

STE-AGATHE *Historical Society*

NEWSLETTER
FALL 2006



Les Chanteurs Acadiens de la Vallée Saint-Jean

Roger Damboise, Don Levesque, Claire Dumais Clogan, Joyce Comeau Crosby
Anne Perreault Levesque and Charles Stewart

They played at the Ste-Agathe Historical Preservation Center this summer and performed four original songs, "*Ste-Agathe sur le bord du lac*", "*Français*", "*Ramasser des patates*" and "*Les filles de Quimby*" as well as traditional Acadian music.

Pepère et Memère Guerrette aux Concessions de Ste-Agathe

Jacqueline Chamberland Blesso

What a noisy and joyous feast it was! In my first memory ever, I am standing in the middle of the dimly lit kitchen of my maternal grandparents on *Montagne platte* at a family gathering. The aunts are busy at the sink peeling and washing *des patates* with water pumped and brought in from outside to help prepare the Sunday meal. Memère had opened the trap door in the kitchen floor, covered with a yellowish *préart* [linoleum], to go down the few steps into the root cellar. She was bringing up *du blé d'inde* [corn] and *des cosses de fèves* [green beans] canned in jars the previous fall. That very morning, she had wrung the neck of one of her large hens, plunged it in boiling water in order to pluck the feathers, and eviscerated it. It was now cooking in the oven of the huge wood stove sending out a delicious smell and making everyone's mouth water. We were all awaiting the moment when we would sit down to enjoy this abundant meal accompanied by *poyes* and salads, and crowned with pies made from the strawberries, raspberries and blueberries Memère had gathered in the fields. Pepère had taken out his jug of wine from the back of the door of the little sitting room, and the uncles were drinking homemade malt beer. With this large group of ten grownups and 20 or so cousins, there wasn't enough room for everyone to sit down at the same time at the kitchen table. So, the children were fed at the first sitting and were let loose to play hide-and-seek in the barn behind the piles of hay and agricultural tools. The grownups would then eat in peace at the second sitting. Pepère and Memère often had the family over, and uncles and aunts would reciprocate. Their way of life was fairly typical of that of other farmers on the mountain and in the St. John Valley in the middle of the 20th century.

At the beginning of the century and into the 1950's, Ste.-Agathe's *concessions* were a beehive of human activity. The first concessionaires (*concession* means the granting of a piece of land), had arrived in the St. John Valley from Acadie around 1785, followed by arrivals from Québec who intermarried. They cleared land for farming and, subsequently, their plots of land passed on to their descendants. My maternal grandparents, Fortunat Guerrette and Emma Bourgoïn, farmed such a plot of land on the *sixième rang*, now called *quatrième rang* or Marquis Road, which Fortunat had received from his father, François Guerrette.

Emma Bourgoïn was "15 and a-half" when she married Fortunat Guerrette, on April 4, 1910, in St. Agatha, where they were born, he on November 21, 1888, and she on October 13, 1894. They had a relational link. Fortunat's grandfather, Jean Baptiste Guerrette, was also Emma's great-grandfather. In other words, Fortunat married his half-cousin's daughter. Fortunat and Emma had seven children. Almost half of their offspring, Sadie, Joseph and Candide, died before they were two years old. Four daughters survived. Alma saw her first day in Stockholm where Pepère had worked at a wood mill during a few winters. Eva, Cécile and Rena were born in St. Agatha. In addition, Pepère and Memère raised Randolphe Guerrette from Cabano, P.Q., who was related to Pepère.



Alma married a farmer, Emile Hébert, on November 20, 1933, and went to live two doors down from the church in St. David. Eva wed Gérard Chamberland on October 27, 1937, and went to live two doors down from the church in St. Agatha. After Cécile married Maurice Fongemie, they lived with Memère and Pepère before they bought their own house and while Maurice was in the military. Their first two children, Viola and Ellis, were born at the farm. Rena's marriage to Lawrence Gagnon took place May 15, 1944, and they also ended up in Fort Kent.

As a youngster, I spent a few summer days at my grandparents' farm with my cousins, Viola and Barbara Gagnon. I adored my gentle and always busy grandmother. Pepère, who was rather quiet and reserved, spoke in a soft voice. I will never forget the only incident when he lost patience with Viola and me. During potato harvest, he was digging the rows with the digger pulled by his work horse, Harry. We could hear him yelling "*à hue, à dia,*" while we should have been picking the potatoes he had dug out of the ground. But, on that day, we were having too much fun throwing *des gorlots* [tiny potatoes] at each

other. Undoubtedly, we had gone to the *pommier* on the hill above the potato field to treat ourselves to the juicy red apples there. Since the picking was not going very fast and he was way ahead of us, he told us to get busy. But, we were enjoying ourselves and continued to play. He got angry and scolded us. It was the first and only time that I remember him scolding. I was mortified. We went right to work and the potatoes were picked in no time. Barbara tells about the time when she jumped from the hayloft into a pile of hay, which Pepère had admonished us not to do. Her foot went through a pitchfork in the hay requiring Memère to put *une couenne de lard* [pork rind] on her foot to extract the poison. Pepère would sit in a chair leaning against the stairs with his feet propped up against the stove. Memère would tell us to stop running in the house. He, in turn, would tell her: “leave them alone, Emma, *elles ont du fun.*”

Romeo Hébert and Barbara have the same childhood memory of coming to our grandparents to stay overnight, of course, at different times. Once night fell, they were homesick. Romeo took off on foot to try to get to Route 1. From there he thought he could hitchhike to get home! He walked to the house of Roméo Chassé who brought him back to Pepère’s. Memère and Pepère learned a lesson. A few years later, when Barbara also wanted to leave, they drove her home to her parents.

With the two horses harnessed together during haying, my brother Ronald, when he was about ten, helped Pepère tamp down the hay in the wagon which had racks on each side. Harry would pull the fork which raked the hay into a *balluche* [a bundle]. A very special chore would take us to the barn to gather eggs from the hens’ nests. Memère cooked the eggs with tea and toast or reheated leftover ployes for breakfast. It was my first tea experience. I still drink it today. She would then feed the chickens. We helped her feed the ducks which she had raised in a little pen in back of the house and ate duck for the first time at one of our family gatherings. In the evening, Memère would send out her beloved dog, Buster, to round up the cows grazing in the field on the other side of the road. They would promptly come for Memère to milk them. She would run the milk through the separator to extract the cream and then wash the separator. With the cream, she made butter in the churn and molded it into one-pound blocks to be wrapped in greaseproof paper. When I was about five, I had health problems and the doctor had recommended that I drink more milk. So, Memère would give me a glass of lukewarm milk which had just come out of the cows. It was awful! I would gag every time.

To get to church and to buy provisions they could not make on the farm, the Guerrette family needed a mode of transport to cover the five or so miles “*au bord*” from Flat Mountain. In winter, when the roads were closed after the first snows, Kate, the mare, was hitched to the sleigh to bring them to church. Eva, my mom, told us that even with warm bricks under her feet, she was cold and often felt ill because of the fasting required in order to receive communion. Ronald remembers Pepère’s 1930 black Ford or Chevrolet. Later, I sat in the back seat of a new wine-colored 1946 Dodge bought from Etscovitz in Fort Kent when Pepère took my dad, Gérard, for a ride. Pepère explained that it was a Fluid Drive, i.e. he didn’t have to engage the clutch when he would stop and take off again. Also, it was his first car with automatic signals to show that one wanted to turn right or left. One year, when times were hard and the

girls still lived at home, they gave their crocheting money to Pepère to buy the license plate for the car. To earn additional income, they crocheted baby sets (sweater, hat and booties) to be sold to a company.

My sister, Arlene, relates that in winter Memère would open the oven so that cold hands and feet could be warmed after coming in from outside. The wood box in back of the stove was easily accessible. I remember *la slâbe* or *le pot* (the *t* is pronounced) [the chamber pot] under the bed for use during the night which Memère would empty in the morning. It was handy especially when one had the “*va vite*.” There were four rooms upstairs and a closet which could be accessed from both sides. Memère and Pepère slept at the top of the stairs. My cousins and I slept in the next room on a straw mattress which Memère would refresh when we came to visit. My sister Louise remembers Memère telling us: “Girls, don’t get married too young ,” – she had not had much of a childhood. Memère always had a bottle of “*odeur*” [perfume] in her room which she bought at the five and dime. When she came to visit, she would dole out *popormènes* [Canada Mints] from her handbag to her grandchildren. My sister Jeanne remembers Memère washing Jeanne’s hands [*laver ses minouches*]; and when she was older, going to fetch her in Fort Kent to bring her to our house for Sunday dinner. Memère told Leola Fongemie to establish herself before getting married [*“fais grosse madame avant de te marier”*]. “It’s wonderful to work” was another one of her sayings. Roberta Hébert evoked one of the pleasures of a visit: *des croqueursse* as Memère called crackers which she would take out of the big armoire, butter and give us for a snack. Much later, when she was widowed, Memère would take the bus to visit the Héberts in St. David and would sleep in Roberta’s room. Roberta was happy to have her all to herself.



Normand and Robert Hébert liked the novelty of pumping water from the pump in front of the house. The shed, which held the separator and other tools, was attached to the house on the right coming out of the kitchen. *La chiotte* [the outhouse] which stood on the left before getting to the barn near the road, was well-stocked with magazines and catalogs. A pile of manure served to fertilize the soil. *L’auge* [the trough] stood near the pigpen and the garage to the right below the fields. The shingles on the buildings had aged to a dull grey. According to Ronald, Pepère planted about eight to ten acres of potatoes and oats. Memère made *boudins* and *cretons* and the ladies from the neighborhood would come over to help her “*faire la boucherie*.” She would, of course, reciprocate, and they would give each other “*le morceau du voisin*” affording them the possibility of having fresh meat each time a neighbor slaughtered an animal before the days of refrigeration.

Every summer, the extended family went on a pilgrimage to Ste.-Anne de Beaupré. Memère would bring a roast chicken to be heated on a Sterno warmer for the first meal on the road. There was always at least one car-sick child. My brothers James and Ronald remember sleeping in Cacouna, Beauport or Montmagny where we would play on the shore of the St. Lawrence in the evening. Having arrived in St. Anne, we would take part in the *procession aux flambeaux*. In May of 1952, the family had gone on just such a pilgrimage; and next February...Alma, Eva and Cécile gave birth to Philip Hébert, Jeanne Chamberland and Linda Fongemie, respectively!

One evening, Mom and Dad had gone to see a film in Madawaska and Ronald was babysitting. Since I was young, after they left I was afraid and started to cry. A few moments later, Memère and Pepère arrived to visit without knowing that our parents had gone out since they did not have a telephone. I was no longer afraid. So, they spent the evening with us and left a short while before mom and dad arrived.

Having been hit by lightning, Memère was deathly afraid of electrical storms. She would bless herself with holy water and put a dish of it on the porch. Doula and Léola Fongémie remember that when thunder and lighting started, Memère would take them by the hand and they would run to the neighbor, Henri Theriault, at the bottom of the hill.

I vaguely remember the celebration of their 40th wedding anniversary. After dinner, the grownups were sitting on the kitchen chairs which had been brought outdoors. Memère received a watch. I don't remember Pepère's gift. Much later, at my wedding, Memère, who did not speak a word of English, managed to get along very well with my mother-in-law who did not speak French. They were sitting and talking together as if they understood each other well. When Beulah Gagnon was in high school and making her own clothes, Memère asked her to make her a dress. Since Memère had a goiter problem, she wanted one that would cover her throat. Beulah made her a blue and greyish white dress with a Nehru collar and rhinestone buttons which she loved.

Pepère developed itching on his face and the doctor gave him some salve to treat it. The cancer spread anyway and he had pains in his stomach. After an operation, he felt well enough to return to the farm for a while. But, he died on November 25, 1953, in Fort Kent at the Fongemies. After embalming, as was the custom, he was laid out in the living room in our house on Main Street in St. Agatha where the family and neighbors came to pay their respects.

Memère continued to live at the farm for a while. Then, she moved to a store-front apartment on Main Street in Fort Kent. She would come back to St. Agatha during the summer until she sold the farm. Gene Gagnon remembers that she had a garden in back of the apartment, and that she made wonderful *ployes*. Once, when he lost his keys, Memère told him to pray to St. Anthony. The keys were soon found. Léola recounts that when Memère would come to their house, she and Cécile loved to sing "*Que Sera Sera*" with Doris Day on the radio. Memère would also tell her grandchildren's fortunes with cards. Twenty years after Pepère's death, on July 11, 1973, she passed away in a convalescent home in Caribou. She was buried in the dress Beulah had made for her.

Alma and Emile Hébert, Eva and Gérard Chamberland, Cécile and Maurice Fongemie and Rena and Lawrence Gagnon are all deceased. Four cousins have also passed away: Berthier Hébert, Ellis Chamberland, Linda Fongemie and Robert Gagnon.

The house, the farm buildings and the apple tree no longer stand. Most of the farms on Flat Mountain emptied out when potatoes ceased to be profitable in the 1950s. Small farmers could no longer make a living and either went to work at Fraser's or in the factories in Connecticut.

But, Emma and Fortunat Guerrette's descendants, as they had in bygone days, came together for the Guerrette reunion

under a tent on July 23, 2005. Having arrived from as far away as Alaska, the extended family of three generations (after our mothers) and of more than 125 people climbed the hill of the Hébert farm in St. David looking out on the magnificent panoramic view of the St. John River Valley. Once again, *la chiotte* [in this case a port-a-john] was revived. Réginald Hébert furnished us with a genealogie of descendants. Philip and Joan Hébert appeared dressed like Pepère and Memère. Each family brought a dish to share with everyone and the meal was followed by a bonfire. What a noisy and joyous feast it was!



St. Agatha Son Receives Medals After 38 Years



James Nicholson, Pauline & Gerard Plourde, and Rep. Nancy Johnson.

It took 38 years, but Gerard Plourde, son of Jos & Aurore Guimond Plourde, has finally been awarded the Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Vietnam Service Medal with one bronze service star, Republic of Vietnam Campaign Ribbon and Marksmanship Badge. During an awards ceremony held October 14, 2005, at the Oakville Veterans of Foreign Wars Hall in Oakville, CT, the presentation of the medals, displayed in a glass box, was made by James Nicholson, secretary of Veterans Affairs, and U. S. Rep. Nancy Johnson.

Plourde served in the U. S. Army from 1965 until 1967. During his year in Vietnam, he worked as a supply specialist at the 93rd Evacuation Hospital in Long Binh. His primary mission was to transport supplies 24 miles to and from an Air Force base near Saigon along a dangerous road known as "Highway One."

Gerard and his wife, Pauline Chamberland, visit their home town of St. Agatha every summer. Now retired from Local 43, they reside in Plainville, Ct. "I'm just a regular Joe, that's all," he said. "We got called to serve and went, that's it. We did our jobs and came back." Gerard's great uncle, Eddie Plourde, did not come back. He died on October 15, 1918, while serving in World War 1 in France only 28 days before the armistice was declared.

Mémoires des années passées

C'est le **Jour de L'An** après la *grand'messe*.

Avant le repas du midi, **M'man** nous appelait, un après l'autre, comme la poule-mère *cocotte* à ses petits poulets. Tous réunis dans la cuisine, mais avant de nous mettre à table, c'était le temps de la bénédiction du Nouvel An que le père de famille faisait à ses enfants-présents et absents! Tous à genoux devant lui, **Pâ** nous donnait sa bénédiction: *bonheur, santé, vivre la nouvelle année d'une façon encore plus joyeuse que celle qui venait juste d'agonir et le Paradis à la fin de vos jours*. Pas ses paroles à lui, mot pour mot, mais c'en était plus ou moins leurs intentions. Ces souhaits paternels étaient accompagnés de sa bénédiction - tout à fait comme celle que donnait le Père Brunelle à la fin de chaque messe, en forme du signe de la croix.

Quelques simples moments de bonheur en famille. Il y en avait beaucoup, beaucoup, beaucoup d'autres!

[Je me demande souvent si on a continué cette magnifique tradition!? Moi, je ne me suis jamais marié; je n'ai pas eu de femme ou d'enfants - que je sache au moins, bien que, comme on dit par chez nous, *ç'a passé proche dés fouais*. J'aurais bien aimé la passer moi-même à mes propres petites *cocottes*. Les coqs ont chacun leur tour à chanter, non?!]

Chez nous, la foi chrétienne n'était pas quelque chose de lu à l'église ou à l'école. C'était quelque chose de vécu de jour en jour - à la maison comme partout ailleurs! Il n'y avait rien d'étrange à le faire; on ne faisait que suivre l'exemple de nos parents. Comme leurs ancêtres Acadiens, suivis de Canadiens, qui sont venus s'établir dans *la vallée de la rivière St. Jean*, la foi chrétienne se lisait certainement mais surtout elle se vivait.

Comme eux, *gagne* d'enfants que nous étions, nous connaissions mieux les fêtes au calendrier liturgique que celles du calendrier laïc. Les préparations pour chacune d'elles devenaient d'autres moments prolongés d'heureuse anticipation - jouis en chœur, la joie au cœur.

Le chef d'orchestre, qui choréographiait toute cette année à venir, se mettait en marche peu après l'**Épiphanie**. Certaines préparations, même pour *la Noël*, débutaient tôt dans l'année. Une autre tradition perdue: "*la cake au lard*" - mystérieusement couverte une bonne partie de l'année! Et presque un péché à manger!

Avant le temps de pénitence et de sacrifice du **Carême**, on s'amusait bien le jour de **Mardi Gras**: pour nous, notre *Halloween*. Le plus souvent, des grandes personnes s'en mêlaient. On pouvait s'attendre à n'importe quoi. Il y avait des gens costumés de tout âge, des plus petits aux bien âgés. C'était en plein hiver, donc pas de costumes risqués! à moins de vouloir *g'ler bin raide*, dans quelques secondes!

C'était surtout les tours joués sur ses parents ou sur ses amis et les cris de surprise ou de joie qui rendaient ce jour *de la débauche* encore plus ravissant! À ne pas oublier aussi le festin - *maigre ou gras*, et quelques bonbons à consommer **PRONTO!** Le lendemain, **Mercredi des Cendres**,

tout disparaissait - à ne ressusciter qu'à **Pâques**! Un dimanche ici et là pendant le **Carême**, on nous faisait de petites surprises pour nous encourager à suivre et à garder nos résolutions jusqu'à la fin.

Mais avant d'arriver à **Pâques**, il y avait le **Dimanche des Rameaux** et la **Semaine Sainte** - tant de choses à faire, à voir, à apprendre, et à apprécier. Les *cérémonies liturgiques* de cette semaine longue dépassaient tout ce que le reste de l'année chrétienne promettait encore, même cet heureux temps de Noël.

Pour les *Petits Lièvres à Thaddie Alec*, **Pâques** bien sûr était temps de fête, pas surtout pour les oeufs ou petits lapins au chocolat (on les a connus plus tard). Il y avait l'*Eau de Pâques* que **Pâ** allait chercher tôt le matin je ne sais pas où! Je ne suis pas certain non plus s'il y était dévoué de nature, ou si **M'man** s'assurait qu'il ne l'oublierait pas. **M'man**, c'était la *Grande Couturière du Town*. Il y avait tous ces nouveaux vêtements à parader comme des petits mannequins - des Petits Mannequins Lapins, n'oublions pas! C'était **Pâques**, après tout!

L'**Ascension** et la **Descente du Saint-Esprit** ne se faisaient pas attendre longtemps après **Pâques**. Et après quelques fêtes spéciales de plus, c'était l'**Assumption** ... juste avant la rentrée des classes.

La rentrée était en août à cause du *temps des patates*, temps de vacances en septembre pour la récolte des pommes de terres - travail qui se faisait, à ce temps-là, à la sueur de son front comme à la torsion et à la torture de ses reins. **M'man** y est déjà allée *aux patates*, mais c'était avant moi. De mon temps, elle restait à la maison avec les trop petits. Elle devait y faire le travail de maison à elle seule, puisque ceux qui en faisaient d'habitude maintenant se peinaient à remplir leurs paniers de *patates* - penchés, à genoux, ou à *quat'e pattes*. Le travail ne manquait certainement pas et il devait être aussi fatigant à une place qu'à l'autre. ... Les jeunes se plaignent toujours du travail! **M'man** le faisait *par amour ou par coeur* et l'endurait "toute", en silence ou turlutant!

Les classes? Il fallait les prendre au sérieux! **M'man** ne nous le laissait jamais oublier que sa chère mère, Alice, avait été maîtresse d'école et que son père s'était marié trois fois - deux maîtresses sur trois! Bien qu'elle-même ne s'était rendue qu'au sixième grade, l'instruction était quelque chose de précieux et à prendre au sérieux. Elle s'assurait que les devoirs se faisaient tout de suite après les classes et avant d'aller jouer. Le plus souvent, tout était fini avant le souper, qui arrivait assez tôt. **Pâ** finissait son travail à quatre heures. Le manger était toujours sur la table quand il arrivait à la maison vers les quatre heures cinq - au moins quatre jours sur cinq!

Le fameux "Qui dort dîne" était en vogue chez *Les Lièvres*. Ça m'est arrivé, mais pas trop souvent! On apprend vite *le ventre vide*! Ça dort mieux la **bédienne pleine**!

Après *le temps des patates* (ou *durant*, certaines années), il fallait aussi se préparer pour l'hiver. En été, *les Petits Lièvres* s'amusaient mais faisaient aussi d'importantes contributions au temps de l'hivernage. Le temps des fraises-framboises-bleuets-cerises, etc. se distinguait par les rangées de confitures à la cave, en plus des conserves de pissenlits, de fugères, ou de jardinage qui germait à tout bout d'champ. Des noisettes ou du beurre à battre! De l'*Ice Cream* à faire - "*from scratch*"! Certains travaillaient à ramasser des "naveaux" ou de la roche pour se procurer des sous, destinés à des besoins quelconques. Tout allait dans la même bourse!

L'automne, c'était aussi le temps de faire boucherie - encore des journées remplies d'activités, de cuisson et de joie. Cette fois, tout le village en jouissait! Le cri mordant du cochon gémissant alertait tout le village; les navrantes bouffées aromatiques provenant de la maison en attiraient d'autres; et la foule de jeunes spectateurs, dont certains se pensaient apprentis-bouchers et s'essayaient en jouant un petit rôle-caméo, ici et là.

La maîtresse de maison avait tout bien prévu, garantissant que rien de bon ne se perdrait. Quels plaisirs à tout savourer - autant par les yeux et par le nez que par la bouche.

La *Fête d'Action de Grâces* nous accordait un régal bien mérité avant de se darder dans le temps de *l'Avent*. *L'Avent* annonçait la dernière grande fête de l'année, la **Noël**. D'autres préparations à quoi s'occuper, celles qui ne se faisaient qu'à la dernière minute; tout ce sucrage (*oui*, que M'man aimait tant), les tourtières et tous ces mets spéciaux pour le réveillon après *la messe de minuit*, ou pour les quelques jours ou semaines à venir.

Oh, et toutes ces décorations à inventer et *l'arbre de Noël* à monter et décorer - à l'église comme à la maison. Aller dans les bois choisir ces arbres et le verdurage, encore du temps incroyable passé à parcourir *le paradis terrestre*.

Les surprises que le matin de **Noël** nous réservait terminaient admirablement une autre belle année qui avait commencé sur un ton comparable, à un rythme plus *andante* et à des harmonies quelque peu différentes - parfois même de la cacophonie mélodies mal-accordées! Pas trop souvent!

M'man avait une fois de plus dirigé le tout comme un grand *oratorio*, composé tout spécialement pour cette année, bénie du commencement. Elle nous préparait sans doute un autre chef-d'oeuvre, débutant le lendemain de la *Veille du Jour de l'An* s'annonçant précipitamment!

Quelles belles années, passées en famille!

MERCI BIEN GROS
Pâ pis M'man

Urbain Lausier
Son of Taddee & Mabel Laura Michaud Lausier

Mother of the Year - 2006 - Alma Couturier Chasse



Front: Ronald & Joan Chasse, Gerard & Judy Chasse, Alma Chasse,
Anita & Thomas Bava.

Back: Reno & Ruth Chasse, Gaetan & Therese Rossignol,
Louise & Michael Bither, Eileen & Roger Chasse.

Alma's family and friends gathered to honor her as Mother of the Year last May 13th. The annual event is sponsored by the St. Agatha Parish Ladies of St. Anne. Many of her children and grandchildren participated in the ceremony. Louise's words reflect the close bond in her family. *"We all cried, prayed and laughed together a lot. We have gone through great joy and sorrow, all people do. We have experienced much loss and gain, great sadness and joy. With both Mom and God by our sides, it has been a wonderful journey. "*

Les Annonces du Dimanche

Roman Catholics of a certain age may remember the Latin Mass. Remember the days when the entire family would crowd into the family sedan with mom and dad and drive to church to attend either the low Mass at 8am or the high Mass at 10am? After the family filed into church and claimed their Sunday pew, brothers and sisters knelt amid the Holy hush of church and felt the presence of the sacred in your bones. There was also an intense secure feeling in seeing your neighbors and school chums in the pews in front of you. Perhaps three pews ahead of you was your best friend with his parents and brothers and sisters, except perhaps the oldest sister who was at home baby sitting the youngest.

And then the priest entered the sanctuary by the side door next to the altar and began Mass, "In nomine patris, et Filii, et Spiritus Santi." The altar server, an eighth grader at your school, answered as loudly as he could, "amen!" The Mass of course was all in Latin and you understood very little of what was prayed. However, what mattered was the gathering of community and knowing that prayers were prayed for you, your family and friends and with your attendance you fulfilled your Sunday obligation..



*Interior of St. Agatha's First church
Destroyed by fire August 13, 1940.*

The Mass, of course, is prayed very differently today. The difference is a result of the Second Vatican Council. In 1962, Pope John XXIII



St. Agatha Catholic Church - Present Day

summoned the bishops of the world to Rome to attend the first such ecumenical gathering of bishops in over a century. This Ecumenical Council, commonly known as Vatican II, changed the way the faithful were to express their faith. The Council was the Church's response to the rapidly changing world of the '60's. Although there had been an ecumenical council held century earlier, never had the Church experienced such radical changes in the way it worshiped since the great

Council of Trent held from 1563-1570.

Bishop Daniel J. Feeney represented the people of our diocese at Vatican II. The St. Agathe Historical Society has in its collection a short letter that Bishop Feeney had printed in the Diocesan Newspaper, *Church World*, as he prepared for the last session of the Council in September, 1965. He wrote, "In obedience to the paternal invitation of His Holiness, Pope Paul VI, I shall enplane at Boston for Rome Sunday the 12th to share in the deliberations of Vatican Council II. Many subjects will be discussed and because of their importance I suspect that the Council Fathers will not be hurried in their decisions." The "many subjects" deliberated by the bishops became very evident to the faithful in the years following the Council.

What were some of the explicit changes? First of all, prior to Vatican II, you "attended" Mass on Sunday; following the Council you "participated" in the Mass. Prior to Vatican II, your attendance at Mass "counted" as long as you was present from the removal of the chalice veil before consecration until after the priest had communed. The Mass was now considered to be one prayer in which you participated as a community from beginning to end. There were no



*St. Agatha Catholic Church – July 4, 1963
Wedding Mass of Robert and Patricia Gendreau Bourgoin*

more "high Masses" or "low Masses." The Mass was now celebrated without distinction of "high" or "low" Mass. *The "high Mass" and the "low Mass" resulted from the Council of Trent. What was the difference between the two? The "High Mass" had singing and the "Low Mass" traditionally did not. Technically, the "High Mass" also required a deacon and sub-deacon, but in the small parishes like St. Agathe or St. Luce deacons were rare and sub-deacons were virtually non-existent. Therefore, the choir would usually sing at the latter Sunday Mass and that was the one designated as the "high Mass."*

The "New" Vatican II Mass was said in the language of the people. No longer was the Mass said entirely in Latin; "Dominus vobiscum" was now, "the Lord be with you." Moreover, the priest faced the people when presiding. There were no more prayers at the foot of the altar, no more Latin

altar cards for the priest to read from and no longer did the priest conclude the Mass by reading the “last Gospel” from the card on the far side of the altar.

The priest was now the leader and participant in the liturgy inviting everyone to sing, respond, and even to shake hands at the sign of peace. Oh, what a difference! The changes were too sudden for many people. Not in a million years would some people turn around and shake the hand with someone they had sat next to for years. Many did not care for the “new Look” in church either, i.e., the new smaller altar, the removal of altar rails, the removal of some statues of beloved saints especially in the sanctuary. Oh, things were indeed changing!



*1981 Harvest Mass - Celebrating the Harvest Mass with Bishop Edward O'Leary
Insert, 1981 St. Agatha Choir*

Parishes were also asked to change their method of communicating mass intentions, bans of marriages, parish and community happenings and whatever was usually announced at Mass. This was also the eve of the age of technology and voila! the weekly parish bulletin was born. Prior to Vatican II, the priests read the parish announcements during Mass. After the Gloria, he turned to the people, and after a loud “Dominus vobiscum” read the opening prayer, the Epistle and the Gospel. Then following the proclamation of the Gospel and before his sermon, the priest would read the announcements of the week from a small book in which he kept his weekly notes.

The Historical Society is very proud to have preserved the books containing the parish announcements from 1912 to the 1960's. The books read like the diary of a community. The announcements were the means by which the pastor and even civil officials communicated

community happenings to the people. They were for most people their community bulletin board, their evening newscast, and their weekly newspaper. From the pages of these books the reader encounters the joys and challenges of a people at work building a community with faith, courage and determination.

The announcements occasionally brought community news of great sadness, other times it invited it to celebrate someone's anniversary. They announced births, deaths, as well as world events of an ocean away. They announced the Mass schedule, someone's missing purse as well sometimes peaking the community's conscience on a moral question.



St. Agatha church on a summer Sunday in the 1930's.

Evident on the pages of the announcement books is the intense integration of the community's religious and secular life. *Les annonces du dimanche* presents an account of a community responding to the inevitable human and natural challenges over the past century with faith which sustained its hope.

The following pages of *les annonces* presents a snapshot of what is between the pages of these small black books. Notice the relationship between the daily life of the parishioners of Ste. Agathe and their faith.

Rev. David Raymond

- v^e Dim. ap. Pâques - 5 Mai 1918. -
 i Vêpres à 2 hrs. p. m. Assemblée des enf de M. à 1/2
 ii Demain à 7 hrs. Gr. Messe in hon. B. M. X. par
 Henri à Pierre Plourde.
 iii Mardi à 7 hrs. Gr. Messe pro Septa Marie
 Tardif, par les enf. de Marie.
 iv Mercredi à 7 hrs. Gr. Messe pro Septa Dame
 B. S. Dufour, par Soc. Ste Anne.
 v Vendredi à 7 hrs. Gr. Messe pro Septa Jos.
 N. Michaud, par son fils Eloi.
 vi Samedi à 7 hrs. Gr. Messe pro Septa Hilaine
 Plourde, par son père Romain.
 vii Jeudi, l'Ascension; fête d'obligation. Of-
 fices aux heures ordinaires. Confessions
 mercredi p. m. de 3 à 5. -
 viii Banca à vendre aujourd'hui, après la
 messe.
 ix Exposition de graines de semence, à 5 hrs
 p. m. aujourd'hui, au Hall.
 x Tapis de voiture perdus, il y a 3 sem. -

Dimanche p. m. - 5 Mai 1918. -

Les francoisiers sont les noms suivants ont
 pris part à l'exposition des grains de semence triés:

Félix Albert: blé & orge - 1^{er} Prix orge en-ague
 Bénon Martin: blé, ~~orge~~ etavoine } 1^{er} Prix: blé
 } 2^e Prix: avoine

Paul Dufour: Avoine & pois - 1^{er} Prix avoine

Joseph Le Duelle: Blé & pois

Ilhalo Lucette: Blé, orge & avoine } 1^{er} Prix blé
 } 2^e Prix orge }
 } 3^e Prix avoine

Henri Duelle: Blé 1^{er} Prix blé

Hilaire Lagnon: Blé 2^e Prix ex-ague blé

Néri Picard: Blé

Alec Plourde: Blé

Joseph J. Martin: pois - 2^e Prix pois

Charles & Albert: Blé

Pia L. Chasse: Pois.

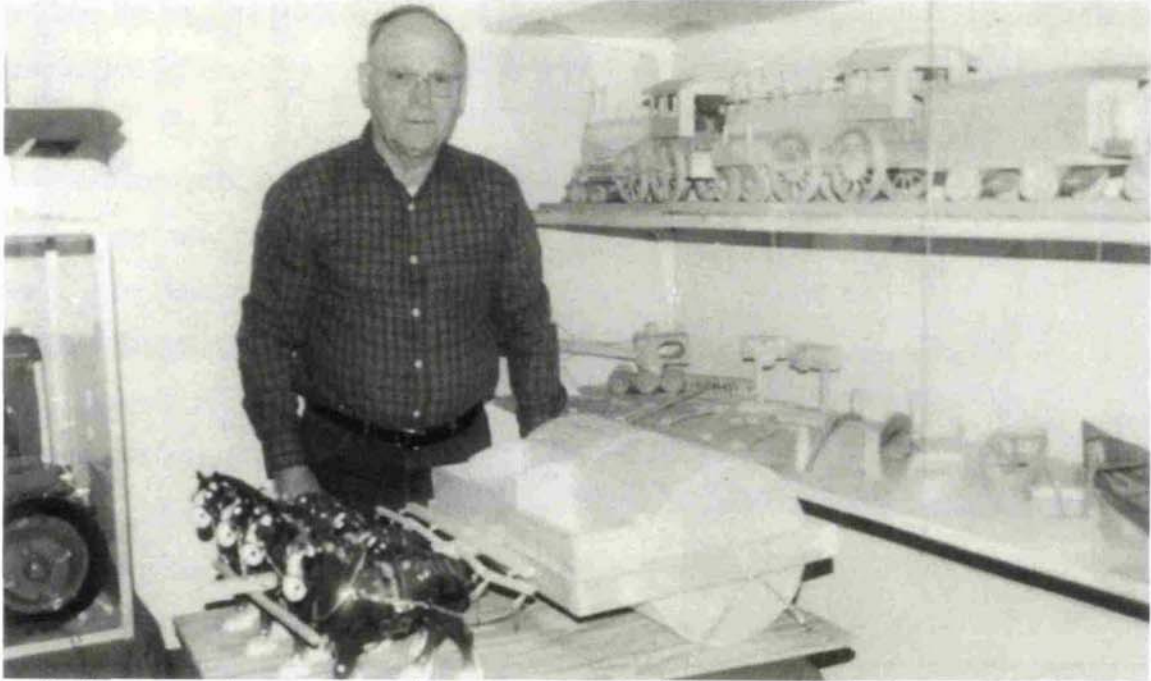
Joseph Lapace: Pois.

Magloire Colin: Buckwheat - 1^{er} Prix

Prix donnés: Rav. R. Bourbeau } 2^e } M. J. S. Dugal } 1^{er} }
 } 3^e } } 2^e }
 } 4^e } } 3^e }
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Juges: Rev. Th. Bergeron - M. Eloi R. Michaud et
 M. Michel Lagnon de Ste Luce. - Ce concours
 avait été organisé par le curé de Ste Agathe pour encourager
 les Choix de grains de semence.

*Some of the activities at the Preservation Center
during the summer of 2006*



The display room featured wooden structures built by Gerald Dubois. One of the items was the old fashion snow plow - the horse drawn snow rollers were used to tap down the snow to make northern Maine's roads passable during the winter months.



Le Métier still generated interest among the potential rug or blanket makers that visited during Lise Sirois' demonstration on how the loom works. Pictured here is Jackie Plourde Daigle working with *le métier*.



Les filles à Belone Chamberland Jr. & Marie Marquis Chamberland
Visiting at the Ste-Agathe Historical Site - Summer 2006
Mathilda Chamberland Ouellette, Rita Chamberland St. Amant,
Rena Chamberland Lizotte and Therese Chamberland Chasse.



Gabbi Bourgoin, granddaughter of Bob & Pat Bourgoin, standing in front of the *métier* which is roped off with room dividers donated by Madawaska Key Bank.



The Carons were the honored family at the Annual Acadian Festival held in Madawaska. In photo is Terry Ouellette accepting a set of the Caron Family Genealogy books from Ronald & Sylvia Caron Belanger.



Board Member Kate Hebert gave a demonstration on how to use the art of braiding to cover metal coat hangers. On hand for this creative afternoon was (front): Jake Lizotte, Marie Mae Chamberland, and Geraldine 'Nune" Michaud. Back: Therese Popolizio, Kate Hebert, Charlene Coulombe, Jackie Baller, and Kate Raymond.



Pottery Class with Susnn Gerard

Kneeling - Susan Gerard guiding Fran Chasse at the wheel. Back: Claudia Morin, Julie Cyr, Donna Boucher, Vic Bosse and Karen Chasse.



Students from Wisdom Middle/High School)

Front: Sarah Paradis, Heather Hebert, and Tiffany Goyette. Back: Vanessa Barriere, Gerald Dubois holding his miniature "sugar camp; 7th grade teacher, Mrs. Helen Ayotte, Benjamin Latham, Haley Bernier, and Elizabeth Guerrette.

DONATED ITEMS

Therese Ayotte Gerald & Rose Marie Parent Dubois	3 kerosene lamps with lamp oil 1 coffee pot, 1 dishpan, 1 bellow, 2 electric fence regulator and a collection of newspaper clippings dining room table and 6 chairs
Carole Plourde Jeannette Guerrette Albert Florine Morin Michaud	1 Michaud Family book 1 set of dishes, 1 Victrola phonograph and records, 1 adding machine, 1 chair, various household items and religious articles, 1 photograph and 1 wall wood carving
Therese Chasse Albert	1 book, 1 photograph, an extension card, 1 valise, 1 Army cap, 1 First Communion veil and 1 Baptismal outfit
Gerard Morin	Collection of books, 2 picture frames, 1 1940 map of Europe, box of crayons and 2 photographs
Sisters Jackie & Joan Ayotte Florence Rose Martin	1 Ayotte Family photo album and 1 meat grinder collection of French songs
Mark & Nicole Gendreau Chamberland Abel Caron	1 photograph 1 book and 1 deck of playing cards
Edwin & Laura Mae Daigle Corriveau Caron Family Reunion Committee Sylvia Ouellette Mellon	1 Mass book stand 1 set of Caron Family descendant books 1 chalice
Sisters of the Presentation of Mary John & Diane Hebert Michaud	1 rosary and 1 book collection of potato barrels and baskets, 1 dividoir, 1 lumber hook, 1 oar, 1 hay fork and 2 benches
Reginald & Francoise Martin Plourde Donald & Edwina Levesque Parent	1 sword 1 extensive collection of artifacts from the Vietnam War, collection of newspaper clippings, 72 photographs, 1 jig saw and 1 spotlight
Clifford & Frances Reilly Chasse Ronnie & Eunice Dubois Seavey	1 framed photograph 4 books
Lisa Picard Pelletier Sinclair Senior Center	1 hutch 1 31 day clock
Marty & Carla Blanchette Begin Ronald & Joan Levasseur Ouellette Sister Gabrielle Michaud	1 pair of children's shoes, c. 1900 1 hand knitted shawl and a collection of photo slides 1 framed photograph, 3 religious statues, 10 books, 4 prayer missals and a collection of photographs
Roger & Vic Bosse Bernadette Doucette Meunier	1 hand crank 1 knitting machine

DONATED ITEMS

Rose & Gerald Nadeau	1 religious missal
Philip Morin	1 radio and various tools
Bertille Beaulieu	wedding dress and wedding photo
Stan Albert	various household items, 2 army uniforms, U.S. Army flag
Bob & Louise Evans Roy	1 grinding wheel and stone, 4 hay forks, 1 "come-along" and other various tools
Camille Morin	11 rail track pins and 1 cow horn knife handle
Robert & Patricia Gendreau Bourgoin	2 handmade chairs, 1 movie projector with a collection of family films and a collection of 8 track cassette tapes
Alfreda Chamberland	Collection of family photos
Lucille Michaud	1 book
Ronald & Roberta Daigle Guerrette	1 wall hanging
Candide Chamberland Desrosiers	Collection of books and booklets, "Candy's Giant Scrapbook" and a collection of her original writings
Ernestine Gagnon Dube	1 radio/phonograph and a collection of records
Richard & Claudette Chasse Boucher	1 1956 class picture
Ross & Judy Ayotte Paradis	1 Franco-American Proclamation Day document
Julie Plourde Cyr	1 cap and 6 books
Patricia Morin	1 set of dishes
Lorraine Albert Jurczyk	1 framed photograph
Arthur "'Babe" Landry	1 Brunswick Beverage bottle
Aldric Daigle	1 clothes trunk
Dale & Ellen Cousins Chamberland	collection of crocheted items, 1 Compaq printer and scanner
Joan Boucher Shady	4 yearbooks
Key Bank of Madawaska	4 lobby posts with ropes
Claude & Agnes Daigle Sirois	2 Sirois Dairy milk bottles with caps
Alan & Denyse Michaud	1 computer and printer
Keith & Bern Gagnon Lord	1 butter churn, 1 horse harness maker, 1 wooden horse with harness and horseshoes, 1 Peavey, 1 Picaroon, 1 shoemaker vice and 2 photographs
Paul & Nora Bourgoin Michaud	1 photograph
St. Agatha Town Office	1 town seal stamp
Steve Cormier	1 framed picture
Richard & Pierrette Bourgoin	1 rocking chair
Rene & Loretta Hebert	Rosary beads
Bobby & Rachel Ouellette Michaud	1 razor strap

STE-AGATHE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

MEMORIAL DONATIONS

OCTOBER 2005 - SEPTEMBER 2006

In memory of Mrs. Georgette (Michaud) Misiek, Julien Misiek

In memory of Mr. Wilfred Chasse, Stan Albert, Philip Morin

In memory of Mrs. Lillian Chasse Ouellette, Terry Ouellette

*In memory of Mr. Garfield King, Stan Albert, Allan & Patricia Dow
& Terry Ouellette*

In memory of Mr. Joseph M. Cyr, Stan Albert

In memory of Mrs. Eva Marie (Cyr) Morin, Jim & Theresa Foster

In memory of Mrs. Clarice (Hebert) Bourgoin, Bob & Pat Bourgoin

In memory of Mrs. Juliette (Martin) Michaud, Cynthia Remington

In memory of Mrs. Annette (Chasse) Roy, Stan Albert, Philip Morin

*In memory of Mrs. Marcelle (Nadeau) Pelletier, Francis & Claudia Morin,
James & Patricia Morin*

In memory of Mr. Roland Michaud, Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Paquin

In memory of Erny & Lillian Chasse Ouellette, Sylvia Ouellette Mellon

In memory of Mrs. Albertine (Chasse) Martin, Stan Albert, Philip Morin

*In memory of Mr. Joseph T. & Mrs. Cecile, Therese & Roland Gervais,
Eddy & Rolande (Gervais) Bilodeau*

*In memory of Mr. Benoit Gervais, Terry Ouellette, Andrea & James Nero
& Cynthia A. Soucy*

In memory of Mr. Paul E. Lagassey, Florine Michaud, Philip Morin

Ste-Agathe Historical Society Memorial Program

P.O. Box 237

St. Agatha, Maine

KEEPSAKES

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

Evangeline - A Tale of Acadie Commemorative Edition by Francoise Paradis, Ed.D.....	\$29.95
Evangeline - Children's Book Coloring Book	\$5.00
Longfellow Reads Longfellow - CD & Book	\$18.95
Mutt Contay Saw by Allen J. Ouellette*	\$14.95
A Century and a Quarter of Progress - UMFK*	\$15.00
Les Filles de la Sagesse Ste-Agathe, Maine 1904 - 2004	\$30.00
Les Belles Histoires 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
Marriages of Ste. Agathe 1889 - 1989	\$10.00
St. John Valley Souvenir Postcard Book	\$12.00
Genealogist's Handbook for Upper St John Valley Research by G. L. Findlen.....	\$19.95
As Luck Would Have It by Henry Albert	\$15.95
Les Chanteurs Acadiens de la Vallée Saint-Jean Music CD*	\$20.00
Les Chanteurs Acadiens de la Vallée Saint-Jean Video*	\$20.00
Year 2007 Calendars	\$10.00

*New Items

To place an order by mail, circle each item that you would like to receive, specifying how many.

Please include \$4.05 for the first item and \$1.00 for each additional item to cover mailing costs, and mail to:

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

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Amount Enclosed: _____

House Activities Summer 2006

The Ste-Agathe Historical Society hosted various events during the summer. The function with the most people in attendance was the afternoon with Les Chanteurs Acadiens when they performed "new " traditional music which included " *Ste-Agathe sur le Bord du Lac,*" " *C'est 'okay' de parler français*" by Joyce Comeau Crosby and " *Ramasseur des patates*" and " *Les filles de Quimby,*" by Don Levesque. The Class of 1956 and the Class of 1961 reunions also scheduled some time for the classmates to meet at the Preservation Center. If you're planning a reunion, please contact us so we can make the Center available for a Class Tour.

We would also like to acknowledge Gerald Dubois for setting up his miniature wooden crafts in the display room. Numerous visitors were impressed when viewing the twin barn model, the Notre Dame de la Sagesse replica of the Convent, the snow rollers, The General, and many other items.

Upcoming Project

Year 2006

The Ste-Agathe Historical Society's cook book committee is still working on the upcoming publication of their collection of old time recipes. Other works in progress include: updating the cemetery record book, updating the St. Agatha Parish Marriage book and setting up a web page.

Heritage Trail Guides & Volunteers

Pictured at right: Sr. Jackie Ayotte, Florine Michaud, Bob Bourgoin, Marie Mae Chamberland, Lise Sirois, Lewis Michaud, and Sr. Joan Ayotte. Not included in photo: Donna Boucher.

Merci Beaucoup!!!!

Ste-Agathe Historical Society Board of Directors

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Vice President.....Gloria Gervais
Treasurer.....Philip Morin
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Harold Chamberland	Jackie Michaud
Judy Chamberland	Roger Morneault
Gerald Dubois	Connie Desrosier
Kate Hebert	Jean Paul Cyr

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Sheila McDonald
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Sr. Joan Ayotte, D.W.
Sr. Jackie Ayotte, D.W.
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Valier & Theresa Thibeault
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