

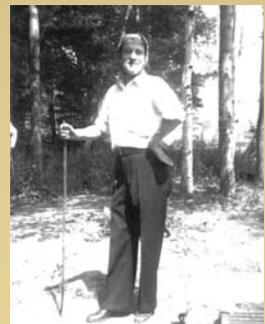


Left:

Lewis Hine caption: Smallest boy is Thomas Losesque, 82 Margin Street. Other is Wilfred Valliere, 79 Margin Street, probably 14. Both work in mill room at Wood Mill. Location: Lawrence, Massachusetts, September 1911.

Joe Manning caption: Thomas Levesque (left), 15 yrs old, Lawrence, Massachusetts, September 1911.

Below (left): Thomas and Annette Levesque on their wedding day, 1919
Below: Thomas Levesque.



Above: "We were on a picnic in a state park, probably about 1938. He was posed with a bandana in his hair. He looked like he was saying, 'Well, here I am.'"
-son Thomas Levesque

THOMAS LEVESQUE (1895—1943)

"I never knew that he worked as a child in the mills, but I've heard many stories about child labor. Seeing that picture of him made me realize what a rough life he had." ~ son, Thomas G. Levesque

IN HIS ENCOUNTERS WITH CHILD LABORERS, LEWIS HINE usually pulled a tiny notebook from his pocket and hurriedly jotted down their names, ages, and sometimes their addresses. He had trouble spelling names, especially those of French Canadians and Eastern Europeans. My research confirmed that "Losesque" was Levesque.

THOMAS OCTAVE LEVESQUE WAS BORN IN BOSTON ON OCTOBER 30, 1895 (some records say the 29th or 31st). His father, Eustache Levesque, came to the US from Quebec in 1887, and settled in Boston. He married Quebec native Alma Dumont in

DEATH MALE	
Place of birth	Windsor Vermont
Place of birth (if in institution)	City or Town Windsor
Length of time in hospital or institution	Street Address Kiniry Street
In this community	City or Town Windsor
Full name of deceased	THOMAS O. LEVESQUE
Full name of informant	THOMAS O. LEVESQUE
Relationship to deceased	Brother
Married	Married
Age at death	48
Sex	Male
Color	White
Height	5' 10"
Weight	165
Build	Slender
Complexion	Fair
Hair	Dark
Eyes	Blue
Occupation of deceased	Photographer
Industry or business	Photography
City or town	Windsor
State or country	Vermont
City or town	Boston
State or country	Mass.
City or town	Windsor
State or country	Canada
Month	Dec
Day	30
Year	1943
Time of death	3:30 A.M.
Cause of death	Myocardial infarction
Other conditions	Asthma chronic, acute laryngitis
Signature of physician	948

1894. By 1900, they were living in a rented apartment in Lawrence, at 366 Market Street. Eustache was a bottler of soda beverages.

Thomas was the second of eight children. By 1910, he and his family had moved to an apartment at 10 Perkins Street; but according to Hine's caption, they had moved to 82 Margin Street by September 1911. Eustache continued his bottling business. In 1912, Thomas's mother

died of kidney failure. She was 39 years old. That was the year of the Bread & Roses Strike.

Thomas registered for the draft in 1917, and stated that he was working as a shuttle maker for the Sprague Bobbin and Shuttling Company in Lawrence. On June 17, 1919, he married Annette Brousseau, who had entered the US from Quebec the previous year. They rented an apartment at 61 Water Street. He commuted by train to a job in Boston, working as an assistant to a commercial photographer.

Shortly after, he bought a photography studio in Windsor, Vermont, and the couple rented a small apartment in a working-class neighborhood in the town called "Little Warsaw." A report by the Vermont Historical Society, published in 1993, described the neighborhood, built just after WWI, as follows:

"...forty-six tenements, and more than forty hastily built hideous looking shanties without adequate health conveniences or electrical lights..."

The Levesques lived there for about six years, and then bought a small house on Kiniry Street, about a mile from the center of town. By 1930, they had five children. Thomas continued to run his photography studio, until his untimely death in 1943. **I INTERVIEWED HIS SON, THOMAS G. LEVESQUE, WHO STILL LIVES IN THE HOMESTEAD ON KINIRY STREET.**

"My father had asthma. When he was working in Boston, his doctor suggested that he move out in the country. Then his father told him about a photography studio that was for sale in Windsor. He came up and decided to buy it. I was born in 1927. My parents had nine, five girls and four boys. Two others were stillbirths."

"The photography studio was called Brousseau Studio, no relation to my mother, whose maiden name was Brousseau. He changed it to Levesque Studio. He did portraits and framed them. He did wedding pictures and baby pictures, and anything else that customers wanted. They were black and white, but one of my sisters learned to tint them so they looked like color pictures. I helped him at the studio when I was growing up. Because of his asthma, he had troubling doing physical labor. He was sick all of his life. Despite that, I never knew him to take off more than half a day. I was sixteen when he died. He had a heart attack."

"It was devastating. Up to that time, my mother hardly ever left the house. She had almost no money, and she had to take care of all the house payments and do the grocery shopping. My sister Isabelle worked downtown, so she would do some of the grocery shopping. She gave almost her whole paycheck to my mother. When I worked, I did the same thing. I was working as a plumber's helper while I was still going to high school. My brother Armand and my brother Leo were in the service when my dad died. They sent home allotments. There was a taxi driver in town that had been a very good friend of my father, and for almost a year, he provided free taxi service for us."

"When I graduated, I went into the Navy. When I got out, I attended the University of Vermont for two years, and then I got married, and worked for a plumbing company. In 1953, I went into the plumbing business for myself. I did that for about 30 years. When my son Mike got out of the Navy, he came to work for me, and when I retired, he took over."

"My brother Leo went to business school in Manchester, New Hampshire. Robert, my youngest brother, was in the service and came out with the GI Bill. He went to the University of Florida and got a degree in electrical engineering. He spent most of his life working for the Navy. Armand stayed in Windsor and worked for the post office, and finally became the postmaster. Two of my sisters moved to Boise, Idaho. My mother moved out there with them after she sold the house in the 1950s. My wife and I bought it, and we still live there. My mother died in 1980."

"My father was quite a character. He told me that when he was commuting to his job in Boston, he and his friend would get on the train first thing in the morning, and then one of them would yawn. Then the other would yawn. And pretty quick, other people on the train would be yawning. It got to be quite a joke, until the other passengers finally realized what they were doing. He played the violin. He would play old French songs. One of my sisters also played the violin, and one of my brothers played the guitar, so they would have jam sessions."

Note: Thomas Levesque and Wilfred Valliere, the two boys standing together in the Hine photograph, lived across the street from one another, and were probably friends. They had a curious thing in common. Thomas's father ran a soda beverage bottling company. When Wilfred grew up, he also had a soda beverage bottling company. It's likely that they would have competed for customers.