Long Live Your French Ancestors!
Vive vos ancêtres français.

Go Backwards in time, from now to then
Go from small to big -- Town to department to region to country
Local church to diocese -- Go from civil registers to church records to other archival records like notarial records

French Localities
- Prior to the French Revolution - divided into provinces
- Provinces now known as regions
- In 1789, reorganized into départements (departments) -- 100 departments in France
- Townships or municipalities or communes
- Large towns and cities (i.e. Paris) often further divided into arrondissements -- arrondissements have their own town hall and archives

French Record Keeping
Civil Registers, or registres d’état-civil
- Begin in 1792 continue to today
- Available for research after 100 years

Birth= naissance ; birth name (literally, born)= né, née
- Contain
  o Place, date & time of registration
  o Child’s full names
  o Parents’ full names, ages, domicile, occupations, if married or not. After 1922, parents’ dates & places of birth
  o Witnesses (2) same details as parents
  o Margin entries – starting in 1880’s
    ▪ Divorce (1886)
    ▪ Marriages (1897)
    ▪ Legal separation (1938)
    ▪ Death (1945)

Marriage= mariage ; husband= mari, époux, marié ; wife= femme, épouse, mariée
- Contain
  o Place, date & time of marriage
  o Couple’s full names, ages, domicile, occupations
  o Parents’ full names, ages, domicile, occupations, & if alive or deceased
  o Details of any marriage contract
  o Witnesses (2) same details as couple
  o Acknowledgement and legitimacy of any children born before marriage
  o Details of any previous marriage

Death= décès ; deceased= défunt
- Contain
Place, date & time of registration
Place, date & time of death
Deceased’s full names, domicile
Witnesses (2) names, ages, domicile, occupations
Marital status of deceased, name of spouse & if alive or deceased (sometimes)
Parents’ (sometimes) full names, domicile, occupations, & if alive or deceased
Women are filed under their birth surname, not their married surname
Until 1865, registered in the place of birth, regardless of domicile at death
  • Tables de mutations – will, inheritors

Church registers, or registres paroissiaux
  o Earliest are from 1300’s
  o Most places start in 1500’s or 1600’s
  o Harder to get ahold of after 1792
Baptism = baptème
Contain
  o Date of baptism, sometimes birth date
  o Child’s name & sex
  o Parents’ full names (varies), if married or not
  o Godparents (2) names
  o Religion
Marriage = mariage
banns = publications bans
Contain
  o Couple’s full names, ages, parish they belong to, occupations (varies)
  o Date of marriage
  o Witnesses (2-4) same details as couple
  o Parents’ full names, ages, domicile, occupations, & if alive or deceased
  o Publications of banns
  o Details of any parental consent
  o Religion
Burial = sépulture
Contain
  o Deceased’s full names, age, date & place of death, occupation
  o Witnesses/relatives (2) names
  o Name of spouse & if alive or deceased (sometimes)
  o Parents’ full names, if deceased is a child
  o Religion
  o Women are filed under their birth surname, not their married surname

Records at LDS Library – Catalog search
  • Start with Place search for town/village
    o état-civil
    o registres paroissiaux
  • Next do a Place search for department
    o tables décennales
    o Emigration and immigration records
  • Next do a Place search for region
    o Emigration and immigration records
French Records Online
List of archives in France -- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_archives_in_France
Links to French archives online -- https://www.archives-departementales.com
Geneanet (free & paid site) -- http://www.geneanet.org/
Filae.com (paid site, links to archive records) -- http://www.filae.com/

Huguenots
- Much of the research will be outside France
- Not called Huguenots in the French records
- Once in France look for church registers for the town
- Pre-civil registration - Non-Catholics had to register in the Catholic church
- Some registers for non-Catholic churches in departmental and regional archives

French Canadian
- Drouin Collection (in Ancestry)
- Répertoire des actes de baptême, mariage, sépulture et des recensements du Québec ancien (XVIIe siècle – 1765)

Direct Emigration to America
- Do place searches in the LDS catalog and look for emigration and immigration
- Search the HPL catalog and look for emigration and immigration
  - ex. -- Les Lorrains en Amérique du Nord

Translating Documents
- Google Translate -- https://translate.google.com
- Babelfish -- https://www.babelfish.com/
- Reverso -- http://www.reverso.net
- Word reference -- http://www.wordreference.com/
- Association for Professional Genealogists -- http://www.apgen.org

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