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# *The Jamme (Jam) Family History*

## *1732 -*

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First Settler of Roberval, Quebec. Thomas Jamme 1825 (?) - 1884

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by *Lee Jam*

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Alma Jam Pope 1884 - 1988

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To Aunt Alma, my connection to the past.....and to my son Jim, whose spirit continues to be my inspiration for the future.



Jim Aultman 1964 - 1989

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## ***Jean Jamme de Bellegarde***

Jean James, as the name was spelled on his birth record, was born on June 4, 1732 to Francois and Marie Rose Duron of Rue Royale, parish of St. Louis, Versailles, France. Francois was a coachman for the Royal government. Two years later another son, Francois, was born—the spelling on his birth record is Jam.

Because so few people could read or write, the name Jam went through many changes over the centuries, and it is impossible to determine the original spelling or where the name originated. If the name was James it may have originated in England. There are indications from a distant Canadian cousin that this family originally came from the Bayeux area of France, just across the channel from England and not far from Normandy.

At the age of 17, Jean became a soldier and in 1757 was sent with the Regiment De Berry to Quebec. Though his regiment was sent to Lake Champlain, Jean was assigned to the personal staff of General Montcalm in Quebec City.

September 13, 1759 was the day of the decisive battle between England and France and Jean was with Montcalm on the Plains of Abraham, 200 feet above the St. Lawrence River, when Montcalm was wounded. According to Ernest Gagnon<sup>1</sup>, Jean James or Jean Jamme dit Bellegarde, as he had come to be known, was one of the officers who helped Montcalm, still on horseback, through the St. Louis gate of the city wall. Montcalm was taken to the home of an absent Surgeon Arnoux where he died early the following morning. During the long night as he prepared himself for death, Montcalm called Jean to his side and said, “I have no family here, but the care you have given me has been that of a son. Take this watch which was dear to me and remember that your General was pleased with you until his last.” Montcalm’s body was taken to the

nearby Convent of the Ursalines and buried, his remains are there today.



**St. Louis Gate, Quebec City**

A year later Quebec fell to the English. Instead of returning to France with his regiment, Jean Jamme dit Bellegarde remained in Quebec. Both Jean’s parents were now dead, he was 29 years old and had spent 12 years as a soldier. On November 23, 1761<sup>2</sup>, he married Francoise Garigue dit Languedoc, widow of Louis Dupuis, who was ten years his senior. The “dit” that appears in both of their names means “alias” or “also known as”, this was common and appears over and over again in documents that date from this period. According to the woman in Versailles who copied the birth record for me, this could also have been the name of Jean’s father’s village: Jean Jamme of the village

of Bellegarde, of which there is a village by this name near Versailles.

Jean and Françoise moved to 'Ile D'Orleans (Isle of Orleans) a few miles upriver. The island, visible from Quebec City, was accessible only by boat or over ice in the winter. Near the crossing point to 'Ile D'Orleans is Montmorency Falls, twice as high as Niagara and quite spectacular. Here they lived in the village of St. Jean, at that time a shipbuilding center and port for ships coming from the Atlantic. In addition to shipbuilding, the island was largely agricultural. Many of the homes there today date from this period, and the island is famous for fruits, berries, vegetables. It is especially known for strawberries. 'Ile D'Orleans is beautiful with gently rolling hills and wooded terrain.



Montmorency Falls, Near 'Ile D'Orleans

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Their son, Jean Baptiste Jamme, was born on 'Ile D'Orleans September 22, 1762. He grew to manhood and on August 22, 1785, married Françoise Fontaine<sup>3</sup>. They made their home in Dorchester County near Levis, across the river from the quaint little island, south of Quebec City. Their son, also Jean Baptiste Jamme, married Catherine Nadeau in the same parish, St. Henri, October 13, 1809. In their marriage record both families are referred to as "laborers of the parish", which indicates that they were skilled workers.

Jean Jamme dit Bellegarde lived the rest of his life at St. Jean, 'Ile D'Orleans. Records from the local parish state that one October day he went fishing and never returned. His body was found about a month later on a nearby island, 'Ile Madame (Lady's Island)—he was 78 years old. Many were present at his burial on November 4, 1811 including his stepson Louis St. Michel, but no mention of his other sons, Jean and Joseph, or their families. Jean was buried in the little parish cemetery at St. Jean. From this cemetery one can look across the river to Dorchester County, where his son, grandson, and great-grandchildren lived.

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### ***Thomas and Ambroise Jamme***

More than 30 years later Jean's great-grandsons, Thomas and Ambroise Jamme, two of eleven children, set out to explore the northern reaches of Quebec—the area of the Saguenay River and later the Lac St. Jean region.



Parish Cemetery St. Jean

Thomas and Ambroise journeyed by boat up the St. Lawrence and the Saguenay River to Chicoutimi. It was here that Thomas met and married Leocadie Boivin on November 17, 1845<sup>4</sup>. Five years later, in 1850, Ambroise married Leocadie's sister Zoe. In 1855 with his father-in law, Celestin Boivin, Thomas left Chicoutimi and portaged over rivers, lakes, and through the thick Quebec woods to Metabetchuone where they crossed Lac St. Jean to the area known today as Roberval.

Lac St. Jean is a large lake approximately 27 miles wide and 30 miles long. The place where Thomas, Celestin, and later their families crossed is about 10 miles to the first traverse point and then another five miles to Roberval. They returned to Chicoutimi convinced that everyone should move to this newly discovered region, and by autumn 1855 Thomas was setting the foundation for his grain mill on the south side of the Quiatchouanish River where the river emptied into Lac St. Jean. On the north side of the river stood his home. For

many years this river was known as the "River of Thomas Jamme".



Parcel	Owner	Parcel	Owner
1	Jean-François	11	Joseph Boivin
2	Jean-François	12	Joseph Boivin
3	Jean-François	13	Joseph Boivin
4	Jean-François	14	Joseph Boivin
5	Jean-François	15	Joseph Boivin
6	Jean-François	16	Joseph Boivin
7	Jean-François	17	Joseph Boivin
8	Jean-François	18	Joseph Boivin
9	Jean-François	19	Joseph Boivin
10	Jean-François	20	Joseph Boivin
21	Jean-François	31	Joseph Boivin
22	Jean-François	32	Joseph Boivin
23	Jean-François	33	Joseph Boivin
24	Jean-François	34	Joseph Boivin
25	Jean-François	35	Joseph Boivin
26	Jean-François	36	Joseph Boivin
27	Jean-François	37	Joseph Boivin
28	Jean-François	38	Joseph Boivin
29	Jean-François	39	Joseph Boivin
30	Jean-François	40	Joseph Boivin
41	Jean-François	51	Joseph Boivin
42	Jean-François	52	Joseph Boivin
43	Jean-François	53	Joseph Boivin
44	Jean-François	54	Joseph Boivin
45	Jean-François	55	Joseph Boivin
46	Jean-François	56	Joseph Boivin
47	Jean-François	57	Joseph Boivin
48	Jean-François	58	Joseph Boivin
49	Jean-François	59	Joseph Boivin
50	Jean-François	60	Joseph Boivin

Property Locations Roberval 1857

In the spring of 1856 Ambroise joined them and made his home at the river south of Roberval, the Quiatchouane. Today, up-river from Ambroise's property, stands the deserted village of Val Jalbert, once a thriving paper-mill village around the turn of the century. A large beautiful waterfall with a deserted mill remains as evidence of the past. One realizes when seeing this beautiful, wild country that life for these early settlers must have been a day-to-day challenge.



**Ambroise's Property, Ouiatchouane River, Roberval**

In 1859 Thomas and Leocadie's seventh child was born. This son—also named Thomas—was Jack Jam and Alma Jam's father. Life was good for the Jamme settlers and it wasn't long before Thomas had two mills and was supplier of wheat for the area. Over the years he also served on the town council and helped build the first schoolhouse in 1861. A teacher from Kamouraska, Victoire Laplante, rented a room in the Jamme household.

Leocadie died in 1863 giving birth to their eighth child. Three years later, in 1866, Thomas married Victoire Laplante who bore Thomas another nine children! Of the nine, Hubert was Tom and Rick's Jammes' father. In 1867 Ambroise died prematurely, Thomas and Victoire adopted and raised his seven children and provided a home for his widow Zoe—24 children in all!!

A fire swept through the Lac St. Jean area in 1870 and destroyed much of the area. Through this hardship these hearty people stayed and rebuilt what they had lost. It was not until 1880 that the first of Thomas' children began to leave Roberval for Minneapolis.

Thomas and Ambroise had a brother Joseph who had moved from Dorchester County to Minneapolis when it was just a small community. The property he owned was on the site of the Old Flat Iron Building. According to Alma, this family later moved to Spokane, Washington.

1880 was also the year young Thomas, or Tomy as he was called, married Marie Justine Lizzotte. An interesting nuptial contract sealed their marriage. Together they had nine children, the third oldest, Alma, born December 20, 1884 in Roberval, Quebec. Jack was born later in Two Harbors, Minnesota, on the North Shore of Lake Superior, in March 1898.



**Tomy and Justine Lizzotte Jamme, Alma and Jack's Parents**

Thomas Jamme, first settler of Roberval, died January 31, 1884. The events surrounding his death were documented by his daughter Marie who was in the Convent of the Ursalines in Roberval. Prior

to Thomas' death there is mention in Marie's journal of her brothers Damase, Joseph, and John living in Minneapolis. After Thomas' death the rest of the family began to leave—Henry in 1886, and Tomy, Jack and Alma's father, not long after. Immigration records show that Tomy emigrated at the port of Duluth, Minnesota in August 1891. The name is spelled “Jam”, perhaps because Thomas could not read or write.

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### ***Tomy and Justine Jamme***

Tomy and Justine lived for a while in Minneapolis and then farmed with Hubert Pronovost, Tomy's brother in law, near St. Cloud. Finally, they moved to Two Harbors where they are listed in the 1900 census—Damase, Tomy's brother, is listed as part of their household. Tomy was a woodsman and later a drayman (cart driver).

Tomy and Justine spent the rest of their lives in this pretty town on Lake Superior. Tomy died in 1925, but Justine lived until about 1938. Longevity is common in her family—a sister, Clara, lived to 105, and several others into their late 80's and 90's. Of Tomy and Justine's children, only one child, Alma, is alive at the time (1984) of this writing. Alma, who lives in Redlands, California, will be 101 in December. Her brother, Mike, died this summer—he was 89 and lived nearby in Yucaipa, California.

*Note: Alma died at the age of 103 in 1987. She wrote me a card just after her 103rd birthday saying: “Feeling fine and looking forward to 104.”*

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### ***The Descendants***

Alma was the family historian, it was from her that I obtained many of the pictures and documents. As a young woman in 1908, she traveled alone to California by train—something unheard of for a

woman at that time. She remembers a time, before the development of Los Angeles, when the city only extended to Eighth Avenue and the countryside was nothing but orchards and flowers. It truly must have been like a paradise. A few years later she went home to Minnesota and didn't return to California for nearly 40 years.

She has an adventuresome spirit. In 1965, when she was 80 years old, she drove 10,000 miles with five other elderly ladies. The youngest was 65 years old. They drove from Redlands, California to Roberval, Quebec stopping on the way in Seattle, Kalispell, Montana, and Minneapolis to visit relatives.

After the death of Alma's brother Alphonse who died in an auto accident in 1923, Alma helped his wife, Nora, raise their two children. There wasn't any social security and families depended on one another. During this time Alma made her living as a dressmaker in Duluth, Minnesota. In 1945 when she was 65 met a former sweetheart, Joseph Pope, and for the first time in her life got married. They moved to California and during the winter lived in Palm Springs and spent summers in Redlands. She carried the name Jam until her death—Alma J. Pope. She was a very independent woman ahead of her time.

Hubert Jamme, Tom and Rick's father, married Cecile Donaldson in January 1897 in the Parish of Notre Dame in Roberval<sup>5</sup>, and in November of that year Tom Jamme was born. It is unclear when they left for Minnesota, but many years later, about 1930, Jack and Tom were neighbors in the Swatara, Minnesota area. Their farms abutted one another on Highway 169 just up the road from Jam's Corner Store, which Jack owned. They raised their children in this area, Tom had three children, Jack had five. Of Tom's children, Dallas still lives in this

area. Of Jack's children, Jane lives on the site where she was raised.



Alma 2nd from left and relative Mrs. Pelletiere far right.

The house that Jack built for his family burned to the ground during the late 1960's, and the other two homes he built, one for Jane and the other for his mother-in-law, Sabrina Childs, were sold. The youngest child, George, lives in Grand Rapids, about 20 miles away. Jack died in 1958 and Tom in 1975; both are buried in Macville Cemetery near the Corner Store.



Jack Jam Family 1953, Jack third from left, Lee in front age 5.

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## ***Retracing the Steps***

The Plains of Abraham, where Jean Jamme dit Bellegarde and General Montcalm did battle with the English, is now a park overlooking the St. Lawrence. Quebec City has many buildings that date from this early period, and one gets a sense of what it may have been like to live there. The wall that surrounded the city still stands and to be there feels much like being in Europe. Ile D'Orleans where Jean later lived, had his family, and died so tragically, remains a small, beautiful, and quiet area—time has done little to change it.

Roberval is a prosperous small town, interested in restoring its historical buildings and preserving its past. The parish house of Notre Dame dates from Victorian times, and the Convent of the Ursalines and Town Hall from about 1925.



Town Hall, Roberval, Quebec

Thomas Jamme's river is now divided up into several neat back yards. The north side of the river where his home stood is a landing spot for float-planes. Nearby, at Point Scott, is the museum that displays Thomas' photograph. The museum tells the history of the lake and Roberval. The streets in



have names from the Jamme family tree: Boivin, Lizzotte, Potvin, Pelletiere, Bouchard, and Donaldson. No Jammes reside here—gone now to other places in search of better lives and opportunity. Only the memory now of times long gone and past events clouded by the present.



River of Thomas Jamme (Ouiatchouanish)

## Afterward

The preceding pages represent many years of research and many miles of travel. From an early age I have been interested in the Jam (Jamme) family history. I believe today this interest stems from the loss of my father so early in my life. James Ray Jam died in an auto accident May 29, 1954—he was 26 years of age.

During the late summer of 1958 I met Alma Jam Pope. She came from California to help my grandmother care for my grandfather, Jack Jam, who was dying of cancer. She was 75 years old then and I was mystified by her. From my child's eyes she was a proud, warm and loving woman who hardly looked 55 much less the age she actually was. She had a youthful quality about her then as she does today at the age of 101. It was 20 years before I saw her again.

In 1978 I returned from Boston to the San Francisco Bay Area of California to live for a short time in Redwood City. Alma lives in Southern California in a pretty town of Redlands near San Bernadino. My son, Jim, and I flew down to see her. She was still as quick-witted and warm as I remembered her, and though she was 94 that year she still had that youthful heart and attitude.

That weekend was an emotional one for both of us. I had lots of questions about the Jam history and it brought to the surface for her places, people, and times long ago and far away. She gave me photos, copies of articles and documents as well as her memories of dates, names, and places that only she has. I visited her again in March when the orange trees were in bloom and the fragrance delightfully overpowering.

In September of 1979, I moved back to Boston. Alma sent me a family tree compiled by Jina Jacobson, grand-daughter of Mary Coursolle, Jack and Alma's sister. About this time I wrote to the Canadian Archives in Quebec for information of Jean Jamme dit Bellegarde and his relationship to Thomas Jamme. Someone there did a trace of the generations between and sent me many pages of our history from French Canadian history books.

While in Paris in April 1981, I went to the town hall in Versailles and got a copy of Jean and Francois' birth records. The woman there who helped me

spoke very little English and I spoke no French, but we did the best we could and she actually took the copies from a very large, old record book. She made me understand that the Bellegarde could have been the name of Jean's father's village and was his connection to France. The next few years I tried to translate the material I collected.

In August 1985, I went to Quebec City and retraced 200 years of history—the Plains of Abraham, Ile D'Orleans, and Roberval. Jean's landlord probably owned the house with the yellow shutters, this man owned most of the property in St. Jean at the time Jean lived there.



House with Yellow Shutters in St. Jean

It was impossible for me to find out why Thomas and Ambroise left their home and traveled to the Lac St. Jean region. What impressed me was the size of the lake and how rich the land was. After driving for three hours through mountains and thick woods, the Lac St. Jean region appeared at a corner and opened into a large, flat region that abutted a huge lake and spread for miles. One can

only guess how hard life was in this beautiful, wild country.



Sunrise Lac St. Jean, Roberval, Quebec

Wheat and farms are the mainstay here and the woody countryside has a wild appearance. Waterfalls are a common sight around the lake and hydroelectric is a thriving industry. This is the last major region before the tundra and St. James Bay 500 miles northwest. Blueberries are also a major industry and are known as the best tasting blueberries in the world. Wildlife abounds here, caribou, moose, and bear are common sights. Summers are short, about 6-8 weeks. Fall is early, peak colors occur about mid-September. Most people speak French only, but are known for their hospitality. Despite the language barrier, I found them cordial and friendly.

The lake resembles a large inland sea, it's waves have regular pattern and do not ebb like ocean waves. Sunrise on the lake is quiet and peaceful, and the sky actually seems closer. The museum on the lake keeps alive the legacy of Thomas Jamme, first settler of Roberval, and the history of the lake and it's region.

I regret I was not able to speak French and communicate more with these people. At the library, a woman behind the desk came out and shook my hand and spoke excitedly to me in French—a relative perhaps? The director of the museum suggested I visit the museum in Chicoutimi or Saguenay for more Jamme photos.

Retracing the steps of these people and visiting Roberval was a dream of mine that I'd had since I was 12 years old. Inspired by Alma's sense of history, of where she had come from and where she had been, it gave me a real sense of my own history and made me aware of how short life is.

Lee Jam  
December 1985  
Boston, MA



Point Scott Museum on Lac St. Jean

## Update

It's been 15 years since I put this family book together, and I have met—at least in writing and photos—many people I never would have met otherwise. Originally I gave the book to my immediate family, my father's immediate family, and Alma. Alma then wrote and asked if I would send a copy to David Jam in Kalispell, Montana. As a result of the book, I received many letters and photos from relatives in Montana, Florida, North Dakota, Utah, Minnesota, and various other places.

Much has happened since the *Jamme Family History* was first published. My son Jim died in 1989 and in 1992 I moved back to California. I am glad to be back near my family. Living in Boston, I was away from them for more than 20 years. Since returning to the west coast, Mom and I bought a home together—we closed escrow on her 70th birthday July 11, 1996.

My photography has grown with me over the years and I dream of returning to the Lac St. Jean region as well as to Two Harbors, Minnesota to photograph these beautiful areas. I've moved around a lot in my life—east coast, west coast, and in between—I am possessed by wanderlust and when I read our history I see where it comes from.

The internet has made our world very small. I recently “met” JJ Coursolle, Mary's grandson, who has a Coursolle family website. His website inspired me to create this revised version of the *Jamme Family History* book and make it available on my own website so anyone interested can simply go to the site and download a copy.

The internet also introduced me to Pierre Carrière who lives in Montreal, Canada and whose descendents are Jammes' from this same area of Bayeux—perhaps an uncle to the Jamme de Bellegarde. He was kind enough to translate a lot of the French written material and has done an

extensive search on his own family. He traces his family back further than I can. Also, there is Thibault Jamme, whose web comments and home page I like very much. He was raised in Glaine, France and now resides in the UK. We are trying to figure out exactly how we're all related.

Lee Jam  
July 2000  
Mountain View, CA



Lee Jam 1999

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