THE FRIGONS

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIGON, FRIGONE, FREGO, FREGOE, FREGON, FREGONE FAMILIES

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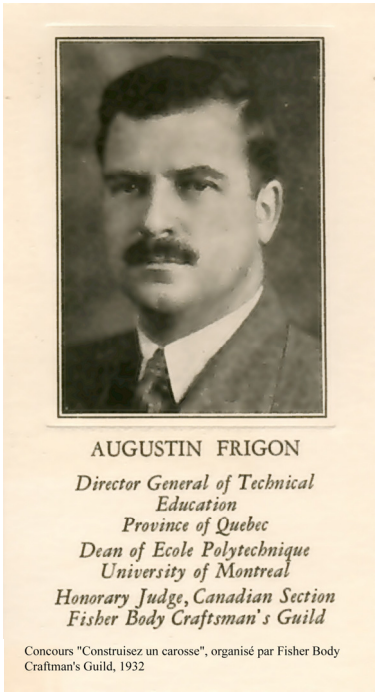
SPECIAL EDITION 2009 **Augustin Frigon 1888 - 1952**

Augustin Frigon, PhD, Engineer

Robert Frigon (2)
Charny, April 23, 2006

January 15, 1934, at Funchal, chief city of Madeira Island, in the Autonomous Region of Portugal.

Augustin, 18 years old (1906). He was a student at the École Polytechnique de Montréal.



Concours "Construisez un carosse", organisé par Fisher Body Craftman's Guild, 1932

Note to the Reader

Pierre Frigon (4)

Shortly before his death, Robert Frigon (2) wrote a text about Augustin Frigon. In the Spring 2008 Newsletter I announced that this document was worth publishing. Here it is! For the convenience of our readers who might not have the Spring 2008 Newsletter at hand, we have reproduced the article below.

Researchers can consult Robert's sources by communicating with the Association of Frigon Families.

A few Editor's Notes help to clarify Robert's text.

Happy reading! May this great man, Augustin Frigon, be long remembered.

ROBERT FRIGON, BIOGRAPHER OF AUGUSTIN FRIGON

Pierre Frigon (4)

VOLUME 15 - NUMBER 2 SPRING 2008

Robert Frigon (2)
1928 - 2006

Very few among you know that Robert (2) had started writing a biography of Augustin Frigon before he died on November 21, 2006. Both of us had been toying with the idea for a long time when he finally decided to buckle down to the task in 2005. We then agreed that I would discontinue my research on Augustin Frigon. At the time of Robert's death, he was gathering data and writing a first draft of his text.

He had meticulously filed his research documents. Among them we find archive documents, extracts from Web sites, photocopies of documents, letters sent to the archivists of the École Polytechnique de Montréal, Radio-Canada, Laval University, SNC Lavalin, etc. Unfortunately he received very few replies from these different organizations. The work must go on. Under every rock that is lifted, a universe remains to be discovered.

The text he left us consists of about fifteen pages. Robert would certainly have done more work on these pages. He would have definitely refused to publish them in their present form. After a careful reading, I came to the conclusion that the text is worth distributing even if it is incomplete. Here we recognize the fine literary style so characteristic of him as well as the accuracy of his information. I plan to make his text available in the course of the year. Robert's archives are open to all for consultation.

I am now taking over this file; the long and passionate detective work continues. Because Augustin Frigon worked in so many different fields, the amount of research to be done is enormous; it will certainly be long. I will keep you informed through our annual general assemblies and through the chronicle Did you know that…? in which I will give you regular tidbits of information.

At this time, I would like to emphasize the quality of the work Robert had begun in spite of the terrible limitations imposed upon him by his illness. I am also appealing for your support. All documents and information about Augustin Frigon's personal or professional life that you may have in your possession will be greatly appreciated.

In closing, I wish to thank very specially Paul (6), Augustin Frigon's grandson, who graciously gave the Association a great part of Augustin's archives (documents and photos) a few weeks before Robert's death. The latter would have been the happiest of men if life had given him the time to consult them.

Augustin Frigon, PhD, Engineer
Robert Frigon (2)
Charny, April 23, 2006

Augustin François-Xavier Hubert Frigon was born in Montreal on March 8, 1888 to **Athanase-Joseph Frigon** and **Marie-Délia Angèle Lizée**. This couple married on April 18, 1887, at Notre-Dame Basilica in Montreal. In 1907, Augustin lost his mother. He was then 19 years old and must have been a student at the *École Polytechnique de Montréal*. On April 21, 1908, his father married his sister-in-law, Catherine-Anna Lizée, daughter of Zéphirin Lizée and of Catherine Gagnon at St. Denis Church in Montreal. This couple had no children.

It seems appropriate to draw the reader's attention to the ancestors and lineage of Augustin Frigon. It was in 1670 that **François Frigon dit (called) l'Espagnol** married Marie-Claude Chamois somewhere on the **"*coste de Batiscan*"**; this is the only clue the official documents have left us. So, we know neither the place nor the church that witnessed the marriage of our founding couple, just as we do not know François Frigon's place of origin in France. We do know, however, that in 1670 there was not yet a church in Batiscan. A priest of the Quebec Diocese traveled up and down the **"coste de Batiscan"** to celebrate the Mass in private homes.

François and Marie-Claude had a few children, of whom only one son, **Jean-François Frigon,** possibly born in 1674, passed on the patronymic Frigon. Jean-François married Madeline Moreau at Batiscan in 1700. She died in 1713 leaving five young children. Jean-François then married Gertrude Perreault in 1715, always in Batiscan. Gertrude gave him ten or so children; the eldest of these was **Antoine-Pierre**, born in 1716, spouse of Marie-Anne Trottier. This couple is at the origin of several lines that produced, among others, **Dr. Augustin Frigon**.

In the next generation there was **Joseph Frigon** [born in 1758], spouse of **Madeleine Lefebvre** [marriage in 1782]. This couple lived in Sainte-Geneviève-de-Batiscan. Misfortune struck this family in 1800 when Madeleine passed away [burial on November 27th], and then Joseph died one month later [burial on December 27th]. They left behind seven young children, 2 to 16 years of age. We suppose that the immediate family took over the care of the young orphans.

A son of the Joseph Frigon-Madeleine Lefebvre couple, born in 1798 and named **Michel-Archange**, married **Josephte Mongrain** at Saint-Stanislas-de-Koska in 1818. Foreseeing a better future in Montreal, Archange moved his whole family there around 1830. The male descendants would become tradesmen: masons, carters, and construction-workers. *The metropolis was in expansion and in leaving agriculture in Batiscan to learn a trade……It seems that these Frigons were blossoming…..the children or descendants were prospering and we are indebted to them for the subsequent lines in the city*[1].

That is how it came about that a son named Césaire-Benjamin Frigon, born to the couple Michel-Archange Frigon - Josephte Mongrain in Montreal in 1838, married Philomène Cassant, also in Montreal, in 1865. And from this couple came Athanase Joseph Frigon, born in 1866, who later joined his destiny to that of Marie Angèle Lizée in 1887 in Montreal. They were the parents of Dr. Augustin Frigon.

1. Editor's Note: The italics were added by the editor. Here Robert seems to have jotted down a few ideas with the intention of returning to them later on.

Coming from a middle-class family that enjoyed an honestly acquired affluence, the father working as an accountant and the grandfather as a mason in the construction of prestigious buildings, and being an only child, Augustin was undoubtedly strongly encouraged to pursue his education. Though we lack precise documents, we can believe that his environment profoundly influenced him.

We believe that he spent his primary school years at the **Académie Commerciale Catholique** of Montreal. This school "was founded in 1855 on Côté Street"[2] for the following reason: "But the Catholic population of Montreal soon understood that, in order not to lag behind the other segments of the population, it was imperative to give its most important school a building worthy of its mission."[3] It was on the **Plateau**, at 1999 Sainte-Catherine Street, corner of Ontario and Saint-Urbain (sic) that a new

Editor's Note: École Commercial Catholique de Montréal (École Archambault)
(Baby Collection- Prints / P0058FG00371, P0058)
University of Montreal, Archives Division

2. Les Cahiers des Dix, Louis-Philippe Audet.
3. Le livre d'Or de l'Académie Commerciale Catholique de Montréal. A. Leblond de Brumath. (1906)

building of 165 x 45 feet (50,3 x 13,7 m) was erected and inaugurated in 1871. Its motto was **Suaviter et fortiter** (Gentleness and Strength).

The **Académie Commerciale Catholique,** a boys' school**,** offered the upper intermediate course up to the eighth and last grade. I still know nothing about this part of his adolescence. However, tidbits picked up here and there finally make a whole. Admittedly, the young Augustin had certain advantages as an only son living in a dynamic milieu (he grew up in the circle of his uncle **Albert-Pierre Frigon**, an audacious promoter, financier and mayor of **Sault-au-Recollet**); furthermore, this period witnessed the construction of railroads all over the continent, a very favourable period for economic and territorial expansion. Lastly, we must suppose that the young Augustin had certain attributes that placed him above others of the same category.

École Commerciale Catholique de Montréal

This magnificent building matched the ambition and pride of the commissioners of the Catholic School Board. It was also called **École Archambault** and **Académie du Plateau**. It served as the head office of the **École Polytechnique**. Built between 1870 and 1872 following the plans of architect Adolphe Lévêque, it stood in the quadrilateral formed by Sainte-Catherine, Saint Urbain, Ontario and Saint-Georges (Jeanne-Mance) Streets, A contract was granted in 1869 to Louis Archambault, the brother of Urgel-Eugène Archambault, for the frame and woodwork. It was a monumental construction for the time and cost more than one hundred fifteen thousand dollars. "It was on June 19, 1872, that the official opening ceremony of the Académie du Plateau took place. The ceremony was presided over by Lord Lisgar[4]. Also in attendance were the Premier of the Province of Quebec, P.-J.-O. Chauveau and the mayor of Montreal, M. Coursol."[5]

The development of railroads and the harnessing of rivers to produce electrical power brought up the problem of technical training. In Montreal, manpower was abundant but unqualified. Technicians had to be trained but these were too often foreigners who had been brought in at great cost from somewhere in Europe. **McGill University** trained skilful engineers, but technical colleges did not yet exist. French Canada and its classical colleges oriented the students toward liberal professions and the clergy. These eminent institutions looked down somewhat upon manual labour and the ironworkers.

Urgel-Eugène Archambault[6], a school director and promoter of technical teaching, suffered because of the circumstances that placed his fellow citizens in an inferior position. The Anglophone segment (of the population) led in the positions that required technical knowledge. By dint of quarrelling with the municipal and provincial administrations and having to cope with prejudices against the teaching of trades, he succeeded to add a few additional years to the curriculum of his **Académie Commerciale**

4. Second Governor General of the **Dominion of Canada**. Sir John Young, Baronet of Baillieborough, 1st Baron Lisgar (1807 - 1876).
5. Les Cahiers des Dix. Louis-Philippe Audet. Number 29, 1964.
6. Born at l'Assomption, son of Louis Archambault, cultivator, and Angélique Prud'homme (1834-1904). Graduate of the École Normale Jacques-Cartier (1857 and 1863). Director of the Académie Commerciale Catholique de Montréal (1860) and of the Académie du Plateau (1872). Principal of the École Polytechnique de Montréal in 1873.

Catholique, a preparation for advanced studies. Furthermore, the steps he took resulted in the foundation of the **École Polytechnique de Montréal.** "This school began its courses in January 1874. This was truly the founding of technical education in French Canada."[7]

We must admit that at the end of his eighth year (of schooling), Augustin was not equipped to undertake higher studies; we have done some research to find the educational institution that enabled this young adolescent to acquire the supplementary knowledge he needed to pursue his studies. We are aware that colleges abounded in Montreal. He was beyond the age required for admission to Greco-Latin studies. Moreover, his application would not have been approved. We will come to this later.

Besides the prestigious classical colleges like Notre-Dame, Mont-Saint-Louis, Sainte-Marie, and others, we know there existed several schools under the supervision of the school board. They all offered the same program intended for the working class clientele.

We find it interesting to note a few of these. **L'Académie Sainte-Marie** (Montcalm School) at the corner of Craig and Visitation, that later moved to the corner of Saint-Hubert and de Montigny. **Sarsfield School,** said to be bilingual, that accepted students from all ethnic groups; **Champlain School** on Fullum Street just a short distance from Saint-Vincent-de-Paul Church; **Belmont School,** situated in the west end of the city, that offered the added advantage of accepting students of both ethnic groups regardless of their religious affiliation; **Olier** School or **Académie Saint-Denis,** located on Pine Avenue, and also, **Edward Murphy School**, 184 Craig Street. Finally, we must point out the private courses given by **Leblond de Brumath** and **de Boisseau,** intended for youths too old to undertake the long path of classical studies, and also for young people who had apparently finished their courses but presented gaps or weak points in their knowledge.

Social Unrest

So, Augustin began his advanced studies. At that time, Montreal was in a period of turmoil. With the rise of a narrow-minded nationalism based on religion and language among both the Anglophones and the Francophones, the city was troubled by contradictory currents of thought and was divided as well. The mayors were alternately English or French. The small, sensational newspapers surreptitiously fed into this social plague. The authorities barely succeeded in preventing anarchy, for during public assemblies in the streets and parks, eloquent speakers stirred up the citizens.[8]

Note: on October 2, 1908, Henri Bourassa addressed his supporters at the Monument National. Certain orators spoke; among these was a certain **Joseph Frigon** who saluted Bourassa as a truly great man (Robert Rumilly). Could this be Augustin's father, Joseph Athanase Frigon?

Indeed, Anglophones and Francophones had to coexist on the same territory and get along with one

7. Histoire de Montréal. Robert Rumilly.

8. In reference to **Henri Bourassa** who protested against an editorial written by **Israël Tarte** in "**La Presse"**. **Robert Rumilly1** quotes: "Help me to chase the vendors from the temple." Bourassa traveled throughout the province and aroused the youth. He shouted, his voice carried far, his eyes blazed, his hand wielded the whip and he really appeared as an avenger.

another. The futile disputes kept alive by the pamphleteers were barely tolerated. The clergy kept a close watch. Our fellow citizens, who came from founding families, were under the wing of the Archbishop of Montreal, who also had to be worried about the Irish Catholics who were numerous in Montreal. The Archbishop of Montreal[9] nurtured his relationships with the upper class and the politicians of the municipal, provincial and **Dominion**[10] levels. The Catholic Church cultivated the art of domination from the bottom to the top of its social ladder, from the humble parish priest at the base of the pyramid, to the superiors of religious communities, responsible for education and health. Every public administrator, regardless whether he was mayor, deputy, or minister had to obtain the endorsement of the archbishop if he wished to succeed. Today we would call this a theocracy; the control over the population was so tight, and for so long, that this kind of ecclesiastical hegemony had to be reflected on the family unit. Taking into account the hierarchical structure of this society: respect for authority, strict obedience to the parents, maintenance of the traditional values taught by the Church, one simply had to adhere to the values of the community in order to be integrated. Young Augustin undoubtedly had to deal with all the pressures of his environment and adapt to the situation.

École Polytechnique

École Polytechnique de Montréal, located on St. Denis Street.
Archives of the École Polytechnique de Montréal.

9. Monsignor Paul Bruchési (1855 - 1939).
10. **Dominion**. This was the name chosen, among others, in Charlottetown in 1867. It simply signifies a colony that is independent but politically bound to the British Empire. On October 12, 1982, the Canadian Parliament expurgated this label from the constitution.

"It was in 1873 that a combination of circumstances and the joint efforts of politicians and eminent educators with vision and audacity permitted the founding, in Montreal, of the École des Sciences appliqués."[11] We are indebted to **Urgel-Eugène Archambault,** a career educator and school commissioner of the Montreal Catholic School Board, for this initiative. The economic and financial circles were worried about the weakness of science education in French Canada. Our classical colleges were preparing people for the liberal professions and the priesthood. At the beginning of the last quarter of the 19th century, public opinion was beginning to be troubled by the little attention paid to the construction trades: canals, railroads, roads and bridges. In our documentation on this era, it is mentioned that these major works were entrusted to English soldiers or American civil engineers.

Around 1870, the editorialists of the local newspapers said they were worried about the absence of French-Canadian engineers on the large building sites. Alarmed by such a situation, the provincial government, through its Premier **Pierre-Olivier Chauveau,** (he was Minister of Public Education since 1868)[12] corresponded with Laval University and its rector **Monsignor Elzéar-Alexandre Tachereau[13],** asking him to found a School of Applied Sciences. His request was accompanied by a generous contribution to get started.

Correspondence shows that negotiations took place between the provincial government and the university, but the rector's replies were not encouraging.. "We had the conviction that the government was getting ready to exercise real control over this institution."[14] In March 1872, Laval's rector let it be known in a letter that, at the present time, the administration was not considering opening a science faculty. This was a categorical "no". This refusal gave a chance to the Montreal educators' project directed by **Urgel-Eugène Archambault** to open the doors of the Académie Commerciale Catholique or, if you wish, the **Académie du Plateau**, to a more advanced level of teaching.

In 1872, **Gédéon Ouimet[15]** was Minister of Public Education. In his official report for the year 1872-1873, he wrote the following: "There is a type of school to which I want to draw the attention of the public. It is an "**école des sciences appliqués aux arts**" (school of science applied to the arts). There is none yet for the French population. My predecessor (Mr. Chauveau) tried to establish such a school but it had to be discontinued. I plan to open one soon and I have every reason to believe that I will be able to do so,"[16] With the backing of influential people, "On October 7, 1873, the commissioners of the Catholic School Board of Montreal, genuinely interested in this project, entrusted to **Urgel-Eugène Archambault** and **Peter S. Murphy** the mission of working with the Minister of Public Education on the organisation, in Montreal, of a scientific and industrial school."[17]

We must point out the presence of **Charles Pfister**, a French geometrician, and principal collaborator of Mr. Archambault, who was the first teacher of this program along with **Joseph Haynes**. The first

11. Monsignor Olivier Maurault. Les Cahiers des Dix, volume 30.
12. Pierre-Olivier Chauveau (1830 - 1890), lawyer, writer, patron of the arts.
13. Elzéar-Alexandre Tachereau (1820 - 1898), first Canadian cardinal named by Rome in 1886.
14. Cahier des Dix. Monsignor Olivier Maurault, Montréal 1965.
15. Gédéon Ouimet (1823 - 1905). Lawyer, Premier of the Province of Quebec (1873 - 1874).
16. Cahier des Dix. Monsignor Olivier Maurault. Volume 30, 1965.
17. Cahier des Dix. op. cit., p. 165.

students to register in January 1874 were: A. Parent, Émile Vanier, Stanislas Pariseau, R. Larivière, Flavien Winter, and W. Haynes. The curriculum is worthy of mention here: arithmetic, geometry, algebra, geography, natural history, physics, mechanics, chemistry, linear and ornamental drawing; plus, surprisingly enough, courses in singing, writing, calligraphy, philosophy and social economics.

In January 1876, "an order-in-council officially recognized *l'École scientifique et industrielle,* and the official Gazette of May 13th of the same year reported it.[18] The article confirmed that on December 28, 1876, the **École Polytechnique de Montréal** had become a school for engineers authorized by Law 40, Victoria, Chapter 22. And in conclusion "we are convinced that by founding such a school we are opening a promising future for our youth."[19] These were the beginnings of the faculty of engineering that formed many a scientist in the course of the following decades.

Advanced Studies

We know, now, how Augustin managed to improve his scientific knowledge in order to meet the requirements for admission to the École Polytechnique. He revealed it himself in a letter dated May 15, 1914, addressed to **Monsieur P. Janet**, director of the École Supérieure d'Électricité, Paris (XVe).[20] He wrote: "Ten months of private courses in elementary mathematics with **M. Leluau**, a professor at the École Polytechnique de Montréal and former student of the École Centrale de Paris."

So, he did ten months of intensive study of algebra, geometry, trigonometry, and possibly calculus; this corresponded to a full school year in the specialty that is the basis for all the sciences. Undeniably, we agree with this initiative that was, without a doubt, suggested by a good counsellor. In 1905, Augustin, aged 17, entered Polytechnique and four years later graduated as a civil engineer and **"chemical engineer",** as he himself wrote in his curriculum vitae. He obtained his diploma in 1909. He was in the 33rd class of the École Polytechnique.

The following year, he took specialized courses in electrical engineering at the **Massachusetts Institute of Technology** in Cambridge. He was registered as an "élève libre" (a student who audits courses).[21] He attended the courses that matched his interests, that is to say, in electro-technology. He himself wrote, on May 15, 1914:[22] "A year of studies as an "élève libre" at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. A complete course in electro-technology, courses in electrical measures, mechanics, mathematics, thermal machines and especially, a large number of experiments in the electrical measures laboratories and in machine testing."

These complementary studies assured him a position as professor at his Alma Mater. In his documents, (we have in our possession vouchers graciously provided us by the archives of the École

18. Les Cahiers des Dix. Monsignor Olivier Maurault. Volume 30.
19. Les Ateliers de Montréal. Montréal, 1874.
20. M. Charles Leluau. A copy of this letter has been included further on.
21. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology opened in 1865, that is, a few years later than planned because of the American Civil War. This institution is very strict but is famous throughout the world.
22. Letter to M. P. Janet, director of the École Supérieure d'Électricité, Paris.

Polytechnique[23]), he pointed out that, beginning in 1910, he taught the fundamentals of electricity at the École Polytechnique.

That a young man twenty-two years old would be invited to share his knowledge with university-level students testifies that he had obvious qualities that had been noticed by his superiors. This basic course was close to his heart and it was with regret that he ceded it to another teacher in 1928, his numerous obligations preventing him from adequately acquitting himself of this work.

Surveyer & Frigon

For a while, he was the associate of Arthur Surveyer, a civil engineer, operating under the firm name of "**Surveyer and Frigon**", with offices at 50 Beaver Hall Hill.[24] In 1913, they obtained from the Shawinigan Water and Power Company, the contract for the supervision of the hydroelectric plant in Grand-Mère. It was constructed on an islet by the H.E.Talbot Construction Co. of Dayton, Ohio according to plans drawn up by Georges F. Hardy of New York, who "**was inspired by the gothic style of the fortress cathedral of Sainte-Cécile d'Albi in France**"[25] for the exterior of the building.

Sainte-Cécile Cathedral
Albi, France

Before continuing our reflections about Augustin's career, I believe that we must talk about a talented Canadian called **Arthur Surveyer,** a "Polytechnician" like himself, but one described by his family as a timid person. This man was the founder of a consultant group that much later on became a world -renowned firm, SNC-Lavalin.[26]

Son of Louis-Joseph Surveyer, a businessman, and of Hectorine Fabre, **Arthur Surveyer** was born in Montreal in 1879. As a youth, he began Greco-Latin studies at the Collège Sainte-Marie under the direction of the Jesuits, where he obtained his Baccalaureat es Arts degree in 1898. Feeling little attraction for the liberal arts professions, and undecided about a choice of career, it was somewhat by default that he registered at the École Polytechnique. He took a liking to these scientific studies and obtained a civil engineering diploma in 1902. At the end of his studies, his father agreed to offer him a course at the *École spéciale de l'industrie et des mines* at

Grand-Mère Power Plant
Shawinigan (Grand-Mère Sector), Québec

23. Compliments of Ms Odile Fortin, archivist.
24. Arthur Surveyer (1879 - 1961). Engineer graduated from the Polytechnique in 1902. Founder of SNC – Lavalin.
25. Constructed between the 12th and 15th centuries, on the Tarn, at the foot of the Pyrenees, near the city of Toulouse. (Source: archives of Hydro-Quebec.)
26. Source: "Génie sans frontiers". Suzanne Lalande. Libre-Expression.

"THE DAM AND POWER PLANT AT GRAND-MÈRE IN 1912"
Photo # SLI-BX-0021241086-35, from an Arthur Surveyer and Augustin Frigon joint projet .
Source : SNC-Lavalin Archives

Hainault, Mons, Belgium. The young student would have preferred an important French school, but none of them accepted his diploma."[27]

Upon his return from Europe, he went to work for the federal Ministry of Public Works in 1904. During seven years, he gathered experience "**in the field**", experience that would serve him throughout his career. But he was not meant to be a civil servant. He knew that the levers of the economy were well anchored in the English-speaking segment of Quebec, in the industrial sector as well as in business and banking; but it was especially in Montreal, a francophone city, that he observed among his compatriots a certain embarrassment about holding leadership positions, as if wealth and prosperity were attributes irreconcilable with the French mentality. "**Let us leave to other nations** (understood here "the

27. Suzanne Lalande. "Génie sans frontières".

Anglophones ") **that are less idealistic than we are, this febrile mercantilism and crude naturalism that rivets them to matter. Our own ambitions must tend and aim higher.**"[28] Let us underline that Arthur's parents, Louis-Joseph Surveyer and Hectorine Fabre, ran a hardware store on Saint-Laurent Street, corner of Craig. Therefore, they were elements of this "**febrile mercantilism**" denounced by Monsignor Paquet.

"He knew that if he remained a civil servant he would never play a role in the economic development of Quebec."[29] He then turned toward private practice. Counting on his contacts and his expertise, he opened an office in the Berthelot Building in 1911. The sign on his door informed people that Arthur Surveyer, I.C. was available as an engineering consultant and that his fields of activity included consultations and project estimates. The results of the first year were poor. He thought about bringing in a partner. He knew **Augustin Frigon** who had been recently teaching electricity at the Polytechnique. He also knew of his academic advancement and the knowledge he had acquired at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge in the field of hydro-electricity fell right in with the orientation that he wished to give to his practice.

In 1912, **Augustin Frigon** joined **Arthur Surveyer** but kept his position as professor at the Polytechnique. They set up their office at 56 Beaver Hall Hill under the company name of "**Surveyer & Frigon**". They obtained their first important contract for the plans and cost estimate of the power station at the "**Rocher de Grand-Mère**".[30] Since 1840 the American pulp and paper companies had chosen the Mauricie Region to develop hydraulic power that would supply electricity to their paper mills. Through our research we have learned that a certain John Forman, baron of the United States paper mills, chose the waterfalls at Grand-Mère and its Rocher to construct one of the first mills in eastern Quebec. "Talbot Construction" of Dayton (Ohio) constructed the building according to the plans of architect Georges Hardy of New York. Strangely enough, the inspiration for the structure came from the cathedral fortress of Sainte-Cécile d'Albi in France.

European Studies

Though equipped with a diploma in electrical engineering obtained in 1909 at the École Polytechnique de Montréal, and with an additional year auditing courses at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology of Cambridge in 1910, Augustin wanted more. That is hardly surprising. The decades around the beginning of the 20th century witnessed a technical revolution in transport, communications, and lighting. It suffices to mention **Guglielmo Marconi** who delivered his wireless telegraph to communicators, **Thomas Edison** with his bulb that made light burst out of darkness, and **Henry Ford** with his automobile and steam engine that relegated the horse to idleness in the stable.

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28. Monsignor Louis Adolphe Paquet (1859 – 1942). Professor of theology and canon law at Laval University. From his "Bréviaire du patriot canadien-français" (Breviary of the French-Canadian patriot).
29. Suzanne Lalande. Op. cit.
30. The building still exists. A unit of Hydro-Quebec.
    Editor's Note : In fact, this plant is called the Centrale Grand-Mère. A new power station on the same site, called the Centrale Du-Rocher-de-Grand-Mère was added to the complex.

His professors at the Polytechnique came from France. He undoubtedly had a certain admiration for them, and for him, the pursuit of his studies had to be done in Paris. Let us assume that he had been planning this project for some time for he seemed really determined even though he had to go through the process twice. He had to wait for the end of the first great world conflict to renew his application. We must admire the courage and tenacity that served him so well. His first application was dated 1914.

In the meantime, Augustin had married. As a matter of fact, it was on April 14, 1913 that he married **Elsie Amanda Owen**, daughter of Henry Owen, civil engineer, and of **Clara Elisabeth Omsden** at Notre-Dame Basilica of Montreal. Two children were born to them: Raymond, on February 24, 1915 and Marguerite, on July 31, 1917. We will come back to Raymond a bit further on. A civil engineer like his father, Raymond had a long and fruitful career and, as we write these lines, he is enjoying a peaceful retirement in Ottawa.

The letter that follows (page 14) was Augustin's first application for admission to the École Supérieure d'Électricité de Paris; it is of biographical interest as well as a source of information about his academic background. We are reproducing it in its entirety.[31]

This letter was written on a typewriter and was not signed. His name was also typed. The letter testifies to an impressive academic background. All the more so since he was teaching at the Polytechnique as well as working as a partner of Arthur Surveyer in his consultation and design firm at the time. We know that they supervised the construction of the hydraulic facility of the Laurentian Pulp and Paper at the Rocher of Grand-Mère.[32]

Appropriate Education

The criteria for the initial education of the young child in the schools of French Canada toward the last quarter of the 19th century would certainly be considered cumbersome a century and a half later, and there would be vehement protests. For example, the program of the Académie Commerciale Catholique under the auspices of the School Commission of the City of Montreal, under the control, it must be said, of the clergy.

The influence of the clergy, under the Church of Rome, was strong at the turn of the century, and the Archbishop of Montreal, as delegate of the Holy Father, exercised a subtle, omnipresent surveillance

obligatory confession once a month
if there was negligence, the principal was notified
the guilty parties were kept after school.

31. Sincere thanks to Mrs. Odile Fortin, of the Office of the Archives, École Polytechnique.

32. Editor's note: Here we do not understand the reference to 500 horsepower, a very small quantity that, in our opinion, is insufficient for supplying a paper mill.

Montreal, May 15, 1914

Mr. P.Janet
Director of the École Supérieure d'Électricité
14, rue de Staal
Paris (XVe),
France

Sir,

I have the honour of sending you my application for admission to the École Supérieure d'Électricité as a full-time foreign student for the year 1914-1915.

My friend and colleague, Robert Pinget, one of your graduates who has just been given the responsibility for a certain number of conferences at our school, has been kind enough to write a letter of recommendation on my behalf.

I would like very much to be able to follow the courses of the École Supérieure d'Électricité for, according to the information I have obtained, it is without a doubt at your school that I will receive the most complete formation. Since I am destined to be the successor to our professor of electro-technology, it would be to my advantage to have had the privilege of following the course that you yourself give at the École Supérieure. I feel that I would profit greatly from the special conferences on the applications of electricity, from the laboratories that I would be involved in, as well as from the industrial projects that I would be called upon to prepare.

You will find enumerated below, in a detailed manner, that which I could call my preparation for admission to your school.

A complete commercial course.

Ten months of private courses in elementary mathematics with Mr. Leluau, professor at the École Polytechnique de Montréal and former student of the École Centrale de Paris.

A four-year course and diploma in civil engineering with distinction from the École Polytechnique de Montréal.

Training courses in different engineering firms and at the test platform of the Montreal Light Heat & Power Co.

A year of courses audited at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Boston. A complete course in electro-technology, a course in electrical measures, in mechanics, mathematics, thermal machines, and above all, a large number of experiments in the electrical measures laboratories, and machinery trials.

Return to the École Polytechnique de Montréal and obtaining of an electrical engineering diploma upon presentation of an industrial project.

Four years as professor in charge of the electrical measures course and electrical laboratories at the École Polytechnique.

Three years as a member of Surveyer & Frigon, a firm of engineering consultants of Montreal. This involved studies of factory installation projects, engineering consultation for the construction of two small hydro-electric plants of 500 horse-power each, preparation of numerous reports, studies, etc.

Associate member of the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers.

I hope that you will deem it opportune, Sir, to transmit my request to the members of your *Conseil de Perfectionnement*. Since I will have to make certain preparations for my departure for Paris, I would be most grateful to you for informing me as soon as possible of the decision taken regarding my application.

Be assured of my best regards.

A. Frigon

Appendix
Biographical notes on Robert Frigon (2)

Birth
December 2, 1928 in Routierville, son of Onésime Frigon and Antoinette Roy. Baptized December 6, 1928 at Sainte-Florence. Godfather: Onésime Frigon, his half brother. Godmother: Yvonne Pinault.

Marriage
Spouse: Denise Goulet, daughter of Alphonse Goulet and Rose-Alma Lafrance. One child: Martine. A grandson: Nicolas Frigon-Robitaille.

Studies
1937-1941 École de Routhierville
1941-1943 Académie Saint-Joseph de Mont-Joli
1943-1945 Collège des Frères du Sacré-Cœur de Rimouski
1945-1947 Séminaire de Rimouski, commercial course
1951-1952 Institut maritime de Rimouski
1987-1989 Institut Teccart inc., correspondence course in electronics

Career
1952-1954 Radio telegrapher on long run ships for Cunard Lines and Canada Steamship Lines.
1954-1956 Maritime controller for Canadian Marconi at Pointe-au-Père, Fort Churchill, Carol Harbor and Frobisher Bay.
1956-1957 Maritime controller for Canadian Marconi at Trois-Rivières.
1958-1960 Electro technician at the Canadian British Aluminium of Baie-Comeau. Installation in his home of a ham radio to communicate either in Morse code or by microphone.
1960-1978 Professor at the Institut maritime de Rimouski.
1966-1968 Gave private courses in Morse code in the evening.
1978-1981 Director of the Institut de marine in Rimouski.

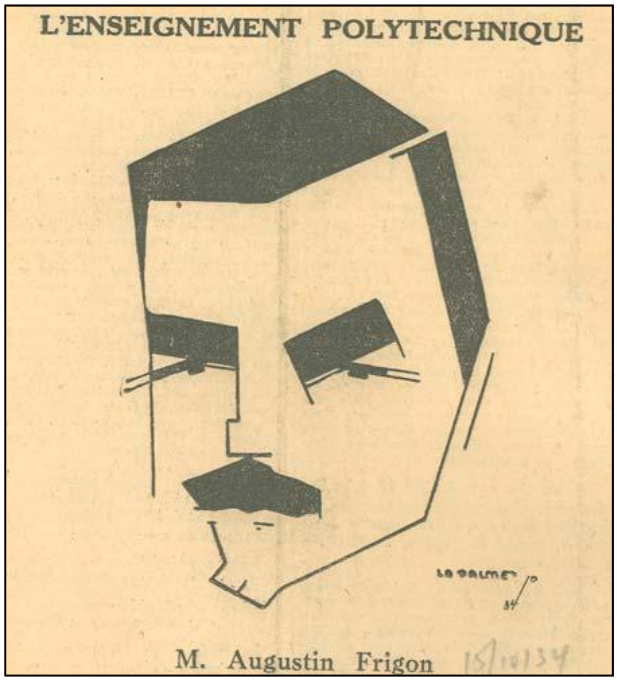
Throughout his career, Robert also repaired ship radars, and for many years, repaired cardiac monitors and x-ray machines at the Rimouski Hospital. He sailed as a third mate on St. Lawrence River cruise ships during the summers of 1964 to1966. He was an officer of the marine cadets at Borden, Ontario for three summers. He was employed by Communications Quebec at Rimouski for two years. Finally, he worked at the Complex G for the Ministry of Education, private teaching sector, for eight years. He retired in 1989.

Genealogy
His genealogical research began in 1977. As a pastime during his retirement, Robert researched the history of his Frigon ancestors in Canada, the United States and even Australia.

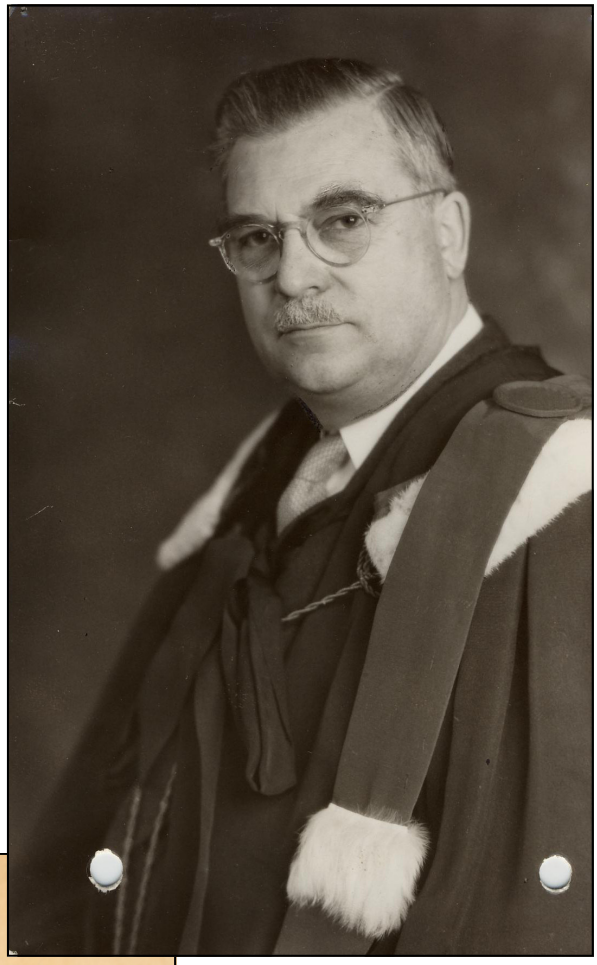
Two years prior to the founding of the Association of Frigon Families, he and Raymond Frigon (1) organized an informal Frigon reunion in Quebec City. This meeting took place on October 17, 1992. The day was such a success that they were driven to intensify their research and to invite other Frigons to join them. On April 8, 1994, Raymond obtained the Association's Charter of Incorporation, and on May 7 the first meeting of the Board of Directors and annual meeting took place. Robert was named vice-president and agreed to write articles for the soon to be launched newsletter. He fulfilled this task regularly from that time on.

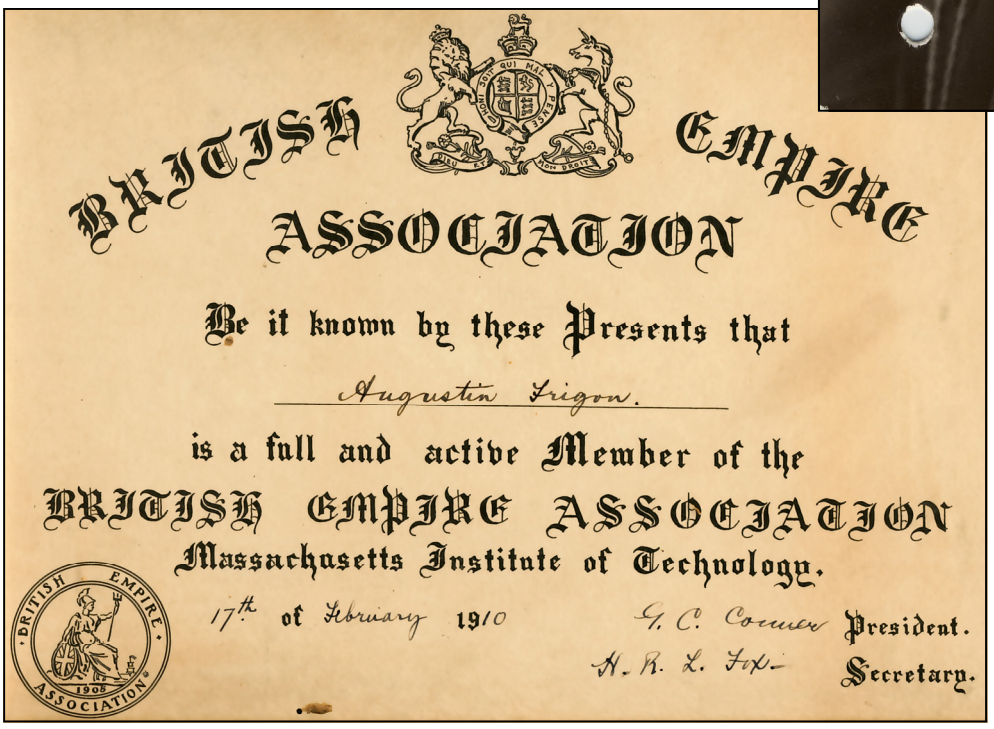
Death
Robert passed away on November 21, 2006, at the age of 77

Annex
Other Photos and Images



City of Montreal.
Management of documents and archives.
This caricature taken from a newspaper was the work of Lapalme.





Augustin, 21 years old, was a member of the British Empire Association at MIT.