

Louis Robichaud (1703-1780)

# Acadian deportee seeks permission to move

by Guy F. Dubay

ST. JOHN VALLEY — On Sept. 10, 1756, Louis Robichaud, an Acadian deportee to Massachusetts, sought permission to move his family from Cambridge to Boston. In order to receive favorable response from the Council of the House of Representatives (the General Court), he gave a backlog of experience to establish his allegiance to British authority.

Robichaud stated that he had for 46 years remained faithful and devoted to his British masters. "At the start of the war, my family and I labored to repair the fortification at Anapolis. We were charged with the supervision of construction vehicles, which brought logs to the fort.

"This was done at the peril of our lives, yet my family and I eluded certain slaughter at the hands of the Indians by hauling said logs to the fort in the midst of the night. Moreover, it was

members of my family who alerted the British to the impending attack of Port Royal by the French, DuVivier. Had the English not been forewarned, the fort would have been taken.

"Later my family and I were twice taken prisoners, and after having been captured by the French, we had difficulty gaining release. On two occasions, my home was pillaged and my cattle stolen. These facts were well known by the British who resided at Annapolis at that time.

"Last year, after having recovered from that distress, Major Handfield confiscated all my property and set me free to expatriate myself wherever I willed. I preferred to stay in New England because I believed I knew here the fidelity of the English and that I hoped to secure the indulgence due me."

Noting that his conduct had been irreproachable while in Boston, and that his transfer to Cambridge had not been coupled

with the opportunity to find employment and permanent housing, Robichaud requested permission to return to Boston.

The council, as noted by its secretary, Thomas Clarke, read and approved the petition, but when the petition was sent to the entire chamber, it was rejected.

Notes on family conditions, a year later, were summarized as follows: Louis Robeshaw, 54, good health, has lost two fingers; Jane Robeshaw, 49, weak and incapable of working; Frederic Robeshaw, 25, suffers from cancer; Otho Robeshaw, 15, in good health; Florence Robeshaw, 10, in good health; and VillBong Robeshaw, 8, very weak.

Also, Esther Robeshaw, 18, Monit Robeshaw, 13, Hannah Robeshaw, 5, Joseph Wite, 28, Margaret Wite, 27, Mary Wite, 2, all in good health. Total, 13 persons, Nov. 30, 1757.

In 1760 the family of Joseph Wite (Leblanc) Robichaud's son-in-law, was separated from the

Cambridge homestead and sent to Charlestown, Mass.

During the remaining years of the French and Indian Wars, Robichaud served as a kind of lay minister to the Catholic Acadians who were dispersed among the Protestant villages of New England. The Rev. Maillard, vicar general at Halifax in 1731, confirmed Robichaud's authority to act as witness to the several weddings, baptisms and deaths that took place in Massachusetts.

The sole condition remaining to validate such marriages was that once said refugee Acadians return to a place where the services of a priest was available, a nuptial blessing should be sought for the marriage and the children born therefrom should be baptised.

With the return of peace after the Colonial Wars, members of the Robichaud family returned to various French provinces. On July 18, 1775, we find Louis Robichaud at Quebec, where he married off his daughter to Olivier Leblanc, a native of Grand Pre, Acadia.

Robichaud died at Quebec, of small pox, Dec. 21, 1783, at the age of 77. His wife, Jeanne Borgeois Robichaud, likewise died there at the age of 89 on March 18, 1790.

The records of Burnt Church on the Miramichi in New Brunswick, however, give us evidence that some members of the Robichaud family took other paths to freedom. It is there at Burnt Church where, in 1824, we find the record of death of Otho Robichaud who had followed his father's trail from Acadia to Massachusetts.

Otho's children were found at

Carquet where the New Brunswick government has since reconstructed the reknowned Acadian Village. The registers of St. Pierre de Caraquet contain in 1815 the record of Louis Robichaud's grandson, who is identified as Louis Robichaud, farmer at Nigaweck.

Other church records, however, place Robichaud's other sons at Deschambault, Quebec, where on Nov. 11 and 20, 1776, we find their marriages revalidated.

With time, some distant relatives of the above Louis Robichaud made their way into the St. John Valley, where at Fort Kent descendants still reside.

# Madawaska Historical Association

JEAN BAPTISTE CYR dit  
CROCK (1710-1785) FATHER OF  
THE CYRS OF THE SAINT JOHN  
VALLEY

BY GUY F. DUBAY

Jean Baptiste Cyr, a son of Jean Baptiste Cyr and Francois Elanson was born 1710 at Beaubassin, Acadia. It was his grand father, Pierre Cyr who had left St. Germain de Bourgeuil in Touraine France and emigrated to Port Royal, Acadia in 1668.

On Jan. 26, 1734 at Beaubassin, Jean Baptiste Cyr married Marguerite Comier, daughter of Pierre Cormier and Catherine Leblanc. We note that his mother in law was the sister of the notary, Rene Leblanc, immortalized in Longfellow's poem, *Evangeline*.

Probably at the instigation of Father Leloutre, Jean Baptiste Cyr, around 1750, moved from Beaubassin to Fort Beausejour on the Isthmus of Nova Scotia. There he took part in the unsuccessful defense of that fort in 1758. From there to the Kennebecaassis River and about 1757 settled at St. Anne du Pays Bas on the St. John River (Fredericton, N.B.) where we find him in 1759 with his eleven children.

There he was taken prisoner during Moses Hazens's seige of St. Anne's point. In 1763, again captive, he was taken to Kamouraska in the Province of Quebec. Twice between 1763 and 1768 he returned to St. Anne where he lived at a place called Crock's Point, six miles above Fredericton at the mouth of the Keswick River, on the east side of the St. John, facing French Village.

AFTER THE revolution, we find him to have assisted Col. Michael Francklin, Superintendent of Indaian Affairs.

On April 8, 1785, Jean Baptiste Cyr was disposed of his land at pays Bas. He then devised a scheme of moving north to what later came to be called the Madawaska Territory. However, he died shortly there after in May 1785.

His sons, Joseph, Firmain, and Laurent lived at Kennebecassis on the 24th of February 1788., as witnessed by ancient documents. On Sept. 29, 1788 his sons Pierre, Francois, and Olivier demanded compensation for the loss of their



lands at Upper French Village, N.B.

His nine sons who eventually moved to the St. John Valley, to whom all Cyrs can trace their lineage were: Jean Baptiste Cyr - 1734-1828, Joseph Cyr - 1738, 1822, Pierre Cyr - 1737-1822, Paul Cyr - 1744-1812, Jacques Cyr - 1746-1828, Francois Cyr - 1744-1832, Firmain Cyr - 1747-1803, Olivier Cyr - 1742-1812 and Antoine Cyr - 1769-1837.

# Was Ist Los, Acadian?

A Commentary by Guy Dubay

Here are facts: When nine Cyr brothers came to Madawaska circa 1785, three of them were married to Ayotte sisters from Kamouraska, P.Q. and a fourth married a Belanger girl from St. Jean Port-Joli, P.Q.

When Joseph-Simon Daigle came here with his two sons, he brought here his second wife, the Quebecois, Charlotte Lefebvre.

The point being made is that right from the beginning, Madawaska was never a "pure Acadian" settlement - for no sooner had the Acadians moved in that the in-laws from Quebec joined them.

The Cyrs, we see, were married to the Ayottes but in Quebec the Ayottes were married to the Sauciers. Thus, no sooner did Pierre Cyr, Paul Cyr, and Francois Cyr come here with

their Ayotte wives than Alexandre Ayote and Germain Saucier came to join the family.

Settling Madawaska was a family affair but by 1785 that family was already an interprovincial one. The association of the Acadians with the Quebecois had occurred in the era before the settlement in Madawaska, but after the historic "deportation" or "grand derangement" of 1755.

It must be remembered the Acadian history did not stop with Evangeline. Even through the harshest years of the French and Indian Wars life went on and history continued being made. For a portion of the Acadian community that history includes those years when Simon Hebert lived at St. Charles de Bellechasse, P.Q. and Joseph Daigle lived at Montmagny and Jean Baptist Cyr lived in the parish of St. Louis de Kamouraska in the province of Quebec.

Here are more facts: The Martin family came from Acadia, but the Fournier family did not. The Fournier family trace their lineage in Quebec to the early 1600s. In Madawaska however, Jean Baptiste Fournier came here as the husband of Felicite Martin, an Acadian. Another early settler was Felicite Martin (Fournier)'s relative, Simon Martin - but Simon Martin had married Genevieve Bourgoin whose folks were pure Quebecois running back several generations.

In sum, the Acadians, because of their prior associations with the Quebecois, were, when they came here, a pretty well mixed bag when blood lines are considered. The Madawaska culture from its origin was not and has never been a pure Acadian thing.

Our old folks knew this - and that is why they use to

use the term "Madawaskayens" - and Madawaska use to describe the whole region of the St. John Valley, not just the town which now bears that name. This is why both the Madawaska Council of the Knights of Columbus and the Madawaska Company, a lumber company, were both in Van Buren and not Madawaska, Maine.

Because the name Madawaska has now evolved, at least on the American side of the river, to mean just the town, now in seeking to celebrate the people of the Valley, the people of old Madawaska, we have tried to find another word such which would include the people from more than the confines of present day Madawaska. That is we have sought to find a regional name to include the people of Fort Kent and Van Buren whose roots likewise go back to the old settlers.

Since the old settlers were Acadian - that term was adopted, but it's an unfortunate choice since it applies principally to one portion of the Madawaska settlers only. Technically speaking the term,

Acadian, would not include the Ouellets of Riviere Ouelle, the Alberts of Kamouraska. However Louis Ouellet had married Genevieve Cyr in the 1790s and Anselme Albert had married Rosalie Cyr in the early 1800s. So these Quebecois by marriage would be entitled to admission to the Acadian festivity, but would not the Acadian be equally entitled to join a Quebecois celebration in the valley? Our ancestors solved the problem by calling us all "Madawaskayens" or in English, "Madawaskan"

Now history is a funny thing. It gets twisted around sometimes and the way we tell Van Buren's history is a case in point.

Tradition tells us Francois Violette was Van Buren's first settler and the role of the Thibodeau family has never been stressed. A reading of the old 1786 land petition submitted jointly by Joseph Cyr, Joseph Theriault, Francois Violette and Olivier Thibodeau points out an interesting factor - all four petitioners were brothers in law to each other. That is Joseph Cyr, Joseph Theriault, and Francois

Violette had each married sisters of Olivier Thibodeau. Thus in a sense the second Acadian migration to St. Leonard, N.B. and Van Buren, Maine was the immigration of the Thibodeau women and their husbands.

History by and large is written by men, and the Thibodeau women have never quite been given their just credits due. So forty years later when Deanne and Kavanaugh heard from Francois Violette Jr the story of how the Acadians came here, word got out that the first settlers of the region were the Violettes.

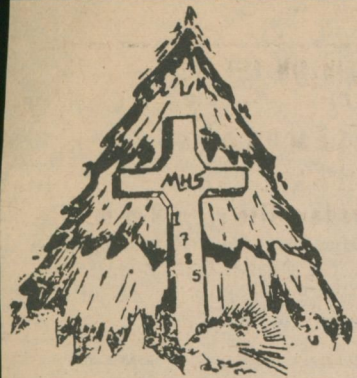
Then a hundred years more when Eva Chadbourne wrote her book on Maine Place Names, she relied on the Deanne and Kavanaugh record of 1831 to discover Van Buren's early settlers, "Francois Violette, Augustin Violette, and Joseph Cyr," and the Thibodeau girls who made it all a family affair are lost to history.

Guy F. Dubay



## MADAWASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# Why Acadians Came To Maine



By Guy Dubay

After the Acadian deportations of 1755, many of our ancestors who in earlier years had moved into the Beausejour or the Sackville area of New Brunswick felt the need to move further inland to evade the depredations imposed on them by the English.

Some of them moved inland into the Kennebecassis River area between present day St. John and Moncton.

Others moved into the Keswick and Fredericton areas where the main core of their lot found refuge at St. Anne du Pays Bas.

One February evening Moses Hazen, a captain under Major Moncton's command, plundered the Acadian settlement leaving Anastasie Bellefontaine, wife of Eustache Pare, and the wife and child of Michel Bellefontaine dead.

The Acadians fled to the

province of Quebec where they settled temporarily. Their lot in the city was a miserable one.

We find earlier refuges listed by J. F. Recher, pastor, in his register.

The deaths of Pierre Aucoin and his six children between the dates of Dec. 25 and 31, 1757 (Pierre aged 50, Charles 14, Jena Baptiste aged 6, Joseph Marie, aged 4, Thecle aged 15, Isabelle aged 20 and Veronique aged 12) point to the misery of the Acadian refugees.

The Fredericton Acadians may have been more fortunate than those who sought refuge in the city. Our ancestors settled mostly in the Kamouraska and La Pocatiere farm regions on the south shore of the St. Lawrence.

There, the young Acadian sons married Canadian girls and as soon as hostilities ceased, they returned with their new families to St. Anne du Pays Bas. Others moved in again into the Kennebecassis area and were found there at the time of the Loyalist immigration in 1783.

One man who became upset with conditions of the area after the coming of the loyalists was Francois Violette, first settler of Van Buren, Maine. We will

publish here petitions he sent to the Governor of New Brunswick, whose partial refusal led to his emigration from southern New Brunswick.

The first petition tells us that part of the lands that he had improved were lost to him by the grant made to Andrew Snape Hammond, Lieutenant-Governor of Nova Scotia. He pleads Governor Carleton to grant him what had by the recent survey come to be called, Lots No. 14 & 13. Action on the petition was only partly favorable as it curtly informs us that Francois Violette is to be registered for Lot 14 — nothing said about Lot 13.

"To his Excellency, Thomas Carleton, Esquire, Captain General and Governor in Chief of His Majesty's Province of New Brunswick, etc:

"The Petition of Francois Violette one of the French Settlers on Hammond River

"Humbly herewith:

That he was one of the first settlers in what is called the French Village on Hammond River and some years ago took the oath of Allegiance to his Majesty at which time the farm on which he now dwells was set off by M. Francklin, one of His Majesty's Council for Nova Scotia, who give him a writing which he supposed to be sufficient assurance of his farm.—

"That the manner in which the land has lately been laid out, Your Memorialist loses ten acres of his best improved Interval on which he now has a crop of wheat—

"That he has always strictly attended to his allegiance — has a large family to support for whom he is with difficulty able to procure the necessaries of life and should he be deprived of his improved Interval which has cost him so much labour it will greatly distress his numerous family.

"That the lot adjoining (No. 14) the one on which his house stands on the North side (which he supposes to be No. 13) includes said ten acres of Interval—

"Your Express Petitioner therefore humbly prays that said Lots No. 14 & 13 on the North side of Hammond River may be granted to him to enable him so to support his family that they may instead of being a burden, become useful settlers in the country — and in duty bound he will be ever thankful

St. John 28th August 1786

Francois Violette"

Written on the reverse of said petition, we find:

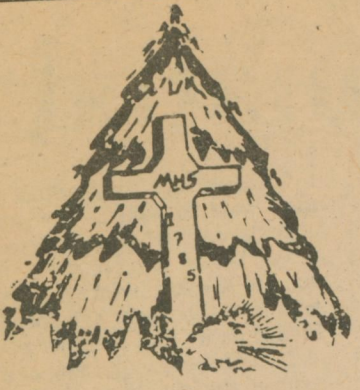
"Francois Violette a French settler on Hammond River praying a Grant of Lots No. 14 & 13 on said River — North side"

And written below that, in different writing is the cursory note "in council 8th Sept. 86 to be registered for No. 14."

We learn from the document to be printed next week that Francois' intention to secure both lots, lay chiefly with the desire to secure lands on which to place his seven sons. He was, it turns out, able to do this only in the Madawaska territory which he later moved to.

MADAWASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Why Acadians Came To Maine



EDITOR'S NOTE - This is the second of a series on Why the Acadians Came to Maine by Guy Dubay. President of the Madawaska Historical Society. Francois Violette's partial success in regard to his plea for two farm lots on the north shore of the Kennebecassis River was followed by the enclosed plea. "To His Excellency Thomas Carleton Esq. Governor in and over the Province of New Brunswick and its territories: "The Memorial of Joseph Sear humbly here with that he and Oliver Tibedo and Joseph Tareyo and Francois Violette wishes to settle between the Great Falls in the River St. John and Madaweqsescaw on the vacant lands and wishes that you give them lands their for themselves and families such of them as is able to settle and give us the Islands in front of the Lands We

Shall settle in the river and shall rest as in duty bound shall ever pray Queensbourg the 26 August 1789.

Joseph Cyr  
Oliver Thibodeau  
Joseph Theriault  
Francois Violette

On the cover of said petition is written: "Joseph Cyr, Oliver Thibodeau, Joseph Theriault, and Francois Violette ask lands below the settlers at Madaweqsescaw." Appended below in a different hand writing is simply a new date, "28 August 1789" indicating perhaps the date that the council received said petition, however, their action is not indicated as on some other grants.

Action must have been in the negative as this petition was followed up with yet another petition three months later.

The previous petition being unsuccessful Francois Violette, Joseph Cyr, Oliver Thibodeau, and Joseph Cyr, Oliver Thibodeau, and Joseph Theriault follow up their plea of 26 August 1789 with that of 24 Dec. 1789

Oliver Thibodeau's family consists of:

Oliver Thibodeau, Sr., His Wife and Sons named Oliver, 23 years, Gregory, 21, Fearman, 22, Paul, 19, Toussant, 15, Francis, 9, Georges, 8, Baptiste, 6, and three daughters, total 13.

Joseph Theriault, himself and wife and six sons, Joseph, 21, Gerard, 19, William, 15, Francis, 14, Simon, 12, Lawrence, 8, Four daughters, total 14.

Francois Violette and his wife and seven sons, Augustine, 17, Francis, 15, Charles, 14, D'aubigue, 12, Lewis, 10, William, 9, Alexander, three months, five daughters, total 14.

On the cover are the words: "Oliver Thibodeau, Joseph Theriault and Francois Violette ask land at Madawaska 21 Dec 1789". To which are appended: "may sit down on vacant lands and report their situation which will be seconded by present grants 24 Dec 1789."

Here then, why they came to Maine - That their sons may be

settled around them and that they may exercise their religion.

The Acadians in that age long before Social Security had developed the custom of deeding their property to an elder son, with the proviso that that son assume the care and welfare of his parents and any minor brothers and sisters still in the homestead.

Our ancestors called this custom "se met a sa rente" or "devenir rentier". We shall publish further an 1879 document where two generations further, this is being done.

A friendly Jewish lady once reminded me when I discussed the ghetto concept with her that such clanishness has among her people been called "ghetteizing". In Ireland you'd call it "clanning". In any case, we find here that the English Loyalist intention to assimilate rather than deport the Acadians as Col Lawrence had done a generation earlier only led to their second "derangement".

Today the desired assimilation is taking place. Nearly every Saturday the newspapers are

filled with betrothals which evidence the fact that the nationalities and religions have become amicable, that ghettoizing does not run as deeply.

The difference, I ascribe to 20th century social programs developed since the New Deal.

With Social Security, Medicare and in fact cradle to grave welfare, the obligations to family are assumed by the government, and the homes with three generations - which have a way of bringing all one's cousins as well as brothers together, are becoming rare. The family under our smaller units have become more independent of each other. It is not our point to moralize here - but simply to state that historically it is so.

The Acadians came to Maine because of the fact that their families transcended many generations. The Biblical "children's children" was a matter of course, where all gathered around their Patriarch. Francois Violette, his 14 children, his 150 plus grandchildren were a family, not 14 separate ones - which is why he came to Maine.

Viz: "To his Excellency Thomas Carleton Esqr. Lieutenant Governor of His Majesty's Province of New Brunswick.

The Petition of Oliver Thibodeau Sr., Joseph Theriault, Sr., and Francois Violette, Sr. "Humbly herewith:

That your petitioners are descended from the early settlers of Acadia at the time it was under the dominion of France, and possess small lots of Two Hundred Acres each.

That your petitioners are incumbered with large families for whose settlement in life they look forward with much anxiety and it is their earnest wish to see them settled around them on lands of their own which they cannot expect in the part of the country where they now dwell.

That your Petitioners are informed that government offer encouragement in lands to such persons as shall settle high up the River St. John which your petitioners are desirous of doing not only in order to obtain such lands for their families but as they may have the assistance of a Priest in the performance of the rites and ceremonies of their religion and the superintendence of their childrens education.

That having always demeaned themselves since the cession of Acadia to great Britain as faithful peacable and industrious subjects and settlers.

Your petitioners humbly pray that lands proportioned to the numbers of their families may be granted to them and their children (a list whereof is annexed) at a place called then Madawascas between the Seven Islands of the River de Vert on the River St. John and your petitioners as in Duty bound shall ever pray.

The Mark X of Oliver Thibodeau

The Mark X of Francois Violette

## MADAWASKA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## "The Town That Was Incorporated Twice"

John; (Now called Caswell) Thence West by the North line of township F. and Township K. (Today called Connor) to the East line of Township numbered sixteen in the third range of townships West of the East line of the State (now identified as T 16 R 3 W.E.L.S.) thence North by the East line of said township numbered sixteen, to the North

East corner thereof.  
"Thence West by the

north line of townships numbered sixteen, in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth, and seventh ranges, West of the East line of the State, (Township 16 R 7 is now Eagle Lake) and thence continuing along the same course until it intersects the river St. John; (at the St. Francis-Allagash Line) thence North until the line intersects the river St. Francis; thence by the center of said river to the grand Portage; thence by the grand portage to the line of Canada and this State.

Thence by the line of Canada, and this state as established by the Proclamations of seventeen hundred and sixty three, the commissions to Governors Murray, Carleton and Haldimand, from seventeen hundred and sixty three to the seventeen hundred and eighty six; the Act of the British Parliament of seventeen hundred and seventy four, and by the treaty of peace in seventeen hundred and eighty three.

"To the North West angle of Nova Scotia, now the North West angle of the province of New Brunswick; thence South by the line established by the Com-

missions, to Governors Wilmot, Campbell, Legge, Hughes, Hammond and Parr, from seventeen hundred and sixty three, to seventeen hundred and eighty two; by the treaty of peace, of seventeen hundred and eighty three, and by the commissions to Sir Thomas Carleton the first governor of New Brunswick, in seventeen hundred and eighty four. "To the first mentioned bounds, being the East line of the State, on the true meridian North from the monument, at the head of the river St. Croix; be, and the same is incorporated into a town by the name of Madawaska. And the inhabitants of said town, are hereby subject to the same duties and liabilities, and vested with the privileges and immunities, which other incorporated towns are, within this State.

"Sect. 2 — Be it further enacted, That all that part of the County of Washington, which lies within the limits of Madawaska, as described in the first section of this Act, be, and hereby is set off from the County of Washington, annexed to the county of Penobscot.

"Sect. 3 — Be it further enacted, That any Justice of the Peace within the county of Penobscot, or any Justice whose commission runs throughout the State, is hereby empowered to issue his warrant to some inhabitant of said town directing him to notify the inhabitants thereof to meet at such time and place as he shall appoint to choose such officers as towns are empowered to choose, at their annual town meetings."

We see then that the Madawaska incorporated in 1831 covered all territory of all Valley towns from Hamlin in the east to Allagash.

What parts of the Canadian side of the St. John were included in this town of Madawaska, I can not be sure. There remains to locate precisely where the "Grand Portage" was. (Is this the Portage between Lake St. Francis and Lake Pohenagamook or that from the Madawaska River to Lac Temiscouata).

The commissions and treaty referred to in the above Act need to be studied further to be able to state precisely what part of

Canada was included in the Town of Madawaska.

It is obvious that the State included the north shore of the St. John as part of its territory for the U.S. Census of 1840 which includes the names of the 1,300 or so residents of the north shore.

We can but reiterate Julie Albert's statement of 1969: "The first, including territory south of

the St. John River and disputed territory north of that river, incorporated a tract of 4,272 square miles known as the Madawaska Settlement. It was more than 118 times the size of the ordinary Maine of United States township. No other town of such magnitude has ever been created in Maine or in any other state."



**EDITOR'S NOTE** — This is the first in a series of articles written by Guy Dubay, President of the Madawaska Historical Society.

With this headline, Mrs. Julie Albert gave us in her Centennial Book of 1969, the early facts of state and valley relationships.

The Acts which we quote in their entirety here will describe precisely the boundaries of each of the Madawaskas to receive a state charter. It must be noted at the outset that Aroostook County had not been incorporated as of the time of the Act here quoted. Hence we find herein references to Washington and Penobscot counties.

From the "Laws of Maine, 1831" we now quote Chapter 151:

"An Act to incorporate the town of Madawaska and for other purposes. Approved March 15, 1831."

"Sect. 1 — Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives, in Legislature assembled, That the territory called and known by the name of Madawaska Settlement, in the counties of Washington and Penobscot, bounded as follows: beginning on the boundary line between this State and the Province of New Brunswick at the North East corner of township F. on Greenleaf's map, near to and south of the river St.

## Celebrates 100th birthday

## Mrs. Dubay recalls a most interesting life



Mrs. Euphemie Dubay

by Guy Dubay

VAN BUREN — Mrs. Euphemie (Michaud) Dubay, believed to be Van Buren's oldest resident and the widow of the late Abraham J. Dubay (1868-1943), will reach her 100th birthday Sunday, Feb. 18.

A native and lifelong resident of this town, Mrs. Dubay resided with three of her daughters at their Birch Street home until two weeks ago when ill health and need for nursing care brought her, however, reluctantly, into the Borderview Nursing Home where she will celebrate her birthday.

Born Feb. 18, 1879, Mrs. Dubay is the seventh of 17 children of the late Remie Michaud (1845-1931) and Methaide Sirois (1851-1893). In recent interviews Mrs. Dubay recalled the joys and pathos that is life of this large family.

Family statistics show that out of 17 children, only a third of the family lived to adulthood.

In 1885, when she was barely six years old, tragedy struck the Michaud family in the form of an epidemic in which five members of the family died within a week.

Among Mrs. Dubay's fondest memories is the recollection of her next younger brother, Joseph Michaud (1880-1885), who in her earliest childhood year had been her confidant and playmate.

Joseph succumbed to the epidemic, dying at a mere 4 years 11 months. Yet Mrs. Dubay's recollection of the boy, who died nearly 95 years ago, is vivid and precise.

Mrs. Dubay recalls the somber days of 1885, when the family upon returning from church where a funeral for the deceased had but taken place, found that yet another ill member of the family had passed away.

Family records indicate the following died in that epidemic:

Julie Philomene Michaud — May 9, 1885 (9 years old).

Leona Michaud — May 5, 1885 (7 years old).

Joseph Alfred Michaud — April 29, 1885 (4 years old).

Catherine Alma Michaud — May 6, 1885 (3 years old).

Alcide Michaud — May 6, 1885 (2 years old).

Can you imagine the trauma that this would have on you if you were a mere six years old at the time?

Shortly after giving birth to her 17th child, Mrs. Euphemie Dubay's mother died at the age of 41, leaving her husband with but six of 18 children born to them.

Young Euphemie was 14 years old at the time. The task of rearing the family fell to an older sister, Elise, later Mrs. Joseph Cyr of Frenchville, who lived to the age of 93.

Life was not all tragedy, however, and Mrs. Dubay now infirmed by advanced age, has pleasant memories. One of them involves her school days at the Good Shepherd School, founded in 1891, where she learned to read.

With this skill she became invaluable to older members of the family in a largely illiterate society. Especially after the death of her own mother, Mrs. Dubay spent many an afternoon reading the novelettes and books brought in to her home by the school.

Musing over what this ability meant to her, Mrs. Dubay lately recalled how much joy reading books to her grandmother meant to the older lady, Marie Luce Martin-Sirois (1818-1903) who never had the opportunity to learn reading in the school-less era of Van Buren's pioneer days.

In Mrs. Dubay's own words, she put it this way:

"Reading has been a tremendous way to banish loneliness. I wonder what the old people use to do when they couldn't read? My

grandmother loved it so to have me over to read to her while she tended to the monotonous rhythm of repetitious chores. I could never read enough for her."

In recalling her own grandparents, Mrs. Dubay brings to mind persons who are the first couple registered in the marriage records in Van Buren. The St. Bruno Church records of 1838 begin by listing a few baptisms and deaths and on the second page of the old volume is the wedding record of Thomas Sirois (? - 1902) and Marie Luce Martin, whom Mrs. Dubay still speaks of in the manner as if they were living.

Oral family traditions gleaned from her father's side of the family brings us back through her grandfather Israel Michaud (1823-1897) who shared with his own grandchildren recollection of an uncle who was a captive of the Indians of Kamouraska for some years.

The bachelor uncle is said to have shown up at a local barbershop wearing the same hat with his name woven on it, leading distant relatives to take note and eventually recognize the long lost relative, presumed for many years to have been dead.

Both her father and grandfather were carpenters by trade and many nail-less frame houses with interlocking joists and bevelled wall panels were the fruit of their labors as Van Buren began to develop a village around the industrial core at Violette Brook.

Published newspaper reports dating to the turn of the century speak of how Remi Michaud (1845-1931) had begun the contracted repairs on the old St. Bruno Church whose steeple he and his brother Cyrille had raised in 1876.

A deeply devout Catholic, Mrs. Dubay's favorite story which she reserved for her great-grandchildren is that of how St. Augustine once watched a young boy on the beaches of North Africa pouring pailful after pailful of sea water in a small hole dug in the sand.

When asked what he was doing, the boy replied to St. Augustine that he was trying to empty the ocean into the hole in the sand. "But my boy that is impossible," the Saint replied.

Taking on angelic qualities the boy, according to the story, is said to have answered, "No more impossible than what you were doing as you paced these beaches trying to resolve the mystery of the origins of creation."

In taking our children — her great-grandchildren — to see her, it becomes a challenge to her if she can get the babbling babes to utter among their first words the names of "Jesus, Mary and Joseph."

When Father Francois Morcel S.M. (1844-1922) came to open up classes in St. Bruno Sacristy, where the beginning of St. Mary's College took root, a young boy named Abraham J. Dubay (1868-1943) numbered among the first students. With so much social life centered around church services, Mrs. Dubay likely first noted her beau there.

Abraham J. Dubay, to the young lady, represented a man of promise, having read law in the office of an uncle, Peter Charles Keegan (1850-1931). The young man began to practice law in 1892.

A figure in local politics, A.J. Dubay became selectman in the era when Van Buren's large lumber mills were being

established and he had a hand in the founding of the local Waterworks and Power District here. Attorney Dubay capped his career by serving on the bench as trail justice in the local municipal court.

Our centenarian, Mrs. Dubay married her lawyer husband on Washington's Birthday in 1897 beginning her home life that was to include 11 children of her own.

Through the boom years of the lumber era down through the lean years of the depression, with patient Christian resolve, Mrs. Dubay tended to her homemaker role that lead to the nurturing of her children. These include two sons and nine daughters each of whom could provide material for biographies of their own. Edward, her eldest son, recalled the family years with these words:

"We were never a wealthy family and to provide for the welfare of all both parents had to work long hours and to do without many of the commodities which we now feel to be indispensable.

At a very early age our mother taught us our prayers and Catechism and prepared us for our First Communion and her confidence and trust in God has been the lodestar of her life."

Widowed since 1943, Mrs. Dubay has continued in her motherly role sharing her experiences and faith to an ever increasing progeny.

Remembering how a dislocated hip led to hospitalization at 90 years old and a cure that left even physicians marveling, faith continues to be a key factor contributing to her longevity. Partly because of her advanced age an operation was ruled out. But banking on Ste. Anne's help, she came to walk again.

Musing over a recent priestly visit to her home wherein through the spirit invoked she overcame a recent bout of malaise and general weakness she said of the young English curate, "He is a good priest, I know that. We don't speak the same language. He doesn't understand my French and I don't speak his English but we understand each other well. I know what he is thinking as he prays. He is a very good priest, that young one."

Of Mrs. Dubay's children, nine are still living. Marguerite Marie, the eldest of the family, born April 16, 1898, became a Marist missionary nun (Sister Jean Eudes S.M.S.M.) and died in Tonga, Oceania, Jan. 7, 1942.

Lucie Agnes the fourth child of the family, born April 7, 1903, died in Van Buren April 30, 1948, after years of illness.

The other children surviving are Edward G., Rose Marie, Monique E., and Jeanne M., all of Van Buren; Anna Marie (Sister Euphemie S.M.S.M.) and Cecile (Mrs. Harry Robbins) of Massachusetts; Antoinette (Sister Mary Loyala S.C.I.M.) of Biddeford-Saco, Martha of California; and Alphonse A. of Nashua, N.H.

While the family initially intended to share the joys of the occasion with friends and well-wishers, all celebrations and gatherings have been cancelled due to Mrs. Dubay's weakened condition which now keeps her convalescing. We thank all the kind people who have already expressed their congratulations and best wishes.

## Real Acadian hard times

To the editor,

My mother was 13 years old when her father died. Still, that may not have been the hardest time in her life. The Violettes had lived a pretty good life. Her grandfather had given \$800 to St. Bruno Church to build a brand new altar when the parish moved the church from the Grande Rivière to Violette Brook. Belonie Violette, 1817-1879, had served as a member of the Board of Assessors of Van Buren Plantation, 1844, as commissioner of Aroostook County, 1859, and as a state representative, 1867. I don't say that to boast but merely to give evidence that the Violettes lived well.

Belonie Violette had bought farms for each of his sons when they reached the age of their majority. My grandfather was still a minor when Belonie died, but instructions were given to the inheriting son on how he could provide for the minor children left behind. Thus, my mother grew up on the farm *aux concessions* provided for my grandfather at the appropriate time.

When Abel Violette, 1859-1916, died, three sons continued to operate and manage the farm until real Acadian hard times came in the Harding-Coolidge Depression of 1926.

(See *Acadian*, page 38)

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## Acadian

(Continued from page 9)

To allow for their young sisters, my mother and my aunt, to get close enough to *l'école du couvent*, the heirs of the Abel Violette Farm bought a home in town for my grandmother, mother and aunt. That home on St. Mary's Street was within easy walking distance of church, school and stores. So, despite their losses in 1916, life went on.

Just before the town of Van Buren built Champlain School at the bottom of Allendale Road, the Hammond Lumber Company was incorporated. One of the sources of lumber for the company was the timbered portions of local farms. Because local farmers were providers of lumber to the firm,

Hammond Lumber Company would on occasion advance money to the farmers on the security of a mortgage on the farm. My uncle John secured one of those loans from Hammond Lumber Company, but in 1923 there came the real Acadian hard times. There had been 34 notices of foreclosure recorded at Northern Aroostook Registry of Deeds the year Warren Harding got elected President of the United States. In the year he died in office, there were 186 notices of foreclosure posted at the Registry.

The following year two such notices were posted by the Hammond Lumber Company against my uncle John, one for the farm and one for my grandmother's house. The problem had come about when the Hammond Lumber Company stopped buying lumber then turned around and started to collect on its loans.

Now, after leaving school, my

mother in the better years had found work with the Sisters of the Holy Family in the kitchen at St. Mary's College. However, in the Acadian hard times of the Harding-Coolidge era, not only did my grandmother and mother lose their home; but Keegan Village lost a pulp mill, and Van Buren village lost its college. My grandmother, now out of her house and homeless, went to live with a brother who took her in, but my mother's uncle had no obligation to his sister's daughters, especially since they, by now in their early twenties, were getting beyond the orphan age.

My aunt, who had completed her education at *l'Ecole du Couvent*, chose to enter the community of nuns teaching there and went on to live a teaching career, but my mother had gone into kitchen work at the college. When that closed, she came into the real Acadian hard times —homeless, spouseless, jobless.

Fortunately, the good nuns with whom she worked invited her to move to Sherbrooke, Quebec, where the community had its mother house. She became a novice among the Sisters of the Holy Family, but she was an Acadian out of her element in Quebec.

In Sherbrooke, some of the other novices insisted that she be called "Laviolette." The Québécois were fully aware of the old Québec name Jahan dit LaViolette. When she named herself as a member of the Violette family, they insisted that she was a Laviolette. She argued with them, but those were the times when Acadians didn't talk back to the Québécois. It peeved her that they didn't take her for

what she was.

Eventually she left the convent, arriving back to a place with no home. The farm had been lost in the Hammond Lumber Company foreclosure, and so she had no home.

Fortunately, the remaining Marists at St. Bruno had a heart, and they gave her a housekeeping cook's job at the rectory. From there at one of the masses at St. Bruno's, she noticed in the *jubé de l'église* (the choir loft) the attorney's son who was not behaving appropriately during mass. Though she was not impressed with him, somehow, with time my father turned the picture around — and we come to wedding bells in 1931.

Still, the young couple had, each in their way, managed through the Harding-Coolidge hard times. He had lived through the "scab calling" at International Paper Company where workers in Keegan were hurried off to the Chisholm Mill in Jay to break through the union's strike picket lines. The affair was never one that Dad ever really liked to talk about, but it's history, the now lost history that was the product of the type of economics admired by some of the victors of the year 2004.

Will history repeat itself? Right now I'll only say that history is both personal and national. What I describe is the effect of the Harding-Coolidge economics on the Violette and Dubay families. I suspect the recent election of George W. Bush by a narrow margin will have as much impact on our economic life here as did "the return to normalcy."

Guy Dubay  
Madawaska



# Coping: The tale of an Acadian family

by Guy F. Dubay

LILLE — Old records incessantly bear out the role of the family in the age before Social Security and aid to dependent children. The Bible speaks of brother marrying his brother's widow in the spirit of keeping the family unit together.

The following is replete with examples of how families with young children were kept together rather than turning the children loose on the state as might be the custom today.

In 1874, Ozithe Mercure, wife of Isidore Theriault, died. The Lille farmer was left with young children. Though older members of the family were aged enough to be on their own, five of Theriault's nine children were still below the age of 13.

Such a situation was not a first occurrence for the Theriault family. Frederic Theriault (1789-1861), Isidore's father, had married at the age of 25 in 1815. With his wife, Marguerite Lizotte (1796-1823), he had eight children and then she died at the age of 26. He remarried a year later and had a family of 18 with his second wife, Marguerite Ayotte (1801-1874). Like his dad then, Isidore Theriault (1828-1874) in 1850. She was just one month younger than he. As noted, they had eight children between 1851 and 1870. In 1874, at the age of 46, Ozithe Theriault died.

A few months later, Isidore Theriault married Philomene Daigle (1840-1906), who as it turns out seems to be the 34-year-old niece of his former wife.

We are not in a position to judge anyone's motives to marry, however we might be able to surmise added inducements to marry that arise circumstantially here.

We haven't been able to determine whether Daigle had had an earlier marriage and was herself widowed or if at 34 she was still a spinster. She appears however, to be the daughter of Germain Daigle (1806-1870) and Celeste Mercure (1812-23).  
latter... turns a

said, two families with the same father, one of eight children and the other of four.

It would be rude to say that such was a marriage of convenience, for none of us really ever know the intimate circumstances of another couple's marriage. Yet suffice it to say that such families found a way to cope through life's trials without imposing on the state or breaking up the family.

Large families are sometimes ridiculed by "holier-than-thou" moralists who advocate government programs for this and government programs for that. "Make every child a wanted child," they say, and they then follow up with advice on birth control.

Yet on close examination of the lives of large families, it seems they can develop relationships to cope with the kind of problems that might arise in any family.