

## 10 — SARZEAU MEDIATHEQUE

Marie Le Franc was born in 1879 in the customs house barracks in Banastère, a village belonging to Sarzeau where her father was the appointed customs brigadier.

From her childhood, comprising periods in Banastère, Pencadénic, Séné and Sarzeau, she developed a profound attachment to her family, to the sea, and to the wide-open spaces and broad horizons.

After completing her primary education in Sarzeau, she was admitted to the Ecole Normale d'Institutrices in Vannes, from which she graduated in 1895. She worked as a teacher in Morbihan for 8 years, before taking a different path.

In 1906 she decided to go to Canada. She was 26 years old; it was a plan of escape and adventure that matured into a literary project, writing novels, novellas and short stories, radio interviews and elaborate correspondence.

*“Marie le Franc could not help being a nomad. But she wanted more, she wanted to be a “writer-traveller”, as author Gwénaëlle Lucas wrote in Montreal in January 2005, as part of a university thesis on the unique career of Marie Le Franc.*

The first printed works by Marie Le Franc are to be found in Montreal; they consist of a few articles, poems and short stories published between February and August 1906 in *La Patrie* and in *Olivar Asselin's le Nationaliste*.

It was also in Montreal that she self-published her first novel, *Grand Louis l'Innocent*, in 1925. Her work was successful even at this stage, and it was the start of a full and prolonged career. Marie le Franc travelled frequently between Brittany and Quebec, and wrote constantly.

Her work is divided into two phases: a Breton phase and a Canadian phase.

Her Breton phase includes *Grand Louis l'Innocent*, published by Rieder, for which she won the Prix Femina in 1927, *Le Poste sur la dune*, *Grand Louis le Revenant*, *Inventaire*, *Dans l'Ile*, *Roman d'Ouessant*, *Pêcheurs du Morbihan* and *Enfance Marine*.

Her Canadian phase, inspired by her stays in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, The Laurentians and Gaspesia, includes the novels *Helier: fils des bois*, *La Rivière solitaire*, *La Randonnée passionnée*, *Pêcheurs de Gaspésie*, *le Fils de la forêt* and some essays and collections of short stories: *Au pays canadien-français*, *Visages de Montréal* and *Ô Canada ! Terre de mes aïeux*.

To this can be added some 3,000 letters contained in archives in Canada: Ottawa and Montreal, and in France: the French National Library in Paris, the Departmental Archives of Morbihan, and the Multimedia Library in Vannes.