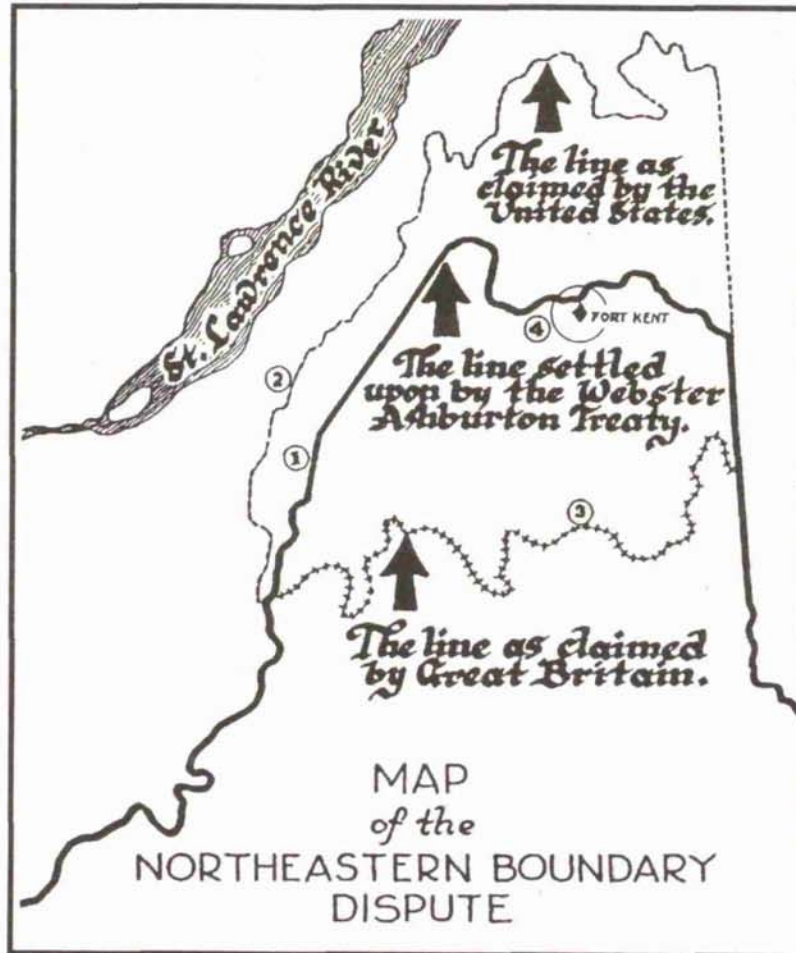


FALL 1992



THE WEBSTER-ASHBURTON TREATY OH, HOW DIFFERENT IT COULD HAVE BEEN...

An old adage says that we are masters of our own fate and in many respects we truly are. However, we are all very much affected by the lives of all St. Agatha residents - past and present - of decisions made 150 years ago by the two major players in a drama culminated in a past known as the Webster Ashburton Treaty, signed in Washington, D.C. on August 9, 1842.

Unlike most states whose boundaries were well defined when they were admitted to statehood, when Maine became a state in 1820, its northern boundary was still a very contentious issue between the United States and Great Brit-

ain. The Treaty of Paris (1783) which ended the Revolutionary War had supposedly settled the boundary question. However, as can be seen on the accompanying map, the lines claimed by the United States and those claimed by Great Britain were vastly different; roughly 12,000 square miles of territory were involved, so heated did the situation become that the Americans were prepared to go to war to defend their claims and thus built forts in such locations as Fort Fairfield and Fort Kent, culminating in the bloodless Aroostook War of 1838-1839. One of the many fears for those living in Canada was that if the

U.S. claims (the most northerly line on the map) were upheld, most of Canada would in effect be cut off from the Maritime Provinces. Bear in mind that Canada at this time was still tied to great Britain and did not become Canada as we know it until Confederation on July 1, 1867.

Luckily for all concerned, cooler heads prevailed, a true war was avoided and the United States Secretary of State, Daniel Webster and Great Britain's special envoy to the United States, Lord Ashburton (Alexander Baring) were able to negotiate the treaty which bears their names and which set what is presently the boundary between Maine and New Brunswick - our beloved St. John River making up a major segment of that boundary.

The specifics of all these negotiations, threatened wars, disputed boundaries, etc. have been well documented by several historians including Professor Roger Paradis from the University of Maine at Fort Kent and local genealogists, Guy Dubay of Madawaska, so I will not linger on the historical aspect. Rather, let us return to my opening premise and ponder what might have been if Great Britain had been totally successful in its claim and if Maine's boundary had thus been considerably to the south as shown on the map.

Would our knowledge of geography — reputed to be notoriously poor — have been any better? Here we sit in St. Agatha, less than 500 miles from the Canadian capitol of Ottawa and almost twice that distance from our U.S. capitol, yet we know more about the Potomac than the Rideau Canal — more about the U.S. senate than the Parliament Building. Had we been Canadians, would our knowledge of our neighbor — Les Etats Unis — been as meager as our present awareness of our current neighbor to the north?

In no particular order, consider the following changes in our lives had we been des Canadiens...

1. Our current hot issues would certainly center upon Mulroneys and Meach Lake rather than Bush and Murphy Brown.

2. We'd worry more about the GST than the IRS.

3. Would we say we were going "across" when "across" was really in the same country?

4. Would the Fraser Mill have been built in its present international location when there would have been no marketing leverage to be had from a totally Canadian operation?

5. Today's cross-border traffic would be cross-river rather than cross-border and would no doubt be of much less volume than the current crush on border officials for there would be no local customs or immigration officers.

6. Our concerns about national health care would not be the worrisome issue we find ourselves facing today.

7. The dominant language in our schools would no doubt be French rather than English.

8. The Ammex Tax Free stores would not exist in this area but would no doubt be available as we went to Les Etats on our shopping trips to the Bangor Mall.

9. Loring AFB would not be scheduled for closure since it would never have been built. Think of the many people and businesses from St. Agatha and the immediate area that profited from this construction and on-going operation.

10. For those who are catholic, the observance of religious holidays would be a vastly different matter since Candians observe all their recognized holy days of obligation as we know them on the Sunday nearest the fest - except for Christmas.

11. The many fisherman on Long Lake would enjoy more liberal fishing regulations since the "limit" laws are greater in Canada; for that matter, hunting laws would also be quite different.

12. The dumping of potatoes to barricade some of the local border crossings in 1980 would have never taken place.

13. The State University at Fort Kent would not exist but might be a branch of the University of Moncton or some other Candian University.

14. First class postage for mailings within our country would cost 42 cents rather than 29 cents.

15. We'd buy liters of gasoline rather than gallons. Like virtually all other countries in the world, we would have adopted the metric system of measurement.

16. For those living in southern Maine who always regard anything north of Bangor a foreign country - well, for once they'd be right.

17. Our paper dollar would have been replaced by the coin commonly referred to as the "loony". We'd also make regular use of the two dollar bill which is so shunned in the U.S.

18. Our dollar would be worth approximately 20% less as we planned our vacation to Old Orchard or perhaps Florida.

19. For those who married that guy or that gal "from across", that would have none of the ramifications it now does.

20. The Catholic Church's diocesan office would be in Edmundston rather than Portland.

21. Our national anthem would be somewhat easier to sing than the present one.

22. Our houses would probably feature carports rather than garages.

23. During WWII, those who were drafted would have served in Canadian Armed Forces and would now go to St. John rather than Togus for medical needs.

24. St. Agatha's representative, Judy Paradis, would not have attended Democratic Convention in New York City but would perhaps be journeying a shorter distance to Fredericton rather than Augusta.

None of these "what ifs" is meant to imply any preference for what is or for what might have been, but merely to illustrate that although we are to some extent the masters of our own fate, we also are very much at the mercy of decisions made by others. Bearing this in mind, remember to vote in our national elections this November.



Governor Edward Kent

1838-1839

1840-1841



LABRIE FARMS — THEN AND NOW

The LaBrie family of St. Agatha were recently honored during this year's 45th Annual Maine Potato Blossom Festival as the 1992 Farm Family of the Year. The Historical Society congratulates this fine family who has supported the Society enthusiastically over its 14 years of existence. The following article appeared in the July '92 edition of Maine Potato News.

The LaBrie Family can trace its farming roots back to 1904 when Jean Baptiste LaBrie and his wife Marie Vaillancourt LaBrie settled in Fort Kent soon after they married. Since actual tillable land was virtually non-existent, Jean Baptiste and Marie spent the first few years clearing the land in order for it to be used for planting a crop.

Jean Baptiste and Marie raised seven chil-

dren, four girls and three boys. Out of the seven children, two of the boys carried on the LaBrie farming tradition. Herby relocated to Connecticut where he raised potatoes until his death in 1970, and Louis (the only children of Jean Baptiste and Marie still living) farmed in Frenchville. While away in Connecticut for a few years, Louis met Lorette Boucher, who was originally from St. Agatha.

In 1941, Louis and Lorette were married in Connecticut. In 1945, Lorette's parents Yvonne and Patrick Boucher decided to retire and Louis and Lorette moved the family to the Boucher Homestead, which was the beginning of the LaBrie Farm as we know it today. At that time, the LaBrie Farm consisted of approximately 50 acres of potatoes, along with oats, hay, beef cattle, chickens, and hogs.

Louis and Lorette raised seven children, six girls and one boy. All the children, along with Lorette were active participants of farm life from milking cows to cutting potatoes in the spring and picking them in the fall.

Danny graduated from Wisdom High School in 1963 and enrolled in the University of Maine at Orono. After being there for three weeks, he realized that a large school atmosphere was not for him and he transferred to Fort Kent State Teacher's College. This provided him with the best of both worlds, furthering his education along with working on the farm.

In 1966 he married Roberta Hebert of St. David. Roberta was also born into a farming family. Her family was just the opposite of Danny's. Danny was the only boy with six sisters and Roberta was the only girl with six brothers. Their farming career formally began at the time with a 25-75% partnership with Louis. They were to become the parents of three sons, Keith, Duane, and Aaron.

In 1967 Danny graduated from the Fort Kent State Teachers' College and accepted a teaching position at Wisdom High School in science and math. The 25-75% partnership remained true until 1974, except for the school year 70-71 when Danny and Roberta along with their two children at that time, Keith and Duane, moved to Nashville, Tennessee, in order for Danny to pursue his masters degree in science education, which was funded by a fellowship from the National Science Foundation.

In 1974, Danny made the decision to resign his teaching position to farm full-time. Danny and Roberta then entered into a 50-50% partnership with his Dad. 1981 brought Louis' retirement and Danny and Roberta became sole proprietors. The farm at that point consisted of 250 acres of potatoes with an equal amount being leased out for oats.

It was not a foregone conclusion that the sons would continue the farming tradition. Although they were raised and worked on the farm since they were knee-high, Danny and Roberta encouraged their sons to experience life outside of the farm before making any decision about their future.

Keith obtained a business administration degree from the University of Maine, Orono in

1989. Duane obtained a business management degree from Eastern Maine Vocational Technical Institute also in 1989. They, at that point, both decided to return to the farm operation.

Their youngest son, Aaron, has just completed his first year at the University of Maine, Orono, in the engineering program. He spends his summers working on the farm.

Keith, Duane, and Aaron feel that post secondary education is essential for anyone entering the farming industry today. With technological advances and computerization in the forefront of the industry, progress depends on knowledge in these areas. Cooperatively, Danny, Keith, and Duane have expanded the farm to 400 acres of potatoes along with an equal amount of Japanese millet as rotation. A major portion of the potato acreage is reserved for processing with the remainder being for tablestock and seed.

All of the family members have been and are very active in various organizations and within the community.

Louis is a past member of the local school board, served two terms as a selectman, past director of the Federal Land Bank, and for the past 23 years has been a director of the St. Agatha Federal Credit Union.

Danny was a member of the restructuring board from the Maine Potato Council to the Maine Potato Board, and presently serves on the Legislative Committee of that board. He is a director and immediate past president of the Agricultural Bargaining Council, is a district supervisor for the St. John Valley Soil and Water Conservation District. He was selected as the Maine Farmer of the Year in 1988 and was the number 1 grower for McCain in 1977. He has also been on their top 10 grower list for several years since. He is serving his second term as a director of Farm Credit of Aroostook. He is a director of both Mid-Valley Sales Corp., and Mid-Valley Purchasing Co-op. He served on the first Maine Pesticide Control Board under the Brennan Administration. He served four terms as a selectman for the town of St. Agatha, served 19 years as director of the St. Agatha Federal Credit Union with 13 of those years as president. He is also a member of the Knights of Columbus Chapter 7920 and a director of the

newly formed Citizens for Efficient Government.

Keith is a member of the Aroostook Soil and Water Management Board and a member of the Central Aroostook Young Farmers Association.

Duane is also a member of the Central Aroostook Young Farmers Association and was on McCain's Top 10 List in 1990.

Roberta is Office Manager for the LaBrie Farms and a director of the newly formed Maine-Agri Women. She is also on the organization's advertising and promotion committee. She is secretary-treasurer for Mid-Valley Sales Corporation and Mid-Valley Purchasing Co-op. She is also chairperson of the Credit Committee for the St. Agatha Federal Credit Union, and a member of the St. Agatha Catholic Church Parish Council.

Josie, Keith's wife, formerly Josie Savoie of Madawaska, in addition to being mother of the only Labrie great-grandchild Sylvia, also works part-time in the farm's office. She is also a member of Maine Agri-Women, serving on the education committee. She was also the one responsible for designing the organization's logo

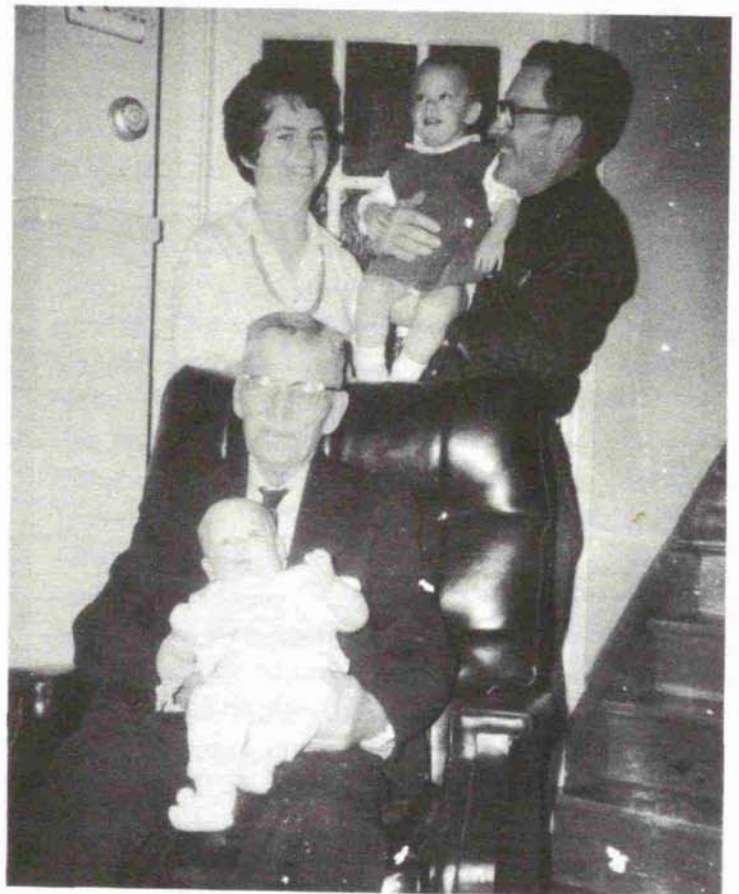
and has also designed the logo for the new Maine Potatoe Board's t-shirt.

All members of the LaBrie family are active in the Aroostook Family Farm Core with Danny serving as Treasurer.

How does the LaBrie Farms of the early 1900's differ from the LaBrie Farm of today? When Jean Baptiste farmed, he did so by a horse drawn plow. LaBrie Farms managed by Louis saw the tractor replacing the horse drawn plow. LaBrie Farms of today harvest their crop mechanically and stores it in five separate storages each under climately controlled environment which can be monitored and controlled from the farm office computer. They have also ventured into an irrigation system this summer.

Although LaBrie Farms has experienced tremendous change and growth over the past 88 years, there is one very important commodity which has endured 88 years — the respect of the land; dedication and commitment to the industry; the courage to adapt to change; hard work and above all else the love of God and the family.

Pépère Jean Batiste Labrie, Louis Labrie, daughter Louise and her two daughters Renae and Karan Lagassey.





CLARENCE & VELMA THIBEAULT 50th Wedding Anniversary (Contributed by Percy Thibeault)

Clarence, son of Octave and Elise (Rossignol) Thibeault and Velma, daughter of Donat and Jane (Tardif) Guerrette, were both born and raised on farms in the back settlement of Ste. Agathe, which is known to many of us as la montagne platte.

Clarence and Velma went to school in a one room schoolhouse where there was one teacher for all the grades. Clarence dropped out of school in the 3rd grade to work with his father on the farm, while Velma dropped out in the 7th grade and went to work in private homes. In those days, especially farmers, couldn't afford to send their children to public or private schools.

Clarence and Velma met at a little general store on la montagne platte where the local boys and girls would gather on week-ends. They would dance and talk about their work week. Apparently, it took a couple weeks before Clarence established a relationship with Velma. Then Clarence and Velma married on November 3, 1942. They were the second couple to be married in Ste. Agathe's new church. The couple lived with Mr. Octave for the next several years.

In the spring of 1946, Clarence's father decided it was time for Clarence and Velma to break away to start their own farming; a place where Clarence and Velma would raise their thirteen children. During those years, Clarence would farm and also would manage to put 5 to 7 work days as a carpenter for Gerard Chamberland during the winter months to earn supplemental income to support his family. Clarence would work in the woods, while Velma would help with some barn chores and cared for her children.

When potato harvest would come around Clarence would take a couple of weeks off to

harvest his crop. Velma would cook those favorite homemade donuts and pies. In their early days of farming, Clarence and Velma would hire extra hands and would provide them with room and board. As the years went by the children became their hired hands. Clarence and Velma were able to utilize their sons and daughters to maintain the farm and the chores around the barn, such as milking cows, feeding the pigs, chickens, etc. Clarence would continue to work as a carpenter and Velma oversaw the chores and nurtured her growing family.

Clarence planted approximately 30 to 35 acres of potatoes. In those days, when the boys would reach the age of 11 to 12 years old they would learn all about farming. In 1963, Clarence started working for the Town of Ste. Agathe. Velma continued to care for the family and soon it was time for their oldest daughter and son to leave for employment in the city. Thereafter, just about every year a son or daughter would leave for employment. As the family was declining Velma returned to her 1940 occupation (private homes care). But this time the occupation would be as homemaker, providing care and comfort to the elderly in their private homes. In 1970, after 27 years of farming, which always appeared to be a struggle, and when none of his nine boys showed an interest in continuing farming, Clarence ceased farming. He maintained his full time employment with Town of St. Agathe. After working 23 years serving the public Clarence retired in 1985.

Finally, Clarence and Velma were alone. The children had left to begin their own families. In 1984, they had to make the hardest decision of their married life; selling the homestead. After 38 years on the farm, after

raising thirteen children and after having provided them with the best up-bringing and care that any mother and father could provide, they sold the homestead and moved to town to a small comfortable apartment.

Clarence continued some part-time employment with Dragon Products as a trucker and payload driver. Most of us would consider this work, but for Clarence it was his main hobby. Clarence has been a member of the Ste. Agathe Volunteer Fire Department for the past 23 years. In 1985, Clarence became a member of the Knights of Columbus and in 1989 enrolled eight of his nine sons in the organization. Shortly after Velma moved in town she started working as a part-time cook for the Sisters, the Daughters of Wisdom. She thus continues the mission which she enjoys the most, that of serving others.

Today Clarence is 69 years old. He is still working part-time as a carpenter for Gerard Chamberland & Sons, and maintains the ground

around the convent and is enjoying life. Velma at 65, still cooks homemade pies for her children and enjoys cooking big suppers.

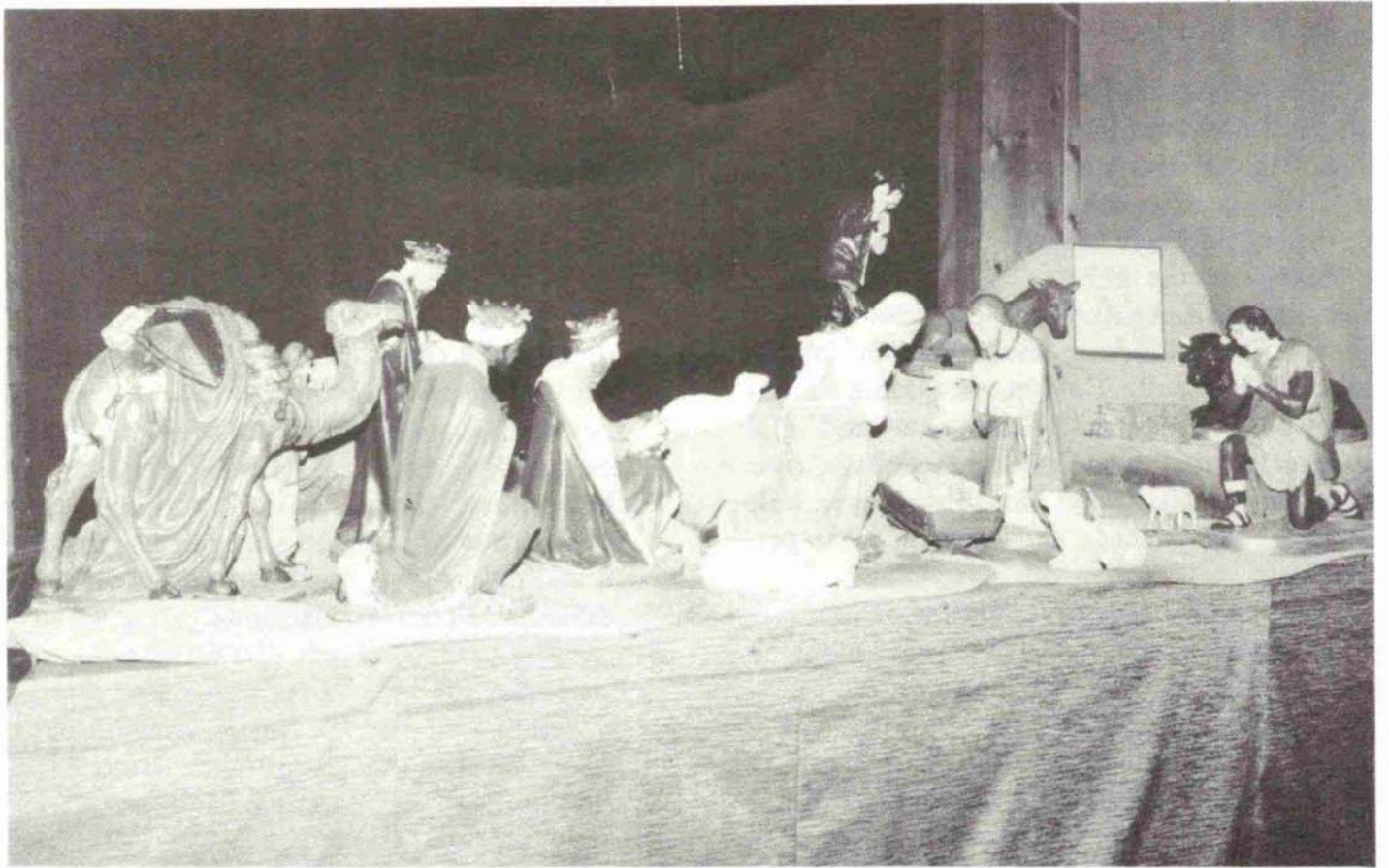
Clarence and Velma like to travel and spend about two to three weeks each spring and fall with their eight children in Connecticut and the rest of the year with their five in the local area.

On July 18, 1992 the children celebrated their mother and father's 50th Golden Wedding Anniversary. Clarence and Velma renewed their marriage vows in the same church they were married in. This time, it was with their thirteen children, brothers, sisters, and friends. Following the Mass the couple enjoyed a beautiful reception. Clarence and Velma, we wish to congratulate you on those 50 years of marriage and wish you many more to come.

This article is dedicated to Clarence and Velma by their children. Jerry, Percy, Raymond, Philip, Danny, Jimmy, Roger, Ricky, Jeffrey, Jean Cote, Sherene Pelletier, Shirley Campagne, Janice Guerrette.

**Octave and Elsie (Rossignol) Thibeault
Married June 12, 1911**





LA CRECHE by Connie Derosier

The exquisitely hand-painted creche was on display at our October 1991 annual breakfast.

It seems the creche has a long and exiting history. Its apparition at the Notre Dame de la Sagesse Convent dates from the early 1900's. The older Sisters claim it was always there, prominently visible, especially during the Yuletide season, at the former "Convent Gris." With the demolition of the old convent, it arrived at the residence of John and Orilla Belanger where it was displayed for many years. Recently it was donated to the Historical Society for preservation.

It was then that Sr. Lorette Chamberland, a participant of SCSEP (Senior Community Service Employee Program) from Orono, decided to repaint, restore and mend the personages, animals, and objects of the old nativity scene, enlisting the held of Marcel Chartier, an expert in ceramics. Sr. Lorette toiled for several months, devoting many hours to the project last winter, always a labor of love. She painstakingly added new colors, replastering the miss-

ing appendages and repainted the delicate features of the Virgin, Magi, Shepherds, and stable animals. Mr. Chartier helped to adorn the newly restored creche statuettes with Austrian jewelry, sequins, pearls and precious stones. Sr. Lorette mentioned that Baby Jesus is not quite ready yet, but eventually, He will be returned to His proper place in the manger. What a piece of art!

Consequently, Sr. Lorette was asked where and how had she acquired such artistic talents? She is a native of St. Agatha. She left to enroll at the Novitiate at Port Jefferson, New York, when she was merely seventeen. For twenty-one years she worked in their kitchen, cooking food for handicapped children. Afterwards, she arrived at the convent in Litchfield, Connecticut, where she managed to enlist in art lessons. Now, she has returned to her dear St. Agatha where one can breathe the pure air, admire the azure blue lake, and trample in the lily-white snow. "It's so lovely here," she likes to tell people.

DIRECTORS OF THE STE. AGATHE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Ste. Agathe Historical Society was incorporated by the State of Maine on March 23, 1978. Eight citizens from our town undertook the challenge of creating this society to promote our rich culture and history.

Thanks to the generosity of members and others, the Ste. Agathe Historical Society now boasts a vast collection of artifacts and photographs. This collection helps people in the Valley better understand who they are and helps to appreciate their wonderful and unique culture. A visit to the Historical House may even help people put their aches and pains in some perspective.

Between three and four hundred people visit our House each summer. This large number is probably far beyond the expectation of its Charter Members. Many of our visitors are folks from away returning to St. Agatha to visit family and friends. Some visitors spend hours

strolling the rooms of the House seeking to recapture that special experience of youth. Others prefer sitting at the kitchen table examining our photo albums and reacquainting themselves with places, family and friends from youth. Few visitors leave without a complimentary word and a kind "thank you."

The Ste. Agathe Historical Society must rely on a team of individual volunteers to promote the goals of its by-laws and conduct the routine organizational duties in the interest of its members. The board of directors, past and present, has worked diligently and successfully in maintaining an organization that is visible and active. This is partly due to the variety of age groups and talents that have collectively comprised the board over the years.

The present Board of Directors thanks all those individuals who have given of their time and shared their talents and gifts with the Society.

Charter Members and First Board of Directors

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1. Gerard Morin | 5. Philip Morin |
| 2. Jack Michaud | 6. Bertile Chamberland |
| 3. Sister Lily Martin | 7. Clarence Michaud |
| 4. Theresa Ouellette | 8. Sister Gabrielle Michaud |

Present Board of Directors

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. David Raymond | 6. Lucien Desrosier |
| 2. Gloria Gervais | 7. Karen Michaud |
| 3. Connie Desrosier | 8. Harold Chamberland |
| 4. Philp Morin | 9. Judy Chamberland |
| 5. Theresa Ouellette | 10. Fernand Sirois |

Other Citizens Who Have Served as Directors

- | | |
|----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Rosaire Michaud | 8. Maynard Martin |
| 2. Lucille Michaud | 9. Barbara Burnap |
| 3. Blanche Collin | 10. Rachel Dubois |
| 4. Patricia Bourgoin | 11. Albe Dubois |
| 5. Louis Cyr | 12. Lise Sirois |
| 6. Reid Chamberland | 13. Jackie Thibeault |
| 7. Helen Ayotte | 14. Louis Labrie |

Ste. Agathe Historical Society Deceased Lifetime Members

The people listed below supported the goals of our society by becoming lifetime members. The society greatly benefited from their contributions helping to maintain a strong and active organization. The Board of Directors expresses its sincere thanks.

1. Sr. Maire Celine
2. Mrs. Maria Chamberland
3. Mr. Jean Paul Chamberland
4. Mrs. Marie Estelle Chasse
5. Mr. Leon Corriveau Jr.
6. Mrs. Germaine Dugal
7. Mrs. Juliette Lagasse
8. Mr. William Livingstone
9. Mrs. Bridget Martin
10. Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Martin
11. Mr. Aurele Michaud
12. Mr. Bert V. Michaud
13. Mr. Clarence Michaud
14. Mr. Leo Morneault
15. Mr. Henry Parent
16. Mr. Luc Sirois



Founders of the Ste. Agathe Historical Society — Standing, from left, Jack Michaud, Gerard Morin, Clarence Michaud and Philip Morin. Sitting, from left, Sr. Gabrielle Michaud, Bertille Chamberland, Sr. Lily Martin, Terry Ouellette.



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