

Acadia, to keep or to share

To the Editor,

Acadianism: Is it something you keep or something you give away? Like the rituals of computer users, you either share the knowledge or you keep it to yourself.

It's like knowledge of a fishing hole, if you keep it to yourself you gain control of the supply of fish but in fishing there's the thrill of angling and there's the camaraderie of the sport. It's the camaraderie that gets magazines like *Field and Stream* in print, the human

need of shared experience.

As it is with computers and fishing, so I suggest it is with Acadianism. Some people need to control and some people need to share. I tend to share. If people ask me a question about Acadia, I tend to give them an answer. In fact, I tend to give them more of an answer than they sometimes want to know. It's sort of like asking an environmentalist, "How's the Water?" and he starts telling you about salinity or ph-factor in the soil beneath the lake when all you want to know is

whether the water is warm or cold.

Those who need to control, answer questions in a word. Those who need to share talk in chapters — often in circles. Both, of course, can be outright bores. The first doesn't give you enough to whet your appetite, the other overwhelms you with what interests you the least.

Is Acadia something you keep or something you share? I don't know. All I know is it takes two to tango.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska

Acadian = a positive definition

To the Editor,

The time is fast approaching when I must be quiet. My words and tales about Acadians must come to an end, but before that time comes, I must issue one warning: Do not let yourself be defined as Acadians negatively. Accept only a positive definition of what it means to be an Acadian.

Most importantly - do not let yourself be defined as descendants of deportation, refugees, and the persecuted. Why? Because Acadians were Acadians before deported, before they were refugees, before they had their priests pulled from them.

While it's true that all of those negative things happen to Acadians, the deportation did not create the Acadians. It was their independent mind-set, based on their family living on North America soil, far from France and England, that created the Acadians, we must not allow ourselves to be defined by those negative factors.

The French and Indian War has been over for 229 years, now. It is not necessary for us to remain forever hung up at that point of history.

But to allow ourselves to be defined strictly as descendents of the deportation has the negative effect of drawing us into a negative, useless, counter-productive and self-defeating debate about French versus English.

Nothing is so counter-productive in our relations with other people who share our interest in federal funding for the preservation of Acadian culture in Maine as the resurrection of old anti-English, anti-French feelings brought on by discussion of Acadians as deportees.

The point is, we're a heck of a lot more than descendents of a people who were deported. Let me explain:

Naomi Griffiths, author of *Acadians: The Creation of a People*, says: "Any examination of the Acadians as families, as people facing the problems of what could be eaten in winter, of how the children were to be clothed, produces the response: By the work of the Acadians themselves." (p. 34.)

Remember that: "By the work of the Acadians themselves."

What we do defines us, not what others do to us. What others do to us can hurt but it does not make us who we are.

No matter how many experts you import to help us figure out how to define Acadians, remember, it's what we do that counts.

To allow ourselves to be defined as descendents of deportees is letting others define us by what they do to us. Remember - over and over - "By the work of the Acadians themselves!"

Griffiths also said, "The Acadians welcome any who come to them with a desire to know what the Acadians themselves feel. They are less considerate to those who come merely to analyze the Acadian situation, to point out what the

Acadian politics should be, and to criticize when the Acadian refuses to accept wholesale tactics closer to the St. Lawrence than to the Bay of Fundy." (85)

Applied to the St. John Valley, we could take Griffiths word literally, substituting the words "Augusta" for "St. Lawrence" and "St. John Valley" for "Bay of Fundy." Go ahead and read that last quote again with the substitutions sug-

gested and see what impact it has.

We are a hospitable people but we shall not be considerate to those who tell us what to think of ourselves. For me, who we are must be stated in positive light.

Again, I borrow from Griffiths when she says: "The Acadians were first and foremost a family people." (p. 32.)

Guy Dubay
Madawaska

Maine between Quebec and Maritime

by Guy Dubay

Living on America's borders presents one with a unique experience, E.G., we do not see things from the same perspective as most Americans. Most American think of Maine as being outer fringe.

In fact most of the State of Maine residents think of Aroostook as being outer fringe. But we who live here have our universe centered here. Remember, the eye is the first circle in an ever widening series of circles which is the universe. So we tend to see the U.S. as being down south of us. Most school books show the U.S. with Maine sticking upwards to one side. The kids have never seen a U.S. surrounded on three sides by a foreign country. We do and it affects our perspective.

I'm an American. My family has been in the U.S. for seven generations. In fact, my people lived here in this valley before this Valley became American. You see, this valley was disputed territory when our ancestors came here. Both the British and the Newly-Freed American colonies claimed it. Our ancestors were neutral in the struggle. They were French - they were citizens of a country which had ceased to exist - Acadia. But when America adopted them, they adopted America. And we have been active contributors to the American scene since.

THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION had broad repercussions among my people. These very few of my fellow Americans are even aware of. You see, if it hadn't been for the American Revolution, my people, the French speaking Americans of northern Maine would probably never have come here anyway. They would have remained in Canada, the land of their birth.

To tell the complete story in but a few lines, we must begin with a look at America on the eve of the Revolution. Let us take a peek for a minute at Colonial America. Let us wipe away the traditional borders between U.S. and Canada as we have come to recognize them and think of the northeast as a Northern Mainer does.

The northeast includes New England and New York and New Jersey but it also needs New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island on the east and Quebec on the west to give us a

75
true picture of the American scene. When you fill in the picture completely in this way something happens.

Note that when Lindbergh flew the Spirit of St. Louis in 1927, he took off from New York - but if you trace his flight to Ireland, England, and France you'll notice that his path took him from New York to New England, up the New England coast to Nova Scotia and Newfoundland.

You see the shortest distance between two points on earth is a curved line! These lines, we call great circles. Every International Airline Pilot knows that. And so did the old navigators of the colonial era. Ships traveling from Boston to London or Liverpool would skirt the French colonial coastlines. Thus Nova Scotia holds a story that represents a chapter in U.S. history.

Much of the Tri-cornered trade of Colonial merchantile era included a lot of illicit trade between English and French colonials. Technically, it was illegal for the French and English colonies to trade or do commerce with any one else other than the Mother country. But the shortest distance between two lines is a curve - which is why people in the Massachusetts Legislature look up to the Cod Fish hanging down from the ceiling of their marbled Assembly Hall. But that cod did not come off the Nantucket coast. Rather it hails from the Grand Banks of Newfoundland, on the great circle from Boston to Plymouth.

Now the colonial situation just before the revolution was this:

There were Frenchmen in Quebec and Montreal, but after 1759 they had fallen under British rule. There had been Frenchmen in Nova Scotia but during the French and Indian Wars they had been dispersed.

The French again outflanked the English with another outpost in Louisiana. But on the eve of the revolution they did not pose the colonials any significant threat. They were just there.

MY PATERNAL ANCESTRY goes back to Quebec in 1665. My maternal ancestry goes back to Nova Scotia in 1740. And the two would not have met hadn't the American revolution caused the movement of my families to a point about half way from each other.

Between Quebec and the Maritimes lies Maine. This part of Maine was unsettled forest when Washington's troops huddled around Valley Forge. But when the victorious rebels won out to become heroes, many colonials who had insisted on fidelity to the King were suddenly evicted out of those colonies.

The fate of the Loyalists is one of the ironies of history. They lost their liberty in the war for liberty. Their properties were confiscated. They were evicted to British crown lands.

Ironically, British crown lands were already inhabited when the loyalists moved to New Brunswick. For twenty years between the two wars there lived in New Brunswick the Acadian who had escaped deportation in 1755 or those repatriated Acadian French who had returned from Massachusetts around 1767. The French Acadian living in the New Brunswick forest technically had no title to his land and claims. Technically, all French had been evicted, thus the remaining French were squatters.

Well just like the little boy who gets scolded by his mother will turn around and kick the cat, so to did the defeated American colonials turn around and kick the Acadia. They had his property taken from him in New York, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. So whatever had been done to him, he turned around and did to the forest roaming Acadian. The result was that the French Acadians abandoned their subsistence level farms of twenty years holding and moved into the remote part of Maine which was then disputed territory.

Most of the Acadians had no intention of being either American or British - but the larger conflict was omnipresent and overwhelming. They were like pawns between two pincers and like minorities everywhere, their fate was to be decided in places and Capitols thousands of miles away.

IN ANY CASE the revolution brought new English settlers into French settlements so our an-

cestors moved to Maine. The Acadians came here in 1785 just prior to the time of the American constitutional convention.

These French Americans lived an isolated existence, lumbering and farming for two generations until 1842 when Daniel Webster and Lord Ashburton worked out details of the Peace Treaty which Jay and Franklin had missed. At that point my family suddenly became American. We were adopted into the new nation.

Since the 1840's we, the French American of Northern Maine have been taught the workings of American Institutions. In the 1840's Irish Americans were sent here to teach us how to conduct town meeting and how to hold court under American style jurisprudence.

We learned our lessons and began participating in the democratic process. In 1846 we elected our first representative to State government. In 1867 my maternal great grandfather, Belonie Violette represented us in Augusta. In 1870 a Paternal grand uncle was to serve his first of ten terms in the state house of representatives. In 1907 a second cousin to my mother entered the State Senate. In 1917 another cousin to my mother became State Forest Commissioner after serving a term in Legislature.

Today the same holds true. My father in law has a cousin serving on the State's judicial bench - after serving in both the House and Senate of Maine. This all points out that once we were adopted, we adopted the system.

Every war from the Civil War on had its French-American veterans. We've sacrificed along with other peoples to protect our American way of life. We have lost our boys in Vietnam, in Korea, in World War II, in World War I. We have even lost our Remi Sansfacon, a young lad of twenty in the Civil war.

I realize that I've spoken of my family here, but in doing so I was only speaking in microcosm. You see the large picture of the Acadian experience in American History is the same as this small one. Most Acadian stories mirror these same experiences. They are varieties and variations of the same basic pattern from Colonial French, to British colonial to American citizenship.

All of this gives us an advantage of course. It's like being an insider with the capacity to be looking at America from the outside. All of this helps me see American as few natives can.

A rose by any other name

To the Editor,

You can't judge a book by its cover, nor can you judge a person's ancestry by the sound of his name alone.

Xavier Dufour (1892-1966) of St. David had a Quebecois or Canadian name - but because of his mother, his grandmothers, his great-grandmothers, Dufour ended up with an ancestry that was 87.5% Acadian. That's a high percentage for someone with a Canadian name.

How do I figure that? Well, like everybody else, Xavier (à

Ubald) had two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents and 16 great-great-grandparents. Of the eight pairs of great-great-grandparents, seven of the pairs were Acadian. The only non-Acadian pair was Joseph Dufour and Josette Autin of Kamouraska, Quebec.

That means that of his great-great-grandparents, 14 out of 16 were Acadian - that is, of Acadian birth or children of parents who were both natives of Acadia.

Since $14/16$ is equal to $7/8$

and 7 divided by 8 gives you 87.5% , then 87.5% of his ancestry was Acadian despite the Dufour name which is Canadian in origin.

Some with an Acadian name may actually have fewer Acadian ancestors than someone like Mr. Dufour. That Acadian male line could have married wives whose ancestry was completely Canadian. So you've got to be careful before you deny a person's Acadianity on the basis of their mother's name being Quebecois.

I know a person whose mother is a Levesque (Quebecois in origin) but don't forget that person's grandfather was married to a Doucette and furthermore the great-grandfather had also married a Doucette and Doucette is Acadian, you know.

There is an objective and scientific way of determining your Acadianity - but you've got to be willing to ask the right questions. It may take courage to do so because there's always the possibility that the answer doesn't come up the way you want it to.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska



"By Guy Dubay"

Did you know that the telephone listings for the town of Madawaska has 150 different English or non-French surnames while only 147 different French family names can be found there.

Of course, this is not to say that Madawaska's population is only 50 percent French, because the name Cyr which by the above count is considered as just one is listed 116 times, while generally each English surname is listed only once or twice. But it does point to the fact that the non-French minority may be larger in Madawaska than we generally assume.

Interestingly, too, the phone book can reveal that Madawaska's French population, generally assumed to be predominately Acadian, may not be quite so.

In fact, of the 147 different French surnames listed therein, only 19 can be traced directly to Acadian. The other French names can trace their lineage to Quebec - most likely to Riviere Ouelle, St. Anne de LaPocatiere or Kamouraska.

Some like the Dufours go back to Ile Aux Oies, or like the Gerards to Baie St. Paul - but the predominance of Valley names are traced to the southern shore of the St. Lawrence in the towns between St. Roch des Aulnaies and Riviere du Loup.

The only Acadian surnames listed in the Madawaska portion of the phone book are: Arsenault (2), Comeau (1), Cormier (3), Cyr (116), Daigle (49), Doucette (5), Gogan (2), Hachey (1), Hebert (25), Landry (2), Leblanc (1), Lebrun (1), Martin (31), Mazerolle (1), Morin (2 sources 1 Acadian, 1 Canadian) (20), Savoie (3), Theriault (6), Thibodeau (11), and Violette (7). Total 285.

While perhaps no single Quebecois name can possibly match the 116 for the Acadian Cyr, all other names like 49 Daigles can find their counterpart among Quebec names like 49 Michauds (The Michauds family lived in the Village of Kamouraska before their immigration here), or the 49 Alberts, which families we can trace to Riviere Ouelle, P.Q. around 1680. Then there are the 52 Pelletiers whose lineages go back to Quebec City before 1649!

There are by my count 1,469 residential or non-business phones listed in the directory. "85 of these phones can be counted as subscribed to by persons with Acadian surnames. If the telephone subscribers list can be said to be representative of the entire population, then Madawaska has a 19.3 percent Acadian population.

Given, also the fact that 150 English surnames occur at least once for each name, the obvious is that Madawaska's non French population ranges at least over 10 percent. This gives us a Quebec or Canadian base population of slightly below 70 percent.

This is not to discredit the Acadian influence on the Valley. We know certainly that the Acadians were here first. But we must remember that the first immigration of 12 Acadian families to the St. Basile - St. David area in 1785 was followed

the following years by as many immigrants from the west (Quebec).

Thomas Albert, in L'Histoire du Madawaska in effect puts it this way. "Des la seconde annee on voit arriver des immigrant du St. Laurent. Les Soucy, les Albert, les Michauds, les Levasseurs, les Charest, les Sauciers venaient de Kamouraska. Les Dube, les Beaulieu, et les Gagnes de l'Isle-Verte: les Guimond et les Ouellets de la Riviere Ouelle: les Desnoyers de la Riviere du Sud. Il ne faut pas oublier que les Deperre, les Lizottes, les Fournier, les Sansfacons, quelque Michaud les avaient precedes a St. Anne." - pp. 100-101.

While most families can be found to have lived at different generations in several places in Quebec, I shall provide you with a list of places where the core of each family was established. I can not account for the source or origin of Madawaska's English population. I have noted above the 19.3 percent Acadian source.

Below then, we give for your information the parish or town that 70 percent of our population group ought to go to find their family's residence prior to coming to the St. John Valley.

Albert, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q. then Kamouraska, P.Q.; Archambault, Montreal, P.Q.; Ayotte, Riviere Ouelle, then LaPocatiere, P.Q.; Bard, St. Pacome, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Baron, St. Roch des Aulnaies, P.Q.; Bechard, Cape Posier, Gaspé, P.Q.; Beland, Baies des Sables, P.Q.; Belanger, Quebec City; Bell see Lebel.

Bellefleur, Pointe Aux Trembles, P.Q.; Bernier Cap St. Ignace, P.Q.; Berube, Quebec City, then St. Pacome, P.Q.; Bilodeau, Ste. Famille, P.Q.;

Blanchette, St. Pierre de Montmagny; Bosse, St. Paschal, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Bouchard, St. Anne de Beaupre, P.Q.; Boucher (and Bushey), Trois Rivières, P.Q.; Bourgoin, St. Antoine de Tilley, P.Q.; Boutot (and Thiboutot) Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Bretemps, This one, I don't know; Brideau, Quebec City; Carrier, St. Jean Port Joli, P.Q.;

Also Chabre, L'Islet, P.Q.; Chaloult, Beauport, P.Q.; Chamberland, Riviere Ouelle; Charest (and Charette) Kamouraska, P.Q.;

Chasse, St. Andre, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Clavette, St. Thomas de Montmagny, P.Q.; Cloutier, Riviere du Loup; Collin, St. Thomas de Montmagny, P.Q.; Corbin, Cape St. Ignace, P.Q.; Corriveau, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Cote, Trois Pistoles, P.Q.

Also Couture, Quebec City; Couturier St. Laurent I.O.; Deschenes (and Descaines) Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Desjardins, see Roy; Devost, St. Modeste de Rimouski; Dionne, Riviere Ouelle P.Q.; Dube, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Dubois, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Dufour, Ile aux Oies, then Kamouraska, P.Q.; Dugal, Trois Pistoles, P.Q.; Dumais Ste. Helene du Kamouraska; Dumond, Beauport, then Kamouraska, P.Q.; Duperre, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Duperre, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Emond, Riviere Ouelle; Fongemie, St. Jean port-Joli, P.Q.; Fortin, Quebec City; Franck, St. Denis, Kamouraska, P.Q. (German); Francoeur, see Leclerc; Gagne, L'Isle-Verte, P.Q.; Garon, St. Denis, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Gauvin, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Gendreau (and Jandreau) Cap St. Ignace, P.Q.; Geoffroy, Montreal area, P.Q.

Gerard, Baie St. Paul, P.Q.;

Gervais, Riviere du Loup, P.Q.; Grandmaison, St. Pierre, I.O., P.Q.; Grivois, Gaspé, P.Q.; Grondin, St. Roch des Aulnaies, P.Q.; Guerette, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Labbe, St. Jean Port-Joli, P.Q.; Labonty, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Lachance, St. Michel de Bellechasse; Laforge, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Laframboise, I can't tell, I don't know.; Lagace, St. Anne de LaPocatiere, P.Q.; Lajoie, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Lang (Long), Quebec City; La Pointe, L'Isle Orleans, P.Q.; Lausier, see Roy; Lavertu, I don't know; Lavigne, I'm not sure; Lavoie, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.

Also Lebel, Riviere Ouelle; Leclerc and Leclair Riviere Ouelle, and Kamouraska, P.Q.; Levasseur, Kamouraska, P.Q.; LLizotte, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Lucas (and Ducas) Riviere du Loup, P.Q.; Madore (and Laplante Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Marchand, Riviere du Loup, P.Q.; Marquis, Trois Bistoles, P.Q.; Mayhew (Maheu) Quebec City; Metayer, St. Anne de LaPocatiere, P.Q.; Michaud, Kamouraska, P.A.; Migneault (and Labrie St. Andre du Kamouraska, P.Q.

Morin, Bertheir en Bas, P.Q.; Morneault, St. Roch des Aulnaies, P.Q.; Nadeau, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Ouellette, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Paradis, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Parent, Quebec City, then Kamouraska, P.Q.; Pelletier, Quebec City then Kamouraska, P.Q.; Picard, St. Thomas de Montmagny, P.Q.; Perrault, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Plourde, Riviere Ouelle, P.Q.; Poulin, St. Anne de Beaupre in the beginning; Proulx, St. Thomas de Montmagny; Raymond Kamouraska, P.Q.; Ringuette, Cap St. Ignace, P.Q.;

Also Rossignol, St. Andre de Kamouraska, P.Q.; Rouleau, Before Grand Falls, I don't know, originally Quebec.; Roussel (and Russell) Riviere du Loup, P.Q.; Roy, Quebec, then Riviere Ouelle and St. Anne de LaPocatiere, P.Q.; St. Amant, St. Anne de La Pocatiere, P.Q.; St. Jarre, Isle-Verte, P.Q.; St. Jean, L'slet, P.Q.; St. Onge, Kamouraska, P.Q.; St. Pierre, St. Roch des Aulnaies, P.Q.; Saucier, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Sirois, St. Andre du Kamouraska, P.Q.; Soucy, Riviere Ouelle,

P.Q.; Sylvain, St. Andre de Kamouraska, P.Q.; Tardif, Cacouna, P.Q.

Also Thibeault, L'Islet; Thiffault- Originally, Batiscan,

P.Q.; Toussaint, St. Roch des Aulnaies, P.Q.; Vaillancourt, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Viel, Kamouraska, P.Q.; Voisine, See Roy.

Learning from the past

To the editor,

If the American mind could open itself to the French experience in North America, it might discover valuable information in dealing with present day reality.

I'm not claiming super power and authority here. It was only in trying to prepare for a summer course, titled, "Maine and Nova Scotia: Likenesses and Differences," that I discovered for myself an element of our history which is, in a sense, being repeated by Americans in Iraq today.

The sources of my discovery lay in reading in the Dictionary of Canadian Biography the biographical sketch of Sir Guy Carleton (Lord Dorchester), governor-general in British North America (Canada today) between 1770 and 1796).

The British were occupiers in a conquered state just like the Americans are now occupiers in a conquered state. Notice here, I've said, "a conquered state" but not "a conquered people." The people of Iraq cannot truly be conquered any more than the French of Quebec were conquered even though their rulers were deposed.

Like the French of Quebec continued to be French, even with the presence of British authority, so

too will the Iraqis continue to be Iraqis even in the presence of American authority.

The purpose of history is not a matter of worshiping the past, but an attempt to benefit from the past to help us understand and deal with the present.

I intended to put together information to help us understand how the Acadians of Nova Scotia evolved here into being Americans of northern Maine while living within the reality of an English-speaking culture. I am not seeking to re-fight the French and Indian War. Indeed, when it comes to the hype and selling of the Acadian deportation, I am tired of it. I want to take our understanding of our experience into the reality of today. In fact, that is the entire purpose of my dwelling in history: understanding our present.

Nova Scotia is to the east of Maine, but Quebec is to the west, and I cannot completely ignore that factor even while I reach out to what the Acadians of New Brunswick call, "*Le vent d'est*" - the easterly wind (which is the Acadian factor in eastern Canada). I also have to recognize the impact of the trade winds from the west. For us that is Quebec.

It's these trade winds, by the

way, on the Maine coast which give that portion of Maine the name, "Down East" for the down wind side there is "down east."

I turned to Quebec as well in preparing for my summer course on Maine and Nova Scotia and I found in G. F. Browne's summary of Sir Guy Carleton's governor role in Quebec an experience which could greatly benefit America in its present dealings with Iraq. So, 250 years ago the French of Quebec were in a position akin to the Arabs of Iraq today, with the British occupying the role of Americans in Iraq today.

I only mean to be helpful. Teaching is my profession. I'm not a soldier and not much of a politician. But I would like to help not only the Acadians of Maine but the Americans of my country and our Canadian neighbors by doing what I am able to do best. If soldiers and politicians and administrators could and would take time to listen a bit, I believe I can share the light of history to the benefit of everyone.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska

P.S. Reality Check: The course was not approved. Sorry about that, America. I thought I could help.

1842 = American Acadians

To the Editor,

Next summer will represent the 150th Anniversary of our American citizenship for it was with the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842 that the Acadians on the right-hand bank of the St. John became Americans.

We celebrate then, next summer, the sesquicentennial of a new inheritance — the acquisition of our American rights.

Since American democracy harkens back to older English traditions, as Acadians living in a land which adopted us, we then inherited, alongside our French continental culture, religion, language and traditions of our forebearers, the ancient priviledges of English Common Law, the procedural processes intiated by the Magna Carta, on to all the rights enumerated in American Revolutionary documents such as The Declaration of Independence, the Federalist Papers, Thomas Paine's "Common Sense".

That, which occured in Philadelphia at the drawing up of the U.S. Constitution, took place at a time when we were new

"Madawaskayens". Yet the spirit of tolerance engendered there and in the Bill of Rights insures us equal rights of common citizenship — a citizenship we gained as soon as the U.S. Senate approved the treaty negotiated in Washington by Daniel Webster and Lord Ashburton in 1842. Thus we were reassured our right to our identity in the manner of our Acadian forebearers, while exercising our rights as Americans.

It is quite an achievement to celebrate. The signing of that treaty 150 years ago rendered obsolete the military fortifications now known in the names of the towns of Fort Kent and Fort Fairfield — the former named for a Whig Governor of Maine, the latter for a Democrat Governor.

Shortly after the treaty formally put an end to that "Bloodless Aroostook War", the process of integrating the Acadians into the American scene was begun. James C. Madigan of Houlton was sent to "Madawaska" to begin educating the new citizens about American governmental process with town meetings, elections and all that.

91
Philip Eastman was appointed to head a commission to survey the land occupants' claims.

Though some families had resided here on British grants dating back to 1790, the American government, in theory, did not recognize the effect of the old British Grants. The States of Maine and Massachusetts would begin over again with fresh land grants, informally called "Treaty Grants", which, owing to the efficiency of the Eastman survey, were issued to the occupants on July 12, 1845.

We find, also, by May 1, 1844 that Van Buren Plantation had been organized for the assessors of the plantation and covered parts of Grand Isle, all of Van Buren, Cyr and Hamlin, completed a census in that area listing the head of each household which had lately gained American citizenship.

Though some might see the sesquicentennial as a time to rehash old animosities — to argue the British claim against the American claim all over again, I would think there's also the opportunity to reconsider the positive aspects — the inheritance of rights granted to the individual by the affirmation of our American citizenship giving us here what Robert Frost called, "The Gift Outright".

In the months ahead, I would hope you might consider all this if you are asked to volunteer on a town planning committee, an Historical Society group, a Chamber of Commerce gathering, a university symposium, and "I speak for Democracy" contest, an international neighborly exchange, because we all ought to chip in in making the 150th anniversary of our grand inheritance a memorabel event.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska

Becoming Americans

To the editor,

For me it's truth-telling time — that time at the end of the road where the bright light reveals all. For years, I've kept this light under the bushel for fear that I might be taken as boasting; but, in the light of the great division of my country, I now tell you my tale.

Mon Oncle Peter Charles was a Democrat, as Democrat as they come. In 1895 he and four other colleagues were the only Democrats in the State House of Representatives with 146 Republicans. There was a moment, when questioning pending legislation, he was met with a facetious response: "Oh, the Democrats need

to caucus? Well, here's the rest room key!" That, my friends, was being a Democrat then — holding on to your principles when you were up to the stuff up to here (and to mouth).

Yet, when troubles came to the international boundary, even the respected Republican of Bible Point, no less than President of the United States Theodore Roosevelt, looked to Peter Charles Keegan for a resolution to what *Le Journal du Madawaska* called "*la guerre sur la rivière St-Jean*." Roosevelt appointed Mon Oncle Peter Charles to the St. John River Commission, the forerunner of the present International Joint

Commission, that body which now regulates activity on our river.

There are six thick volumes of St. John River Commission hearings. A few years ago I troubled myself to read them, and from them I gleaned a measure of history uncommon today.

Mon Oncle Peter Charles has been my ace in the hole in the way I come to understand the politics of Maine; but he has not been my only card in the deck. Three years before Mon Oncle Peter Charles went to Augusta, grandpère Belonie was our state representative. I called Belonie Violette, 1817-1879, grandpère Belonie because that's how my mother and

my visiting uncles always spoke of him. Mom was *la fille à Abel à Belonie*.

I never claimed great political laurels for grandpère Belonie. He served but one term in the state legislature, and the one piece of legislation which might be attributable to him may be 'An Act to Make Legal the Doings of Van Buren Plantation'. However rudimentary was the conduct of Van Buren Plantation matters, half French half English as they were, Belonie Violette got things to stand in the light of the law of the time.

Grandpère Belonie stood at that point in our history where Acadians were made over into Americans. Few people understand the citizen formation stage: that of Acadians becoming Americans. It has largely been forgotten that Acadians first came to the St. John Valley as British subjects; but the situation is made clear for me when I realize that grandpère Belonie was the son of a captain of the New Brunswick Militia. François Violette, 1770-1854, his father, is found on the military rolls in 1824 as captain of one of the companies of the York County Militia.

It was he who in 1831 said to Maine agents John G. Deane and Edward Kavanaugh that it was his father, François Violette, 1744-1824, who built the first grist mill on the Picquanositac (Violette Brook) "forty years ago." Captain of the British militia, he diplomatically hosted the visiting Maine agents when they came here to question matters in regards to the boundary. The other militia captain, Simonette Hébert, fed his visitors rancid pork.

Again, folks, I bring this out not hoping to boast, but rather to give

you the roots of American politics and our way of life in our lovely Valley. The point of departure is not originally American — American is something we have become, and America is the country we have fought for since the time Sgt. Thomas Violette of Van Buren and Captain Joseph Harney Thibodeau of Fort Kent marched out to the Civil War (their stories are reserved for a later chapter). The point I want to limit myself to for the moment is the matter and manner of which we became citizens of Maine.

You see, folks, I've had this rare gift of understanding how our politics go way back to that interview between François Violette and U.S. Congressman Edward Kavanaugh. Kavanaugh, as acting governor of Maine, in 1843 sent us James C. Madigan to serve as civic missionary to the new American citizens of Maine on the international boundary.

Under the watchful eye of Madigan, Belonie Violette would in 1844 take up with Joseph Cyr and Paul Cyr one of the seats as members of the Board of Assessors of Van Buren Plantation. This was as my uncle John Violette described it as "*dans les premiers temps*."

If you will bear with me as I rummage through the deep blood in my veins, I'd love to tell you the story of how *les acadiens sont devenus des américains*.

The true point of departure of it all began when the Acadians arrived here with British pounds and shillings in their pockets, but under Belonie Violette the pound, shilling and pence were converted to American dollars and cents.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska

Acadian roots

To the editor,

This is an open letter in response to Ricky McKinney's letter in this newspaper on Jan. 29 on the Acadian Cross site.

Ricky, it's not right that I leave you without recourse in regards to your hope in things Acadian.

That the archives are in Fort Kent is a matter of law now and, though we may not especially like it, we must bend to the law of the land.

Still, Ricky, you need not remain without hope.

Several things come to mind, some quite personal.

I recall from about 40 years ago, a tall, bright, lanky youth in high school, a member of the basketball varsity team, the social elite of the school.

My mind goes back to the full front page photo in this newspaper of Don Arnold and the Madawaska Owls in their white uniforms with blue letters.

You are in that photo, a team we were all proud of on the road to the Double LL Eastern Maine Tournament.

Shortly afterwards our country took some of its finest youth and shoved them into a hell-hole called Vietnam where many a spirit was crushed by chemicals and drugs. (Need I remind anyone

of Agent Orange?)

There is in Madawaska today two monuments that were drawn from that era: The Vietnam Veteran monument in the Bicentennial Park and the Acadian Cross at the Acadian Center maintained by the town of Madawaska under the aegis of the Historical Society.

Both were raised and erected by private subscription.

This last is an important point, Ricky, as it means that they came not out of government resources of imposed taxes but from the hearts and pockets of the willing people.

Now, Ricky, you have come back from that hell-hole and you have obviously dwelt on the Acadian Cross.

This is what I have to say to you.

As you look on the names thereon, you see neither your father's nor mother's name but let me tell you that your mother's family name is part of the unscripted spirit of that monument.

If I recall correctly your mother was the daughter of Lamuel Bourgeois and Lillian McKillian.

Lamuel is a very English sounding name, likely from the area of Joggins Mines where he grew up and McKillian sounds very Irish.

But, Ricky, get this, the name Bourgeois is the family name of the great-grandmother of all those Cyrs listed on that monument.

Pierre Cyr who came from

Touraine, France, to Acadie, married at Port Royal, Acadie (now Annapolis Royal, N.S.) Marie Bourgeois, the daughter of the surgeon Jacques Bourgeois at that early Acadian settlement.

Ricky, let the lawmakers set their bricks and mortar where they will.

And let them even take our name (Acadian) and set in on their structures.

There is something you have which they will never possess.

What they have is set above ground but what you have lies deep: Acadian roots - an Acadian mother.

Ricky, I recall your mother as a gracious lady.

(See *Acadian*, page 35)

Acadian

(Continued from 34)

Yes, she grew up in an integrated English-Irish-Acadian environment.

She married your father, Edgar McKinney (from Gagetown, N.B.)

right here at St. Thomas Church in 1934 and together they raised a home on Mountain View Street within walking distance of Fraser Paper, Ltd.

Your parents worked themselves into the fabric of our lives here.

I remember your mother as active in the Lioness Club which worked for the betterment of our community.

I never engaged her in long conversation but I distinctly remember the graciousness of her greetings, her smile and friendly hello.

Ricky, over the summer I read in the French-Acadian daily newspaper, "L'Acadie Nouvelle" two stories.

One in the 4 juillet issue p. 35 a story on Marc Bourgeois, the young Acadian golfer from what they call "le troisieme rang à Bouctouche."

The other in the 2 juillet issue p. 20 was on Georgette Bourgeois the artist-painter from "Le Pays de la Sagouine."

This tells me that the family name of your mother still thrives in Acadie.

There are some things, Ricky, if we want to be done in our way, we must pay for it ourselves.

This is what happened in Madawaska.

Private subscriptions raised both our monuments.

You can tell me more about the Vietnam monument and what it represents that I can ever know.

The anguish and fatigue in the face of the young soldier is yet in your soul, but, Ricky, I'm glad you have walked from the Vietnam monument back to the Acadian Cross.

There is one thing that you have in you that you must never lose - and

that's the spirit of that young boy who grew up on Mountain View.

Therein is part of the soul of your mother's Acadian forebears of long ago.

It's not much known at the university that the Acadian Cross you contemplate today speaks of the spirit of Catherine Albert (1879-1965).

Let me conclude by telling you of the impact of Catherine Albert.

She was a spinster school teacher, a school marm of the old era.

She knew she was the daughter of Eloi à Luc à Anselme Albert and that Anselme had married Rosalie Cyr, a daughter to one of those Cyrs listed on the monument today.

Then, while her nephew, Elmo Albert was busy raising, selling and shipping potatoes to keep the family alive, Catherine put a bug in his spouse's ear.

I can see her as having said, "Ecoute-donce, Julie, tu est une Daigle toi. Tu est une Acadienne. Sais-tu ce que c'est une Acadienne?"

I remember in the 1960s in the public library a little red portfolio of Julie Albert's poems.

Now all the "-ologists" who have come around since to tell us who we are, might consider those poems as primitive.

But the impact of the spirit of those poems gave rise to the book, "Deja 100 Ans" and the whole celebration of the 100th anniversary of the incorporation of the town of Madawaska in 1969.

To effectively organize that event, leading members of the community organized the Madawaska Historical

Society.

Nearly a decade later the society initiated, out of the spark lit by Austin Wylie, the Acadian Festival.

By leaps and bounds the thing grew and by the bicentennial of Madawaska Settlement in 1985 we had ourselves a permanent marble cross in place of the old rustic wooden cross which had to be replaced every 20 to 30 years.

But all of this was done out of the heart and soul of Madawaska, from the spirit of others who came before us.

While it may be the function of old teachers to correct their students and charges, it is not their duty to put them down.

But, hopefully, the correction is to make them better.

This is why, while my last letter brought to you strong admonition

regarding the Archives in Fort Kent, I wish you no hurt.

Yet, it is my responsibility to let you know that your eyes are on the right place.

It's just that sometimes in order to have things our way we must be prepared to pay the cost and let others do what they will.

The victory that is ours as Acadians may never be physical but it must be moral.

To know what it truly means to be Acadians, they who lord over us would have to walk the three miles in your boots from the monument of your anguish to the symbol of your free soul; the soul long nurtured on Mountain View by the loving heart of Margaret Bourgeois McKinney.

Guy Dubay
Madawaska