
FALL 1994

Season's Greetings from St. Agatha, Maine



Les Ployes by Connie Desrosier

Once Every Pancake Day

Pancakes!

Pancakes!

Don't let the pancakes

Frizzle away

Pancake & Painted Eggs

From: Jean Chapman

Les ployes, a famous Acadian delicacy, are made with buckwheat flour. The Encyclopedia Britannica tells us that buckwheat is native to central Asia, where it still grows wild. The name comes from a Dutch word boekweit or from the German buckweizen. Both mean "beech wheat", so named because the three-sided seed resembles the beech nut.

Another interesting fact, which probably our forefathers were not aware of, is that a new

product made from buckwheat is rutin. This is a medicinal agent which strengthens capillaries. It is often prescribed in the treatment of diseases characterized by hemorrhage and high blood pressure. You see, ployes are good for you!

Another plus for the farmer, it is encouraging to note, buckwheat grows on poor soil with little cultivation. It is grown also as a weed killer. It can grow quickly, it crowds out weeds and deprives them of sunlight. Growers like to plant the buckwheat as a cover crop to prevent soil erosion.

Most probably the hardy Acadian settlers grew buckwheat to supplement their meager diets, ate ployes in lieu of bread or cereal. Today, they are considered a gourmet food, served as a delicacy on special occasions. You may serve them in stacks, or rolled-up filled

with creton, maple syrup or country churned butter, perhaps piping hot with a pat of oleo. Recently, a Canadian restaurant offered them, as part of a Sunday brunch, rolled-up taco fashion, buttered, ready to munch on.

And, of course, available presently are the buckwheat pancake mix ready to cook. You simply add water to the mix and voila it is ready quickly to pour on a hot griddle. Others prefer the hand-me-down recipes, treasured because it happens to be *mémère's* or *ma tante's* method of preparing the savory ploye. Ladies or lumberjack cooks of the past would mix buckwheat flour with white flour and leavening stored in a wooden bucket (*scieau a pâte*) placed conveniently in the cupboard. Keith Bourgoïn of Ste. Agathe remembers his grandmother, Catherine Bourgoïn's ployes, compared to none, not even his dad's confection. Those *mémeres* reserved treats and *petites gâteries* for their loving grandchildren.

On the farm, where I grew up, my mother or father would serve all of us, sixteen children, ployes three times a day. For many of us it was a breakfast preference. Dad would reheat left-over ployes from the previous evening's meal. He would pour lots of butter and black-strap molasses over them. I can still smell that pleasant aroma. What a treat! They complemented the dishes of beans, grillades, ham and sometimes lake smelt. We didn't know then that ployes were beneficial for our capillaries. One other reference book states the heart-shaped leaf of the buckwheat plant contain a rich store of nectar and is often visited by honey bees. Honey collected from the buckwheat plant is one of the best known kind. It is dark in color and has a pleasant flavor. Wonders shall never cease!

Mix a pancake,
Stir a pancake,
Pop it in the pan.
Fry the pancake
Toss the pancake —
Catch it if you can!

Christina Rossetti

Connie's Easy, No-Fail Ployes Recipe (ample to satisfy 8 to 10 diners)

1 cup buckwheat flour
2 cups white flour (self-rising works beautifully)
1 heaping teaspoon of Rumford Baking Powder (less if using self-rising flour)
Water added (hot to begin thickening batter) then add cold water for thinner mixture.

Pour batter on medium hot cast iron skillet.

May be served with butter in lieu of bread. If preferred for a main dish, roll-up with creton or an accompaniment for stew or beans. For dessert, add maple syrup or brown sugar, a sprinkle of white sugar tastes really delicious also.

Left-overs may be reheated with butter and molasses for breakfast. Un vrai delice!

People Who Have Overcome by Carissa Ouellette



Carissa Ouellette

Carissa is the 11-year old daughter of Guy and Francine Ouellette of Tolland, CT. She is a 6 grade student of St. Joseph's Catholic School of Rockville, CT. The following article is one of the oration presented at the Woodsmen Oration contest by the school. Carissa was one of the participants

competing with 6th, 7th and 8th graders. We all feel she's a grand winner with her presentation about her granddad, Lucien Desrosier.

My grandfather, Lucien Desrosier, was raised on a farm in northern Maine by his uncle after his mother died. He worked on the farm and at the age of seventeen he was carrying some dynamite caps from one place to another when they exploded. The problem he had was that when they exploded he lost three fingers and almost an eye. The caps were supposedly

duds but unfortunately for him they weren't. And he's still having problems with his eyes today. He still carried on in life, got married and had ten children. The things he had to overcome were things we take for granted. Basics like tying his shoes, buttoning his shirt, opening jars, making things to eat, grasping a fork, and doing manual labor. But what amazes me the most was the fact that he could go on after a tragedy like this. My grandfather feels that his greatest accomplishments were things like raising ten kids including my mother and learning how to do the things he couldn't do before. He never went to college because it wasn't a thing you did back then. Yet he found a job at a paper mill and befriended the older workers who taught him how to do the job well. It wasn't until two months later that his supervisor saw that he had three fingers missing. His supervisor wanted to let him go but because

he had proven that he could do the job right his supervisor kept him. And he tried his best at it. He worked there until he retired at the age of 62.

His goals were to never take any offers to help him because he was too proud to. He never took local nor state government offers. He was a productive member of the community and put his children through school and disciplined them well because if you had any idea of what they did, you would have disciplined them just like he did.

On a Little Note: Recently he has had surgery done on his eye. The surgery, from what I've heard hasn't gone well. And on top of that his step mother passed away a few months ago.

Through it all he has helped others through his thoughts and deeds. He's an excellent example to all of us that when tragedy strikes never give up hope. And through my eyes he is truly a hero.

New Lifetime Members

Mr. & Mrs. Guy Dube of Lewiston, ME

Ms. Louella Cyr Laprise of Kensington, CT

Mr. Gerard B. Chamberland of St. Agatha, ME

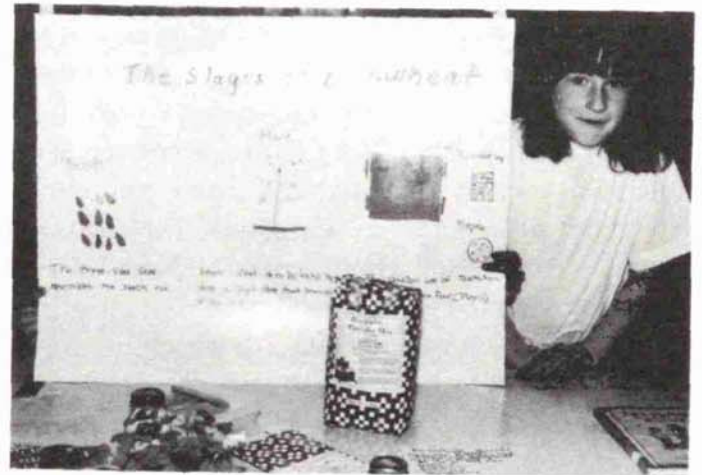
Ms. Jeanne Chamberland (à Gerard) of
St. Agatha, ME

Rev. Valmont Gilbert of Rockland, ME

Ms. Doris Beaulieu of Glastonbury, CT

Mr. & Mrs. Louis Labrie of St. Agatha, ME

Ms. Lorraine Dufour of New Britain, CT



Tracy Dumais -- 4th grader at Dr. Levesque School with her Science Fair project (1994) on buckwheat ployes. Rewarding to know younger Acadians display an interest in their colorful culture! Tracy is the daughter of Mike and Stella (Bourgoin) Dumais of Frenchville.

Ployes by Jean White



Jean White of Frenchville, Jackie Dumont of Sinclair, Lucille Michaud and Dave Raymond of St. Agatha making "ployes" at annual breakfast.

Few topics are more likely to cause strong opinions one way or the other than that of the "correct" method of making — and eating — ployes. This became abundantly clear to me as I spoke with many of our area's finest cooks in the annual Historical Society's breakfast, trying to gather up their various recipes. Everyone had a story to authenticate their particular recipe: Jackie Dumont was taught by her mother-in-law who wanted to prepare Jackie for life in French country, while George Diaz claims his recipe comes from the fifth graders he taught at Bailey School in '71, who took pity on him and his "foreign ways" and tried to teach him the local cultural traditions of food and vocabulary!

Especially interesting to me, however, were the recipes that were handed down generation to generation such as the ones described by Lucille Michaud. Her mother, Marie Tardif Chasse, used the old method of making a starter and keeping a portion of it with which to mix up subsequent batches. Her basic recipe was to combine one cup each of white and buckwheat flours, some baking soda, and a pinch of salt with enough cold water to make a thick paste. To this, boiling water was added to make a smooth batter. Daily, Marie would make ployes ahead of the noon and evening mealtimes with any leftovers being buttered and toasted up on the stove for breakfasts. A favorite way of serving the ployes involved alternating layers

of them, while hot off the griddle, with brown sugar (and no butter). The steam rising off the ployes melted the sugar, of course, and the resultant galettes were cut into wedges.

A generation later, Lucille has simplified the technique somewhat. She too, starts with a cup each of white and buckwheat flours, but instead of using baking soda, her levain is Rumford baking powder. The dry ingredients are mixed with enough room-temperature tap water to make a batter, and the ployes are cooked up as needed, to be served with butter and syrup. Leftovers, though, if there are any, meet the same fate as her mother's!

Remarkably, for all the subtle variations in the recipes I heard, most people had the same basic criteria for judging what makes a good ploye GOOD. The color must not be too yellow, nor should it have a reddish cast to it; rather it must be properly greenish. The "eyes" ought to be fairly small and uniform in size (not big and craggy), and there should be just the barest hint of a crust on the cooked surface that melts into the tenderness of the ploye itself. Who could ask for better?

If you have any old family recipes that you would be willing to share with the Historical Society for a future project, please contact Jean White at 543-7850, or come to the house. Your help would be especially appreciated!

SOUVENIRS D'UNE TANTE

By Jacqueline Chamberland Blesso

[Translation by the author of an article published in French in the *St. John Valley Times* in December 1993.]

Tante Maria, Papineau, Ida Roy, Ti-pou-ti-out, Roger Paradis, Eddy Wabby - these disparate names are woven into the fabric of the Valley by a common thread.

Maria Rose Délima Bossé Chamberland (1903-1986) from Ste. Agathe and her husband, uncle Olivier Chamberland, raised nine children. Tante Maria filled her 83 years with a multitude of enterprises including the composition of poetry. Ida Roy (the niece of Jules Marquis, one of the last owners of the Historical House in Ste. Agathe), is well known in the Valley as the celebrated performer throughout New England of songs and *complaintes*. Ida tells us that Roger Paradis, professor at the University of Maine at Fort Kent, had given her one of Maria's poems to set to music.

But Ida and Maria, these two treasures from the *concessions* on Flat Mountain in Ste. Agathe, had already been associated in the craft shared by a number of women in the Valley during the first half of this century - *le crochetage* [*travail au crochet* in standard French]. The industriousness of Madawaskans is well known. Having finished taking care of the children, the farm chores and household work, Valley women, noted for their handwork, would crochet to augment the family income. They created ribbon-trimmed baby ensembles (hat, sweater, booties) in pastel tones of blue, pink, yellow, green and white, and baby buntings for New England companies to sell to dress the babies of America. Tante Maria, who named her enterprise *Oliver's*, would pick up the work, send it to the company and pay the workers. On Maria's retirement, Ida Roy, who also crocheted, replaced her as the agent. Ida sings the songs she learned from her father at the *veillées* in the old days. Now, when she is not on the road to various folklore festivals, she lives in Van Buren where she collects and records French songs which, at last count, numbered more than 5,000.

Here they are once again reunited in Ida's air (taped for her collection) joined to Maria's poem (which she liked to sing to the other retirees in her later years after her own retirement at Wisdom House).

SOUVENIRS D'ENFANCE

- 1 -

*Te souviens-tu de notre enfance
De ces beaux jours pleins d'espérances
Quand les pieds nus, le nez au vent
Marchant dans la poussière du chemin
On s'en allait tout en chantant
En se tenant main dans la main
On revenait en se chicanant
Et souvent fois même en pleurant*

- 3 -

*Te souviens-tu pendant l'hiver
A tous les soirs quand il faisait noir
On glissait dans la côte des pins
On agaçait tous les passants
C'était pas si drôle le lendemain
Quand on le disait à nos parents
Il fallait aller s'excuser
Et promettre de ne plus recommencer*

- 2 -

*Te souviens-tu qu'au mois de mai
On aimait aller prier
Au pied de l'autel de Marie
Dans la petite école au mur gris
Les grands-mères disaient le chapelet
Et tout ensemble on chantait
Oui, la Sainte-Vierge était aimée
Dans ces beaux jours du temps passé*

- 4 -

*Te souviens-tu du temps de Noël
Oh que les fêtes étaient donc belles
Allant à la messe de minuit
Dans un traineau de chevaux gris
Nos rires et nos chants enfantins
Se faisaient entendre de loin
Car on regardait les étoiles
Tout en chantant le Jingle Bells*

Te souviens-tu de Ti-pou-ti-out
 Le Papineau des grandes routes
 Qui parcourait tous les chemins
 Toujours en demandant son pain
 Il était la terreur des enfants
 Pourtant il n'était pas méchant
 Quand on le voyait arriver
 En pleurant on allait se cacher

Tous ces beaux jours sont bien lointains
 Ce sont des souvenirs d'enfants
 Mais, on aime bien les rappeler
 Toutes ces bonnes choses du temps passé
 Quand on le dit à nos petits-enfants
 Ils nous regardent en souriant
 Ils trouvent ça drôle, mais ça me fait rien
 Quand ils seront grands, ils pourront pas n'en dire autant

This well-constructed poem with its direct and frank vocabulary develops a central idea in each octave. The first stanza shows the gamut of fleeting emotions and the friendship of the children in movement, obscured by "la poussière," the dust of time, seen in perspective by the mechanism of the road or "chemin." From a cultural point of view, the second stanza, which refers to "la petite école au mur gris," highlights the educational situation of the era in Ste. Agathe in the little gray schoolhouses in existence before the construction of red schoolhouses in 1927. The gray schoolhouses are gone, but one of the little red schoolhouses still stands on the west side of Route 162 near Frenchville. The one-room schoolhouses were very much a part of Maria's life as she had attended one in grammar school in the *concessions* and had later taught in another close to the Gilbert Martin residence. Her children went to yet another which stood in place of the Jerome Chamberland residence, and which was removed during the consolidation of the schools to create Montfort School.

"Que la Sainte Vierge était aimée" speaks to the Agathan love of the Virgin as seen in the Marian devotions. Every evening during the month of May, the devout would make their way to Church; or if they lived too far away, as in the *concessions*, they would assemble either in the schoolhouses or in one of the larger residences to take part in the devotions. In the fourth stanza, Tante Maria calls attention to both the religious and secular aspects of the principal holiday of Christmas celebrated at midnight mass together with the carol *Jingle Bells*.

Questions on the authenticity of the 17th-century aspects of the language of the Valley have arisen recently. The rhyming of *Bells* with *étoiles* shows the phonetic evolution of the pronunciation of the diphthong *oi*. In the Valley *étoiles* is pronounced (*étwèl*) which corresponds to its pronunciation in France at the beginning of the 16th century. Two other pronunciations of the diphthong developed during this century: *è* and *wè*. The *è* survives in the Valley as in the pronunciation for *droite* (*drèt*), while the *wè*, which developed later and which is the modern standard French pronunciation is not often heard on the American side of the Valley. The *wè*, as in *toi* (*twé*), currently in use in the Valley, is a pronunciation from old French from before the 13th century. In France, even after the drastic efforts to standardize the language in the 17th century, the *wè* persisted into the 18th century. Our immigrant French ancestors, having already arrived in the New World at the beginning of the 17th century, continued the pronunciations of *wè*, *è* and *wè* as in *toi* (*twé*), *droite* (*drèt*) and *étoile* (*étwèl*) which they brought with them. The *wè* had not become a part of their experience. This illustrates only one small example of the many elements of Valley French which come from Old French and Middle French.

One could ask if *Bells* and *étoiles* lend themselves to rhyming (all the lines rhyme alternately or consecutively) since the final /s/ in French is not pronounced while it is in English. In the Valley, there was also a tendency to drop the final /s/ from English words, and thus *Bells* could be pronounced *Bell*. Given that the English /l/ was also often pronounced like the French /l/, tante Maria's rhyme of *Bells* (*bel*) and *étoiles* (*étwèl*) arrives at a *rime suffisante* (rhyming of two elements).

For those who are interested in geography, "la côte des pins" of the third stanza is situated on the south side of Mountain Road about half a mile from Route 162, a little further than the Lakeview Restaurant. Unfortunately, the stand of pines no longer exists. Also, the children if they quarreled or teased and annoyed others, as children are wont to do, were responsible for their behavior and had to apologize.

A legendary character in the Valley at the beginning of the century emerges from the fifth stanza. He was Papineau, meaning someone of middling intelligence, a sobriquet given to a bearded bachelor who trembled named Alexis Pelletier from Daigle. An infirm with a crooked leg who had to utilize a cane, he was a beggar throughout the Valley all the way to Caribou and even further. Tante Maria also mentions his other nickname, Ti-pou-ti-out, a deformation of his way of addressing children as "ti-petiot," or "ti-petiote" in the feminine, which means a small child.

Papineau had acquired the reputation of a hearty eater ("*gros mangeux*") [*mangeur*]. He could not be sated. It is said that he could eat four dozen eggs and a couple of pies and sausages; that he was *safre* [*glouton*] or gluttonous; and that after having eaten *une char* [*grande quantité*] or huge quantities at someone's house, he would go to the neighbor and eat another meal, and then a third meal at the next neighbor and even a fourth, from whence comes the saying in the Valley: "*Tu mange comme un Papineau.*" People would say: "Papineau, don't eat the plate."

Known for their generosity, most Valley folks would invite him to the table with the family and would let him sleep on the floor or in the barn because he had picked up lice from his travels. He would sleep in *la batterie* [*le plancher de la grange*] the floor of the barn or in *la tasserie* [*la partie de la grange ou l'on met le foin, la paille et les grains*] the part of the barn where grain and straw are kept. He would be covered with a *robe de carriole* [*fouffure utilisée comme couverture dans un traineau à lame tiré par un cheval*] fur utilized as a covering in a horse-drawn sleigh. He was instructed to leave his pipe and his matches in the house, because of fear of setting fire to the hay.

Eccentric but harmless, Papineau would read tea leaves. The children *l'agouçaient* [*le taquinaient*] would tease him, and in order to get even and to get them to leave him alone, he would wish them bad luck and would tell them stories of giants in order to *les épéurer* [*effrayer*] scare them. It is said that he would try to *les poigner* [*attraper*] catch them, that he was *un verfat* [*fripou*] mischievous, and that he could make the animals die from wishing them bad luck. He would try to ward off the children's insults by calling them *petits paourds* [*lourds*] little oafs and would open his pocket knife and would pretend to run after them so that they would not bother him. From these incidents came "*la terreur*" of the children mentioned in the fifth stanza. But people who knew him well, like *tante Maria*, understood that "*il n'était pas méchant*" - he was not a bad person.

Champion arm wrestler, apparently Eddy Wabby from Fort Kent was the only one who could break him. His life was walking. He would hitchhike, and during one winter he had followed some salesmen on the train all the way to Bangor. Trying to earn his bread in the same manner in a hostile environment where people did not know him, he was brought to the asylum where he stayed until spring. Once again he returned to his quest. He has since passed into the legend of the Valley. The older residents remember him and all have stories to tell about him.

The stanzas are separated in half by Ida's air which repeats every four lines. The last line of the poem ends in a humoristic comment on intergenerational relations. These verses abound with optimism and, as we have seen, with ethnographic and linguistic notations.

Maria, the daughter of Joseph O. Bosse and Anne Dube, and the sister of Philippe (a First Selectman in Ste. Agathe, therefore the manager of the village, during the '30s), was a boarder at the convent during her high school years. She went to Normal School in Lewiston to receive her teaching certificate. On July 7, 1925, she married Olivier at the Ste. Agathe Church. Maria liked enterprises. Her family established a dairy farm. She undertook research into her genealogy. She taught night school, the depression-era literacy program. Intelligent, not at all shy, but very pious, her daughter, Bernadette Michaud, tells us that she liked everything to do with religious life. She worked in the Daughters of Wisdom laundry. For many years, she was in charge of the altar linens and liturgical garments at the church. Sociable, she liked to visit family and friends and liked to play cards. One of her compositions, "*C'est aujourd'hui la fête d'une maman bien aimée*," was sung by the author's mother, Eva, to celebrate the birthday of their mother-in-law, Edith Chasse Chamberland. At Maria's retirement home, she would organize evenings of card games, conversation and song to get people moving ("*Il faut faire grouiller les gens*"). *Tante Maria avait toujours organisé et elle avait toujours grouillé*. Consequently, we know the era and some of the people who were a part of it because she wove them into the tapestry of her poem to create a picture of life in the Valley.



L-R: Geralda, Maria Bosse Chamberland, Marie Claire, Olivier Chamberland and Rachel
 Standing: Joel, Jacqueline, Robert, Roch, Bernadette and Jean Paul

(Photo courtesy of the Ste. Agathe Historical Society)

1964 1994
MSAD #33 MARKS ITS 30th YEAR
by David Raymond

Plans for St. Agatha-Frenchville SAD Moves Ahead. This was the heading of page 18 of the *St. John Valley Times* newspaper on November 14, 1963. The two towns were in the process of studying the impact that forming a school administrative district would have on the communities. A steering committee and three study committees were formed at a meeting held during the week of November 10. The steering committee, charged with overseeing the entire project, comprised ten members; five from each town. The members from Frenchville were: Hercule Levesque, Bertrand Dumais, Arthur Fongemie, Florence Michaud and Edwin Pelletier. The five members from St. Agatha included: John Belanger, Gerald Chamberlain, Romeo Chasse, Rosaire Michaud and Sylvio Michaud. The study committees were to complete their work by February or March of 1964 and report their findings to the steering committee. These study committees included a transportation committee made up of Clarence Michaud, Emile Fongemie, John Belanger and Eddie Plourde. The finance committee included Ovilla Rossignol, Paul Ouellette, Pierre Paul Dufour and George Dugal. Serving on the building committee were Gerard Chamberland, Emile Chasse, Louis Gagnon and Archie Lausier.

The idea of forming a school administrative district came in response to the political happenings in Augusta during the 1950s. For years the Maine State Legislature had been wrangling over the issue of school funding. Many members of the Maine Legislature along with many people in the larger communities in our state, were not pleased with the General Purpose Aid Bill of 1951. This piece of legislation was accused of giving Maine school districts a blank check from the state treasury. All school districts were entitled to receive state money based on a percentage of their yearly operating costs. The state was obliged to fund a percentage of each district's operating costs no matter how luxurious they might be. Conservatives in the legislature considered the formula wasteful because it

encouraged even the smallest of schools to remain open. These small schools were seen by some people as inadequate to meet the needs of the baby boomers.

In 1955, Democratic Governor Edmund Muskie and Republican Senate President Robert Haskell began an effort to change the funding provisions of the General Purpose Aid Bill of 1951. It was not until 1957, however, that the Sinclair Bill passed through the legislature. This bill created a new formula for figuring state school subsidy to Maine communities. It also encouraged small school districts to consolidate with surrounding communities. Construction money was available from the state to help small communities consolidate.

Many citizens in the towns of St. Agatha and Frenchville favored forming a school administrative district which would enable the towns to construct new school buildings. While St. Agatha had a high school, the Notre Dame de la Sagesse Convent, Frenchville students were tutored to St. Agatha, Madawaska, or to other high schools. Some people considered the formation of a SAD as a great opportunity to construct modern school buildings for both towns that would provide facilities such as Industrial Arts and Home Economics labs and a gymnasium.

The study committees completed their work in January 1964 and presented their findings to the steering committee. Meanwhile, Raymond J. Brennick, Superintendent of Union 127 which included Madawaska, Frenchville and St. Agatha, set a meeting date for the local school committees, the steering committee and the State School Committee to determine the number of directors each town would supply to the new SAD.

The first informational meeting for the general public to hear the details of the proposed consolidation was held on January 17, 1964. Apparently there was hesitation from many citizens on the plan for consolidation. This seemed especially true in Frenchville. Some citizens may have felt that the creation of a SAD would certainly mean the construction of a new

district high school in St. Agatha. These Frenchville residents wanted the future high school to be located in their town since they would carry a greater share of the SAD's budget.

The two towns voted on the issue of consolidation on February 25, 1964. The tallies showed the vote to be 78 for and 15 against in St. Agatha and 105 for and 88 against in Frenchville. A board of directors was also elected at the polls. Citizens elected to serve on the board included: Emile Chasse, Romeo Chasse and Bertrand Collin from St. Agatha, and Hercules Levesque, Arthur Fongemie, and Bertrand Dumais from Frenchville. Superintendent Brennick remained in his position. The Board of Directors was sworn in on April 6, 1964, marking the official creation of the new SAD. The new SAD became the 33rd to be established in the State of Maine.

While the directors were busy at their

school meeting, many citizens were at home watching television. The following is the WAGM T.V. schedule of programs for the evening of Monday, April 6, 1964:

5:00 Bozo special
 5:40 Topic
 5:45 Today in Agriculture
 6:00 Sportscast
 6:10 Weather
 6:15 County Reporter
 6:25 Opinion
 6:30 CBS News
 7:00 Danny Thomas
 7:30 To Tell the Truth
 8:00 I've Got A Secret
 9:00 Burke's Law
 10:00 East Side West Side
 11:00 News Final
 11:30 Tonight Show

Friends and Supporters Who Have Left Us During the Past Year



Richard I. Morin

also a charter and lifetime member.

"Dick" was instrumental during the early days of the Historical Society in providing guidance and assistance in setting up the Incorporation papers and in setting up the financial arrangements that facilitated the purchase of the present historical house. He was



Marie Blanche Albert Savoy

every annual breakfast and she was also a lifetime and charter member of the Ste. Agathe Historical Society.

Marie Blanche provided the Ste. Agathe Historical Society with numerous donations of photographs and memorabilia of her days in St. Agatha as Fr. Robitaille's housekeeper. Her home movies of the moving of the small rural schoolhouses to be combined as the old Montfort School is the only record of that momentous occasion in the history of schools in St. Agatha. She also was present at



Sr. Lily Martin

Sr. Lily served as a director of the Ste. Agathe Historical Society for a period of several years. She was an invaluable source of information concerning the history of the role the Daughters of Wisdom played in the life of our community. Sr. Lily was a charter and lifetime member.



Anne Vermette Michaud

of her expertise to the Ste. Agathe Historical Society and she will be missed greatly by us all. Anne was a lifetime and charter member.

Anne was always interested in the history of Ste. Agathe. She had attended the convent school as a boarder and eventually came back to her alma mater as a teacher after her graduation. With her husband, Amarant Michaud, they scoured the St. John Valley collecting and recording countless people who retold stories of historical and cultural importance. She gave much

"Broken Pants Road" by Terry "T.O." Ouellette



Fred Marin, 91, holds sign for Brise Culotte Road.

Street names or route names have always held a special meaning. St. Agatha residents still refer to certain sections of their town as "La Pleine", "Premier Rang", "Deuxième Rang", "Troisième Rang", "Quatrième Rang", "Pousse Blé", "Belle Corne", "La Pointe a Malcolm", "La Pointe Rouge", "Brise Culotte", and "La Pointe A Petit Sinclair". The community people around Long Lake use the French language as well as the English. The local schools in Upper Frenchville and St. Agatha have been involved with bilingual instruction. Director of the bilingual programs, Gil Albert, has offered numerous courses in Bilingual Education to educators in the St. John Valley. In reviewing some of the road names, you can't help but wonder why you'd call a road "Brise Culotte." Some of the roads might have been so rough that one tore pants on branches as he or she travelled that particular road? "Brise Culotte" is paved from one end to the other these days. One wouldn't "brise" his pants while traveling this road, but one might get to meet some wildlife. Moose sightings are common on that section of road so one should drive with caution.

Fred Marin, St. Agatha's oldest citizen, remembers using these names when he was young. He was born on July 27, 1903, and he said that those names had been in use before his time. "La Pleine" referred to what is now Guerrette, Sinclair, and part of St. Agatha. It

was a large section of land with plenty of timber. "La Pleine" had something for everyone. Fred recalled that the first timber to be cut down was timber to be brought to saw mills. This wood was used for construction. The men would then cut the "green wood" to be used for heating. The last wood to be obtained from "La Pleine" was dry wood. "La Pleine" meant "le terrain à grandpère". Who was "le grandpère"? It could have been what we call today Uncle Sam or the famed landowner of northern Maine woods, Mr. Tarbell. He was obviously from away.

When we travel up Flat Mountain, "La Montagne Platte", we come across "Le Premier Rang", "Le Deuxième Rang", "Le Troisième Rang", and "Le Quatrième Rang". According to Fred, "Le Premier Rang" was where the Bossés and Alexie Derosier lived. "Le Deuxième Rang" était le rang des Tardif. "Le Troisième Rang" was the road that ended up in Fort Kent. "Le Quatrième Rang" était le rang des Bouchards.

What about "La Pousse Blé"? In those days the popular crop was potatoes. Every farmer planted potatoes, but this particular farmer decided to try a different crop. Fred didn't recall this farmer's name, but he planted wheat and had a successful crop. He discovered that the soil was agreeable to grow wheat. From then on that section of town was called, "Pousse Blé" where more people sowed wheat. The nearest flour mill was in Wallagrass. It was a water powered mill that would mill two bushels per hour. If you brought in thirty bushels, you'd put in a long day's work. The only other mill at that time was in Caribou.

"La Belle Corne" était sur le chemin de "La Pleine". It was usually associated with the second row of land from the lake. Why the name "Belle Corne"? In those days, the farmers usually had a team of oxen. Some farmers did not have two oxen on the pulling team. They would have one horse and one ox. The combination made a powerful pulling team and the farmers needed that to work the land.

The horse trader/farmer, Malcolm Marin, lived on the land where Ma and Pa's Sunrise

Cafe is presently located. That general area had a beautiful view of the lake and the rocky point. It became known as "La Pointe à Malcolm". The first priest, Father Etenaud, arrived in St. Agatha in 1889, there was no rectory ready for him. For a short time Father Etenaud stayed at Malcolm Marin's farmhouse.

"La Pointe Rouge" was located in Township 17 range 4. That was where Joseph Albert raised a large family. "There was only one road to get there," recalled Fred. "In those days people would use the lake. They travelled in canoes in the summer and sleds in the winter. Joseph Albert would haul wood, firewood, to people in St. Agatha in the winter time."

"La Pointe a Petit Sinclair" was inhabited by Sinclairs. That was where the first school was located. At the end of the conversation,

Fred recalled how the farmers had to travel to Rivière-du-Loup to get supplies. They needed to get salt, salted cod fish and molasses. It took three days to get to Rivière-du-Loup and sometimes it took four days to get back. He chuckled a bit when he explained why it took four days to get back. With every ten dollar purchase, the merchants of Rivière-du-Loup gave the buyer a free gallon of rum. Sometimes the loads were very heavy, so the travellers would consume some of the contents of the load therefore creating a lighter load. After thinking awhile, Fred remembered that there was one fellow who could make the trip to Rivière-du-Loup in one day. He ran all the way. That man was Jos Gervais' grandfather, Pierre. How could he do it without the modern day running shoes?

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