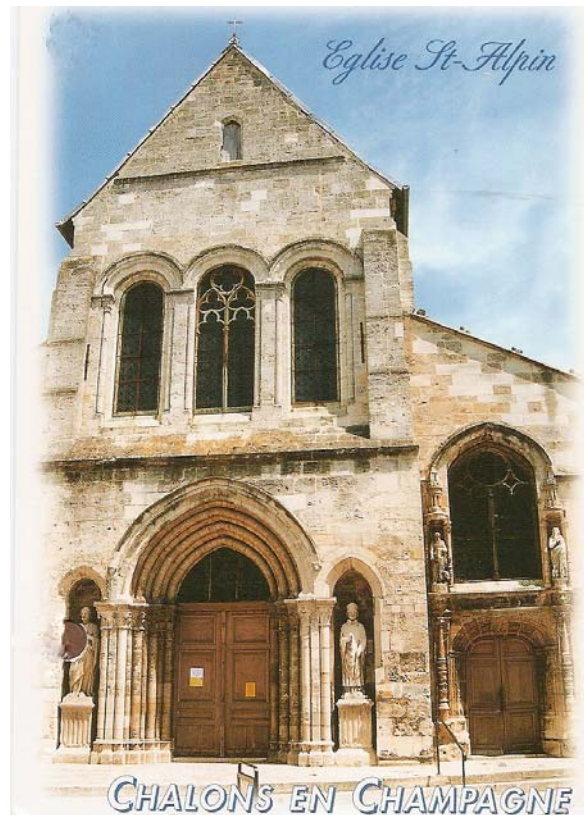
As a point of interest, modern photography first began in the 1820's in France and soon became fashionable. In our family artifacts we have not only old photographs but also some old “glass” negatives which are an early photographic process dating back to the early 1840's. These negatives are images of the Ste. Tanche Church and chapel of L'huitre.



According to their church marriage certificate, Pierre and Françoise exchanged their vows on May 7, 1787, in the St. Alpin Church, known as the parish of the wealthiest merchants (la paroisse des commerçants les plus riches).

At the time of their marriage, Pierre was 40 years old and Françoise was 31. One could say that for that era they were late starters! From birth, marriage and death records, we know that the Freminet family was well-established in business in Châlons. From the local records of Châlons that we have found Pierre's father-in-law, Jean Toussaints Freminet, born October 31, 1722, was a clothing merchant known in French as a "marchant drapier," (cloth merchant and manufacturer) and a very prominent businessman in the city of Châlons sur Marne. From a Freminet family website, upon which Pierre Mollot is listed, we found that the Freminet family had been in the cloth/fabric business for many generations. No doubt, the knowledge and experience that Pierre Mollot had gained in the clothing and textile industry in Châlons played an important part in the financial success of his son, Louis, who followed his father's footsteps. Louis, consequently, amassed a large fortune which was later inherited by his artistic son, Fortuné Mollot. Also, according to the memoirs of Fortuné, the Freminet family owned vineyards and were the founders of the FREMINET HOUSE of CHAMPAGNE. "My cousin Freminet was the founder of the House of Champagne, which his sons head today", Fortuné says. There is a champagne still in existence called "Charles Freminet", produced by Château Malakoff, a well known house of champagne in Epernay which produces numerous other brands as well. It is, however, marketed and distributed throughout the world by another large house of champagnes in Epernay by the name of "Champagne de Castellane". With the cooperation of these two champagne houses, I am presently in the process of researching the origin and family connection to this Charles Freminet champagne. This very famous Champagne vineyard region is only approximately 40 kms. northeast of Châlons en Champagne.

Pierre and Françoise had only two children: FRANCOISE JEANNE MOLLOT (6) and LOUIS FORTUNE MOLLOT (7) (Fortuné's father). You will notice that in those years, it was quite common to name the first born female after the mother and the first born male after the father. This custom can be rather confusing for historians and genealogists. The in-laws of Pierre Mollot were Jean Toussaints Freminet and Françoise Collard. According to their marriage records, Jean Toussaints and Françoise were wed on



Feb. 18, 1754 in Eglise St. Eloi in Châlons. Note the chain of three important family events in the four years surrounding the French Revolution during the years of 1789 and 1793: Pierre and Francoise were married on May 7 in 1787. Françoise Jeanne, their daughter, was born on June 23, 1788, and a year later, Jean Toussaints Freminet, the father-in-law, died on August 31, 1789, at the age of 66. The Bastille was stormed in Paris on July 14, 1789, by revolutionaries or anti-monarchist so this date is approximately six weeks into the French Revolution, better known as the Reign of Terror. One can only imagine the conditions that our ancestors lived through, given the social unrest that resulted in this horrible religious and political civil war. History books tell us that throughout the 1700's and 1800's, the feudal system and the Bourbon kings (1610 – 1789) kept the French population severely oppressed while they, King Louis XIII, King Louis XIV, King Louis XV and, finally, King Louis XVI, the nobility and their Courts, lived extravagantly. Consequently, this led to the bloody French Revolution during which thousands died.

Back to Pierre and Françoise Mollot: Their second and last child and only son, LOUIS FORTUNÉ MOLLOT, was born and baptized on Feb. 15, 1791, also in Église St. Alpin in Châlons sur Marne. Louis lived his childhood during some very troublesome years in French history: The French Revolution or Reign of Terror occurred between 1789 and 1793 with the beheading of King Louis XVI on January 21st, 1793, and Queen Marie Antoinette on October 16th, 1793. These difficult times ended with the overthrow of the Revolutionary Government and, shortly thereafter, with the rise of Emperor Napoleon 1st.

Pierre Mollot's wife, Marie Joseph Françoise Freminet, was born and baptized on February 25, 1756 in Eglise St. Eloi in Châlons and, according to her civil death certificate, died on January 15, 1846, at the age of 89 in Châlons sur Marne. Her name and the year of her death were also discovered inscribed on the back of a picture frame that included decorative woven locks of her hair. This custom of saving locks of hair as a souvenir was quite common in those days. The inscription reads as follows: 'Cheveux Provenant de Marie Joseph Françoise Freminet, Epouse de Pierre Mollot, Décédée dans sa 90 ième année....Leurs descendants, Louis Mollot, Jeanne Françoise Mollot.' This memorabilia is yet another souvenir of our ancestry.

From the civil records of the city, Pierre Mollot died in Châlons sur Marne on July 5, 1810, at the age of 63 when Napoleon and his armies ruled most of Europe. These records indicate that Pierre was a "merchant" at the time of his death.

It is also most interesting to note that their only daughter, FRANCOISE JEANNE MOLLOT (6) born June 23, 1788, in Châlons sur Marne, (now Châlons en Champagne) married CAPITAINE JEAN MARIE FORTUNÉ COLLET. He was born in Turin, Italy, in 1781 and, according to his civil death records, died on October 7th in 1850 in Châlons sur Marne at the age of 68. Capitaine Collet served both in the armies of Napoleon 1st and Louis XVIII and was wounded twice in action. From the Emperor and the King, he received certificates of honor as a "Chevalier de St. Louis et St. Ferdinand d'Espagne" as well as medals of bravery. Other artifacts that have been passed down to us are the decorations from his military uniform, namely, his épauettes and a metal visor from his cap. All these memorabilia are still with family today.



Capitaine Fortuné Collet and spouse Françoise Collet née Mollot

According to her civil death certificate, Françoise Jeanne Collet, née Mollot, died on Sept 29, 1869, at her residence at No.1; rue Saint Joseph in Châlons sur Marne at the age of 81. This residence is still in existence today and is known as Maison St. Joseph, a retirement home for seniors. Fortuné Collet and his wife Françoise had no children. Also of interest, her only brother, Louis, age 78, and her nephew, Fortuné, age 24, attended her funeral in Châlons as their signatures are on her death certificate. It is also interesting to note that on her death certificate, it was her maiden name, Mollot, that was used and not her married name, Collet. In those days, it was quite common for women to revert back to their maiden name after their husbands had passed away. In the collection of family artifacts, we still have numerous letters that she wrote to her nephew, Fortuné Mollot, dating back as far as the year 1862. In fact, when Françoise died in 1869, Fortune inherited 42,000 Francs which was a substantial amount in those days

Historically, the 19th century years were years of transition in France. The French Revolution and the Napoleonic era put an end to rule by monarchs and emperors. It ushered in the new beginnings of democratic government which was quite unstable at times. However, entrepreneurship was able to flourish for it was no longer under the control of monarchs and the nobility. This factor certainly allowed people such as our direct ancestors, Pierre Mollot, and, especially, his son, Louis Fortuné Mollot, to become entrepreneurs and to prosper and to have a much better quality of life.

1791-1871 LOUIS FORTUNE MOLLOT (7) As previously mentioned, Louis Fortuné Mollot was the only son of Pierre Mollot and Françoise Marie Joseph Freminet of

Châlons sur Marne. Louis Fortuné was born and baptized on Feb. 15th, 1791, in Église St. Alpin in Châlons sur Marne. He very likely began work in the clothing, new fashions and accessories business of his father, Pierre, in Châlons where he learned the “tricks of the trade.” Due to a problem with his eyesight, Louis Fortuné retired from military service in Napoleon’s army in 1811. Louis Fortuné, then 20 years of age, moved to Paris for greater opportunities and for different and varied experiences in the fashion and clothing industry. In following his career path, one realizes that Louis Fortuné had similar character attributes as his father, Pierre. He was a go-getter...an entrepreneur...a businessman...a person with ambition and drive. After his time in Paris, Louis Fortuné moved further south to Lyon which at the time was the hub of the silk industry in France, Europe and the Western World. From the sixteenth century right up until postwar WWI (1918), silk was one of the main industries of the city, generating enormous wealth and contributing to a multitude of Renaissance architectural structures throughout the city. At the outset in Lyon, Louis Fortuné Mollet was involved as a salesman/broker of silk products. Later, he established his own silk manufacturing enterprise in the heart of “le Vieux Lyon” in the Croix-Rousse district. This area is still known as the “old silk weavers” district. To date, we have not done the research and do not have information pertaining to the specific location of his enterprise but it is certainly possible that he was established in this area. Based on facts from many books that have been written on the silk industry in Lyon, most of the focus is on this area. We do know, however, that it was at No. 2, Place Sathonay in the “vieux Lyon” where Louis Fortuné was originally a buyer and seller of silk goods (acheteur et vendeur de soieries). Louis Fortuné also lived in this same building on the 3rd floor which housed many of these silk merchants. In a book on the history of the silk industry in Lyon called “Les filières de la soie lyonnaise”, it clearly illustrates that Place Sathonay was the hub of the silk industry in the city at that time.

It is interesting to note, however, that Louis Fortuné Mollet in his latter years did not pass on his very successful silk business to his son or stepdaughter. The last few years that Louis was in business were not profitable. This was likely due to increased competition, imports from the Orient, and, possibly, his health and age. Also, his son had suffered a misfortune. At the age of 22, Fortuné had fallen off a horse and become partly paralyzed. In addition, Fortuné really had not shown a great interest or aptitude in business; he was more interested in pursuing a career as an artist as noted by Fortuné himself in his memoirs. By then, Louis may have realized that his son, Fortuné, was not suited for the business. He sold the silk business.

Another interesting document that we have from Louis’ business affairs is a Mexican bond property certificate # 1488 dated August 31, 1869, in Paris. During the years 1864-1865, Louis purchased from the Imperial Government of Mexico ten of these bond issues. As today, in those days, there were risky venture investments available and one has to wonder if this was a profitable one for Louis. ‘Plus ça change, plus c’est la même chose.’! (...the more things change, the more they stay the same!)

On the personal side, Louis Fortuné was very much like his father, Pierre; Louis Fortuné married later on in life at the age of 53! According to their civil marriage records, he married THERESE ANNEQUIN on Dec. 8, 1844, in the village of Châbons, Isère, France. She was 37 years old at that time. Thérèse had been born on Dec. 31, 1806, in the small village called Châbons in the commune of Grand Lemps which is nearby the

village of BLANDIN where their son Fortuné would later end up building Château Blandin. Thérèse's parents were Joseph Annequin, a farmer who died on Dec. 20, 1824, and Marie Malens.

One can speculate that Louis Fortuné may have met his wife Thérèse Annequin through his business interests in Châbons where were situated silk farms with which he likely had business interests.

As to family, LOUIS FORTUNE MOLLOT and THERESE ANNEQUIN had two children, THÉRÈSE PAULINE MOLLOT (9) and FORTUNÉ LOUIS JOSEPH MOLLOT(8). Note again that the given names were repeated from one generation to the next. From letters and other documents, we know that Pauline was adopted. Was she from a previous marriage of Thérèse? Is it possible that Thérèse was widowed? We do know that Pauline was 12 years old when they married and we do know that Louis Fortuné adopted her as a stepdaughter as indicated in his last will and testament. Approximately one year into their marriage, their only son Fortuné Louis Joseph Mollot, was born at 3 a. m. on Nov. 4, 1845, in a 3rd floor apartment No. 4 at Place Sathonay (some documents such as his birth certificate have No. 2 spelled as Satonay) located in the 1st arrondissement (circle or district) in Lyon. As previously mentioned, this was in the heart of the then silk industry in old Lyon. His parents were not exactly young when he was born; his father was 54 years old and his mother was 39 years old. Interestingly, there was fifteen years difference in age! According to his church baptismal certificate, Fortuné was baptized at l' Eglise Notre Dame de St. Louis, now called Eglise St. Vincent, 17 rue Vieille, on Nov. 16, 1845. His godfather was his uncle Capitaine Fortuné Collet who had married Françoise Jeanne Mollot of Châlons sur Marne.

According to other documents, in the early 1850's, Louis and Thérèse Mollot moved from their apartment on Place Sathonay to a home at 18, rue du Béguin in Lyon where their young son Fortuné spent his early childhood years.

In September 1852, his stepdaughter Thérèse Pauline Mollot, age 19, married Jean Baptiste Bonaventure Algoud. From Mr. Algoud's numerous letters and papers, we can certainly conclude that he was a very well educated and astute business person. They had three children; Louis Jean Baptiste, Marie Renée, and, would you believe, another Fortuné! The Algoud family was also involved in the silk industry in and around Lyon. Found on a business letterhead is the following; Soieries Unies, Algoud Frères, 3 Montée de Griffon, Lyon. This was a silk manufacture in the heart of the former Lyon silk trade but today it is a night club! Also, Jean Baptiste Algoud, Fortuné's brother-in-law, owned a silkworm company in Grand Lemps which is only 11 kms. from Blandin. In those years, silkworm farms were very thriving industries in and around Grand Lemps. From all accounts, it can be surmised that the Algouds were a very wealthy family. It is interesting to note that there must have been a business connection between these two families. An example, among others, is that a Mollot relative, Paul Thevenot from the Trouans area in the Champagne region, the cradle of the Mollot family, was the manager of the silkworm company in Grand Lemps near Blandin in Isère. That connection would be an interesting puzzle to resolve. Presently, we have personal friends by the name of Thevenot whose ancestors immigrated to Canada from the same area of France as ours!

Now back to Louis Fortuné Mollot; he was an extremely successful businessman and amassed a very large fortune described by a present day historian as “colossal” for those days. Besides this fortune, he also inherited from his wife, Thérèse, some property which was “la ferme de la Molinière” (farm) located in the village of Blandin in the “vallée de la Bourbe”, approximately 80 kms. from Lyon where, ironically, his son Fortuné would later spend part of his inheritance building what he called “Château Blandin” (known today as Château de Molinière) for his future bride to be, Léopoldine Benoit, who would not care for the château nor for country living! This property happens to be within 15 kms. from the village of Châbons where Thérèse Annequin, the wife of Louis Fortuné Mollot, was born and raised. This property, originally owned by the Annequin family, was part of the dowry of Thérèse Annequin when Louis Mollot and Thérèse were married in 1844. Louis later inherited the property from his wife Thérèse.

Originally, the property comprised a large farmhouse and barn on some 17 hectares or 42 acres of land.....and, would you believe, the original farmhouse is still standing today some 200 years later! The present owners are the Dominique and Frederique Buisson family who are very good family friends. According to their research, this ancestral farmhouse was built in the year 1821.



Of interest, Louis Fortuné Mollot also left a footprint in the village of Blandin which still exists today. He donated the property for the existing cemetery. In fact, on a large stone in the cemetery is inscribed the following: “Souvenir de Reconnaissance à M. Louis Fortuné MOLLOT (Donnateur de ce cimetière).....Souvenir of recognition to Louis Fortuné MOLLOT (Donor of the cemetery)”. As previously mentioned, Louis Mollot inherited the Blandin property from his wife Thérèse Annequin who had received it in her dowry. This may explain the connection between the names on this monument; Marguerite Chaboud née Annequin and Louis Fortuné Mollot.

Monument in the cemetery in Blandin, France

Thérèse, the wife of Louis Fortuné, did not live a long life. After only eighteen years of married life, she died of breast cancer on Dec. 4, 1862, at the age of 56. It’s amazing that

even in those years, they somehow were able to diagnose such illnesses but had virtually no cure for them! In the memoirs of her son, Fortuné, he says that, “she underwent surgery for breast cancer which gave her hope and relief for a year or two but the disease returned with a vengeance; stronger and more painful than before and made my mother a veritable martyr in the final year of her life!” One can only imagine the helplessness experienced by those facing a terrible disease in those times. At the time of Thérèse’s death her daughter Pauline was 30 years old and her son Fortuné was 17 years old. Louis Fortuné, her husband, was 71 years old. In remembrance of his wife Thérèse, Louis Fortuné had a picture frame made with decorative woven locks of her hair enclosed with the following inscription on the back; ‘Cheveux Provenant de Thérèse Annequin, Epouse de Louis Mollot, décédée le 4 décembre 1862, dans sa 56 ième année. Ses descendants : Louis Joseph Fortuné Mollot et Thérèse Mollot.’ This is the second memorabilia of this nature that has been passed on as a souvenir.

Louis Fortuné Mollot died at the age of 80 on June 10, 1871, in the village of Blandin, in the farmhouse of the “ferme de la Molinière” which still is occupied today as a residence, next door to where the “Château Blandin” would be built by his son Fortuné. Louis Fortuné had been suffering from a serious heart condition and, consequently, he had decided to spend the summer of 1871 in Blandin in order to rest. In addition, the political events of the day would have caused him anxiety. France had just been defeated and humiliated at the hands of Bismarck in the Franco-Prussian War. Because this war had been initiated by Emperor Napoleon III, with the signing of the Treaty of Frankfurt, the regions of Alsace & Lorraine were abandoned by France and taken by Germany. The French were also ordered to repay the cost of the war: the huge sum of some five billion francs. To compound this misfortune, unrest brought the country to the brink of civil war! Anarchy ruled in the streets of France again for a few months: monarchists against republicans. In what is called the “semaine sanglante” (bloody week), government troops in their attempt to keep law and order fought in the streets and massacred around 25,000 people, the last of which were lined up against the wall in Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris and shot! It was a brutal episode that left a permanent scar on the political and psychological landscape of the country. To quote from Fortuné’s memoirs, ‘Our emotions swayed anxiously from hope to discouragement as we followed the events’. Napoleon III was deposed and, finally in 1871, France came to its senses and established the Third Republic. This government would last until after World War II in 1946.

Louis Fortuné Mollot and his wife Thérèse were both laid to rest in the Guillotière cemetery in Lyon. According to the cemetery records, Louis was buried there on June 13, 1871, emplacement no. 23/24. Given the laws of burial in France, plots/graves are not issued in perpetuity; they are purchased for xx number of years and, if not renewed, are sold to someone else. In this case, the expiry year was 1924 and given that there was no family left to use or renew the concession, the plot was purchased by another family. The burials are registered at the cemetery but there is no longer a gravestone with their names.

Note that Louis Fortuné was born in 1791 during the French Revolution’s Reign of Terror (1789-1793) and died in 1871 just after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870. It is interesting that these two devastating and tumultuous events in French history coincided with his birth and death. Indeed, Louis Fortuné lived in a period of political unrest.

1845-1924 FORTUNÉ LOUIS JOSEPH MOLLOT (8) As many of you are aware, the reason why we know so much about our ancestry is because Fortuné wrote his memoirs in detail. The memoirs have been passed on from generation to generation. We are very grateful that Fortuné took the time and effort to write these in detail. There are some sixty-six pages which have given us a tremendous insight into the life and times of the family. The original document is in hand-written form and, of course, in French. It was completed on July 18, 1912, when Fortuné was 67 years old, some twelve years before his death. Consequently, we only have limited data on their lives from 1912 to 1924.

During the past twenty or so years, his memoirs have been typewritten in French and have also been translated into English. They are available in print in French and in English as well as on a CD all in pdf file. The memoirs of Fortuné are posted on the Mollot web site: Mollot.ca

In order to better understand the man, it is strongly recommended that one read his memoirs. However, an attempt will be made to provide some history of his life based not only on his memoirs but also on family letters and on numerous documents such as wills, birth, marriage and death certificates, on various write-ups in local journals by historians and even on interviews with people who have also passed on but who knew the family; and, finally, on stories from his offspring.

As indicated on his birth certificate, Fortuné Louis Joseph Mollot was born on Nov. 4, 1845, in a 3rd floor apartment, No. 4 Place Sathonay in Lyon, France. Today, this residence is the mayor's office of the 1st arrondissement of Lyon.



No 4 Place Sathonay, 2008. The complex overlooks an attractive city square called Place Sathonay.

Also, according to his baptismal certificate, he was baptized on Nov. 16, 1845, in L'Eglise Notre Dame de St. Louis in Lyon, now called Eglise Notre Dame St. Vincent at

17 rue Vieille, Lyon, France. As a young boy from ages five to seventeen in the years 1850 to 1862, he attended a private boarding school called l'Abbé Bland in Lyon and traveled frequently with his father on various business trips throughout France. He expressed enjoyment of this travel. During the summers, they would spend time at "la ferme de la Molinière" in the village of Blandin with family and friends and travel in the Châlons sur Marne area (Trouans and L'huitre) visiting family. After grade school, Fortuné was placed at Minimes seminary for classical studies. He did not enjoy this school. However, there he started to develop an interest in drawing and painting. While at this school, he undertook a one year drawing class, taught by his teacher Pierre Bonirote, a renowned professor at the Fine Arts School of Lyon. He then further pursued his artistic talents at the Lycée de Lyon which is something like a college of fine arts. However, in the later years of his studies, the untimely death of his mother, Thérèse, on Dec. 4th in 1862 really distracted him from his studies...his desire was now to quickly finish his education and move on... but to what!

To quote Fortuné, "I now faced the difficult question of what to do next. I would really have liked to attend the school of fine arts. But my father, like most of the generation of 1830, held a firm prejudice against artists, and he would not hear of it. He had made his fortune in business and this is what he had in mind for me. But I did not suit that type of occupation at all and I knew that I could never be the businessman that my father had been. Nevertheless, I resigned myself to please him and with the help of my brother in law, Mr. Algoud, I started as a junior employee at a large wholesale novelty house called Magnun Fauré & Company, located at 40 L'Imperatrice Street in Lyon."

In his late teens and early twenties, after having served an apprenticeship in the silk and apparel industry, Fortuné traveled quite extensively throughout France, Italy and Switzerland thanks to the "Banque de Papa". However, tragedy would strike again. On March 19, 1868, at the age of 22, he suffered from a fall from a horse which virtually rendered him immobile!

This unfortunate event changed his life dramatically. To quote Fortuné, "From this moment onward, however, I had to renounce any intentions of going into business, an outcome which I was not altogether upset about. Something good came from my injury for I could finally realize my dream of painting. This occupation pleased me greatly and, at the same time, allowed me plenty of time to recover."

During the next few years, Fortuné traveled the country seeking treatment at various spas, salt baths and thermal resorts in the Pyrenees and the Alps. Eventually, strength did return to his limbs and he could walk quite well but, as my parents John and Blanche told me, he walked with a noticeable limp. In photos, we see him with a cane.

Then on June 11, 1871, nine years after the death of his mother, came the sudden death of his father, Louis, at the age of 80! Fortuné, age 25, inherited what is considered by historians today as a "huge fortune" for the era; in excess of 500,000 francs, plus a monthly stipend of 25,000 francs and real estate. This information is found in his memoirs. In reference to Pauline, the adopted sister of Fortuné, Louis' last will and testament indicates that she had received her portion at her wedding.

With this new amassed fortune at his disposal, Fortuné began to spend his wealth. His mother Thérèse had always dreamed of living in the countryside. His father, too, had

always dreamed of being able to live in the country but during his business career had never had the time to realize that desire. Fortuné did not enjoy city life! Therefore, in 1871-72, at the age of 25, having no wife or family, he hired an architect, M. Bourbon, to plan and build a 12,000 sq. ft. mansion on a 42 acre property that had been purchased previously by his father Louis Fortuné. This property was in Blandin, the quaint little French village situated only a few kilometers from Châbons, the small hamlet where Fortuné's mother, Thérèse Annequin, was born.

In the process of doing research to purchase furniture, tapestries and paintings for his future home, Fortuné one day noticed an advertisement in a Lyon newspaper of an establishment called "le Martouret" in Die which is located close to the French Alps. This establishment offered thermal baths, treatments that seemed to suit his condition as he still suffered from his physical ailments. Quoting from his memoirs, "At the end of July, 1871, I headed for the Martouret. It was the first of many times that I would go there for it was there that I was destined to meet my wife! "

Between his constant need for therapy and his courtship of LÉOPOLDINE BENOIT, (10) the eldest daughter of Dr. Alexandre Benoit and Ernestine Croze, proprietors of the thermal establishment "Le Martouret", Fortuné found himself going to Die frequently. Also, Mme. Benoit would bring Léopoldine occasionally to Lyon for singing lessons, during which time they visited with Fortuné. Léopoldine was known to have a very pretty voice and a passion for theatre. Through his future brother-in-law Gabriel, Fortuné would ask for her hand in marriage. His request was accepted. After approximately fourteen months of courtship, the wedding date was set; October 5, 1872, in Die. Fortuné was 28 years old and Léopoldine was 20 years old.

After the wedding, Fortuné and Léopoldine went on a honeymoon and then settled into Château Blandin situated in the small village of the same name, "Blandin".

*In 1871, Fortuné age 26,
Léopoldine age 19.*



ABOUT CHATEAU BLANDIN

Château Blandin is situated in a small village known as Blandin in the Department of Isère, in the Rhône-Alps region of central France. It is approximately 80 kilometers southeast of the second largest city, Lyon, which is also known as the gastronomic center

of France. The population of Blandin, according to statistics in the year 1999, was 122. The region has a number of valleys and rolling hills and is very suitable to agriculture. The climate is very moderate and Mediterranean in nature even though they do get some snow in winter.

To give you some perspective of this grandiose château built by Fortuné before his acquaintance of and marriage to Léopoldine, it is located on a 17 hectare (1 hectare equals 2.47 acres) or a 42 acre site overlooking a beautiful scenic valley called “Vallée de la Bourbre”. The Château is a majestic four-story brick mansion heated by numerous fireplaces in various rooms. Originally, the basement was a large wine cellar. Some of the most striking aristocratic features of the interior are the huge “his and hers” bedrooms with balconies overlooking the front yard and gorgeous valley.

*Painting:
Chateau Blandin
by Fortuné Mollot
circa 1880*



The château has a most impressive staircase, a main “salon” and a dining room with a beautiful large hanging crystal chandelier. Fortuné even had his own private painting studio. Lasting footprints Fortuné left in this château are a number of his paintings which today still adorn the walls in the main dining room.

For an adequate water source, a water pipe had to be installed approximately one mile uphill behind the mansion. This water source would not only supply the home but also the duck ponds in front of the château. During the 1880’s most of the property was turned into vineyards. Old photos and postcards picture a beautiful mansion with a large duck pond in the forefront surrounded by gorgeous vineyards on the sloping sides and back, overlooking a very picturesque valley. From this brief description, one can visualize that this was a magnificent postcard mansion and property as it still is today.

According to current architectural standards of France, the size of the mansion and the acreage on which it is situated determines its designation as a château and Château Blandin complies with those standards. The name of the original architect that Fortuné Mollot hired in 1870-1871 to design the château was M. Bourbon.

Today, the château is owned by Michel and Arlette Auclerc. It is one of three ‘châteaux’ in the valley. M. Auclerc is a very successful architect and Arlette, his wife, is a retired medical doctor. They have been extremely hospitable to our family and are very good family friends. They have taken a great interest in our family history and this has created a very strong bond. Michel and Arlette have indicated to our family many times, “Our home is your home.” They have a very deep respect for our ties to Blandin. They are truly wonderful friends!

When Michel and Arlette Auclerc first purchased the château property in 1994, it had been abandoned for a number of years. True to his profession as an architect, one of Michel’s goals was to restore the château to its original state of the early 1870’s. Michel and Arlette have done a fantastic job! They have even added to the château by building a large underground hall which is used for entertaining large groups and/or storing a number of Michel’s vintage cars. In fact, one of the restored items is Fortuné’s old classic horse drawn carriage! Another structure that they have restored and which is very unique on the property is a small hut up on the hillside. It had been built by Fortuné within the vineyard during the 1880’s as a shelter for the workers and for storage of tools.

The Auclerc family has renamed Château Blandin to Château de Molinière. The name relates back to the name of the farm “ferme de la Molinière” which had been previously owned by the Annequin family until the year 1844. Then it became part of the dowry of Thérèse, Louis’ bride. At the death of his wife, Thérèse, in 1862, Louis inherited the property along with the house that had been built in 1821. The Auclerc family has sold a small part of the estate (1 hectare- 2.47 acres), which includes the original farmhouse and barn, to a young family by the name of Buisson. This home, in which Louis died in 1871, has been extremely well kept by maintaining original structures. It, too, has a very unique interior.



The original farmhouse and barn of Louis Fortuné Mollot, built in 1821 next to Château Blandin

In August 2008, some forty-eight Mollot ancestors participated in the “Mollot Tour de France” during which we were the guests of Michel and Arlette Auclerc in Blandin for a most memorable day. It was the highlight of our tour. As we approached the small village of Blandin from across the valley, our bus stopped for us to view the picturesque setting and amazingly, we spotted the château. Our bus then drove into the village to the sound of the church bells. A welcoming party including the mayor was there to receive us. Later that day, everyone got the opportunity to view the château and the property. We were treated to the finest reception in such a beautiful setting. The Auclerc family and the village of Blandin were just fantastic hosts! In fact, if you visit Blandin today, you will find a plaque and a maple tree that was planted next to the duck pond in front of the château to commemorate our visit.



August 2008, Mollot Tour de France visit of Château de Molinière, Blandin, France

The property and château has by itself an interesting history. Below is a list of the families who have owned the property. Research and compilation of this information was done by our friends and present owners, Michel and Arlette Auclerc.

As previously mentioned, the property was originally owned by the Annequin family. When Louis Fortuné Mollot married Thérèse Annequin in 1844, this parcel of land was part of her dowry. In 1852, Thérèse willed it to her husband Louis Fortuné and their two children, Pauline and Fortuné.

On December 26, 1853, Louis Fortuné Mollot purchased the property by paying off outstanding monies owing to a M. Pierre Caillat. In 1862, Thérèse died and her husband Louis became the official property owner.

On December 16, 1869, Louis Fortuné willed the property to his two children, Pauline and Fortuné.

In 1871-1876, Château Blandin was built on the property by his son Fortuné Louis Mollot. It became the family's main residence in 1877. The property was sold on July 4, 1892, when the Mollot family immigrated to Canada.

July 4, 1892 - The Jean Antoine Benoît Ballofet family, a civil court judge from Lyon, purchased the property. The price was 69,000 Francs.

August 4, 1917 - The Camille Albert Suel family, owner of a fabric manufacturing company, purchased the property. The price was 58,000 Francs.

July 20, 1939 - The Xavier Aimé Morfin family, a university professor, purchased the property. The price was 175,000 Francs.

April 10, 1969 - The Fabre family, a retired French ambassador, inherited the property. It was donated by the Morfin family to the Fabre family.

April 14, 1994 to the present – The latest owners are the Auclerc family. Michel Auclerc is an architect and Arlette Auclerc is a medical doctor.

It is most fortunate that this property is in the hands of Michel and Arlette Auclerc because they have taken great pride in restoring and maintaining it to a very high standard.



Arlette and Michel Auclerc

August, 2008

An analysis of the selling prices for the château in the last century shows how inflation has really eaten away at the real value and the purchasing power of the French Franc, let alone our own currency. In 2010, the Euro is equivalent to 6.5 Francs and 1 Euro is equivalent to approximately \$1.50 US. In 1892, Fortuné sold Château Blandin for 69,000 Francs which today is \$15,923.00 US. (This is based on 1 EURO equivalent to 6.5 francs today.) It is just incredible! Today, the cost of building such a mansion would be in the millions of dollars. One can understand that a French Franc in 1871 was worth a lot more than it is today.

THE BENOIT ROOTS

Before elaborating on the marriage of Fortuné Molloy and Léopoldine Benoit, it is necessary to look at the Benoit ancestry.

The Azémar/Croze/Benoit ancestry researched to date goes back as far as approximately the year 1617. This is well documented in a number of French history books and articles including the book called La France Moderne, a dictionnaire généalogique, historique et biographique (Drôme et Ardèche), printed by Laffitte Reprints, Marseille, France in 1979. This history book was obtained through the Departmental Archives of Ardèche in Privas, France. The document entry number is 6363, pages 43 and 44. Another valuable source for this information is a document called “La Famille D’Azémar à La Voulte sur Rhône”, written by l’Abbé Auguste Roche, published in 1900 at L’imprimerie centrale de l’Ardèche.

The ancestry, as described in La France Moderne, is quite fascinating and impressive in that Léopoldine’s side of the family has roots to the French aristocracy and nobility. Ancestors from both sides of her family were very well educated and generally held prominent positions in local government and/or the French military. Not as much research has been done into this family as compared to the Molloy side but we do have at our disposal some official documents such as wills and birth certificates containing excellent information.

Thus, we have traced the ancestry of Léopoldine Molloy née Benoit, on her maternal side (Croze/Azémar), back to approximately the year 1617.

This information has been taken from the French documents mentioned above and also from various birth, marriage and death certificates that we have obtained from the Archival Departments de la Drôme in Valence and de l’Ardèche in Privas.

I would highly recommend that the attached Molloy Family Tree chart be examined. The numbers following the names in this document can also be found on the chart to gain a better understanding about whom references are being made. Eg. Guillaume Azémar (13)

GUILLAUME AZEMAR- (13) Our journey begins as indicated in the year 1617 when Guillaume Azémar, a magistrate by profession, originally from Pézenas which is close to Montpellier in Languedoc in southern France, with wife, Isabeau Cieppe, settle in La Voulte on the Rhône River next to Valence. La Voulte is an area in south central France known today as part of the Department of L’Ardèche. The La Voulte area is quite forested. For centuries mining was a very important industry. Journeying south, however, vineyards become the main industry. The brother of Guillaume, Antoine Azémar, married a lady by the name of Catherine de Fabre.

Antoine Azémar and his family were granted the rights to be “les receveurs des péages par eau”- the receivers of tolls by water! As well, in 1652, Antoine was granted the title of BARON ANTOINE D’AZEMAR (14) by the Duchess of Ventadour and King Louis XIV of France. The Baron was granted the right to collect taxes for the King from the people/businesses that used certain waterways as a means of transportation. In this case, the waterway was part of the Rhône River and its tributaries in that region. Interestingly

enough, the King at the time was King Louis the XIV who reigned from 1643 to 1715 for some 72 years. As you may know, King Louis XIV developed the reputation of being extremely extravagant. The palace of Versailles, one of his more extravagant accomplishments just on the outskirts of Paris, was built on the backs of the common French people.

From BARON ANTOINE D'AZEMAR (14) in the 1650's to BARON MARTIAL-MICHEL D'AZEMAR (15) in 1805: These people also held prominent positions for the French Crown. As an example, Baron Martial-Michel d'Azémar was "l'avocat en parlement, juge général du comté de la Voulte et maire élu" –parliamentary lawyer, judge and elected mayor of la Voulte. He was elected mayor of La Voulte on Nov. 13, 1791, during the horrific years of the French Revolution . One cannot imagine the persecutions and public executions that occurred during those times when Protestants vied with Catholics and monarchists with revolutionaries! His first wife was Jeanne-Angélique Morier and on Sept. 11, 1804, he married his second wife, Marie-Anne Désenfant. From his second marriage, a son was born on July 18, 1757, by the name of Jean-Jacques d'Azémar.

This marks a very interesting period of military connection in our family tree and particularly in the direct ancestry of Léopoldine Molloy née Benoit. Baron Jean-Jacques d'Azémar is the first of three generations to rise to the rank of Military General in the various French armies of the pre- and post-Napoleonic years.

1757-1816 – GENERAL BARON JEAN-JACQUES D'AZEMAR (16) He was born in La Voulte on July 18, 1757, in the region now known as the department of Ardèche. Being from a noble family, well educated and in a position of influence and power, he first started his career by establishing mines and foundries in La Voulte. In 1778, he enlisted as a volunteer in the military regiment of the area. Shortly thereafter, he joined the military and very quickly moved up the military ranks. In 1785, just prior to the French Revolution, he even met Napoleon Bonaparte in La Voulte who, at the time, was also a high ranking military officer. (Note that the date of birth printed on the photo which was taken from another source is different from the 1757 date given in the book, La France Moderne.



One can only speculate what the politics of the day might have been! Revolutionary winds of change were in the air. Being from an aristocratic family and well positioned in society, Baron Jean-Jacques d'Azémar likely realized that the feudal system and the extravagance of the French monarchies would soon crumble. He possibly wondered to where poverty, suppression, and extravagance would lead?

Just a few years later in 1789, the French Revolution exploded! Chaos and anarchy ruled and a few years later, Napoleon, through the military, worked his way into power as Emperor of France.

Historically, the reign of Napoleon is very significant in reference to the United States. In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase agreement was negotiated between France (Napoleon) and the U.S.A. The U.S.A. acquired some 828,000 sq. miles of France's claim to the territory of Louisiana. This encompassed all or part of 14 current states thus doubling the size of the United States. The total cost to the U.S. was 15 million dollars which works out to approximately 3 cents an acre as valued today. Reasons which propelled this agreement were the outstanding debt owed to the U.S. as well as the need Napoleon had for money for his armies. In addition, Napoleon's strategy was to create another rival for England. Napoleon, upon completion of this agreement stated, "This accession of territory affirms forever the power of the United States and I have given England a maritime rival who sooner or later will humble her pride".

Now back to Baron Jean-Jacques d'Azémar. Throughout Napoleon's reign, he moved up the military ladder to General by 1806. He was heavily involved in Napoleon's military campaign in Northern Europe and, especially, in Italy.

In reference to his personal life, on April 6, 1802, at the age of 44 in La Voulte sur Rhône, he married Appolinaire Agathe Geneviève Fontneuve, daughter of the parliamentary lawyer and judge of La Voulte. He later died on January 31, 1816, in La Voulte.

Their son, BARON GENERAL LEOPOLD MICHEL MARTIAL d'AZEMAR- 1804-1888 (18) His birth certificate records indicate that he was born on May 22, 1804 in Privas. He also ended up being a military general in the French army but was known more as an administrator and military strategist. He wrote books such as The Future of the Calvary and The System of Modern War. The three generational photos of Général Baron Jean-Jacques, his son Général Baron Léopold Michel Martial and grandson Général Baron Adolphe Henry Gaston d'Azémar are included in this document.



1803- ? EUGENIE MARIE APPOLINAIRE d'AZEMAR-(17) Besides a son, Baron Jean Jacques d'Azémar and Appolinaire Fonteneuve had a daughter, born Jan.18, 1803, by the name of Eugénie Marie Appolinaire d'Azémar, as per her birth certificate. According to their church marriage publication certificate, on August 2nd, 1819, at 16 years of age, in her hometown of La Voulte, she married Jacques Joseph Hubert Croze, age 30, a lawyer from the neighboring city of Privas. Eugénie is our direct family link to the Azémar noble family.

1823-1887 – AGATHE ERNESTINE JULIE CROZE (12) Jacques Joseph Hubert Croze (20) and Eugénie Marie Appolinaire d'Azémar (17) also had a daughter born in Privas on Feb. 25, 1823. They gave her the name of Agathe Ernestine Julie Croze.(12) From

Ernestine's birth certificate, we have determined that her father Hubert Croze had a law practice and that the family lived in the city of Privas.

Ernestine Croze married DR. ALEXANDRE GABRIEL HUBERT BENOIT (11), a medical doctor, from the small 3rd century Gallo-Roman city of Die which is nestled close to the French Alps. This is a most picturesque area of France. As one can appreciate, distances were a problem in those days as compared to today. Though Privas, La Voulte sur Rhône, Die and Blandin are all of the same region and within approximately 125 kilometers of each other, a few days were required to travel from point A to point B.



Dr. Alexandre Benoit and Ernestine Croze had five children, one of which is Marie Anais Léopoldine Benoit, (10) our direct ancestor and great grandmother of the author of this document.

1852-1944 - MARIE ANAIS LÉOPOLDINE BENOIT (10) – Léopoldine, who later immigrated to Canada with husband Fortuné and family, was born on July 8, 1852, in Die, France, in the department of Drôme. She was the third of five children of Dr. Alexandre Gabriel Hubert Benoit (11) and Agathe Ernestine Julie Croze (12). The same year that Léopoldine was born, that is 1852, Dr. Benoit founded a thermo resort known as “le Martouret” just on the outskirts of Die to treat patients who had rheumatism and arthritis. Dr. Benoit had developed various innovative treatments of hot baths and vapors from turpentine. The individuals relaxed in a chamber of approximately 6x8 ft. where their limbs were exposed to turpentine vapors. Based on a schematic drawing displayed in the city museum in Die, it appears that the subject sat in a chamber with part of the body enclosed in a covering. The vapors of turpentine flowed from a lower chamber where the turpentine had been vaporized. The turpentine gases were piped up to the upper chamber into the space under the covering, thus treating the patient. Interestingly, Dr.

Benoit presented his process at an International Exposition in Venice, Italy, in the late 1800's. Still today in the city museum of Die, you will find a display and a large schematic drawing of Dr. Benoit's scientific approach to treating rheumatism and arthritis.

Among the family archives, there are a few family pictures taken approximately in the year 1885 at the resort. In these photos, it is possible to identify some of our ancestors as well as some of the buildings. Some of these pictures were taken on the veranda of a house which was likely their residence. On the veranda, still in existence today, we recognize the ornamental molding and railing that are in the family photographs of July, 1885.



July 1888

Family picture

on the veranda at

le Martouret.

*Liéopoldine Mollot
(age 36) is seated on
the lower steps -
centre front.*

Others unknown.

August 2008

Family picture

on the veranda at

le Martouret.

*Group picture of
'Mollot Tour de
France.'*



Le Martouret, still standing today, is now used as a youth summer camp. Interestingly, the remnants of the building with six treatment chambers are still there!

Dr. Benoit was born in Die, France, April 27, 1818. According to his death certificate, he died on Dec. 20, 1892, in Die at 74 years of age. As previously mentioned, Dr. Benoit and Ernestine Croze had five children: Gabriel, born in 1847 who also became the 3rd generation Benoit medical doctor, Hubert, born in 1849, Léopoldine, our ancestor, born in 1852, Eugénie, born in 1855 and lastly Adolphe, born in 1857. Léopoldine's mother, Ernestine Benoit née Croze, died on March 21, 1877, according to the liquidation and distribution of her estate which we have as part of our family collection.

It is also interesting to note that Dr. Benoit's father was also a medical doctor by the similar name of Dr. Alexandre Gabriel Benoit, born in 1787. His mother was Anne Planel. According to a local museum director and city historian, Jacques Planchon, and other sources, it has been determined that the medical office and home of Dr. Alexandre Benoit, the father, were at 14 rue Villeneuve, now 14 rue Emile Laurens which is located within the walls or ramparts in the heart of this quaint little 3rd century Gallo-Roman city of Die.

The family connection to *French nobility and aristocracy*, as previously mentioned, originated from the ancestors of Léopoldine's maternal grandmother, Eugénie Marie Appolinaire Croze, née Azémar. In all previous generations, someone in the family carried the title of "Baron d'Azémar". Archives indicate that as late as 1913, the title was still in existence.

History books define nobility as follows; people seen as capable leaders chosen by the Crown to manage/rule such things as tracks of land, control of waterways, etc. Over and above the title, noble families were usually granted special rights and rewarded financially in various ways.

The title of "Baron" stayed with the Azémar family for centuries but their rights to collect taxes or tolls on the waterways were abolished after the French Revolution.

THE MOLLOT - BENOIT MARRIAGE

FORTUNE LOUIS JOSEPH MOLLOT (8) and MARIE ANAIS LÉOPOLDINE BENOIT (10), later to immigrate to Canada, were wed in Die, France. The civil marriage took place on October 4, 1872, with the church service on the following day, October 5, 1872. Having two ceremonies is still a common practice today as an expression of the separation between the rules of church and state. Prior to the French Revolution, the Church had great influence over the State and the people and, as a result, laws were enacted to separate the two.

The marriage took place in the Notre Dame Cathedral of Die, followed by a grand banquet at "Le Martouret". As for a dowry, which was customary with well-to-do families, Dr. Benoit gave thirty thousand francs to his daughter and two hundred thousand francs to his new son-in-law, Fortuné.

Stated in the Memoires of Fortuné, one of the distinguished guests at the wedding was Léopoldine's great uncle, Général Baron Adolphe Henry Gaston d'Azémar, (born 10/03/1837-died 1921) (19) of La Voulte. He was the 3rd of three consecutive generations of military generals in Léopoldine's family tree. He also carried the title of Baron which had been granted to the family a century or so earlier. In the annals of the Azémar family, it says that Général Baron Gaston d'Azémar was "equally a distinguished musician". He was the author of many musical compositions.



Later on, the newlyweds enjoyed a honeymoon in Paris and Châlons en Champagne to see relatives. Then eventually they visited Vienna, Naples, Venice, Rome, Florence, and various other splendors in Austria and Italy! With the recent huge inheritance from his father and a new bride, one could not have imagined a better scenario for a great life and future ahead!

Fortuné Louis Mollot
(approx. age 40) and
Léopoldine Mollot, née
Benoit (approx. age 33)
circa 1885



But the grandiose lifestyle (a new summer mansion in the countryside, a winter villa in Lyon and extensive traveling) for this couple who seemed to have everything could not last forever! As stated numerous times in his memoirs and letters, Fortuné was neither a financier nor a businessman. The next twenty years would prove to be financially disastrous! In the years 1872-77 the cost of construction and furnishings for Château Blandin were much more than expected. The economics of the times did not help matters either. Just after the Franco-Prussian War of 1870 in which France was defeated and

humiliated, the country dipped into a recession in 1873 that ended up lasting some 22 years until 1895. Furthermore, in the early 1870's, Fortuné invested heavily in the French stock market but in 1877, the government of the day brought in 'radical practices' to quote from Fortuné, which badly affected the market. Consequently, the market crashed thus greatly diminishing the family's wealth. Then the famous French Panama Canal fiasco occurred. Between 1881 and 1888, the French undertook construction of a canal between the Atlantic and the Pacific Oceans. This massive French engineering project, headed by chairman Ferdinand Marie de Lesseps, ended up as a total financial disaster by the year 1889! The French construction company went bankrupt and collapsed, involving several members of the French government in a corruption scandal. According to newspaper articles, the abandonment of this project caused financial ruin for many investors. Fortuné had also invested heavily in the Panama Canal project...and lost his entire investment. This would eventually prove to be a fatal blow!

After these events, the family had to sell the villa in Lyon and make Château Blandin their full time residence. Prior to this, the family had been privileged to live in the city during the winter and in the country during in the summer. Blandin became their permanent home, but family's misfortunes were not over yet! Fortuné was desperately trying to find a quick and comfortable source of income. He decided to expand extensively the vineyards earlier begun by his father in the year 1869, but disaster was to strike again! The vineyard was devastated and destroyed by the disease called phylloxera. Phylloxera ruined virtually most of the wine industry of that era in France and southern Europe.

According to local Blandin documents, the vineyards employed some fifteen to eighteen local workers from Blandin. From Blandin the white wine in barrels was transported by horse-drawn wagons to the nearby rail station in Virieu. The vineyards of Blandin supplied white wine to numerous churches for mass in the region. .



Fortuné Mollot family crest and his logo as a wine producer

Fortuné was also quite involved in the community of Blandin. He served as councilor for the village (Commune) and was elected mayor of Blandin for the years 1886 to 1888. Besides Château Blandin, Fortuné left another footprint of interest. On his own property,

just on the edge of the village property, he installed a statue of the Virgin Mary and had a bylaw passed by town council that it remain there in perpetuity! In our family archives, we have a copy of this bylaw. Not surprisingly, the statue is still there today!

Despite setbacks, the lives of Fortuné and Léopoldine from the 1870's to the 1890's also were filled with many happy and memorable events. Four of their five children were born during this time and this brought them great joy:

Gabrielle Thérèse Mollot, (21) born Dec. 4, 1875, at #2, rue de la Bourse in Lyon

Louis Jean Baptiste Ernest Mollot, (22) born Aug. 29, 1879, in Die at the Martouret

Marcel Gabriel Mollot, (23) born Oct. 22, 1880, in Blandin

Marie Louise Mollot, (Lily) (24) born Feb. 27, 1891, in Blandin



Family picture on front entrance at Château Blandin, Sept. 1885. Left to Right: Gabrielle Mollot, 9 yrs; Léopoldine Mollot, 33 yrs; Little girl, unknown; Dr. Benoit; in front of him, Mme. Benoit; Marcel Mollot, 5 yrs. on toy horse; far right, Ernest Mollot, 6 yrs.

Family picture, circa 1888.
 Left to Right: Ernest
 Mollot; lady sitting unknown
 (possibly Fortuné's sister,
 Pauline Algoud); Gabrielle
 Mollot; Fortuné Mollot;
 Léopoldine Mollot; Marcel
 Mollot.



Even though the Mollot family saw their fortune diminish in those years, their lifestyle was very aristocratic in nature. All their children attended private boarding schools and were exposed to various musical and cultural activities. Interestingly, in our collection of family artifacts, we have numerous letters from the children addressed to their parents. At six years of age, they had beautiful handwriting! Yes, handwriting! To this day, in France, children are taught first handwriting, then printing.

In the early years of their marriage, during the summer, Fortuné enjoyed Blandin and painting. In the winter, he painted at le Salon de Peinture in Lyon. On the other hand Léopoldine, who never enjoyed the countryside and Blandin, was in her glory in Lyon because she was part of the Lyonnaise cultural life - music, theatre, opera, and the related social activities. To quote Fortuné from his memoirs, "My status as an artist allowed us free entry to the Grand Théâtre de Lyon. We enjoyed ourselves greatly. The orchestras were excellent and the singers, for the most part, were first rate. In addition to the pleasure of listening to good music, there was also that of talking with the society of artists of Lyon, a charming society full of spirit whose conversations filled the intermissions."



Self portrait of Fortuné Mollot in his studio in Blandin. Painting of Léopoldine Mollot by Fortuné.

However, for Fortuné, financial problems were a constant concern and stress as were the political and social developments of the times in France.

During the years of 1886 –1891, as a last stand, Fortuné agreed to allow his brother-in-law, J. B. Algoud, and his adopted sister, Pauline (9), to take “the responsibility of treating and restoring the vineyards.” However, the results were less than satisfactory. Ultimately, the decision was to sell Blandin....but where to go? What to do in France?

To quote Fortuné, “Deciding to sell the property made me reflect on our future in France in general! I honestly saw no futurethe state of French society seemed somber and little reassuring of positive prospects for our children. Laws had been created to combat everything pertaining to religion and to the teaching of it! So much was wrong in France that I began to focus on foreign lands where there might be room for all the energy of youth!”

So why did the Mollot family immigrate? This question is quite complex but based on the memoirs of Fortuné, various documents and letters, I believe that there were a great number of reasons: economic, political, social and religious in nature. He had lost most of the fortune that he had inherited from his father, Louis, and the political, social and religious developments in his native France were of grave concern to him. He felt strongly that his country was headed in the wrong direction! Thus, given the state of affairs in France at the time, he felt that his children would have greater opportunities and a better life elsewhere. In fact, one of his paintings “Reproches; le Bavard et le Moniteur” clearly depicts Fortuné’s feelings about his France at the time! It portrays a dominant lady (La France) reprimanding two naked children (French society) with hats made of newsprint, bearing the names “le Bavard” and le “Moniteur”....the gossip and the

monitor. It insinuates that the Press had been reduced to wearing dunce hats and society was listening to government rather than expressing its own opinions....the one child is standing at attention and saluting! On the painting, there is also a toy wooden soldier dumped upside down in a trash can, giving us the impression that the French military was in the tank. The painting expresses Fortuné's deep negative feelings towards big government and the freedom of the press and free speech. The painting really summarizes the reasons as to why Fortuné immigrated. He was very disenchanted with the conditions in France and foresaw an even bleaker future. This painting makes a profound statement.



Painting – 'Reproches: Le Barard et Le Moniteur' circa 1887

After much soul searching, the Fortuné Mollot family decided to leave their native France! It may have been much easier for Fortuné for he virtually had no family ties left; his mother, father, and only aunt and uncle had all passed on. The only remaining family members were his adopted sister Pauline and her family. As to Léopoldine, her whole family were still living in France. Deciding to leave the family, let alone the lifestyle they had, must have been much, much more difficult for Léopoldine than for Fortuné!

The question was to where should the family immigrate? Some consideration was given to Haiti and to Algeria. At the time, both were colonies of France. However, the influence of the religious order in Blandin was a major factor that influenced their ultimate decision to immigrate to CANADA. To quote from the memoirs of Fortuné, "Finally, the l'Abbé of St. Antoine, l'Abbé Cusset, whose sister was the Superior at the convent and school in Blandin, told us that the Regular Canons of the Immaculate Conception also had a house in Notre Dame de Lourdes, MANITOBA, CANADA. This country, we were told, had a great future and we would certainly find what we were looking for. The more I learned, the more enthusiastic I became. In Canada, my children would be able to grow up free and independent, so long as they were willing and energetic."

Blandin was put up for sale and, after some difficulty, was sold effective July 4, 1892!

Now, just imagine, with only about two months to go before departure to Canada, Fortuné, age 47, and Léopoldine, age 40, and four children (Gabrielle, age 17; Ernest, age 13; Marcel, age 12; and Marie Louise (Lily), age 1 ½) make the final preparations to immigrate to Canada and establish themselves somewhere in Manitoba before the harsh Canadian winter months set in. According to Fortuné's memoirs and the August, 1892

ship's passenger list manifest, when they set sail for Canada, all they knew was that their destination was the city of Winnipeg, Manitoba! They had not selected the specific community in which to settle. That would be done upon their arrival.

In late August 1892, the family said their final "adieu" to all their relatives and friends! They journeyed to Paris, then to Antwerp, and across the North Sea to Liverpool, England, where on August 25, 1892, they board the ship called "Circassion", destined for Quebec City, Canada. According to the ship's passenger manifest, they were listed as follows; Fortime Jos. Mollot, head, Annis L. wife, (for Léopoldine), Therese G. (for Gabrielle), Louis J. (for Ernest), Gabriel H. (for Marcel) and Marie L. for Marie Louise. Besides using mostly all their middle names as given names, many of those were misspelled. This was not uncommon on passenger lists.

After probably a difficult trip across the North Atlantic Ocean, they arrive in Quebec City and then still have to take a train for three full days to reach their destination, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. They arrived on September 10, 1892....after some sixteen days on a small ship and a train! What a grueling voyage this must have been for the whole family!

The Mollot family then spent a few days in neighboring St. Boniface and, after consulting with various priests, such as Bishop Taché and others as to where they could possibly settle, they ended up visiting a number of French speaking villages such as Lorette, St. Pierre and St. Malo. However, as Fortuné explains in his memoirs, they finally chose Fannystelle because of the warm welcome they received from the French priest L'Abbé Perquis and other families such as the Guyots and the Guilbaults who had immigrated there from France. They were also delighted that they could purchase land immediately adjacent to the town. According to the certificate land title # 28191 that I obtained from the Manitoba Lands Title office, on September 15, 1894, 80 acres of land was registered under the name of "Léopoldine Mollot of Fannystelle, Manitoba, wife of Fortuné Mollot." The two lots that they also purchased upon which to build their house were in town and the 80 acres of farm land was immediately south and adjacent to the town. This property was purchased from M. Veronneau who was the local postmaster. The legal description is as follows; "Being the north half of the northeast quarter of Section 10 in the Ninth Township and Third Range West of the Principal Meridian in Manitoba containing eighty acres more or less." It is interesting to note that this property is of low elevation. In fact, it is very good farmland today but it is prone to flooding and has been nicknamed "le marais", the swamp. Given that there were no drainage ditches in those early years, it is likely that this land was only good for grazing and this is what Fortuné attempted to do by raising cattle and sheep.

The village of Fannystelle was founded in 1889 by the Countess Marthe d'Albuféra, a Parisien philanthropist, who named it in memory of her deceased friend Fanny Rives. The name Fannystelle was derived from the Latin word "stella" meaning star (Star of Fanny). The Countess d'Albuféra's project was managed by a Mr. T. A. Bernier who encouraged the immigration of nobility and well-to-do families from France.

Gabrielle, age 17, quickly went to study at a girls' school, l'Academie St. Joseph, 321 rue de la Cathédrale in St. Boniface and Ernest, age 14, and Marcel, age 13, were enrolled and boarded at le Collège St. Boniface, 200 rue de la Cathédrale under the Jesuit Fathers.

According to the Collège St. Boniface archives, the boys attended “le Collège” for three years.

However, within a few weeks, there was bad news from France. The sale of Château Blandin had fallen through. Fortuné then instructed his brother-in-law, J. P. Algoud, to sell the property again. Château Blandin was eventually sold to the Ballofay family but for considerably less money than they had expected and much less than the previous offer which had fallen through.

On October 19, 1892, Fortuné, Léopoldine, and 1 ½ yr. old Marie Louise (Lily) settle in at their final destination, FANNYSTELLE, MANITOBA, CANADA! From all accounts, they were ill prepared for the things to come! Throughout his life, Fortuné had not really worked at any job for any length of time. Since his teenage years, he had focused on painting and being an artist. Just imagine the scenario! With paint brush in hand and canvas under his arm, he and Léopoldine and four children settle in Fannystelle, Manitoba, Canada. They had shipped from France mostly non-essentials to survive the bitter elements and the “new” farm lifestyle: mayonnaise maker, family silverware bearing the family crest, some Louis XVIII furniture, a 3x4 ft. crucifix on a large frame, stacks of French literature books, encyclopedia, bible, boxes of letters and memorabilia and a number of paintings that Fortuné had done while at Blandin.

In the family archives, we have a couple of black and white photos that were taken in 1893 and 1894 on a platform in front of a house of some family and community members. The photos depict the rugged lifestyle of the times.... somewhat like an old Wild West scene from the John Wayne movies!



Front porch photo – family & friends. Fannystelle April, 1894. Left to right: Mr. Allard, Rosenberg, de la Borderie with Lily Mollot on his knees, Mrs Léopoldine Mollot, Mr Marchisio, Dufflot, Thomas & Miss Gabrielle Mollot.

When the Mollot family first arrived in Fannystelle on October 19, 1892, the town had only six houses as well as a school, a church, a creamery owned by Pierre Rosenberg, a blacksmith shop operated by Honoré Lavasseur and a large stable. That's it! There wasn't even a railroad. In 1892, the CPR railway only went as far as Starbuck, the neighboring town, eight miles to the east. Other than mail from the postmaster, Mr. Veronneau, the only form of communication was telegraph and one had to go to Starbuck to the CPR rail station by horse and buggy on very poor roads for that. According to the 1892 Henderson's Directory at the Manitoba Genealogical Society, the population of the village of Fannystelle was thirty! Just imagine only twenty-four other people besides the Mollot family.

In his memoirs, Fortuné describes it this way, "What struck me most about this place was the curious mixture of the civilized and savage worlds which I found so different from Europe. It broke my heart!" Life had to be most difficult in those pioneer years.

As previously mentioned, the Mollots had purchased from the postmaster, Mr. Veronneau, an 80 acre piece of land that bordered the town on the south side. In those years, as you can imagine, land was very inexpensive to purchase.

And now the problem they faced was, 'Where to live?' Fortuné hired a Mr. Cinq-Mars to build a new house in town but it would not be ready for occupancy for at least four months. Luckily, one of the makeshift houses in town became available and they rented it. In this rented house, quoting Fortuné, "We lived out of our trunks and cases that were scattered about, disguised as chairs. Only the piano, our first major purchase in Canada, stood so beautiful and brand new in this mess of crude wood." The piano was likely purchased for their eldest daughter, Gabrielle, who was a very talented musician and for Léopoldine who enjoyed playing it. In January 1893, the Mollots were finally able to move into their new house! Besides having only coal oil lamps for lighting and wood for heating and cooking, there was another problem...no water! Because of the hard ground water, all water for drinking and washing had to be brought in by horse-drawn tanks or taken from ponds or melted snow.

Overall, it was a drastic lifestyle contrast to that of Blandin and Lyon....from a 12,000 sq. ft. mansion in Blandin to a modest 700 sq. ft. wood framed prairie house in Fannystelle, Manitoba, Canada! The Mollot house which is no longer standing was located on the corner lot just across from the existing church on the east side of the street.

First Mollot family home in Fannystelle. The home was originally built in 1893.

This photo was taken in the late 1890's. The home was sold in 1912 to the Black family. Note the church - far right.



In his memoirs, Fortuné indicates that the first winter was not as horrible as expected. However, one of the stories told by Léopoldine and passed on was that it got so cold in the house that the bread would freeze hard as a rock and, that at first, she would wonder why it became so hard overnight! From all accounts, life in a new prairie settlement must have been a great challenge.

Approximately one year after their arrival, on October 22, 1893, Marie Thérèse Albertine (25) was born. This was the last addition to the family.

During the next few years, approximately 1893 to 1903, Fortuné attempted to farm by raising cattle and sheep...but with little success. According to the 1901 Canadian Genealogy Index, Fortuné was classified as a farmer. To quote Fortuné, “With the winter of 1894, our first disappointments began. All the rest, until 1902, were filled with disappointments! I should have abandoned the animals and farming.”

According to the Certificate of Title # 28191, after having little or no success at farming, Fortuné and Léopoldine abandoned the idea of farming and sold the 80 acres on November 19, 1903. This was no doubt another setback in their lives.

By 1895, the three older children, Gabrielle (aged 20), Ernest (aged 16) and Marcel (age 15) were going to school in St. Boniface. Gabrielle was pursuing her career in music and the boys were attending “le Collège” in St. Boniface.

After only three years in this country, Fortuné, aged 50, and Léopoldine, aged 43, were virtually left at home with two babies; that is, Marie Louise (Lily), aged 4, and Thérèse, aged 2. There were actually eighteen years difference in age between Gabrielle, the oldest, and Thérèse, the youngest! From all accounts, the family lived on their diminishing inheritances. Fortuné tried to farm and continued to paint: one of his large projects was the painting of religious scenes on the ceiling of the Fannystelle Church. Unfortunately, the church burned in 1912 and all his work was lost! Léopoldine initiated a theatre group in Fannystelle which consisted of friends gathering at their home to practice theater performances.



Sacred Heart Church, Fannystelle 1894

Nearby, the statue of Fanny Rives. Left to right- Marie Louise, Léopoldine with Thérèse

An old family friend, Donalda Guilbeault, who has passed on, always had great stories to tell about the Mollot household and their involvement in theatre performances for family entertainment. The historian, Noel Bernier, who wrote up the history of Fannystelle also vividly describes the “séances” that occurred in the Mollot home for the community.

Music and the arts flourished in their home and it is rather interesting that all three daughters, Gabrielle, Lily, and Thérèse, pursued careers in the arts. Furthermore, in the next generation, the tradition has been carried on. Thérèse's daughter, Yolande, has had a very successful acting career in England and Hollywood.

In the next chapter of the lives of Fortuné and Léopoldine, it is a little unclear as to where the family lived. From the information that we have compiled, as well from the various Canada Census of the years 1906, 1911, and 1916, the following is the likely scenario.

By the year 1903, Fortuné had abandoned farming but the family remained in Fannystelle. The three older children were living independently. Ernest, age 26, was working in Winnipeg; Marcel, age 25, was married and had a butcher shop in Fannystelle. Gabrielle, age 30, according to a Manitoba Free Press advertisement dated Sept. 7, 1903, had established a piano studio at the Winnipeg College of Music on Notre Dame East. The two younger children, Marie Louise, age 14, and Thérèse, age 12, were attending school in Fannystelle.

Then, during the years 1905-1907, Gabrielle decided to pursue her studies in music at the Conservatoire National de Musique de Paris, Université de Paris. During that time, in August of 1906, Fortuné, Léopoldine, Marie Louise, age 15, and Thérèse, age 13, travelled to Europe to visit Gabrielle in Paris. From various postcards mailed to Canada and from France and visa versa, dated from Aug. 10, 1906 thru March 28, 1907 and addressed to Marie Louise, Thérèse, Fortuné or Léopoldine, we know that they stayed in France for just about a year. Also from these postcards, we learn that the family members visited relatives in L'huitre which is next to the village of Trouans, the cradle of the Mollot family, Die, the Gallo-Roman city from which the Benoit family originate and Lyon, the birthplace of Fortuné. All the correspondence to the family in Paris was addressed to the two residences where Gabrielle lived while studying in Paris: 37, rue Davioud, in the 16th arrondissement, a beautiful area next to the Tour Eiffel called Passy, and 62, Boulevard de Strasbourg which is close to the university. According to a passenger list obtained from Archives Canada, they all returned to Canada on Aug. 1, 1907 on the "Empress of Ireland"; Quebec City being the port of arrival.

Upon coming home from France, Fortuné and Léopoldine returned to Fannystelle for a few more years. However, sometime in 1911, likely during the summer, they moved to Winnipeg. The original Mollot house in town was sold to the Jack Black family, the new blacksmith in town.

From 1911 to 1918, according to letters and the 1911 and 1916 Canada Census, Fortuné and Léopoldine lived at various places with family members. At times, Fortuné lived in Fannystelle in the country with the Marcel Mollot family while Léopoldine lived with Gabrielle in the city. At other times, they both lived in the city.

Again, from postcards and letters addressed and dated to Fortuné and Léopoldine, we know that they lived in Winnipeg at the following locations:

Aug. 30, 1911, at 173 Langside St. By this time, the youngest Thérèse was 17 years old and attending school in Winnipeg.

Feb. 12, 1912, at 17 Fawcett Ave.

Sept. 11, 1918, at 366 Qu'Appelle Ave. (overlooking Central Park) in suite # 503 Warwick Block

The Warwick Block has an interesting history of its own. Built in the early 1900's, it is a very majestic structure with gorgeous marble floors and huge balconies overlooking what we call Central Park. The lower floor housed the horses and carriages. The block even has a huge atrium. In its day it must have been a very beautiful complex. It is still in use today and is classified as a "Heritage Building."

It is also interesting to note that during the years of World War 1, that is 1914 to 1918, Fortuné and Léopoldine received numerous letters from friends and family in France describing the horrific events of the war and indicating that they were very fortunate to be living in Canada. As we all know, France suffered extremely high casualties. Some five million soldiers gave their lives. In virtually every small village or town in France today, we see a touching war memorial to recognize and honor this horrendous sacrifice.

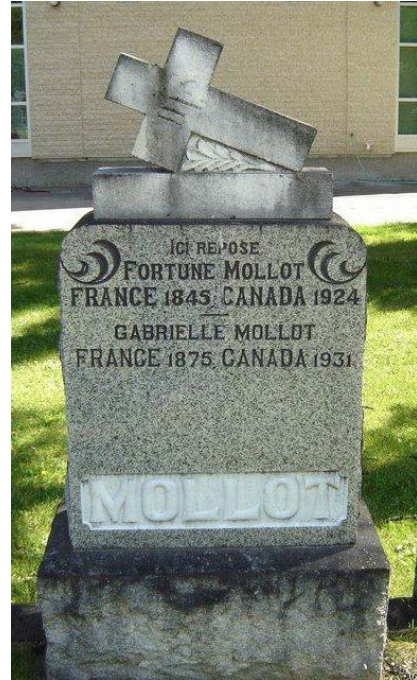
In May, 1920, Léopoldine went to Timmins, Ontario to visit her daughter Marie Louise who had just given birth to grandson George Theriault born April 25, 1920. She then continued on to Chicago to visit her other daughter Gabrielle who was pursuing her summer studies there. According to a U.S./Canada cross border manifest dated May, 1920, Léopoldine indicated that she lived with husband Fortuné at 53 Eugenie St. in Norwood. At that time, according to the Henderson's Directory, 53 Eugenie St. was the home of their son Marcel and wife Eugenie. Marcel was a livestock broker in Winnipeg and also operated a small grocery store called "le Bon Marché" situated on Provencher Ave. in St. Boniface.

It is interesting to note that in sources such as cross border manifests, immigration manifests, ship manifests, and census lists, names were often misspelled. Though surnames were usually correct, given names were not. Immigration and census officers seemed to be more interested in the numbers of persons and other information rather than in the accuracy of their names. As previously mentioned, when Fortuné, Léopoldine and family immigrated to Canada on the ship *Circassion*, the manifest dated August 25, 1892 had most of the given names of the family members misspelled. The list showed the immigrants to be: "Fortime Jos Mollot and Annis L. Mollot" (Anaïs was her middle name). In the Canadian Census list of 1911, Fortuné is listed as "Fortuna." Again, on the ship's passenger list, the *Empress of Ireland* of Aug. 1st, 1907 coming from France to Canada after the completion of Gabrielle's studies, Fortuné, Léopoldine, and the three girls were listed as follows: Frank for Fortuné, Leafa for Léopoldine, Mary for Marie Louise and Tobenelle for Gabrielle. The only one that was correctly listed was Therese, though written with no accents. Also, the 1921 Henderson's Directory of Winnipeg lists Fortuné again as "Frank." On many census and manifest lists, officers incorrectly wrote most of their surnames.

In the last years of Fortuné's life, however, the elderly couple likely returned to Fannystelle where they lived with the family of their son Marcel, wife Eugenie and children as seen on various family pictures dated 1922 at the Marcel Mollot family home. The Marcel Mollot home was always known to be full of people.

Fortuné Louis Joseph Mollot died at the age of 78 on April 22, 1924, and was laid to rest on April 25, 1924, in the historical St. Boniface Cathedral Cemetery, plot site plan west, row #2, plot #4 overlooking the beautiful Red River and City of Winnipeg skyline. A copy of his death certificate has been obtained from the St. Boniface Parish Archival records to verify this information.

By the time of his death, all the children had gone their separate ways: Gabrielle and Ernest were in Winnipeg, Marcel was established in Fannystelle, Marie Louise (Lily) in Timmins, Ontario and Thérèse in New York. It is reported that by this time, Fortuné had virtually spent his entire inheritance but Léopoldine still had some money. The fact that Fortuné had exhausted his entire fortune and died penniless is a rather tragic ending considering the various inheritances that he had received from his aunt, father and even the dowry from his father-in-law. The inheritances which Léopoldine had received were likely part of the funds upon which they lived in their later years while in Canada.



From stories passed on, it can be said that Léopoldine, from the first days in 1892, never really enjoyed life in Canada. She longed for the French culture, her family in France, her lifestyle of music and theatre; all which were sadly lacking in Canada. Also, she found the climate rigorous and harsh.

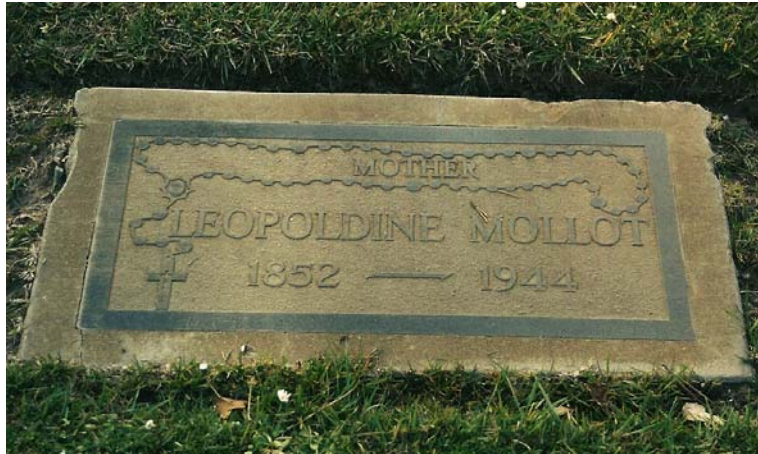
Not surprisingly, thirty-two years after immigrating and six months after the death of her husband, Fortuné, Léopoldine left Canada and never returned. In October, 1924, at the age of 72, she moved to New York and lived with Thérèse, to help raise her granddaughter Yolande, age 4, while daughter Thérèse worked at a career on Broadway in New York. As recorded on passenger list manifests, a year later, October, 1925, Léopoldine left New York for France. There, she lived for some seven years with friends and family in rented apartments until August, 1932. In Paris, she lived for some time at the Hotel de Turenne, 6 rue de Turenne. From a letter dated October 23, 1930, to John Mollot, her grandson, (this author's father), we know Léopoldine was living in a rented apartment in Geneva, Switzerland, close to her relatives by the name of Brodart. Unfortunately, however, on Sept. 2, 1931, during the Great Depression, Léopoldine, while still living in France, lost her eldest daughter Gabrielle of Winnipeg. Gabrielle, 55 years of age died of a sudden heart attack. This must have been very difficult for Léopoldine because during the seven years (1925 to 1932) that she lived in France, of her five children, Gabrielle was the only one who was in a position to travel from Canada to visit her in France during the summers of 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, and 1930, according to Canadian Passenger Lists. Gabrielle loved to travel, especially to France, and, being single, was able to afford to spend time with her mother overseas,. Truly, her mother would miss Gabrielle. She was buried next to her father, Fortuné, in the historical St. Boniface cemetery in the adjoining plot that was likely earmarked originally for Léopoldine.

Léopoldine's last address in France suggested she was living with a cousin by the name of R. Vigoureux, 52, rue de Passy, Paris, as found on the passenger list manifest. Finally, because of the age of Léopoldine (80) and her ailing health, daughter Thérèse went to her in France in August, 1932. They returned to the U.S. to live specifically at 1206 ½ Beachwood Drive in Hollywood, California. This was Thérèse's new home at that time. All of this information was found on a Manifest of Alien Passengers for the United States dated August 23, 1932, list #13. On this manifest, passengers had to answer thirty-seven questions. They left the port of Le Havre in France on Aug. 17, 1932, on the S.S. "Ile de La France" and arrived in New York on Aug. 23, 1932. From there they travelled on to Hollywood, California.

Léopoldine Mollot, née Benoit, lived her final twelve years in California in the type of climate that she enjoyed and in which she had been raised. Being in Hollywood, she was also able to experience theatre and the arts of which she was always very fond. However, for Léopoldine, tragedy struck again for she lost her second child, Marcel. He was living in Fannystelle and died of a heart condition on Dec. 6, 1934, at the age of 54! One of the most difficult things to accept in life is the loss of children and Léopoldine, now 82 years of age, was predeceased by two of her five children.

Around the year 1938, one of her grandsons, Georges Theriault Sr., spent the better part of a year living with her. On numerous occasions, she indicated to him, "Je ne comprends pas pourquoi nous avons choisis de vivre à Fannystelle" "I don't understand why we chose to live in Fannystelle"!

Léopoldine Mollot, née Benoit, died on April 20, 1944, at the golden age of 91. Her grave site is at the Holy Cross Cemetery in Culver City of Greater Los Angeles, California; section C-Group 144, Grave #2.



Fortunately for Léopoldine, because of the inheritances that she had received from both her father and mother

when they passed away, and which she managed well, she was able to maintain a reasonable lifestyle of comfort and pleasure especially from 1924 to 1944, the last twenty years of her life. When Léopoldine and her husband Fortuné and family were still living in Blandin, her mother, Ernestine Benoit, née Croze, died on March 22, 1887, at her residence at 14, rue Villeneuve in Die. In her mother's will, a fourteen page document, it specified that Léopoldine was to receive one-fifth of her mother's estate. The four children and her husband, Dr. Benoit, each received an equal share. Some of this inheritance, which included investments, properties, jewelry and money, had come from Léopoldine's grandfather, Hubert Croze, who had been a lawyer in Privas. From a detailed summary succession table, 82,813 Francs were shared, giving Léopoldine one-fifth.

A few years later, that is on Dec.20, 1892, after the Mollots had already immigrated to Canada, Léopoldine's father, Dr. Benoit, passed away. Here again, she inherited a good sum of money and property. Dr. Benoit's will is very extensive; some fifty-eight pages in length. Léopoldine's two brothers and a sister equally shared 91,393 Francs. From his real estate holdings, she inherited part of the "Martouret." From her share of the sale of "le Martouret," she received substantial yearly payments till 1908, as indicated on a bill of sale. In today's terms, these amounts might seem miniscule but in those days, these sums were quite considerable. Fortuné and Léopoldine likely would never have immigrated had they received this inheritance before their departure for Canada.

Also, in terms of the finances of Léopoldine, it is reported by Georges Theriault Sr., her grandson, that when she moved to California in 1932 to live with daughter Thérèse, she invested in residential real estate in Hollywood and did well with that.

It is truly amazing to analyze such old documents which were all neatly and meticulously hand-written in great detail and expressed in bureaucratic terms. This work had to be very time consuming for lawyers and accountants! It is interesting to see the signatures of some of our ancestors.. These signatures have been obtained from various birth, marriage, death certificates and the like.



No doubt, there had been some very disappointing times in the lives of Fortuné and Léopoldine, given that they had it "all" at the beginning but that their wealth and lifestyle slipped away! Their lives were really a financial disaster! They were out of their element when they came to settle in Fannystelle, let alone Canada! Fortuné was not a farmer ... he was an aspiring artist...and Léopoldine was not suited to farm work and country life. Some interesting quotes from Fortuné's memoirs express profound feelings about their immigration to Canada....."Had I come by myself, I would have never stayed", and, "My wife did not want me to go alone, therefore, with God, let us go! So we took a chance on a land that seemed almost too good to be true."

Another event that would change their lives was the timing of Léopoldine's father's death, Dr. Benoit. In his memoirs, Fortuné indicates that had Dr. Benoit died while they were still living in France, they would not have immigrated. The Mollot family would have likely moved to Die and lived at the Martouret. But, as fate would have it, the Mollots immigrated in August, 1892, and Dr. Benoit's sudden death occurred on Dec. 20, 1892, six months later.

Probably the greatest reward for Fortuné and Léopoldine was to see their children prosper in this new land, even though it wasn't necessarily easy. The great, great grandsons of Fortuné and Léopoldine, Marc and Roger Mollot, amusingly capture the essence of the lives of Fortuné and Léopoldine in their song and CD entitled, 'Why the Hell Did I Ever Leave!'

In the book about the history of Fannystelle by Noel Bernier, the author indicates that M. Fortuné Mollot, "Était un peintre paysagiste de la meilleure école française. Madame Mollot était une artiste en musique." (Mr. Fortuné Mollot was a well known landscape painter of the best French school. Madame Mollot was an artist in music.) The same type of comments are found in Bernard Mulaire's Dictionnaire des artistes de langue française en Amérique du Nord, University of Laval, 1992.

Today, a number of Fortuné's paintings can be found in the homes of his offspring. Most depict either nature or religious scenes. One, as described earlier, is an expression of French Society as it was at the time. Some are signed and dated back as far as the year 1878 when he lived in Blandin and as late as 1912 when he lived in Winnipeg. Fortuné also painted furniture in a baroque style. In Château Blandin, now renamed Château de Molinière, on the dining room walls are a number of his paintings. There are likely more of his early paintings in France. One other painting, Mont Blanc, was purchased in London, England, in the early 1920's and it made its way to a Winnipeg family. During the years that the Mollots lived in Fannystelle, Fortuné painted religious scenes on the ceiling of the Sacred Heart Church. Unfortunately, all his work was lost when the church was destroyed by fire in 1912. The church was rebuilt and the religious paintings were done by others. Fortuné's artistic talent is very evident in his various paintings on canvas, cloth and furniture. To be an artist was his desire....and he painted throughout his life. We have numerous sketches from various locations which are religious and pastoral in nature. He later transferred these drawings to canvass. One such work, Mont Blanc, showed pastoral scenes in the Alps around Die, and another, which may have been inspired by the work of Leonardo De Vinci, depicted Jesus in Mary's arms.

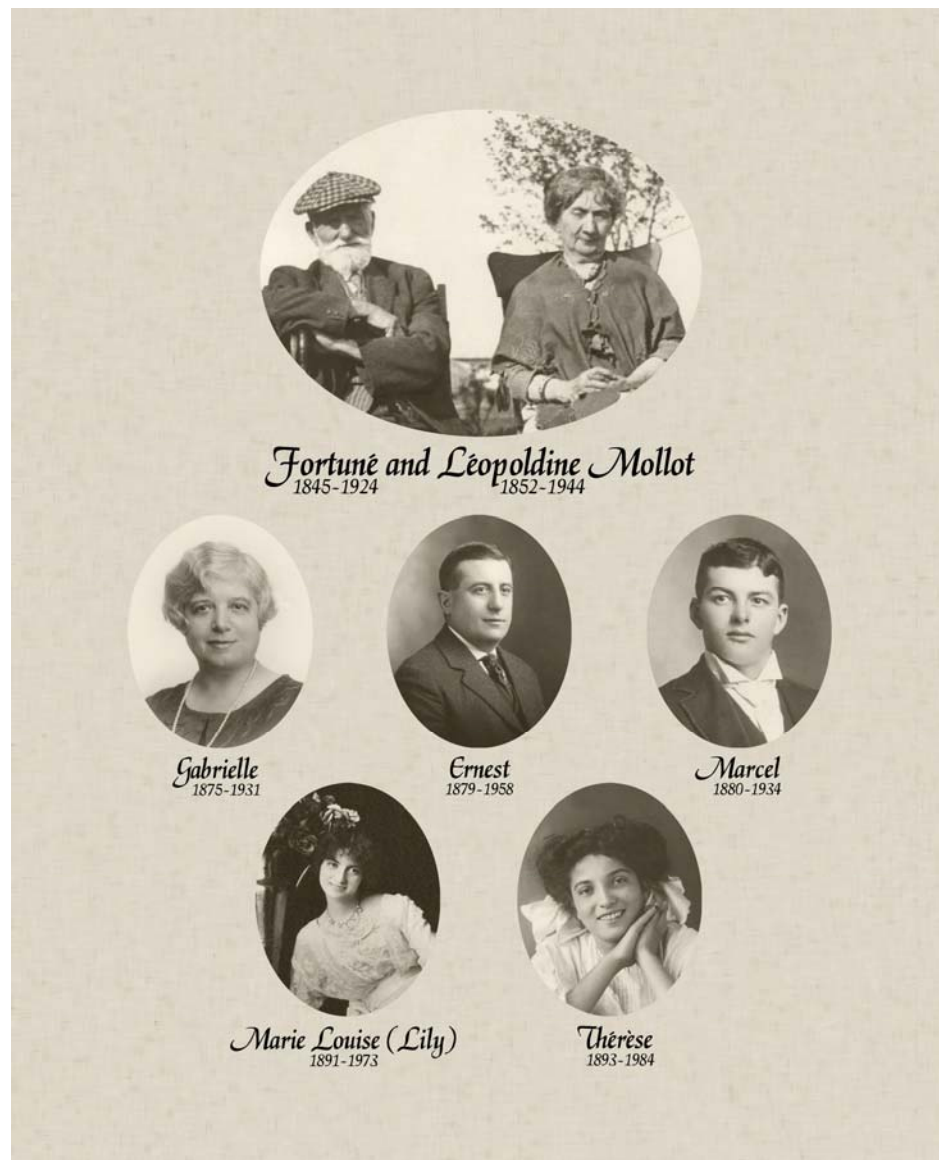
Fortuné was also quite an eloquent writer and this is evident in the memoirs, letters, and even poems that he left behind.

Fortuné's children, grandchildren and people who got to know him characterize Fortuné as 'un rêveur' – a dreamer! He was an artist, a principled man, a person of deep faith, but a very poor money manager. His legacy is his family, his art and his memoirs.

Léopoldine was a sophisticated and well-educated person who enjoyed city life and travel, who loved the arts and was talented in music and theatre. With courage, she followed her husband's dream to Canada and faced the many challenges in her life. The Mollot family is also her legacy.

The story of Fortuné and Léopoldine Mollot and their ancestors is a most interesting narrative for all of us to cherish. We have a rich ancestry that fortunately has been well documented. It is truly amazing that in looking at our family tree, you and I can reflect and ponder back some thirteen generations to our direct ancestor Georges Mollot, a wheelwright, born in 1613 in Trouans, back eight generations to Louis Mollot, a silk merchant, born in 1791 in Châlons en Champagne, and back four generations to Fortuné Mollot, an artist born in 1845 in Lyon and so the story continues! Whoever reads this narrative can also relive the family's past.

Collage of photos
of the Fortuné
and Léopoldine
Mollot family



It is hoped that this summary, A Journey into the Mollot and Benoit Family Tree, provides information necessary to the understanding, appreciation and knowledge of our family heritage. It is hoped that family members will share this information and pass it on to future generations.

A sequel to this document is necessary to outline the lives of the next generation; that of Gabrielle (21), Ernest (22), Marcel (23), Marie Louise (Lily) (24) and Thérèse (25)!

I hope you have enjoyed this Mollot family tree journey!

Sincerely, VIC MOLLOT

APPENDIX OF DOCUMENTS AND CERTIFICATES

The Memoires of Fortuné Mollot, dated July 18, 1912

Family research of Pascal Pierre, French genealogist, Trouans, France

Various items from the family archives:

- Civil registration - Birth of Louis Fortuné Mollot - Feb. 15, 1791 - Châlons sur Marne
- Civil marriage registration & contract - Louis Fortuné Mollot and Thérèse Annequin - Dec. 8, 1844 - Châbons
- Civil registration - Birth of Fortuné Louis Mollot - Nov.4, 1845 - Lyon
- Last Will and Testament of Louis Fortuné Mollot - Dec. 12, 1869
- Civil death certificate - Louis Fortuné Mollot - June 10, 1871 - Blandin
- Last Will and Testament Ernestine Benoit née Croze - March 21, 1887 – Die
- Letter-Comte de Paris to Fortuné Louis Mollot, mayor of Blandin - July 4, 1888
- Last Will and Testament of Dr. Alexandre Benoit – Dec. 20, 1892 - Die
- Terms of the sale of “le Martouret” - July 7, 1896 - Die
- St. Boniface Parish Archival records - death records of Fortuné Louis Mollot - April 22, 1924
- Reminiscences of my student life in Paris by Gabrielle Mollot, April 25, 1925
- St. Boniface Parish Archival records - death records of Gabrielle Mollot – Sept. 2, 1931
- Holy Cross Cemetery, Culver City, California - Death records of Léopoldine Mollot née Benoit - April 20, 1944

Archives Departementales de L'Aube, Troyes, France (for research of ancestors in Trouans, Dosnon, and L'Huitre)

- Louis Mollot and Jeanne Milliat - church marriage certificate - Nov.23, 1701 - Trouans
- Georges Mollot - church birth/baptism record - April 18, 1706 –Trouans - Microfilm # 5MI476P Années 1570 -1706
- Claude Mollot - church death record - May 26, 1727 - Trouans-Microfilm #5MI476P Années 1707 - 1754
- Georges Mollot and Sire Beaurieux-church marriage certificate – Trouans - Nov. 26, 1742
- Louis Mollot-church death record - Dec. 21, 1747 – Trouans - Microfilm #5MI476P Années 1707 - 1754 or LDS* Microfilm #1982967
- Pierre Mollot - church birth/baptism record - May 23, 1747 – Dosnon - Microfilm # 5MI 101P or LDS microfilm # 1897626
- Marie Angelique Mollot - church birth/baptism record - Mar. 20, 1758 – Dosnon - Microfilm # 5 MI 101P or LDS microfilm # 1897626

Archives Departementales de la Marne, Châlons en Champagne, France (for research of ancestors in Châlons sur Marne)

- Jean Toussaint Freminet - church birth/baptism record - Oct.31, 1722 - Châlons
- Jean Toussaint Freminet and Françoise Collard - church marriage record-Feb. 18, 1754 - Châlons - LDS microfilm # 2361444 - index table 1753-1772
- Marie Joseph Françoise Freminet - church birth registration - Feb. 25, 1756 – Châlons - St. Eloi Parish index tables - Années 1753 -1772
- Pierre Mollot and Marie Joseph Françoise Freminet - church marriage record - May 7, 1787 - Châlons - Document # 2E119 - Années 1781-1792. Also found on LDS microfilm # 2361445 in index table.
- Françoise Jeanne Mollot - church birth/baptism record - June 23, 1788 – Châlons - LDS microfilm # 2329070
- Jean Toussaint Freminet - church death record-Aug. 31, 1789 - Châlons- Document # 2E119 - Années 1781 - 1792 and LDS microfilm # 2329070. Also found on LDS microfilm #2361445 in index table.
- Louis Fortuné Mollot - church birth/baptism record - Feb. 15, 1791-Châlons - Document # 2E119-Années 1781-1792
- Pierre Mollot - civil death record - Aug. 5, 1810 – Châlons - LDS microfilm # 2330125
- Marie Joseph Françoise Mollot née Freminet-civic death record - Jan. 15, 1846-Châlons-Document # 2^E119/413 or LDS microfilm # 2330127
- Capitaine Jean Marie Fortuné Collet-civil death record - Oct. 7, 1850 - Châlons-Document # 2E119/413 or LDS microfilm # 2330127
- Françoise Jeanne Collet née Mollot - Sept. 29, 1869-civil death record – Châlons - LDS microfilm # 2330087 Années 1865 -1875

Archives Départementales de L'Isère, Grenoble, France (for research of ancestors in Blandin, Châbons and Grand Lemps)

- Thérèse Annequin - civil birth records - Dec. 31, 1806 – Châbons - LDS microfilm # 2067021
- Louis Fortuné Mollot and Thérèse Annequin - marriage record - Dec. 8, 1844 - Châbons - Document # 5E66/4-14 or LDS microfilm # 2067224
- Louis Fortuné Mollot - civic death record-June 10, 1871 – Blandin
- Gabriel Henri Marcel Mollot - civil birth record-Oct. 22, 1880-Blandin - Microfilm # 5E-47/3 -12 and LDS microfilm # 2101855
- Marie Louise Eugénie Dieudonné Mollot - civil birth record - Feb. 27, 1891 – Blandin - Microfilm # 5^E-47/3 - 12 or LDS microfilm # 2101855

Archives Départementales de L'Ardèche, Privas, France (for research of ancestors in Privas and La Voulte)

- Jacques Hubert Croze - church birth record - June 20, 1789 - Privas - LDS microfilm # 0396390 - Années 1768 -1792
- Eugénie Marie Appolinaire d'Azémar - civil birth certificate - Jan. 18,1803 - Privas-LDS microfilm # 0396393
- Léopold Michel Martial d'Azémar - civil birth certificate - May 5, 1804 – Privas - LDS microfilm # 0396393
- Jacques Hubert Croze and Eugénie Marie Appolinaire d'Azémar - Civil record - 1st marriage publication - Married Aug. 2, 1819-Privas - LDS microfilm #0396398
- Agathe Ernestine Julie Croze - birth certificate - Feb. 25, 1823 – Privas - Document # 4 E 186 art - Année1823

Archives Départementales de la Drôme, Valence, France (for research of ancestors in Die)

- Dr. Alexandre Gabriel Hubert Benoit - civil birth certificate - April 27, 1818-Die - LDS - microfilm # 371897. Also found on index table - LDS microfilm # 0375060
- Marie Léopoldine Anais Benoit - civil birth record - July 8, 1852 – Die - LDS microfilm # 371906 - Années 1793-1852
- Fortuné Louis Mollot and Marie Léopoldine Anais Benoit - civil marriage registration - Oct. 4, 1872 - Die - LDS microfilm # 2432109
- Agathe Ernestine Julie Benoit née Croze - civil death record - Mar. 22, 1887 - Die
- Louis Jean Ernest Mollot - civil birth registration - Aug. 31, 1879 - Die- 1792 - 1892 Civic Tables # 2M18-R113 or LDS microfilm # 375060

Archives Municipales de Lyon, Lyon, France

- Fortuné Louis Mollot - civil birth record - Nov. 4, 1845-Lyon

- Fortuné Louis Mollot - church baptism certificate - Nov. 4, 1845-Lyon- Obtained from Eglise Notre Dame St. Vincent.

Other sources

- Canada Census-of the years 1901, 1906, 1911, and 1916
- Canada Immigration - passenger list- S. S. Circassion - Allan Shipping Line - Aug. 25, 1892
- Canadian Genealogy Index - 1901
- Canadian passenger lists of 1907, 1926, 1927 1928, 1929, and 1930
- Collège Universitaire de St. Boniface - Enrolment records of 1892-1894
- Dictionnaire des artistes de langue française en Amérique du Nord par Bernard Mulaire, University of Laval, 1992
- Fannystelle - Western People - May 25, 1989 by Constance Franzmann
- Fannystelle Church records
- Henderson's Manitoba & North West Territories Gazetteer and Directory - for the years - 1892 to 1935
- Henderson's City of Winnipeg's Directory-for the years 1900 to 1945
- L'Histoire de Fannystelle par Noel Bernier, 1939
- La Famille D'Azémar à la Voulte sur Rhône by L'Abbé Auguste Roche
- La France Moderne printed by Lafitte Reprints - 1908
- La Liberté et Le Patriote - Sept.14, 1892 issue
- Les Français dans L'Ouest Canadien par Donatien Frémont
- Manitoba Genealogical Society
- Manitoba Land Titles - Land Title Certificate of Fannystelle farm - Sept. 15, 1894
- Municipality of Grey records
- New York passenger lists of 1911, 1921 and 1932
- The Manitoba Free Press –April 24, 1924 issue and Sept 3, 4,and 5, 1931 issues
- The Winnipeg Tribune-Sept. 3 &7, 1931 issues
- The Museum of Die, France
- U. S. /Canada Border Crossing lists, 1918, 1920

* LDS denotes Latter Day Saints. The Church of Latter Day Saints, better known as the Mormon Church, has state of the art Family Research Centres throughout the world for anyone to access free of charge. In the last 80 or so years, they have microfilmed millions of archival church and civil records from the 4 corners of the earth. A number of the above records/certificates were obtained from this source.

Attachments: Mollot Family Tree – 2nd edition-April, 2010

In the next edition

The next generation (The children of Fortuné and Léopoldine)

Version française à suivre.