



“Chuck-de-Walon”

# The Walloon Belgians

by Grace LeMense



# Remembers big voice, peppermints in pocket

By GRACE  
LEGRAVE LEMENSE

Grandpa Frank emigrated from Belgium with his father and paternal grandmother and his two older sisters and a brother in 1856. He always lived with my family as my father was the youngest of his family. I was only 16 years old when he died and how I wish I would have paid more attention to the yarns Grandpa told us everyday as he sat in his creaky rocking chair which he came with from Belgium.

As he puffed heavily on his pipe filled with his home-grown tobacco, Grandpa's eyes looked far out of the window ahead of him and recalled the stormy ocean as well as the hunger, sickness, and deaths which occurred on the trip to the "New World."

He was only eleven years old and motherless, but Grandpa worked hard with his family and friends who came from Belgium, to clear the land and prepare the soil to plant wheat. They were well aware that bread was the staff of life and without it they would not be able to survive.

After a crude cabin was built, they immediately dug around nearby trees to plant a few potatoes. How thankful they were to the friendly Indians who showed them how to use corn. (When visitors from Belgium were here in summer '75 they were amazed to see us eating corn, as it is used only for hogs in their country!)

From the day that I was born until the day of Grandpa's death at age 89, he was always with my family, his son, daughter-in-law (which he loved as well as his two daughters) and his four granddaughters of which I was the youngest. He was my baby-sitter while my parents did farm chores or while they attended a dance nearby.

How I loved Grandpa's blue eyes and his long grey beard. He loved us dearly also and always had peppermints to give us from his pocket. I knew Grandpa would be sitting in his old rocker near the kitchen range when I arrived home from my one and a half mile walk from the two-room schoolhouse.

I had to speak Belgian to Grandpa as he could not speak English. He could read French and I learned the basics from his French books and newspapers. My ancestors came from the Walloon speaking area of Belgium, which is similar to the French language. I've often wondered why Grandpa never wrote to any of his relatives in Belgium, but perhaps he couldn't afford it. Now that I have visited with several of his distant relatives in Belgium I wish even more than ever that I had paid closer attention to Grandpa's "Yarns of Yesteryear."

My parents taught us to love and respect Grandpa although sometimes the "normal" mischievous instincts in us liked to tease him (when Dad wasn't around). Then Grandpa would scold and throw his stiff hat at us and demand that we bring it back to him. How frightened we were when he disciplined us with his cap or hat-throwing. Grandpa was confined to his old rocker due to rheumatism and I can just hear him say as he painfully stood up to come to the table at mealtime. "Ah, St. Bernard." and I never did ask him why he called on that particular saint.

Grandpa enjoyed music and flowers and plants. He played a large bass horn in a local brass band. The local Catholic church choir boasted of his



FRANK LE GREVE SR.

presence for over 60 years. But his deep belling type voice was not appreciated by some parishioners. I was sometimes embarrassed when Grandpa had a few too many beers at a celebration and wound up singing and jigging in front of the large audience. But my deep love for Grandpa from Belgium grew deeper as I grew older.

Juicy blackcaps, enormous strawberries, plums, gooseberries, currants, and grapes were all in Grandpa's beautiful garden. I loved to walk down the path between his rosebushes, currants, and the grapevine on an arbor which led to his tobacco patch and vegetable garden. Mother never had to clean any vegetables from the garden or do any weeding and when I visited some of the enormous vegetable gardens in Belgium I realized that Grandpa's garden was quite similar to those I saw in Grandpa's homeland. It was like I was walking in Grandpa's garden on my old home farm again! Sentimental tears came to my eyes and I was lonesome for Grandpa. His son, my father is now 91 and is my favorite living ancestor. How happy he is when I come to play cards or just sit and talk with him. A very deep love has been passed on from Grandpa to his son to myself which will always be the greatest gift I have on my country's 200th birthday.

# Hospitality and Friendliness Have Impact on D-K Travelers

By GRACE LE MENSE

No words can describe the hospitality and friendliness of the people we visited in Belgium! Harv and I were welcomed by a friendly young man, Alain Ippersiel, 20, and his lovable little sister, Francoise, 9, who took us to their home at Meux, a 15-minute ride from Namur. A delicious dinner was

served by their mother, Berthe Ippersiel. Cabbage, potatoes, beef and a Belgian pie, much larger than ours and with a peach topping, was the menu.

Soup is served every day for the first course and is made from "legumes" from enormous gardens. Then the main course, which always includes potatoes, meat and a vegetable, such as cooked cabbage, and a salad from their garden "greens."

Alain had visited us last summer when he was in this area. It was a coincidence that his father has a feed mill business like we have at Rosiere.

Victor Ippersiel's generosity is superb! His oldest son, Charles, 22, as well as the younger son, Jean Michel, 16, and their sister, Chantal, 19 (whose birthday was the day after we arrived Sept. 11), were very polite, lovable and soon became "attached" to us. We were treated "royally" by all their friends, neighbors and relatives. The Ippersiels remarked that neighbors would say, "You are very fortunate to have Americans staying with you."

The older Ippersiel children spoke a little English, but we spoke Belgian most of the time and everyone smiled at each other and seemed to wonder how it is possible for us to speak exactly as they do!

## 1908 Letter Shown

A cousin of my mother had a sympathy letter from my grandfather, Peter Reince, which he wrote to his cousins in 1908 following the death of a relative. In the letter, he wrote:

"My oldest daughter, Lucy, is 20 (Lucy was my mother, Mrs. Frank LeGrave, who recently died at the age of 86), son Fabian is 18 (he is now 84 and lives in Schofield), son Fred (now in

Green Bay), son Modest (now of Maplewood), Clara (now Mrs. Delforge of Luxemburg) and Lena (now Mrs. Neuville of Sturgeon Bay) is two months old."

Grandpa mentioned he hoped

to visit his relatives in Belgium in three years, but he died of cancer two years after he wrote the letter. The address was the same as mine — R1, Casco. At that time Peter Reince lived at Rosiere — first house west of ours — where the Massart brothers now live.

It was difficult to hold back tears as I read the letter from my grandfather who was dead before I was born and of whom my dear mother spoke to us so often. It was written in beautiful script, French, and was translated to me by Victor Ippersiel.

Many people in Belgium mentioned how grateful they were to the Americans for sending soldiers to help during the wars there.

Harv and I did not take all the bus tours planned for us because we wanted to visit "relatives." We were fortunate to meet several LeMenses and several Legreves and also Reince relatives. All were overjoyed at having us visit them. Wine and delicious foods were always included with our visits, as well as gifts.

Plates of pewter are found in most homes as well as beautiful antique furniture and chandeliers. Every home is a museum in itself and the flower gardens are indescribable. Enormous fuschia plants, roses in abundance everywhere, and many other beautiful flowers. Their flower gardens are a "Paradise on Earth."

Leek is found in every vegetable garden — row upon row — neatly transplanted. It is kept there all winter. Plums and pears are in abundance. It doesn't freeze until November, and it doesn't snow much in this area. The roses don't freeze over winter like ours do.

One of the bus tours we took included an enormous church and seminary at Fosse. Wood carvings of many saints in the

800-year-old church were an interesting sight.

## See Play in Walloon

A live play in Walloon dialect (which we hope to re-enact for

our Belgian club) was most hilarious.

The tour to Our Lady of Beauraing Shrine in France was impressive. An outdoor statue with kneelers arranged in front and people praying was noticed. By the way, in the Center for Belgian Culture Newsletter of September, 1974, is my photo (Grace LeMense with Nellie DeTombe of the Moline (Ill.) Belgian club). It was taken at the Shrine of Our Lady of Good Help at Robinsonville.

Whenever anyone met us walking along the narrow brick streets in Meux, we were asked to enter their home and have a drink and eat with them. One family we visited in Meux included two adopted Korean children.

Everyone in Meux would ask, "Are you going to the cooyah card game Tuesday?" It was held at the church and the Walloon Belgians from America played cooyah with the natives. What a celebration! Live music and dancing and beer drinking, but it was the only day of our stay in Belgium that a thunderstorm and heavy down-pour of rain occurred. (This was an excuse for remaining with our cooyah playing friends until 1 a.m.)

A double wedding which we attended Sunday, Sept. 15, at Meux was beautiful. The two bridegrooms were brothers with a familiar name in this area, Quartemont, and the brides were sisters. As their farm was near the church, the bridal procession walked and the girl scouts and boy scouts dressed in

uniforms lined up along each side in front of the church because the brides and bridegrooms were active leaders. All the churches in the area are Catholic.

A young fellow named Gustaf LeMense came to get Harv and me to visit at his home which is connected to his bakery shop. He was a most interesting fellow

those mother, wife and two beautiful children were overjoyed at our visit with them. He lives at Orpe-le-Grand. On the way to his home, he stopped to show us some caves which a Mr. Bodart and his wife own. They have been in existence since before the time of Christ. In centuries past, priests hid in the caves to say Mass in times of persecution. Several altars carved in the rocks are proof. Heads of beautiful women as well as animals are carved in the rocks.

Mr. Bodart mentioned that he and his father raised mushrooms in these caves for many years until a more modern, easier method was obtained from America.

#### Guided Thru Caves

A river flows several feet below the caves. The friendly "Madame" used a Coleman light, now is difficult to obtain, to walk through and serve as our guide. She gave a friendly explanation of each part of the caves. The caves were closed for the season but because Gustaf LeMense asked her if "the Americans" could see them, she kindly agreed to show them to us. Her husband was busy at the time but he took over the last 15 minutes of the tour. We noticed names carved on the rocks, familiar ones included, such as L. Wery and L. Deprez. Soldiers used the caves to hide in. A giraff carved in 1875 and a Roman soldier, as well as the head of an African, were observed.

Our "relative," Gustaf, has the unusual hobby of deep sea diving and he showed us movies of the diving club which meets every Sunday.

He took us to a chapel in honor of St. Odile (patron saint of the eyes). A stream of clear flowing water is nearby and visitors may help themselves to the "miraculous" water. (By the way, I took some home and will be glad to give some to persons desiring a few drops.)

A young boy whose parents are school teachers at Orpe-le-Grande asked Harv if he would be his "uncle" from America as he has no living aunts or uncles. He gave Harv an enormous, old Belgian flag and also his photo.

The Belgians are a lovable people. A gesture of three kisses — on each side of the face — is received each time you are met. (Guess I was kissed more the past two weeks than I've been the past 10 years!) Children greet their parents and brothers and sisters the same way.



TAKEN AT MEUX, BELGIUM, last September, this picture shows some of the hospitable Belgium hosts and their guests. The photo was taken in front of the Victor Ippersiel home. Visible at the right is the Ippersiel feed mill, attached to the house.

From left are Grace (Mrs. Harvey LeMense),

Berthe (Mrs. Victor Ippersiel), Victor, Harvey, Francoise Ippersiel (in front of Harvey), Joe Destree, Mrs. Destree and Jean Rousseau.

The LeMenses are of Rosiere, the Destrees live at Namur (our Namur) and is a resident of Meux. (Ivan is a relative of the Destrees.

The home we lived in was modern — indoor plumbing, clothes dryer, dish washer, but the "parlor" door is kept closed except when company comes. The parlor is a museum in itself, with beautiful fireplace with marble, a chandelier, plaques of pewter, statues, etc. The furniture is exquisite.

#### Admire Antiques

A Madame Deschane, 89, lives across the narrow cobblestone road from the Ippersiels and the sweet, auburn-haired, little woman has a million dollars worth of antiques. Her two sons are dead, but she has a daughter and family. Madame Deschane has many rooms full of antiques and lives alone on her so-called farm and is happy among her treasures. The fancy drink she mixed for us had the rim of the glass dipped in sugar and lemon. Delicious cookies (they call them "bisques") are always

served.

A castle where a brother and sister with the name of Baudhuin worked the farm for the baron over 70 years was a most interesting place to visit. The friendly Mary Louise and Leon Baudhuin insisted on entertaining us at their beautiful home nearby.

I could go on and on. I must mention the hour-long, tearful goodbyes at the bus at Namur. Hand-waving to the departing "Americans" in the bus after many kisses was a sight to behold. To our surprise, a family of LeMenses — father, daughter and husband and their two young sons — surprised us at Luxembourg. They made a four-hour drive to see us off on the plane and assisted in carrying our heavy luggage. Au Revoir! They hope to come and visit us next year.

# Letters From Belgium Continue; Sad News Is Mingled With Happy

By GRACE LE MENSE

Every week letters are received from relatives and friends met on our trip to Belgium last September. Some contain pleasant news items while others are sad.

The news of their forthcoming tour planned by the "Walonie Wisconsin" club in Namur, Belgium, is very pleasant! (The LeMenses stayed with the Ippersiel family.) But recently Harvey LeMense received a letter from Gustaf LeMense, a relative who lives in Orp-le-Grand. Gustaf is a baker and his hobby is deep-sea diving. Harvey and I spent a wonderful day visiting Gustaf, his wife, his mother, and his two children while in Belgium.

But two death announcements accompanied Gustaf's letter. In Belgium a full page announcement edged in grey or purple and containing the dead person's name and names of the children are printed and distributed. Also the dates of births and place and dates of burials.

## Couple Dies

Mrs. Gustaf (Fernande Houart) LeMense's father, 79, and mother, also 79, died within two days of each other. Monsieur Henri Houart, her father, died Dec. 17, 1974, and her mother, Madame Angelique Paquay (Mrs. Henri Houart) died Dec. 19, 1974. He was buried Friday, Dec. 20, and she was buried Saturday, Dec. 21.

## Visitors enjoyed stay; laughter still echoes

By GRACE LEMENSE

The Belgians enjoyed their visit with relatives and friends! How they love to sing French and Walloon songs with their "comrades" and a pitcher of cold beer! Bread and butter and cheese are a most welcome menu, especially for their breakfast. Wine and coffee are enjoyed at every meal.

They enjoyed shopping for souvenirs to take home for their families and friends in Belgium, but they did feel the "American rush" atmosphere and despise it! The Belgians are never in a hurry and they didn't enjoy the too busy

pace of our planned itineraries.

The talented dance and song groups which entertained at WBAY Wednesday afternoon and evening, as well as the play, were enjoyed immensely by those of us who attended. The beautiful costumes of the dancers, as well as their perfect performances, were a welcome sight to all of us.

We have been kissed again and again, and a part of our Belgian heritage is here to stay, I hope. They love to tell jokes and their laughter will echo long after their departure (Monday, July 7).

Thursday, July 1, 1976

## Rosiere

By GRACE LEMENSE

Mr. and Mrs. Harvey LeMense received visitors from Belgium Wednesday, June 23. Two young men, Didier Pennequin, and his brother Roland and their two stepsisters, Catherine and Christine Jahnen saw an article in a French newspaper, "Le Soir" from Brussels, Belgium about Mrs. LeMense from Rosiere, (Wis.) and they decided to visit her. The visitors are now living in Burlington, Wis., and their father teaches at Elkhorn. They speak English and French and a very pleasant afternoon and evening of reminiscing about their homeland was enjoyed with the LeMenses.

It was coincidence that the Belgians found the small article in the newspaper which their father receives daily from Belgium and so the discovery of this area of Belgians in Wisconsin. A telephone call from Gustaf LeMense in Belgium to the LeMenses on June 24 was also a pleasant surprise. He and his wife and mother stayed with the LeMenses last summer when the Belgians visited in this area.

When Al Vandertie returns to Algoma from Washington, D. C. where he participated in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival eight musicians from Belgium who also were participants will visit in this area.

One of them, Francoise Lempereur, 26, a TV and radio-producer, has visited here several times before. The other Belgians, who will be staying at various homes in this area include:

Elizabeth Melchior, an accordion-player, 50, who is a farm woman, unmarried. She will be staying at the Harvey LeMenses in Rosiere and any "Melchiors" or any other interested friends are invited to visit her there Aug. 2-7.

A drummer who will be coming from Washington D. C. is: Alain Simons, 14, student, and his father Robert Simons, 46, a costumier, who accompanies with a flute.

The other Belgians who will be here the

first week in August include Philomene Gehlen, a singer, 67 and a widow. Henri Schmitz is a fiddler, 71. Ernest Schmitz, brother of Henri, is a singer, 67, and a retired tire-retreader. Renee Bertulot, 45, plays the drum.

## Belgium tops us in years and also in quaffing beer

The Harvey LeMenses of Rosiere recently received a linen calendar from Gustaf LeMense, Belgium, who visited them last summer.

"We have 1776-1976 on our calendars this year, so it was interesting to note the years, 1376-1976, on the calendar from the City of Orp-le Grand, Belgium," Mrs. LeMense stated. "I wonder what our country will be like 400 years from now!"

Mrs. LeMense also calls attention to an article which she read in a Milwaukee paper Jan. 11. It was about Brussels, Belgium, and mentioned that a patron ordering "scotch" in a Belgian tavern is served a glass of dark, creamy beer.

The article went on to say that it is illegal to sell hard liquor in pubs, and beer has been Belgium's national drink for centuries. Scotch ale is only one of a long list of brews, each with a flavor as subtly different as various wine vintages.

Virtually everyone in Belgium drinks beer. In 1974 the per capita beer consumption was 117 quarts. Beer is drunk in restaurants and at home, but most often it is drunk

in cafes or pubs of which Belgium boasts about 60,000. (How many taverns in Wisconsin?) There are many kinds of drinking places in Belgium—some look more like beer palaces and have large bare rooms set with rows and rows of tables where people can be seen mulling over their glasses from early morning on into the nights.

In downtown Brussels there are still a number of old cafes, holdovers from another era, where one can drink a good glass of the local specialty and munch "tartine fromage blanc"—a slice of bread spread with creamy white cheese and eaten with radishes and green onions.

One of the "Bruxellois" taverns is the Grande Brasserie Ste. Catherine which occupies a building nearly four

centuries old in the heart of the city. The Ste. Catherine maintains its own brewery outside of town to furnish the hose beer specialties. The Ste. Catherine's neighbor, the Vieu Chateaux D'or, was founded in 1597 and claims to be the oldest brasserie in Brussels. It also maintains its own family brewery in a Brussels suburb.

The number of cafes in Belgium has dropped by about 10,000 in the past decade. This reflects the growing trend toward drinking at home, influenced by changing lifestyles, television and a tough campaign against drinking and driving.

Although production has nearly doubled since 1950 and consumption has risen, the number of breweries has

dropped from 663 in 1950 to 185 in 1974.

Beer is still the national drink, however, and likely to remain so.

It will take 9 hours for the tour to Belgium sponsored by the Peninsula Belgian American club. In Nov. 1902 five Rosiere persons were members of a tour to Belgium and France, but instead of 9 hours, the rough voyage on a French liner lasted 169 hours.

From France, the party, consisting of Mr. and Mrs. Constant Flemal, Charles Herison and Peter and Charles Monfils continued by rail, to their native Belgium. After an absence of 30 years, they were greatly surprised to find well-to-do and intelligent people, instead of being poor and without facilities. The Belgian government took over the railroads and industries sprung up.

But almost an identical situation remains in 1976 as when the 1902 tour to Belgium was made - "The Royal Welcome" of the visitors from this area by the Belgians and the "Reluctant Goodbyes" remain the same!

Letters, telephone calls and cassette tapes have been received frequently the past weeks inviting us to stay with them and telling of their preparations for our visit with them this September and the "famous cooyah" game is planned, as well as parties, reunions, tours and receptions.

We are looking forward to happy hours with our Belgian friends, from the day of our arrival on Sept. 8 to the day of our departure Sept. 21.

# Belgium getting to be like the next county

Rosiere—Visitors from Belgium used to be a very unusual happening until a couple years ago. But the past month, which is the month that the Belgians go on vacations, several visited this area. Sunday, July 11, Mr. and Mrs. Denis Hermand from Ottignies, Belgium, spent the day at Namur. They were surprised to know that we hosted visitors from Ottignies last summer and they are friends of the Hermand family.

Simone Legreve and Floren and her sister Adelaide from Ottignies stayed with Mr. and Mrs. Ed Wautlet at Algoma. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Courbet accompanied the Hermands and they drove to Namur with a cousin from Detroit, a native of Belgium, Celine Walker.

Celine asked to have the name "Mertens" mentioned in local papers as she is looking for relatives in Wisconsin by that name. Anyone who knows people named Mertens should write to Celine Walker, 36733 Rowe, Sterling Heights, Mich. 48077 and she would be very happy. She came to Michigan in 1947 at age 21 after marrying a soldier. He is deceased. As usual the Belgians were amazed at the Wallon Belgian language we spoke as they speak the identical Wallon. As they could not speak English our Belgian tongue had an all day practice session which we need before our tour to Belgium coming up Sept. 7-21.

Other names which the Belgian visitors were interested in because they have

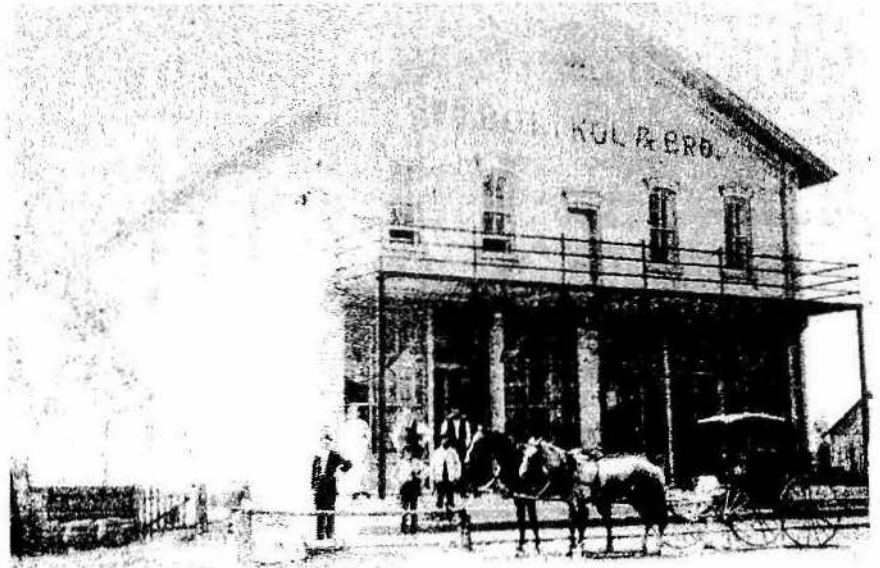
ancestors by these names are Lardinois and Collins. Mrs. Collins from Dyckesville and her daughter Mrs. Julius Vandermeuse and sons Dave and Paul spent the afternoon at Namur as well as Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Lardinois and Mrs. Ray Guth of Brussels.

How delighted the Courbets and Hermands and Mrs. Walker were to find Belgians with their ancestors' names! Now they are hoping we will all visit them in September and Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Guth, the LeMenses, Harry Chadoirs and Austin Allards who met them at Namur hope to pay a return visit when they are in Belgium with the tour. Others who were on hand to greet the visitors include Mrs. Lema Lampeurer

and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Chadoir Sr.

Fourteen guests from Belgium at-

tended Belgian Days at Brussels. They included the Hermands and Courbets, who were guests of the Ray Guths, Brussels; Mr. and Mrs. Jean Jacmot of Grez, Belgium, and their daughters, Jacqueline and Christine who are visiting the Merle Jeanquarts of Green Bay and George Jeanquarts of Namur. Also, Mr. and Mrs. Albert Pennequin, Burlington, Wis. and their two sons and two daughters who were guests of the Harvey LeMenses, Rosiere. (They came to Wisconsin from Belgium two years ago).



BOTTKOL'S AT LINCOLN

## Post card jogs memory

By GRACE LEMENSE

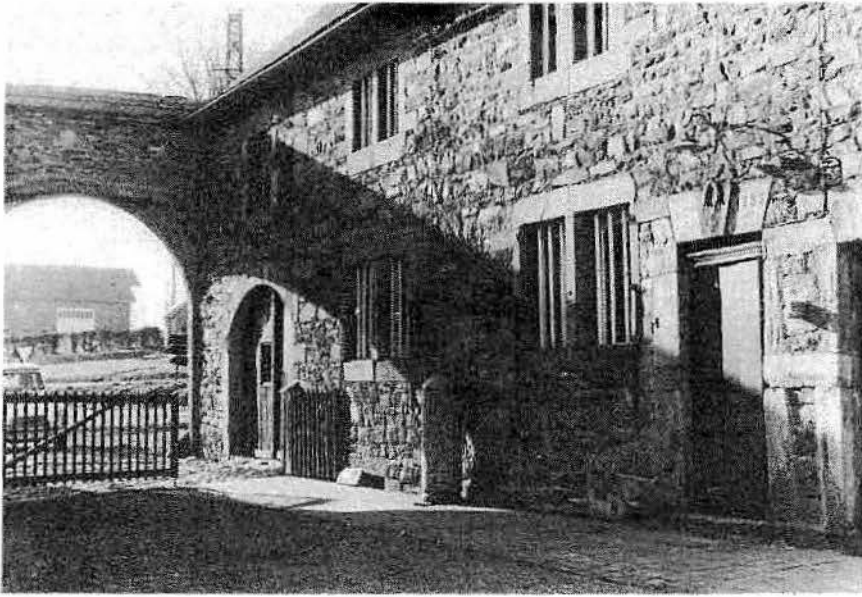
Although the above photo is from a saloon and store in Kewaunee county it is a typical scene from the early 1900's. The building still stands at Lincoln, south of

Rosiere, but it has been remodeled. For many years it was Hucek's Bar and Store. Empty wooden beer kegs are on the left.

The flag is flying from the pole on the

porch. Patriotism was typical of the early days.

My grandfather never learned to drive a car so when he would visit his relatives with horse and buggy like the one in the photo I often rode along. The swaying of the buggy accompanied by the sound of the creaking buggy wheels often put me to sleep before we arrived at our destination. Grandpa always smoked a pipe and chewed tobacco as he drove along the dusty roads.



The 200-year-old stone house of Elizabeth Melchoir, Belgium, recent guest of Mr. and Mrs. Harvey LeMense, Rosiere.

## Musical interests unite hosts and Belgian visitors

By MRS. HARVEY LE MENSE

Recently the St. Michael's Catholic church at Misere was taken down because it was "too old". Yes, a hundred years is old for buildings in America. But the house in the picture, which was built in 1735 in Belgium is still being used. My houseguest Aug. 1-8 was Elizabeth Melchior from Belgium. The date the house was built is above the door (1735)-over 200 years old.

Elizabeth's grandmother owned it, then her mother, and now Elizabeth, 50, who is unmarried and lives with her 82 year old father. She told me they don't use the downstairs anymore, which also includes the barn. She and her father live upstairs in the ancient stone structure, which once housed their livestock, as well as their family.

Her two older sisters are married and one of them owns a bakery shop. I asked Elizabeth why the gate was closed in the picture and she said so many motorcycles come racing through, if she doesn't keep it closed, that it is too noisy.

Animals are her favorites so she really enjoyed her visit to The Farm north of Sturgeon Bay. When she came home she showed us the cute little stuffed raccoon she bought and from then on the "Pet" was a decoration on the bed in her bedroom.

"Liza", as her family and friends call her, plays an accordion and sings very well. Her stay in Rosiere was greatly enjoyed by us as she was always willing to play and sing.

Liza was one of the musicians chosen for the Belgian Bicentennial Representation at Washington, D.C. at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival '76. She enjoyed meeting people from all over the world at the festival and their entertainment.

Her lady friend from Belgium, who was her roommate in Washington was Philomene Gehlen, 67, a singer. She sang many times for us during her week's stay in this area. How confident these Belgians are. I was impressed with their self-confidence and their willingness to entertain anytime they were asked.

The old fiddler who accompanied them and his brother, Henri and Ernest Scmitz were happy when we asked them to entertain. Their performance at Namur on Thursday evening was greatly enjoyed by the crowd who came to meet the Belgian entertainers. The uniforms worn by the two drummers, Alain Simons and Rene Bertulot, and Robert Simons are so colorful and attractive. Alain's father, Robert, accompanied them on a shrill tone type flute. They marched in perfect step, as they beat the drums along with the fifer.

Rene is a tailor, and made the uniforms and hats. He gave the six hats they had taken along to friends who asked for them. "I will make more of them when I get home" Robert commented.

Francoise Lempereur, the leader of the group, rented a station wagon and drove the seven entertainers on a tour of Door county and Green Bay as well as Algoma where they visited Al Vandertie, who was with them in, Washington D.C. to sing Walloon Belgian songs. Mrs. Mel Porath of the Algoma area also was at the festival in Washington where she

demonstrated the baking of Belgian pies.

On the day they returned to Belgium, Sunday, Aug. 8 was the occasion of their leader, Françoise Lempereur's 27th birthday, so she had had several "pre-birthday parties" during her week's stay in the Brussels area.

She said, "I usually have only "half" of a birthday party because my brother's birthday is the same day. But this year I had four parties of my own!"

## Favorite Belgian foods are simple

By GRACE LEMENSE

ROSIERE — Recently there was a page in a Green Bay newspaper with Belgian recipes and photos. I hope those who read it won't be discouraged from "hosting" Belgians when they come next summer with the Walonie-Wisconsin Club tour from Belgium.

These recipes are not the "daily menu" in most homes, and as long as we have plenty of beer and wine and bread and cheese on hand our friends will be happy.

(A woman from this area who had planned to host Belgians called me and said she didn't think she could cook those fancy recipes and was wondering if she should offer her home to the visitors.)

As I mentioned in a previous article, the favorite foods in the Walonie area of Belgium are French fries — frits as they call them, steak and a lettuce salad. There was no boxed cereal, such as cornflakes, in the homes we visited. Their breakfast consists of bread and cheese or cold meat and jam with coffee and orange juice. Most of the families buy all their bread and pastries. They were surprised when I told them I bake my own bread and Belgian pies.



This photo was taken at Temploux, Belgium on Sept. 8, 1976 upon the Door county residents' arrival by buses from the Brussels, Belgium airport. Can you recognize anyone? In the front row left to right are Maurice Jeanquart, Belgium, Blanche and George Jeanquart and daughter, Sonya, Namur, Wis., Mrs. Joe Vandervest, Dykesville, Wis., Mr. and Mrs. Harold Lefevre, Green Bay, Emerence Crevier, Green Bay, and Florence Lardinois, Pulaski, Myron Lardinois, Mrs. Libbie

Collins and Louie Ropson, Dykesville, Wis. Belgians, including Mr. Leonard, (white hair) president of Wallonie club in Belgium (to the right in front row). Also John Derenne of Duval, Mr. and Mrs. Al Vandertie and Myra Stephenson, Algoma, all on the left in the photo. After the photo was taken the group with their relatives and friends enjoyed a lunch and music and beer in the "cabaret" at Temploux. The tour was sponsored by the Peninsula Belgian American club.

When Harvey and I went to Belgium in '74 with the tour, which was planned by Harry Chaudoir, President of the Peninsula Belgian American Club, we felt very grateful to him for having found our Walloon Belgian friends. And now, after having returned Tuesday Sept. 21 from another similar tour we must remember that if it hadn't been for Harry, who kept the Belgian club alive these past several years, we probably wouldn't have had the wonderful visit in Belgium we again had. Thanks, Harry!

Speaking of the word, "probably" when I sent some "LeGrave" relatives in Belgium a letter a few weeks previous to our tour, I mentioned that I PROBABLY would visit them the 15th and 16th, but they do not read English very well and they understood it was definite that I would visit them on those dates, so I had a lot of explaining to do when I wasn't

able to visit them on those exact dates.

I think they know the meaning of the word, "probably" now. No words can describe the friendliness and hospitality of these Walloon Belgians. The best favor you can do them is pay them a visit and write letters. They save every letter ever written them.

Franz Castin, a Lemense relative from Rixensart, Belgium, showed us a letter he had received from Rodney LeMense, son of Harold LeMense, Brussels, about 20 years ago. And when I told Andre Hancre, a singer and entertainer that I had a record he made and how much I liked his singing, he pulled out of his file a letter I had written to him in 1975. I could go on and on telling about many other people we visited who proudly showed us letters we sent them the past couple years.

On Sunday, Sept. 12 we attended a mass in Walloon in Meux and after the mass in the evening enjoyed the cooyah card game between the Belgians and American Walloons. There was dancing and drinking and eating and much visiting. I was happy to receive a beautiful bouquet of flowers from the Wallonie Club in Belgium. Many of our members present received prizes for the card game and Al Vandertie of Algoma was one of them. His wife, Liz appreciated receiving the beautiful pitcher vase and I hope she was able to arrive home with it unbroken.

I was sure I would never bring home a beautiful tall opaline pink vase given to us by some Lemense relatives without breaking it as well as a tall red and white crystal glass rooster decoration, but we wrapped them in turkish towels and



Mrs. Harvey LeMense (foreground) placed a wreath of flowers at the monument of the Martyrs of Wavre, Belgium, during her recent visit there with the Peninsula Belgian-American club.

packed them in our clothes in the suitcases and lo and behold they were in perfect condition when we opened the luggage.

I had brought along a recording by Harvey Deguelle's orchestra, a lifelong neighbor from Rosiere, because when the Belgians came in '74 his orchestra played at Dykesville when we had arranged a cooyah game and dance there for them. So I asked if they would like to hear the music they had had here.

We enjoyed dancing to the recording, but little did we dream that a tragic accident that day had occurred and that Harvey had been killed. Our deepest sympathy to the family and friends. I left two of his records with friends in Belgium. I know they will appreciate them even more now that they know he will not make any more recordings. Another unhappy bit of news we received the day after our homecoming was that our friend, Agnes Ledocq of Rosiere had had a heart attack. She is improved now and we hope she will soon be home again.

For persons who love roses as much as I do, I don't think there is a better place to go than in the Walloon area of Belgium. Roses are in abundance everywhere and they are enormous, of all colors. There are other beautiful flowers too, and the golden marigolds were beautiful as well as many other varieties. But the rose is the most prevalent in every garden.

Speaking of gardens, they have mild winters there so they are still transplanting lettuce and leek, which will

survive the winter. They have hundreds of leek plants transplanted in a hole about two inches in diameter, which they do not fill in to allow the leek to grow into a large stalk. They make the most delicious soups and always use leeks.

Our welcome was indescribably: Hundreds of friends and relatives were waiting both at the Brussels Airport as well as at Namur. The hugging and kissing was a beautiful sight. These Walloon Belgians are the most generous, kind, loving people on earth, I think. It is quite a let-down when we arrived back in America and not one friend or relative is there to meet us. I hope the Belgians never change. Next week I will write another letter about our lovable Walloon friends.

It takes Harv and I only one hour longer to go to Belgium than it takes to go visit our son in Iowa. (by car to Iowa). Oh, the wonders of the air-travel and how beautiful the earth and clouds are from the windows of the airplane. The colored lights of the cities at night are a beautiful sight from the plane. It's difficult to believe that we are traveling hundreds of miles an hour in the plane as it seems like we are almost "standing still."

On Friday in a parochial school we visited in Meux, Belgium, the children from ages 5-12 were all doing some form of needlework, including the boys. What beautiful crocheted shawls the little girls were working on. And some of the boys and girls were receiving help from the

teacher (a nun), but the orderliness and politeness, plus the friendly, relaxed atmosphere in each of the three classrooms we visited was interesting to see.

We were asked to come back a few days later to receive a gift they made for us - a wall hanging and a plaque of their school. Each child gave us their name and address and some of the familiar ones like in this area are: Parmentier, Everard, Lambert and Cravillon.

The University "Louvain Le Neuve", which was started five years ago, will have 2,400 students when completed. Not

When I was in Belgium in September 1976 I had the honor to lay a wreath at a tomb of a soldier along with the Mayor of the city of Wavre. When the photo appeared in a newspaper in Belgium, a caption under the photo in French said the flowers were deposited at the monument of "The Martyrs of Wavre" (War Martyrs).

It was a rainy day and the gloom of the weather was reflected in the people present. Norman Wautier, Brussels, Wis. is in the row standing, toward the right of the group. Mr. L. Leonard, president of the Wallonie-Wis. Club in Belgium is standing right of Norman.

Nov. 11 will always be remembered by me as "Armistice Day" and I felt like it was that day when I layed the beautiful wreath of live flowers on the tomb with a flame emerging in the background. (not in this photo).

# Visitors return with many memories of Belgian trip

By GRACE LeMENSE

"Wonderful, Wonderful." Many friends and relatives waited at the Brussels (Belgium) airport on Sept. 8 for a couple hours when the flight bringing Belgians from Door county was delayed. Such happiness - the hugging, kissing and crying between the people from the two countries when we finally arrived.

Buses took the town people to Namur where the crowd was waiting at a cabaret for their guests. I felt I was being torn apart with love. Everyone was asking "When can you come to our home?" I had about 20 towns to visit in 13 days.

I guess the nine hour ride on the plane was worth it after all (even if my liquid make-up spilled in my purse). The delicious buns with cheese and pitchers of beer along with joyful music at "The Oasis" and Temploux were wonderful. "Where is she" or "Why didn't he come" could be heard over and over.

We woke up to the sound of raindrops on the next day after visiting a couple of relatives of my mother the first night we arrived. How happy and excited the relatives were to see us. Every letter they have ever received from America is carefully set aside (when I complimented Andre Hancré, a well known Belgian artist, on his singing one evening and told him who I was, he pulled out a letter I had written him in 1975 - I was speechless!)

The best loved dish in Belgium is "frits" (french fries), beef steak and salad with a dressing of oil, vinegar and onions. The lettuce here is simply delicious, as well as the tasty fries and steak. No one bakes their own bread, but the baker is kept very busy trying to keep the families supplied with delicious bread. Wines and sparkling water are always served in bottles placed on the tables.

The Walloon Belgians make us feel as though we are doing them the greatest favor by visiting them. The dinners they serve are indescribable. Appetizers, wines and food served in courses, with tasty soup first, vegetables, meat and delicious bread. How generous and loving these people are.

The children are extremely polite and well-mannered. They speak softly and seem to enjoy being with older people. The parents return the love of their children and respect them.

I had the honor of placing a wreath of flowers on a tomb with a flame along with the mayor at Wavre. Marching in a procession in the rain with drums beating brought tears to our eyes.

Trying to keep appointments and receptions and dinners is impossible. But we try. There is always someone ready and happy to take us anywhere we'd like to go. If you love roses (as I do) come to this part of Belgium near Namur. There are enormous roses of every color everywhere. I am happy when there are five or six in blossom in my yard at Rosiere, but here in Meux, Orp-le-Grand, Liernu and Aische there are hundreds of beautiful roses in bloom. (Harv says "I never promised you a rose garden.")

Finding ancestors names in ancient cemeteries in Belgium is gratifying. Everyone was waiting to assist us in our search. Walking the same paths and visiting the old churches our ancestors attended revives our spirits. Behind an old church over 200 years old we found a stone slab with the family name of my grandfather.

Eating lamb roasted on a spit outdoors in a beautiful museum, formerly a castle, is quite an experience. And dessert included large Belgian pies.

I cannot appropriately describe the generous hospitality of my Walloon friends. It seems like it is a very great honor for them to wine and dine us.

## It's indeed a small world!

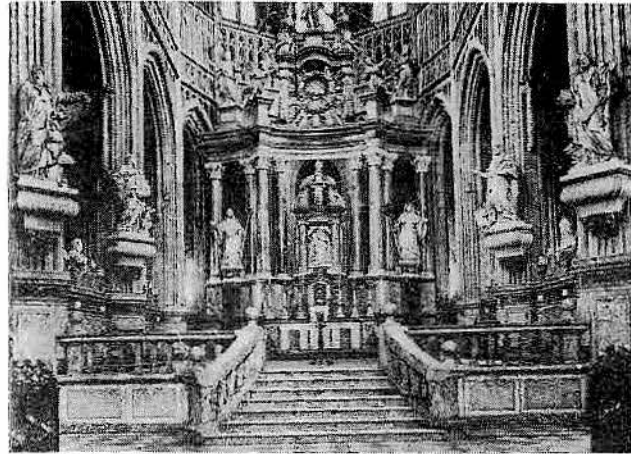
ROSIERE — When Cliff Vlies, Algoma, was stationed in Belgium during the war over 30 years ago, he gave his name and address to some people there. Recently, the people who still have the name and address were visited by Mr. and Mrs. Lloyd Delfosse, Casco, and the Castermans of Court St., Etienne, Belgium, asked the Delfosses if they knew the person whose name and address they showed them.

How surprised they were to see Cliff's name and they told the Castermans that they know him very well! (Mr. Vlies told me there were many Walloon Belgians interested in him because he could speak Walloon). Cliff remembers giving the slip of paper to some people very hurriedly as the group of soldiers he was with that day was being told to "move" or they would be court-martialled. So, after all these years, "the soldier who gave his name to strangers in a

land" hopes to communicate with them and probably visit them in the near future.

Speaking of Belgians, I read in a newspaper recently that Sen. Proxmire is quite disturbed because the federal government is spending \$45,734 of tax money for a study of sex habits of a 19th century Belgian village. A Belgian professor at the University of Pennsylvania will try to find out why the people of the tiny village of La Hulpe, Belgium, used birth control devices between the years of 1846 and 1880.

Last week I heard in radio and TV news that there was a plane crash in Phillipville, Belgium, causing several deaths and injuries and demolishing homes when a plane hit them. Mr. and Mrs. Walter Derenne, Duvall, stayed with friends in Phillipville while they were in Belgium with the tour last September. Sept. 12, 1976, there was a special reception planned for tour members from here at Phillipville. There was a historical presentation with a reception with officials from the village of Phillipville. It's a small world!



County residents touring Belgium made a special stop at St. Hubert's church, Belgium, namesake of St. Hubert's Catholic church, Rosiere. The Belgian cathedral was begun in 727 A.D. and took several centuries to complete.

## Bicycle museum, cathedral two stops on Belgian tour

By GRACE LEMENSE

The Peninsula Belgian American club does not only have members from Door county. Many of its members are from Green Bay, Dykesville, Luxemburg, Kewaunee, Algoma, Shiocton, New Franken and Pulaski. Some out of county members include people from Indiana, Clintonville, Peshtigo, Colemann, Lena, Appleton, Marshfield and Minnesota. Tour members to Belgium Sept. 7-21, 1976 included persons from the above towns and states.

One woman from Marshfield and her son, who joined the tour, were happy to see her parents and sisters, in Belgium as she has been living here 26 years and had never returned to her homeland after marrying a soldier and coming here to live. How happy they were to see her and she was overjoyed at seeing them. Her son was also happy at his first sight of his maternal grandparents.

Yesterday Joe Charles, Rosiere, came trotting into our house with a beautiful, varnished pair of wooden shoes. He said he had gotten them as a gift from the people he and his wife stayed with in Belgium. I remarked that he should not be wearing them to come to the feed mill. But he stated that he just wanted to show his gift to us and went on to his truck of grain and unloaded the bags with his clickety-clack of the shiny wooden shoes.

Joe's grandparents were wooden shoe makers and the nickname of his ancestors was "Shubbutee," as so many of our Belgian ancestors had nicknames,

depending on their type of work. "Chorlee" means wagon maker and some Englebert ancestors had that nickname.

In Falmignou, Belgium there is a Cycle Museum. It is the only museum of its kind in the world and I was fortunate along with many others of the tour to visit this most interesting place. There are 250 different "velos" as bicycles are called Belgium, dating back many centuries.

We were very interested in St. Hubert's church in Belgium because our church at Rosiere is St. Hubert's. There is no comparison, however, except in the name. St. Hubert's at Rosiere was built about 45 years ago, but St. Hubert's in the town called St. Hubert's, Belgium, took hundreds of years to complete and was begun in 727.

There are many beautiful carvings depicting the life of St. Hubert, who was converted on a Sunday when he went hunting and did not attend mass. A deer appeared with a cross in the middle of his antlers with a vision of Christ. The enormous structure is situated high on a hill and can be seen from miles away. One could spend many hours in the historic structure looking at the many antiques and beautiful carvings.

Most of the historic spots in Belgium center around the ancient abbeys and churches which are all very old and beautiful. Elaborate "pulpits" are still present in many of the historic structures. Some have been partially destroyed by troops or looters during wars.

When we rode around the countryside with friends in their little foreign autos, which is all we see in Belgium, they talked a lot about wars that were fought in the area and told of the many hardships their people encountered. It is hard to believe that the people in the new Walloon area of our Belgian ancestors ever lived through such terrible days. They are all so well dressed and have beautiful homes.

I asked a friend in Belgium if there are any poor people there, and he said, "No, not in this area, but in some of the larger cities you will find some."

Another thing I've noticed about the Walloon is that there seems to be no Class distinction. We were talked to and treated the same by high dignitaries in government as we were by ordinary

farmers. They all speak the same Walloon Belgian and have the same lovable, generous personality. The Lieutenant Governor of Belgium and his lovely wife always were ready to entertain us or take us anywhere we would like to go in Belgium. Their children treated us in the same way.

Most of the people I asked about their coming with the Wallonie - Wis. tour next summer had an affirmative answer. So we can look forward to a delightful two weeks with them next summer again. If you would like to have someone stay with you a few days or the whole two weeks let Harry Chadoir, President, Forestville, know so he can start planning. Mention if you are unable to speak Walloon, as many of the young Belgians can speak English.



## Bicentennial dolls make Belgian trip

Dec. 29.  
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By GRACE LEMENSE  
ROSIERE — Two of Mrs. Clarence Engebose's Bicentennial dolls almost didn't arrive at their far destination of Belgium in 1976. I mailed them to Gustaf Lemense the last week in September and they arrived two weeks ago!

There is an abundance of dolls in the Lemense home in Orp-le-Grand, Belgium. I counted 28 of them in the bedroom of their nine-year-old daughter, Agnes! Shelves above her bed are lined up with dolls from all over the world. Her father brings them home when he goes deep-sea diving. In 1975 he went to Jordan and his next hope is to go to Thailand. When I told them the Americans are not welcome there, Gustaf remarked (in Walloon Belgian) "I am not an American!"

When he and his wife visited us in 1975, they were very interested in seeing Indians in this area and they bought Indian dolls for their two children. We also brought one for their daughter when we went to Belgium last September. Large hand-carved camels from Jordan, which Gustaf returned with to Belgium, were in every room and he gave us one also. It is

very appropriate at this season with our Nativity set.

Speaking of toys, reminds me of the kinds of toys I enjoyed when I was a child. My favorite one was a "potato man" which my father made with a potato for the head and carved sticks for the arms and legs. But the fun of it was that it would stand balanced on the edge of a table and swing back and forth.

Dad also made many tops for us out of empty spools from thread. They would spin a long time on the floor or table when given the right twist of the finger.

He made "spudjacks" out of wood which were thick in the middle and slanted to a point on each end. This was an outdoor game. The spudjack was placed between two bricks or stones and we would hold a small paddle under the spudjack and eject it into the air. Then we had three tries to tap a pointed end to see how far away from the bricks we could send it. The person sending it the farthest was the winner.

Our home-made sled was shared among my three sisters and the near-by hill was great fun sliding down in winter.

Some of the toys that I noticed my nephew's children were most interested in from

santa included plastic monkeys to pick up in a chain, which requires (and teaches) patience and skill. The toy record player run with batteries is a wonderful teaching invention and is a far cry from the wind-up victrola I used to play records on when I was a child!

The willow-whistle my father and grandfather used to make for us was a delightful toy. They were made in spring when the willow trees got green as their sap got into the branches. Dad would take his pocketknife and cut a willow

branch about six inches long and an inch thick. He left one end square and cut the other end at an angle to form a mouthpiece. Then he gently tapped the piece of willow branch with the broad side of his knife. The inside of the willow, which is wood, slid out leaving just the bark. He then cut a small piece off the squared end of the wood and placed it as a plug in the end of the bark. After this he cut a small piece off the angled end, shaved a small portion off the top to form the mouthpiece, and I had a whistle.



Members of the Peninsula Belgian American club were entertained by costumed Belgians called Gilles during the recent visit to Belgium.

No, these are not part of the New Year's Day Parade. They are The Gilles from Belgium in their court jester's costumes loaded with bells, and enormous ostrich-plumed headresses. The others are members of the Peninsula Belgian American club from this area, including President Harry Chaudoir and his wife Helen, partly hidden in the background.

The woman on the left is Doris Nellis, Green Bay and the man trying on the headress is George Jeanquart and his daughter, Sonja (on his left), Namur, Wis. Edith Frisque of Casco, Wi. is next to Sonja and Sonja's mother Blanche Jeanquart is on the right. This was taken in September 1976 when they went on the tour to Belgium.

Many of us were given dolls from our friends in Belgium dressed in the fancy costumes. (I have a large one and a small one) The origin of these "Binchois" is very old. It began as a week long festival before Lent. The "Carnival" comes from the Spanish Carne Vale or "Farewell

meat." The Gilles of Binche is a traditional group which held a celebration, especially on the last three days before Ash Wednesday in the 14th century. They throw oranges at the crowd everyone playing practical jokes on everyone else, snake dancing, and a brilliant display of fireworks. However, the Americans in the photo had attended a party in Belgium given by The Jacquots, who visited here last summer.

As a surprise ending the Gilles were hiding in a garage and hopped out after the elaborate dinner. They removed the straw which was stuffed in their costumes and lighted a bonfire with the straw.

My father always lit a bonfire of straw on Ash Wednesday, when I was a child. And our neighbors in Rosiere usually had a bonfire also. It was sort of a religious ritual which was a part of their Belgian heritage.

The Gilles danced around the fire. My husband and I had received a formal

invitation to this elaborate party which was arranged by the three brothers who are teachers. Jean, his wife and two daughters visited us last summer, had given the invitation to us before they left. But we were unable to attend, due to other plans, unfortunately.

I forgot to mention that Mrs. Jeanquart told me that when her husband placed the heavy headpiece on, which weighs 35 lbs., he fell to his knees and so he had to try it a second time for the photo!



These Yule Logs baked and decorated by Gustaf and Fernande LeMense, Orp-Le-Grand, Belgium, are one of the traditional holiday foods served by Belgians.

## She recalls Belgian Christmas customs observed here and abroad

By GRACE LeMENSE

Gustaf and Fernande LeMense, Orp-le-Grand, Belgium, are very busy in their bakery shop at this time of year because they bake a special pastry called Yule Logs. Decorations such as little snowmen, reindeer and little trees and candles are used on the logs. The people of Belgium have always loved good food and wine. Each town retains its own specialties. Near Namur, in the town of Andenne, "cogous" (a special kind of long loaf) can be won in a card game called "Trairies". This is a very old custom. The people play this game in the early morning hours after Midnight Mass, or on Christmas morning. Some play it in their home and others at cafes and bakeries.

A "trairie" consists of five "cognous". It decreases in size and is called: Li premie (the first), li deuzinme (the second), li twezinme (the third), li quartrinme (the fourth), and li yroys (the last).

In Liege, bouquets (a sort of pancake)

are popular. Rabbit and hare were formerly the most popular main courses, but turkey has replaced it.

On the night of Dec. 6 children and adults in Belgium impatiently wait for St. Nicholas. When I was a child we always put a plate on the table the evening before St. Nick with bread for St. Nick. In the morning there was candy and cookies on our plates. But in Belgium he comes mounted on a gray donkey or perhaps a white horse. He wears elegant Bishop's robes, white gloves and carries a heavy cane. Saint Nick is accompanied by a young black page, said to be from Africa, who carries a bulging bag of presents.

In this Belgian area when I was a child and teenager, we enjoyed going out "Santaclausing" for St. Nick on the eve of Dec. 6. We wore Santa Claus costumes, mask and beard and enjoyed going to houses in the neighborhood and gave peanuts and candy to the children. Some of the smaller children were frightened and would run and hide when they heard the loud rap at their door.

In Belgium, St. Nicholas' donkey is allowed to eat the hay packed in the

children's carefully cleaned wooden shoes. Then small toys, nuts and sweets are left in the shoes. St. Nick tells the children to be good until Christmas and rides on to yet another warm home.

In every town and village in Belgium, creches are set up depicting the nativity. Adults, children and animals take part in re-enacting the Biblical story. In some villages a few adults and children dress up as the three kings and go door to door singing Christmas carols. They are given money to be donated to a charity.

Christmas trees adorn most Belgian cities. Antwerp and Brussels each are given a large tree as a gift from Helsinki, Norway as a token of international good will. In Belgium pine trees are a symbol of Peace on Earth and Good Will Toward Men. The whole city turns out to decorate these trees which become the focal point for outdoor caroling organized by a group called "Community Christmas." This group began the custom of leaving a gift at lighted outdoor creches. The gifts, whether large or small, are given to the needy of Belgium.

According to legend, at Midnight on the Holy Eve the animals in their stalls are said to turn their heads to the east. (My father used to tell us that too.) This happens after the man of the household visits the stable and gives the animals extra grain.

Clanging churchbells shatter the snow-covered stillness hanging over the houses with their calls to begin the new day, while the night still lingers over the plain. From houses and cottages people and little groups often with lanterns in hand set off for the church where the altar gleams and the nativity scene topped by the traditional star of Bethlehem takes its honored place.

Gift giving in Belgium was traditionally confined to the family group. Now, however, it extends to relatives and friends. God-children visit their God-parents and present them with

beautifully illuminated letters which are lovingly prepared at school and read with reverence. Custom has it that gifts are not given on Christmas Day. Small gifts are given that night and larger gifts are saved for New Years Day. When I was a child, my grandfather, who came from Belgium followed The New Years Day tradition and his children always brought him presents on that day.

After dinner and family gatherings, both young and old flock to the ice for skating on the frozen canals. Hot drinks and snack foods are sold in little booths set up on the canal sides, and friendly greetings are exchanged among acquaintances. After skating, the families attend Mass or go home to a warm crackling fire and a sleepy chat.

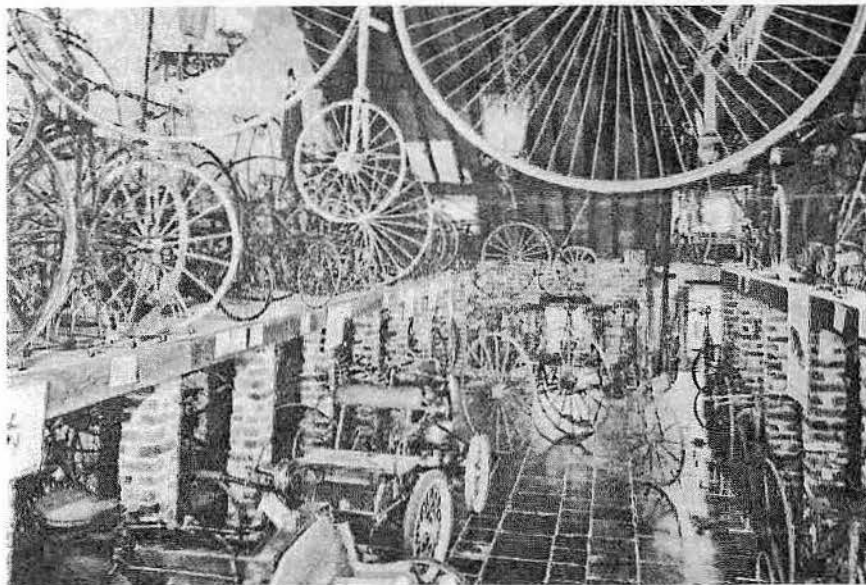
All the important towns of Belgium sparkle in the night during the holiday season. The old buildings are flood-lit and the main streets gleam with light. Each

store offers gifts better than the one before. The flowerseller's baskets overflow with branches of holly and mistletoe (traditional Christmas decorations). On Christmas eve, ballets, open-air concerts, and plays make the city hum with beautiful holiday music that puts the people in a care-free mood.

During Christmas, the Belgians, like people all over the world, are united in love and understanding. The customs of the people have endured this long and are sure to be carried out throughout the coming years. For Christmas is a time when everyone can forget their troubles and realities of the harsh world and live with peaceful feelings, at least for a short time. But we should always be happy because Jesus stayed here with us in The Eucharist and no matter what happens we can always turn to Him.

My Christmas wish to you is that you will always be happy because He is here.

# La Petite Reine



Members of the Peninsula Belgian American club touring Belgium recently made a stop at the only Bicycle Museum in the world located at Falmignou, Belgium.

## Christmas traditions revive memories of early childhood

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