

Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Church

# Burial place of original parishioners remains secret

**EDITOR'S NOTE** — This article does not deal with the present controversy centered around the closing of Notre Dame du Mont Carmel Church in Lille but rather focuses on historical questions concerning the early history of that parish currently being researched by the author.

by Guy Dubay

**LILLE** — In 1976, the Madawaska Historical Society, largely through the untiring efforts of its Museum Curator Miss Bernette Albert, erected a commemorative monument over the original Mt. Carmel Cemetery in St. David.

Since then, the question has fascinated us — Who in fact lies buried here? The commemorative plaque states simply that Acadian pioneers were buried here circa 1840-1850.

Old timers have assured us that they in fact remember seeing headstones and wooden cross markers over the graves at the cemetery site on the Madawaska-Grand Isle town lines. However definite names have been hard to come by.

No original headstone or marker have been found here yet that should not be surprising because people who neither read nor write do not compose epitaphs to carve on stone.

So by and large the first generation gravesites of the Valley were marked by mere wooden crosses or markers which have been obliterated by the ravages of time.

Documentation regarding this old cemetery, said to include at least 12 to 20 graves, has been difficult to locate. Much that has come down to us concerning the site has come down through oral tradition and some comments about it in Rev. Thomas Albert's History of Madawaska.

Unfortunately the latter work gave no reference to documents from which his comments were made.

A search of church records causes us to ask more questions than we have been able to find answers.

It is a matter of fact that the Mont Carmel Church opened in 1869 with the first baptism on March 4, 1869, the first marriage dated April 16, 1869, and the first funeral recorded on June 5, 1869, (Mt. Carmel Register 1869, pp. 1, 2 and 5).

However, since the site of the present Mont Carmel Church in Grand Isle was only deeded to the Diocese of Portland in 1876, it leads us to wonder whether the original Mont Carmel Church site was that cited at Mont Carmel Hill site in present day St. David.

The deed of Cyrille Thibodeau, Marcel Thibodeau and Regis Thibodeau, "Yeomen, all of Grand Isle," states that "in consideration of \$575 paid by the Fabrique of the Parish of Notre Dame du Mont Carmel in said town and county convey to the Right Reverend James Augustine Healey, Bishop of Portland, part of lot 218 in township 18 range three containing five acres."

The transaction, dated March 31, 1876 (vol. 10 p133 No. Aroostook Registry of Deeds), also mentions an additional acre on lot 219 in said town plus sundry other legal terms beyond our ken. The question then is where was the Mont Carmel Church site from 1869 to 1876?

The Church register tells us that 12 persons were buried in the

parish in 1869. Thirteen more are listed for 1870 plus 19 for 1871, nine for 1872, nine again in 1873, 11 in 1874, seven in 1875 and four in 1876 for a total of 84.

The question is where are the graves of these 84 Mont Carmel parishioners? It could be that some were transferred to the cemetery behind the Lille church in Grand Isle afterwards, but indications point to the use of that burial ground in Lille only after 1876.

The answer may lie in two other source documents recently uncovered.

From 1859 to 1877, the Bishop of Portland held title to a four-acre tract of land at the Mont Carmel Hill site or river lot 186 which is situated partly in the town of Madawaska and partly in the town of Grand Isle.

We have traced ownership of this four-acre lot to the present day though some particulars still need to be researched to determine whether the four acres included the commemorative cemetery site or just the church site lot where the state Department of Transportation now maintains a roadside picnic area off U.S. 1.

Of these facts, however, we are certain:

Remi Plourde (1812-1889), the second owner of lot 186 at the town line site, granted the four-acre site to the Right Rev. David W. Bacon in 1859 (Vol. 4, p. 100). Remi Plourde had received it from Bruno and Sophie Ayotte who had received it in Treaty Grant from the states of Maine and Massachusetts in 1845.

The deed further mentions that church wardens marked out the site in 1854, but Albert notes (p. 246) that Bishop Fenwick of Boston had selected the site for Mont Carmel in 1846 and that his successor, Bishop Fitzpatrick, had dedicated the church there in 1848.

Moving the church site in the 1870's to Lille appears to have caused considerable controversy. The matter also became embroiled in broader diocesan questions, namely the matter of defining the limits between the American and Canadian dioceses.

While technically speaking, the area had been under the Bishop of Boston from 1808 to the founding of the diocese of Portland in 1853 (1978 Catholic Almanac pp. 491 and 496) (Guildday Life of Bishop Carroll p. 623), Canadian Bishops had continued to appoint priests to area churches long afterward.

Indeed the Rev. Patrick McKeaghy, second pastor of St. Bruno who died there in 1860 and lies buried here in diocesan soil, is not recognized in the official necrology of priests of the Diocese of Portland.

Early Valley pastors when reassigned in that era took up other posts in New Brunswick, not Maine as in the case of the Rev. Antoine Gosselin, first pastor of St. Bruno, who was assigned in 1852 to Grand Digue and Cocagne area of New Brunswick.

Rev. Albert (p. 247) names the Bishops of Chatham and later the Bishops of St. John, N.B., as Church administrators of the "Madawaska American."

Rt. Rev. James Augustin Healy who succeeded the Rt. Rev. David W. Bacon to the See of Portland in 1875, sold the abandoned church site at Mont Carmel to Florent Fournier on Jan. 8, 1877, marking

the close of a chapter of Eraly Mont Carmel Church history (Vol. 19 p. 71 N.A.R.D.).

What is not yet clear, however, is whether this transfer to Fournier, said to include the lands named in deed of Plourde. The Rev. David W. Bacon included the cemetery of just the church site.

Turn of the century land transfers adjoining the cemetery site make reference to the cemetery as a point of departure, or boundary, but it is still unclear whether the land on lot 186 recently held by the Madawaska Federal Credit Union includes the graves of our ancestors (Vol. 415 p. 486).

The question still lingers however where might we find the grave of Mathilde Cyr (1822-1869) wife of Marcel Thibodeau; Benoit Theriault (1844-1869), husband of Nancy Plourde; Joseph Grivois (1815-1870), spouse of Thecle Martin; and Jean Baptiste Levasseur (1782-1871), who had married Marguerite Cormier.

Circumstantial evidence has it that Hilarion Violette (1790-1871) and Julien Thibodeau (1796-1871) are among the previous who appear to have been buried at old Mont Carmel, but that is all that we have at this point — circumstantial evidence which demands corroboration to give conclusive evidence.

Of interest, however, is the fact that when Bishop Healy deeded

the current Mont Carmel Church site to the Bishop of Portland, a stood.

That cross had long disappeared by the time of the American Revolutionary War Bicentennial, thus fitting with the spirit of the time, a new monument was raised there by the Historical Society and blessed at a commemorative ceremony on Memorial Day 1976 by the late Msgr. Albert E. Long, then pastor of St. Thomas Church in Madawaska, with a homily delivered on the occasion by the late Rev. Roger Bolduc, then

*Don't forget to see Rev. Bolduc at St. David's.*

## St. Agatha rec. department

### corn boil termed success

**ST. AGATHA** — An overwhelming crowd of over 300 people attended and enjoyed the St. Agatha recreation department corn boil. About 100 dozen ears of corn were sold along with hot dogs, chips, and soda.

A variety of games were enjoyed by all. The games played were nail hammering, darts, candle and water pistol, ring the bell with a sledge hammer and a sawing contest.

There was a door prize which was won by James M. Chamberland of St. Agatha.

Trophies were awarded for the

pastor of St. Gerard in Grand Isle. Corporation Sole, in 1891, he (or his lawyers) called it "Notre Dame de la Paix" instead of "Notre Dame du Mont Carmel" (Vol. 24, p. 273-286).

This may have been in part a response to the cynic who had dubbed the controversial parish as "Notre Dame de la Chicane" (T. Albert, p. 249).

Rev. Albert notes the end of the story by stating that at the time of his writing (1919) a mere cross marked the site on the arid rocky flat land where the old cemetery

bike-a-thon which was held this summer.

These trophies went to Jeanne Chamberland for collecting the most pledges, and Peter Michaud of Madawaska for being the first to finish the 25 mile bike ride.

The recreation department would like to say a big thank-you to those volunteers who were kind enough to give their time and help with this great success, and to all the people who attended.

The St. Agatha recreation department would like to remind everyone that every Monday night there is bingo at 7 o'clock at the center.



## TIRE CLEARANCE SALE!

**Exclusive Atlas Tire Dealer In St. John Valley!**

**SALE ENDS SEPTEMBER 5**

**GLASS BELTED RADIALS**

As low as **\$38<sup>92</sup>** tax incl.

---

**POLYESTER FIBERGLASS BELTED**

4-ply polyester

As low as **\$25<sup>95</sup>** tax incl.



**DOUBLE S&H STAMPS**

**ON ALL TIRE SALES PLUS FREE BALANCE & MOUNTING!**

# CHANEL'S EXXON

Main Street, Van Buren Tel. 868-3998

# Tid bits of history

by Guy Dubay

1886 or 1887, I think it was. Edward McElveney ran a lumber crew up Pleasant Lake just above Churchill Lake — 4 million board feet of the stuff ay-yuh!

For Andre Cushing down in St. John, an American firm in St. John, N.B. nevertheless.

Round about Third Lake the logs were dragging. "She's gonna get hung up," the drivers warned. That's when McElveney put a bug in Jos. Savage's ear.

Both Cy Dickey and Will Cunliff Jr. testified about it years later. They recalled their own logs high and dry on the St. David flats. Crews were busy twitching 'em back to the banks into the low water.

It hadn't rained for days but suddenly the water mysteriously began to rise.

And just like a cocker spaniel's ears don't fly, pretty soon, on the pitch of water, these pine logs began to run by with a-whooping and a-whomping from the guys on the logs to the crew on shore.

The mystery was only unravelled 26 years later at a River Commission hearing held in the Hammond House in Van Buren.

They all testified, Joseph Savage of St. Francis, Cy Dickey and Will Cunliff Jr. of Fort Kent and even Ed McElveney of Fredericton.

'Tweren't the first or the last time this mystery on the river would occur. What mystery it was can only be revealed in our next Tid-Bit of History.

(P.S. Anyone figured out yet what a Tid-Bit of History is? *C'est un "p'tit-boute" d'histoire. Tid-bit = Ti-boute.*)

# Tid bits of history

## Madawaska Election Frauds

by Guy Dubay

The *North Star*, Presque Isle's answer to the *Loyal Sunrise* on May, 15, 1875, editorialized as follows:

"Madawaska is again the theatre of pretended election frauds. We named some weeks since that an attempt was being made by a few desperate politicians to cheat the people of a sheriff whom they elected and take one whom they did not elect by pretended election fraud."

Explaining further, the editorial said:

"This year the people chose Mr. N.S. Lufkin by a majority of 72 votes. In looking over the

returns, it was seen that by disenfranchising Frenchville, another man would be elected...

"Who ever heard of such a monstrosity - and yet if it can be done with Frenchville, it may be done with every other town in the State."

There are more details, but I promised the editor to keep these notes down to the size of a tidbit - so the rest of the story will have to keep.

Anyway, a couple of years later what happened here would prove to be a mere rehearsal, but that goes beyond a tidbit to a master's degree, and this is no place for a thesis, folks.

# Tid bits of history

by Guy Dubay

1886 or 1887, I think it was. Edward McElveney ran a lumber crew up Pleasant Lake just above Churchill Lake — 4 million board feet of the stuff ay-yuh!

For Andre Cushing down in St. John, an American firm in St. John, N.B. nevertheless.

Round about Third Lake the logs were dragging. "She's gonna get hung up," the drivers warned. That's when McElveney put a bug in Jos. Savage's ear.

Both Cy Dickey and Will Cunliff Jr. testified about it years later. They recalled their own logs high and dry on the St. David flats. Crews were busy twitching 'em back to the banks into the low water.

It hadn't rained for days but suddenly the water mysteriously began to rise.

And just like a cocker spaniel's ears don't fly, pretty soon, on the pitch of water, these pine logs began to run by with a-whooping and a-whomping from the guys on the logs to the crew on shore.

The mystery was only unravelled 26 years later at a River Commission hearing held in the Hammond House in Van Buren.

They all testified, Joseph Savage of St. Francis, Cy Dickey and Will Cunliff Jr. of Fort Kent and even Ed McElveney of Fredericton.

'Tweren't the first or the last time this mystery on the river would occur. What mystery it was can only be revealed in our next Tid-Bit of History.

(P.S. Anyone figured out yet what a Tid-Bit of History is? *C'est un "p'tit-boute" d'histoire.* Tid-bit = *Ti-boute.*)

# Tid bits of history

The Valley picked a loser

By Guy Dubay

It's not often that we have a chance to dig up state election results at the local level way back in the Civil War era, but rummaging through an old Presque Isle newspaper we came up with the following results:

	1864		1863	
	Cony	Howard	Cony	Bradbury
Hamlin	28	38	15	59
Van Buren	51	95	5	82
Grand Isle	16	65	2	71

Checking this out with back issues of the Maine Register, I find that Samuel Cony of Augusta (Cony High School is named after him) was a

Republican.

State-wide, Cony beat Bradbury 65,339 to 50,676 and he beat the other Democrat even worse.

For us, however, though the Valley Towns can be said to "*avoir perdu leurs voix*". the election results in Lincoln's day do show how deep Democrat roots are in the Valley since they were picking Democrats over Republicans well over 125 years ago.

(Be patient, we'll tell you about Republican victories in Madawaska in another Tidbit.)

---

# Tid bits of history

---

## Madawaska Murder

by Guy Dubay

The above headline caught my eye as I spun through the pages of the *Loyal Sunrise*, a civil war era newspaper published by the Rev. Danile Stickney of Presque Isle.

The issue of March 23, 1864, reported that a Mr. Smith had been killed at Madawaska, some six miles below Little Falls.

It isn't entirely clear why this happened but from the sketchy notes I've been able to come across, I know that a Mr. Smith of Old Town, acting as an officer, sought to arrest a Mr. Gove who killed him.

The escape was only temporary, and though the paper states that there were many

confused rumors about the incident, we know Mr. Gove ended up in the Houlton jail.

The Oct. 5, 1864, issue of the same newspaper noted that after some kind of hunger strike in jail, Mr. Gove, whose trial had been delayed to the next terms of the Superior Court, died in jail.

In mid-nineteen century style, the editorial comment of Mr. Gove said: "He was unfit to live, and more unfit to die".

*Editor's note: Tid bits of history will appear as a weekly feature on this page. The rest of the articles in the series are all pretty much in the same light-hearted vein as the one presented this week.*

# Education beyond the classroom

To the Editor,

Education does not only take place in the classroom. In a rural environment, the numerous activities of the 4-H clubs give testimony to that fact. Behind every successful 4-H club one usually will find a concerned parent who assists in organizing the neighborhood youth program.

Often you will find a mother of teenaged children behind the movement. Teenagers have a need to relate with more than family and, in the rural setting, a concerned parent often lies behind the mobilization of people and environment into that educational experience beyond the classroom which 4-H can provide.

My recent sortie into archiving, for example, led me to rediscover that among the early background experiences of our present Speaker of the House, John L. Martin, was a goodly sting of that fresh-air educational experience with the 4-H club of Eagle Lake. Though not of a farming family, Martin's hands once touched the soil enough to qualify him for a trip to National 4-H meetings in Chicago.

Back in the depression era it was realized that economics does not occur in banks or classrooms but must be practiced at home. Home economics became the theme of many publications appearing in the battle against the depression. The war effort following the depression gave the movement a patriotic fervor. This was the era of "food for peace" when home gardening was regarded not only as economic but as patriotism.

This was also the era of farm co-operatives. The University of Maine having already engaged in agricultural experimentation and life sciences, the University became an

ideal organization to provide a sort of educational co-operative linking the home economics and the farm co-operative ideas.

Herein lie the seeds of the co-operative extension movement which provides an array of information packets on a variety of subjects important to our lives, but rarely discussed in formal education settings.

At one point, I was told, "A University is its faculty." The purpose of a university faculty is to disseminate knowledge and thus better our lives. Thomas Jefferson insisted that an informed citizenry is a requirement of sound democracy. Where knowledge is controlled by hierarchies, you can't have a democracy. A citizen needs access to knowledge to exercise his informed judgement.

Education then becomes doubly important in our incessant struggle for freedom. But the human struggle for freedom has un-

covered the need for education to extend beyond the classroom in such human movements and co-operative efforts as the 4-H, the County Extension Service, the FFA, the Boy and Girl Scouts and the local historical societies.

Ours is an open society. The degree with which the university participates in that society depends on whether the faculty opens its doors to educational experience beyond the confines of the classroom.

Our communication with each other is going to have to take place by using our real names and, if we are going to level criticisms at one another, we are going to have to do it with the courage of our own names behind it. Otherwise, we, the citizens, shall have to turn to resources elsewhere to secure for ourselves an education upon which we found our democracy.

Guy Dubay  
Madawaska

# 'When I read...Rooster, I laughed and I laughed...'

To the Editor,

When I read Phil Turner's ROOSTER, I laughed and I laughed, but apparently not everybody thought the book was funny. I probably have an advantage over Valley readers, I know Phil Turner. The man's usually got a smile that makes you wonder whether he's got something up his sleeve, and you never really quite know whether he's pulling your leg a bit. The key to enjoying his witticisms is to not take him overly seriously — after all what Phil is doing here is being a raconteur — not a historian.

The key to the fun in the book is to figure out when he's telling you the history of Aroostook and when he's telling you a tale — sort of like an old story teller handing down the legends: there's a grain of truth in the legend, but there's the spinning of a yarn in it, too.

I called the author after I read ROOSTER to tell him that his work was a book of "litistory". Now what the heck is litistory? Well it's half literature and half history and it helps to be an historian to know when he's pulling out from one phase to the other. And that's what makes the book funny.

For example, he pulls your leg right from the beginning in talking about John Turner as John Letourneau. If you

climb up the Turner family tree, like I did, you'd know that Phil can't trace his line back further than 1831 when Jonas Turner (b. 1807) married Statira Burlock in Carleton County, N.B.

So to take the Turner to the Acadian days, Turner whips out of his imagination an ancestor named John Letourneau who supposedly provides the Turner family with its origins.

In essence, this is like saying to the Anglos who might act superiorly that, as per origins, they're just like the French anyway.

The winters in Aroostook bring us all into a common experience and this is what the book is all about — telling us we share a common experience.

Some of my friends did not think the book was funny. When I told them I laughed and laughed while reading it, I was told, "I don't care for his kind of humor."

One thing I've learned about living in the Valley, are the limits on humor and the supersensitivity on ethnic matters. What passes for humor here is ribaldry (a la Baudelaire) not wit.

But what ROOSTER possesses is a lot of wit that's being misread here like the famous "I'm going fishing" editorial on the Acadian Festival a few years back.

The article was witty — but the people were incensed, but as a piece of writing it remains one of the most artful pieces that's ever appeared in this paper. But a lot of people got on their high horses and missed the point entirely. And the reaction tells more about the shortcomings of the people than the short comings of its author.

The same applies here as Turner unwittingly stepped into the hornet's nest by asking for a review of his book in this paper.

You've got to remember that the French had an old song about a monk who danced. Such is humor for the French. It's okay for the French to laugh at their priest but heaven help the poor priest who laughs back at them.

In the same vein, peasants may laugh at their Seigneur, but the seigneur must not laugh at them. When we overreact with a defensive stance to jest, we're taking the author and placing him on a pedestal with the aristocrats thereby making peasants of ourselves.

He's not the one putting us down — we're the ones putting him up. We're doing it to ourselves — and we've got to stop doing that — making everybody else a notch or two above ourselves.

If the same thing had come

from me — you'd have said, "Guy, you're full of baloney," and you'd have dismissed it. But just because it's Phil Turner who's full of baloney, why can't you treat him just like you treat one of your own — tell him he's full of it and laugh it off.

Any other reaction tells more about us than about Phil Turner.

The guy's telling us that the Turner's are nothing but a bunch of Letourneaus. That is, no different from us, and the book is really a compliment to us, if only we won't insist on making the author into a giant bigger than we are.

Oh, well, Phil Turner, don't be too hard on yourself, you only stepped in Frank Hopkins shoes a mite.

Angus McLean, you know, did have a high regard for

Febronie Arsenault. I can't send you to Febronie, he died some 15 years back but talking to old Angus might do you a world of good.

Guy Dubay  
Madawaska

P.S. While Febronie Arsenault was alive, old Angus McLean did his best to get Febronie riled, but when Febronie died, Angus called it straight, he called Febronie "A Man for all seasons".

Oh yes, Don, take another look at that Rooster picture you published in *Times*. Draw its outline and compare it to the shape of Aroostook on the map. You ought to know, Don, when an Anglo presents you a mirror he expects you to "look through the looking glass" — after all how else do you get into Wonderland?



# The power brokers and Dickey dam

Re: Mr. McBreairty on Dickey Dam

Last spring, in this paper, I stated that Dickey Dam will be built. The gist of my statement was the dam will be built despite the local resident's view. I predicted that when those out of state and down state interests which control Maine's forest lands find themselves in an all out power pinch, the dam will be built. Much like other matters which affect and change the lives of local people, this dam thing is not a matter for local determination.

This is not a statement suggesting one ought to favor the dam. Rather, it is a statement of reality. It was meant to awaken the local resident toward the urgency of a situation where vital local issues are determined anywhere else but locally.

The fate of Dickey Dam will be decided as much in St. John, N.B., Bermuda, B.W.I., and Ottawa, Canada, as Portland, Maine, New York, N.Y., and Boston, Massachusetts. The point of reality I'm trying to bring home is that it isn't in Allagash, Fort Kent, or even Madawaska where the dam issue will be decided.

If one studies the behavior of politicians in using the Canadian pulp cutter as a trump card in the bargaining with Canadian authorities to secure oil for the American Paper companies during the late, great energy crisis, one can see that there are two levels of reality, the overt reality you and I live with - the

reality of a small job, with a small routine and small rewards, and then there's the covert reality - the big power plays, the big deals which are beyond the scope and ken of us as small time workers who are never the real winners in any deal.

What I tried to portray in that piece was that those "super bosses" who can arrange such oil deals in time of crisis, now do not favor the dam, but when conditions change such that hydroelectricity may be cheaper than millions of gallons it takes to run Maine's industry - the stockholders in New York and Connecticut, who now espouse the environment issue as a cover-up, will drop that issue like a hot potato.

I can not predict when this turn around will occur - I can only predict it will come. It will be as sudden a change as that of Maine attitudes toward the Canadian laborer in Maine. In 1973, the Canadian, as a trump card in negotiations with Canada, was regarded as an asset. Now, by the thinking of those same paper-maker union men who kept their jobs during the energy crisis because Canadian oil kept the mill open, these same men now view the Canadian woodsman in Maine as the thorn in the side of American laborer rights. How quick people change!

If people have changed on the bonded woodsman issue, they can change on the dam - and they will.

Mr. and Mrs. St. John of Fort Kent, and Mr. Gardner of

Allagash responded to my statement last Spring as if I were a proponent of the dam. They suggested I visit Mactaquac in New Brunswick to determine the role that dam plays in the local economy. The tour guide there answered by query by stating that only an approximate thirty-five people worked there now that construction is nearly over.

Not being a visiting politician, but just a mereman in the street like you, I had to get my answers from official tour guides rather than some power commissioner or engineer. But the point is, I did not see a boon city rising up around the dam - just a government sponsored tourist trap called King's Landing - and the Indians at St. Anne's mission seem every bit as poor as they were.

But that doesn't change the nature of reality. I still believe that we'll see the greening of the St. John when the fat cats decide that things should be that way.

I am heartened that area residents like the St. Johns, Mr. Gardner and now Mr. Darrell McBreairty are speaking their piece. It's time some local people get into the thick of this issue, or else we'll find a dam in our backyard someday over which we have no control.

That's the real issue - control. The Allagash and the St. John River area above Dickey are indeed beautiful, but tell me, sir, who controls it?

Guy F. Dubay  
Madawaska, Maine

Book review*Aux Pied du Mont-Carmel**Aux Pied du Mont-Carmel*

by Guy Dubay  
Madawaska

*Aux Pied de Mont-Carmel*

*Aux Pied du Mont-Carmel* is not just a genealogy book, it's a book of life, but it's also life as only Cecile could tell it.

When Cecile Dufour Pozzuto does something, she does it with a kind of verve, a kind of energy and pluck that can make you both laugh and want to cry at the same time. This is because the truth can often be maddening while being funny but Cecile has always had a way of drawing humor out of maddening situation.

Maybe it all has to do with something she calls survival while at the same time possessing what's called a "*joie de vivre*" facing adversity while making the most of it to get out of it all moment of joy.

In a large family all may share many aspects of life but each individual has his own way of seeing things. No one's life in a family is ever quite the same as another. I can almost envision family members in this case saying, "Cecile, *Au pour quoi gue tu a dit ca?*" And being slightly upset over the family revelation because things didn't quite seem that way to the sibling.

But one of the enduring qualities that Cecile has is that "*elle a pas la langue dans sa poche*". It wouldn't be quite right to say of Cecile that "*elle a du front toute le tour sa poche*". It wouldn't be quite right to say of Cecile that "*elle a du front toute le tour de la tete*." Her boldness is not of the heartless kind, but it can be said that "*elle n's pas frette aux yeux*".

It's that particular match of

quality, perhaps drawn out of a little farm girl that did all the chores boys would do but never having had the advantage of pants while doing it. Perhaps that is what gave Cecile that particular match of character and wit which allows her to record circumstance in a way that only she can.

That is why I kind of pushed, pulled and pleaded with Cecile to get on with it and put on paper some of those stories she would often tell us.

Because the work is honest, all people who have a love-hate relationship with the author better be prepared to face both extremes of feeling because there's a lot of truth here. Some of it grates the soul, some of it tickles the funny bone, but no, this is not the old sob story of La Pauvre Evangeline. It's rather, as Francis Doucette noted in the introduction, "historical events on a human scale."

It's "our real heritage" beyond the cultural impositions of *les tetes de pioches* who come along to tell us how the meaning of our life is really what they believe it to be.

I'm sure after the dust settles from any family storm that might arise because the other members didn't quite see it (life) that way, the value of *Aux Pied de Mont-Carmel* will come through as such that people will come around and say "*Merci, Cecile, merci beaucoup*".



# Return to normalcy

To the editor:

Victory statements in letters to the editor of our daily newspaper blow my mind: The Red Sox and George Bush won, life can not get any better than this says a County voice. Out of our churches to the ballot box they went says a Valley voice. What the voters don't seem to know is history.

More people lost their farms in the St. John Valley during the Harding-Coolidge depression than in the better know Great Depression. I came to an awareness of that fact first by searching my own roots.

My parents married in 1931. My paternal grandfather was an attorney, but his father and brother were farmers in Hamlin. My maternal grandfather was a farmer who died when my Mother was young. My uncles took over the family farm. During the Harding-Coolidge era the real Acadian Hard Times came. Both families lost their farms.

Perhaps the attorney work of my grandfather, A.J. Dubay (1868-1943) saved my own personal family from the hardest times-but my father's uncle Vivan left the St. John Valley for

Massachusetts. His 12 year-old son, Louis, on his own, went to work in the logging camps in Patten. My mother's brothers, three of them, left the farm and went to work on the Maine Central Railroad. Two of the families remained in Waterville and Lewiston. One of them, Uncle John Violette, was able to come back and repurchase the farm. So in the 1950s as a 12-year-old was able to get acquainted with potato harvesting.

I never tasted the depth of their

See *NORMALCY*, page 26

26 ST. JOHN VALLEY TIMES, Madawaska, Maine 04756

November 17, 2004

Letter to the editor

## Normalcy

continued from page 8

troubles. I grew up on the generosity of the survivors of Acadian Hard Times. There were days when I'd come home from school and would find a 50 pound bag of potatoes on the porch. I hadn't seen him do it. My Mother hadn't seen him either, but I'd enter the house and proclaim, "Ma, *Mon Oncle John a venu icit.*" They knew the hard times: farm evictions, rum-runners, and the KKK. That's why they helped one another.

The victors of the Harding-Coolidge elections declared their era to be "The Roaring Twenties" because the rich guys ran off to the New York Stock Market to proclaim their self-righteous heritage. But the years 1922 to 1924, the years of seeding Nazism in Europe and self-righteous prohibition in the United States, were years of farm foreclosures, drownings and shooting of rum-runners on the St. John River. In the County, the political shenanigans extended to the night burning of a cross on Mars Hill. It's a story that is told in whispers, the untold history of self-righteous victors.

Fortunately for me, President Wilson in 1916 had Congress enact a Farm Loan Program which created the Federal Land Bank of Springfield. In that era of Bank closings, the Northern Production Credit Association (which was the St. John Valley branch of the Federal Land Bank) opened the door of opportunity for my family. When the First National Bank of Van Buren closed, the bank's manager drove his car into the St. John River and drowned. But the bank's cashier, Alexis Cyr kept a cooler head and found work at the Northern Production Credit Association.

The year I was born, my Father was hired as a clerk by Alexis Cyr. As a kid I remember some Sunday afternoons when Alexis Cyr loaned us his car-and Dad took the family out to a picnic at Madawaska Lake. I never knew the poverty of my forebears because they, in their difficulty,

had leaned to help each other.

The year Alexis Cyr died, my Father bought our first family car. I remember being in my Father's office at NPCA when Jean-Baptiste Pelletier, an attorney with an office in the other portion of the building, came in by the inter-connecting door of their offices to announce that the St. Joseph Church in Hamlin was burning. We all got into that 49' Plymouth and headed to the fire. We got there just as the steeple came crashing down.

Yes, there's history-lots of history that I know; political history, economic history, that I've not been able to tell professionally because I've been kept on the sidelines by those who would keep our history safe and innocuous by keeping us locked into the chapter of Evangeline and the Acadian deportation.

That great era dubbed by Coolidge as the "Return to Normalcy" was not normal at all. I don't think it is normal to have the son of the County Attorney sitting in the State Prison and the County Sheriff locked in the Federal Penitentiary in Atlanta, Georgia.

The Irish side of my family

lost a father of eight children as he attempted to cross the St. John River on the ice in January. In more prosperous times before the Harding-Coolidge years that man had been a manager of one of our Valley saw mills. But there was a glut in the lumber market in 1924, the year that the Hammond Lumber Company foreclosed on the Violette farm "*dans les concessions*" as we use to say it. That Irish named relative turned to another source of income to feed his large family. In ensuing years it cost him his life.

Another member of that Irish family had once served as legal advisor to the unions in the large saw mills in Van Buren. When that market glut in the lumber industry came, he turned to the bottle and an illustrious career took a down turn.

To the political victors of our day who throw the Bible in our faces, I have but one word for you: Read Ezekiel 14.

Yes, the times are "roaring" for the few with a corner on the oil market-but in the return to normalcy that the forebears of the present victory proclaim are the roots of real Acadian Hard Times.

The only avenue I have to tell

you is this little weekly newspaper which allows me to tell you all I know. There is history, indeed much untold history. God, I wish I had the power to tell it. To do so, however, I need to be kept

alive-and as Shakespeare put it: "Aye, there's the rub."

(Next installment: Madawaska Election Frauds)

Guy Dubay  
Madawaska

# Untaught history

To the editor,

On Aug. 23, 1798, the English pound married the American dollar. Yes, that was the day when Alexander Baring married Anna Louisa Baring. Yet, to realize the significance of that union one must look into the family background of the bridal couple to see just how much theirs was the union of the pound and the dollar.

The name Alexander Baring is not a buzzword in the St. John Valley today. Yet, two towns in Washington County are named after him; Alexander and Baring. His father, Francis Baring (1740-1804) was the founder of the British investment bank later known as Baring Brothers of London - the firm that bailed out the Bank of England in times of

crisis.

Now, local historians here better knew Alexander Baring as Lord Ashburton and it has something to do with the Webster-Ashburton Treaty, which settled the international boundary dispute in 1842.

The marriage of the pound and the dollar was reconfirmed on April 1, 1802, when Henry Baring married Maria-Mathilda Bingham. Yes, I told you that the banking firm of London was known as Baring Brothers - and Alexander and Henry were just two of them - and both married Americans: Anna Louisa Bingham and Maria Mathilda Bingham.

Up in the headwaters of Maine's Kennebec River there is a power dam at a place called

Bingham. Ah, now we come to the other side of the story. Anna and Maria were daughters of U.S. Senator William Bingham (1752-1804) and his wife Anne Willing. The mother-in-law is the key to understanding the matter here since she was the daughter of Thomas Willing, founding president of the Bank of the United States. Senator Bingham, the son-in-law, was also a founding director of the original Bank of the United States. He was a rich Philadelphian who owned (get this!) two million acres of forestland in Maine. He likewise owned extensive land holdings in upstate New York - so what we are talking about here are fat cats.

*(See Untaught, page 28)*

## Untaught

*(Continued from page 9)*

The history is this: After the American Revolution, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts was saddled with war debts. To pay off those debts Massachusetts set up a lottery on forestland in Maine. The scheme didn't work. So, next they turned to rich men with access to venture capital. Senator Bingham, an in-law to the Baring Brothers of London, came to the rescue. And, when he died, Alexander Baring was an heir and devisee of those lands in Maine.

But this is the history which fat cats would not have you know and understand today. It exposes too much truth of how the dollar and the pound are wedded to each other - and where British troops go - American troops are sure to follow if the British troops run into hard times. (Iraq was a British mandate after World War I that's why the Blair mind and British pride can't let it go).

The details of the history I cite can indeed be accessed in Robert

Albert's, "The Golden Voyage: The Life and Times of William Bingham", published in 1969, and also in Frederick Allis's William Bingham Lands in Maine published by the Massachusetts Historical Society. But these are the kinds of works professors don't take from the shelves to share with students these days because they make dull, detailed and heavy reading.

Yet, you will not understand the marriage of Bush mind with the Blair mind until you understand that history repeats itself and that we've "been there, done that."

The particulars may vary today

from the past but you won't understand the present without understanding the marriage of the pound and the dollar.

I've told you the story of Francois Violette and his one hundred-pound note from Henry Darling of St. John, N. B., in 1790. And I followed that by telling you of his grandson, Belonie Violette, and his sale of a saw-mill site on Violette Brook to George W. Smith, a director of one of several banks in Bangor in 1853 and how the Acadians moved from the pound to the dollar. But the switch from the pound to the dollar can be understood when one understands how the

pound (Baring Brothers of London) married into the Bingham family of Philadelphia (the Bank of the United States). You hardly ever get to be told how Daniel Webster was the attorney for the Baring interests in the United States.

It can be important to the powers that be today that you do not fully understand this and that you be kept ignorant of your own history so that the true nature of their deals is kept secret and that the source of their power is not revealed.

Guy Dubay  
Madawaska

# Life in an old museum

35 V  
18-Aug-04

To the editor,

Is there life in an old museum? For me I've enjoyed my summer at the old Tante Blanche Museum in Madawaska but for me the joy is as much in the people - the visitors than in the old artifacts of history. I've enjoyed telling tourists from "away" about Acadia, and the Madawaska settlement - about how they settled on long narrow farms which run from the river and the flats to the hardwood ridge. But my favorite visitors - the ones I have enjoyed the most - are the local people who bring life in their memory to the objects before us.

One lady saw the little glass duck shaped - or rather swan headed candy dish in the glass cabinet - and she said, "Mon Doux!" and then told me how she had donated this to the his-

torical society more than 20 years ago. "Bernette Albert talked me into it - and here it is today." It's a joy to see the joy in the memories that provides the spark in this summer work.

One of my students from 40 years ago (oh we don't count the years) came with his brother and we looked at old maps and figured out the difference between an Acadian and a Quebecois. He picked up a book I could not have interested him in 40 years ago. The book was Lawrence Violette's "How the Acadians came to Maine."

There's only a few weeks left before the cold weather shuts us down. But the point I want to make is that the biggest part of the museum is you. No matter if you are just a father with a little boy or the family historian writing the story for your nieces and

nephews, it's the people who come to the museum that have brought me the joy of the season.

Oh yes, I've had other kinds of visitors too - at least one squirrel (or was it a chipmunk) and two birds. One bird flew in and tried to fly out through the closed windows. Then he turned himself out cold. It was lying still on the floor and I grabbed an old town tax book (to use as a shield) and swept it out on the stoop. In the warm sun it got on its feet and finally flew away. In neither instance did I try to tell these "visitors" about Acadians or how the old tax break (une braye) works. God's creatures may say that I discriminate in favor of humans but alas my employer is the Madawaska Historical Society.

Guy Dubay  
Madawaska