

# Anne Raymond Richard tells her French-Canadian Story

by Dr. James Paul

At the age of 107, Anne (Raymond) Richard died on Dec. 5, 2017. The following narrative of her life is based on a transcript of her Nov. 20, 2000 interview with two Kankakee Community College Western Civilization course students, Debra Lynch and Amy Henson. More information including photo gallery, family tree and a video clip of Anne can be found at <http://frenchcanadians.kcc.edu/interviewees/arrichard/transcript.html>.

"I was born Anne Mary Raymond on Jan. 2, 1910 in St. George, Illinois the youngest daughter and child of Xavier and Josephine Raymond. My family was a large one compared to today's standards. I had nine brothers and sisters and there was 20 years difference between my oldest brother and myself. At 91 years old, I am the only surviving member of my immediate family. As was common for the time period, my brothers, sisters and I were all born at home. Back then, doctors made house visits to deliver babies, or women used the services of midwives. My mother was a midwife and she mainly assisted women during the birth of their children. In those days, childbirth and pregnancy were never discussed openly in public and were considered very private matters, unlike today where fathers may witness and videotape the birth of their children.

Typical of most people from the early 1900s, my father and mother were farmers. They farmed 700 acres located mostly in St. George, just northeast of Bourbonnais, and a few acres in other parts of the county. All of us children worked on the farm and it was very hard work. We had several hired hands as well to help out. Some stayed and received room and meals in return for their labor. We not only grew crops, but also raised animals such as cows, chickens, geese and pigs. In those days, there were no fast food restaurants. We grew our own vegetables and butchered the animals for meat. Almost all of our food was homemade by my mother. She also sewed most of the clothes we wore. As a young girl, I can remember a salesman coming to the house with a wagon selling fabrics and other household items. Mother would buy the fabric she needed to make our clothes from him.

Although life and work on the farm could be hard, some of my happiest memories are from my childhood spent there. Most of our time was spent outside, and we didn't leave the farm very often. People didn't travel like they do now. But, I do remember going to dances and parties. We also didn't have toys like children do now. I believe I had one doll while growing up. Sometime we would cut pictures out of the Montgomery Ward and Sears catalogs for fun.

I attended both public school and Catholic school that was taught by the nuns. I finished grammar school and had 1 year, 2 months of high school. I rode a horse (bareback) 1 1/2 miles to school each day, or I walked in any kind of weather—rain,

sleet or snow. I left school each day to attend religion classes taught by priests at the Catholic Church.

During my childhood, my family only spoke French. We knew very little English. Over time, though, I eventually learned English.

We had very few celebrations on the farm. No big fusses. Christmas wasn't celebrated like it is now. We had our celebration on New Year's Eve. There would be a big party and we had to kiss everyone—which I didn't like much. Then we would get a blessing from our father. My father's hobby was wine making, so we would have some of the wine he made.

For presents we would put our shoes outside our bedroom door at night and usually we got an apple. For dinner, we would maybe butcher a hog, duck or chicken, and mother would make enough cookies to fill a milk can and enough donuts to fill a milk can. To this day, I still cannot make cookies that taste as good as my mothers.

At around 14 years of age, I recall hearing a sound something like a lawnmower, which we didn't have yet back then, and I ran out to the orchard and it was then I saw my first airplane. Early planes were big and very noisy. The first movie I ever saw was with my sister Hattie. The movie was in black and white and had no sound. A piano or organ was played for the sound effects. It was a Wild West movie and I remember the piano making the sound of the horse's hooves.

When my youngest brother, Rene, got married, he took the farm in St. George and my mother and I moved in with my sister, Henrietta (Hattie) and her husband in Bourbonnais.

Hattie's husband ran a bakery and we always had fresh bread. It was while living with my sister that I got my first job. My first jobs were cleaning houses. I cleaned a whole house for \$1. I made about \$3 a week.

Eventually, I came to live with a Kankakee attorney, Gene LeMare and his family on East Court Street. I helped raised their children, and did the cooking and cleaning. Even though it was hard work, we didn't have the modern conveniences we have today, I was treated quite well. It was soon after this that I met my husband-to-be Adrien Richard at a dance down at the town hall which at that time was near the Dairy Queen in Bourbonnais. We dated for several years before we married when I was 25 years old. The happiest day of my life was when I married Adrien on July 27, 1935 at 7:30 in the morning at Maternity BVM Church. We honeymooned in the Black Hills and Shawnee Mountains in Colorado. It took us 10 days to drive to Colorado at 35 miles an hour. We spent \$100 on our whole honeymoon.

In 1938, Adrien and I bought our house on Marsile in Bourbonnais where I have resided ever since. Adrien passed away five years ago after 60 years of marriage. We have two daughters, Stephanie (Arthur) Yonke and Marcia (Larry) Rabideau. They are

both retired teachers. My hobbies include gardening, quilting and volunteering at the church. I still tend a beautiful garden in my backyard and have quilted probably over 75 quilts in my lifetime. I have also experienced five wars (World War I, World War II, Korean War, Vietnam War and Gulf War) and lived through shortages of food and clothing. I've gone from horse and buggy to automobiles. I went from "outdoor plumbing" to indoor plumbing. I've seen the invention of the telephone, television, airplanes and radio. I've lived through the Great Depression.

Some of my happiest memories have been when times were at the toughest. We all had to pull together and take care of each other to survive."

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Anne and Adrien Richard's Golden Wedding photograph.

The one story Colonial Revival style frame house at 269 E. Marsile St., built in 1927 by Art Lambert out of wood from the former Arseneau Bakery located just west on East Marsile Street. Adrien and Anne Richard along with their two daughters lived in the house for many years until Anne moved in the early 2000s.



Anne's farm home which is still located on St. George Road. This two-story frame home was built by Alexander Lord around 1850 and sold, along with 80 acres of land, to Xavier Raymond, Sr. in 1894. The home was occupied by the Raymond family until 1966 and owned by Anne Richard, the youngest of the Raymond children, until 1984. The photograph of the family was taken in 1912. Anne (toddler in center front) was 2 years old at the time.

## Breakfast fundraiser

The Sun River Terrace Community Center will present its "Inspirational Old Fashioned Country Breakfast", the annual fundraiser for the Summer Food Meals Program on Saturday, March 10, 2018 from 10 a.m.-noon. The breakfast will be held in the village of Sun River Terrace, at 7219 E. Chicago St. Menu items will include sausage patties, bacon, ham, buttermilk pancakes, fried green tomatoes, eggs, grits, biscuits, smothered potatoes, juice, coffee and milk. Adult tickets are \$8 and children's tickets are \$5.

Proceeds will go to youth summer healthy meals, educational enrichment, arts and crafts and physical activities. Donations will be accepted. For advance ticket sales, contact Sun River Terrace Community Center at 1-815-304-4498 or email: [sunriverterracecommunitycenter@comcast.net](mailto:sunriverterracecommunitycenter@comcast.net).

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