



# Family, Friends and Joie de Vivre



## The Wedding "Shivaree"

In the *charivari* (usually pronounced in English as "shivaree") all the friends and relatives of a newly wed couple went to their home on their wedding night and danced, sang, made noises, played tricks, and sometimes broke into the house. They were usually even wilder if there was something unusual about the marriage such as a great difference between the ages of the couple.

P. G. Roy, a French-Canadian scholar writes:

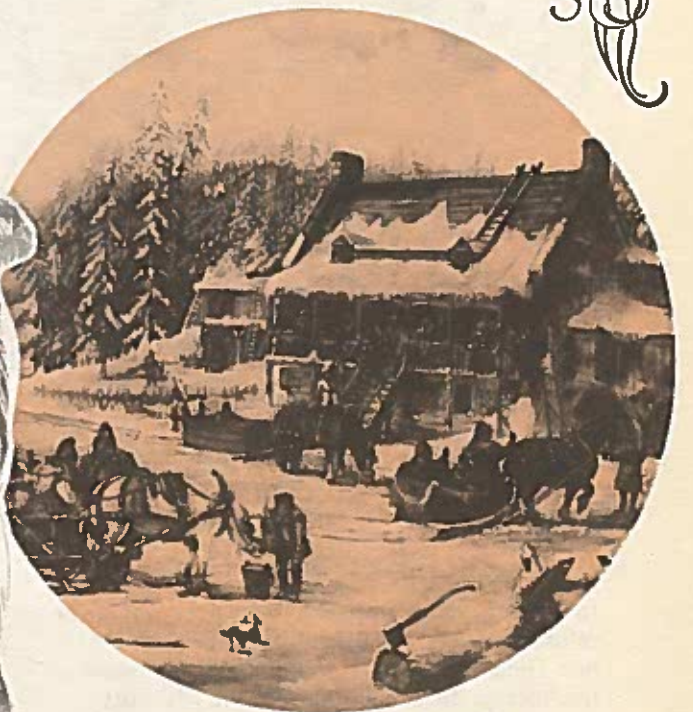
"The first charivari that is recorded in our history took place in Québec in 1683. A widow of 25 remarried only three weeks after her husband's death. The charivari lasted a week, and things went so far that Monseigneur Saint-Vallier (the Bishop) had to publish a notice threatening with excommunication [denial of the sacraments of the church] anyone who continued to stage charivaris.

Charivaris died out for a while, but later reappeared in country districts in a kinder form. Under English rule they continued, but victims who showed some spirit could stop the disturbance by letting the participants into their home for a glass of wine. Others paid a donation to the poor and immediately the fun-seekers would leave."

P. G. Roy, "Nos coutumes et nos traditions françaises," dans les *Cahiers des Dix*, quoted in M. D. Ferland, *Coutumes Populaires du Canada Français*, p. 55



A. Laliberté



The Jolifou Inn—A.S. Giffard



Habitants at Cards—C. Kreighoff



Grand Seigneur at Dinner, 18th century

"Ah, If Only My Monk Would Dance With Me!" was a popular dancing song among the voyageurs who met at the fur-trading posts for an evening's fun. Since the word "moine" means "top" as well as "monk" this song was also sung by children spinning their tops.

## Ah! Si Mon Moine Voulait Danser!

Oh! If Only My Monk Would Dance!

1. If you will come and dance with me,  
If you will come and dance with me,  
A feathered cap I will give to thee,  
A feathered cap I will give to thee.

### Refrain:

Come, my lass, let's trip now,  
Together let us skip now,  
As lightly on the measures go  
Our feet move merrily to and fro.

2. If you will come and dance with me,  
Bright silver shoes I will give to thee.
3. If you will come and dance with me,  
A dress of blue I will give to thee.
4. If you will come and dance with me,  
A kiss or two I will give to thee.
5. And if you'll give me a kiss or two,  
A ring of gold I will give to you.

from *Folk Songs of Canada* by E. Fowke and R. Johnson reprinted by permission of the Waterloo Music Company Limited, Waterloo

## Les Filles à Marier

The Marriageable Maidens

Maidens here are sweetly singing,  
Maidens longing to be wed.  
Slowly through the village strolling,  
I can hear them softly whisp'ring,  
"Mother, I must wed today.  
Don't say nay!"

"Hold your tongue, you little silly,  
You are hardly yet fifteen;  
Till you're old enough to marry,  
Love must tarry, love must tarry.  
Till you're sixteen, you must be  
Fancy free.

Here is money, O my daughter!  
To the convent you must go."  
"What a dowry this would make me!  
Do not to the convent take me,  
Let me find my love today,  
Don't say nay!"

"Now my daughter, mine's the right way.  
To the convent you must go."  
"No, my mother, here is my way,  
Right before me lies the highway,  
Leading to him, to my beau,  
Don't say no!"

from *Jongleur Songs of Old Québec* by Marius Barbeau. Copyright © 1962 by Rutgers, The State University. Reprinted by permission of Rutgers University Press.

## Traditional Party Games from Ile Verte, Québec

### 1. Pulling up the Stump

The first player gets down on his hands and knees; the second sits on the shoulders of the first, facing towards his feet; he crosses his feet under the first, and, giving some jerks, he tries to make him raise his hands from the floor and to tip him backwards.

### 6. Loading the Sheep

A player lying on the floor flounders about like a sheep while a second player tries to load him on his shoulder.

### 17. Pulling the Stick

Two players, sitting facing each other on the floor with the soles of their feet together, hold a broom horizontally. Each pulls the broom towards him and the stronger lifts the other.

### 19. Turning the Broom

The player, seizing a broom by the large end and holding it against the ceiling, must turn around fifty times, keeping his eyes fixed on the end that rests on the ceiling. He then has to place the end of the broom at a previously indicated spot in the room.

### 25. Launching the Ship

One of the players lies on his back; a second lies on top of him, with his head at the other's feet, and also on his back. The first then puts his legs over the shoulders of the other, holding his legs between his arms, while a third pours a glass of water in his face.

### 30. Shooting the Rapids

Several people sit astride a long bench; the first grips the end of the bench while the others cross their hands over the eyes of the one in front of them; the game is supposed to consist for the first in not losing hold while the others pull him backwards, but actually the second has his hands covered with soot with which he smears the face of the first player without his knowledge.

E. Fowke, *Folklore of Canada*, pp. 86-90