

EATH WALTZ

Ste-Agathe Historical Society

Annual Newsletter 2011



MEMOIRES

A. The Homestead and the Early Years

June 7, 2010 - Revised 9-10-11

Having decided I will never get any wiser, I have attempted to write the experiences and unique recollections of my life.

I dedicate these to the loving memory of my mother and father;

Benoit and RoseAnn Gervais

They have instilled me with the love and appreciation of my Acadian heredity, customs and french language, and like them, wish to share these with my children, grandchildres and family.

These are done to the best of my own memory, experiences and my recollections or the verbal accounts passed on to me by my family, parents and grandparents. In reseach, I have read and reread my mother's collection of books on genealogy, family reunions, cultural and Acadian history books, mortuary cards and family pictures. The internet has also been an invaluable resource of facts and oral history. Any events that need more research are marked (?). Input and/or corrections gratefully welcomed.

A special thanks to my daughter Lynne for her support and gentle prodding through the years. I respectfully request for my permission to distribute or publish and any part of this personel account.

Loving,

Patricia Gervais Flynn

MEMOIRES OF MY ACADIAN FAMILY IN NORTHERN MAINE

by

Patricia Gervais Flynn

LIFE BEGINS IN THE HOME

The house that I was born and lived in for seventeen years was the same one my father, Benoit Gervais, was born and lived in until he was 82 years old. I can't determine exactly when that special house was first built, but my best estimate is that it was built between 1830-1848 and has seen at least 5 generations. Built of hand hewn hardwood beams and held together with square, forged nails, it was first located a half mile down from the lot close to the lake past the inlet. (L'Anse sur Mr. Gilbert)



One of the oldest houses in St. Agathe, it was originally bought by my father's mother Euphemie Ouellette in 1911 for \$65.00. This plain, 24X20 two story house had already seen at least two generations and been owned by the family of Mr. Christophe and Mme. Celina Martin. In August of 1831 when the State of Maine attempted to organize the Madawaska Territory, the initial election lists the name of Christophe Martin as taking part in that contested election in Frenchville. (Chautauqua) It possibly was that same family. (?)

Memere Gervais in early 1911 had bought an acre of land from Mr. Joseph Ringuette for \$80.00, which he carved out from the southeastern part of his farm bordering that of Mr. Joseph Sirois. The plot was 76 ft. wide and ran from the main road (Rte 162) then unpaved, down to the west shore of Long Lake.

Obviously, the house had to be transported to the lot somehow. These enterprising Acadians figured out that the best way was to wait until winter when the lake froze solid and the ice got more than 3 ft. thick. Then, using large sleds, (des traîneaux) pulled by several teams of strong horses, they laboriously made their way up the lake and overland to the lot and placed it, facing southwest, on a shallowly dug out stone foundation, where it stands to this day.

I recall a dirt cellar underneath that was only about 4 ft high, with no outside access (cavereau). A trap door in the middle of the kitchen floor led to that dark, earthy, mysterious place and it was mostly used for storage in summer and winter for potatoes, turnips, carrots, onions, apples, hazelnuts, butter, salt pork in brine, and wover else was stored from the surplus of their gardens. Rats, field mice and salamanders sought refuge from the sub-zero, winters there, and one year Papa showed us a cute, little, white weasel (blette) wintering between the beams and the foundation.

But, I digress.....

My grandmother Euphemie (nee Michaud) Ouellette-Parent-Ouellette-Gervais, having been widowed 4 times in her life, looked to establish herself along Long Lake in St. Agathe in 1911. Being temporarily "of means" she had been left a moderate amount of money when her third husband, Denis Ouellette had died.

Her plan was to start a small general store there to make a living for her family. At that time she was 40 yrs old and had borne 6 boys; Leo Parent 6, Warren Ouellette 2, Denis Ouellette 1, and the 3 oldest, Willie, Albert and Frank Ouellette, by then in their teens. The oldest Ouellette boys, looking to lighten the load on their mother, soon left home to find work and establish in Old Town, Maine where their descendants can be found today.

Sometime previously, the local dowser had been contacted to find a water source for the new lot. This was done by using a Y shaped willow branch held a special way. When the branch senses water close, it emit's a vibration and sometimes bends right over and falls to the ground. A spot was marked, and Mr. Simeon Guerrette, (?) the well driller, came with his rig and found a good vein of water not too far down. A wooden hand pump was installed to retrieve water and a bucket of water had to be left on the platform after each drawing, in order to prime the pump for the next draw. The well is still producing after 100 years, although I recall having Mr. Henry Michaud redrill it deeper when our family got larger and required more water in the 50s.

It wasn't until I was 5 or 6 (1946) that electricity was wired in and an electric pump was installed to bring water inside. Instead of just a flat surface replacing our large granite washbowl, (le plat des mains) was a deep enamel sink installed by Mr. Donat Daigle. A rustic iron faucet (une champlure) reigned majestically over it. Wonder of wonders, modern science had finally reached our home in the far regions of Northern Maine.

UNITING 2 FAMILIES

Pepere Henri Gervais had lost his wife Edith Rossignol, in August 1911 shortly after the birth of his 7th child, Marie Albertine on June 11th. Little Albertine did not survive and died in September, a month after her mother, at 3 mos. old. His family then consisted of Alsime 11, Donat 10 and profoundly deaf, Albert 7, and his only daughter Jeannette 6, three of his 7 children having died in infancy. Albert and Jeannette, the two youngest went to live with their maternal grand parents, Mr. William and Mme. Venerande Rossignol, after their mother's death, and never actually lived with the new step family. Albert died 4 years later at 11 yrs old of, I believe, typhoid fever.

Feeling sad, with a pressing need to provide a mother for his grieving family, he heard of the tall, beautiful, gracious, widow establishing herself by the lake in St. Agathe. In those hard and needy times, marriages were made often out of mutual necessity, especially in cases of widowhood. He arranged to meet her, proposed marriage, and deciding they were compatible and could build a good family, she accepted.

They wasted no time in formalizing their union in marriage, and establishing their new family. Records at St. Agathe Parish indicate the date of January 8, 1912 for the marriage of Euphemie Michaud Ouellette, daughter of Xavier Michaud and Delina Baron to Henri Gervais son of Pierre Gervais III and Marguerite Levesque. Armed with their traditional Acadian traits of faith, courage, ingenuity and a strong work ethic they lovingly started working together at healing wounds and rebuilding their new family.



Euphemie Michaud, her sister born deaf, "La Petite Sourde", and unknown.



*Henri Gervais & Euphemie Michaud Gervais
Euphemie: Mother of Louis & Benoit Gervais, Léo Parent, Warren, Denis, Albert, Willie & Frank Ouellette*

THE SMALL STORE BY THE LAKE

Whatever remaining money left after the house and property debt were satisfied, went into stocking purchases and necessary preparations for the furnishing of Memere Gervais's small store. She sold everyday staples like flour, sugar, beans, molasses along with needles, thread, and other sewing and knitting goods. I know she also sold bananas at some time. My mother showed me a hole in the ceiling in the corner of our living room where the large hook to suspend those bananas had been screwed in.

Like most general stores then, she also sold penny candy. The children attending the neighboring little red schoolhouse, Coolidge School, would run in before or after school hours with their shiny pennies to buy a scoop of chocolats, des petits bonhommes, des binnes, des petits carres, du licorice, etc. These confections were temptingly displayed on the counter in wooden buckets with tops on them.

My mother Rose Ann, who started school in 1926, remembered well going to buy candy there with her sisters and schoolmates and those mischievous Gervais boys making a game of sneaking pieces of candy as soon as their mother's back was turned.

ALTERATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Through the years additions and modifications were done to the original homestead. A small 6X8 storehouse (laiterie) was built in back of and close to the house. Laiterie means "milkhouse" and, in my growing up days, was not used for milk but for storage of buckets, garden tools, des cruchons, des patins, des raquettes et bottes d'hiver, des jarres de viande sale, and all sorts of old, fascinating things.

One summer just before electricity was wired in (broche) and the water pump was installed, (the mid 40s) major reinforcements were in the plans and the tedious process of digging out the cellar and making a new foundation (solage) was started; The house was precariously jacked up at each corner and supported with beams. (madriers) At least 4 feet of dirt was dug out of the cellar (creuse) and cement mixed by hand was poured for the floor. Stairs and an outside access (cavereau) were also added. After that was set, wooden forms were put up and a cement foundation was made. Very carefully the jacks were removed and the old house settled itself, taller and prouder, in its new posture, ready to face another 100 years.

We children must have been sent to a relative for an extended visit at that time because I don't recall who the workers were and how long it took for that process. I do remember that Papa had a large load of sawdust (mouilleti) brought in from Mr. Hubald Corriveau's sawmill (moulin a scie) down the road. By large pailfulls, it was hoisted in through the upstairs window and emptied into the walls (rembris) to add much needed insulation. Thank goodness it's too cold in Northern Maine for termites to thrive, they would have had a feast in there!



Family of Benoit & Rose Ann Hebert

July 2006

*Front: Benita, Patsy, Jeannine, Simone, Robertine
Back: Robert "Bob", Joel, Norman, Roger and Andrew*

Front and back landings (perrons) were added. New windows were installed and a ceiling in large panels replaced the wide wooden boards so I couldn't count the square nails above my bed anymore.

In the 1970s, my father and oldest brother, Bobby, built a garage adjoining the house and a covered porch was also added to the back. That back porch, facing beautiful Long Lake was the center of activity in the summer and humming with picnics, kids and grandkids, visiting neighbors and friends, the peeling of echalots, and numerous summer projects. I remember sitting there quietly on summer mornings, the sun warming me, as I took in the beauty and serenity of a brand new day.

THE BLACKSMITH SHOP (LA BOUTIQUE)

Sometime in 1912, Pepere Henri, a blacksmith (forgeron) by trade, soon started accumulating wood and supplies to build his blacksmith shop, about 50 ft. in back of the house. As was the tradition then, a large group of surrounding families and relatives would assemble together (un frolic) for a weekend to help build. The men brought their building tools and the women cooked while the children played. They would work long and hard and when darkness came, the feasting, fiddling and jiggling started. They knew how to work and also have a good time those Acadians.

The boutique was almost as large, though not as tall, as the house itself. Two huge doors in the front opened to display an interior open to the rafters with waist high, wide, work shelves on both sides (des etablis) fitted with large, iron vises. Above the work shelves on the wall, hung on hooks and nails were all sizes of metal pieces, horseshoes, wagon wheels, anvils, axes, hammers, saddles and whatever tools then in use for fabricating iron.

Underneath the work shelves on a coarse wooden floor among the work debris, were several small barrels of varying sizes of square nails. When empty, these barrels were turned down and used as mobile seats to accommodate farmers, visitors and workers as necessary.

Pepere Gervais had no permanent employees that I know of but all his sons and step sons were expected to help, and apprentice in his trade. His brothers Pierre and especially, Damase (le vieux garcon) would often give him a hand especially in winter when work was slow on their farm.

His oldest brother, Vital, lived in the family homestead of his father Pierre III and grandfather Pierre II on the Madawaska side of Long Lake, and was listed as a merchant in the Madawaska Centennial Book. His store has lasted for at least 3 generations, originally passed on to his sons, Leonard and Saul Gervais in the nature of a hardware/general store. I remember the 3rd generation, Joel and Ronald Gervais, inheriting it in the 60s and branching out to include TVs and electronics. I visited Joel and his wife Charlene at the store this summer, and marveled at the variety of goods stocked there in back of the latest fishing flies and lures.

BACK TO LA BOUTIQUE.....

A roaring wood fire was lit daily, in front of the large doors of the boutique and the appropriate pieces of metal placed into it until they were red hot and adaptable to molding and hammering into shape for axles, poles and wagon wheels, sled rails, rakes, farm implements and tools, etc....

The back third of the boutique was closed off as a stable for a cow and Pepere's horses. Above the stable (L'etable) was a small open loft (fanie) for storing hay and feed for the cow, horses, chickens and the annual pig that summered in the open back pen.

I remember the closed up smell of animals, hay and fresh manure emanating from it as we opened the stable door to go milk the cow or feed and clean out the animals and gather eggs in winter. In summer l'etable was vacant and the animals out to pasture at Mr. Octave Cyr's neighboring farm. Out from the side back door of the stable, we deposited the manure which accumulated to quite a pile during the course of the year. This potent nitrogen was used to fertilize our gardens and I recall was shared with other surrounding gardeners who did not own animals.

Our cousin Donald visiting from Massachusetts, called that smelly thing his "million dollar pile". He told us that if he had a pile like that back home, he'd be rich. He turned out to be a lawyer instead. I'm not sure if those two careers might not be related somehow.

THE VILLAGE SMITHY

Pepere Henri, a tall, strong, brawny man, was purposeful, quiet and not one to waste words. Rising at the break of dawn, after starting up the wood stove, he rushed out to feed the animals and milk the cow before breakfast.

Work was plentiful at the blacksmith shop. Shoeing horses was a daily affair like tire shops are today, and daily the sounds of life could be heard; the clanging and banging of iron on iron, the clip-clopping and jingling of horses, coming and going, the yelling of orders and instructions, Memere with her high pitched voice, calling the boys to get ready for school or meals, and the many conversations going on simultaneously 6 days a week, from dawn to dusk.

Sundays were strictly observed then and the family, dressed in their best clothes, attended church faithfully each week. The rest of the day was spent visiting, having a drink (un p'tit coup) and socializing with friends and relatives. Work was never performed on "The Lord's Day" upon pain of sin. That beautiful Acadian custom continued through my father's generation and has mostly disappeared in my lifetime.

After supper, during WWI, Pepere would go to his neighbors, Mr. Joe and Madame Braxede Ringuette's house to listen to the news of the war's progress on their radio. Memere would inquire how things were going in Europe and his answer would always be, "they're fighting hard" (ca buche la, ca buche). That's all she could get out of him.

According to my grandmother, there was little enrichment to be made from that shop. The farmers and town folk who needed work done were extremely poor and, like them, were eking out a living by tooth and nail.

There was no money to pay and the kind person he was, would tell them to "pay when they sold their potatoes" and never collected. Therefore, he got paid in hay, potatoes, chickens, buckwheat flour, oats and mostly, not at all for his hard work and all the horseshoes (fers a jouales) he had pounded in.

YOURS, MINE & OURS

Life went on as it usually does, and they welcomed their first child together, a son Louis, born on February 25, 1913. Three years later, on the same date in 1916, my father Benoit was born. He would be the 8th son and the last child born to that strong, courageous, woman. She was then 44 years old.

The small store and the "boutique" thrived and provided a bare living for them all, including the half brothers and the step brothers, during those very hard times from the teens to the early 40's, that included 2 depressions, two World wars and an epidemic.

THE SPANISH FLU (LA GRIPPE ESPANOL)

In the fall of 1918, the Spanish Influenza pandemic ravaged the country. Throughout the U. S. 665,000 people died. More soldiers died of the flu than in WWI. It targeted especially young people in their 20's and 30's. Spreading very fast it wasn't particularly the flu itself, but the pneumonia that resulted, that was fatal. A high fever followed by intense body pain ensued, the lungs filled up and the infected drowned in their own body fluids. It was a horrible death. Many families in the area lost loved ones. Memere's brother Damase's son, Pierre Michaud, died of that flu. Schools, churches and most public places were closed. Signs of "Quarantined" and the black wreath of death decorated many front doors.

According to Memere Gervais, by the grace of God and the family's fervent prayers, they evaded the flu. Each evening after supper, the family would kneel on the floor and pray the rosary together. Memere showed me the quarter-sized, blessed, holy medal she had nailed above the front door that she firmly believed prevented the sickness from entering.

It was covered over with so many coats of paint that I couldn't determine which saint was impressed on it and was still there when I left home in 1957. What a testimony to our ancestors' traditional strong faith and belief in God.

LIFE GOES ON.....10 MORE

Over the years, my mother and father, met, married and lived in that house for 59 years, from 1939 to 1998. In 1998, Papa and my mother RoseAnn moved into Mr. Emile Chasse's apartment at 485 Main St. until my mother's death on May 25, 2002. The 4 last years of my father's life were spent at St Joseph Nursing Home in Frenchville, where he died peacefully on July 20, 2006 at 90 years old.

Seven of my brothers and sisters were born there in the downstairs bedroom and their perfect little bodies, lovingly washed and warmed near the wood stove. The two last children were born at Fort Kent Hospital, Benita on February 25, 1956 and Andrew on January 12, 1965, when my mother was 43.

At age 15, on Feb. 24, in 1956, I recall a cold winter evening, darkness, and supertime at our home. I was helping my mother pack for the hospital as her labor had started. Not a word from her, I never knew she was in pain. She had prepared supper for her family, and Dr. Romeo Levesque came to get her to take her to Ft. Kent Hospital for the birth. She had sent my father to the Marin Store to call Doctor Levesque as we did not own a phone yet. He came in and saw that large family around the table with meat, potatoes, buckwheat ployes piled high with real butter (du beurre d'habitants), and a large pitcher of cold milk in the center. I'll never forget his observation; "Ca c'est du monde qui save vivre" (these are people who know how to live.RoseAnn, est tu prete?

TRAGEDY ON WASHDAY

The next week I stayed home from school, cooked, cleaned, and helped by my sister Jeannine, prepared the 6 children for the school bus each morning for 7:30. Roger was the only one not in school then, he was 4 yrs. old and the sweetest child ever. On Monday, I felt what it was like to freeze my fingers on the clothesline that week when I did the wash. Load by load I would go outside to hang it up with clothespins and my warm fingers stuck on those metal lines. As each piece was hung, the frigid air instantly froze it solid. First, the sheets then the towels and underwear, then the shirts and socks and lastly the dark pants and work clothes.

I dressed Roger in his snowsuit and took him out with me while I hung the clothes out. It happened to be a very cold but sunny day and he played in the snow and would slide down on his little sled underneath the clothesline (perchi). Not paying enough attention to him I was hurriedly hanging clothes, when the sled hit me in the back of the legs. Of course, I fell down and landed on top of his head on the sled. I quickly checked him and he was crying, his mouth had a big cut and was bleeding profusely. I blotted it with my handkerchief as best I could, and we both went crying across

the street to our closest and dearest neighbor Madame Bertha Guerrette. She washed the wound and put cold snow on it. Roger had stopped crying and his mouth was swelled up. She said, don't worry that will heal in no time...and it did. To this day Roger has a scar across his lip, and together we can laugh at that memory.

We could not wait to see that new baby and questioned Papa each time he returned from a visit. Finally Maman and Baby Benita came home and life returned to normal. We lavished so much love and attention on her. When I left home a year later, I missed all my brothers and sisters acutely but that little one had a special place in my heart.

THE STEEP STAIRS

The stairway in our home consisted of 10 steps ascending at a very steep angle. The steps were narrow and the risers higher than normal. They were worn down in the middle, and many times a day you could hear the rapid staccato of someone running up or down. We all had the misfortune of tripping or missing a step during our lifetimes but no one ever was badly hurt or broke a limb as a result. A few times, we fell while carrying the slop pail down to be emptied. Yukkk... .

Simone had an unforgettable tumble when she was about 3 or 4. It was in the fall and one day we were in the middle of killing and canning chickens and I was helping take the pin feathers (les repoussons) off. Simone fell down the stairs and landed in the large round tub sitting at the bottom, full of bare chickens soaking in cold water. We rescued her, crying and soaked, but thankfully, unharmed.

Robertine remembers her great fall, having just put on her nylons for church one Sunday, she started going downstairs and on the top step, slid out like a skate on ice. Her body never touched any of those 10 steps as she sailed over them and landed in a heap on one of Maman's handmade braided rugs (tapis tresse) at the bottom, dazed, but intact.

The last tumble I recall was experienced by my granddaughter Dana when she was around 12 years old in the summer of 1990. She slipped on the top step and oohed and aahed all the way down. Maman, her mother Carol, and I were there, and after making sure she was o.k., proceeded to humor her by reminiscing about all the other memorable trips that had been taken down the stairs in our lifetime. In 2007, my brother Andrew's daughter, Isabelle, 7, fell down the stairs and unfortunately, broke her arm.

The other unique feature of the stairs was the hinged, opening second step. (le trou d'échelle) It was the perfect place to store our gloves, mittens, rubbers, shoes, toys, etc. We'd search in that dark hole up to our armpits trying to find just the right pair of old shoes to go pick strawberries, or for a matching pair of rubbers to fit over our good shoes when it rained or snowed.

ABOVE THE STEEP STAIRS

The upstairs consisted of the large bedroom, the warmest room upstairs, as the tin chimney flue went right through one corner and would get quite hot anytime the stove was lit. That was always the girls' room, my grandmother's room the 4 years she lived with us from 1947 to 1950, and later my mother's bedroom. I don't recall boys ever sleeping in that room. The remaining area was a stairway with a railing, the landing, and 2 small bedrooms on the back, north side.

The back bedrooms had an open doorway and a heavy door with a latch would close them off from the rest of the house, as they were almost impossible to heat in the winter when the temperatures would get 20-40 below and the winds were howling. Consequently they were called the cold side (le bord frette).

The back of this door was the coldest corner and we called it "le racu" and it was used for placing various things, winter and summer, like a chamber pail, (une slobbe) laundry, and an old valise. My hardy brothers Bobby and Joel slept in that back bedroom. In winter, they would run in, jump under a pile of wool quilts and pull the blankets over their heads to get warm.

Papa eventually removed that heavy door and installed a grate though the floor of the back bedroom so that heat could permeate from the downstairs wood stove. There were 2 stoves at that time in the house, one for cooking which in later years (the 50s) was fed by kerosene and a Franklin wood stove, (un poele de rechaud) for heating in the winter.

When the family was at its largest, 5 beds, 3 dressers, and 1 crib crowded the 2nd level. It was always clean and cozy, the beds and blankets smelled good and we were warm, secure and comfortable even when we slept 3 in a double bed. To this day, I crawl into bed and don't wiggle much.

DES GARDEROBES

Through the years, many changes, updates and alterations were made to the inside. Coats and coats of paint, layers and layers of wallpaper, the corners were rounded from the layering. Mom decided to strip the wallpaper in the back bedroom one time and discovered that the first layer was all done with old newspapers from around the civil war. Of course, mom was the "interior decorator" along with all her other duties.

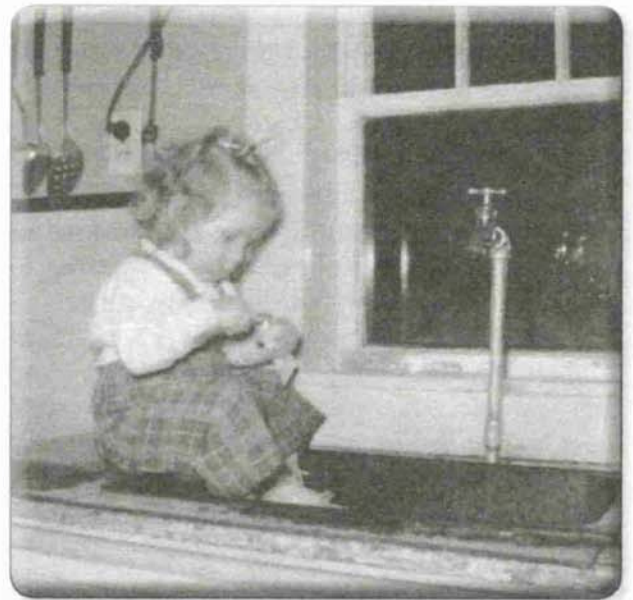
She was good at it and would order her wallpaper from the "Penwall" catalog and hang it all herself. Many times I heard her frustration when she got to a corner that wasn't straight; "This darn old house, nothing is straight...I can't believe I will always live in an old house like this." What can you expect from a house built before the 1850's and dragged a half mile.

In the early 50s, she convinced Papa to build her a closet in the upstairs main bedroom. There were no closets at all in the whole house. In the early days, people owned only a few changes of clothes and these were hung up on nails here and there throughout the house. Our coats, jackets and sweaters were hung on long nails, all the way up the stairs, 3 or 4 layers one over the other. We watched Papa build with anticipation. Mom was absolutely overjoyed to finally have a place to hang our clothes. A nice shelf all across the top stored hats, scarves, gloves and "portefeuilles".

The whole family shared that closet and it got very crowded. A few years later, Papa built a "garderobe" in the downstairs bedroom and one in the far back upstairs room also. Of course that made the rooms even smaller but, by then, the oldest of us were grown and had started leaving, one by one. The girls to find work in Connecticut and the boys to serve their country....A new Gervais generation was being launched.

As I revise my memoirs in September of 2011, the old homestead is recording it's final chapter. Like a dignified dowager it stands undaunted with a solid and weathered façade accomplishing it's mission as in the past 5 generations: gracefully providing comfort, privacy and solace to those within.

My brother Andrew and his fiancée Renee are well into the process of realizing their dream of building a new log cabin chalet for their family. When completed, the original old house will be systematically dismantled after, I hope, a proper eulogy. The new generation are the future and united with the spirits of Maman and Papa, we wish them much health and happiness in their new home. Time marches on and we must follow with our memories and forge ahead, lest we be left behind and wither.



The "Champlure"

Donated Items in 2011 (January – November)

Alan & Patricia Dow	Who's Who in Maine – 1947
Susan "Sue" Pelletier	Portable Electric Hair Dryer
Milton Cyr	US Army Boots, Military Dress Hat, Lather King, Photo
Marcel Chartier	"Holland" Wooden Shoes, St. David Parish Centennial Book
Roberta Daigle Guerrette	Book - Marie Louise of Jesus De Montfort's Spiritual Daughter, Photographs , Book-Allie Cole, A Maine Pioneer
Viola Caron	Religious Items
Camille Morin	Ice Pick, Lead Melting Pot, Bible, Religious Items, Milk Strainer, Funnel, Needle Point Picture, Book Ends
Arlene Voisine	Religious Items, Lantern, Belt, Burlap Bag, Bottles, Thread, Tap Auger, Spool, Nail, Statues
Generous Treasure Shoppe	Flags, Hats, Tools, Wigs, Tags, Labels, Rosary, Frames, Bench, Tables, Wooden Chest, Yarn
Gerry Morin	Religious Art, Shelves
Elaine Michaud	Fisher Price Toys, Flute, Camera, Clock, Religious Books
Andrew Michaud	Metal Box
Florine Morin Michaud	Jewelry, Hat, US Army Duffle Bag, Organ, Tables, Toasters, Framed Photos, Salt 'n Pepper Shakers, Tools, Frames, Electric Canner
Therese Chasse Albert	Tablecloths, Cushions, Tables
Philip Morin	Adze, Weaved Crib Basket, Bucket, Goat Yoke, Glasses, Mugs, Waking Up French – Réveil (DVD), Picture Frames, 3 OWL Yearbooks
Stan Albert	Book Stand, Books, Cushions, Souvenir Plate from Grand Pré, Missals, Barbicide, Souvenir Plate Ste-Luce 1843-1993, Glass Cross
Cheryl Pelletier	Basket
Sr. Aurelie Michaud, D.W.	Centenaire de St. Agathe, Maine 1899-1999
Doris Coté Matthews	Seth Thomas Mantle Clock, Souvenir Box
Ross & Judy Ayotte Paradis	Souvenir Mugs, Gov. Baldacci Pen, Framed Photographs
Jean Paul Michaud	Books, Echoes Magazines, Pamphlets
Captain Tina Ouellette	Battle Field Dress Uniform, Desert Flight Suit, Military Hats, Emblems
Long Lake Public Library	Wooden Book Stand, Books
Angela Chamberland Houghton	Bonjour Banner
Carole Plourde	Annual Newsletters, Echoes Magazines, Mainely Maine, 1994 Long Lake Summerfest Book
Dr. Thomas & Jackie Chasse	Collection of Books

Donna Regan	The Story of the Nuns
Nelson & Helen Ouellette	Basket Weaving Supplies
Laurette Melanson	15 Cent Pre-Stamped Envelopes
Arthur Albert Jr.	Two Glass Jugs, Army Medals, Photograph, Documentation
Maude Marin	Two Woolen Blankets
Phil Rossignol Family	Pink Woolen Blanket
Roger Bosse	Town Constable Uniform
Sr. Jacqueline Ayotte, D.W.	Photo Panels, Daughters of Wisdom, Paper written by Dr. Fern Desjardins
Bernard & Judy Michaud	Religious Item, Electrical Items
Estate of Walter Fournier	Books, Yearbooks, Publications, US Navy Uniform, Newspaper Clippings, Hat & Hat Box
Jackie Plourde Daigle	Wooden Ironing Board
Henry Theriault	St. Agatha High School Yearbooks
Gordon Soucy	Homcoming Album '94, An Adadian Heritage, In Fair Aroostook
Keith Lord	Rug
Pete Bernier	Pony Sleigh
Ronald & Candide Bouchard	1946 Notre Dame de la Sagesse High School Diploma
Jeff Cyr	Cyr Family Reunion August 11-15, 2011
Paul & Kimberly Marquis	Marquis Genealogy Book
Rose Marie Levesque	Descendants of Paul Cyr & Charlotte Ayotte
Linda Dube	1967 Photos - Wisdom High School
Helen Collin Ayotte	Music Books
Bernie "Boo" Roy	Story of Daughters of Wisdom, Notre Dame de la Sagesse Diploma
Scott Fay	Two Sirois Dairy Milk Bottles
Dr. Levesque School	1978 Kodak Pleaser Instant Camera
Ronald & Sylvia Belanger	Pot de Crème et Le Sucrier
Rinette Michaud	Wall Hanging
John Labrie	Painting of the Causeway to the Pelletier Island
John Naranja	Chest Set
Pearl Gagnon Martin	Foot Stool
Jeanne Gagnon Chamberland	Black Veil & Container, Newspaper Articles, Pamphlets
Laurel & Pris Daigle	Shelves, Display Tubes
Lucille Tardif Paradis	Original - Farmers Starch Company Inc. Common Stock, Certificate of Discharge from CCC -Raoul Paradis
Jim & Theresa Morin Foster	Collections of Assorted Items, Newspapers, Magazines, Lamp
Robert & Joline Dube Martin	Three Rocking Chairs, Two Glass Jars

A JOURNEY BACK IN TIME AND INTO THE PRESENT

by

Bernadette Doucette Meunier
Class of 1961

In the famous best seller 'The Time Machine' by H. G. Wells, a scientist invented such an exceptional machine that he was able to travel into the future. In the process, he saw for himself what he and the world generally would be like a few years hence. I had more or less the same type of experience in August.

My "time machine" brought me back in time to St. Agatha to reunite with classmates and to celebrate the 50th year since our high school graduation, the class of 1961.

As graduating classes go ours was small, both by today's standards and those of five decades ago. There were other things that made us different. We were the recipients of a superlative basic education rendered under the guidelines of both the diocese and the State of Maine. Our class, and perhaps one or two after, were the final products of what was known as a classical education, grounded in a tight set of study and behavioral standards.



L To R. Claudette Belanger Sirois, Harold Bouchard, Joline Dube Martin, Frances Martin Pelletier, Jeannette Roy, Bernadette Doucette Meunier, Philip Michaud, Ann Marie Bosse Sandstrom, Ronald Albert, Patricia Gendreau Bourgoin, Robert Chamberland and Lorette Sirois Paradis.

Our teachers were an unusual group of highly trained women who just happened to be nuns. Although the term had not yet been coined, I now realize that they were strident feminist – an exceptional blend of steel and magnolias, a courage unaware of itself.

By their example and with their encouragement, we strove to be both modest ladies and serious students. Sister Bernard of the Assumption assuring us that the becoming of both was a viable and acceptable goal. And our vigilance about these aspirations must never waver; satan is a master at finding loopholes.

It was of little concern to the sisters who instructed us that no one spoke Latin anymore. Sister Marie Antoinette taught it for its singular grammatical structure and the legacy it imparted to so many modern languages.

Sister Louise Marie of the Immaculate instilled in us a fundamental respect for the rules of English grammar and usage. She still perches on my shoulder every time I write or speak – a participle must never dangle and "less" must never be used with countable items.

At a time when we 38 graduates were cart-wheeling towards future shock and the information age, the principle, Sister Catherine of the Cross, encouraged us to increase our reading speed and cultivate sound study habits for the demands of college.

Our teachers also had an innate understanding of the learning preferences of boys. They challenged them more and inspired them to unleash their creativity in ways that respected their own unique natural development. By inviting them to sharpen their focus on personal perspectives, they instilled a sense of pride, community awareness and patriotism.

All this was accomplished in an environment that stressed the importance of teamwork, relationships and especially humor. Sr. Christine de Marie was notable for restoring a student's floundering self-esteem with a few amusing quips.

If they failed to provide us with the social interaction of a formal prom night, they made up for it by tutoring us diligently (and at no additional cost) in the ways of handling SAT exams.

50 years ago, we were taught a discipline that encompassed morality and mind. We learned by rote the definition of conscience - "an act of intellect by which we judge whether an action is morally right" - (Sister Veronica of the Cross would be gratified that I remember) and given examples of unconscionable behavior. Although at times, our moral compass may have wobbled, they provided us with the tools to sustain us in an age where there are no absolutes.

If all of this occurred within the framework of a somewhat spartan regimen, then so much the better. Beyond the school walls, a plethora of opportunities for self-indulgence awaited us. The standards and values imparted to us by the Sisters, however, gave us the courage to explore them without turning away from the concept of personal and moral responsibility.

One or two members of the class were inspired to become nuns and live the vocational traditions that had given us our somewhat unique secondary education. Still others answered our country's clarion call and with courage and valor served the military in perilous and very contentious times. The rest of us strode cheerfully forth to embrace a world in flux.

The litany of what transpired since that June day 50 years ago is long; political assassinations, Vietnam, Watergate, insider trading, junk bonds, conspicuous consumption, a wayward clergy, Columbine, the Unabomber, the wanton little blue dress, Desert Storm, 9/11, the war on terror and hanging chads - all serious assaults on our sensibilities. Consider, too, how dramatically life has changed with the insinuation of personal computers into our lives.

As members of the Silent Generation, born on the cusp between the Greatest Generation and the Baby Boomers, we endured the idealism and activism of the 60s, and graciously accepted the accelerated change in humanity's way of living, tempering it with empathy and compassion, thanks to the inspiring devotion of the Sisters.

Hard to believe that our 50th reunion is now behind us, but at the same time, it makes for one heck of a wonderful memory, one to be treasured.

Despite not having seen each other for years and having lived very different lives, I found that friends whom I hadn't seen for 50 years were still my friends. We had a common and very deep bond, forged during our years at St. Agatha High School; the old conversations were simply taken up again. It was truly amazing! Somehow, the fact that we share the same background creates a bond of its own, a magnetism which cannot be forced.

As we reminisced, sharing our journeys, my "time machine" again worked its magic. Something shifted. Now the past was very much the present and a future of some kind was beginning again.

As I gazed into the faces of my classmates, it is the faces of 50 years ago that looked back at me, young faces with an honest contentment honored by experience. Although we have grown grayer, broader and balder, the more I spoke to everyone, the more interesting, attractive and younger they all became.

So what's the take-away from this magnificent weekend? I'm grateful to the Daughters of Wisdom for the grounding that helped us navigate through the bad weather of civilization and the emotional spontaneity to accept it. I'm grateful that I'll not remember any of my classmates as a yearbook picture. I'm thankful that fuzzy old memories have been replaced with vibrant new ones. And most of all, to paraphrase Mark Twain, I'm thankful that none of us would excite the undertaker.

KEEPSAKES

The following items can be ordered from the Ste-Agathe Historical Society:

Voici the Valley Culture way - CD & Booklet.....	\$ 5.00
*Evangeline, The Novel by Richard F. Mullins.....	\$14.95 (Paperback).....\$24.95 (Hardcover)
Land In Between by Beatrice Craig.....	\$30.00
Destination Madawaska by J.R.T. Theriault.....	\$19.95
Fusion of the Acadian and Canadian Races In Madawaska-English Translation by J. Blesso.....	\$5.00
Les Filles de la Sagesse Ste-Agathe, Maine 1904 - 2004.....	\$30.00
Les Belles Histoire du Couvent de Ste-Agathe.....	\$25.00
Le Centenaire de St. Agatha Maine.....	\$25.00
History of Ste. Agathe Parish 1889 - 1989.....	\$10.00
Ste-Agathe Cemetery Records 1889 - 1989.....	\$10.00
Ste-Agathe Cemetery Records Part II 1990 - 2006.....	\$10.00
Marriages of Ste-Agathe 1889 - 1989.....	\$10.00
St. John Valley Souvenir Postcard Book.....	\$12.00
Acadian Flags (3' x 5').....	\$29.95
Heritage Sites of the St. John Valley by Louise M. Martin.....	\$ 5.00
Year 2012 Calendars.....	\$10.00

*New Items

To place an order by mail, circle each item that you would like, specifying how many. Please include \$4.95 for the first item and \$1.00 for each additional item to cover mailing costs, and mail to:

The Ste-Agathe Historical Society
PO Box 237
St. Agatha, Maine 04772

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

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November 10, 2010 to November 14, 2011

In memory of Mr. Jean Yves St. Pierre, by Clifford & Theresa Guerrette.

*In Memory of Mr. Walter Fournier, by James & Theresa Foster, Terry Ouellette,
Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois, Harold & Candide Sedlik.*

*In Memory of Mr. Roger (Bea) Chamberland, by Terry M. Ouellette, Lionel & Jackie Daigle,
Harold Chamberland, Bob & Pat Bourgoïn, Constance Desrosier, Roberta Guerrette,
Angela Houghton, Monique Gordon.*

In Memory of Mr. Richard Hebert, by Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois

*In Memory of Mr. Jean Paul Bechard, by Terry M. Ouellette, Bobby & Rachel Michaud,
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*In Memory of Mr. Warren Michaud, by Terry M. Ouellette, Stan Albert, Greta Laferriere Martin
& Family.*

In Memory of Mrs. Juliette Martin Michaud, by Greta Laferriere Martin & Family.

In Memory of Mr. Jack Michaud, by Florine, Andrew, and Elaine Michaud.

In Memory of Mr. Louis & Mrs. Lorette LaBrie, by Daniel & Roberta LaBrie.

*In Memory of Mrs. Rachel Plourde Rouleau, by Florine Morin Michaud, Stan Albert, Philip
Morin, Ken & Arlene Lerman, Terry Marin Ouellette, Roberta Guerrette, Lise Sirois & Family.*

In Memory of Mr. Jean Michaud, by Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois.

*In Memory of Mr. Alan J. Albert, by Stan Albert, Philip Morin, Florine Morin Michaud, Elaine
Michaud, Donna & Gary Boucher, Patricia Morin, Gerard R. Morin, Peter & Rachel Lapointe,
Francis & Claudia Morin, Julie Cyr, Terry Marin Ouellette, Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois,
Lise Sirois. Carole Plourde.*

In Memory of Mrs. Cecilia Michaud, by Terry Marin Ouellette.

In Memory of Mr. Albenie Roy, by Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois.

In Memory of Deceased 1961 Classmates, by 1961 Reunion Committee.

*In Memory of Mr. Reginald Plourde, by Terry Ouellette, Connie Derosier, Gloria Gervais,
Roberta Guerrette, Don & Rachel Daigle, Juliette M. Cyr, Florine Michaud, Gary & Donna
Boucher, Stan Albert, Philip Morin, Mark & Nicole Chamberland, Dale & Ellen Chamberland,
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Ronald & Sylvia Belanger, Lise Sirois, Cheryl & Russell Plourde.*

*In Memory of Mrs. Rinette Chamberland Deschaine, by Ronald & Sylvia Belanger,
Patricia J. Morin.*

In Memory of Mr. Eloi & Mrs. Cecile Caron, by Ronald & Sylvia Caron Belanger.

In Memory of Mr. Gaetan Bedard, by Ken & Arlene Lerman.

In Memory of Mrs. Lydia Boccialetti, by Lise Sirois, Terry M. Ouellette.

*In Memory of Mr. Philip Chasse, by Gary & Donna Boucher, Clifford & Theresa Guerrette,
Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois.*

In Memory of Mrs. Florence G. Roy, by Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois.

In Memory of Mr. Louis R. Dubois, by Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois.

In Memory of Mrs. Corinne Michaud, by Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois.

In Memory of Mr. David R. Dumond, by Gerald & Rose Marie Dubois.

*In Memory of Mr. Gerard & Mrs. Eva Chamberland, by Francis & Jacqueline
Chamberland Blesso.*

In Memory of Mr. Fernand Levesque by Francis & Claudia Morin

In Memory of Mr. Joseph Ulysses Albert & Family by Stan Albert

In Memory of Maurice & Angela Morin by Philip Morin

In Memory of Mr. Denis & Mrs. Dorumene Ouellette Morin Family by Philip Morin

In Memory of Mr. Michel & Mrs. Madeleine Michaud Pelletier Family by Philip Morin

In Memory of Mr. Philippe & Mrs. Edith Chasse Morin by Philip Morin

WHY THE NAME STE-AGATHE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

People often ask why the name Ste-Agathe Historical Society. The name is half French and half English. Going back into the society's history albums, the charter members who held their first meeting on November 3, 1977, elected to choose the name of the parish - Ste-Agathe - for the official name of the society. The parish of Ste-Agathe was established in 1889, ten years before the Town of St. Agatha was incorporated. The town accepted the English spelling of St. Agatha. The charter members of the Ste-Agathe Historical Society included: President Gerry Morin, Vice President Jack Michaud, Treasurer Terry Ouellette, and Secretary, Sr. Lily Martin, D.W. The other four directors: Sr. Gabrielle Michaud, D.W., Clarence Michaud, Bertille "Bea" Chamberland and Phillip Morin.

NOTICE OF NAME OR ADDRESS CHANGE

Name: _____

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Note: If you plan to be away any time during the year, please notify us so that we can send the UPDATE to the proper address.

Approximate Time Away: From Date: _____ To Date: _____

**PLEASE HELP
US KEEP OUR
RECORDS
CURRENT**

TWINNING

The Oldest Textile Technique



Keith Lord, Janette Pelletier Hayes, Gloria Gervais



Stan Albert doing some twinning.

BOOK SIGNING

July 30, 2011



*Richard Mullins Author of *Evangeline The Novel*,
and *Lise Sirois**



*Trail Guide Sylvia Belanger, Visitor Priscilla Gammon
and Trail Guide Paul Buck*

SCENES FROM THE 33RD ANNUAL BREAKFAST



Charter Member Bea Chamberland Beaulieu attends the 33rd Annual Breakfast.



The Textile Display with Lise Sirois Abigail, daughter of Doug & Tammy Lerman, watches Lise do rug hooking.



Behind the scenes - Gloria Gervais, Phil Morin, Stan Albert and Alfreda Chamberland.

New Lifetime Members

University of Maine at Fort Kent Acadian Archives

Larry & Theresa Ayotte

Pat & Lori Minard

Keith A. Lord

Pete & Georgette Roy

Annual Members

Sally A. Gagnon

Susan Gerard

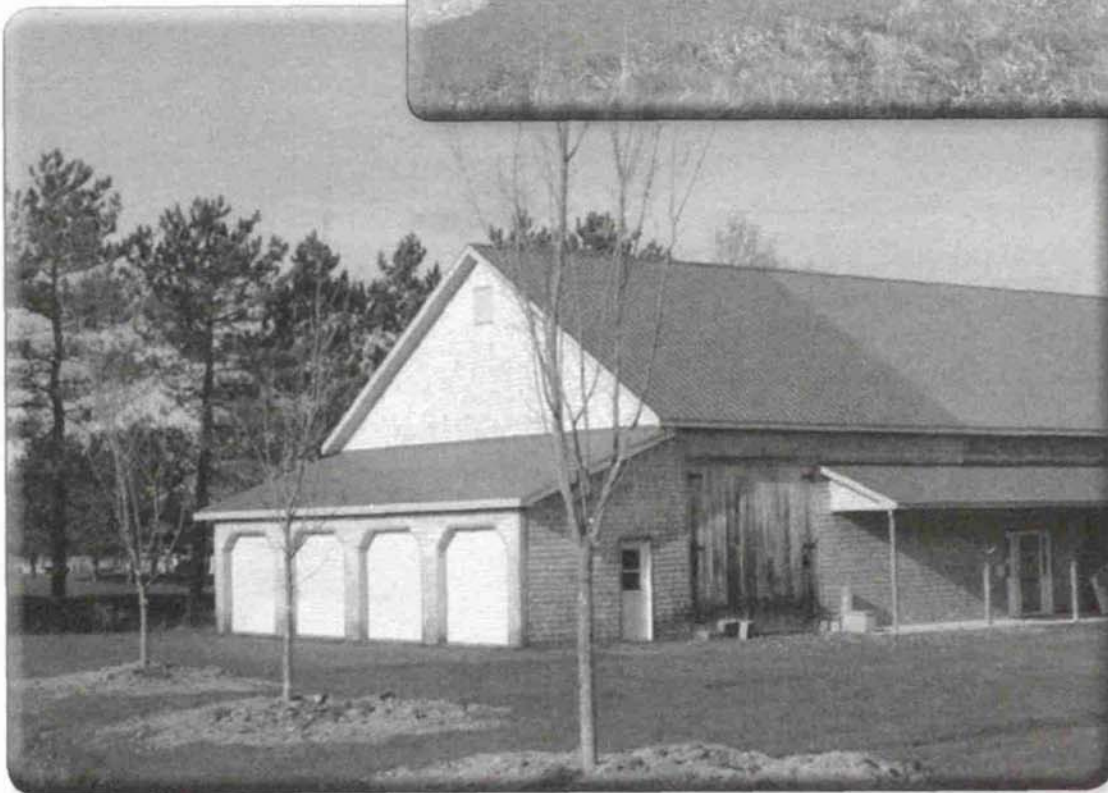


Maude Marin with cousin, Glenda Marin of Lakeland, Florida, doing research.



Board of Directors at the Annual Meeting in July - Front: Vice President Gloria Gervais, Anne Chamberland, Judy Chamberland and Lise Sirois. Back: Jackie Michaud, Alan Michaud, Vincent Morneault, Harold Chamberland, Secretary Carole Plourde, Treasurer Philip Morin and President Terry Ouellette.

On October 28, 2011, Bert Albert, Mark Albert, and Ricky Chamberlain successfully planted the three Silver Maples that were donated to the Ste-Agathe Historical Society by Project Canopy.



*Town Manager Christie Sirois with
Selectmen Beurmond Banville
and Dale Chamberland at their July
monthly meeting.*



*Terry Ouellette accepts donation
of framed photos of the House of
Representatives and State Senate
from Judy & Ross Paradis on
July 30, 2011.*



*Pete Bernier
donates pony sleigh
he refurbished.*



November 28, 2011

Dear Friends of the Ste-Agathe Historical Society,

Another season has come to a close for the Preservation Center and the Pelletier-Marquis Museum House. We were very busy during the summer months with two "first time events" and a steady flow of visitors. On July 11th the town selectmen, Beurmond Banville, Dale Chamberland and town manager, Christie Sirois, held their monthly meeting in the reception room of the Preservation Center. (Selectman Danny Bechard was unable to be there). On July 30th we had our first Book Signing Event with the author of Evangeline The Novel, Richard Mullins. The most popular "Textile Thursdays" continued to be well attended. The group, under the guidance of artisan Lise Sirois, became involved in various crafts. Keith Lord from Wallagrass introduced the old craft of "twinning" to the participants. "A good time is had by all" during these gatherings.

The special feature in the display room included an assortment of products with textiles. We had quilts, blankets, crochet items and cut cloth that were over 100 years old. We also displayed a sock knitting machine and a miniature loom.

We are grateful for the dedicated board members and volunteers that once again served over three hundred guests at the 33rd annual historical society breakfast. The special attraction was an extension of the textile display with a live application of rug hooking with Lise Sirois.

We are also appreciative of the Maine Acadian Heritage Council Preservation Grant and Heritage Trail Guide Grant awarded to the society. With the preservation grant monies we were able to refurbish the granary, apply a new shingle roof to the big part of the Museum House and storage shed. We were also able to have the shingles treated with a sealant. The Heritage Trail Guide grant makes it possible to have the site open on a daily basis from mid-June to mid-September.

We already look forward to the new season to see how the three silver maples will enhance the appearance of the grounds. We received these big valuable trees from the Canopy Project during the month of October and successfully placed them in the ground with the help of Bert Albert, Marc Albert, and Ricky Chamberlain.

Sincerely,

Terry Ouellette

Terry Ouellette, President



*Joyeux Noël
Bonne et Heureuse Année*

Ste-Agathe Historical Society
534 Main Street
P.O. Box 237
St. Agatha ME 04772

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