

# **Le Drapeau National (Windsor)**

## **Publication Dates**

1891: Nov. 20 (Vol. 1: no. 1) – 1892: Apr. 29? (vol. 1: no. 9?)

## **Frequency**

Irregular

## **Online Holdings**

1891: Nov. 20 (Vol. 1: no. 1)	4p.
1892: Apr. 29 (Vol. 1: no. 9)	4p.

## **Source of our Digitized Holdings**

Library and Archives Canada  
Universite Laval

## **Description**

Le Drapeau National was a shortlived French language newspaper, published in Windsor, from Thursday, November 20, 1891 until roughly mid-1892. It was a 4 page newspaper devoted to the interests of the francophone populations of the West, with mottos such as "Dieu et mon Droit", "Dieu et Patrie" and "L'Union fait la Force". The editor and publisher was Gustav Vekeman. He was assisted in the typesetting and printing by his son Victor. The newspaper was intended to be free of charge for its first year, and then \$1 per year after that.

Unlike many newspapers of the time, the goal of *Le Drapeau National* was to be neutral in its politics and reporting of events. It was to serve as a unifying force for francophone Canadians, and to assist settlers to the region, especially in the realms of agriculture and viticulture. Vekeman requested contributions from local farmers and encouraged them to visit the newspaper offices: “ceux de la campagne pourront venir allumer leur pipe en passant et nous parler de leurs terres, leur bétail, des travaux des champs, des récoltes et mille autres choses”. He wished to improve local agricultural practices. Vekeman also expressed his very traditional support of the Catholic religion and values. The April 29, 1892 issue had an extensive report of a banquet held in honour of the well known, local school inspector, Theodule Girardot. Otherwise, the content of the newspaper was pretty standard: advertisements, local news, some national/international stories, and miscellaneous facts/curiosities.

Gustav Vekeman was born in Belgium in 1841. He arrived in Canada in 1882 and settled in Sherbrooke, Quebec. His son, Victor, followed him to Canada in 1888. In the years immediately after his arrival, Gustav authored a large number of articles and brochures, the majority of which encouraged Belgians and other European francophones to emigrate to Canada. He often published using pseudonyms, the most common of which was Jean des Erables. For a while, his work was subsidized by the Quebec government, although there were concerns expressed by the Belgians about his real estate speculation activities.

In Autumn, 1891, he moved to Windsor with his son Victor and, on November 20<sup>th</sup>, founded the newspaper, *Le Drapeau National*. The motivation for their move is not known. Another small French language newspaper, *Le Canadien* (Windsor), ceased publication around this time, so perhaps they saw a business opportunity? However, the main French language newspaper *Le Progres* (Windsor) was well established in the community and had been publishing since 1881.

After the demise of *Le Drapeau Canadien*, likely in mid 1892, Gustav returned to Quebec, to the Montreal area. His son Victor, however, remained in Windsor until late 1897, working as a printer and foreman for *Le Progres*. In September 1898, both Gustav and Victor moved to Woonsocket, Rhode Island where they edited and published another French language newspaper: *La Tribune*. Gustav died in 1916 in the Montreal area.

Updated: Katharine Ball, March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022