Madawaska Historical Society

Early Valley Education

(EDITOR'S NOTE: For the next three weeks the Historical Society returns to the writings of Guy Dubay of Madawaska, who previously wrote about early farming organizations in the Valley. In this series he explores early education in the Valley. The first of the three columns follows:)

By Guy Dubay

MADAWASKA -- Having exhausted all my knowledge on early farmers' organizations by writing the last five columns of this Society, I now turn to a different field: the development of early educational institutions in the St. John Valley.

Hence from time to time there will appear in this column in the weeks ahead various reports and laws dealing with the founding and evolution of the University of Maine at Fort Kent. These of course will be interrupted from week to week to give other members of the Society a forum in which to discuss other items of historical interest.

In the Laws of Maine, the story of the University of Maine at Fort Kent begins in 1878.

Although a high school had already been established by State resolve in Frenchville in 1873, there hadn't yet been established any school for the preparation of teachers suitable for the valley's needs as such. The language factor in the valley necessitated teachers with a tinge of bilingualism.

The University of Maine at Orono, a land grant college, was still primarily an Agricultural College, not yet involved in the area of teacher preparation.

Public Laws of 1863, Chapter 210 had set up Normal Schools at Farmington and Castine, but to the valley youth of the time, this was probably too foreign and too far away.

Whereas young men had willingly ventured off to war, the young girls who would have been prospective teachers were not wont to travel beyond the areas and places supervised by parents and priests.

Men like Major William Dickey and Col. David Page saw the need for state education of teachers, if this area was ever to develop an American ethic. They had earlier secured state funds for use in the "common" schools, but as Colonel Page's report of October, 1866, shows, the teachers were often unskilled in the use of English, the language required by law for instruction in schools.

Thus in 1878, William Dickey and John Farrell were able to secure from the legislature of Maine the following act:

Chapter 85

"An Act to provide schools for the training of Teachers in Madawaska Territory.

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled, as follows:

"Sect. 1. The Trustees of the normal schools are hereby authorized to establish and maintain, for a period of not less than six months in each year, two schools in Madawaska Territory, so called, for the purpose of training persons to teach in the common schools of said territory.

"The towns in which such schools may be located, shall furnish suitable buildings therefore, free of expense, and shall also furnish fuel for said schools.

"The choice of books and teachers for said schools, the course of study to be pursued therein, and the grade of scholarship for admission thereto shall be under the control of said trustees.

"Sect. 2. To defray the expenses of said schools, the sum of one thousand dollars is hereby appropriated in the manner hereinafter provided.

The treasurer of the state shall annually deduct from the gross amount of the state school funds, of all description, annually apportioned to the towns of Grand Isle, Frenchville, Madawaska, and Fort Kent, and from the plantations of Hamlin, Connor, Cyr, Van Buren, St. Francis, St. John, Wallagrass, and Eagle Lake. one thousand dollars, which sum shall remain in the state treasury, subject to the order of the governor and council, for the payment of the expenses of said schools, the bills for which shall be approved by the state superintendent of common schools, and audited by the governor and council.

Approved February 21, 1878"

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Education In Maine's Hinterlands In 1847

By Guy Dubay

MADAWASKA - While delving through the old laws of the State of Maine and particularly those that concern the department of education, the following report by William T. Savage, printed in 1847, is of utmost interest to the people of this county as well as to all hinterlands of the different counties of the state that had just been settled.

Whether the members of this commission had travelled as far north as the Valley may never be known but they do show concern about the inequality of educational opportunities that existed then as now in some sections of the state.

Because of the length of the report, we will give it in two parts. To allow you, however, to draw your own conclusions about this first report dealing with Madawaska schools to be published by the State, we choose not to edit it in any way.

Here then, without further comment, is quoted from the book, The "First Report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine, 1847, this following report, to Wit: "Report of the Committee upon Education in New Settlements."

"The committee to whom was referred the topic of 'education in the new settlements,' have bestowed upon it their deliberate attention, and beg leave to submit their report - arriving at the following conclusions:

"That the newly settled portions of the state do not enjoy adequate advantages of common school education - that to secure these advantages they need assistance from abroad - and that the application of the necessary aid is practicable.

"Your committee are convinced that the legislature looked upon this subject in its true light when they made it the duty of the board of education 'to consider the best method of aiding and promoting education in the new settlements.' Thus assuming and declaring that in those new parts of the state, there is need of aiding and promoting education. The research of your committee fully sustains the correctness of this view.

"The parts of the state designated as 'the new settlements,' are situated chiefly, though not entirely, in the northern part of the counties of Franklin, Somerset, Piscataquis and Penobscot, and in the whole of Arooostook.

"This last named county contains a surface of more than 6,000 square miles, an area larger than that of the state of Connecticut and Rhode Island. Over this territory is scattered a population of 10,000 souls, and of these a large proportion are children and youth.

"Yet of the 4,000 square miles in this county now surveyed into townships, only in about 300 square miles can be found the free common schools which are the boast and glory of New England: while of its 10,000 citizens, less than 4,000 enjoy the blessings which such schools are designed to confer. The remaining, 6,000, that is, three-fifths of the whole population, are almost entirely unprovided for by the guardian care of the state.

"Private schools are indeed found in some of the larger unincorporated settlements. But from the nature of the case, the advantages of these cannot be enjoyed by the poor, and will not be sought by the indifferent. They are, of course, in adequate to the wants of the inhabitants.

"This general view is sustained by particular facts, showing the effects upon the community of this educational destination. In a plantation adjoining the shire-town of the county referred to above, there are 75 scholars, but there never was a public school kept in summer, but youth there have entered upon married life, who have yet been unable to read or write.

"In another plantation six miles from the above, there have been kept the past year, neither private nor public schools. Of the 92 scholars in this plantation, probably one-half are unable to read or write. On direct inquiry, 25 persons between the ages of 15 and 21 were ascertained to be unable to read or write. Just beyond the bounds of this plantation resides one family containing nine children, eight of whom can neither read or write. This state of things is found on all of the principal thoroughfares of the county!

"Your committee desire to be understood, that the facts now presented are not isolated ones. Similar facts, with a greater or less degree of shading, may be found in the new settlements of the state at large. 'In this plantation,' writes one school committee, 'are 126 scholars, 26 only of whom have attended school, a private school kept by a female, last winter.' Thus leaving 100 scholars, that is about four-fifths of the whole number, who have not entered the school-house, summer or winter.

"Another school committee states as follows: 'In this plantation are 60 scholars, and we have never had a school of any kind, public or private.'

"The constitution of Maine declares that 'a general diffusion of the advantages of education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people.' The ignorant man cannot be a freeman. He bows down his head like an ox, in subjection to others, or else, like the wild animal of the forest, he is the sport of untamed and unregulated powers and impulses within.

"Much less can he be an American freeman. He cannot understand the great practical ideas of the sovereignty of the people and the equality of conditions, peculiar to our form of government, neither can he rightly discharge the duties resting on every citizen, growing out of them. Vested equally with the most intelligent citizen with the right of making all laws, of managing all public affairs, of controlling all social action, he is incompetent to fill his responsible position. If he act for himself at all, he must carry the darkness of ignorance or the caprice of self will, when light should shine and patriotism should govern."

(To Be Continued)

Madawaska Historical Society

St. Mary's School

(EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the third and final part of a three part series by Guy Dubay of Madawaska on early education in the Valley).

By Guy Dubay

MADAWASKA - Last week, I stated in this column that two powerful forces vastly influenced the development of educational institutions in the Valley. These forces were state and religion.

The chief agency of the state which served to bring Americanism to the schools was University of Maine at Fort Kent, then known as Madawaska Training School.

The foremost tool of religion in bringing Catholicism into our schools was St. Mary's College.

This week we shall delve into the matter further by doing for St. Mary's what we did last week for Madawaska Training School. Let us look into the state documents for the act establishing said college.

Madawaska Training School, as an instrument of the state, did not need to be incorporated by the state in order to be established. A mere fiat of the legislature was its act of creation.

St. Mary's on the other hand, was conceived by a private body and only a legal act of incorporation by the legislature could give said body legal life.

Hence in January, 1889, a group of individuals, most of whom were Marist fathers, petitioned the legislature to be incorporated as the "Trustees of Van Buren College."

It must be noted, that the Marists being of French origin (Lyons-1836) that group brought with it many educational concepts akin to France. One of these ideas transmitted to the valley was the French concept of a college.

Whereas in later years, St. Mary's was empowered to issue baccalaureate degrees, the school founded in 1889 did in its early years more closely resemble a French Lycee than an American college.

This is why we here in the Valley hear many of our elders boast of having gone "Au College" when in fact their educational credits would today be equated to a high school diploma.

My equating St. Mary's College to a high school of the day, however, is not to be interpreted as a slight at said school for its alumni will compare well with with those of any college today. A study of the class rosters of those days will reveal names of many who became, doctors, lawyers, priests and bishops.

Like UMFK today, St. Mary's could in its heyday point to an enrollment of students of several states and a few foreign countries.

So in a sense St. Mary's was a College with B.A. degrees and 21-year-old graduates. But St. Mary's also had among its classes many 11 year old boys which gave the school more of an aura of a prep school than a college.

Such however is typical of the histories of private colleges though. Many religious groups who aimed to establish colleges found it necessary to prepare students for that college by milling them first through their own prep schools. St. Francis College in Maine, Assumption College in Mass., and St. Louis College in New Brunswick, may serve as a case in point. The Marists found the same need here in the Valley.

Owing to such lack of common schooling then current in the area, the Marists found it necessary to provide their students with a basic education prior to teaching them the arts and humanities.

Here then is the start of St. Mary's as the state would have it.

Chapter 407

"An act to incorporate the Trustees of Van Buren College.

"Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in Legislature assembled, as follows:

"Section 1. Alexander Loude, Thoamas Maher, Peter Kirk, Celestin Francois, Peter Charles Keegan, Francois Morcel, John Leterrier, John B. Descreux, Lawrence Fahy, their associates and successors, are hereby created a body politic and corporate, under the name of the Trustees of Van Buren College, at Van Buren, Aroostook County, Maine for the promotion of education, literature, the arts and sciences, religion, and morality.

"Section 2. Said corporation is hereby vested with all the rights, privileges and immunities incident to similar corporations: may have and use a common seal, prosecute and defend suits at law, make and establish by-laws and regulations for the management of its affairs and the proper government of said college, and of those in any way connected therewith not repugnant to the laws of the state, and hold estate, real and personal, that it may hereafter receive by gift, grant, devise, purchases or otherwise, to an amount not exceeding two hundred thousand dollars.

"Section 3. Either of the persons named in the first section of this act may call the first meeting of said trustees, by giving each of the other persons named, at least ten days written notice of the time and place of said meeting.

"Section 4. This act shall take effect when approved. Approved February 19, 1889."

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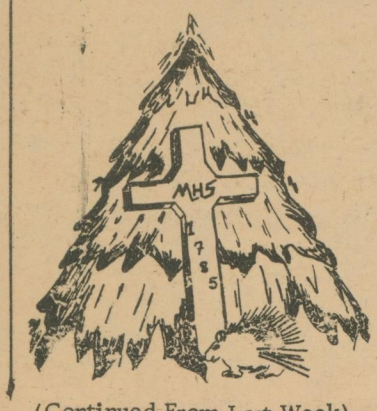

(Continued From Last Week)

By Guy Dubay

MADAWASKA -- "In view of these statements and facts, the committee would respectfully submit to the board, their opinion, that the newly settled parts of the state are not in possession of adequate advantages of common school education---and that the political and social, as well as the economical and moral interests of the state, require such advantages to be extended to the children and youth there, as soon as possible.

"Your committee would further submit, that in order to secure to the new settlements the necessary educational advantages, assistance is needed from abroad---because sufficient available help cannot be found within themselves.

"The ordinary exigencies of settlers in a new country, make heavy drafts upon their energies, drafts unfavorable to the proper mental culture of their families. They must cut down the forests, clear the soil, make the roads, turn the wilderness into fruitful fields, and draw their own support therefrom; while generally, their isolated situation cuts them off from the animating impulses which might be imparted by others.

"But in addition to these, there are other disadvantages peculiar to our new settlements.

"On its newer parts, this state borders very largely upon foreign provinces, in which free schools do not exist. And as emigration is always to a greater or less degree taking place, there is a constant influx of ignorance and educational indifference within the bounds of the state.

"Especially does this current flow in upon us from the valley of the St. John.

"At the same time the migrating population from the older parts of the state takes its course northward and eastward, and meets the inward current. Agitations and eddyings result from the conflict.

"When these have subsided and the waters become quick, it is found in the new settlement, that intelligence and ignorance are placed side by side; deep solicitude for the young and profound neglect for them, reside upon continuous farms, and lodge in neighboring dwellings.

"Under these circumstances, the board will readily see that if the new settlements are left to accomplish the work alone, the establishment of schools must be difficult, and the progress of education slow. In the meanwhile, as little or nothing is done, whole families lose the favorable season for mental culture, and grow up ignorant alike of their capabilities, their duties, and their true happiness.

"Aid is needed from abroad to give energy and direction to the educational forces on the field, and, like the reserve corps on the field of battle, to prevent a drawn conflict, and win a decisive victory.

"In bringing to the attention of the board the more difficult subject of the aid appropriated to be applied to meet the existing want, the committee would point out the necessity of securing the establishment and support of such teachers' seminaries, as shall be sufficient to furnish teachers for the common schools existing or to be established in the new parts of the state.

"The want of qualified teachers constitutes and obstacle to education well nigh universal in the new settlements. In the northern section of this state, there is not, and never has been, an institution of any kind from which this want could be supplied.

"The welfare of the children there imperatively demands the establishment of teachers' seminaries. Greatly conducive to the same end, more speedy in its operation, will be the establishment of the teachers' institute already resolved upon by the board.

"To meet the situation existing in the new settlements, it is necessary also to raise a greater amount of money for establishing and supporting common schools therein. The only funds at present available for this object in the places not incorporated for municipal purposes are the proceeds of the bank tax, amounting the past year to just 12 cents for each scholar; a sum not sufficient to procure mittens to save his fingers from the frost for a winter, much less to purchase the educational privileges which he needs for a year.

"The incorporated towns are required by law, in addition to other funds available for school purposes, to raise by tax 40 cents for each inhabitant. No judicious person will consider this sum too great for the support of schools.

"Your committee submit it as their opinion, that an equal sum should be raised for the support of schools in the settlements yet incorporated for municipal purposes. And in view of the already mentioned exigencies of the settlers--- in view also of the proprietorship of the state in the soil on which many of the settlers reside, they think that the state, like other proprietors, should assist in educating the children in its new settlements.

"And they suggest it as in their view just and proper that there should be appropriated from the public treasury to this object, a sum equal to that which the settlers themselves shall appropriate thereto, until the amount shall reach 40 cents for each inhabitant.

"With such provision made for supplying teachers, and for raising funds for their support, your committee would rely for the rest upon the moral influence of the board, and of the friends of education in the new settlements, and upon the never ceasing, all powerful working of time to carry knowledge and mental culture to the most distant and destitute settlement and log cabin of our state.

"With the expression of these views, the committee in conclusion would recommend the adoption by the board of the following resolutions.

"Resolved, As the opinion of the board of education, that two academies, or teachers' seminaries, should be established in the northern part of this state, at which teachers may be qualified and prepared to meet the wants of common schools in the new settlements. And that these institutions, like other academies, should be endowed by grant from the state.

"Resolved, That the board memoralize the legislature to appropriate for the establishment and support of common schools in the new settlements of the state, upon townships of which the state is proprietor, a sum in addition to the avails of the bank tax, equal to that which shall be appropriated by the settlers themselves, equal to that which shall be appropriated by the settlers themselves, to that purpose, till the amount shall reach the sum of 40 cents for each inhabitant.

"All which is respectfully submitted.

WM. T. Savage, per order."

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"Schoolin" In The St. John Valley

Madawaska Historical Society
By Guy Dubay

MADAWASKA - When frontier school masters give way to the genteel school marm, a people's language has an opportunity to become civilized. Along with putting away the colonial school master's birch rod, the new school marm (a product of normal school movement) brought linguistic changes to our country.

In the St. John Valley, the school marm first came to us in the form of Mother Superior, but nevertheless it was still a change from the old earlier counterparts like Jacques Hamel, who came from the Province of Quebec in the late 1830's as an "instituteur" to teach in the old Ste. Luce area of the Valley. Prior to their coming, if a valleyite wanted more than a basic or rudimentary education as that given by roving school masters like Jacques Hamel cited above, one went to the province of Quebec, most notably Ste Anne de la Pocatiere.

We noted in our genealogical studies how one Eloi Cyr and wife Adelaide Legarde were drowned in the St. Lawrence River in the 1830's on their return trip from their son Prosper's ordination in the province of Quebec. With the coming of the nuns, however, came the first systematic type of school set up, but they also brought the first direct challenge to our manner of speaking French.

Whereas the Acadians, for more than three generations after the deportation of 1755, were bereft of proper schooling, the Masculine way of speaking predominated. In Quebec, however, the convent schools remained even after the conquest and acculturalization (that is, feminization) of language continued to take place. This did not occur in the Valley — hence our language became distinct as the language of the "chantier" and farm entered the homes.

The child's earliest speech is most likely to be emulative of his mother. Even as the boy grew big enough to help on the farm, his mother was more in touch with him. Later, when Dad and all the older brothers were out in the fields, it was the mother who taught the little ones how to milk a cow. But then the boy gradually broke away from the house and barn and traveled to the woods and fields there to learn a new way of speech that befitted tobacco chewing and spittoon ways of behavior.

With women teachers in the early grades, however, mother's early language lessons got a reinforcement that they had never had earlier. The boy instead of passing directly under his father's influence at age of six or seven now tarried another four-five years in a feminine environment. Thus the advent of schools in the pioneer world aided in the change of language from Male French to Female French.

For the little girl, this posed no problem, but to the young lad, the female attack on his speech was the first of many crises that school was to bring him. The teacher tended to reinforce what was taught him by his mother, but at recess the older boys would laugh at him if he did not imitate the language that they had heard their older brothers speak. If he said "culotte" like his teacher rather than "chulotte" like his father, he would be labeled a sissy and a namby-pamby.

Schools as we knew then, so utterly devoid of men, were a threat to the young boy's sense of masculinity, and the easiest way to resolve the crisis was to drop out very early. And in spite of the poor little nuns' attempt to "teach us proper (that is, feminine) French," the Valley resisted, resisted and resisted.

While the young girls entered the convent schools in droves, the young boys dropped out. They insisted on not accepting coloricateur for radiateur, because that was not how their father spoke— and they seeking to be men, tended to emulate him.

The lack of schools in the early years of our history, allowed for the masculinization of our language. The failure to relate a man's (or boys') speech to his self concept, led to the high drop-out rate that only tends to re-inforce the male dominant speech of the farm.

And in an agricultural setting, if a teenage boy could find himself a young girl who could cook, sew and read well enough to order things from Sears and Robuck what need did he have to stay in schools which incessantly attacked his ego.

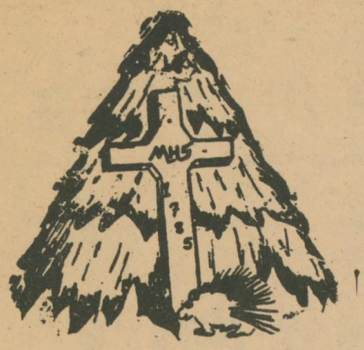
In sum, the Acadian experience of early valley history had a tendency to masculinize our speech. All the while our Quebec counterparts were establishing their convent schools, our Acadian ancestors, subject to repeated emigration were forced to lead a schoolless frontier life-- and this subject to male dominant speech.

This is the Langlois Theory of Language. This is how he helped me understand our distinct speech, a bold, frank, firm way of speaking French!

I remember how Father Langlois would antagonize his Quebec confreres by telling them, "Vous parler Francais comme des fifi, parler donc comme des hommes."

Langlois rather enjoyed our French and warned me not to demean it by apologizing for it. "Speak boldly," he said. Which brings me to my last visit to Quebec city, where I insisted on speaking French but not on their terms — and the native reactions were interesting.

Several Quebecois asked me if I was a Montrealais, which meant that they noted my French to be distinct from theirs but still too perfect to be an American. Only one, a student of Laval, asked me if I came from the states, but he posed the question this way: "Est-vous de la Louisiane?" I answered, "Presque", almost, which was quite right because here he way paying tribute to my Acadian background, which is the first indication that I have received from Quebec that there is such a thing as French spoken outside of Quebec!



Madawaska Historical Society

Valley French Derided By Early Teachers

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the ninth in a series of articles by Guy Dubay for the Madawaska Historical Society).

MADAWASKA -- We can conclude from last week's column that our early teachers of French did not know our minds. Any self respecting boy in the valley would not stoop to say "calorifateur" instead of radiateur. Such speech was antithetical to his maleness.

So for two or more generations after the arrival of French teachers from Quebec, our French was derided but to no avail. If only they had taught us to read and write French as we spoke it first then we might have made the transition to standard French. At least we would have had the verbal skills to begin the task. If only they had brought us to the water and allowed us to play in it, we might have become interested, but they forced us to drink.

In typical fashion of an over proud male, we not only refuse to drink, but we spat out that which we had been forced to take. They wanted us to say "caoutchouc" instead of our more familiar "claque" so we adopted instead the English form "rubbers."

Les petites soeurs, having failed to teach our young boys "proper" French, then turned to the Priests like at St. Mary's. But the priests from France fared no better than the nuns from Quebec, for they too did not understand our particular history and its effect on [illegible]suage.

They, with all their learning, were taught to look at the French language academically in its "langue d'oil - langue d'oc" distinctions.

Father Thomas Albert, in his "History of Madawaska", erroneously calls us descendants of Normandie and Brittany when in fact names common to the valley find their sources in Poitou and provinces further south.

L'abbe Albert was not looking at us genealogically when he so described us. He was merely adopting the attitude of the French priests exiled by the French Revolution. They generalized that those people who spoke French different from them must have had origins in the out-lying provinces.

It's the old French academie way of thinking. "Paris speaks 'Pure French' and the further you remove yourself from Paris, the more the language 'deteriorates'."

In Canada this took the form of a Quebec-Acadia conflict. Thus these priests, and the nuns they brought with them, tried to understand our distinct speech patterns in terms of Acadian speech. Yet neither was our French that of Shediac. So in desperation, they simply accused us of being spoilers of language 'des Breyons."

While our Acadianisms were there, we were too much a cross culture between Acadia and Quebec to be truly cognizant of both types of speech (See column next week.)

Verily, it was our male dominance of speech that accounted for our unique voice. The mind is titillated by the thought of what might have happened if early teachers of French had recognized this fact. But that was a hundred years before Father Langlois came here to teach us about male and female distinctions in the use of French.

Since we interchange our Quebec and Acadian dialects within single sentences, I maintain then that while there were distinctions between our Acadian and Quebec speech, these were not of a nature as to cause antipathy for one another.

Commerce and contact between Quebec and Acadia was common under the ancient regime and after. Indeed, wasn't that what Joseph Dufour was doing (communicating between Quebec and Acadia) when Charles-Nichau Noiste and Francois L'Harguenion killed him at Siegas during the American Revolution?

No, differing dialects in themselves would not give rise to the enmity that existed between boys and our schools; but introduce differing sexual mores in your language instruction and you open areas of conflict. If they hadn't tried to subjugate our young boys to effeminate ways of speech our young men might have felt more inclined to stay in school to learn their French.

The lesson of history, then, is that Father Langlois must have been right. That there are two French languages: Male and Female: and a boy or a girl may speak either, depending on what influences are dominant in his environment.

What might we do then with these understandings? The virgin soil of language lies before us. To those who doubt the validality of the theory, there remains the challenge to test it.

A Pre-Civil War Story

Madawaska And State School Aid

by Guy Dubay

The earliest efforts by the State of Maine to assist Madawaska with school monies took place in 1843 when this town, by virtue of the Treaty of Washington of 1842 (also called Webster-Ashburton Treaty), definitively came under state jurisdiction.

The First Education Funding act of the State (1821 Ch. 117) required every town and plantation to annually raise and expend 40 cents for each inhabitant according to the preceding census for the support of schools therein to be taught by school masters. Schools taught by a school mistress said the law, "shall not exceed thirty-five dollars". Such were different times from ours today and school funding then was an entirely different ball game.

In the beginning then, education funding was a State requirement imposed on local districts and towns. In 1828 the State came in with direct assistance. That year a State School Fund was established (1828 Ch. 403 Sec. 2)

It stipulated that monies received by the land agent for sale of land would be "put out on interest" and that "income thereof, annually distributed amongst the towns in the State. Later the law was amended such that the amount distributed would not constitute more than 69% of the fund. The original intention then was that State aide to education would come out of a permanent school fund built out of investments made possible by the sale of the State's public lands.

In 1831, the State added a [illegible] source of revenue for school monies. This was through a tax on banks. This remained as a prime source of school funds for the State until President Lincoln's Green back Policy and tax on State charted bank earnings drove those banks into the Federal Bank System and deprived the State of its former source of school funds.

In 1844 the policies of President Lincoln were yet in the future, thus Madawaska's source of State aide for schools lay with the permanent school fund and the bank tax.

In 1857 when State superintendent of schools came here, he found but three in all of the Madawaska plantation. It must be remembered that at the time the plantation included the present towns of Grand Isle, Frenchville and St. Agatha in addition to Madawaska. One school, according to Dunnell was in Mons. Francis Thibodeau's house (i.e. Grand Isle). Another was Fr. Dionne's school near St. Luce Church (Frenchville) and the third was opposite "Little Falls" (thus in Madawaska).

Both the Thibodeau and Dionne schools were privately funded and one -the Thibodeau school- was said to be taught "by a Frenchman".

Whether it was out of ignorance of the law or in defiance of it, the plantation had raised but six cents per scholar for schools, instead of the mandated 40 cents per resident. That year State aide to the plantation, coming out of the permanent school fund came to $241.00. Local schools were also entitled as per repeated State resolves to receive another $200.00 out of the bank tax, but to get this sum the locality had to match it. Having raised by $45 locally the schools then had forfeited State help through the bank tax.

Superintendent Dunnell complained somewhat in his next report to the State Board of Education: "It is a matter of profound mortification that so small a fraction of the children of this French district should receive the rudiments of an education". Population statistics gave the plantation a count of 765 scholars with but a daily average school attendance of 75 scholars or less than 10%.

The State superintendent noted in 1858 that the schools in the district "were sustained by the money received by the State School Fund, the plantations not having raised any by tax."

It appears from a reading of early State superintendent reports that it was nearly twenty years before the town positioned itself to match State school funds. By then, Lincoln's Greenbacks were issued to finance a war, and the State's earnings from the bank tax went into the tail spin, above described.

The earliest recorded land deed we have been able to find where the Town of Madawaska came into land for a school house dates to 1862. This is a conditional deed by Vital and Rose Cyr for 34 by 38 feet on the north side of the road on Lot 178. This lot on the western corner of the Cyr farm stood on the edge of Narcisse Dufour's farm. It is on the Dufour farm (Lot 177) on the southern side of the highway where Ubald Dufour in 1901 set the old school house which now sits behind the Tante Blanche Museum in St. David.

From that point in the midst of the war years, things began to look up for education in Madawaska. Col. David Page of Fort Kent who had been appointed State Agent for all school in the "Madawaska Territory" noted: "The female academy at St. Basil has afforded me essential service in as much as it has furnished most of the teachers for the schools under my charge."

The Page reports notes by then the presence of five schools in the area now comprising the Town of Madawaska. For the first time we note the presence of schools in the back settlement, one three miles from the river road, and the other described as "in an obscure valley where no ray of knowledge of letters ever penetrated until this school was opened".

According to Title XX Chapter 501 section 3451, the old permanent school fund in a much altered form is still in the books. Present provisions call for the fund to be invested in securities as legal investments for savings banks and are used on a matching basis by local schools to cover costs of school system surveys and developing school plans when anticipating school construction.

From "Madawaska Training School" To "UMFK"

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following column from the Madawaska Historical Society was submitted by Guy Dubay, society president.

Madawaska Training School, Fort Kent State Normal School. Fort Kent State Teachers' College, Fort Kent State College of the University of Maine, and fianally University of Maine at Fort Kent. These are the names we have used in different times for the institution that has played a key role in much of our history.

We recall that in its origins this part of the State of Maine are shrouded with the mantle of Acadianism. Seconded with a heavy dose of Quebecoism the characteristics of the St. John Valley's early settlers has left an imprint still obseruable in the behavior of its citizens. Yet so too is it directly observable that the majority of our citizenry swear proudly to their American Allegience.

Actually it was quite a step from Acadianism to Americanism, yet today owing to the principles that America was founded upon, the Acadian feels quite comfortable living under the aegis of the American Eagle. This is of course in that in America he may be himself, as all men can, and yet take part in that process that allows him to be a partner with men of far different colors and creeds.

Helping the Acadian in his transition from the social outcast of the French and Indian War to a partner in the American experience has been the state of Maine, its agents, and institutions. University of Maine at Fort Kent has for the last 95 years been the most crucial in the process of the Americanizing of the St. John Valley citizenry.

UMFK of course is not the sole Americanizer we have had.

First came the soldiers. In the State Archives we may read the interesting account in chapter 278 of the Laws of Maine 1844 which contains Gen. Winfield Scott's report on the occupation of Fort Kent. The soldiers left a mark on Fort Kent that gave that settlement its American tenor that characterizes it to this day. Then came the lumber barons, who while diverging much of the waters in our hither lands from the Allagash and St. John to the Penobscot (by means of a dam at Rippogenus)the monies they brought with them gave sustanance to many a young Acadian who chose to be a hewer of wood. The railroad which finally came to link us economically as well as politically with the state helped us shrugg off our loss of the St. John River waters rails could replace what we lost as in our aquatic routes to the timber market.

Long pine floating down from Allagash to Fredericton and St. John became rarer and we started to loose "our British Connection". We gradually were being Americanized. With the opening of WAGM in Presque Isle the Americanization proscess became complete as our youth learned the arts of handling the pigskin the fashion of Starr, Unitas and Namath and other Sunday afternoon heros.

But UMFK more than any other single body or group was perhaps more vital than any other organization in bringing love of Washington and Lincoln into our Acadian homes.

Our history records the early vain efforts of American advisers in teaching these French Folk the workings of a republic. Pierre Lizotte, that native of Riviere Ouelle in Canada who as a lad of 14 had wintered among the Malissets of "Madouesca" in 1783 as a mature man, accepted his election to the State Legislature in 1830. British authorities intervened and it was sixteen years before another Acadian finally entered the hallowed halls of State.

An Irish catholic, James C. Madigan of Houlton next became the bridge between Anglo-Saxon Maine and the French papists which by virtue of the Webster-Ashburton treaty would now claim citizenship in Maine. Traveling from town to town helped the state's new citizens set up their municipalities and legal jurisdictions.

But finally in 1843 we begin with Chapter 162 of the Resolves of the State of Maine to see the State direct its effort toward the schooling of it new adopted citizens.

The First Report of the Board of Education of the State of Maine, 1847 describes the conditions that existed then and recommends: "that two academies or teachers seminaries should be established in the northern part of the state, at which teachers may be qualified and prepared to meet the wants of common schools in the new settlements. And that these institutions, like other academies, should be endowed by grant from the state."

The State of Maine documents describe further the role Maine played in the developing of the American ethic in the St. John Valley. In 1867 Col. David Page of Fort Kent whom I may cite as one of those early militarists to affect the course of our development, served as the State's superintendent of Schools for the entire St. John Valley. He too describes the schooling situation in great detail and reading his report leads us to the same diagnoses of 1847. If schools are to be effective in this part of the state, Maine will have to see to the education of teachers suited for the area.

In 1878 the State Legislature at last provided funds which were able to complete its task. Through its schools, American thought could reach into every home of the St. John Valley. Through the education of teachers the State was able to reach into every school from St. Francis to Hamlin. Our earliest educators were roving or itinerant 'instituteurs' like Jacques Hamel who came in from the St. Lawrence River Valley in the 1830's. But now with "Madawaska Training School" the State could take 'locals', infuse in them a bit of the language and philosophy of the land, and certify them to teach in the "common schools" of said territory.

That having occurred we began to make headlong strides into Americanism. After relying for more than thirty years on Dickey and Keegan for proper representation in State Government we could now send men like Neil Violette down to Augusta where he later became our State Forest Commissioner; or men like Patrick Theriault , our first State Senator like-wise an Acadian; for whom the State chose to honor in its naming after him, the school it built in the unorganized township of Sinclair. And now we can help our State by providing it with the services of such men whose early schooling can be laid to the teachers who are products of MTS or UMFK.

I refer of course to such men as State Civil Defense Director Emilien Levesque (a former Speaker of the House), Superior Court Justice, Elmer Violette (a former Senate Minority Floor Leader) and Chairman of Maine Land Use Regulation Commission. John Martin, (also currently House Minority Floor Leader). Each of course most likely learned the Pledge of Allegience to the Flag at the hand of teacher and graduate of UMFK.

Indeed the blend between Acadian and American can be evidenced in the earliest records of UMFK. Its first principal and teacher in 1878 was Vital Cyr, and Acadian descendant who as protege of that Irish Catholic of Houlton, became the valley's first graduate of what later became Ricker Clasical Institute and finally the Land Grant. College at Orono which later became the University of Maine.

One of his annual reports to the State helps us characterize the work of education at the time. Indeed the pitance with which this part of the State was provided was used advantageously. We can see in the report our reaching out for all the advantages that an American education would provide us.

In order that the reader may see this for himself, let me then cite the report in its entirety.:

"MADAWASKA TRAINING SCHOOL REPORT MAY 1, 1896"
"To the Honorable Trustees of the Normal Schools. "Gentlemen: - The following is a report of the above named school for the year ending April 23, 1896.

Attendance: The attendence has been larger that of any year since the founding of the school 18 years ago. The number attending the fall term, 97: the winter and spring terms 108; the number of different pupils for the year, 117; an increase of 30 over last year's attendence. The number graduating, 18; eight ladies and 10 gentlemen.

Names of the graduating class, Raymond P. Albert, teacher, Madawaska, Marie B. Cyr, teacher, Madawaska, Caroline Dionne, teacher, Madawaska, Lizzie J. Freeman, teacher, Wallagrass, Denis B. Martin, teacher, Eagle Lake, Archille M. Michaud, teacher, Fort Kent, Philomen Michaud, teacher, Wallagrass, Joseph C. Morin, teacher,, Fort Kent, Meddie J. Pelletier, teacher, St. Francis, Ozite P. Pelletier, teacher, St. Francis, Arthur P. Pniette, teacher, Fort Kent, Jennie Pratt, teacher, Fort Kent, Flora B. Robbins, teacher, Allagash, Omar J. Robbins, ha[illegible] maker, Fort Kent, Nelson D. Sinclair, Farmer, St. Francis, Henry W. Theriault, Farmer, Fort Kent and Remi Thibodeau, Teacher, Grande Isle'

Teachers were, Vetal Cyr, principal and Miss Mary Nowland, assistant, with Miss Sophia Pinette, a graduate of the school, in charge of the prepartory class. Her work was satisfactory. I would recom-

UMFK will survive

To the Editor,

The fear that has spread across Maine campuses regarding Governor McKernan's call of a 15 percent reduction of all state expenditures is founded on the premise that outside forces are stronger than inner resolve.

UMFK, in the past, has shown an inner resolve that has carried the school (as we use to call it) through each crisis, surmounting the negative factors from without by stressing the positive factors within.

In 1955, Madawaska Training School was challenged by a call of 100 percent reduction (that is, closure). It came out of that crisis as Fort Kent State Normal School. Capitalization for new construction followed and led to the early efforts to make the Normal School a State Teachers' College.

Then in 1969, after having graduated six baccalaureate classes, the University was challenged with a 50 percent cutback (reduction from four years to two years). The St. John Valley rallied its inner resolve and the State College came out even stronger. New programs were added and the State College stepped in the University as a full fledged University campus.

The point is, you cannot kill UMFK by attacking it from the outside. The only way this campus can die is in giving mere lip-service to its goals from the inside: That is, by being overtly supportive while being covertly divisive. At that time of the HEP Commission report (1969) a major portion of supportive testimony came from those citing the bilingual/bicultural aspect of this campus's environment, but bilingualism/biculturalism has the potential of threatening an establishment founded on monolingualism.

There is a real fear in the American community that biculturalism may be subversive. Certainly it puts the power-dominance community in a tough spot when they see elements of their own subordinated discussing topics in a language they cannot understand.

California bilingual education researcher, Jim Cummings notes: "The major theme that has emerged from press commentary on bilingual education during the past 15 years is the fear that bilingual education will subvert the social stability of the United States and threaten our way of life.

Because of the cultural milieu of the UMFK setting, the validity of the campus, as per 1969 arguments, is based on bilingual/bicultural education. Having survived calls for 100 percent and 50 percent reduction, devotion to the bilingual/bicultural goals can readily survive a call for a 15 percent reduction of efforts toward these goals rise beyond mere lip service.

The only force that can effectively kill the campus is a dichotomy from within which officially sanctions bilingualism while internally disempowering it. If we say we support an effort but do not give it the power to decide its own fate, then the structure may begin to fail from within.

Whether the governor is public servant or master depends not on him but on us. Ultimately, the forces from within are the only effective threat to the vitality of the campus.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska