

French-Canadian and Métis* Heritage Week in Michigan

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*The fruit
doesn't
fall far
from
the
tree...*

VoyageurHeritage.wordpress.com

* mé • tis \may-TEE\ n, [fr.] people of mixed European and Indigenous ancestry



Jesuit
Pear

Gaspard Joseph Chaussegros de Léry's 1743 map of the Detroit River
- courtesy of Library and Archives Canada

The French at the Straits



(14) Citadel, 1764 (BHC)

This is a drawing of *Détroit*, 1764. Founded in 1701 by Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. Its economy was based on the fur trade. Homes and business buildings were protected within its fort walls.

The Frenchtown Community



The River Raisin settlement, also known as Frenchtown, between 1785 and 1817 was one of the most visible French-Canadian communities of the Great Lakes in North America. Frenchtown was named Monroe (Michigan) in 1817.

With few exceptions, French-Canadians of Monroe County can trace their heritage to northern France. Their ancestors left France for Canada during the seventeenth century bringing with them their language, religion, and traditions.

Early French Settlers

Frenchtown (Monroe, MI)

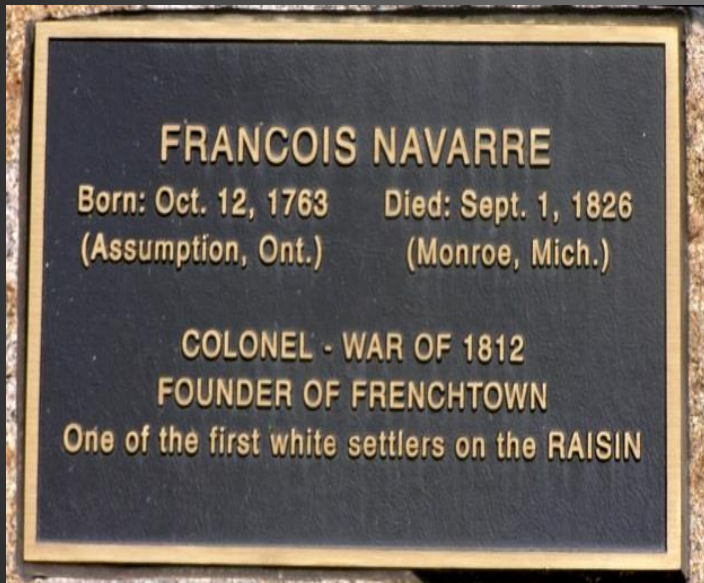
French missionaries came to our area as early as 1634. They named the river the Rivière Aux Raisins because of the many grapes in this locality.

A trading post and fort were established here in 1778.

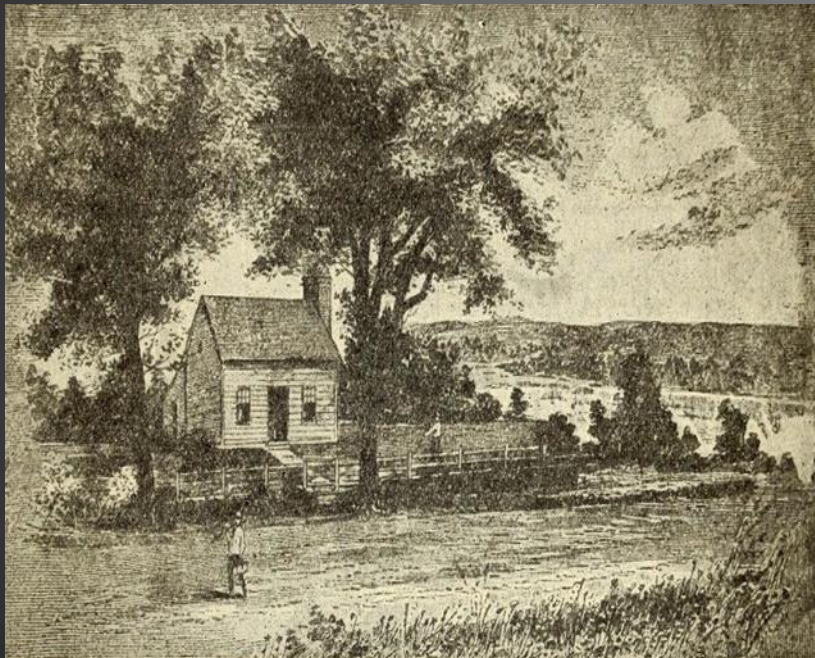
Francois Navarre was the first white settler in 1780. The first settlement was called Frenchtown when about 100 French families came here from Detroit and Canada. The American Flag was first raised in Michigan at Monroe in honor of President James Monroe. St. Antoine's Church on the banks of the River Raisin was the second church in the state.

François Navarre

François Navarre was one of the first permanent European settlers of the River Raisin area, arriving in 1780.



François Navarre



Home of Col. Francis Navarre. Gen. Winchester's Headquarters.

The French-Canadian settlers built log cabins, farmed, traded, and lived peacefully among the local Native Americans for many years. Many of them received their land from the Native Americans.

François Navarre's homestead was located where the present day Sawyer Homestead stands.

Frenchtown



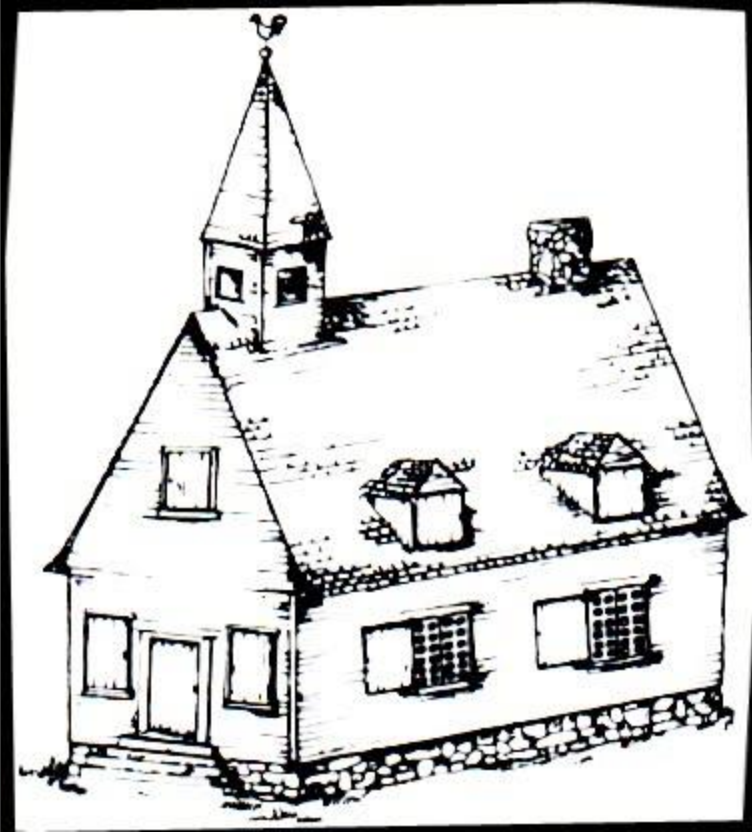
During the late eighteenth century, some 442 new farms were carved-out of the rugged wilderness by mostly French habitants along rivers, streams, and the lake shore from Lake St. Clair, north of Detroit, south to Rivière-aux-Loutres (Otter Creek), ten miles south of River Raisin.

Along the River Raisin



The French set up their farms in long "ribbons" set back from the river or creek. This allowed each settler access to for fresh water use and transportation. There were no roads.

St. Antoine sur la Rivière-aux-Raisins



Officially named Saint Mary in 1845, the long-standing parish traces its ancestry to its little known predecessor "Saint-Antoine sur la Rivière-aux-Raisins" (Saint-Anthony on the River Raisin), a poor French Canadian parish and mission founded jointly by River Raisin settlers and the Catholic Archdiocese of Québec (Canada) on October 15, 1788.

Reconstruction of St. Antoine Church in 1796
(from Bartolo and Reaume 1988)

St. Antoine sur la Rivière-aux-Raisins

The first curé and missionary of St. Antoine's parish tasked with bringing the Roman Catholic religion to habitant settler and Indian alike was Father Edmund Burke, an Irish priest teaching at the Seminary of Québec in Québec city. Burke, trained and educated in Paris, France, spoke, read, and wrote English, French, and Latin fluently. Burke arrived at the Rivière aux Raisins in November of 1794 with his manservant to setup quarters in the recently built two-story, chapel and rectory which was still in an unfinished condition.



Bishop Edmund Burke (ca. 1817), First Catholic Bishop of Nova Scotia, Canada. Twenty-three years earlier (1794) he was the first parish priest and missionary of St. Antoine de la Riviere-aux-Raisins.

The Deloeuil Site



Deloeuil Archaeological Site

1789-1867

Archaeologists came together to learn about the early French by digging in the ground before a new subdivision was made at Frenchmen's Bend on North Custer Road.

Historical markers of the first church & cemetery



A new housing development was scheduled nearby but human bones were unearthed at the proposed site in 1999. By September of that year, further examination found a total of 45 tombs. The City of Monroe bought the site from the developer, reinterred the remains in a formal ceremony, and another monument was placed at the site.

The Navarre-Anderson Trading Post



The main building, built in 1789 by Utreau Navarre, is the oldest wooden residence still standing in the state. It is the most complete example of French-Canadian "piece-sur-piece" construction in the Old Northwest. Now restored to 1797.

The Trading Post complex was established to represent a French pioneer homestead along the old River Raisin. The main building, built in 1789 by Utreau Navarre, is the oldest wooden residence still standing in the state. It is the most complete example of French-Canadian piece-sur-piece construction in the Old Northwest. It has been restored to about 1797. Other buildings include the Navarre-Morris 1810 cookhouse and a replica 1790's French-Canadian style barn

The Navarre-Anderson Trading Post Complex



1810 Cookhouse

The Navarre-Anderson Trading Post Complex



Replica 1790s French-Canadian style barn

What did the French look like?



This is how many Frenchmen dressed—a mix of European and Native American clothing styles.

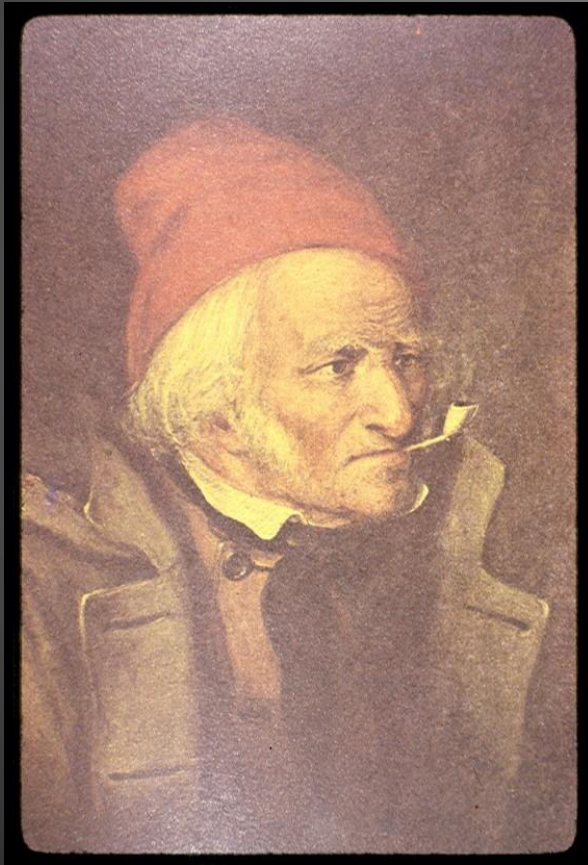
This is Peter Navarre, a War of 1812 veteran and scout.

Une ceinture fléchée



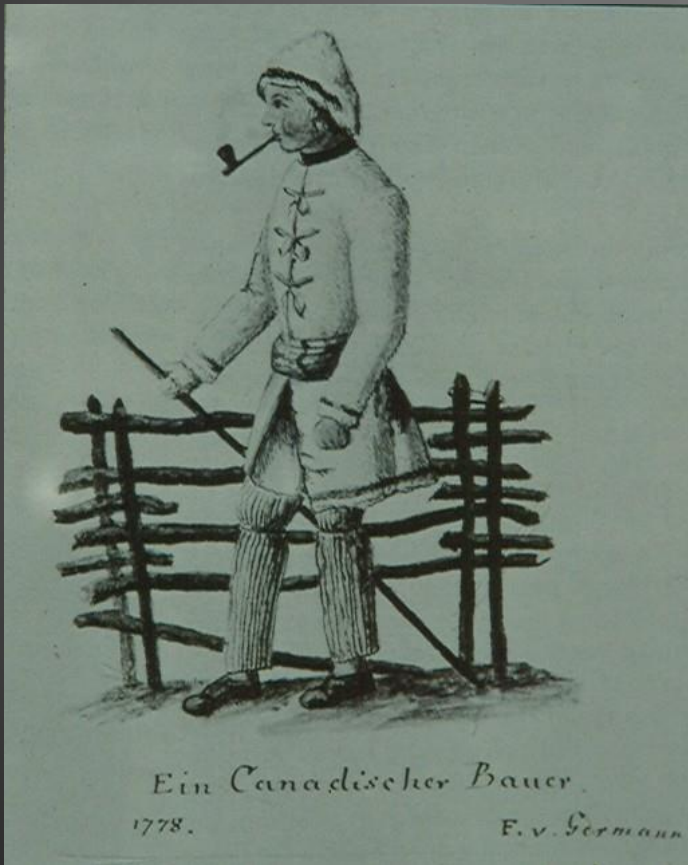
This woven sash was called *une ceinture fléchée*. It was hand woven and brightly colored. It was used as a belt wrapped around the middle, into which a knife, pistol, etc. could be tucked.

Une tuque



This hand knitted cap was known as *une tuque*. It was made from wool and very warm. It could be worn both during the day and at night.

Une capote



The French wore a wool overcoat called *une capote*. It would wrap across the front, and be tied with the *ceinture fléchée*. It had a hood, long sleeves, and was down to the knees.

La nourriture



The French were not large area farmers. There was no demand for farm products to sell. But the French had large fruit orchards. These French pears are small (see the quarter) but delicious.

La pêche



Living on the river and next to the Lake meant an abundance of fish. Fishing was done by hook, net and by spear. The large sturgeon was often 5 feet long and a hundred pounds.

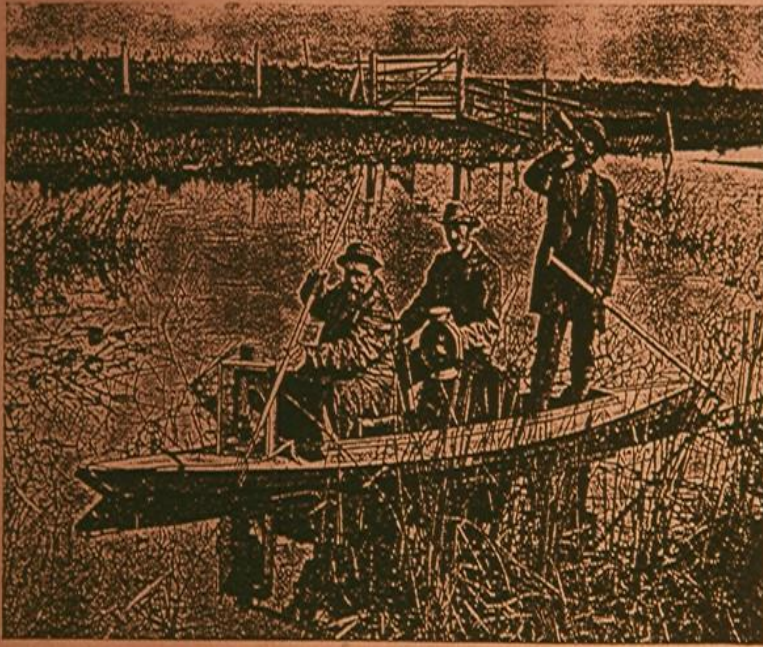
L'écrevisse



The rivers, creeks and lake were home to these little creatures, also eaten by the French.

Crawfish/crayfish are tiny, and look like lobsters. They still live along the waters today.

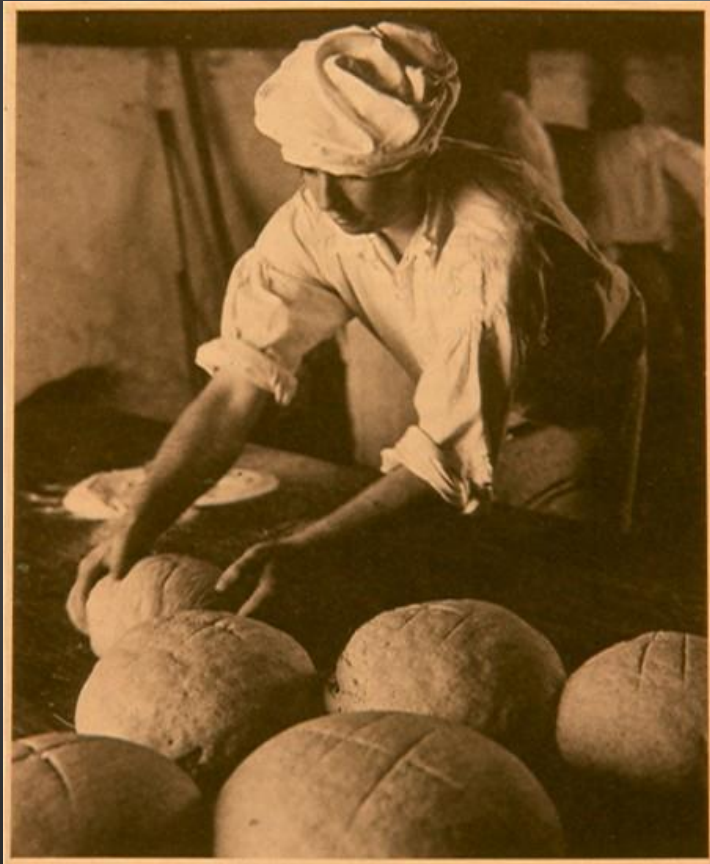
Les grenouilles



FROGING ON THE RAISIN.

The marshes were full of frogs which the French captured while 'frogging'. Frog legs were a delicacy.

Le pain



Making bread was an important activity and the French set up grist (grain) mills in their settlements. Often grain was taken to a baker for baking, or a bread oven was shared by families. Loaves rose high with a chewy crust.

Les glissantes



Another dough product were boiled dumplings, or *glissantes*, or 'sliders'. Bits of batter were dropped into boiling broth, which solidified and cooked the dumplings.

Le rat musqué

“God Bless dee Mushrat:
She’s a Fish!”

by Dennis M. Au

Muskrat: nearly 300 years of French presence in southeastern Michigan has boiled down to an enduring passion for eating this little rodent. From Port Huron in the north down to the western shore of Lake Erie into Ohio, the descendants of Michigan’s 18th century French community are dubbed “Mushrat” French. This foodway is a trait that in part distinguishes them as a unique cultural group. The taste for muskrat has proved to be pervasive and has



Another celebrated food item on the River Raisin was the marsh rabbit, the mushrat- the muskrat. The French Catholics from Frenchtown were allowed to eat muskrat during Lent because it was considered a fish since it spent so much time in the water.

Tarte au Sucre

Sugar Pie

1 cup brown sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Carnation evaporated milk

1 tsp nutmeg

1 heaping tbsp flour

Mix all together then pour in an unbaked pie shell. Bake 350° and cook for 40-45 until set.

GLISSANTES

(Sliders, adapted from Trois Siecles de recettes au pays de Cadillac)

Ingredients :

1 beaten egg

$\frac{3}{4}$ c. milk

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

2 tsp baking powder

2 c. flour to make dough

3 pints of chicken broth.

Procedure: Combine the ingredients (except broth) into dough. Roll the dough thinly and cut in pieces.

Drop pieces one by one into very hot broth. Cover and simmer 5 minutes or until cooked through. Remove from heat and let the glissantes absorb the flavor.

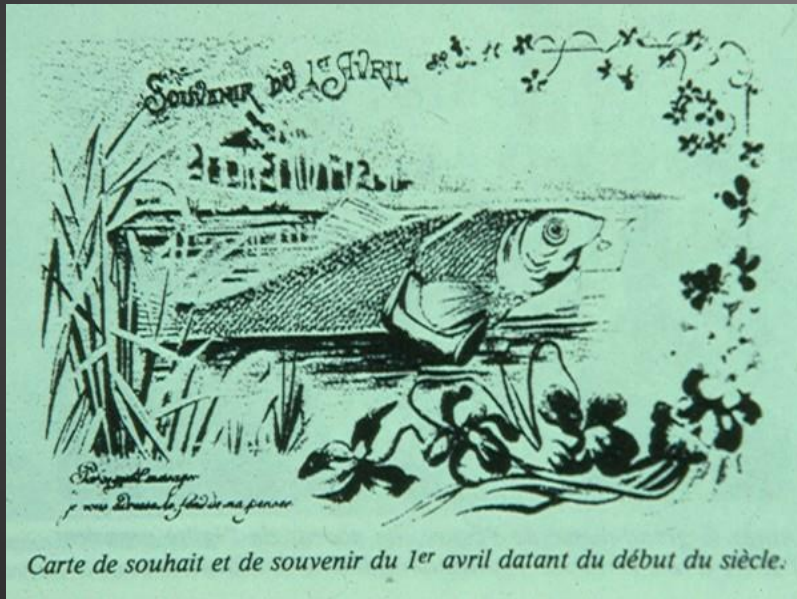
Fêtes



Holidays were especially festive. On New Years Eve and Fat Tuesday (*Mardi Gras*) people would dress in funny clothes and go from door to door for food and gifts for the poor. Usually noise and music was involved in the celebrating.

Poisson d'avril

April Fools' Day came out of the French celebration of *poisson d'avril*, or the April fish, on April 1st. A paper fish was pinned to someone's back without their knowledge and the joke was on them.



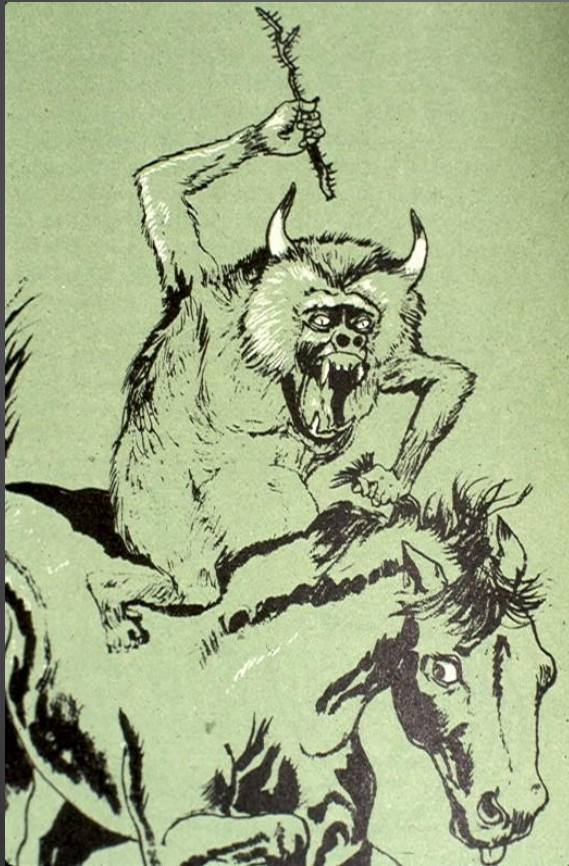
Contes et légendes



LA CHASSE GALERIE.

The French would tell stories for entertainment, many of which were quite scary. La chasse galerie is a popular French-Canadian tale of a flying canoe.

Lutin



The *lutin* was a goblin who snuck into the farmer's barn at night to ride his horse to exhaustion and tie its tail and mane in knots. The poor horses could not work in the morning.

Loup-garou



Le loup garou was a werewolf who howled and prowled the night. His bite would turn you into one, also. Drawing blood from the *loup garou* would break the evil spell and return him into a human.

La Dame Blanche



La Dame Blanche or 'white lady' was a ghostly woman who lured travelers into the woods to be hopelessly lost, and never to be seen again.

La musique



The French enjoyed playing music and singing. Every neighborhood had a fiddler, who played music for dances and parties.

Traditional French-Canadian Song

Chevalier de la table ronde

Chevalier de la table ronde

Goûtons voir si le vin est bon. (2x)

Goûtons voir oui, oui, oui

Goûtons voir non, non, non

Goûtons voir si le vien est bon. (2x)

Si je meurs, je veux qu'on m'enterre

Dans la cave où il y a du bon vin. (2x)

Dans la cave oui, oui, oui

Dans la cave non, non, non

Dans la cave où il y a du bon vin. (2x)

Traditional French-Canadian Song

Alouette

Refrain:

Alouette, gentille alouette
Alouette je te plumerai.

Je te plumerai la tête
Je te plumerai la tête
Et la tête, et la tête
Alouette, Alouette
O-o-o-o-oh (Refrain)

Je te plumerai le bec
Je te plumerai le bec
Et le bec, et le bec
Et la tête, et la tête
Alouette, Alouette
O-o-o-o-oh (Refrain)

Je te plumerai le cou
Je te plumerai le cou
Et le cou, et le cou
Et le bec, et le bec
Et la tête, et la tête
Alouette, Alouette
O-o-o-o-oh (Refrain)

Je te plumerai le dos
Je te plumerai le dos
Et le dos, et le dos
Et le cou, et le cou
Et le bec, et le bec
Et la tête, et la tête
Alouette, Alouette
O-o-o-o-oh (Refrain)

