

STE. AGATHE

Historical Society
NEWSLETTER

FALL 1991

THE CLASS OF 1941
by David Raymond



Left to Right: Priscille Michaud, Marcella Michaud, Lucille Langlais, Jeanne d'Arc Bouchard, Geraldine Paradis, Jeannette Dionne, Aurore Theriault, Lewis Michaud, Alice Frank, Geraldine Bouchard, Bernadette Albert, Aline Collin, Martha Bosse, Dorothy Martin, Estelle Bouchard and Marthe Daigle.

Class President: Lewis Michaud
Vice President: Bernadette Albert
Secretary: Jeannette Dionne
Treasurer: Alice Frank
Business Manager: Priscille Michaud
Aurore Theriault

Class Flower: Yellow Rose
Class Colors: Blue, Gold
Class Motto: "Impossible is Unamerican"
Yell: S - A - H WISDOM We're the
people. We're the stuff.
Wisdom - Wisdom - and that's enough.

St. Agatha is proud of its long history with public and parochial education. Each Spring, for eighty one years, the community of St. Agatha has witnessed the graduation of its young men and women from high school. On May 28, 1910 the first class consisting of seven students received diplomas from State commissof Education, Mr. Payson Smith and local Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Patrick Theriault. These proud graduates inaugurated a tradition which many hundreds have since had the opportunity to experience.

High school graduation serves as a landmark and common reference point in our lives. When we try to remember the name of someone who has temporarily escaped our memory, we frequently make reference to his or her graduating class as an aide to jog our memory, i.e., he graduated with... or she graduated in... We also rely on our high school experience to remember events; "This happened when I was a Senior.." etc. The members of the Class of '41 is a class that has no problems making associations with local events.

Notre Dame de la Sagesse High School was classified as "Class A" by the State of Maine. It offered general, college, and commercial courses. The class day ran from 8:30 to 3:45 PM. The 1941 curriculum consisted of four years of Religion, science, social studies, and three years of math and Latin. The commercial students could select typewriting, shorthand, bookkeeping, commercial arithmetics, secretarial studies and filing, and commercial law. Extracurricular activities included drama, music, and girls were welcome to learn "the mysteries of fine sewing and embroidery." The faculty consisted of seven teachers including Sr. Cyrille, English and the Classics; Sr. Denis, Religion and Chemistry; Sr. Christine, commercial courses, and Sr. St. Patrick, Latin and Math. Mother Patrick served as Principal having succeeded Mother Herve on February 22, 1940.

Members of that class included fifteen girls and one boy; Lewis Michaud. More boys started out as Freshmen but some had left school to seek employment on the farm or the CCC's

while others as Maurice Raymond, Elmo Michaud, and George Emile Chasse of Frenchville had transferred to Madawaska High School. Lewis Michaud carried out his responsibilities as the only male with honor. He was elected Senior class president and "Generale" of the Chevalier de la Vierge, an organization begun by Sr. Herve in 1933 in reverence to Our Lady.

In the month of July 1940, our future Seniors were busy participating in the celebrations marking the Golden Anniversary of the parish. The street leading to the church was beautifully decked with festive decor. Bishop J. E. McCarthy was in town to preside over the anniversary Mass in the recently renovated Ste. Agathe Church. This July 16 celebration included a banquet and play at the convent hosted by the sisters and students of Notre Dame de la Sagesse. Earlier that summer the community had observed the ground-breaking of the future "Red Convent" across the street from the church. The class of 1941 knew that they would be the first class to graduate in the new gymnasium of that building. However, prior to the opening of classes that fall, the entire community witnessed a tragic event which ruined the summer's great festivities.

During the early evening hours of August 13, 1940, the recently renovated church fell victim to fire. The inferno stemmed from an explosion in the stove of a nearby home. Fire departments from as far away as Presque Isle participated in abating the wind driven flames. The next morning the community viewed the devastating aftermath. The casualties included several structures adjacent to the church and the majority of the building materials waiting assembly for the construction of the new "Red Convent". With the arrival of Fall, the construction of the new convent proceeded despite the financial and morale depleting events of the summer.

The events of each academic year at Notre Dame de la Sagesse were well documented via "Echos de la Sagesse", a quarterly newsletter written by students and staff and published by the Alumni Association. The 1940-1941 "Echos"

chronicle both major and minor happenings at school. It also served as a vehicle for students to express their literary talents. For example, in a 1941 issue, the officers of the "Chevalier de la Vierge" published an essay depicting the life of Bienheureux Louis - Marie de Montfort, founder of the Daughters of Wisdom. The contributors to this article were, Roger Lachance (class of '43), Paul Emile Chasse (class of '42), Edwin Lavigne (class of '43), and Lewis Michaud (class of '41). We also learn that in the fall Fr. Patenaude replaced Fr. Roberge as "Vicaire" of the parish and "Aumonier du Couvent."

"Echos" had a column dedicated to general convent news. This journal reviewed the everyday happenings at the convent. Today, "Echoes" provides us with insights into the daily life of students in the class of '41. Here are a few excerpts from the Easter issue of 1941:

January 6: Reopening of school. The feast of the Epiphany was celebrated and the traditional "Twelfth Night Cake" was the occasion of much gaiety.

January 12: The J. A. A.'s had a very amusing "peanut hunt". The lucky victors consumed their spoils with great gusto.

January 28: Mid - term exam week!

February 2: Wisdom Foundation Day! A great feast for the Sisters. The girls' choir alone sang beautifully at Benediction as a special treat.

February 23: An entertainment was given in the school auditorium and the proceeds thereof offered to Our Reverend Pastor for the new church. The Comedy "La Cigale et le Fourmie" met with hearty applause.

March 3: An unexpected but highly welcome visitor: good Father W. Soucy and with him brought the film "Father Damien" which he kindly showed for the whole school.

March 14: All the sisters and children gathered in the Convent Hall to offer Feast Day wishes to Rev. Mother. Miss J. A. Bouchard, '41, read the address.

March 17: All hail to St. Patrick! and three cheers for Superintendent McMonagle for giving us a holiday, in honor of the great Saint and our Rev. Mother, whose patron he is. On Friday

afternoon March 14, all the sisters and children gathered in the Convent hall to offer Feast Day wishes to Rev. Mother. Miss J. A. Bouchard, '41, read the address.

And so it goes!! How things have changed!!

In the month of April, it became evident that the gymnasium of the new convent would be ready for the 1941 commencement exercises. The Sisters chose to name the new structure the "Queen of Peace Hall", very appropriate considering the escalating war in Europe and Asia. The building was a brick edifice, two stories above the auditorium. In the back of the gymnasium house a fire-proof motion picture booth. The exterior of the building measured 140 feet on the facade and 65 feet wide. High up in a niche in the exterior stood (and remains) a statue of the Queen of Peace, a Deprato masterpiece offered as a souvenir by all those who labored on the building.

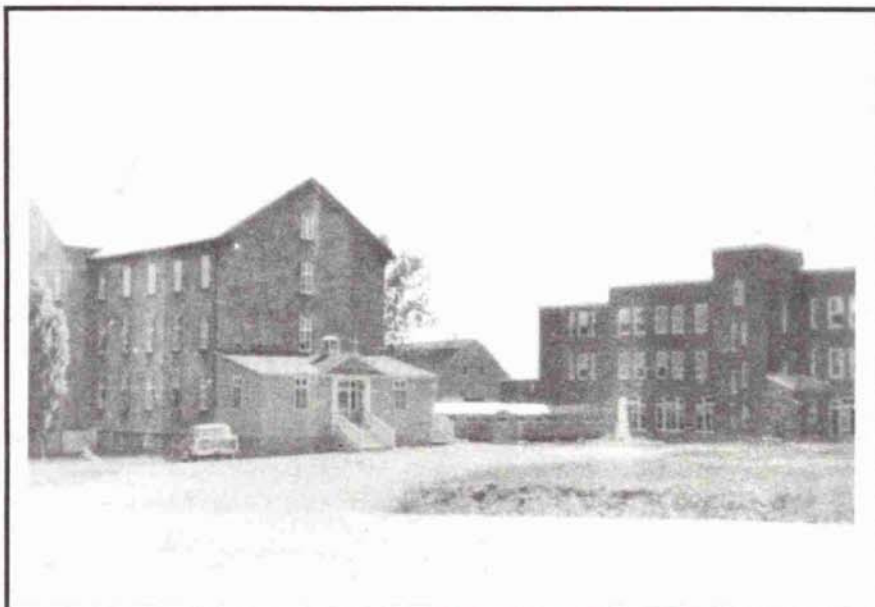
On June 17, 1941, proud parents, teachers and guest applauded the 16 graduates as they marched in the new structure. (The building was officially dedicated on August 9) The stage was decorated with abundant flowers and plants accenting the elegant new stage curtains. The ceremony proceeded with the class song. Sr. Alice and Sr. Mary Francis hid behind the curtains to boost the bass section which consisted of the lone voice of Lewis Michaud. The guest speaker, Dr. Wright of Augusta, followed and humorously commented on the strong bass section of the chorus.

The graduates could now boast being the first class to graduate from Queen of Peace Hall. Three graduates, Jeanne d'Arc Bouchard, Alice Frank, and Marthe Bosse would later consecrate their lives to God as Daughters of Wisdom. Sr. Jeanne d'Arc later became the Provincial of the American Province of the Daughters of Wisdom. All graduates of 1941 became productive members of society. Their teachers, the Daughters of Wisdom, remain proud of the contributions they made in the formation of this class and the hundreds that followed.

'CLASSMATES' CLASS OF '41

(From "Commencement Memories" book of Jeannette Dionne)

| NAME | NICKNAME | WANTS TO BE |
|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Bernadette Albert | "Bunny" | Dental Nurse |
| Marthe Bosse | "Marty" | Secretary |
| Estelle Bouchard | "Stella" | French Teacher |
| Geraldine Bouchard | "Gerry" | Teacher |
| Jeanne D'Arc Bouchard | "Jean" | Teacher |
| Aline Collin | "Ti Line" | |
| Matha Daigle | "Michy" | Stenographer |
| Jeannette Dionne | "Jeannie" | Lawyer |
| Alice Frank | "Peggy" | Nurse |
| Lucille Langlais | "Puss" | Nurse |
| Dorothy Martin | "Dot" | Stenographer |
| Lewis Michaud | "Lou" | Teacher of Grades |
| Marcella Michaud | "Marcy" | A farmer's Wife |
| Priscille Michaud | "Pussy" | Secretary |
| Geraldine Paradis | "Gerry" | P. Secretary |
| Aurore Theriault | "Dawn" | Postmistress |



The Old Gray Convent and
the new "Red Convent"

ST. AGATHA

We like St. Agatha because:

- it's a very small town and we are close to all the people
- Long Lake because it's very calm and at night you can hear the loons
- wildlife because the wild animals and wild flowers make St. Agatha beautiful
- scenery like the lakes, hills, forests and islands also make St. Agatha beautiful
- Seasons, some states don't have all 4 seasons, but Maine is lucky to have them all. Spring when the snow starts to melt, summer when the trees are green and the flowers in bloom, fall when the leaves on the trees change colors, and winter when we have inches of snow
- and the Historical Society where we can share memories of the past that our ancestors shared

Written by: Crissy Guerrette — 10, daughter of Ronald and Roberta Guerrette,
and
Trisha Cyr — 10, daughter of Conrad and Louise Cyr.



Trisha Cyr

Crissy Guerrette

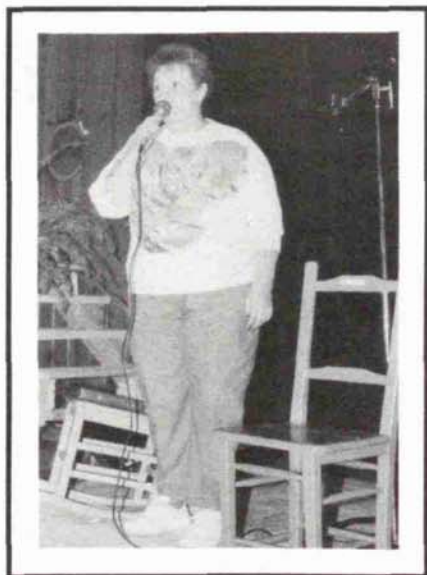
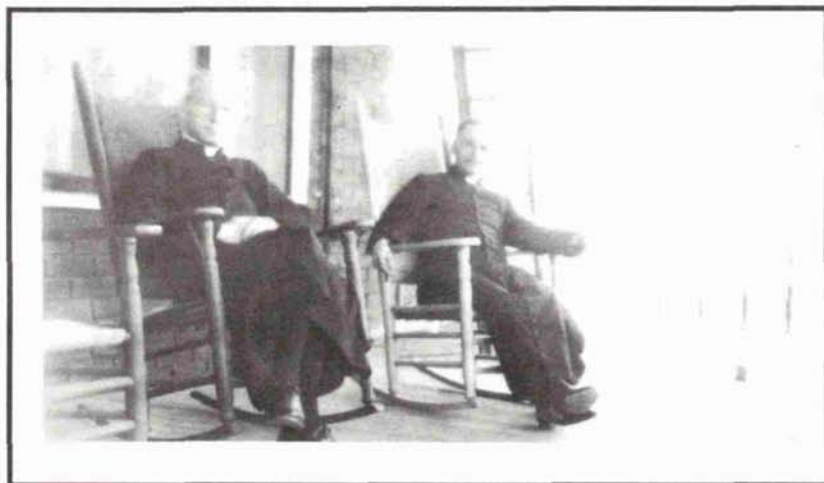


A play performed at the convent commemorating the 250th anniversary of the founding of the Daughters of Wisdom.



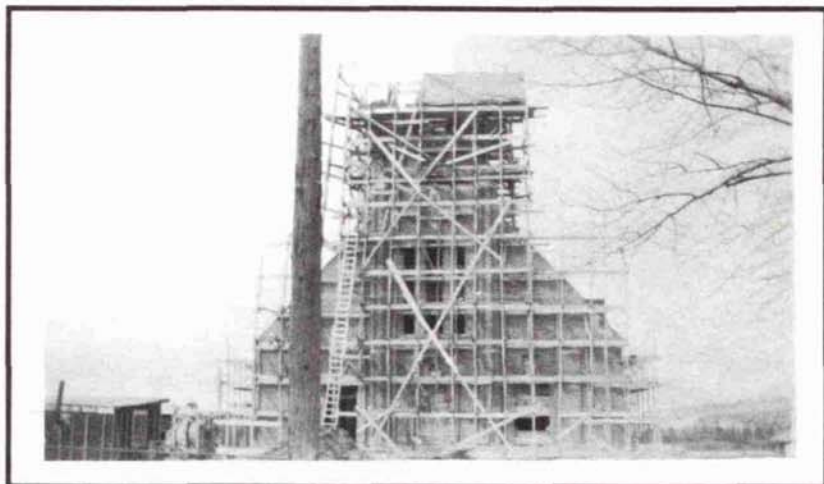
The interior of the beautiful convent chapel.

Fr. Robitaille and Bishop Joseph McCarthy relaxing following the 1941 dedication of the "new church".



Florence Rose Martin singing traditional songs at the 1990 annual breakfast. Ms. Martin donated a large collection of songs to the Society.

The new Church under construction. Spring of 1941.



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