The What, Where and How of a Genealogical Treasure Trove

Background

- System came from Europe with the beginnings of New France.
- Considered legal professionals, open private practice and have extensive powers.
- End of practice, records to fellow notary or applicable Palais du Justice.
- Most legal documents of a personal/civil matter are produced by notaries, which is why their records can be a comprehensive source of genealogical data.
- Archived/open records up to 1934 at centres d’archives of the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BAnQ) [http://www.banq.qc.ca/accueil/index.html?language_id=1](http://www.banq.qc.ca/accueil/index.html?language_id=1)

French Regime Period - 1626 to 1763/94

–Records easiest and quickest to locate. Note that dates do run slightly into the English Regime, as the Société de recherche historique Archiv-Histo updates.
–Search tool - Parchemin – banque de données notariales du Québec, databank of over 300,000 notarial acts, on in-house computers at centres d’archives of the BAnQ.

Historic Period - Post Parchemin to 1934

–Records not as easy to locate. The quickest way is if the name of a notary is known, though records of any notaries within a region/district applicable to an ancestor can be searched.

Current Period - Post 1934 to Present

–Records most difficult to impossible to obtain. They are not yet archived, so not open to the public, and are held at a notary greffe (office) or the Palais du Justice (Court House)
–Search tool - Chambre des notaires du Québec (CNQ) at [http://www.cnq.org/fr/accueil.html](http://www.cnq.org/fr/accueil.html), contact with notaries or Palais du Justice, and exceptionally within land records.

Miscellaneous

–Investigate holdings at local archives and libraries, or societies whether genealogical or historical and check documents already held for any reference to a notary name.
–Search tools - [www.ancestry.ca](http://www.ancestry.ca) and [www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) have notary collections that, though not all inclusive, can be browsed.

Conclusion

- Notary records are an important and valuable resource in family history research.
- Quebec notaries played a vital role in recording an abundance of personal data.
- Their records can shine new light on our ancestors’ lives. Don’t miss out on them.