

Narcisse Duford: **What I Learned by Tracking His Moves and Finding His Children** *Janine LaFleur Penfield #9134*

When I think back on when I began the journey to discover my family history in 2006, quite a few good lessons roll around in my mind: patience, persistence, rechecking, and letting the evidence lead to your next question. My great-great grandparents, Narcisse **Bougret dit Duford** and Malvina **Blais** might be a typical example of what one can expect in French-Canadian research. They immigrated to the United States twice and had children all along the way, but it's easy to see that their lives were not a linear process, and the research is definitely not linear either.

Beginning with what I knew, I traced my family beginning with my parents, Lorraine **Duford** and Philip **LaFleur**, and found that the town where my mom grew up, Pembroke, NH, was home to **Dufords** since the 1880s. Mom's parents and grandparents were married at St-John-the-Baptist, and many babies were baptized there. At the beginning of my search, my mother was still alive to provide some information, but as I continued to share the information I gathered until her death in 2007, I then had to hope that her older brother could recall some old tales.

[Lesson learned – talk to your parents, uncles, aunts and grandparents – sooner rather later.]

For the longest time at the start, the only information I had on the family was what I could cull out of the repertoires – marriages and deaths of children, most baptized at St-John. Then I discovered New Hampshire vital records where marriage records provided the birthplaces of two children, my great-grandfather

Albert and his sister, Melina, at Great Falls, NH, now part of Somersworth. I found an 1894 New Hampshire death record for Adelard born in “Leedonville [Lyndonville], Vermont.” Adelard died at the age of 11 years on the 4th of July from drowning. His occupation is listed as “mill operative.”

After finding my great-great aunt's birth in 1871 in Great Falls, the family didn't appear again until the 1881 Canadian census, when the family is found in Stoke Center, Quebec with just three children, Samuel born in Canada in 1868, Albert born in 1869 and Melina born in 1871. From St-John's repertoires, I knew of two children born in New Hampshire, François/Frank in 1885 and Marie Anne Phedora in 1888. Parish records also gave me Samuel's death at 15 years old in 1883 in Pembroke.

I began to search all the repertoires available at the time for parishes around Stoke Center, in the Eastern Townships of Richmond and Shefford on account of their being on a census in nearby Stoke Center, and found the marriage of Narcisse **Duford** and Malvina **Blais** on 15 Aug 1864 at *St-Jean-Baptiste* in Roxton Falls, Quebec.

The 1900 U.S. Census then showed five children for Narcisse and Malvina: Albert, Melina, Frank, Phedora, and one child born directly after the Canadian census was conducted, Euclid in May 1881 in Stoke Center, Quebec.

But I was puzzled. The spacing of the children showed a 10-year gap between Melina born in 1871 and Euclid in 1881.

Where were they for those ten years and were there more children?

[Lesson learned – analyze your data for anomalies. It can mean that your search is incomplete or incorrect.]

Of course, along the way, I was introduced to online resources. One of these is BMS2000.org. Dates and places found there can be used to find Drouin images on FamilySearch.org, or to help narrow down results in Ancestry.com. It's a resource that is continually being updated; in fact all the online non-subscription and subscription sites have more records added all the time. The marriage record for Narcisse and Malvina then led me to find Narcisse's parents and a line going back to *St-Antoine de-Pade* in Longueuil. It was there and on BMS2000 that I learned that **Duford** is a *dit* name for **Bougret**, and that **Duford**, as becomes the case in the US, is also spelled **Dufort**.

[Lesson learned: Use several sources to bolster your evidence. Look at *dit* names

alone and in combination with the name you know, and record all the ways the priests and indexers spelled the name.]

A search in the St-Michel, Sherbrooke baptism repertoires and confirmed by Ancestry.com finally revealed two more children born in Sherbrook, Quebec, and died in Stoke Center, Quebec: Marie Exilie born 1 Aug 1874 and dying 5 Feb 1881, then Joseph Napoleon born 1 Mar 1879 and dying 15 Jan 1881, just before the 1881 census. Who couldn't help but feel a pang for Malvina, pregnant with her 6th child, losing two young children within weeks of each other. No other children have emerged in my research and the 10-year gap is now accounted for.

The children's births trace the family's movement from Quebec to the United States, back to Quebec, and then back to the United States, finally settling in Pembroke, NH, after a short stop in Vermont.

Name	Born/Bapt.	Place	Died	Place
Samuel	20 Feb 1868	Sherbrooke, QC	29 Aug 1883	Pembroke, NH
Albert	22 Feb 1869	Somersworth, NH	13 Dec 1950	Concord, NH
Melina	1871	Somersworth, NH	22 Jun 1932	Cumberland, RI
Exilie	1 Aug 1874	Sherbrooke, QC	5 Feb 1881	Stoke Center, QC
Napoleon	18 Mar 1879	Sherbrooke, QC	15 Jan 1881	Stoke Center, QC
Euclid	23 May 1881	Stoke Center, QC	1 Sep 1933	Pembroke, NH
Adelard	22 Jan 1883	Lyndonville, VT	4 Jul 1894	Pembroke, NH
Frank	9 Mar 1885	Pembroke, NH	14 Dec 1939	Bow, NH
Phedora	19 Oct 1888	Pembroke, NH	27 Jul 1975	Manchester, NH

All of the family's moves can be followed along the established railroads of the day to the burgeoning industrial areas of Quebec and New England. Many **Dufords** can still be found in the Eastern Townships and in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

The family group sheet was looking pretty complete as far as the children were concerned but what about the births of Narcisse and Malvina?

Narcisse's death certificate in 1930 gives his birth date as 1 Dec 1843 at "St-François." Once I learned to browse Drouin images on FamilySearch, I looked

at every St-François in the given time frame to no avail. At the time, I culled five baptisms for Narcisse's parents, Narcisse **Bougret dit Duford** and Françoise **Bourdon**, all at *St-Antoine-de-Pade* in Longueuil. The church repertoire and BMS2000 agreed on those five baptisms, however, Narcisse **Duford's** was not among them. Additionally, there were curious time gaps, plus other children for whom I had marriages who were not baptized at *St-Antoine*.

After being on the back burner for a long time, I decided to recheck BMS2000 and behold, four more children's baptisms appear for Narcisse's parents at *Ste-Famille* in Boucherville! Narcisse was born on 30 Nov 1842 and baptized the following day.

[Lessons learned – just because you've checked a resource doesn't mean that it's never updated. Check it again and again – and the information given on death certificates is only as good as the informant's knowledge.]

Malvina **Blais's** baptism was found on Ancestry.com. She was born 15 Feb 1846 at *Ste-Marguerite-de-Dorchester*, Quebec. Throughout this process and all my research, I have a map of Quebec on hand to see where the various parishes are in relation to the family I'm researching, to answer the question: does everyone's location make sense? With the various baptisms of Narcisse's siblings, Boucherville and Longueuil are relatively close to each other and the family could have been moving back and forth. Narcisse's St-François birth never made sense.

Malvina's birth was recorded quite a bit east of where Narcisse was born and where

they married, I accepted the information but couldn't imagine how they met. To answer that question, I looked at Malvina's parents: Jacques **Blais** and Emérence **Dominique**, married 3 Jul 1837 at *St-François-de-la-Rivière Sud*. In 1846, when Malvina was only 3 months old, her father died in *Ste-Marguerite-de-Dorchester*. Three years later, in 1849, Emérence married Benjamin **Thibeault [Thibault]** in Henryville, Iberville County, Québec. On the 1861 Canadian census, I find the **Blais/ Thibeault/ Dominique** families in Henryville. The **Duford** family also appears in Iberville County on the 1861 Canadian census. More research will have to be done to learn how Iberville attracted so many farmers to move there, although I suspect that the land around the St-Lawrence River could no longer support large families adequately and new land in the Eastern Townships opened. The question of how my great-great grandparents came together was answered by the census. Three years after the 1861 census was conducted they married and began the journey that brought our family to the United States.

[Lesson learned: the census is useful to track movement but should be supported by other vital records.]

So many of the lessons learned were on account of this family or learned elsewhere and applied liberally here. How Narcisse and Malvina met was discovered just recently to complete the portrait of this family. Malvina died in August 1923 followed by Narcisse in April 1930. They are buried in Old *St-Jean-Baptiste* Cemetery in Allenstown, NH. While most families' journeys are unique, what is not unique is that so many American families make the journey.

Ancestral Chart of Narcisse Duford

Janine LaFleur Penfield, #9134

Groom	Marriage	Spouse and Parents
Pierre Bougrette dit Duford ↓	Mantes sur Seine, France	Catherine Guérin
I		
Prudent Bougrette dit Duford ↓	19 Oct 1673 Trois-Rivières, Québec	M. Charlotte Etienne Philippe Marie (Kiarie) Vien
II		
Louis Bourgrette dit Duford ↓	24 Jul 1719 Pointe aux Trembles, Québec	M. Anne Beaudry Louis Françoise Langlois
III		
Jacques Amable Bourgrette dit Duford ↓	26 Feb 1759 Repentigny, Québec	M. Françoise Jetté dit DuRivage Urbaine Teresse Richaume
IV		
Louis Amable Bougrette dit Duford ↓	20 Feb 1797 L'Assomption, Québec	M. Charlotte Marion Antoine Monique Tellier dit LaFortune
V		
Narcisse Bougret dit Duford ↓	15 Oct 1833 Longueuil, Québec	Françoise Bourdon François Charlotte Ste-Marie
VI		
Narcisse Bougret dit Duford [Duford] ↓	15 Aug 1864 Roxton Falls, Québec	Malvina Blais Jacques Emérance Dominique
VII		
Albert Duford ↓	29 May 1893 Allenstown, NH	M. Odina Neveu Joseph Marcelline Marie Brouillard
VIII		
Arthur Duford	6 Aug 1923 Allenstown, NH	Thérèse Pronovost Narcisse M. Philomene Beaudoin