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**MEMORIES  
AND  
GENEALOGY  
OF A  
DAIGLE FAMILY**

by  
*Candide Daigle Sedlik*

ME  
GEN  
DAI

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DEDICATED

to my Parents

Alphonse Daigle - Marie Cyr

and Grandparents

Israel Daigle - Eugenie Daigle  
Adolphe Cyr - Gertrude Marquis

with gratitude and admiration

"Their love and devotion bound  
our family together and  
gave meaning to our lives."

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A project of this magnitude requires countless long hours of research, composition, and preparation. I would like to extend my boundless gratitude to all who, have made this undertaking a reality through their kindness, patience, and love, especially:

The "cousins" who so kindly answered my letters and provided me with information on their immediate families.

My family, relatives, and friends who have patiently and politely listened to me speak of nothing but "généalogie" (genealogy) for the past twenty-five years.

The relatives, who have received me so pleasantly in their homes and while reminiscing, shared family information.

The Pastors and their assistants, of the various parishes of the Saint John Valley, who have so willingly and graciously supplied me with data requested.

For all the assistance kindly received as I visited various town offices in the Valley for information.

To all the personnel at the various libraries and historical societies who have provided their assistance.

My sisters for sharing family photos, and Noel and Marguerite Daigle for giving me reproductions of Uncle Elias' precious photographs; and all cousins who provided photos - much indebtedness.

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Mrs. Pea (Jeanne Collin) Daigle for helping me unravel the second family of Francois Regis à Hilairon Daigle.

To my husband, Harry, for encouraging and giving me his support over these years.

And, I am grateful and happy at having conversed with numerous "little cousins" over the telephone and personally meeting many of them. They have all greatly enriched my life.

Candide Daigle Sedlik

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"Happiness is:

- . . . the patch of beauty 'chez-nous' I call home,
- . . . the tranquility and peace for thoughts to roam,
- . . . the living cycle I call my very own,
- . . . the energy that rolls up with the dawn,

Dear God I thank thee."

Candide Daigle Sedlik

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## INTRODUCTION

During the course of my secretarial career, I was fortunate to have worked many years for the late Henry J. Meinke, Art Director of the Company. He was also a gifted artist. Oftentimes I would reminisce about life in the Saint John Valley - sharing with him "des petite histoires" (little stories) which he would enjoy with much interest. It was during some of these "petite histoires" that he urged me to record for future generations this simple, unspoiled way of living.

Mr. Meinke encouraged me to write about my humble beginning - growing up on the farm - and to garnish my stories with family memorabilia and photographs. I was greatly inspired by his encouragement and heeded his advice. I started to make notes and through the years as I recalled memorable events, I wrote many "petite histoires" of my childhood on the farm.

I grew up in a family where our Grandmother Daigle enjoyed telling stories of the past. My father also had an uncanny memory for tales. Papa smiled with genuine warmth while the twinkle in his eyes gave away his mischievousness, especially when telling us stories. As a child, I would listen in wide-eye admiration as my grandmother spoke about her childhood. She would weave so much life and nature into her stories that I would become completely enraptured. During our early years, Grandmother had a strong influence on us. Storytelling must be in the family genes as through the years, I have become a "raconteuse" d'histoires" (storyteller).

"Memories of a Daigle Family" - Section I - has been written for the pleasure and nourishment of my siblings, my nieces, nephews and relatives. The memories are my personal experiences of life as I lived on the family farm. I have documented these reminiscences for family heritage. Simple, shared family experiences often become the happiest memories. By keeping our ancestors in our memories, we share and learn from one another in tracing one's family history. The best traditions are passed down from generation to generation. They link us to the past and bring special meaning to the present.

I am recording life on the farm so my nieces and nephews may capture a glimpse of my generation, that of my parents and grandparents, living in an era with its lack of modern conveniences; and despite the hardships, managing to find some moments of joy and peace.

Also, in my retirement I have continued researching the genealogy of my family.

"Genealogy of a Daigle Family" - Section II - is the result of my research on my Paternal and Maternal Grandparents: Daigle/Daigle and Cyr/Marquis, respectively.

During the 1980 Madawaska Acadian Festival and the Daigle Reunion, Mr. Guy Dubay, Historian, wrote, "Daigle History Disclosed in Two Chapters" published in the St. John Valley Times - June 11, 1980. I am sharing a passage from Mr. Dubay's article: "From here it remains the task of each Daigle Family today to seek out its own genealogy which link it to all that history which belongs to all in common." His comment was an incentive for me to continue during moments of discouragement.

In retrospect, I realize that it was a privilege having been part of a rural farm family. We were raised to be appreciative for what we had and to utilize our assets and resources creatively. Our outlook on life, our values and strengths derived from our parents and grandparents. They possessed great courage and were hard working people. These qualities were passed onto us, which made us strong individuals. It was their love and devotion that held us together and gave meaning to our lives.

The process of discovering and documenting my family genealogy, history and memories has been extremely rewarding.

"Oublier ses ancêtres, c'est être un arbre  
sans racine, un ruisseau sans source."  
proverbe Chinois

"To forget one's ancestors is to be a tree  
without roots, a brook without its source."  
Chinese proverb

(Courtesy of the Madawaska Historical Society)

## MADAWASKA, MAINE

Madawaska, Aroostook County, Maine, is where I was born and raised. Madawaska is the most northeasterly town in the United States and it is also an International Border Town. Across the Saint John River from Madawaska is the City of Edmundston, Madawaska County, New Brunswick, Canada. The Saint John Valley is most beautiful and enhanced by the Saint John River winding its way through the town. Madawaska was incorporated twice - first in 1831 and again in 1869. The International Border was settled in 1842 - Webster-Ashburton Treaty. In the pioneer days the name Madawaska had various spellings: Matawascah Settlement, Medaueskak, Madoueskak and Madawaska Settlement, to name a few. Madawaska is an Indian name meaning land of the porcupines.

Briefly, Madawaska was settled by French Acadians, my ancestors, also ancestors to many people in the Valley. They arrived in the Saint John Valley in 1785 and carved the Madawaska Settlement out of the wilderness.

Acadian people are descendants of a few hundred families who emigrated from France to Acadia, a French possession in the early 1600s, now known as Nova Scotia, Canada. Our ancestors left France for the "New World" in search of peace and religious freedom. They came to establish a colony, to worship unhindered, and to cultivate the land as many excelled in farming. Among them, were skilled craftsmen: blacksmiths, carpenters, surgeons, dyke builders, et cetera. Unlike the English, the French were not aristocrats, but had trades and were able to farm for their foods; our ancestors came from the middle class and were survivors. They possessed great faith in God and it was this faith that gave them the courage and strength to overcome the many obstacles encountered. They lived peacefully and were self-sustaining in Acadia for over a century. The Acadians were known for building and maintaining complex dykes, which created fertile and productive farmland from saltwater marshes.

My direct ancestors were not deported during the great deportation of the Acadians; nevertheless, they were caught in the whirlwind of it and wandered for some thirty years before arriving in the Madawaska Territory. In Madawaska, our forefathers found a place where they wanted to remain - now over two hundred years.

The Madawaska area of the Saint John Valley is unique - unique in the sense we were raised in a bilingual environment.

My knowledge of the French language has been an invaluable asset throughout my life and I feel very fortunate originating from the "Madawaska Settlement." In spite of many adversities, the French language has survived and is still flourishing in the Valley.

Our family farm is located approximately six miles from the Saint John River in the beautiful hills of "les Concession de Saint David" (back settlement - Town of Madawaska). The farm is 200 to 225 acres more or less and has been in the family for several generations. The land is a sequence of rolling hills, low at the front along the public road then climbing toward the back to the highest point known in the family as "Candide's Hill." From this spot looking south is a panoramic view of Long Lake, a section of Sainte Agathe, and on a clear day, Cross Lake. To the northwest, we can see an area of the City of Edmundston and the blue-green mountains of Canada. At sunset the scenery is especially spectacular from this point. To the North side is a tract of approximately eighty acres of forest; and beyond the forest we can see the hills of Saint Basile, New Brunswick, Canada. Continuing looking east, the "Pointue de la Rivière Verte" comes in view (Green River, Canada, Mountain). This spot on the hill is a favorite for everyone in the family.

"We come and go but the land  
is always here and  
the people who love and understand it  
are the people to whom it  
belongs for a little while."

Willa Sibert Cather  
(1876 - 1947)

## SECTION I

# MEMORIES

## of a Daigle Family

"What we keep in memory is ours unchanged forever."

Author Unknown

"You can close your eyes to reality  
but not to memories."

Stanislaw J. Lec  
Polish Author (1909 -1966)

## FAMILY HISTORY

**Our Parents** - The family setup in my parents' generation on the farm was much different than it is today. Very often, in those days, a family consisted of a mother, father, a grandmother, grandfather, siblings, the hired man, and perhaps a maid - all under one roof. Farm wives married at twenty or younger and had large families. Their husbands it seems were usually older. A "traditional" family of the past was a breadwinner father and a stay-at-home mother, whose primary role was raising the children. That's the way it was when my parents married. At the time of her marriage, my mother was twenty years old and my father was thirty-one.

My father, Alphonse Daigle and mother, Marie Cyr married in the Church of Sainte Agathe on 12 November 1929, St Agatha, Maine. After the ceremony, her parents organized a small reception at their home. After the reception they were driven via horse and sleigh to the Hotel Royal in Edmundston, New Brunswick, Canada, where they spent their wedding night. In the morning they travel by train to Rivière du Loup, a popular honeymoon paradise of the time.



Alphonse and Marie

Many years later, I asked my mother how she met my father. At that moment she blushed and quickly proceeded to tell me she had first seen him when she was a ten-year old child waiting to make her First Holy Communion. Apparently two events were going on that day, a Holy Communion Ceremony preceded by a Wedding. At that tender age she had noticed my father who was the best man. When she saw the "sui vant" (best man), she said she "fell in love" with him. She inquired who the best man was and found out he was Alphonse Daigle. The bride was her cousin, Bertha Cyr, and the groom was Levite Hebert. Bertha was also Alphonse's cousin. The next time Mama saw my father was at the home of their mutual Aunt and Uncle, Philomene (Daigle) and Victorie Cyr, (Bertha's parents), when she was about eighteen years old. The third encounter was at the Vermette Store in Grand Isle, Maine, while she was working as a maid for Mr. and

Mrs. Vermette, and occasionally waited on customers. My father entered the store in a hurry to purchase a machinery part, was unshaven, and wearing old farm clothes. She did not recognize him until he asked her to accompany him the following evening to a house party. She accepted the date and the rest is history.

As was the custom, in that era, after the honeymoon, my father brought his young bride to live on the farm with his parents - all under one roof.

Exactly two weeks to the day prior to their marriage was the Stock Market "crash" - Black Tuesday - 29 October 1929, the beginning of the infamous great depression that plague them throughout the early years of their married life.

My parents raised a family of eight children: Doris, Leonard, Candide, Albertine, Albert, Germaine, Joseph Leo and Joanne - all born at home on the farm with the assistance of the good Doctor François Faucher, except Joanne was born with Doctor Romeo Levesque's assistance. We were all baptized at Saint David Church, Madawaska, Maine.

**Our Grandparents Daigle** - A generation earlier, my grandfather had done the same with his bride, my grandmother. After their marriage, in the Church of Sainte Luce, Frenchville, Maine, 29 June 1896, my grandfather, Israel Daigle, brought his bride, Eugenie Daigle (also a Daigle), on the farm to live with his parents, Pierre Regis Daigle and Athalie Nathalie Cyr. My grandparents had a family of six children - two, Laura and Albert, died in infancy; Adolphe died at the age of 20 and Delina died at 18 years of age. Alphonse, my father, and Odile survived, married and raised families of their own. My grandparents were married fifty years.

My grandmother told us she met grandfather at a flour mill in Frenchville, Maine. I recall grandmother saying she had accompanied her father, Hilaire,



Israel and Eugenie

to the mill as a helper with a load of buckwheat. This mill was located somewhere near the Sainte Luce Church. On that day my grandfather, Israel, also was at the mill with a load of buckwheat. They were introduced and my grandfather found himself attracted to this young woman. According to grandmother, they saw each other only on three other occasions. The first meeting being in the fall of 1895, and within six months they were married.

**Family Homestead** - The humble home where grandma started her married life was not as modest as the home of her parents in Daigle, Maine. Grandma recalled the simple house had once been painted a shade of yellow with barn red trimming; however, when she arrived in "les Concession" of Saint David, the paint had faded to just a trace of its original colors.

The main part of the house consisted of "la grande maison" (great room), a bedroom, and a small room on the first floor. In the winter time "la grande maison" was the large kitchen - family type room. In the summer, the stove would be moved to the summer kitchen, a room between the woodshed and the rear of the house, where all the cooking and eating took place. In the summer time, "la grande maison" was furnished with a sofa, chairs and a couple of small tables - it was cozy, airy and homey. In the fall the process was reversed. I mention this because this moving at times was a big ordeal.

The second floor comprised of four bedrooms with a trundle bed underneath one bed. One bedroom was always referred to as "la chambre d'la maitresse d'école" (schoolteacher's room). There was a small storage-type room we called "le trou à tout mettre." In this room "le petit grinier" (attic) could be accessed via a ladder. It was an interesting attic with a loom and baskets of "des peloton de guenilles" (rag strips wound into balls), apparently left over from when grandma made "catalognes" (rag blankets). She also made many woolen blankets from the wool of our sheep. On the top landing hung a huge photograph of the Rev. Father Charles Sweron. My grandmother's mother, Anais (Lebrun) Daigle worked for Father Sweron as a "servante" before she married.

My grandparents' bedroom was on the second floor - the room grandpa had occupied before his marriage, and his parents occupied the bedroom on the first floor. When my father brought his bride to live with them, grandma kept her room upstairs and my parents occupied the downstairs bedroom. After my parents started their family, the small room next to their room was the





The Old Homestead - 1963

children's room. I recall sleeping in this room at a very young age along with Doris and Leonard, each in our own "couchette" (crib). I remember this old house very well, as I was almost fourteen years old when we moved to the "new" house.

The structure we called a home was not insulated and was drafty. The main source of heat was from a cast-iron stove in the main room - kitchen. This stove was used for heat, hot water, cooking and baking. Over this wood-burning stove, my mother prepared wholesome meals for her large family. It was not unusual for ten to twelve sitting around the large kitchen table for three meals a day. There were always hired men whom she fed.

The first chore my father did in the morning was to start a fire in the stove or rekindled if he was fortunate enough to have gotten to the stove before the fire went out. During the winter months, there was a small box type stove upstairs where he would start a fire in the morning, and again in the evenings, a couple hours before bedtime. On colder winter nights, my mother would cover the window in our room with an old quilt.

In the wall directly behind the stove was an opening with a slider constructed of sheet metal that could be opened to provide heat to my parents' bedroom. A little Acadian ingenuity was used here. The stovepipe would pass through the ceiling into my grandparents' bedroom heating it, then connecting to the chimney that started on the second floor. There was a cubbyhole under the chimney called "le trou à bas" (hole for stockings).

While visiting the Fort Fairfield Block House Museum, I was fortunate to discover a Pioneer cast-iron stove exactly like the one we had in my childhood days. Upon my request, I was granted permission to take the photograph on the right. The top round part of the stove was where the bread was baked - two loaves at a time. This stove was the only source of heat for the entire house. The hot water for daily use was obtained by heating it in a large kettle on the stove.

In the corner of my mother's bedroom was a white cabinet on the wall for her cosmetics. She had the nicest perfume bottle with a fancy stopper. I loved that fragrant corner. The scent might have been Coty's Ambush. To this day I can still detect that soothing scent.

The kitchen, "grand maison" a huge room with a large table, served for everything - substituting as a family gathering place, a work area for preparing the daily meals, a handy place for after school snacks, a desk for doing homework, and a meeting place for family discussions and entertainment. It was also where mother would be seated at her sewing machine making clothes for her family, using the table for laying out patterns for cutting materials. The kitchen table was never bare. It was always covered with a pungent-smelling oilcloth when new. When we had company, there was always a well-ironed tablecloth over the oilcloth. On the stove would be an old black cast-iron teakettle full of hot water. I can still remember the soft whistling sound.

The kitchen table and chairs were of Acadian style belonging to my grandfather's parents. The chairs and table were constructed by hand with wooden pegs - no nails - supposedly by Grandpère Israel's father, Pierre Regis Daigle. Three chairs and the table have been preserved and remain in the family.



Pioneer Cast-iron Stove



There were no cabinets in the kitchen; the cupboard for dishes was built under the stairs, and at the lower part was "le trou à bois" (woodbin). It was the responsibility of the boys in the family to keep the woodbin full at all times. In the kitchen we did not have a refrigerator. The perishables were stored in the backroom of the potato house along with the butter crocks, the cream, and the salt pork barrel. Somehow there did not seem to be any leftovers to refrigerate. We had fresh milk twice a day from the cows; by the time the milk would sour, there was fresh milk waiting. In the front part of the potato house was a huge cupboard where the preserved and canned foods were stored for usage in the winter. It was also where Papa kept his car during the winter months.

The farmhouse lacked another convenience - lighting. For lights we had a gasoline lamp with mantles capable of being lit only by mother or father as it had to be pressurized by pumping, making it dangerous for children to handle. This lamp hung from the ceiling and provided excellent light. We also had several kerosene lamps. One of the daily chores for a farm girl was to maintain the kerosene lamps, filling them, trimming the wicks and cleaning the glass chimneys. Upon exercising this ritual, I frequently grumbled.

All the household water was brought into the house with a pail. On a dry sink close to the back door was the drinking water in a pail with a dipper. Next to it was a basin for washing hands and on the wall nearby was a "linge à rouleau" (continuous towel on a roller) to be used by anyone who came into the house from outside chores. Next to the dry sink was a covered barrel for collection of this gray water. Above the sink was a mirror and comb container. Electricity and indoor plumbing was a luxury yet to come to the farm.

**Farm Buildings** - The farm buildings were relatively uncomplicated structures. The twin barn was built at the turn of the century about 100 feet from the house, The front barn had a stable for the animals with a "fenil" (hayloft) above. On the opposite side was a "tasserie" (mow) for hay. The two barns were connected with a "grainerie" (granary) where the oats, buckwheat and flour were stored on one side; the other side was a storage place for the binder. In the back barn there were two more "tasserie" (mows) for straw for the animals, more hay, and oats to be threshed during the late winter. In the middle was an area called "la batterie" used as a work place, storage for wagons, and a place for the threshing machine, et cetera. On the south

side of the barns were lean-to additions for the pigs, sheep, hens and the rooster.

The barn was a pleasant place at any time of the year, but particularly in autumn. Most folks liked barns generally for the same reasons: They were beautiful in many ways, nearly every way related to a purpose - hay mows jammed with aromatic hay, straw bins, freshly threshed oats, buckwheat, et cetera. The hay mows were ideal places for us to play, to fall and jump. Hay has a pleasing aroma. In his younger years, before he married, my father enjoyed sleeping on the hayloft in the summertime.

Our twin-barn on the exterior was exactly like the Zenon Daigle barn located on Frenchville Road, Fort Kent, Maine. Our stable was on the opposite corner and the Zenon stable was more elaborate inside. My father had dismantled the rear barn and granary many years ago. After my parents moved "au bord" (in town), Papa, then, tore down the front barn which included the stable.



The Zenon Daigle Twin-Barn

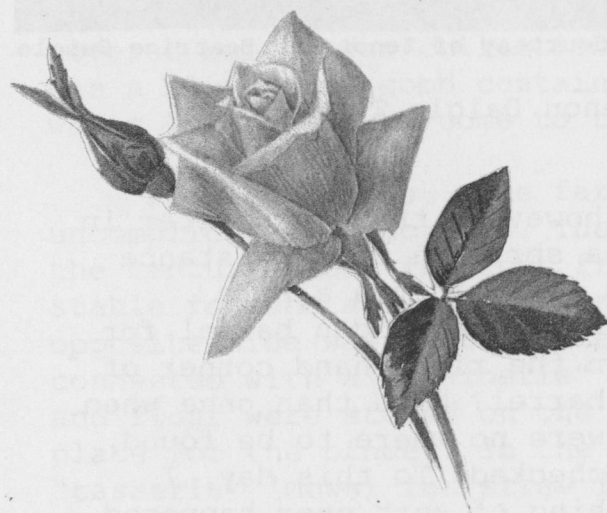
The house had no running water; however, there was water in the barn. The water supply came from a spring a short distance from the house and was gravity fed to the barn via a pipe located in the spring and collected in a huge wooden barrel for the animals. The barrel was located in the right hand corner of the stable. How well I remember that barrel! More than once when some of the little ones wandered and were no where to be found, the barrel was the first place to be checked. To this day, I often think it was a miracle that nothing of sort ever happened.

Papa was about ten years old when the potato house was built. In those days my grandfather had a team of oxen and my father remembered driving the oxen to haul rocks for the potato

house foundation - part of that wall was preserved and exists today. One story Papa took great pleasure in telling us follows. My grandmother had planted a grove of Poplar trees between the barn and the house and she gave these trees diligent care. Apparently the men in the family made every effort to destroy these trees as they claimed the trees were in their way. My father did a good job at trying to get rid of them. Even at the tender age of ten, at every opportunity he had, he would pass over the young trees with the team of oxen - getting my grandmother out of the house in a rage. The outcome of the story: the Poplar trees survived - the old trees are still there today!

The description of the old house would not be complete if I omitted mentioning grandma's white rose bushes. She loved white roses and enjoyed their fragrance. I especially remember the one she planted by the east window of the house where it grew into a gorgeous rosebush. Another bush was planted on the upper side of the potato house. She often cut roses and put them in a vase creating a wonderful fragrance in the house. She nurtured these roses and later on it was my mother who cared for them. Grandmother's roses are surviving today on the farm - thanks to my mother who equally loved the roses. I treasure the memory of that old house with the pretty white rosebush by the window.

A Rose for Mama  
and Grandmère



(In 1967 when my father was burning the fields in early spring, the wind suddenly changed direction and the dear old house caught fire and burned to the ground.)

**New Home for Grandmother and Grandfather** - In 1938 my grandparents deeded their farm to my father but was recorded in the Registry of Deed only in 1941. During those three years my grandfather prepared to have a small house built on the farm. He and my father cut trees and had them sawed into boards, et cetera, for the house and stored them in the lean-to that was built onto the garage. In preparation, grandmother bought a new Home Comfort Stove and when it arrived, it was connected to the chimney in the "grand maison" (great room). She learned how to operate her new stove and I remember we had hot water whenever Grandma cooked with it. This stove was not used much before she moved into her new home. In the fall it was stored in the summer kitchen and the old cast-iron stove moved back for the winter.

Construction began on the new home in early 1941. Uncle Henri, mother's brother, was the carpenter. By fall of that year grandpa and grandma moved into their new home. It was two rooms on the first floor and one big room on the second floor. Grandma furnished her home with furniture from our house and household furnishings given to her when Aunt Odile moved with her family to the Biddeford, Maine, area in June, 1940.

Grandma's little house was very nicely decorated with nice tied-back white curtains with small green flowers. Near the right front window she placed her sofa and next to the left window was her radio and her rocking chair. The kitchen was part



Grandpère Israel Daigle



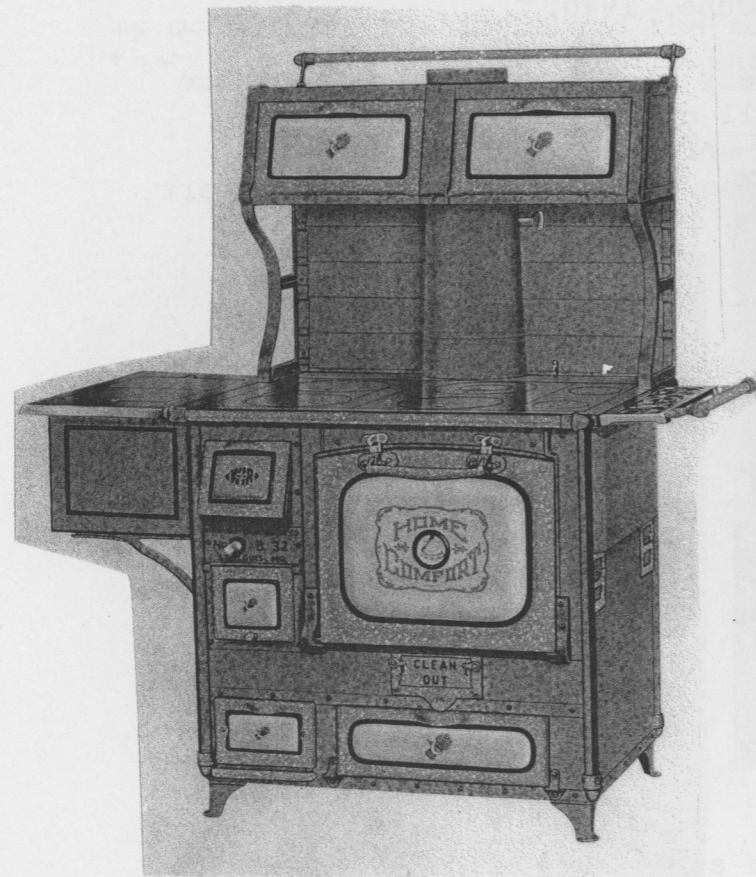
Grandmère Eugenie Daigle

My grandparents in front of their small cozy home - 1944

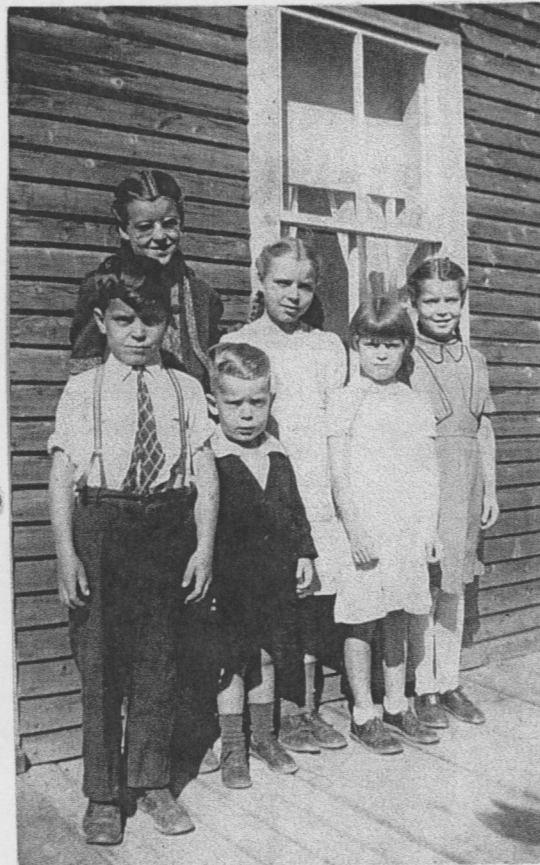
of this big room with a back door leading into the woodshed. Grandpa's favorite spot was the east window where he watched everything happening on the farm. The second room on the first floor was a bedroom. As a pastime they raised a few chickens. Also, Grandpa built the nicest and cleanest outhouse in the rear of the house - directly over the brook. We just enjoyed using the facility with the Sears Roebuck Catalog handy. In their marriage, it was the first time that they were alone and loved it.

Grandfather Daigle was a big, tall man over six feet and at one point I remember he weighed 265 pounds. He always had a gold chain, which looked impressive across his large belly. We know he gave his watch to my brother, Albert, but no one seems to recall what became of his famous gold chain.

Grandmother Daigle was also tall and wore her wavy hair in a "torquette" (braided bun). Unlike my grandfather, she could write, and read French fluently and was well versed.



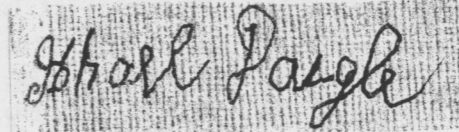
Grandmère's Home Comfort



1944

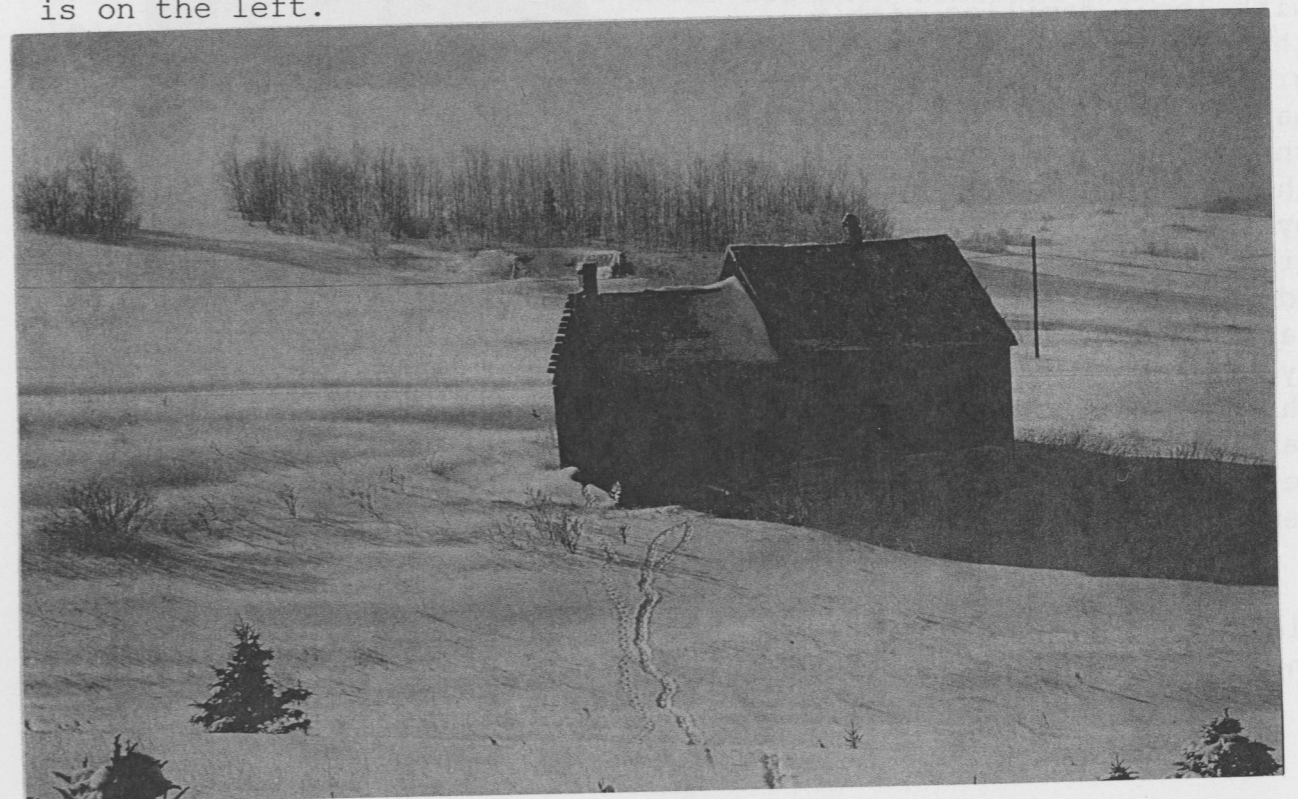
The grandchildren in front our grandparents' new home. Left to right: Albert, Leo, Doris, Candide, Germaine, and Albertine.

**Schoolhouses on Our Land** - When Grandpa Daigle was a youngster, there were no school buildings in our area. Children did not attend school at an early age. I remember grandpa telling us he only attended school in the summer. School was held in Victorie Cyr's summer kitchen, our neighbor. Most of the children went to school bare foot. The students all sat on long benches on both sides of a long table. I recall grandpa admitting not learning much. With a mischievous smile on his face, he told how he inserted a common pin in the hardened skin of his toes and as he sat at the table he teased the girls sitting on the opposite side by poking them with the pin. He was about ten years old at the time. School was taught in French; therefore, he did not learn English and could not sign his name until a schoolteacher, Edna Daigle, boarding at my grandparents' home taught him to spell and sign his name. I always enjoyed whenever he signed his name as he pronounced each letter aloud in French: I S R A E L D A I G L E, a facsimile of his signature follows.



Victorie Cyr's House is where Grandpa Israel attended school. Classes were held in the summer kitchen during the summers.

Photograph below shows the rear of the house - summer kitchen is on the left.



In 1907 Victorie gave land on the south side of the road to the inhabitants of Madawaska for a schoolhouse. That is where my father and his siblings attended school equivalent to the eighth grade. After 1929 when this building was abandoned to a new schoolhouse, Willie and his wife Laura turned it into their residence during the first years of their married life. Willie, Victorie's son, dismantled the old school building in 1946, and used what he could in constructing his house in town after he sold his farm to my father.

In 1929 my grandfather donated land to the town to build a new school. It was again a one-room school and accommodated about 20-25 students from first to eighth grades. The schoolhouse on our farm was known as Schoolhouse No. 10 - Israel Daigle. This school served the local neighborhood for nine years. School was discontinued at the end of the 1938 school year and the neighborhood children were transferred to Saint Thomas School in Madawaska.

According to the municipal records during this period, the following teachers taught at School District No. 10: Edmund Dionne, 1929-1930; Yvonne Dumais, 1930-1931; Edna Daigle, 1931-1933; Therese Dionne, 1933-1934; Laura Beaulieu, 1934-1935; Delia Sirois, 1935-1937; Roa Daigle, 1937-1938.

**Schoolteacher, Edna Daigle** - It was customary for the rural schoolteacher to live with local families within the school district. My grandparents were always happy to have the teacher share their home. Generally, the families were reimbursed by the town in the form of a tax credit for their hospitality. Edna Daigle was one of the early teachers who lived with my grandparents and parents while teaching school on our farm. My parents chose Edna to be my Godmother with Uncle Henri Cyr as Godfather.

Edna remembers teaching all eight grades and enjoyed teaching at this school and recalled



Teacher - Edna Daigle

how the children were all so eager to learn. This was the first schoolhouse she taught that was equipped with water and toilet facilities. She recalled how the older boys had the duty of pumping water in the holding tank every morning. (Laura Beaulieu also lived with our family while teaching in District #10.)

The last teacher to teach in our neighborhood was Roa Daigle. In those days one had to be five years old by October 15<sup>th</sup>. I missed that date by one month and seven days. Miss Roa told my mother it was okay to send me to school as long as I behaved. The teacher gave me a book, pencil and paper and I sat at an empty desk and listened as she taught all of the eight grades. There was one requirement - I had to be quiet.

One day Doris went to the teacher to ask about a word she had trouble with. Doris, being my oldest sister, little sister had to imitate her. I presented my upside down book to the teacher and pointed to a word and asked what the word was. She turned my book around and very nicely asked me to go sit down. That hit Doris' funny bone and she laughed at me. As I went by her desk, I hit her over the head with my book! Doris has never forgotten that. After that episode I was not allowed at school for a few days. The schoolhouse being on our farm made it very convenient for me to attend school with Leonard and Doris. I remember wearing a beret to school and the older boys making fun of it - however no one could make me part with my beret. Let them make fun. Frequently the older students assisted the teacher with the younger ones. One instance Leonard had to go to the bathroom so Miss Roa asked Valeda Cyr "à Felix" (Felix's daughter) to go help him. Leonard was not too pleased at having a girl helping him. He never forgot that.

My parents wanted a good education for all their children. Education was important to them since they did not have the opportunity. When I started school I did not know any English as we spoke only French at home. This was true with most children in our area; we learned English when we started school. In those days the teacher was boss. If there was a problem, the school board and the parents backed the teacher. If the teacher punished us, we did not complain to our parents because we would get punished again. In school we were constantly reminded to speak English. I was punished more than once for speaking French on school property. Since we spoke only French at home, I now realize the importance of speaking English in school. I am very happy and proud to have been raised bilingual. Over the years it has proven most beneficial and I feel greatly enriched still able to write, read and speak my ancestors' language.

**Purchased Schoolhouse** - In February of 1946, my father bought the schoolhouse that was on our farm. The land belonged to him. When my grandfather, Israel, gave the land to the town for a schoolhouse, it was given for the sole purpose of a school. In the event the building was no longer used as a school, the land reverted back to Israel or his heirs.

Remodeling of the schoolhouse transforming it into a one-family home began immediately, if I remember correctly, the carpenter was a Mr. Raoul Chasse. The ceiling was lowered and rooms were divided - three rooms on the first floor and five rooms on the second floor. Work continued through the summer. Uncle Henri built my mother a beautiful set of cabinets in the huge kitchen. In addition, there was a living room and bedroom with a half bath and closet on the first floor, and also a huge closet in the kitchen for everyday coats and jackets. The basement had a huge wood-burning furnace and a large area for storing firewood. Shelves were built for the canning jars. There were four toilets and wash basins that remained in the basement for one year (one set was given to Willie for the house he was building in town). Once we finally had the luxury of electricity, there was a bathroom on each floor in our "new" home.

The photograph below is of schoolhouse #10 converted into a residential home. The windows and door (front of the house) replaced the huge windows of the schoolhouse and the entrance to the schoolhouse was on the right side - end of the building, which was taken down.



Schoolhouse #10 as our "new" Home

During the summer of 1946, we children lived with great anticipation to moving into the "new" house. In late summer the house was ready to be occupied. What joy - we would now have some conveniences - cold and hot water, toilets in the basement despite having to pump the water by hand into a holding tank attached to the basement ceiling. Running down to the basement was a joy to behold - no more chamber pots! It was at this time that our straw beds were discarded. We now had feather beds from grandmother's house.

**Buying More Land** - As the family kept increasing my father felt he needed more land; he wanted to expand. My mother always wanted to leave the "Concession." I remember one of the farms along the river had come up for sale. The house was big and square and oh, how wonderful it would be to live "au bord" (by the river - in town). The price was \$10,000, which, of course, my parents could not afford. As a teenager I often dreamed about that house, how it would have been to perhaps have a room all by myself, be close to town, and be able to participate in school activities, basketball, et cetera.

Not long after, our neighbor, who was a life-long friend of my father, came to see him. It was in late winter - a beautiful warm spring-like evening. I can still visualize the two lonely-looking figures standing in the middle of the road talking - interrupted only by long pauses. They were in deep thoughts - it was serious business. It was apparent they did not want the children or the wives to hear. Oftentimes the men would discuss the most important business outside the house frequently these discussions would take place in the barn. When my father told my mother that Willie needed to sell his farm and that he was going to purchase it, Mama was not too much in agreement as she wanted to move out of the area, closer to town; but, as a devoted wife she consented. On March 13, 1946, my parents bought Willie's farm next door to our farm. At the time it was the sensible thing to do and they never regretted their decision.

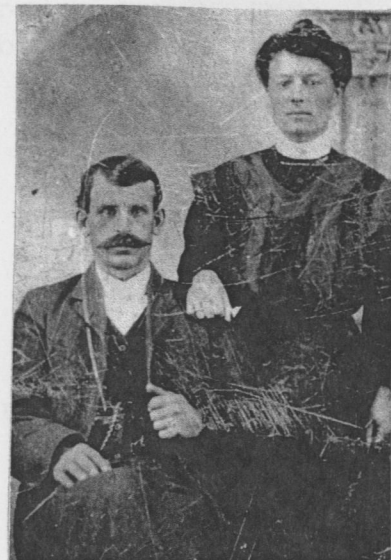
(When my parents retired, my father did take my mother out of the "Concession." Papa bought a lot "au bord" and moved the family home downtown. Mama was happy!)

**Three Generations** - After we moved in our "new" home it was quite evident my grandparents could no longer remain in their little cozy home, so they moved back with us. Once more we were three generations living under one roof. We children had to be quiet and often take care of our grandparents down to the youngest one in the family who was but two years old. Grandpa

would drop his pipe or sometime his money calling to Joanne, "la 'tite" (the little one) to pick it up. Grandpa lived but a few months after the move, and did not see electricity on the farm.

**Electricity came to the Concession** - During the summer of 1947, Donat Daigle, Mama's cousin and his brother-in-law, Roland Michaud, wired the house and farm buildings in anticipation of electricity. We were indeed electrified in late fall of 1947. The power was turned on during the afternoon while we children were in school. That day when the school bus reached the top of Henri's hill the house appeared to be on fire as my parents had all the lights on for us. The house looked like a palace. What a difference this was from the little kerosene lamps and even the gasoline lamp. It did not take long we adapted to our new luxury and life on the farm took a new turn as we changed our ways. From that time on, the words "turn off the lights" were often heard as my parents reminded us to turn the lights off to conserve energy. During the first few years the electric power was not always reliable, so Mama kept her kerosene lamps handy for the mini blackouts.

**Our Grandparents Cyr** - Mama's parents lived on the Madawaska side of Long Lake, and their parish was Sainte Agathe. Adolphe and Gertrude (Gertie) had a family of ten children - one, Catherine, died in infancy. Grandmère Cyr died at fifty-two in 1936 and Grandpère Cyr at sixty-nine in 1945 after having been married only twenty-eight years. Seven of their children were married over fifty years. Mama had been wedded forty-five years when Papa died and Uncle Henri was married thirty-five years when he passed on.



Adolphe and Gertrude



Grandparents Cyr's Home

## IN RETROSPECT

**Papa's Decision** - It was a heartbreak for Papa when his brother, Adolphe, became ill as Papa had finished the elementary studies and was to enter the Madawaska Training School. His dream was to become a schoolteacher. Papa was very intelligent and had an excellent mind for mathematics and loved to read. Nevertheless, he made the decision and sacrifice to remain on the farm and help his parents.

**Mortality** - Grandma often spoke about death. As she and grandpa raised their family, there were many disappointments and heartbreaks. All our growing-up years, grandmother talked about Uncle Adolphe and Tante Delina. Even though they had died several years before I was born, I feel as if I knew them. This is because grandma recounted stories about them. She talked about mourning crepes (a black ribbon hung by the door when someone was being waked), and mourning veils, which she kept in a box.

Uncle Adolphe was stricken with tuberculosis shortly before finishing school at the Madawaska Training School. It was also called consumption in those days. In the early 1900s tuberculosis was the most feared disease in the world. Young and old, rich and poor were being stricken. It was known as the "White Plague" because as the disease ravaged its victims, they grew pale and emaciated. Uncle Adolphe was sent for an extended period of time to the Sanatorium in Presque Isle, Maine; then he returned home and was told to sleep outside, so he did in a tent. One day my grandfather received a letter written in English from Adolphe's doctor regarding his disease. Grandpa, proud that Adolphe knew English, showed him the letter. The letter stated that there was no cure for his son's illness and there was little hope of recovery. That news really depressed Adolphe and he died a couple months later - 21 September 1917.

Tante Delina was a victim of the great influenza pandemic of 1918. This influenza, spanning continents, affected a large number of young adults in the prime of their lives. The disease spread swiftly and many people died in the Madawaska area. At the end of World War I this deadly virus had reached every part of the globe leaving the family trees of many American families shaken and rearranged by the great influenza outbreak.

Aunt Delina was in her last year at the Madawaska Training School when she felt ill with what they called "la grippe Espagnol" (the Spanish influenza). Grandfather was notified and

went to get her. She died within a couple days. Grandmother recounted how Delina asked her for "une tarte aux framboise" (a raspberry pie). Grandma promptly obliged. Papa often reminisced how after she ate the pie she asked for her violin and played like she had never before, always bringing tears to his eyes. She died that night - 14 October 1918. I have preserved a few memorabilia of Tante Delina's entrusted in my care by grandma. Grandmère as we called her wanted my mother to give me the name of Delina when I was born; Mama had the name, Candide, chosen for me, but consented to Marie Delina Candide and ended by calling me by the name she favored.

On 19 October 1919, a year and five days to the time Tante Delina died, Grandma gave birth to a beautiful blue eyed, blond baby boy named Albert, a span of almost 17 years between Albert and his sister, Laura. Albert was born only to be taken away by death of cholera at nearly two years old on 8 September 1921.

As I grew older I realized that fifteen or twenty years was indeed a short time. By talking about her deceased children, Adolphe and Delina, grandma was reliving their lives through us. Tante Delina was 18 in 1918, full of life and looking forward to teaching school. As I was born in 1932 - it was only 14 years that Grandmère had suffered the loss of Uncle Adolphe in 1917, Delina in 1918, Odile to marriage in 1920, "petit Bert" in 1921, and on 22 November 1922, Grandmère's father, Hilaire Daigle, died. (Grandmère had also agonized over the loss of her six-month infant daughter, Laura, in 1903.) In 1924, her daughter, Odile, loss two children - Jeannette and Gilbert Cyr, both died the same day, 12 August. In July of 1936, grandma's mother, Anais LeBrun Daigle, died in Saint Basile. Poor woman - no wonder she constantly talked about them - "des grosse épreuve" (great hardships) to have experienced.

My grandparents had very sad and difficult lives, however they had excellent coping skills. They didn't deny grief or loss, instead they acknowledged it and moved on. They possessed great faith and strong courage.



Adolphe Daigle



Delina Daigle

**Sorrowful Times** - I remember when my Grandfather Daigle died in 1946, and Grandmother in 1948. There were no funeral homes back then; the wakes were held in the homes. I recall whenever "la mort avait passé" (death had come) a heavy silky black ribbon was hung by the door which would let people know someone had died at this particular home. This ribbon was called a crepe. The wakes lasted three days and the person was waked around the clock. At about midnight, a light meal was served, usually consisting of sandwiches, soup, various desserts, tea and coffee. Grandpa died 11 December 1946, during an ice storm. The front yard was so icy that the hearse driven by Armand Beaulieu and carrying grandpa to be waked almost tipped over. In the church I remember the catafalque was still in existence. This catafalque was an ornamental structure or canopy with an array of candles around the casket used at requiem masses. I recall a superstition of the time that if one candle was not lit or had blown out, it meant that another close person would die soon. The whole church was draped with black banners covering the windows and on each column. In the sanctuary was a huge "Misericordia" (have mercy) banner. The choir would chant the "Dies irae, dies illa ..." (Dreaded day, day of ire ...) - it was so sad and depressing. This custom has changed and caskets in church are draped in white symbolizing resurrection - hope.

The night Grandfather Daigle died we had burnt beans for supper. We were late from school because the bus was stuck "dans la cote chez Eugene" (Eugene's hill). We walked the rest of the way home. Upon reaching home, Mama told us that grandpa was in his last hours. We hurriedly ate the beans without complaints and quickly cleared the table. Mr. Simon Beaulieu arrived and proceeded to attend to grandpa. We all knelt down around the bed and Mr. Simon started to recite the rosary slowly articulating every word loudly. Grandfather died very peacefully surrounded by my father and mother and all the children praying.

Two years later Grandmother Daigle died very suddenly during potato harvest. It was after lunch as we were getting ready to return to the field. Upon entering her room, Doris found her standing by the door and hitting her chest; she quickly summoned Papa and grandma died in his arms - just within minutes. Grandma died 27 September 1948, on a beautiful autumn day aflame with majestic colors - the season she so loved.

That was the year that we picked potatoes in the snow and missed weeks of school. It was also the year we automatically flunked the first semester simply by missing too many days - a new rule instituted by the principal of the school that year.



In our immediate family we have experienced three early deaths. My parents suffered the death of a son, Albert, taken away so suddenly in an automobile accident in Woodbridge, Connecticut - 10 May 1960, age 24. Another son, Joseph Leo died of cancer of his right leg, in Hartford, Connecticut - 18 May 1982, age 42. Leo had such a strong will to live after being diagnosed with cancer. After his surgery - (3 months to live) he went back to work as a carpenter - even when he couldn't, he could. It was at that time while remodeling in a house, he found a plaque between the walls: "Either I will find a way or I will make one." This gave him the strength and courage to keep going for well over a year. This plaque is on his monument. Then, our sister-in-law, Leonard's wife, Norma Lagace Daigle, fought a courageous battle against Leukemia - she died 14 February 1990, New Britain, Connecticut at age 52. These are indeed sad times in each our lives.

Our father was basically a quiet and peace loving man, and when he spoke, we truly listened. He was supportive of our leaving the area for better opportunities, and was satisfied with his children's accomplishments.

Papa experienced "les trois cloches de la vie" (the three bells of life) all in the same month. He was born 12 November 1898, married 12 November 1929, and died 29 November 1974. The three bells of life was the practice of ringing church bells for baptismal celebrations, marriage ceremonies, and funeral services. Another interesting coincidence, which occurred in November, was that his parents deeded their farm to Papa on November 17, 1938. Our father died at age seventy-six of a stroke after having had several over a period of almost two years while he resided at Highview Manor. He died in the hospital in Edmundston, New Brunswick, Canada.

Mama outlived our father by twenty-four years. There was a difference in age of ten and a half years between them. Mama was of strong will and possessed much courage and common sense. After she became a widow, she obtained her driver's license and drove her car until she was eighty-five. She enjoyed socializing and going out to restaurants with her widowed friends. She spent over twenty winters in Connecticut enjoying her children and grandchildren. At eighty-six years of age she sold her home and went to live at the Wisdom House for three years, among the French people she knew. Mama died 24 November 1998, in Van Buren, Maine, after suffering a major stroke at eighty-nine years old.

## LIFE ON THE FARM

Farming was not an easy job. A farmer and his wife always found themselves at the mercy of the weather such as windstorms, hail, floods, droughts and insects. Farm work was hard and the hours were long. Nevertheless, for the farmer there were rewards to be found working outdoors - close to the land and being independent. To be self-sufficient on our farm, a variety of crops were grown. A typical mixture: potatoes, oats, buckwheat, wheat, and vegetables - the major crop being potatoes.

A large part of our farm comprised livestock: horses, cows, pigs, sheep, chicken, turkeys, geese, ducks, and even rabbits and pigeons - bred for sale or for use on the farm. All required special care.

**Responsibilities** - Papa had the responsibility of managing the farm in such a way as to make it profitable, as it was the only means of our livelihood. He had to keep "au courant" (informed) of the daily market in order to obtain the best price for his produce.

Life on the farm for Mama and Papa required various skills, hard work, and resourcefulness for survival.

The duties and responsibilities of the woman living on the farm went beyond that of wife and mother - she was the bond that kept together the family life, a most essential element of the society. Her work was basic to the physical and spiritual survival of the family. Mama was an educator, a doctor, a barber, a counselor, an entertainer, an organizer, and a manager of the daily difficulties she encountered in running the household. Mama was busy from morning to night - working endlessly in pre-appliance days. A phrase my mother frequently uttered was a common proverb, "A man works from sun to sun but a woman's work is never done." Reflecting back I find this proverb to be so true and very appropriate for Mama. She could never sit still; she was always doing something with her hands.

My father was occupied with much farm work during the day; however, in the evenings he was able to relax and often retired early. For my mother while she sewed, embroidered, knitted or crocheted in the evenings, she claimed that was her way of relaxing. Perhaps she found a sense of fulfillment from creating something - instant gratification.

Back in the days when I was raised, youngsters grew up in a different world than today. There were no televisions to occupy our time; our parents saw to it that we were kept busy with the many chores that needed to be done on the farm.

Chores were many and never ending. For most children, being assigned a family chore was the first taste of responsibility. There were daily chores and seasonal chores.

**Chores** - On the farm there was always chores waiting for someone's attention. For a few examples: the preparation of three big meals daily, making a pile of "poyes" for every meal, preserving and canning foods, bread baking, milking the cows, milk separating, butter making, washing clothes, ironing, sewing clothes for entire family, feeding the chickens, gathering the eggs, gathering various berries for jams and jellies, gardening, washing of the floors, washing windows, making soap, shearing of sheep, preparing the fleece, seeding (cutting potatoes), butchering, preserving and canning the meat, picking potatoes, taking care of the children, and outside chores, et cetera.

In the daily life, the kitchen usually was filled with wonderful aromas. I recall that there was always something cooking. Mama cooked the best roast beef or pork roast on earth. With the roasts she sometime made yellow potatoes with white insides. The meat was so tender and tasty. As I remember she used a big black cast-iron pot to roast all the various meats. Even a meal of what we called fricassee in our family was delicious. It consisted of salt pork slices (previously soaked in warm water then grilled taking out the excess fat), potatoes, onions, carrots, and dumplings thickened to form gravy. It was then served with poyes and homemade butter. We frequently had poyes and molasses for dessert, which we all liked. Mama had the knack of transforming a lowly meal into a feast. She often made soup and served a small bowl of it before a meal. Our Sunday evening meal (if we were lucky at not having company) often was homemade soup ranging from pea soup to tomato and rice served with "creton" (pork spread) or butter. Soup was a comfort food, easy to make, healthy, and economical. I also recall the delicious chicken soups when we were ill. Mama made a special dessert, which we called "un gauteau." This dessert was a three-layer cake with a butterscotch pudding between each layer, then covered with a meringue instead of a frosting - scrumptious. These were but a few of Mama's tasty meals.

One of the best tantalizing aromas was the pleasant one of baking white bread. Baking bread was one of my grandmother's

pleasures. She enjoyed helping my mother with that delightful chore. I remember the smell and the looks of those full golden loaves coming out of the oven. Grandma's bread was delicious to eat especially warm. As we sat at the oilcloth-covered table in the kitchen, she sensed our desire for a slice with good butter and I am sure the look of happiness on our faces gave her great satisfaction. She always gave us another slice as one slice was never enough. As we devoured the slices, every mouthful was paradise. Eating Grandmother's bread remains one of the most unforgettable pleasures of my childhood.

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Mother made delicious butter and taught us the art of churning - not too slow, not too fast. More than once as we turned too fast, the cover blew off - what a mess. The butter churn was of hardwood cylinder design with double dasher removable for cleaning. The process of making butter would take approximately half an hour of churning heavy cream until it separated and the buttermilk poured off. Mother would then remove the butter from the churn and knead it on a special wooden board with an attached roller and with a butter paddle, forcing out remaining buttermilk. Ice-cold water would be added and repeated until the water pouring off was clear, then salt was added. As Doris got older, she was a great helper for Mother. Doris enjoyed kneading the butter and rolling out the water, eventually excelling in all phases of butter making. Mother took great pride in preparing the butter that she would sell to choice customers. Her rectangular one-pound capacity butter mold was a two-piece wooden mold with a plunger to help remove the butter, which was then wrapped in a special paper. She also had a round mold used to make a few fancy forms for the round butter dish. The butter she did not sell was put in a big crock and stored "dans la cave du fond" (rear of the potato house) where it was always cold and dark.

\* \* \* \*

Wash day was a backbreaking task that entailed long hours of carrying water from the spring with a pail, filling the boiler to be heated on the cast-iron stove. Usually my father would help with this chore. By the time we came along, my mother was fortunate as she had the luxury of an Easy Washing Machine powered by a gasoline engine. After the water was heated, the boiler was emptied into the washing machine. The detergent was homemade lye soap. I recall how the soap was shaved into slivers and put into a screened gadget and dropped in the washing machine. Often some of the clothes needed bleaching. This was accomplished by adding lye to the boiling water in the boiler. We had to be careful as not to burn ourselves. Usually mother would take care of removing the clothes to the washing machine

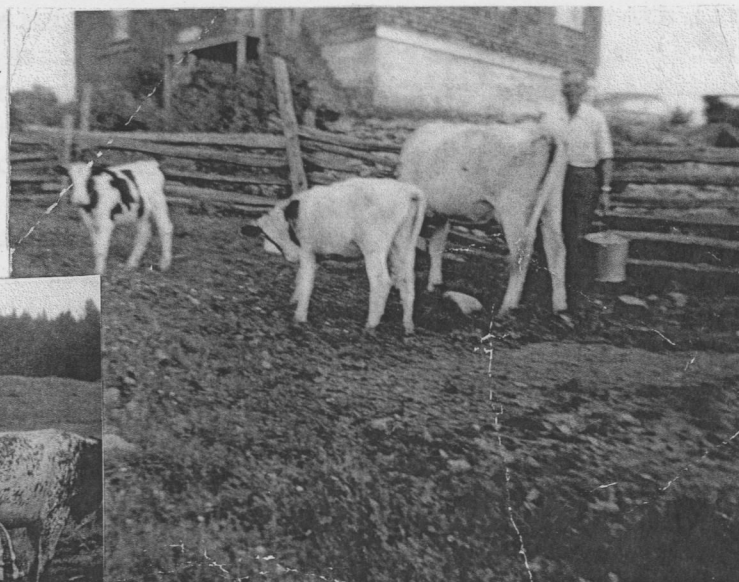
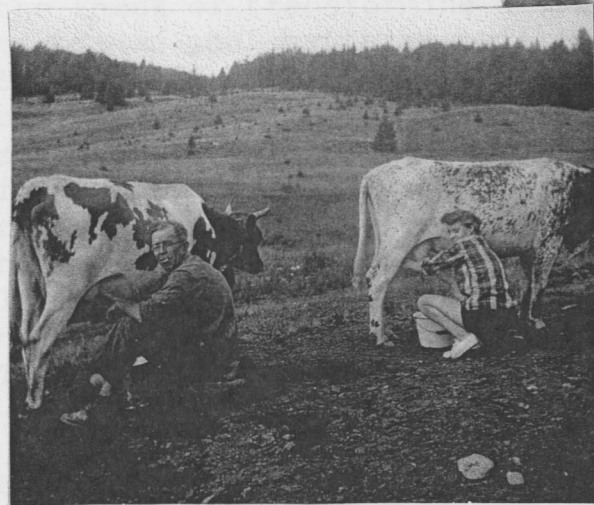
with a long wooden paddle with prongs on the end. A huge galvanized tub was used for rinsing. I remember a blue liquid was added to the rinse water supposedly helping to keep the clothes white. The clothes were wrung by passing through the wringer with great care as not to get our fingers caught. Also clothes with buttons had to be folded so the buttons were inside. Washing clothes was a whole day event. There were many laundry days where this machine was temperamental and our neighbor, Willie Cyr, would come to fix the problem. He was mechanically inclined and a very handy person. The following day was reserved for ironing. Ironing was done with old-fashioned flatirons with a removable handle. Usually there were three or four flatirons heating up on the stove at the same time; we would change to a hot iron when needed. We, girls, all learned to iron clothes with these irons (also called sad irons).

\* \* \* \*

Upon attaining a certain age, learning to milk cows was a mandatory chore for all the children. Like it or not - we had to learn. Therefore, as a child, I often milked our cows. We sat on a small stool that Papa made. Rule number one was to sit on the right side of the cow. Before starting to milk, we had to wash the udder. There was a brook running through the pasture and if the cows went in the swamp, they would get quite dirty. Milking was accomplished by our hands with thumbs and forefingers holding the teats at top close to the udder; with the other fingers applying pressure to the cow's teats, squirting the milk into

Milking the cows - it was mandatory!

Below: Papa and Candide Milking the cows



Above: Papa Ready for the Twice-daily Milking Chore

(Home on vacation - 1954 - I still remembered how!)

the pail. Since there are four teats, you would start with the two in the front, then the two in the back. All went well until the cow would swish her tail, often time wet from the swamp, and slap us in the head. It was not too pleasant! We never knew when to expect that ritual. It happened especially on hot humid days with lots of flies around. During potato harvest, after picking potatoes all day, milking the cows was the chore of the girls. Cows had to be milked twice a day; however, the girls did not have to milk cows in the morning.

I recall one time on several evenings, we had troubles while milking the cows. We were scared of our neighbor's bull, which had jumped the fence into our pasture. We had mentioned to my father the previous night that we were afraid of the bull; but Papa had no time to call the neighbor. While we were milking the cows the following evening the bull came at us snorting and digging in the dirt. We all jumped the fence and I came in the house screaming that I was going to take the matter into my own hands and go tell "tit George à Victorie" to come get his d--- bull. After I finished blurting out, I spotted Mr. Cyr sitting at the table who had come to inquire if we had seen his bull. After Mr. Cyr left with his bull, Mama gave me a lesson on respect that I never forgot. As a child I frequently complained; I realize now that at times I had valid reasons to speak out.

After the milking chore came the separating of the cream from the milk. I remember when my parents bought a cream separator. I still have the wooden box it came in. I seem to remember a special cloth Mama had made as a filter fitting over the huge bowl where the milk was poured from a pail with a strainer. This cloth was then taken off and washed. Since we did not have electricity, the separator was powered by hand, turning the crank at a high speed until there was a certain noise that alerted us when the right momentum had been reached. We then kept turning until the cream had been extracted from the milk. Washing the separator was a time consuming chore. It had to be completely taken apart and it contained at least fifty or more parts. There were difficult areas hard to reach. We had various size brushes that we used. It was also quite an art to reassemble. I knew every step of this operation. Mama was very strict with this chore. The pails had to be washed and everything made ready for the next milking. I recall the times prior to the cream separator when a "cremeuse" was used to separate the milk. A "cremeuse" was a tall metal container with a gage and spout. When filled with milk it was placed in the cold spring for a whole day or night. The skim milk was then removed from the

bottom by using the spout, and the cream, which had risen to the top, was conserved. The skim milk was fed to the animals.

\* \* \* \*

I recall fondly the few years that we had ducks on the farm. Unlike chickens they seemed to be intelligent and gregarious. The ducks would amble up to us, look at us in the eyes, almost wanting to strike up a conversation. We had to build a small mud pond for them. The ducks did not tear things up the way Grandma's geese did and they were much cleaner. They forage for themselves quite well and grew rather quickly. They were fun. It was sad in the fall when Mama would slaughter them for table food. They did make a delicious dinner, though.

\* \* \* \*

As a young child I remember Grandma had a flock of geese. She would take good care of her geese with much pride, fed and loved them. I recall Papa hated them. Sometimes the geese would peck at us but Grandma was always around to rescue us from her friends. In her days, Grandma had made four feather beds (actually feather mattresses) and had given one to her daughter, Odile, when she married. I remember three feather beds in our house - Grandma's, Mama's, and the schoolteacher's. When grandma and grandpa moved into their little house, she brought two of the feather beds leaving one for Mother. I cannot fathom all the feathers needed to make just one bed. All our pillows were from goose down. I do not recall the "goose picking" but I remember Papa saying how he hated helping Grandmère with plucking the feathers from the lived goose. I also remember Mama saving all the feathers from the hens year after year and finally had enough for one feather bed. Grandma made "wing dusters" from the wings of the geese, which were used for dusting furniture. These were also used as stove brushes.

\* \* \* \*

I remember Joanne had a pet calf that she fed with a bottle and nipple. At one point or another we all had pet lambs whose mother had abandoned them. We cared for them; they survived and we became very attached to these animals. I also remember Leo, always having a pet cat that followed him everywhere. On the farm every child learned a lesson sooner or later - don't let your livestock become pets!

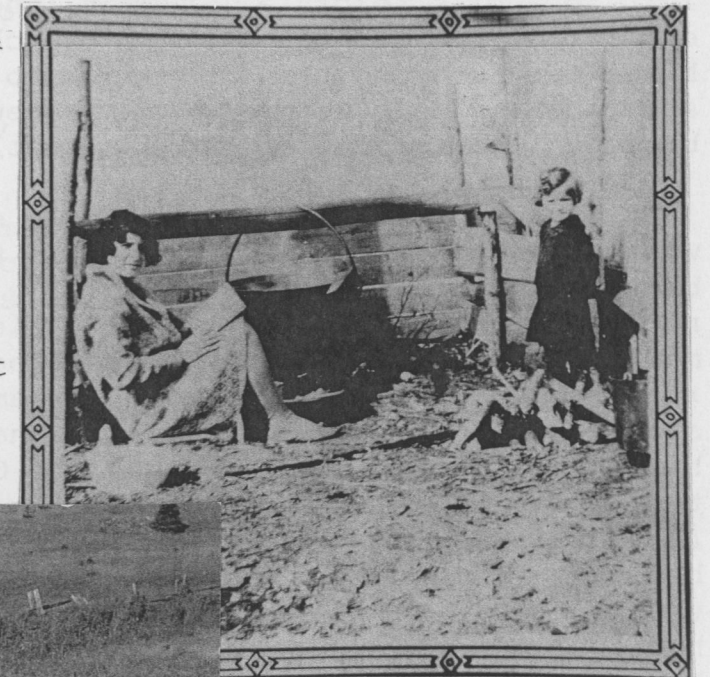
\* \* \* \*

Another chore was the making of soap, a necessity on the farm. Over a period of time, the grease from the "grillade de lard" (fried salt pork) was conserved. Also whenever a hog was butchered, the various parts of the hog that we did not consumed was boiled down to lard which was reserved to make a batch of soap. The boiling of wood ashes would make a strong liquid called lye. To the lye, rosin, lard, and grease would be added.

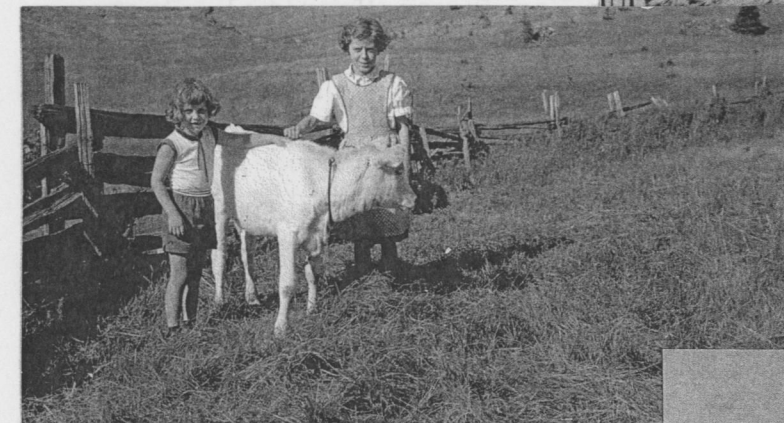
This concoction would be boiled again. I remember Mama would check the mixture with a huge paddle. She seemed to know exactly when it had boiled enough. It was then left to cool and the soap would rise to the surface. After it had set for a day it was cut into bars and stored. This basic no-nonsense lye soap was used for various household cleaning, including dishes, laundry and bathing. In those days, it was said to be the cure for germs and diseases of the world.

\* \* \* \*

Right: Aunt Annie  
(Mama's Sister)  
Making Soap - Young  
Child with her is  
Aunt Yvette (Mama's  
Youngest Sister)



Below: Joanne with her Pet  
Calf and Cousin, Kathleen  
Pelletier, now Bolduc



Below: Leo and Candide  
Horseback Riding  
with June



Right:  
Our  
Favorite  
Ducks



Another chore that required much time was preparing the firewood. This was done at various times during the year - very early spring or late fall. First Papa would go in the woods to select and cut trees. Working with a horse the logs were hauled out of the woods and put in a pile by the edge of the forest. At a later time this wood would be sawed into stove length on a rotary saw then split if the pieces were too big. It was then left in a pile to dry all summer long. When it was dried in early fall, it was the task of the children with the help of a hired man to bring the firewood into the wood shed using a wagon and a horse. When we moved to the new house, the wood was brought into the cellar and was neatly piled up to the ceiling.

On one of these times in early spring, Grandpère Carice Cyr was helping my father cut trees. As they were cutting the branches off, my father accidentally cut his left thumb and was not aware of it until Grandpère Carice seeing blood on the melting snow said, "Where is the blood coming from?" They then realized that Papa was hurt. They came down from the woods and stopped at Grandmère as it was the nearest house. Grandmère put his thumb in place and bandaged it. Grandpère Carice made a tourniquet and Papa drove himself to Van Buren Hospital. Doctor Labbé was able to save Papa's thumb; however, it no longer could bend but Papa said it was better than not having a thumb. Papa had a high tolerance to pain. He would hurt himself and it never ached. He was so strong.



Sawing Firewood - Leo, Papa and Fernand Cyr



Papa at the Rotary Saw with Maurice Cyr and Leonard

\* \* \* \*

On the farm we were close to nature and family life revolved around the seasons. In this section I will first reflect on Spring - the time when everything came alive.

**Spring on the farm** - It was the season of renewal - for people, for animals, and for all the crops that farmers grow. Calves, colts, chicks, lambs and pigs are all naturally born in early spring, allowing the young to develop and mature before winter. Spring is a time for rebirth and growth and nowhere is that more apparent than on a farm. With spring lamb, new calves, fresh eggs, and melting snow, the surrounding takes on a new look. For Papa, spring was a very busy time especially since he had to care for many animals. As it was the natural time for most animals to give birth, most required attention if a good survival rate was to be expected. This required a lot of time out in the barn, helping sows farrow down, cows drop calves and ewes at lambing time.

I recall vividly one of those occasions when we were told that Belle was going to have a "little pony." We were not allowed near the barn, as we had to be very quiet - Belle needed a tranquil atmosphere - not possible with playful children. Papa and Grandpa were in the barn with Belle. After what seemed like an eternity, Papa came out and announced that Belle had a "little pony" (given birth to a colt). I remember how delighted we were. We decided since it was June first, we would name her June. Later on in the day we were able to see Belle and her colt - what an adorable sight, we should have named her Black Beauty, as she was completely black! June was born June 1, 1941, and was the last horse on the farm. It must have been an emotional time for my father to give her away when he left the farm. Papa so loved horses.

\* \* \* \*

Every spring mother would order very young chicks and would keep them in the house for a few weeks in a huge wooden box equipped with feeding facility. She used old newspaper to cover under the box and also inside the box for warmth and ease in cleaning. These old papers we would obtain from Vetal Daigle, a cousin of my Father, who lived in our neighborhood. The odor was not too pleasant, but that was life back then. The chicks would be transferred to a chicken house as soon as the weather permitted. Mother made money raising these chicks and later selling eggs and chickens. Along with her butter, she made it a very profitable little business! My mother was of the opinion that if you lived on a farm, one should always have something to sell. And, she saw to it that she did. This was excellent

advice. Every Saturday night after supper she and Papa went selling her produce to her choice customers.

\* \* \* \*

Spring was also a period in which life came back into trees, especially fruit trees exploding into blossoms - it was such a beautiful time on the farm. I recall my father saying that Grandma had planted ten apple trees near the garden. Only two have survived and are still producing delicious apples. In that area there were cherry trees, "pimbina or pavina" bushes (high bush cranberry), and hawthorn bushes - all great for making jams and jellies.

A very special spring delicacy for us was "fougère" (fidleheads). It is the young frond of the Ostrich Fern resembling the scroll of a fiddle - thus its name. We gathered these about five inches high when still tightly curled. These were found in clumps along the brooks and wet areas on the farm. We always looked forward to a few delicious meals of fresh "fougère" with "ploys." Mother canned several quarts for winter treats.

\* \* \* \*

In early spring the hens would resume laying eggs. The taste of those fresh eggs was very appetizing. It was with grandmother that we learned about the gathering of eggs from the hens. She taught us how to sneak the eggs away from broody hens, and find the eggs around the yard and barn where mischievous hens sometimes stashed them. Once in a while hens would manage to find a quiet secret place to sit on a "couverte" (clutch of eggs) until they hatched. We would find out only after they showed up with a brood. What a delight it was to see mother hen and her little chicks. What was interesting was the way the hen would protect her little ones by calling them with a cluck, cluck sound; the chicks would all gather underneath her. At times it was necessary to "renfermer" (lock up) broody fowls as they could have hurt us by pecking at us when we tried to get the hens off the eggs. For these "poule couveuse" (broody hens) it was prison time - until they stopped clucking! Gathering of eggs was a daily chore for one of the older girls with a younger child tagging along. Doris reminded me that as the eggs were dispensed, eggshells were saved, crushed, and added to the feed.

\* \* \* \*

Spring was a time of planting - potatoes, wheat, buckwheat, oats and vegetable gardens. Planting time was an exciting time. There was so much work to be done. The men plowed and harrowed the garden areas for mother, then would leave her with the seed planting. They would then start preparing the fields for potato planting. The smell of the freshly turned earth, the clean fresh

air, and the fragrance of the blossoming trees, even the manure scent, have been imbedded in me forever.

I remember my brother, Leonard, telling me how delighted he was in being allowed, at a very young age, to tag along and watch Papa do the plowing, planting, and cultivating in the springtime. "What a thrill it was the first time Pa put me behind the plow and let me guide it as the horse pulled; and later, put me up on the sulky plow and taught me how to drive the team," Leonard related to me. Those were important moments in a child's life.

After the fields had been plowed and harrowed, came the thrilling job of picking rocks by hand that turned up in the fields after the process of harrowing. Yes, we all picked rocks - it was a yearly detestable chore we all remember well. This accounts for all "les tas de roche" (rock piles) on the farm.

Very often the boys were kept home from school during planting season as they were needed to help on the farm. This was very difficult for the boys. Upon returning to school, they had to catch up as best they could. Discouragement would set in and they would end up quitting school at an early age. When we were youngsters my father had hired help; however, when we grew older we became very good helpers. My father then hired help only when absolutely necessary. I remember the girls had to help one year with seeding the potatoes for planting. Mother helped us so we didn't have to miss too many days of school. We worked after school through the evening hours - we hurried and got it done. After the planting was finished in the fields, there was a lull and that was when Papa and the boys helped in the gardens.

\* \* \* \*

After the garden was planted, there was another chore waiting for us. Something I never missed from the old days was that rite of spring that virtually turned our house inside out. The elaborate, exhausting spring housecleaning, which required moving half the contents of the house out onto the porches to air out, was just what every family did. They used to call this ritual "le grand ménage." That is one tradition I did not retain. When I was about ten years old, my mother decided it was time for Doris and me to learn to wash the floor. No matter how hard I tried not to learn by swinging the wash rag all over the place, it did not take too long, mother managed to teach me! I washed the wide-board wood floor Mama's way. We had to scrub the boards with a brush and homemade soap on our knees. How well I remember! Cleaning was something my mother did well. Washing floors and windows every Saturday was tedious work that did not

interest me. When it was cleaning time, it seems I always had my nose in a book. How I loved to read! Or, I frequently found work with Papa and the boys on the farm to escape housework.

\* \* \* \*

One of the springtime chores for Papa and the boys in the family included spreading the manure on the fields. It must have been an unpleasant task. After the animals were let out in the spring, a good cleaning of the stalls and the stable alley was undertaken. The stable had a clean look for the summer. Keeping the stalls clean was also a daily chore that was expected of the boys. In the spring usually the sheep pen and hen house were given a thorough cleaning, as well as the pigsty.

\* \* \* \*

Another springtime ritual was the shearing of the sheep. As I recalled it was quite an interesting event for the younger members of the family. How I loved the sheep, after I grew up I always wanted a sheep farm - of course this dream never happened. Grandpa was an expert at shearing the sheep. We children would gather the sheep in a pen, then Grandfather would take the poor sheep trembling with fright and place it between his knees and would begin to shear. The wool would come off like a blanket - all in one piece. This procedure was repeated for each sheep. After he finished, the sheep were all so small that it did not seem to be the same animals - they had a naked look. After shearing, they were turned out to pasture to fend for themselves all summer. Sheep were good to have on the farm. As they grazed, it discouraged second growth in the pasture and helped maintain open space. There was a special pasture for them behind the barn - an area not suitable for farming and difficult to mow. The frolic of spring lambs on a greening pasture was a joy to watch. Come fall, the "belier" (ram) was reintroduced to the ewes and the cycle would begin again.

The wool was washed in hot water in the big cauldron then hung on the cedar fences to dry. After the wool was dried the girls along with Mother and Grandmother would open the fleece with care and remove all the pitched and tarred locks, handpick the straw, the burdocks, and any unwanted matter. We enjoyed doing this, making big fluffy mountains. For Grandmère and Ma it was a task that was not looked forward to; however, it had to be performed in order to have warm clothing for the cold New England winters. After completions of this chore, the fluffy stuff was put in big burlap bags, and Papa would then take it to the Corriveau Mill for carding into small fleecy rolls, which would now be ready for spinning.

\* \* \* \*

**Summer on the farm** - It was a time of hope, heat, gorgeous days, beautiful fresh air, sunshine, picking berries of all kinds, picking vegetables for canning and preserving, weeding the gardens, pulling the "maudit naveau savage" (wild weeds) in the potato fields, and a time of waiting for the crops to mature. Summertime was the time to make hay. Summertime was a time for much heavy work on the farm. For the young boys and girls there were many chores to keep us busy. However, we found plenty of time for playing and having fun. Summer was also a time for visiting, family gatherings, and picnics.

I recall strawberries were the first fruit of the season. Strawberry gathering time was late June to mid July. We would pick these berries by the pail full. I remember more than one year, Mama preserved over forty quarts of strawberry "confiture" (jam). These were the wild strawberries not larger than the tip of our little finger. Certain years there would be such an abundance of berries that the fields appeared dyed red. This was the time that we, country folks, armed ourselves with cream and sugar. To me that was the most delicious treat! My Grandmother loved those little red berries and would give us ten cents for a glass full - to us that was big money.

We would find these berries in old pastures and uncultivated parts of the farm. There were always neighbors that would let us pick berries on their land, such as the Henri Cyr Farm. Next to our sheep pasture was a spot where we picked many of these small berries on Mr. Cyr's farm.

On a few occasions my sister, Doris, and I also recalled Grandpa Daigle driving Mama and us in the old Chevrolet over Uncle Victorie and Tante Philomene's farm at the head of Long Lake to gather strawberries. These were fun times as Mama would pack a picnic lunch and we would spend the day there - way back on the farm where Uncle Victorie had built a lean-to "un abri" (shelter). We gathered the berries by the gallons. On one occasion when we came down from the field, Tante Philomene had just taken some loaves of bread from the oven - I can still smell and taste that delicious bread - the aroma cemented in my memory. Somehow Mama knew that making it sound as if we were going on a picnic, would keep us happy and she would get more picking out of us. Grandpa would come back for us before suppertime.

We also went berry picking on Fred Daigle's Farm, a cousin of Papa. This was not too far from our farm on Fournier Road; however, Papa would give us a ride and Mama would pack a

delicious picnic lunch - those were good times. So you see, many chores we did not consider work. After we brought these berries home the work started. We helped Mama clean the berries, wash the jars, et cetera - she did the rest.

Another strawberry tale that deserves to be recounted is the time several of us were preparing to go strawberry picking on \*"la terre dans bas." Albertine and I started to fight over a pan with a handle. We were screaming at each other and both pulling on the pan. Our siblings, Doris, Albert, Germaine and Leo were calling us as they were leaving - I let go of the handle and Albertine fell. Not realizing she was hurt, I left for the berry field with them. The berries were the nicest and largest we had ever seen - how wonderful they were to pick. Suddenly, we saw Leonard back with the old Chevy truck calling us to come home and telling us Albertine had a broken leg. Mama was in the garden when we left and upon hearing Albertine yelling and crying she came to investigate. My parents rushed her to the hospital in Van Buren. She was in a cast for several weeks, missing out on the summer fun and spending a miserable summer. That was one time I was not too proud of myself - leaving without checking if "Butine" was hurt.

\*"La terre dans bas" (the farm below) belonged to Willie Cyr's mother. My father rented fields from Willie for planting potatoes there. This parcel of land is still in the Cyr Family belonging to Gerald's widow, Verna, now Mrs. Gaston Fortin.

\* \* \* \*

**Hay Harvest** - a time of hard work, which depended on good weather and had to be accomplished quickly while the sun was shining. Anyone old enough to help was put to work. I remember at an early age helping during haying time. In those days my father or Leonard would mow the hay with a mowing machine driven with a team of horses. The hay was then raked into rolls with a hayraker pulled by one horse. Once the hay was dried the girls in the family would help by making haystacks. Hay was loaded by hand, pitching it with a hayfork from the ground into the wagon rack. Usually there was one man on each side of the wagon with one man on top building a high and secured load. The hay was trampled after each haystack pitched on top. This was the chore of one of the girls. The loaded wagon was then driven with a team of horses to the barn for unloading. The hay was stored loose - not baled as is today. This was achieved with a huge fork and rope with a pulley lifting the hay from the wagon to the hayloft. A team of horses was used to pull the big rope until the loaded hayfork reached the loft at which time my father would yell, "whoa, whoa." I am sure he was heard two

Haying Time



Top Left: Candide Making Haystacks with Albertine and Joanne  
 Top Right: Joanne on a Haystack  
 Bottom: Papa Loading Hay  
 Bottom Right: Papa and Candide with a Hayload - Leo Driving



farms down the road. I drove the team many times for this task. A younger sibling would retrieve the rope as the team was turned around. I remember being a little afraid at times. I recall a muddy area that the horses had to go through as they turned to go back to the barn - mud flying in the air. As I am writing this I wonder why the men did not drain that area with a pipe. I remember Mr. Eddie Dufour mentioning that often times the farm buildings were built in an area unsuitable for farming; thus the reason why it was always so muddy and messy around the barns.

Many years later when my father purchased a tractor, some of these chores were done differently. For instance, the tractor was used instead of horses, and loading the hay was done with a truck instead of a wagon with a hayrack. By that time I was old enough to be the "man" on top of the hay load and Papa was proud of me that I was able to pack a good load. I was one of the boys - I would do anything in the fields so not to wash dishes.

Back then the air was so pure and fresh; I just loved being outside. What a life stealing a little time off and lying on a "vailloche de foin" (haystack) looking up at the beautiful blue sky with the huge cumulus clouds - what peace and tranquillity!

In those days the girls did men's work attired in dresses. Today, that does not make any sense to me. Our legs would get all scratched from the hay and we did not complain. It was not proper for a girl to wear slacks or overalls - only during potato harvest did we wear old patched up boys' trousers. Oh - those were the good old days!



My father, Alphonse Daigle mowing hay with a sickle-bar mowing machine being pulled with the tractor.

\* \* \* \*

As soon as we were no longer needed in the hay field, Mama needed help with the gardens and more berry picking. For Mama summertime was canning season and a busy time for her until she had the cellar filled with several hundred quart-jars full of various vegetables and fruits. She also canned ears of corn in half-gallon jars. She preserved hundreds smaller jars of berries boiled into rich, spicy jams, jellies, honey, and marmalades - made with strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, and cherries.

\* \* \* \*

We have good memories of blueberry picking. Blueberry season was usually around the 15<sup>th</sup> of August and we would have to drive a good distance for picking areas. I remember the times when on Sunday the whole family would go to Saint John where many people would pick the wild blueberries. On these occasions, Mama would prepare a special picnic lunch that consisted of a roasted hen with potatoes and vegetable in a large black cast-iron pot. She would make one of her delicious "gâteau" and off we were to a berry-picking picnic. It was a great time for the entire family. We picked blueberries by the gallons.



Left: Blueberry Picking in Saint John, Maine  
Front: Mama and Joanne,  
Rear: Mrs. Alvin Cyr,  
Candide, Leo, Papa,  
and Albert

\* \* \* \*

Below: Papa on his Iron Horse

Throughout the summer months, Papa and the boys were busy cultivating, weeding, and spraying the potato fields. My father waited and watched and worried until September when his major crop - potatoes - would normally ripen. A good yield was every farmer's hope.



\* \* \* \*

**Autumn on the farm** - It was a time of celebration and delight on the farm, a gorgeous time to admire the majestic multi-color autumn foliage, a time of thanksgiving for all the beautiful bounty. It was a time of maturity. It also was time for more chores - reaping the harvest and preparing for winter.

In the fall of the year was another busy time in the preservation of foods. The vegetables that Mama had not canned had to be pulled out of the garden and stored in barrels in the potato house. Also it was pickling time - with fancy pickles and relishes. More jellies were made from the apples, and Pavina (high bush cranberry). Mama preserved a small apple we called "pommette" in a thick syrup. These looked so nice in the jars and they were delicious, too. I always admired the beauty of Mama's shelves from floor to ceiling in the basement of all her canning and preserves. It certainly represented much hard work.

Pavina jelly was one of my favorite and from my mother's recipe, I have altered to make a sauce that I serve with chicken and turkey meals. The recipe follows with instructions.

"Pavina" Highbush Cranberry Sauce

4 lbs (4 qts) Pavina berries - 6 ½ cups water in large pan. Bring to a boil and simmer 10 minutes. Crush, then pass through a food mill to extract juice, then, measure: 5 cups of juice and 5 cups of sugar, add ½ teas. butter to prevent foaming, mix together and place over high heat and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil to a rolling boil and boil hard for 3 minutes. No Certo needed.

Mama also made wines from chokecherries and beets. Her choke cherry wine recipe is as follows:

Mother's Choke Cherry Wine

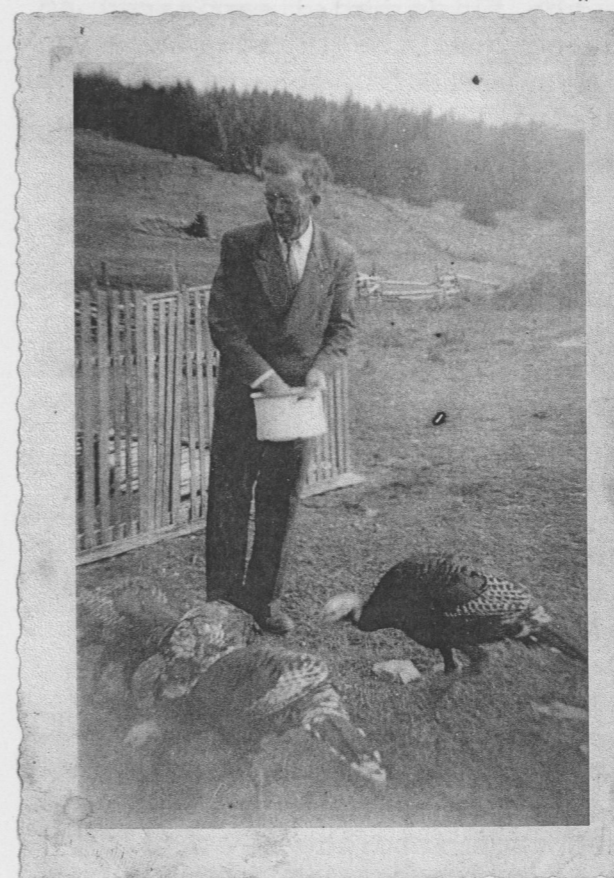
1 gallon choke cherries - 8 pounds sugar  
2 gallons lukewarm water - 3 oranges, sliced  
2 lemons, sliced  
3 (1-inch sq.) yeast cake, dissolved in a cup of lukewarm water. Mix and stir all ingredients. Let stand for 30 days in stone crock or plastic wine container. Leave at room temperature. Stir every day, then bottle. Strain through a cotton cloth when bottling. LET SET IN THE BOTTLES ABOUT ONE MONTH. (A deposit will form in the bottles.) At this time, pour the clear liquid portion into other clean bottles. Use any screw-type quart bottles. Pour all deposits into one bottle and let set. Store in a cool place.

Mother's beet wine recipe has been lost; however, Simone Doucette, a "summer" neighbor gave me her recipe which, I recall is very much like the one Mama had. In our family I have kept the winemaking tradition alive.

Simone's Beet Wine

1 gallon beet juice - 3 gallons boiling water  
12 pounds white sugar - 1 package raisin  
1 orange, sliced - 1 lemon, sliced  
3 (1-inch sq.) yeast cake, dissolved in 1 cup warm water.  
Mix all ingredients together in a large plastic wine container and stir every day. Leave at room temperature for 30 days then bottle. Strain with cheesecloth when bottling. DO NOT TIGHTEN COVERS - need room to expand. After one week, tighten covers. Store in cool place.

\* \* \* \*



Above Right: Mama - canning an abundant crop of green peas.

Above: On Sundays Papa relieved Mama from her chore of feeding the chickens and turkeys.



Right: Albertine feeding the turkeys.

In my early childhood I remember my grandmother canning eggs for baking during the winter. A solution was put in the water that would preserve the eggs. This solution had a strong odor. We enjoyed testing the eggs for grandma by dropping them in a bucket of water. If the egg floated, it was not good to can; the egg had to go to the bottom.

\* \* \* \*

**Grain Harvest** - The harvesting of the grain was the next chore - mid August to early September. As the oats matured to a golden field, it was a rewarding sight and time for another enjoyable task. The cutting of the oats was accomplished with a machine we called a binder, which was pulled by a team of horses. This binder would cut the oats, tie it, and drop the bundles on the field. This was where we children would be handy. It was our job to gather four bundles and stack them against each other to dry. I recall that it was a happy time on the farm. The days were a little cooler, the flies had disappeared, and the air was crisp and fresh. Looking over the field at the shocks of oats was a scene to behold. Once the bundles of oats were dried it was time for threshing. For the older children grain harvest was a joy remembered with great affection.

On threshing day the threshing machine was hauled into the field and the operation would start. A Novo gasoline-engine powered the threshing machine. We would perform various small jobs around the threshing machine. For instance, keeping the husk shoot clean, removing the blown straw from the machine, and hauling the water jug for the men. One aspect of the job of threshing was that the men and older children would get so grubby - we were covered with dust and dirt.

Threshing consisted of long hard days for the men and longer for my mother who fed them. It seemed the whole household was disrupted for a few days. Mama was expected to feed several hired men in a grand manner. The men had a hearty appetite and food disappeared fast.

On the last day in the evening the men would burn the extra straw. That produced some excitement for the young folks as we watched the sparks fly upward and then fade into the black of night. The straw that was kept for the bedding of the animals was hauled and stored in the barn.

I fondly remember that on threshing day was the time to tend to our "paillasse" (straw bed). We, children, all slept on a "paillasse," however, our parents had a feather bed and mattress. The replacing of the straw in our "paillasse" with

fresh new straw from the field was quite an event. Early in the morning we had to empty our straw beds so mother could quickly wash the coverings. When dried, we would fill the coverings as full and high as possible. The "paillasse" barely fit through the door. For a few nights we would sleep way high - on top of the world. All my siblings except the two youngest recall this thrilling experience. We would replace the straw every so often; however, none was so memorable as the filling in the field.

Bundles of oats were reserved and threshed at a later time toward spring when more straw was needed for the livestock. The operation was set up in the barn. At this time we would again put fresh straw in our "paillasse." This ritual lasted until we moved to the "new" house - 1946.

With the advent of the tractor, the binder and threshing machines became obsolete. There were no longer threshing of oats in the field. My father hired our "new" neighbor, George Cyr, with his combine to harvest the oats.

\* \* \* \*

After the oat harvest, the buckwheat matured to a shade of red, and was cut with a reaper, which dropped it gently on the field to dry. It was picked up, threshed and milled into flour.

\* \* \* \*

For anyone who has ever experienced life on a farm, I would like to share a nostalgic and very interesting message from Pope John Paul II when he visited Iowa in October 1979. Excerpt from "The Hartford Courant" dated October 5, 1979:

In his homily at the Mass, the Pontiff spoke,  
"Conserve the land well, so that your  
children's children and generations after  
them will inherit an even richer land  
than was entrusted to you."

He added that farmers must also be generous, saying:  
"You have the potential to provide food  
for the millions who have nothing to eat and  
thus help to rid the world of famine."

Meeting with the parishioners, the Pontiff said:  
"On your farms, you are close to God's nature;  
in your work on the land you follow the rhythm  
of the seasons; and in your heart you feel  
close to each other as children of a common  
father and as brothers and sisters in Christ."

I identified with his beautiful message as we were indeed close to God's nature on our farm in the Saint John Valley.

\* \* \* \*

After the gathering of the grain was completed and the trees started to show a little tinge of red, we knew the potato harvest would soon be upon us. There were chores for everyone in the preparation. Mama had to be sure she had enough commodities on hand in order to prepare the three big meals each day to accommodate her family and the hired help. The barrels had to be taken out of storage, new ones had to be marked with initials: A.D. The potato house had to be cleaned and made ready for the new crop. Papa had to figure what help was needed.

*Fall was when we were known as potato pickers - yes, that we were with much joy and pride.*

**Potato Harvest** - Potatoes in Maine finished their growth cycle, after much nurturing from the farmer, and were ready for digging in mid-September. On the farm one of the latest crops to be gathered was the harvesting and storage of potatoes which formed such an important part of the farmer's provisions for himself and the rest of the world. Potato harvest was an invigorating and refreshing time. It was one of the most beautiful and exciting times on the farm, despite the long working days. During the potato season, the harvest moon hung low in the sky like a great big lantern. It was also the time that nature provided us with breathtaking foliage aflame with color. The local schools would close for a period of three weeks during September allowing school children to assist with the harvest.

Potato harvest produced considerable activity, lots of hired help, and much work for both the woman of the house and the man on the farm. After my father bought a truck and tractor, there was a tremendous change during potato harvest. In the early days, a horse-drawn potato digger powered by a Novo gasoline engine unearthed the potatoes. I remember the days of potato harvest with horses and wagons hauling the barrels from the field; and I remember a longer lunchtime for the horses to eat and rest. Those were the days when we were too young to be of substantial help. My father had to seek help to drive the horses on the digger and also hire potato pickers. In those years I recall my father's favorite pickers were Paul and Jeannette Levesque. Our job then, was to pick the culls. Every picker had a young child following him/her picking the culls left on the field. Culls were small potatoes that were saved for cooking in the huge caldron for feeding the farm animals, mainly the "cochons" (swines and piglets). Once we attained the age of ten we were given a short section of our own in the potato field to prepare us for the "real" picking. At the time of the transition from the horses to the tractor, we were considered old

enough to assume the responsibilities of adult pickers. For a few years our potato pickers were Ronaldo, Velma and Clarence Cyr - our former neighbors. These years were fun times. During harvest Mama prepared extra beds for the hired help. We were crowded but we did not mind. Our friends would stay and sleep over all week - going home on Saturday night. Papa would return for them on Sunday evening in order to start early Monday morning. Also we had hired help working with Leonard on the potato truck. I remember for two consecutive years, Papa hired Zoel Albert, from Jerry Lake, Canada; he was a very nice gentleman. Everyone liked and enjoyed him. He would sleep over during the week and return home on Saturday evening; his sister would drive him back on Sunday evening.

There were many nights when we would talk and tell stories late into the night until we would hear Papa's loud voice yelling, "Go to sleep!" We then would turn over to sleep. Some mornings we were tired and sleepy, Papa had no compassion for us. The day started early about 5:30 when we again would hear Papa hollering, "Get up!" We would all scramble out of our warm beds and jump into our potato clothes full of dirt from the field. After washing, we would go down to the most delicious breakfast on earth prepared by Mama. It was eggs, bacon, ham, oatmeal, cornflakes, baked beans, potatoes, ployes, syrup, molasses and enough for second helpings. We had a ferocious appetite.

After breakfast we were ready to face the crisp cool morning air which would fully wake us up. We would all climb onto the truck or in the old Chevrolet to the potato field. Upon arrival in the field the potato row was divided into sections marked with a branch from the nearby trees. This task was repeated every time we entered a new field. Before going to the field each morning the pickers were given tickets with a designated numeral. As a barrel was filled a ticket was placed on top. The men on the truck would gather these tickets to be counted at the end of each day. Somehow we picked more potatoes in the morning. At lunchtime we counted the unused tickets and estimated how many more barrels we could pick in the afternoon.

There usually were fighting and hassles over the size of the sections - some pickers wanted more while others wanted less. My father always put me at the end of the rows - it was a tough section to handle as when the digger would turn into another row it often would leave huge lumps of dirt that had to be turned over to get at the potatoes. My mouth was constantly going - talking, yelling at various things. Being placed at the end of the row had a few disadvantages for example, when I was

digging with my hands in those mounds of earth I was not picking potatoes; then being at the end of the field, I would often lack barrels. The men on the truck would not calculate correctly and would drop all the barrels before reaching the end. That would enrage me and I would let them know. I had to take barrels from another section and that would cause friction. When Papa realized the situation he would intervene. Many years later my dear father told me he knew which one to put in that spot. He told me he was proud of me and that I did an excellent job. Also with a gleam in his eyes he said he sometime enjoyed hearing me yelling - he said I was funny and kept the work going smoothly.

The men on the truck, Leonard and the hired man, gathered the barrels; one would be on the ground the other on the truck's flatbed with a hoist. The potatoes were then taken to the potato house for storage. The driver, in the field, was the next oldest boy in the family, Albert. Everyone had a specific job!

We had two potato houses on the farm after my father had Willie's potato house rebuilt. I remember in the early years, potato bins were rented at Isaie Cyr's Potato Houses along the railroad tracks "au bord" on Route 1. Also a certain amount of potatoes were hauled in a potato bin designated for the church.

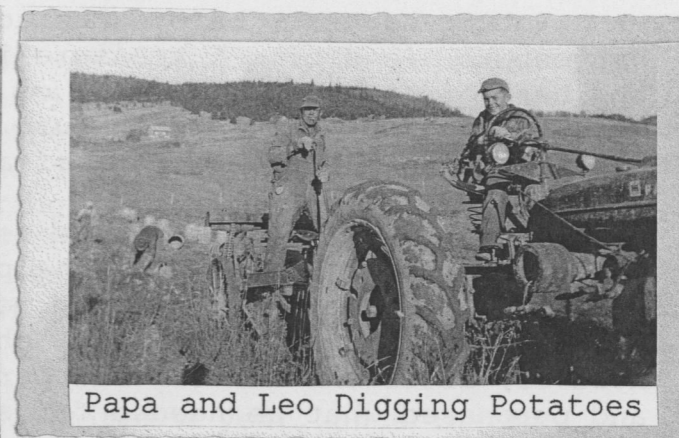
My sister, Doris, and I often were in competition to see who would pick the most; our goal was achieving 100 barrels in one day. We never reached our goal; however, Doris picked the most - 93 barrels and I picked 91. A barrel contained 165 pounds of potatoes. If my mathematics is correct, 93 barrels times 165 pounds equals 15,345 pounds of potatoes. In any language this is mind boggling! We had a friend, Adrienne Levesque, who would often pick 100 barrels a day. Pickers gathered the potatoes into a basket emptied into a barrel. We were given baskets according to our size and the capacity we could handle.

Every now and then the digger broke down, when this happened we would hurry to pick the dug potatoes and enjoy playtime. One game we enjoyed was gathering the empty barrels, placing each barrel on an incline, one in back of the other with a good space between each. Then we would run, throwing ourselves on the first barrel then jumping and grabbing the next barrel down the line. The next person would follow repeating until we were all at the bottom. The barrels then had to be rolled back up the hill. It was fun, really - what energy we had! We loved these breakdowns. At other times we reclined on a barrel and bask in the sun. Sometimes we pulled out the dried potato stocks on the rows yet to be dug in our section.

POTATO HARVEST

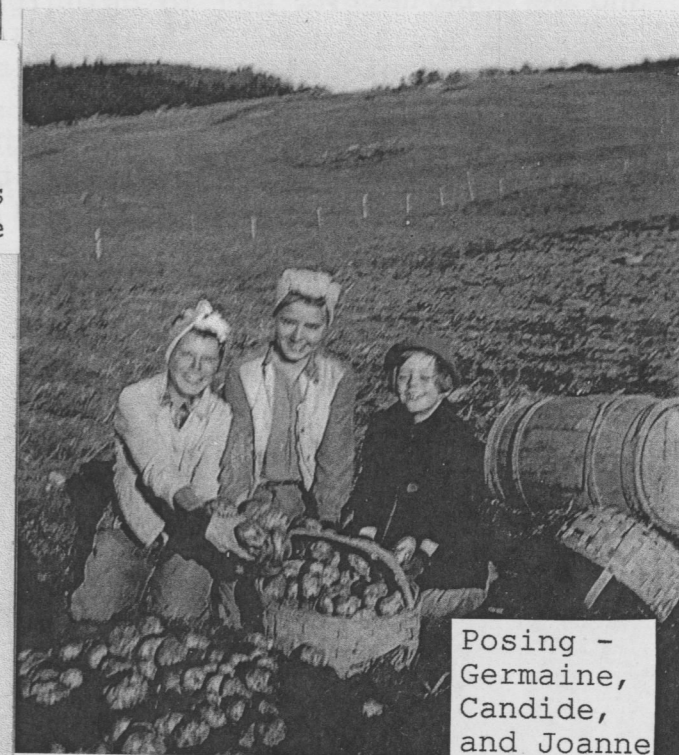


Above: Uncle Lucien Michaud Picking Potatoes



Papa and Leo Digging Potatoes

Below: Leonard and Zoel Albert, Hired man, Hauling the Potatoes to the Potato House for Storage



Posing - Germaine, Candide, and Joanne

Right: Albertine with a Full Basket



Right: Doris and Velma Taking a Break



Potato harvest, before the advent of the mechanical potato harvesters, is a time I treasure in my heart. On the farm it was the best of times with a sense of freedom being out in the field marveling at the beauty of nature. Today this privilege is not possible within the enclosure of a potato harvester.

At the end of the harvest we celebrated - it was time for my parents to thank the hired help, show their appreciation and pay them. Mama lavished us with more delicious food and Papa even had beer for his help. We, children, did not get paid; however, after the harvest our parents would take us shopping and purchased what we needed for school. That would satisfy us and we were happy.

If we finished the potato harvest before school restarted, we would assist on other farms. I recall one year we helped Bart Cyr with his potato harvest. Another year we helped our neighbor, Paul Beaulieu, when his potato digger had broken down. My father used his own equipment and crew, rushing against time, to finish Mr. Beaulieu's harvest. That was the year we teenagers picked potatoes in the snow for 25 cents a barrel. As I recall we did not mind the cold. We loved the dollars!



Potato Harvest was over and we were celebrating. Left to Right: Leonard, Velma Cyr, Zoel Albert, Candide, Albert, and Ronaldo Cyr.



Leonard had started to celebrate a little too early and ended up in the "wet area." Albert was helping him unload to the other truck.

\* \* \* \*

**Winter on the farm** - Winter was somewhat of a relaxing time for the farm people. Winter, despite snow and cold, could be a time of joy. It was a time for the older children to play outside, to skate, to ski, slide down the hill, et cetera. It was also a time for the butchering of animals, and time for Papa to sort and grade his potatoes for the market. For Mama it was time to catch up on her sewing, spinning, knitting, rug making, and other indoor chores. And, winter was the time to stay indoors, relax and keep warm.

Butchering occurred a couple times a year, once in the spring and then again at the beginning of the winter when the weather was at freezing point. It was an all day affair and usually a "boeuf" (beef) and hog were slaughtered on the same day. On butchering day Mama needed help after grandma could no longer assist, so she had a "fille engagere" (maid). When we were older, we helped. Doris especially loved to "debiter la viande" (cut up the meat). Mama would can some of the meat in half gallon jars; therefore, she always had food on hand.

My father would hire Alcime Deschaine or Levite Hebert to butcher the animals. Before the butcher arrived Papa would build a fire under the huge caldron full of water in the front part of the potato house. I remember after the hog was butchered it was scalded and scraped removing all the hair. I was not too much help - I just didn't like to look at the poor animal but Doris did not mind and she usually was right there to gather the blood to make "boudin" (blood sausage).

Our first meal was always liver. How could we have eaten it so fresh? Nevertheless it was delicious. Although I did not enjoy the work involved with butchering, I loved the thought of all the delicious meals later on. Our mother cooked everything from the butchered animals - the lungs, tongue, ears, feet, liver, heart, brain, head and tail. Mama made blood sausage, creton (a pork spread), "saindou" (shortening) and salted pork. In our house nothing was wasted, we ate all kinds foods.

The cut up meat was spread out on boards in the summer kitchen and it would freeze overnight. The meat was then stored in barrel with packed snow and kept frozen all winter. What a life! It's no wonder after we moved in the schoolhouse, one of the first appliance my parents bought was a Philco Freezer which lasted the rest of their lives. Also some meat was sometime preserved in brine in a huge bucket. This usually happened in the spring if there was any meat left before the frozen meat had

a chance to thaw. The salt pork was preserved in brine in the "carre a lard" (salt pork barrel).

I recall helping to clean the intestines for casing for the blood sausage and how we had to blow air to check for holes. If there was a hole, the casing was tied. The casings were filled with the blood pudding and cooked in boiling water.

I remember quite a frightening experience when mother was melting the various parts of the hog for lard. The process consisted of melting and rendering the fat of hogs into grease or lard. This was done in a large kettle over a hot wood fire in the summer kitchen. As it was cooking on the stove she left us to take care of it while she went to put baby Leo down for a nap. The mixture started to boil over and caught on fire. Doris ran upstairs to get Mama and I ran to the potato house to get Papa. Ma ran down the stairs with Leo in her arms and fell when she reached the bottom step. Papa ran in, grabbed a coat hanging by the door and smothered the fire. By the time mother picked herself up unhurt, the fire was out, and a big clean-up mess left for her.

\* \* \* \*

**Charlemagne** - I recall during the winter months, it was not unusual for some of the neighbors or relatives to just stop by after supper for a visit and play cards most likely Charlemagne. There was never a need of an invitation. Farm people had more time to party and play music, dance, and have a good time during the winter.



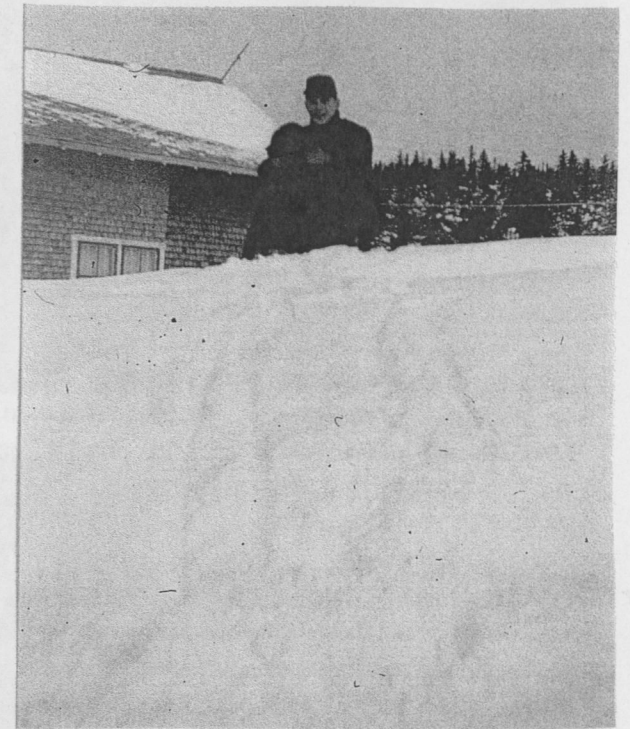
Mama and Papa Enjoying a Card Game of Charlemagne with Aunt Anna and Uncle Leo Roy

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**Snowstorm** - Wintertime was not all "partying" either. There was also much snow shoveling to be done. It seems when I was growing up it snowed every day. I remember a huge storm in 1951 when I was 18 years old. It snowed from Saturday to Saturday. The snow was beyond belief on the farm. We did not go to school for well over a week as the roads were closed. My Uncle Henri was the plowman at that time. On the day that the town crew came to plow the road, Uncle Henri called Mama and told her to prepare "le dinner" (lunch) for 23 men. My mother obliged and immediately proceeded to delegate jobs for each one of us. In no time Mama had a meal on the table fit for kings. Those are unforgettable memories.



Above Left: Papa - on huge snowdrift in front of house during 1951 snowstorm.



Above Right: Albert and Puppy on same snowdrift.

Right: Papa, Alphonse Daigle, ready to shovel so he can drive his car out of the garage.





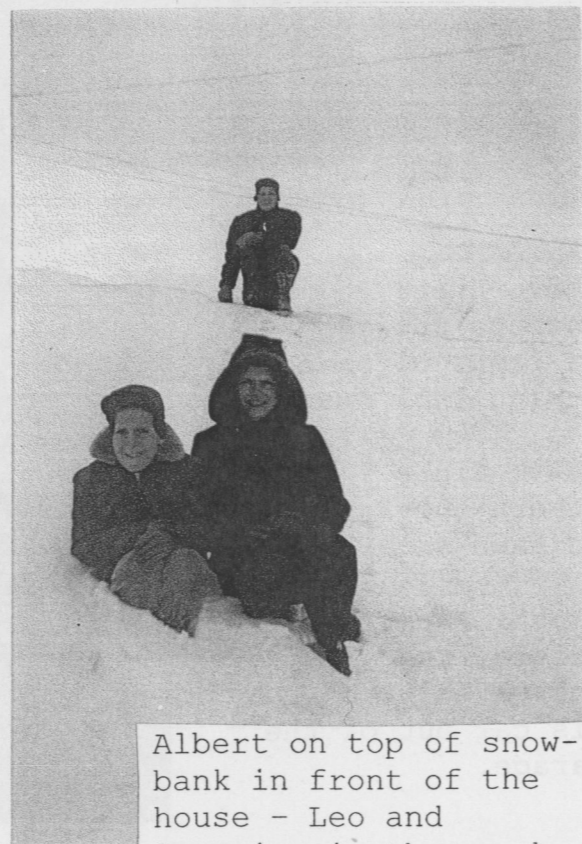
Some of the 23 Men who were shoveling the road in front of the plow.



Big snowdrift in front of barn - from left, Joanne, Germaine, Leo and Candide.



The plow was a huge track vehicle.



Albert on top of snow-bank in front of the house - Leo and Germaine in the road.

\* \* \* \*

**Spinning and Knitting** - When her daily duties were finished, Mama's busy fingers never stopped, she would pick up her knitting or crochet and the needles would fly. She knitted stocking, mittens, bonnets, sweaters, and even underwear for the whole family. I remember wearing wool underwear - I liked the feel of wool, although, some said it made them itch. I also remember Father Doucette while on his "visite paroissial" (annual parish visit) would comment on our "beau petit bas rouge" (beautiful red stockings). Ma must have liked the color red, as I seem to remember mittens and sweaters also dyed red. She also crocheted baby sets for sale. These sets for infants consisted of a sweater, hat, and booties in two colors, blue and pink each with white trimming. These were so pretty. If I recall correctly, she crocheted these for the Bluebird Company. Grandmère and Mama also knitted oversized mittens "pour les matelot" (for the Merchant Marine). I think they would take them to Frank Fournier - he was the middleman involved. Grandma had the luxury of owning a knitting machine. She would knit the upper part of the stockings on the machine and all Mama had to do was knit the foot. Doris learned how to operate the machine and she enjoyed working with grandma. After our parents left the farm, they had temporarily stored some belongings in the garage. Much to our chagrin, a number of things were stolen. That was the fate of our knitting machine. On one of my weekend trips home from Connecticut, Pa and I came upon it in the garage and Pa gave it to me for Doris. We put it by the door with the intention of picking it up the next day. When we returned the following day, someone had stolen the knitting machine.

Spinning yarn was a chore of most families. Spinning required a skilled hand. Mama did a lot of spinning in her day on her treadle spinning wheel. After the wool was carded the fleece rolls were ready to be spun into yarn. The act of spinning twists and stretches fibers of wool in such a way that they cannot come apart. The spinning wheel twisted the wool evenly and kept the yarn spinning at a steady rate. The spinner kept the wheel moving with her foot and held the wool tightly between her fingers. She had to hold it at just the right angle to keep it from bunching. After the bobbin was full, the yarn was removed unto a yarn winder. Mama's winder had a mechanism which counted the revolutions - after 40 turns it clicked loudly so mother would know that 80 yards, or one "knot," was wound. When seven knots had been wound, there were 560 yards of yarn or one skein. The next step was plying the yarn which means twisting several strand together. Then there was the dyeing of the wool. My Grandmother at one time used natural ingredients such as bark and roots, onionskin, flowers and berries. For instance, dande-

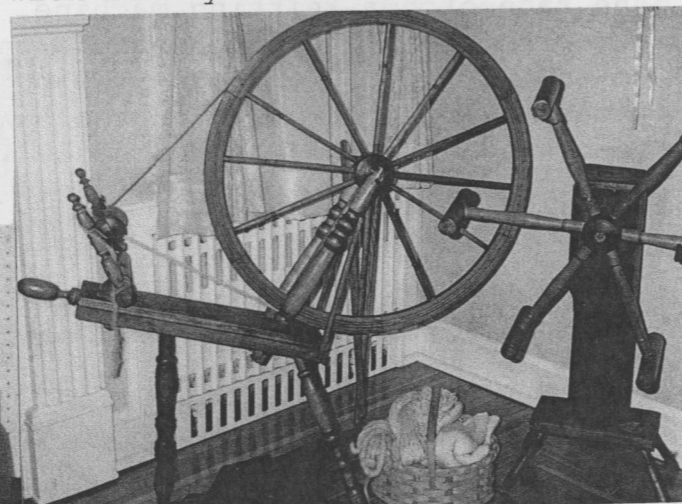


lions made a dark yellow dye and cranberries were used to dye red. My mother was somewhat more modern - I recall she used Cushing's Perfection Dyes, manufactured by W. Cushing & Company, Dover-Foxcroft, Maine. When Mama dyed yarn or clothes I found it so fascinating and I was always ready to assist. For me being helpful paid off as many years later while I was braiding wool rugs for my own home, and needed to dye specific colors, I appreciated having worked with my mother. It was amazing how much I remembered from my childhood days, even to adding vinegar or salt to set the color.

As we were growing up all young girls learned how to knit, crochet and embroider. My grandmother tried to teach me how to knit but I just could not do it - my knitting was so tight it would turn into a ball. Doris learned and she laughed at my knitting; needless to say, I do not knit. I learned embroidery from Mama and loved it. It was unheard of to have nothing to do. No woman would dream of sitting down without some form of needlework, even darning or other handiwork in her hands.

Mama excelled in needlework of all kinds especially in crocheting. After she retired, she crocheted many Afghans for her children and grandchildren. She also crocheted beautiful vests and sweaters for herself with fine yarn.

Right: Our family's spinning wheel and yarn winder have been preserved and now grace a corner of my living room.



Left: Mama demonstrating "The Art of Spinning" with Mrs. Dan Cyr's Spinning Wheel during the 1990 Acadian Festival at age 81.

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## TIMES OF ENJOYMENTS

**Mama's musical talent** - Mama derived great joy from her God-given talent. She happily shared this talent with her family and friends. She learned to play the accordion at a very young age and played until the summer of her eighty-ninth year.

The photo on the right is of my mother, Marie Cyr Daigle, with her youngest sister, Yvette. Mama was about age 18.

The organ is the one she purchased from Sears Roebuck with her wages working as a maid for various families - Isaie Martin, Mabel and William Martin, her aunt, Ida Michaud, and Adèle and Gédéon Vermette, to name a few.



Our mother was very musically inclined - she loved music and loved to dance. When we were young she would take out her accordion and play especially on Sundays. We would all gather around her and quietly listen to her play - how we enjoyed those times. At a very tender age, she motivated us as we began to play melodies on the old pump organ which she purchased prior to her marriage. I remember playing old French songs that my grandmother sang. My father knew all the words but lacked on the tunes "il donnais pas l'air" as we said in French. (He could not carry a tune.) Songs like "En Arrière d'la Cantinière," "Ta Petite Jupe de Laine," "Parton la Mer est Belle", and "Évangéline" - all Acadian songs that grandma taught us. Mama encouraged all of us to learn to play the organ, piano, the accordion, trombone, and harmonica. I learned to play chords on the pump organ as Mama played the accordion. Simone Beaulieu, our

neighbor, and Marie Anne Cyr (Mrs. Jean Fortin), taught me the chords. Eventually, Germaine and Joanne first learned the chords from me and became excellent accompanists. Albertine was good at playing some of Aunt Eva's melodies on the piano. (Aunt Edith, grandmother's sister, sold her piano to us after her daughter, Fernande Pelletier, left for the Medical Mission Sisters.)

When we got older, Germaine never seemed to be around to help with dishes; she was always playing the piano and as we complained, Mama would say, "Let her play, j'aime sa." Now we are happy Ma let her play because today she plays beautifully - to the enjoyment of us all. Germaine also learned to play the accordion. We all played "a l'oreille" (by ear). Joanne also learned to play the piano and still enjoys entertaining us.

In high school, Joanne joined the Madawaska High School Band, learned to read music and played the trombone. In her Sophomore year, the Madawaska High School Band had the honor of being chosen to march and play during the Cherry Blossom Festival in Washington, D. C. In 1960, this was quite an exciting event for a little farm girl from the "concession de Saint David" (back settlement - town of Madawaska).

**Winter good times** - We had fewer chores in the wintertime, so we took the opportunity to enjoy ourselves outdoors when it was not stormy. It didn't take much to keep us entertained. We managed to have a good time whatever we did. I recall we were great at improvising. We did not have skates, skis, bicycles, or any sport equipment. We made our own. For instance, we made skis from potato barrel boards. We also made a type of sled with a barrel board for slider and a seat on the board held in place with a piece of log, and another log on the front with a handle to hold on to. (Recently upon visiting the Daigle/Saint Jean House in Clair, New Brunswick, Canada, I was thrilled at seeing one of those homemade-type sled.) We also used opened-up corrugated cardboard boxes to slide down hills.

I remember vividly that on clear crisp cold moonlit evenings, we would go play outside. The conditions had to be just right for sliding - we needed crusted snow shining in the moonlight. Oh what fun! Over and over we would run back up the hill amusing ourselves. The beauty of those evenings is what left an unforgettable impression for me. What we enjoyed was being in the cold invigorating air and while playing, looking up admiring the spacious sky above with its million stars. It was the mystery ... the wonder of it all. This was always a good opportunity to wish upon the stars. I truly believed in wishing

on the first star: "Star light star bright, first star I see tonight, I wish I may wish I might, have the wish I wish tonight." Once in a while we were fortunate at witnessing a momentary glimpse of a shooting star. On these occasions, we would say it was a confirmation that our wish would come true. Shooting stars were the angels guarding us.

I especially treasure visiting my friend, Doris Albert, after school. There was a hill facing their house, which was much steeper than ours, where we also enjoyed sliding with cardboard boxes. After playing we would all come in for supper that Mrs. Albert prepared with a pile of ployes - just as delicious as Mama's suppers. After supper we would recite the rosary and then Mrs. Albert would play her accordion much to our delight. I would sleep over and go on to school the next day. Doris would take her turn at coming over my house - what unforgettable good times!

We did not have skates, however we had our own skating rink where the neighborhood children would come to skate. The brook would swell and form a small pond. This area was just below the hill where we would slide with our cardboard. We were happy clearing and maintaining the ice. I don't recollect that I was terribly "malheureuse" (unhappy) because we lacked skates. Oh, I'm sure we would have loved a pair of skates like the others around, but somehow we knew it was out of the question and learned to compensate. I was always ready to try everything. One of the neighbor's boys, Norman, would lend me his skates and tried teaching me. The skates were about three sizes too large and my feet would bend in all directions. Needless to say we both gave up.

At other times we attempted to make igloos working hard and never succeeding. Also, when the snow was just the right consistency how we delighted in making snowballs, then forming teams and having a snowball fight. Walking on snowshoes was another pastime that gave us much pleasure. We often walked with them on the farm giving us good exercise during the winter. We sometimes would go sledding down the hill in the road, though dangerous.

**Christmas** - In the good old days Christmas may not have been lavish by today's standards, but we certainly were not lacking the spirit of the season. Many of us felt ourselves very fortunate to have even the simplest of celebrations. Christmas meant celebrating the gatherings of families - aunts, uncles and friends with much music, singing, violin, piano, accordion, and always a full table of food. It was evident these relatives and

friends knew how to enjoy themselves - they possessed the Acadian "joie de vivre" (love of life).

Sixty-five years ago when I was five years old, life was so very different. I remember my childhood Christmas celebrations as joyous occasions. It was such a peaceful, simple and happy time. Just the anticipation of the joyous time ahead was enough for us. Christmas was not a day of great gift giving. For the children there were a few homemade clothes and toys, nothing elaborate - for the adults, a good wish, a kiss or a handshake. On Christmas Eve we hung our hand-knitted red wool stockings in back of the stove. The next morning they were filled with small surprises, hard candy, oranges or banana.

There were no television with blaring advertisements to tempt us and pester our parents, no shopping malls and crowded store where one could lose the true meaning of Christmas. Our mother made us little outfits secretly, having the boys try the outfits for size and the girls would try on the boys' shirts - only to find out on Christmas morning what had been happening. It was amusing. Grandma on the other hand would buy us fruits and candies and some time a coloring book. Oh what great gifts they were.

When I was around eight years old I recall Santa Claus brought a tole tea set that he had divided among the three oldest girls. Doris, had the tray with the teapot, creamer and sugar bowl; I had the cups and saucers, and Albertine had the four plates. How wise Santa Claus was! This was a lesson in sharing. What was so wonderful was that we learned to share as we played together.

Christmas was a time to reunite. Despite the stresses of the daily life, holidays had a way to fulfill and renew. The rituals held families together and allowed families to express love for one another. It was a home-centered celebration and also we were taught that this special time celebrated a miracle - the birth of the Enfant Jesus.

I remember going to Midnight Mass at an early age. We would take an early evening nap and our parents would wake us when it was time to leave for church. On the way to midnight mass, seeing the Christmas lights at "les gens du bord" was a special treat. The first lights were at the Patrick Beaulieu residence. They had a Christmas tree with lights in the window, which has remained in my memory. There were other lights along the way as well. In the early days, we did not have this luxury.

Once at church we children would pay a visit at the beautiful "Crèche" (Nativity) they had in Saint David Church in those early days. We would kneel in awe of the Infant Jesus. I remember the choir how gloriously and wonderfully they sang the "Gloria and Minuit Chrétien" (Gloria and O Holy Night). Who can forget the great voices of Mr. Dan à Jacques Cyr, his sons Raoul and Armand; then there were the Guerrettes, Paul Beaulieu, Aline Michaud, Lewis Martin, and many others.

Upon returning home we children went to bed. We lay in bed eager to sleep so that Christmas morning might come that much sooner! As we grew older we were allowed to partake of "le Réveillon" (a special meal after the Midnight Mass). It was a time of special cherished foods enjoyed with Mama's siblings and friends. Mama usually baked a "buche de Noël" (Christmas log cake) and raisin pies, my favorite desserts, and would serve the traditional chicken stew. Always, there were "des crossignols" (homemade doughnuts).

Also music was a great part of our growing up. Music gave us enormous joy - it made a big difference in our life on the farm. I remember singing Christmas carols with our aunts and uncles at the Reveillon. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were special family times.

I remember well our first Christmas tree. Papa had gone to cut one from the forest, and the tree was so huge it did not fit in the doorway. Mama had him shorten the tree by almost three feet. Our first tree was decorated with the help of mother and grandmother. We cut strips of bright colored construction paper and pasted them together to form chains and draped them over our tree. It was gorgeous and we children were very happy. The following year grandma bought us three ornaments of which two are still in existence and Mama bought some tinsel. For us children, the holidays were a time of happiness and excitement.

During the Christmas holidays my mind flashes back to the Christmases of my childhood. I relive the time when Mama would serve Ribbon Candy on a beautiful plate. The glass-like ribbon candy almost looked like fine porcelain. I remember this delicate white candy with red and green stripes. It was fragile, colorful and sweet. Ribbon candy was a very special treat at Christmas time in our home.

Christmas can often bring to mind touches of sadness. When I was in the lower grades, we had practiced for a Christmas play which was to be held in our parish of Saint David on a Sunday

afternoon. I was to sing "Away in a Manger" with other children. Being the unpredictable winter of northern Maine, it started to snow. The big wet snowflakes fell like dollops of whipped cream ... I remember it was so beautiful watching the snow come down.

Our excitement over the beauty was short lived when my father announced, "No way were we going out in this storm." We all felt terrible and thought Papa was so mean. Our disappointment was nothing compared to the pains and grief we were to suffer the next day when we heard one young boy, with his dog and sled on the way to the play, was hit by a car and died. Needless to say, every Christmas, "Away in a Manger" brings back memories of a sad tragedy.

As I grew older I realized it was not easy getting out of the hilly Concession during inclement weather and learned to appreciate my parents decisions.

New Year's Day was also a feast day in our home with relatives and friends stopping for "un petit cou" (a little drink). Company was always expected on New Year's Day and Mama was prepared with delicious food. Going from house to house was the tradition in those days, socializing with lots of kissing, eating and drinking. I recall my parents joining relatives and friends in going to different homes celebrating the first day of the New Year and then gather back with the family for another big meal. The New Year's day of today is very different. I have retained vivid memories of the New Year's day of my childhood.



Friends and neighbors on their way to the traditional house-to-house socializing. Our parents joined them to go wake up someone else. Albertine and I decorated the men's hats with branches from the Christmas tree. Left to Right: Carmen Cyr, Simone Beaulieu, Marie and Alphonse Daigle, George Cyr. Present but not in the photo were: Abel Cyr, Paul Beaulieu and Rita Cyr.

Throughout the years there were many gatherings of relatives at home. Our home seemed to be the meeting place for Mama's siblings. Mama was the oldest in her family and after Grandmother Cyr died, her brothers and sisters often visited on Sundays. I remember when Uncle Henri, driving Grandpa Cyr's big tan colored car, would come visiting with Uncles Octave and Lucien, Aunts Lucienne and Yvette, and Grandpa.

As Mama's sisters and brothers married, they continued to visit. There were lots of good times with music and dancing. After Aunt Lucienne married Uncle Lucien, they would visit on Sundays; we would play music all afternoon often converting the huge kitchen into a dance hall. I enjoyed playing the chords on the piano while Uncle Lucien played the violin. Also I learned a lot playing the chords with Aunt Anna while she played the violin. Mama often sent me over Aunt Anna to help her when she did not feel well; however, her illness did not stop her from playing violin. It made my time there somewhat enjoyable.

It's true we did not have much money and it did not take much to make us happy; also we did wonders with what we had. We provided our own entertainment and we found joy making people happy. The guests were always treated to a banquet-like table at our house!



Tante Jeanne and Uncle Rene - Uncle Lewis and Simone  
Friends and relatives had great times at our home.

Mama and Germaine  
Playing the  
Accordions



Germaine Playing  
the Accordion and  
Joanne at the Piano



A Gathering at Aunt Anna and Uncle Leo Roy - Mama, Marie Cyr  
Daigle, Germaine Daigle, Joan Roy and Candide Daigle Playing  
the "Old Pump Organ"

**Play Time** - I vividly recall a favorite place to play and "pretend" during our summer vacation from school was on top of the potato house. It was a huge room with old sleighs, Papa's gig, and old tools hanging all around this room. During the winter it served as storage for farm machinery.

Velma Cyr, our neighbor, very often would come to visit and she would play with Doris, Albertine, and me. Some days we would play "à femme" (pretending we were someone else like Irene, or Yvonne - Velma's aunts, and carrying on grown-up conversations). That was fun. Other times we played school - how I liked to pretend to be the teacher. Behind the huge doors were several barrels of old shoes, some very fashionable high-button shoes, all mixed in with old bottles. We used to play with these shoes and then return them in the barrels. There also was what we called a "pushin" (pincushion) made from the base of a lamp. The pincushion was stuffed, covered with a black velvet fabric embroidered with a beautiful white design, and attached to the lamp base. My family never threw anything away. That must be where I inherited the need of saving everything.

Long after the potato house had been dismantled; I asked my father what had happened to those potato barrels of shoes and bottles. He informed me that he had dumped the barrel on a rock pile many years ago. He recalled the exact place. I had become interested in old bottles and wondered if possibly some old bottles had survived. One day with my father and husband, Harry, we went bottle digging. My father was all excited like a child. That day we recovered over twenty-five good bottles plus several broken ones. What had preserved some of the bottles were the shoes. Of course the shoes were all deteriorated. The second time we went bottle hunting, we found the old pincushion's glass lamp base - turned purple with age. I remembered playing "house" with that pincushion. What a thrill to have found such a treasure! I proudly display this lamp base in my home - a candle has taken the place of the pincushion.

Through the years, I have found treasures on the farm in gathering a variety of bottles. Bottle collecting gave me a glimpse into the life of my family. For instance a little green bottle I recall contained small red pills. It reminded me of a slogan on the radio in the 1940s, "Des pillude rouge pour les femmes pale et faible" (red pills for pale and weak women). Then there was the Lydia Pinkham tonic, cobalt blue Phillip's Milk of Magnesia, Capsules Cresobene for respiratory problems, no doubt Uncle Adolphe's medication, and several flasks of gin, et cetera. There is a story with each bottle found - interesting.

**Games we played** - hide and seek, tag, giant steps, kick the can, marigool, "petit oiseau bleu" (little bluebird), a tasket-a-tisket, cowboys and Indians, marbles (oh how I loved to play marbles), various card games, cat's cradle - played by looping a string on the fingers, and sometimes transferring it to the hand of another player so as to form designs, we often played make believe, and parachuting with the carriage umbrella by jumping from the peak of the garage, leg wrestling, et cetera.

If neighborhood children came over to play when Papa and Mama were not at home, Grandmère would ask them in a polite way to go home and come back another day. She kept a watchful eye on us. As I look back what a great blessing Grandma was for us.

**Toys** - Most of our toys were homemade. For example, these toys were whistles made from a willow twig, various others made out of empty spools of thread, stilts, tin cans smashed in the middle with the ends curling around the soles of our shoes then we would walk for hours, skis made from old barrel boards, bob sleds made from barrel board, empty spool with a string through, big buttons on a string, small tops carved from empty spools, building see saws behind the wood shed, building swings in the poplar tree grove, et cetera. There were never dull moments. I recall our parents gave us a "toupi" (top) as a gift for all to share. It was the best of tops - it made a whirling sound, and whistled and played a tune. We enjoyed and shared that top for years! Another store-bought toy we all loved was the kaleidoscope that Albertine's Godparents, Gretchen and Vetel Daigle, gave her one Christmas. It delighted and fascinated all of us.



Joanne on Swing - Poplar Grove

**Nature** - Taking nature walks with Grandmother was not only beautiful adventures but also very educational. The spring air was so clean, invigorating and refreshing after the long winters. It was always amazing how many flowering trees there were in the woods; Grandmother seemed to know all the names. She would teach us the name of trees and plants. As we strolled through the lush woodland in the spring, she taught us to listen

to the joyful and vibrant sounds of nature. As we would walk suddenly we would hear a bird's cheery song. We were always on the lookout for a robin. It was the sign that spring had really arrived. Upon seeing the first robin, we were suppose to make a wish - a wish that we would be promoted to the next grade in school. As we walked farther into the woods, we occasionally saw rabbits jump nearby. We would see different kinds of birds - sometime blue jays fighting. Also on the lush floor of the forest, it was interesting with the moss, princess pines, and the many wild flowers. I especially remember the red trilliums and the pink and white (painted trilliums). She let us pick a few for our mother. She cautioned that picking all the flowers, the plant would become extinct. Also the sunlight filtering through the green darkness of the forest was interesting. On our way back we would pick some princess pines, and some flowers and grandma would make a wreath for our heads and a garland to wear around our necks, then come home and show Mama.

I have fond memories of early spring when the snow was nearly melted, Grandma would take us in the cow pasture and let us play on two huge ledges. It was a beautiful area and there always was a pool of water between the ledges. Grandma told us that when her daughters were little they would play on those huge rocks. Today the forest has taken over; however the wild roses that I remember in that area are still growing.

A short distance from the ledges, was the site of the original house on the farm, prior to grandfather's time. Grandmother showed us remnants of the rock foundation and also the location of the spring, which provided water via wooden pipes to two household, Daigle brothers. Supposedly the road used to be beyond the brook "cedrière" (cedar grove) in those days. (Today this area would be on the hill above the pond.)

During the early summer it was always a joy and very fascinating observing "les hirondelles" (the barn swallows) flying about and making nests out of twigs and mud in the barn. By haying time they would be busy flying gathering food for their young ones. When Papa was in the hayloft manning the hay fork while unloading a load of hay, every now and then a "maudite hirondelles" (damn swallows) would come out of his mouth as the swallows messed on his head. I wondered why he would get so angry at such beautiful charming birds.

When I think of summer evenings on the farm, I can hear the long-ago laughter of my siblings at play, the cool evening air, and the dwindling daylight as we watched the sparkle of the

fireflies and listened to the crickets. We enjoyed catching these insects and putting them in jars. Also in the evenings as we were growing up we delighted in admiring the blue mountains in the distant northwest which is Canada. Our special name for the mountains was "the scallops in the sky" (mountains forming a series of rounded projections along the "firmament" - horizon).

It was also at that time we admired the splendor of the sun setting. As the sun would descend into the western horizon, the view overlooking the blue mountains created an unforgettable breath-taking scenery.

In the autumn the walks with grandma were also interesting and fun. The trees on the farm during the fall would go out in a blaze of glory. We would pick out the best colorful leaves and later pressed them in a book until dried then used them for decorations. What I remember the most about our fall excursions was the gathering of beechnuts. We had to sometime dig through the leaves to find them. We would also gather spruce gum, which grew on the spruce trees.

On the farm we were very much aware of nature as we witnessed raging storms fill the sky with lightening and shadows, and loud thunder, then watched as the clouds dissipated, leaving behind beautiful blue skies and gorgeous rainbows.

Grandmother certainly embedded in me the appreciation and love of nature.

Our mother was known for having beautiful flowers. Here she is with one of her prized red Dahlia. She always had gorgeous blossoming houseplants, especially the Angel Wing Begonia. The deep pink flowers hung from the plant in huge clusters.

Right: Marie Daigle



## FAMILY STORIES AND KEEPSAKES

Mama's resourcefulness and confidence have given us, as young girls, a blueprint for self-reliance. She clearly was a woman ahead of her time.

**"Couturière" (Seamstress)** - Mama was a very resourceful and creative mother. Through all the hard years of our early childhood, there were no tasks too overwhelming for her. She fashioned her own clothing and made clothing for the entire family. She was great at recycling old clothes into new garments for us. She made us little dresses from her wedding dress. From old worn out coats turned inside out she would find good pieces large enough to make us coats. Nothing was ever thrown out.

During the depression years life was tough on the farm because there just wasn't any money to buy anything especially clothes. She collected all the feed sacks and designed some neat dresses. Empty feed bags were plentiful on the farm and the fabric they were made of clothed the entire family: shirts for the boys, shorts for Papa and the boys, nightgowns, housecoats, aprons, and dresses for the girls. She even made herself very nice dresses from these bags. In buying the feed the pattern of the sack fabric was equally important as the feed inside.

All the other empty bags of sugar, salt, flour, et cetera, were also put to good use. After they were washed and the lettering bleached out, these bags made great dishtowels and even pillowcases. All the remnants from these bags and feed sacks were saved to later use in making quilts. When we cleaned out the family home after Mama sold it, we found some feed sack fabric neatly folded - perhaps kept as souvenirs.

Mama was fortunate in having an uncle living in Watertown, Connecticut, who sent on a few occasion huge boxes of used clothing. What treasures we found for Mama to sew stylish outfits for us. Mama did not need store-bought dress patterns. We would look through the latest Sears Roebuck Catalog and point at what we wanted; she would look at it, make herself a pattern out of brown paper and start sewing. She never ran out of ideas!

Many years later I recollect stopping with Mama to visit Velma and her mother, former farm neighbor, and we began reminiscing about our days on the farm. Velma shared how she envied us because our mother made all our clothes and we were so well dressed, and wishing her mother could sew. I then shared

our feelings - we too were envious, we complained to our mother of always having homemade clothes, why couldn't we have store-bought clothes like Velma. Needless to say the four of us spent an unforgettable afternoon.

Mama became a wonderful "couturière" (seamstress) and not only sewed for her family but for other people as well. She was very good at alterations, shortening and lengthening and making store bought clothes fit properly. She designed and sewed gorgeous baptismal outfits for her grandchildren.

\* \* \* \*

**Quilts** - Patchwork quilts evoke memories of my childhood. In our home there were quilts on every bed made by mother and grandmother. Some patchwork were humble and simple pieces of woolen fabric sewn together for the sole purpose of keeping us snugly warm and protecting us against the frigid Maine winters. I remember two such patchworks on the boys' beds were made from dark-colored squares with an occasional red-square here and there. The square patches were cut out of old woolen coats and trousers, et cetera. In an earlier time, grandma related, these quilts were used on the hired man's bed and Papa's bed. My older sister, Doris, and I had favorites - hers was an embroidered spread that grandma put on her bed only on Sundays. During the week she would cover her bed with another quilt and often reminisced by pointing at various patches and telling us it was from dresses she had made for her little girls - aunt Delina and aunt Odile or dresses she had made for herself. Listening to grandmother reminiscing we could sense the love that was put in that quilt. My favorite was the basket pattern appliqued on a dark red fabric with tiny black dots, also called the wedding cake pattern. "Someday these will be ours," we said. Sadly the quilts all wore out from constant use and none survived except grandfather's heavy comforter which was still in the garage.

Upon looking into the old garage one day with Mama, we noticed the old comforter. Mama suggested that it should be discarded as the mice had made a couple of holes in it. I thought that perhaps I should wash, repair, and preserve it as a family heirloom. My mother volunteered her help. Upon studying this "rag" we discovered a "couverture de paille" (straw mattress cover) and a crazy quilt among the five layers - no wonder it was so heavy. Much to my surprise this quilt was my grandmother's everyday quilt that she often reminisced with us concerning her little daughters' dresses. With my mothers' expert help, this treasure was repaired with not too much difficulty. It was an easier task than we originally anticipated. Today, this quilt proudly graces a chair in my bedroom.

This particular quilt has special meaning for me as it represents the story of our family's joys and pains. Through that quilt grandmother left a piece of history, a piece of her soul for us to cherish. And for my Mother in her expert help in restoring this treasure, she left her threads that make up the fabric of our lives.

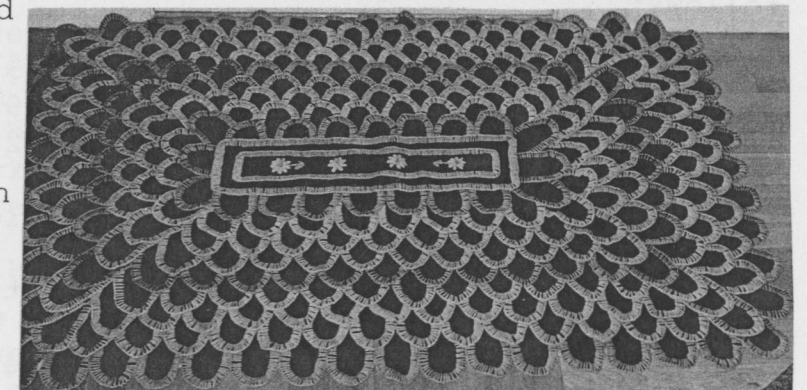
\* \* \* \*

After my mother was widowed, she spent many winters with her children in Connecticut. We each had our turn of having her for a few weeks at a time. She just could not sit without anything to do, so I had the bright idea of working with her on patchwork quilts. We started with taking apart some of our old clothes that at one time had sent to her. These were woolen skirts, dresses, coats and suits of the fifties and sixties. Upon helping her clean her basement while vacationing "chez nous" (home), instead of discarding these out-of-style garments, I had brought them to Connecticut with the idea of someday doing patchwork. The time for patchwork had arrived. We also made some pattern and crazy quilts and tie-quilted all of them. In all we made thirty-six and Mama cut enough patches for fifteen more. Hopefully some day I will find time to finish them and pass them on to the next generation.

\* \* \* \*

**Rug Braiding** - I often have flashbacks of my grandmère braiding rugs to use as doormats to wipe our feet and was always amazed at the result when she finished a rug. Even when she was in her little house, she still made them out of old clothes. I recall Mrs. Eddie Dufour braiding room-size rugs. A small braided rug was our wedding gift from Mrs. Dufour. Inspired by these two women, after I married I studied the Art of Rug Making with Mrs. Lillian Kennedy from Windsor, Connecticut, and braided room size rugs for every room in our home.

Another type of rugs that grandmère taught us was "des tapis a langue de chat" (cat tongue rugs). The rug below was made from the fabric of an old black coat with patches cut rounded at one end. The edges were worked in a blanket stitch. Then these petals were sewn in a design on a piece of felt. These cat tongue rugs were also made with cut up wool strips all sewn in a row on heavy material such as felt.



"Un Tapis à Langue de Chat"



**Remedies** - In those days with little medications available and only one doctor in our area, out of necessity, my mother would play the role of the doctor and make her own medicines. In many instances my mother would use herbs, roots, and barks of trees, et cetera for treating our illnesses. For example:

If we had a cold and our lungs became congested she would place a "cataplasme de moutarde" on our chest (dry mustard and flour mixed to form a thick paste placed between two pieces of cloths) - mustard plaster.

For worms, she would boil the bark of Aspen Tree and administered in small dosage.

For boils, she would make a paste with sulfur and molasses applied on the boil.

When we stepped on rusty nails, the rind of salt pork was applied to the spot then wrapped with a piece of cloth around our foot.

When a baby had a diaper rash, she would apply the powder from "l'écorce de pruche" (hemlock bark). I remember she also used cornstarch for a baby's rash.

For earache, smoke from Grandpa's pipe was blown in the ear.

For colicky baby, a drop of liquid from boiled "pavot" (poppy from Willie's garden).

To prevent a cold we wore a piece of camphor around our necks. (We went to school wearing that!)

For colds with an obstinate cough, a teaspoonful of honey and ginger made a good cough suppressant. It was strong and delicious.

A teaspoonful of Cod Liver Oil daily was a must.

The above are but a few of Mama's remedies that I remember. I know there were many more.

Mama made her own honey for cold medicine - the recipe follows:

<u>MIEL DE TRÈFLE</u> (Clover Honey)	
10 cups sugar	19 red clovers
2 cups water	29 white clovers
1 teas. powdered alum	2 red roses (petals)

Mix sugar, water, alum, and flowers. Boil 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Do not stir. Let stand for 15 minutes. Strain and pour in sterilized jars.

For the cold medicine, add one teaspoonful of ground ginger to each small jar of honey.

In a large and active family like ours there were always emergencies that would happen and we did not have emergency rooms and clinics around the corner. Our mother dealt with some at home, and others they traveled 25 miles to Van Buren Hospital.

There was the time when Germaine fell from the attic into Mama's knitting basket and a needle got stuck in the flesh of her fanny. Armand Beaulieu happened to be driving down the road with his tractor and we flagged him down to help. Upon seeing Germaine's fanny he just shook his head. Mama said, "Do something, get some pliers." He ran to his tractor and with the pliers he pulled the needle out.

\* \* \* \*

Another episode was the time I stepped on a rusty nail and Mama and Grandma fixed my wound with a "couenne de lard salé" (salt pork rind). They no sooner finished I came back in crawling as I had climbed on top of the garage as we often did and jumped with a carriage umbrella used as a parachute. This time I sprained my ankle - same foot. Mama bandaged my ankle and ordered me to stay in the house one more time.

\* \* \* \*

When Albert caught his foot in the potato digger chain, he was taken to Van Buren Hospital. He lost a toe. After he was cared for and back home, there was a big discussion between Mama and Papa. It seems Mama did not know what to do with the toe, "It should be buried in sacred ground," she said. Papa insisted, "It should just be thrown out." As this argument was going on Mama was in the process of cooking supper. All of a sudden Papa lifted the hinged lid on the stove and threw the toe in the fire. "That's it no more toe," he said. Mama was not too happy. Sometime I think we all make too much out of our sacred beliefs.

\* \* \* \*

Doris often had sore throats which, lead to the removal of her tonsils. The operation took place at Tante Odile's on her kitchen table. In those days it was customary for the doctor to perform tonsillectomies at home. Tante Odile's home was one often selected by the doctors. I remember Doris was so sick and she needed ice to hold in her mouth. As we did not have refrigeration, my father bought a huge block of ice and kept it in the sawdust in the back room of the potato house. Chunks were chipped, as she needed ice.

\* \* \* \*

Then there was the time during a delicious fish dinner, Mama and Papa had to drop everything and rushed Albertine to the doctor as she had swallowed a fishbone and it remained lodged in her throat. To this day, she is not too fond of fish dinners.

\* \* \* \*

When Joanne was born with a broken vein on an ankle, the result of being a breech birth, it developed to be serious. No matter what medicine was prescribed, the sore kept getting worse. The doctors talked amputating her little foot. Mama and grandmother decided to try "une couenne de lard salé" (salt pork rind) on the open sore and bandaged it up. It worked!

\* \* \* \*

The above were some of the many incidences that happened during our growing up years. There were also others, for example, when Joanne broke her collar bone falling off the swing, Albertine's broken leg, Leo's stuttering, Candide's appendicitis, et cetera. The only incident I can think for Leonard is when he was a toddler, he hopped on the wagon with the hayrack without being noticed, then fell off, and the hired man, Petouche, ran over him. It was a miracle that he was not hurt. There was another time when he wandered out in the field and fell asleep on one of the many haystacks and could not be found until he woke up and started to cry.

\* \* \* \*

**Papa's Horses** - I recall my mother saying that Papa always had nice horses and was proud of his carriages. She added that he carried a beautiful woolen blanket on the back of his sleigh that his mother made on the loom. Like many men in those days, my father took great care of his team of horses and later did likewise with his cars.

Papa lovingly talked about a special horse named Corbette. She had to have been his favorite. He said she was intelligent. Working in the lumber camps or with him while cutting firewood, on the farm, he said she did not need any guidance from him; she did what she was supposed to do. Once he would hitch the logs, she would go alone to the yard. Someone there would unhitch the logs and Corbette would return for other logs. A good horse Papa said was one that was always thinking and always a step ahead of him.



Left to Right: Lewis and Annie Cyr Cote and Alphonse and Marie Cyr Daigle

Horses were a part of farming that old farmers had mixed feelings about. My father enjoyed horses. I think that after he purchased the tractor Papa missed his horses. Working with a horse was totally different from working with a machine. I think my father developed good relationships with his horses that made the work rewarding in ways not possible with a tractor. Regarding horses, I remember Papa saying, "Working with my horses on the farm was like having friends working with me." There was a bond with horses that was not there with the tractor.

I recall a couple of horses on the farm once they got old, we still kept them; we children would ride them bareback. I am especially thinking of Doll, the little old gentle mare. Some of the names that I recall were Corbette and King, Lady, Belle, Jim, Doll, Queen, Sandy, Jake and June.

\* \* \* \*

**Lumber Camp** - Prior to his marriage, my father as a young man enjoyed working in the lumber camps during the wintertime. Logging was an extremely important industry in the early days. Most houses and buildings were made of wood and lumber was rapidly consumed. I recall my father saying he worked in lumber camps at Portage Lake and Fish River Lake. This was during 1919 and the early 1920s.

In a camp there was a foreman, a clerk, a cook and his assistant, a blacksmith, and a saw filer. The remainder of the camp was divided into crews: choppers, whose job was to cut down the trees; sawyers, who sawed the felled trees into logs; skidders, hauled the logs to the roads which led to the sawmill or the river; swampers, kept the roads in good condition; and teamsters, who cared for the horses and were in charge of hauling logs. In the latter capacity was where my father most often worked with his team of horses.

My father described the camp where the men slept on bunks and ate at a long table. The food often consisted of baked beans and lard, meat and potatoes, and ployes, which the men liked. The life of a lumberjack was not easy. They worked from sunup to sundown and were faced with many dangers. It took a great deal of skill to saw through a huge tree and have it fall in a predetermined location. Papa recalled that many men were adroit, and could drop a tree on a coin placed on the ground. There was excellent teamwork among the men. They were up by 4:30 every morning with breakfast at 5:00 o'clock and at work with the first rays of light. It was indeed long days and during the week they retired early.

Papa delighted in telling us how the men entertained themselves with card playing, story telling and playing the violin, and harmonica. He told us how Fred, Henri Cyr's brother, our neighbor, was a talented entertainer - fiddler, jigger and loved good times. The entertainment was usually on Saturday evenings. Papa loved the "woods" and enjoyed the camaraderie of the men.

Another story Papa enjoyed telling us was the winter he and Willie, our neighbor, went to the logging camp together. It seemed one evening at supertime it was discovered that Willie was missing. The men quickly ate and a few of them organized a search. They all took different trails. Papa knew that Willie would often get disoriented in the woods - he would always turn the wrong direction. After walking for a few miles Papa found Willie sitting next to a big tree resigned to spending the night there. Papa gave the signal and everyone returned to the camp.

Most of the time Papa would go to camp with his team of horses. Working with his horses meant additional money on payday. According to Papa, he could not reach the camp in one day. Along the way there were a few overnight stopover places for the men and their horses. One such place was in Daigle, Maine, at Joseph and Philomene Michaud. They would feed and provide a warm bed for the men and board their horses for a minimal fee. (While I was researching my Daigle genealogy, I met a "little" cousin, Phyllis Daigle Taberner, whose maternal grandparents were Joseph and Philomene Michaud and she verified the above. She added that her grandmother spoke English fluently, an asset, which was convenient for the lumber employers.)

Papa had a special team of horses that he loved - King and Corbette. King had a patch of white on his forehead. Papa used to say Corbette was one good "jumant" (mare). Papa often said he enjoyed his years in the lumber camps - loved being in the woods. Right: Team on left is Corbette and King, Papa is 3<sup>rd</sup> man, 1,2,4 men ?, on right is Lezieme Charette with his Team - Portage Lake, 1919.

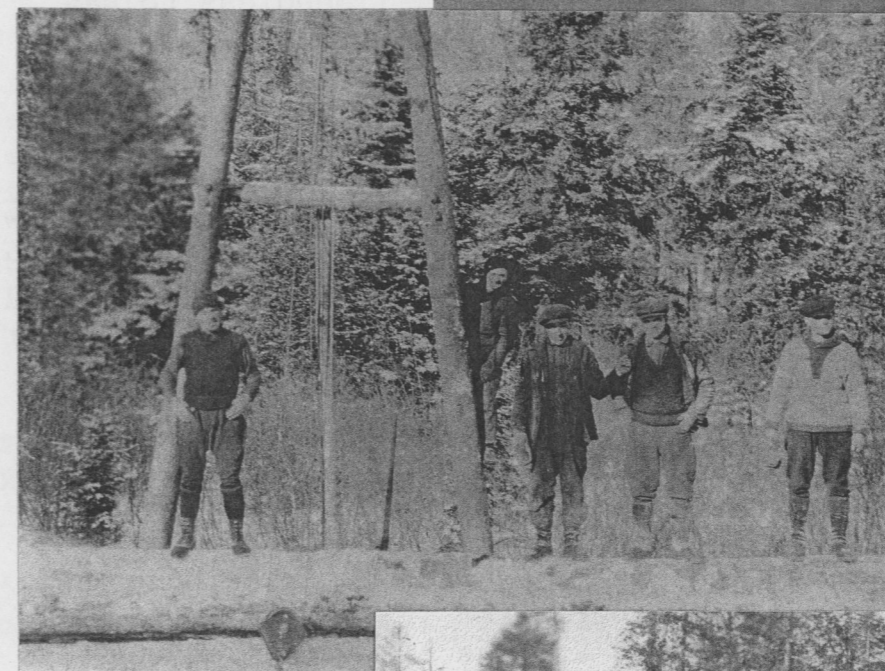


Papa's Lumbering Days - Prized Photographs - Portage Lake - 1919

Right: Bobsled - Edmond LaChance driving the Company Team, unidentified man, Alphonse Daigle w/peavey.



Below: Derrick - used for loading logs. The men from Left: Vital à Joachim Cyr, Nicholas Picard, Alcide à Vital Daigle, Jr., René à Chrysostome Daigle, and Henry Morneault.



Below: Log Hauler built ca. 1880-1900

These log haulers carried as many as 25 sleds. It ran day and night so the water would not freeze.

At that time a Crew was needed to feed the steam engine, icing the roads, and sanding in the hills. The enclosure in front gave them a place to warm up, carry their lunches, lights, and other supplies.



Comments on Log Hauler - Courtesy of Gerald Dubois

**Depression** - I remember during the depression Papa leaving with his knapsack on his back for the lumber camp. That was in the early years of their marriage - mid 1930s. I recall Mama telling us upon his return in the spring, he would hand over the money, not to her, but to his mother and father. They would decide how that money would be spent - 100 pound each of white flour, beans, sugar, et cetera. It was very difficult for a young wife living with her husband's parents; however that was the custom in those days.

"Israel never became rich" - Grandpa Daigle often told us a story regarding a prominent man in town before the depression, who wanted to enter into some kind of business deal with him which, grandpa felt was not ethical. Grandpa refused and the man pointing his finger at grandfather angrily said, "Israel tu sera jamais riche - tu est trop honnete," and abruptly left. ("Israel you will never be rich - you are too honest.") Needless to say just a few years later, with the hard times during the depression, this person lost his entire fortune. My grandfather was saddened with the horrible news. As the years passed grandpa did feel rich, as he was able to preserve his farm in spite of many hard lean years.

We grew up with many stories of the depression. I was born in the middle of the depression - 1932. As small children we were only vaguely aware of the hardships surrounding us. I remember my grandfather talking about the depression, how the banks closed and people losing all their fortune, and their jobs. I remember my father saying he worked a whole day for fifty cents. Also Grandpa Daigle and Papa hauled rocks when Gagnon Road was built during the depression. Nevertheless, for us children there was always a little joy to be found. What comes to mind is the time Papa came home with a "grafaphone" (phonograph), a Victrola. He had purchased it from Thommy Hebert for two cords of wood. During that era the barter system was common.

\* \* \* \*

**Peddlers** - I recall various peddlers coming around selling their merchandise. Frequently the peddler would obtain his wares from farmers and their wives, who traded articles they made in their spare time for things they needed but could not make. Trading was more common than cash transactions.

Once grandma bought a hideous brown dress in exchange for a hen. After the peddler had left, she tried on her new dress and discovered a hole in the front of the dress. She was able to

mend it and with her big apron it never showed. Nonetheless, she was not very happy with her "achat" (purchase).

I also remember when grandfather bought a solid-maple rocking chair from a peddler. Since grandpa was a big man, there never seem to be a strong enough chair around. This one was very heavy and we still have that chair in the family.

Then there was "le vendeur d'essence" who made his round at infrequent intervals, selling various essences including vanilla, spices and other Rawleigh Products. Depending how much a person bought, there was always a prize of a dish.

I recall my grandmother saying that Tante (aunt) Delina had sold in the Larkins Company and had received for prizes, grandma's black rocker and a square table that we have preserved.

In the family, every once in a while, one of us will remember a Mr. Klein from Fort Kent. I remember the mournful, singsong of the junkman clattering by the farm in his rickety old truck. It was Soloman Klein riding in our Concessions looking for "d'la peau de 'vous' veaux" (calves or cowhide) and "des gling d'lane 'guenilles de laine'" (woolen rags). He meant to say "veaux" but it sounded like "vous" and "guenilles de laine" sounded like "gling d'lane." My father would save all the hides and sell them to Solomon.

Then there was "'tit Louis Bouley" - he would go from house to house carrying a little "grafaphone" and would play a tune for ten cents. I remember he also had a little monkey with him.

Also "'tit Louis LeCarre" - he would come around and do odd jobs for a few cents and then be on his way. Sometime he slept over if the chore lasted more than a day.

I remember many stories about "Papineau" - a homeless man. Everybody was afraid of him but grandmother used to say that he would not hurt anyone. She would give him something to eat and would often let him sleep on the hayloft in the barn. Supposedly he was from the village of Daigle, and perhaps she knew him. He would look at us and say, "les belle petite 'apoutiout'" (That is how it sounded like to me - the nice little 'apoutiout'.)

There were many others who would come by regularly - for instance, the "vendeur de poisson" (fish man), "vendeur de pain" (breadman), et cetera. These people were all part of our life.

\* \* \* \*

**World War II** - We were isolated on the farm; we knew little about the outside world. Nonetheless, during World War II, our only contact was grandmother's radio - her pride and joy. Because grandma was an avid news listener we always heard the latest news. Grandma with her radio was our bond with the outside world. I recall during the World War II, how sad she was as she recounted negative war news. Her youngest brother, Elias, was in the United States Navy. She also had a grandson, Louis Cyr, in the United States Army Air Force, and grandsons, Gerard and Emile Cyr, both in the United States Navy - her daughter, Odile's sons.

Following is a write-up on Uncle Elias Daigle, which appeared in the Bangor Daily News, circa 1944, Bangor, Maine. (The photograph was not part of the write-up.)

**NAVY CHAPLAIN**—Lt. Elias Daigle joined the Navy in 1919. He went through training at Providence, R. I. Upon completion of this training course, he was ordered aboard the U. S. S. Pennsylvania. During the seven years that he served aboard her, he advanced to B. M. 1/c. In 1926 he was ordered to the Naval Training Station at Great Lakes, where he was assistant to the ship's service officer.

In 1928, he was ordered back to sea duty aboard the U. S. S. Maryland. He served aboard her for six years where he was advanced to Co. BM. He was held in high esteem as Chief Master at Arms and as the quarterback of the Maryland football squad who were the Pacific fleet champions for two years. From his experience in football he was chosen for a billet on the All-Navy coaching staff under Lt. Tom Hamilton.

Although the Maryland tried to keep him as long as she could, he was eventually ordered to the Asiatic station in 1934 for foreign duty where he spent five happy years with his family. He was captain of the Navy ferry plying between Manila and Cavite, P. I. In 1938 he returned to the United States to Bremerton, Wash., where he was retired to Fleet Naval Reserve and accepted a position in the Puget Sound Navy Yard.



Lt. Elias Daigle - 1942

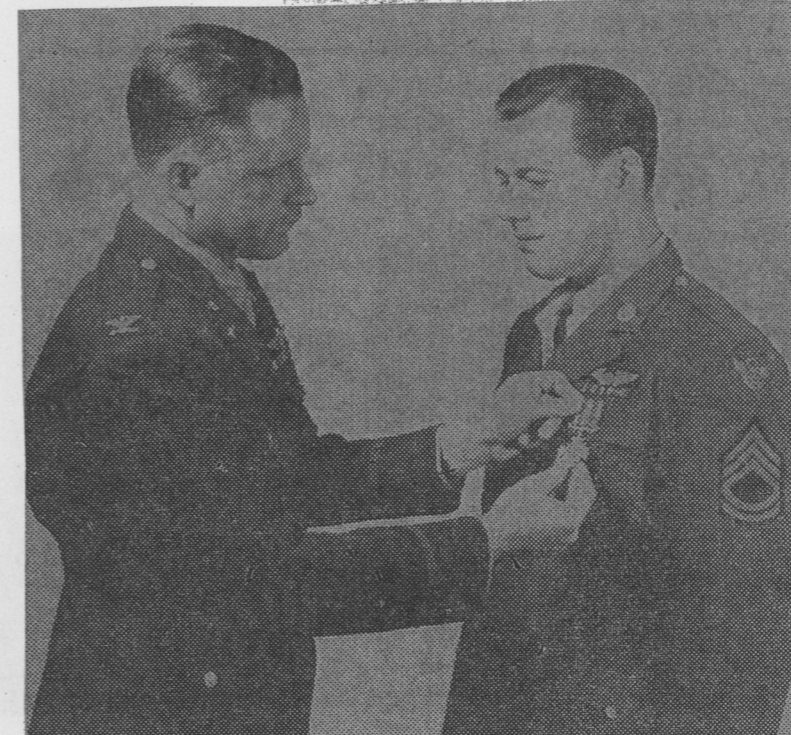
In July, 1941, he was recalled to active duty again. Lt. Daigle was ordered to Dutch Harbor, Alaska. He took part in fighting off the Japs during the raids in June 1942 and has been commended for the fine work he is doing in that theatre of war, having been on missions over the entire Aleutian area.

His wife, the former Lillian Kinney, and two children, a daughter, 15, and a son, 5, reside in Bremerton, Wash. Lt. Daigle has seen his family only once in two years, for ten days.

Grandmother Daigle had a large photo of Louis, her first grandchild, on the wall above the radio. Next to it she had another photo and newspaper clipping in a frame also of Louis. She also had a photo of Gerard and Emile in a little black frame.

**Local Soldier Gets D. F. C.**

Excerpt from a Biddeford, Maine Newspaper Daily Journal, Tuesday Evening, June 20, 1944



The Distinguished Flying Cross recently was awarded to Technical Sergeant Lewis Cyr of this city for "meritorious service" as a radio operator-gunner of a Ninth Air Force Marauder. He is a veteran of 59 missions, and is shown (right) receiving the medal from Col. Glenn C. Nye, of Raleigh, N. C.

**Fighting News Of Men And Women Whom You Know**

A veteran of 59 bombing missions over enemy-occupied Western Europe, **Technical Sergeant Lewis Cyr**, 23, Biddeford, recently was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for "meritorious service" as a radio operation-gunner of a B-26 Marauder twin-engined bomber.

T-Sgt. Cyr also has the distinction of being a member of the famed "Nye's Annihilators," the pioneer Ninth Air Force B-26 group in the English theatre of operations, commanded by Col. Glenn C. Nye, from Raleigh, North Carolina.

In addition to the D.F.C., he wears the Air Medal with six Oak Leaf Clusters.

The citation accompanying the award read in part: "T-Sgt. Cyr's dauntless bravery and steadfast devotion to duty were of inestimable value."

The Ninth Air Force Marauders have concentrated their devastating and relentless attacks on: Luftwaffe airdromes, railway-yards, ship-yards, and many other vital Nazi installations in France, Belgium and Holland.

T-Sgt. Cyr attended Madawaska High School and was later employed as a shipfitter for the Todd-Bath Shipyard in South Portland. He was inducted July 22, 1942, and later received training at Madison, Wisconsin, and Fort Myers, Florida. He left for overseas duty in April of 1943.

His parents, Mr. and Mrs. C. F. Cyr and his wife, Lillian, reside here.

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Lewis's mother Odile Daigle Cyr sent the newspaper clipping to her mother, Mrs. Israel Daigle ca. 1944

My mother also had a brother, Octave, in the United States Army. Mama was so proud at having a brother in the service of his country. Mama treasured a colored print of Mont Saint Michel in France, which Uncle Octave sent her. For many years it was under a glass on her bureau - now hanging with pride in my sister Joanne's home.

During the war, every morning in school, Sister Flavie would take a moment to lead the whole class in prayer for the men in the armed forces. For me, those men were Uncle Octave Cyr, cousins, Louis, Gerard, Emile Cyr, and Uncle Elias Daigle.

\* \* \* \*



Mama's Brother  
Octave Cyr  
1942-1945



Gerard Cyr and Emile Cyr  
Sons of Odile and Côme Cyr

Grandma also subscribed to the "Messenger" a newspaper from Lewiston, Maine, and "Le Franco Americain" another French newspaper. She certainly kept up with the news.

\* \* \* \*

I remember practice air raid drills during the war - which were scary for the young children. Each neighborhood had an air raid warden. On our road, it was Vetal Daigle; he was the one appointed to alert the neighbors. He would race down the hill fifty miles an hour with his horn full blast. When we heard the horn, all lights had to be extinguished immediately - complete blackout. What stories we heard the next day at school! I recall one story after an air raid drill was that two Germans had landed on the town office roof - how scared we were. Of course this story was the result of someone's overly active imagination.

\* \* \* \*

The rationing on various products did not affect us too much except for sugar, white beans, white flour, and a few other products like rubber. These products were available at a cheaper price in Canada and sometimes were smuggled across the border. There were no rations on gasoline for farmers - farmers could obtain what they needed. They had coupons of a different color. My grandmother used to send whatever coupons we did not need to Tante Odile in the city. Tante Odile would send some of her extra coupons for sugar. We often went to Canada shopping for certain articles.

\* \* \* \*

I remember one time Fedime (the local chief of police) came to our house to talk with Papa as someone had reported that we children were all wearing Canadian boots made of rubber. We knew the person well who reported us. Papa had to pay a fine. That hurt especially when he did not have any money. Also, I seem to recall 100-pound bag of sugar hidden in the attic of which we were to tell no one. Another story of smuggling concerned Grand-mère's fur coat purchased in Canada many years before the war. During the war this coat was carefully hidden on top of the potato house. On one occasion, we heard that we would be searched once again for smuggled goods - I recall my father hiding grandma's coat in the "champ d'avoine" (in the oat field).

\* \* \* \*

I recollect when the Evangeline School children conducted a paper drive during World War II. I collected from neighbors, relatives, and anyone whom I met. Every day I faithfully brought the paper on the bus to school where it was weighed. When the drive was over, I had collected more than anyone else in the class. Looking back I cannot imagine how I did it - we just did not have much to give - must be the other children in the class were not as aggressive.

\* \* \* \*

When World War II ended, we heard horns, church bells, the mill whistle, sirens, et cetera, from six miles away. We children all piled in the car with Papa and went into town to find out what was going on. It was a hot August evening - Albertine's birthday, the 14<sup>th</sup>, 1945 - the day Japan surrendered and World War II ended. What joys and excitement - people were celebrating all over town! I remember the war had first ended in Europe in May and the schools had dismissed the schoolchildren for the afternoon.

\* \* \* \*

When the war ended, I recall Grandpa Daigle reminiscing on World War I as he had been on his way home from the Frenchville Flour Mill hearing church bells, whistles and horns from all directions. Upon stopping at a small General Store, he learned the War was over. The day was November 11, 1918 - World War I had ended. When he arrived home he gave his family the great news. Everyone was relieved and happy.

\* \* \* \*

Shortly before the war ended we had a radio of our own. I recall Grandpa Cyr giving us his radio and how happy we all were at Grandpa Cyr's generous gift. It was exactly the same model as Grandma Daigle's radio. It was operated with a large battery with an aerial from the house to the potato house. We were so thrilled. It was in 1944 when grandpa lived with us for awhile, as I remember we were still in the old house.

\* \* \* \*

In those days there was a serial program airing every evening at seven o'clock. Every household with a radio listened to "Seraphin - Un homme et Son Péché" (A Man and His Sin). Seraphin was the story of an old miser, Seraphin Poudrier, who was the mayor of the village and also the undertaker. With his money and capacity he manipulated the people in his village. It was a program done very interestingly. We could hear the floor squeak, and especially the squeaky door when he went in "la chambre dans haut" (the room upstairs) to count his money. We could tell by the sounds how he adored his money. At times we could hear the wind blowing, et cetera. Much of the realism brought to the program was credited to the sound effect people. Some of the other characters were: Donaldal Laloge, Seraphin's wife, her brother, 'tit Mousse, Alexis LaBranche, his wife Arthémise, le Père Ovide, and a few others. We would all gather around the radio and not a sound was heard from anyone. After the program was over it was bedtime for the children. This program continued way into the 1950s. Young and old - we all enjoyed this story.

\* \* \* \*

**Special Tin Box** - Grandmère's tin box of Aunt Delina's memorabilia has survived. Once upon looking in this tin box and reminiscing with my father, we found a poem written in the handwriting of either Aunt Delina or Aunt Odile (Papa's sisters). My father recited it including a missing stanza. I was amazed at my father knowing it by heart. I should have written that stanza and place it in the box, unfortunately I did not. Following is the Poem.

"SOUVENIRE"

S'aimer et s'écrire,  
Sont deux grand plaisir,  
Se voir et se parler,  
Ses le seul secret de ta bien amiée,

"SOUVENIRE"

Quand tu sera dans ta chambre,  
Et que tu ne sera pas,  
À qui pensé,  
Pense à ta bien amiée.

"SOUVENIRE"

Si je pourais choisir parmi les coeurs,  
Comme je peut choisir parmi les fleurs,  
Je choisirai ton coeur,  
Qui ferais mon bonheur.

It is most difficult to translate this French poem into English. "Souvenire" means "Remembering." Roughly translated: To love and to write each other are two great pleasures. It is the only secret from your beloved. When you are alone in your room and you do not know of whom to think, think of your beloved. If I could choose among the hearts like I can choose among the flowers, I would choose your heart, which would be my happiness.

Also in the tin box is a lock of Delina's hair, sampler of her embroidery, small white embroidered apron, her rosary, small tintype photo of Regis Daigle, (grandmother's grandfather), and the genealogy papers of their Daigle lineage from Sister Malvina given to me in 1937.

I remember my grandmother had a beautiful rose-gold wedding band. It was embossed in a rose pattern. She wore it until it became thin to the breaking point. She then kept the ring in a small envelope along with a piece of her wedding cake in this old Whitman Chocolate Tin Box. There is no longer any sign of the wedding ring - what happened to it is unknown.

\* \* \* \*

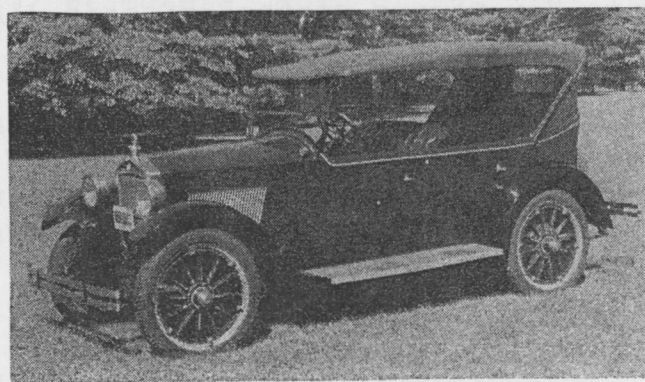
**Delina's Violin** - We have preserved Tante Delina's violin, but the big black wooden case with the velvet inside did not survive. My father recalled the violin was purchased from the Sears Roebuck Catalog ca. 1912. This violin is an exact copy of the celebrated violin maker, Jacobus Stainer.



Tante Delina's Violin

\* \* \* \*

**Hupmobile** - My father loved to reminisce on how he learned to drive a car when he was 26 years old. He remembered clearly when there were no cars in Madawaska. He said Simon Beaulieu and Laurent Fournier were the first to own cars. When my grandfather became the owner of a 1924 Hupmobile my father was in his glory. My grandfather had a bachelor brother, Aubin, who had gone to Montana, to work with his two brothers, Hubald and Dolphis who had been living in Montana for a number of years. Aubin worked and purchased a car for \$800.00, then decided to return to the valley. Upon his return he found employment at a cedar mill in Van Buren and lived with Alexis and Lucie Daigle, cousins. Apparently Uncle Aubin liked his "petit coup" (little drink) too much and the law officer told him, "Aubin either you give up drinking or get off the road." Soon after Uncle Aubin paid grandpa a visit and asked if he would buy his Hupmobile for \$400.00, half of what he had paid in Montana. After thinking of this proposal grandpa agreed to buy the car; however, he would pay Aubin a little at a time, as Aubin needed money. It was a deal that worked out fine. Grandpa Israel felt sad at Uncle Aubin's problem with alcoholism. The following week Uncle Aubin drove to the farm from Van Buren to deliver the car. He took my father up the farm road, taught him how to start, shift, back up, go forward and stop, then said, "Now take me back to Van Buren." My father said that was all there was to it. Papa drove



Uncle Aubin Daigle's  
1924 Hupmobile

to Van Buren and came back all by himself. A license was not required in those days. My grandfather built a garage in 1925 for the Hupmobile behind the grove of Poplar trees that grandmother had planted.

This garage is the only original building that survived the ravages of time on the farm. In 1974 my brothers, Leonard and Leo, agreed the old garage should be preserved. So, my husband, Harry, renovated the garage, working on it all summer. My father had suffered a stroke and was at Highview Manor at that time. I remember the last ride to the farm for my father to show him the renovated garage. The drive through the hills of a nostalgic beautiful Maine autumn was so pleasant and peaceful - driving him through his final October though unknown to us at the time. My father was so easy to please - how uncomplicated he was. As for the garage, we could tell he was very pleased to see his old garage fixed up and good for another fifty years. He had only one negative comment, "Remove those rags (curtains) from the windows!" My mother and I knew he would make such a comment.

My grandparents owned the Hupmobile until 1937, at which time grandpa traded it for a 1934 Chevrolet. My parents kept this car until the fall of 1948 when my father bought a new Hudson after the potato harvest.

\* \* \* \*

The 1948 potato harvest was a great one. It was a good "recolt" (yield) and he was in need of a car. Mother would have preferred "un set de salon!" (a parlor set). In 1948, Hudson introduced their elegant and revolutionary "step-down" design. The Hudson Company was founded by Roy D. Chapin in 1909. The Hudson was famous for being well built. The car was a rich-maroon color, huge, and would accommodate the entire family to Sunday Mass. Papa loved his Hudson.

\* \* \* \*

**Tractor** - My father purchased a new tractor in 1947 from the International Harvester dealer in Grand Isle, Maine. The Farmall-H replaced two teams of horses and became my father's workhorse on his farm of potatoes, oats and buckwheat. He used the tractor for plowing, harrowing, planting, cultivating, spraying, digging, and mowing, et cetera, from spring until fall for ten years. He discontinued farming in 1957. During the next twelve years the tractor was used for mowing to maintain the seeded hayfields. (In 1969, my husband, Harold Harry, and I purchased the farm and my father insisted that the tractor was part of the transaction. The tractor continues to be used to maintain the farm. We also enjoy riding it around on the farm - it is a great toy!)



**Home from High School** - As I reflect on my thoughts and memory I think of the year my parents made me stay home from high school to take care of Mama, who had undergone surgery, and Joanne who was only four years old. I also had to take care of all the duties of the household. Maybe that is the reason I ended up mothering everyone in the family.

Every morning as the school bus would leave the house I would go upstairs and cry as I watched the bus go out of sight by the corner of Dionne Road (now Starbarn Avenue) and Gagnon Road. After a good cry, I would come downstairs and tend to the daily chores of picking up after everybody.

At sixteen it was quite a responsibility even if Mama and Papa were there. I cooked, did the housework, washed clothes, and saw to it that Mama did not do a stitch of work other than embroider or crochet. Mama taught me how to use the treadle sewing machine and gave me sewing lessons while I made myself a purple dress. I also made a little blue dress with white eyelet around the neckline for Joanne. Mama had a star pattern for a patchwork that she intended to use some day. She helped me to put the pattern together, gave me scraps of material, and left me alone with my project. As I look back, my choice of colors did not always match; nevertheless it was good sewing practice. Today I treasure my first quilt and having learned to sew.

Yes, I cooked some awful meals - try as I may, even with Ma's instructions, it never came out right. Oftentimes my father originated the complaints. I remember making "de la sauce et des grillade" (white sauce and grilled pork lard). One might ask, what could go wrong with such a simple meal? After everyone had been served and had put the sauce over their potatoes and started to eat, out of my father's mouth was, "C'est pas mangeable" (this is not edible). I kept on eating and said with a calm and straight face that it was delicious and did not make a move to go prepare something else. Somehow no one left the table hungry. I always claimed the white sauce was delicious whenever the "famous sauce" came up in conversation; however, in retrospect it really was not good, it was tasteless, too watery, and did not have a good appearance. Doris said that it was foamy. I never admitted until now - over fifty years later - it was not too appetizing.

Another cooking incident was the chocolate pie that took me all afternoon to prepare. This pie was equally as bad as the white sauce meal! The whole family refused to eat the piece I had served them, except Leo, and of course the cook, me. Each

one had his/her own choice words - it was terrible. Eight-year old Leo ate his serving and asked for more. My heart skipped a beat, "Oh, he likes my pie, I thought." I kept eating along with him, and said, "Mange en d'la tarte mon petit Leo" (Eat pie my dear little Leo). Thirty-three years later as dear little Leo was nearing death, the famous pie story came up. Joanne and I had spent the afternoon alone with Leo at Hartford Hospital. Although he did not converse with us too much, as Joanne and I reminisced over pleasant times, Leo would add a word every now and then. The instant Joanne and I stopped talking, Leo would say, "Parler, parler" (talk, talk). So we talked some more and spent an unforgettable afternoon with Leo. When his wife came at the end of the afternoon, she brought Leo a chocolate pie for supper. Well, that brought back the famous chocolate pie story of many years ago. At this point I said, "the chocolate pie was indeed awful." Leo, piped up and said in a defensive tone, "It wasn't that bad - it was delicious." To his dying day Leo was still supporting me. God Bless my petit Leo - he died that night - May 18, 1982, May God rest his soul.

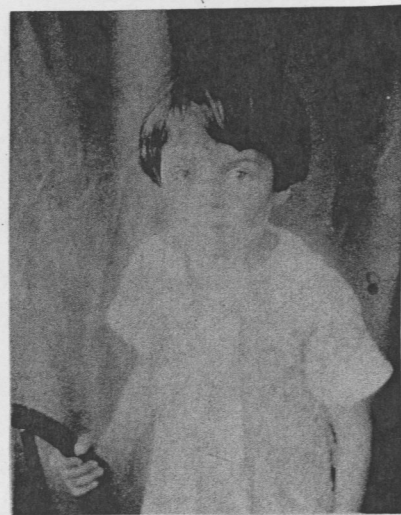
At four years old Joanne demanded attention, I would rock her and sing to her. On nice days I would take her dog-sled riding. On one such afternoon I had harnessed our dog, Puppy, to the sled and went up to Willie's potato house where the men were sorting potatoes for the market. After spending time with them I had to go prepare dinner so I harnessed Puppy once again making certain everything was okay and left. As we came on top of the hill Puppy and I noticed simultaneously some cattle in the road by the barn. Puppy let out a yelp and took off, throwing me off balance but I managed to grab onto Joanne's scarf and told her to hold on tightly to the sled. Puppy dragged me all the way down the hill on my belly. It was some scary wild ride. Once among the cows I was able to pull Joanne off the sled and let Puppy bark and chase the animals away. They belonged to our next door neighbor, Mr. Henri Cyr. Being such a beautiful day he had let the cattle out for a fresh air treat. I recall also going visiting our Cyr neighbors with a horse and sleigh taking Joanne with me on a few occasions. Taking care of Joanne was a joy, and looking back that was what sustained me throughout that school year. I grew very attached to her.



Joanne at age four

The following year my parents insisted that I return to school. Although I loved school and had missed school terribly, I was very stubborn and refused to go back. The evening prior to the start of the next school year, my brother, Leonard's friend, Jean Paul Martin stopped by to see if Leonard would go with him to the Sporting Club. As Jean Paul arrived I was on the porch crying my eyes as I had been fighting all day with my mother and father regarding my returning to school. Jean Paul convinced me to stop that crying and go with them. At the Sporting Club I met another classmate who was in the same situation, except her parents did not want her to return to school, and she was determined to go back. Needless to say a few more tears were shed that evening. My classmate, Irma Gendreau, convinced me to attend school the next day so she could tell her parents about my parents letting me return to school and possibly her parents would change their minds and let her go also. With that encouragement I reluctantly returned to finish high school. Today I am appreciative that my parents insisted. As for Irma, she did not return; however, she became a Saint Franciscan Sister and taught school for many years. Jean Paul and Irma are two individuals who made an immense difference in my life and I am thankful.

**School Photos** - The earliest school photos that we have are of Doris and Leonard, which I find most precious. They both started school the same year, 1936 in primary, while Miss Delia Sirois (now Lagasse) was teaching in School District #10 on our farm. Doris was six years old and Leonard was five. The following year, they started first grade and Miss Roa Daigle (now Cyr) was the teacher.

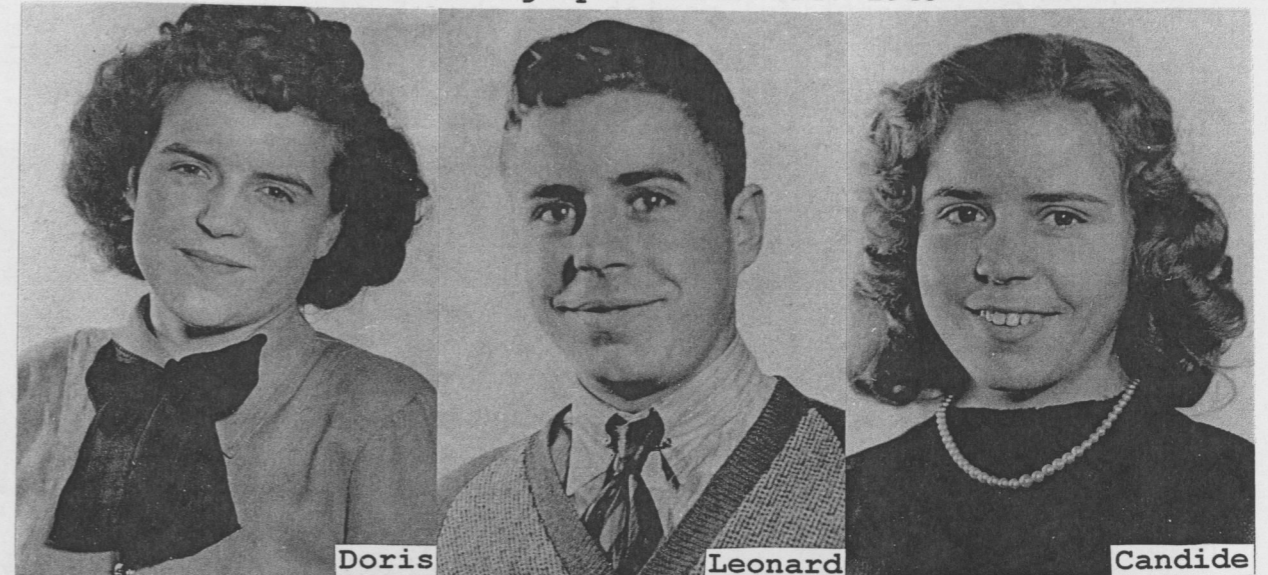


Doris Daigle



Leonard Daigle

School Photographs - ca. 1947-1949



Doris

Leonard

Candide



Albertine

Albert



Germaine

Leo

Joanne

**Saint David Church** - Madawaska, Maine - I have cherished memories of our beautiful parish and church of Saint David. In our family we, children, were all Baptized, received the Sacrament of Penance, received our First Holy Communion, our "Communion Solennelle," and Confirmation at Saint David.

Interior of Church:

Notice the full altar, winding stairs "la chaire" (pulpit), "la sainte table," Sacred Heart, votive light holder, and "la place des banc" (pew markers). Our family pew was in the center aisle on the right, Pew #9 a custom no longer practiced.



St. David's Church, Madawaska, Maine

I fondly remember belonging to "La Societé des Enfants de Marie" (The Sodality of the Children of Mary) as a teenager. There was a special tradition for members of "les Enfants de Marie" when a member married. Two members wearing light blue capes with a crown of flowers on their heads would first start the procession down the aisle, the ushers and bridesmaids followed, then the bride's father escorted her down, she also wearing a crown of flowers on her head. Next the two "Enfants de Marie" would escort the bride to the Altar of the Blessed Virgin Mary and place at Mary's feet the bride's crown of flowers. We knelt while the choir sang, "Vois à tes Pied Vierge Marie." We then returned the bride to her father and the wedding ceremony would begin. This tradition was special and carried out for many years, however it is no longer practiced. I was one of the members who had the honors of escorting many brides to the Altar of Mary. I still have my "Enfants de Marie" manual and medal. I recall my mother fashioned and sewed many of the capes for the children of Mary officers and counselors. I remember a beautiful banner of Mary in the sanctuary during such a wedding. The children of Mary also attended and enjoyed monthly meetings, participated in living rosaries, and assisted in the kitchen during social gatherings of the parish. I recall attending with the children of Mary as a group, the dedication in the cemetery of the Reclining Christ Altar - Shell Monument - circa 1950.

I have only one photo of a Child of Mary Wedding in which I had participated. It took place on the 25<sup>th</sup> of February 1952 - Wedding of Rachel Gendreau and Roger Bechard.

Top row - left to right: Ernest M. Cyr, his wife Annie, Gertie and Paul Gendreau, parents of the bride, Middle row: Romeo J. Cyr, Yvonne Gendreau, Therese Gendreau, Lucien Gendreau, First row: Blanche Dufour, Roger Bechard, groom, Rachel Gendreau, bride, and Candide Daigle. Below: Children of Mary medal.



ST. DAVID CHURCH, MADAWASKA, MAINE 2161

**Knights of Columbus** - Before Papa married he belonged to the Knights of Columbus and had attained the 3<sup>rd</sup> Degree. He enjoyed being a Knight. After his marriage and family obligation he could not afford to stay in the organization. Nevertheless, he always retained a strong desire to once again belong. So after he retired he rejoined and became a 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Knight - a happy accomplishment for Papa.

**Daughters of Isabella** - After Mama raised her family she joined the Daughters of Isabella and enjoyed the meetings and activities of the daughters.



Papa and Mama  
- 1969 -



This Is To Certify That  
WORTHY SIR KNIGHT:

*Alphonse Daigle*

Received the Honors of the Fourth Degree of  
the Knights of Columbus at an Exemplification

held in *Madawaska* *June 29, 1969*  
Date

*Frank E. MacMillan*  
Supreme Master

*Robert J. Ouellette*  
Master

*Maine*  
District

A Few Favorite Daigle Family Photos



Doris at Two Years Old

Leonard - One Year Old



Germaine



Leo



Grandmère Daigle with  
Doris and Leonard  
at Grandpère Cyr



Papa with his Little  
Girl, Joanne



Mama with her Little  
Family - Candide, Doris,  
Leonard, Albertine and  
Baby Albert  
at Grandpère Cyr

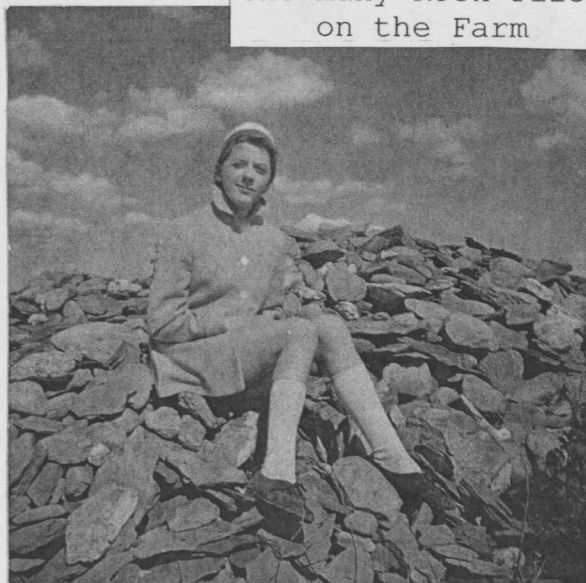


Leonard with Puppy  
Background: Willie's  
Barn and House

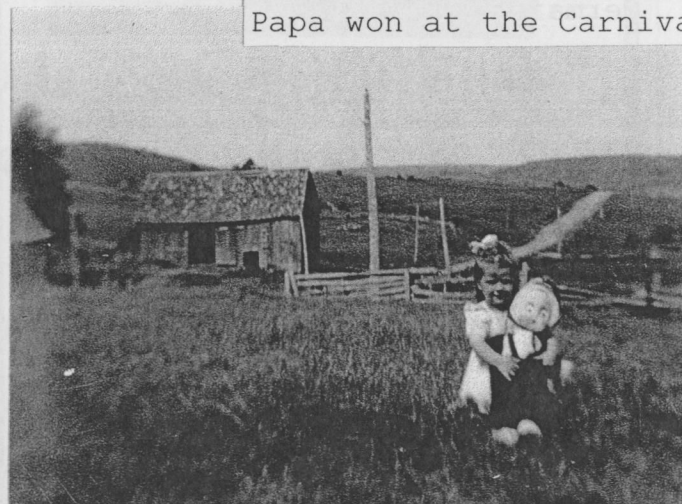


Leo and his Cat  
Background:  
The Old Homestead

Joanne on one of  
the many Rock Piles  
on the Farm



Potato Truck with Hoist



Joanne with Doll that  
Papa won at the Carnival



Marie and Alphonse  
Daigle - 1970 Portrait



Daigle Family Portrait - 1951 - Sitting: Alphonse, Leo, Joanne,  
Marie (Cyr), Standing: Albert, Candide, Germaine, Albertine,  
Doris, and Leonard.

**Grandfather and Grandmother Cyr** - I have vivid recollections of our Grandpère and Grandmère Cyr and derive great joy remembering having spent a winter at their home when I was three years old. That was the year Albert was born - 1935. It was also the year Aunt Eva and Uncle Auguste married and were living for a short time with Grandpa and Grandma. I can still relive the ride by horse and sleigh while sitting between them, and the big buffalo robe keeping us warm. The bells on the horse's harness sounded like music as the horse trotted toward Grandpa's house.

At their home I recall a house full of grownups. It was also a home with music. I remember Tante Eva playing the organ and Tante Anna playing violin (she learned on Tante Delina Daigle's violin). Grandma played the harmonica. Uncle Octave played the "guimbarde" (Jew's Harp), which fascinated me. (A "guimbarde" is a small lyre-shaped instrument when placed between the teeth gives tones from a metal tongue struck by the finger.) Years later I felt sad when Uncle Octave told me that he never found his harp after returning home from World War II.

One of the memories I recall was when they took turns at disguising themselves and scaring me with "le bonhomme sept heure" (bogieman); saying that he would come to carry me away if I did not go to bed. It worked on several evenings; upon seeing "le bonhomme sept heures" through the window, I rushed to bed. On one occasion, I recognized Tante Eva; consequently, I never believed in "le bonhomme sept heures" again. I remember sleeping in a little black crib and once I returned home I cried for that crib. Also, there was the time I went in Aunt Eva's room into her cosmetics and came downstairs all made up. I recalled that created some laughter.

Grandma Cyr had the best cookies in the world. I can still taste them and the sweet aroma is embedded in my memory to this day. The cookies were stored in a big tintype box. Every now and then when no one was looking, I would quietly sneak a cookie and go hide to eat it. That cookie tin was never empty. Many years later Uncle Lucien reminisced how Grandma would instruct the aunts to keep the cookie tin full at all times for "la petite" (the little one). Mama said it was a molasses cookie. Uncle Lucien recalled I spent two consecutive winters with them.

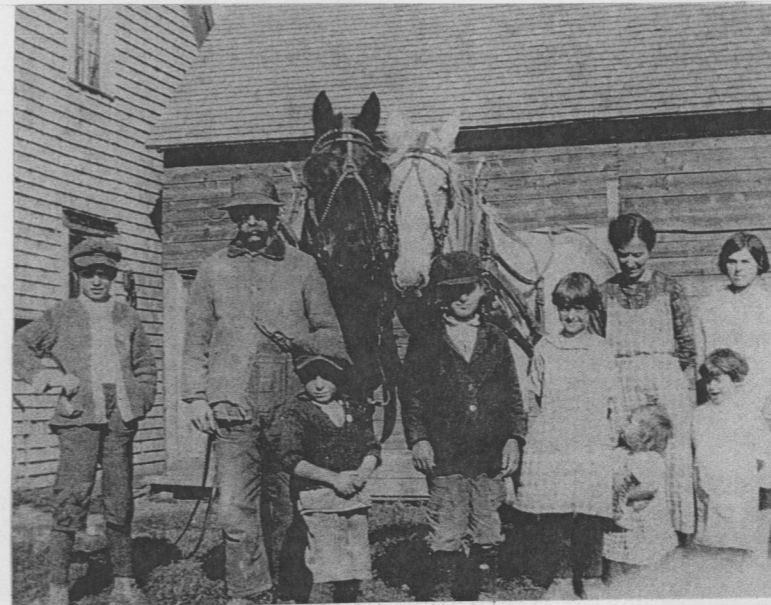
As we were growing up going over Grandpa Cyr on Sunday afternoon was always a treat. Uncle Lucien used to take us in grandpa's canoe on the lake. When I think of it today, it was quite a responsibility for him. He must have been good at handling that canoe!

**Very Special Photographs of Our Grandparents Cyr's Family**

Right: Grandpa Cyr's Team of Oxen  
from left - Barry and Rod



Below: Henri, Grandpa Cyr with his Team of Horses, Lucien, Octave, Anna, Yvette, Grandma Cyr, Lucienne, and Eva



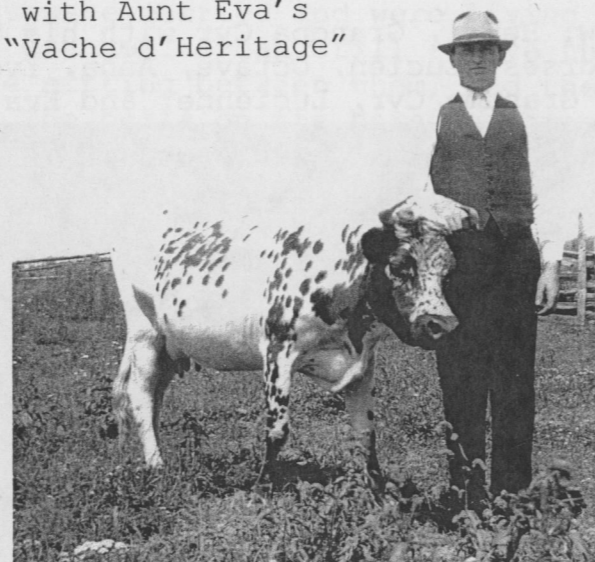
Grandpa Cyr Family in the  
Potato Field - 1<sup>st</sup> row: Eva,  
Lucienne, Lucien, 2<sup>nd</sup> row: Edward  
Ouellette, Anna, Octave, Henri,  
3<sup>rd</sup> row: Grandpa Cyr and Yvette



Grandpa Cyr with Yvette and  
his Favorite Horse, "Ben"

"La Vache d'Héritage" - As his daughters married, grand-  
 father Cyr gave them  
 "une vache d'héritage."  
 It was an old Acadian  
 custom to give livestock  
 to a newly-wed couple.  
 Mama told us how she  
 received from her father  
 "une petite vache rouge"  
 (a little red cow). Some  
 of my siblings and I  
 remember that cow.

Uncle Auguste Morin  
 with Aunt Eva's  
 "Vache d'Heritage"

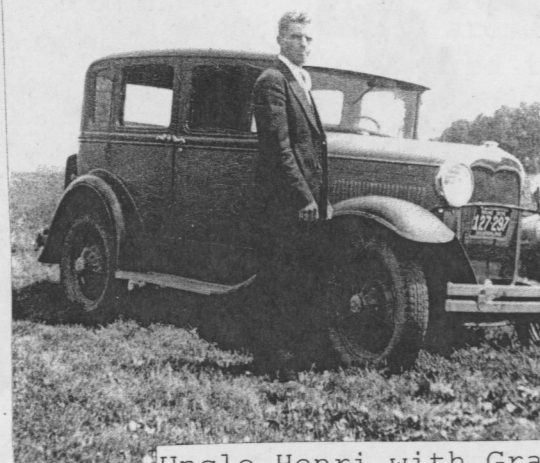


Tante Annie and Mama  
 Annie and Marie Cyr

Below:  
 Mama's Youngest Sisters,  
 Left: Yvette Cyr Pelletier,  
 and Lucienne Cyr Michaud



Dolls - Gift from Uncle  
 Maxime Marquis - Waterbury



Uncle Henri with Grand-  
 père Cyr's 1930 Ford



Candide at Grandparents Cyr

- ca. 1936 -



1936  
 Summer at Grandparents Cyr  
 Left: Candide, Doris, Leonard,  
 Albertine, and Baby Albert

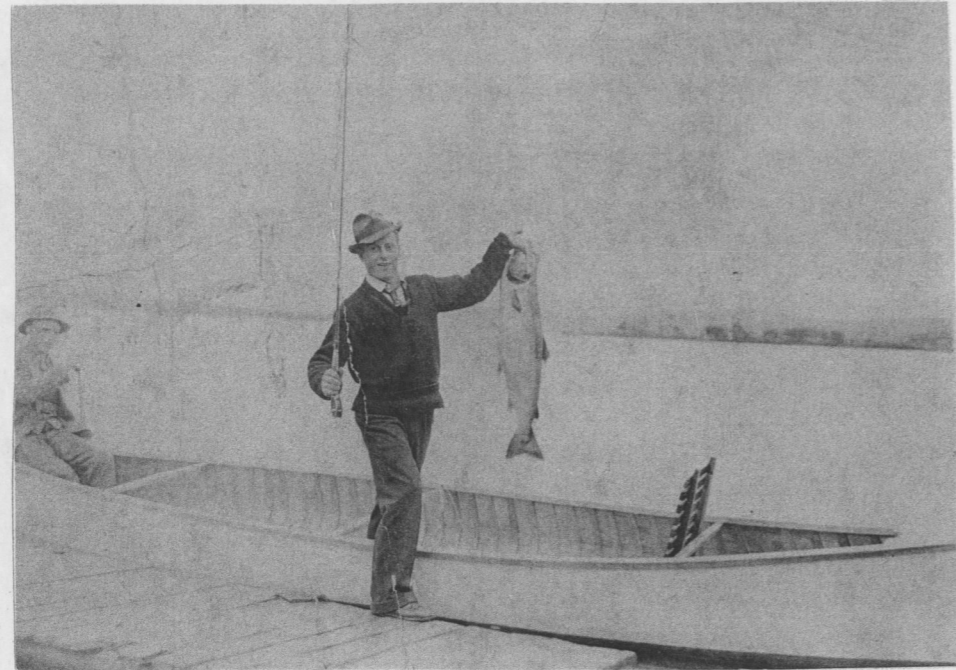


Mama Playing her Accordion  
 (Notice the barn in Background)

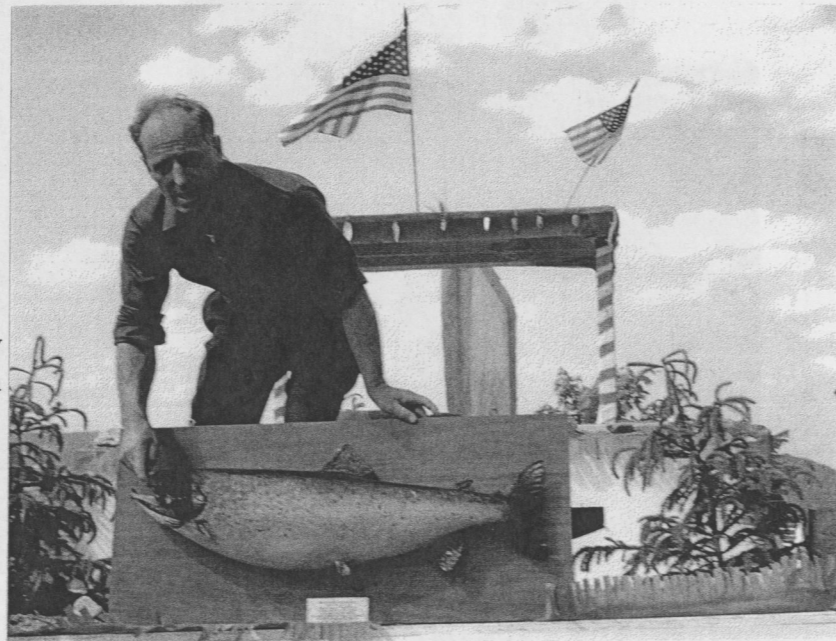


Tante Anna with her Violin

Uncle Lucien Cyr with his Famous Fish



When I was in the eighth grade we studied the "Maine History" with Mr. Hector Bourgoïn. What excitement it was the day we came across a photograph of my Uncle Lucien in the Maine History Textbook. I delightfully announced to the class that the man in the photo with the big fish was my uncle. I beamed with pride. In 1941 Uncle Lucien caught the largest landlocked salmon on record in Long Lake, Madawaska, Maine. His salmon measured 35-3/4 inches in length and weighed over 21 pounds. At the time, this great catch had broken all records. As far as I know, he still holds the record - well over fifty years. In the above photograph, the man in the canoe is my Grandfather, Adolphe Cyr.



During the Madawaska Centennial in 1969, Uncle Lucien proudly mounted his beautiful fish on a float for the parade.

Right: Uncle Lucien Cyr with his Salmon on his Float - 1969.

Aunt Odile and Uncle Côme Family - My grandmother Daigle was very sad when she learned that her only daughter, Odile, was moving to Biddeford, Maine, with her family. We were quite young at the time yet we remember them well. We enjoyed visiting Tante Odile when grandpère and grandmère went shopping and once in a while would take one of us with them. I recall they lived in various houses as Uncle Côme would build houses and they lived in each house for a while. We also remember when Florence would come to spend a week on the farm. Grandmère would give her "la chambre de la maitress d'école" (the school-teacher's room) the spare room at that time. Lewis also came for long visits on the farm. Our father enjoyed telling stories about Lewis hiding in the attic to read when my father wanted him to go fetch the cows. Papa use to say how grandpère and grandmère spoiled Lewis; they loved him. I recall Lewis babysitting for us a few times. Also, I remember when he left for the Civilian Conservation Corps, and when he visited us while in the CCC. Papa missed his sister after she left the area and it always brought on a huge smile when he would hear of Odile coming for a visit.



Odile and Alphonse - 1969  
Madawaska Centennial



Alphonse and Odile - 1968  
Saco, Maine





Bertrand



Bottom: Ronald, Roger  
Top: Bertrand, Elden



Reginald



Florence

A Few Favorite Photos of  
Odile & Côme Cyr Family



Odile



Emile

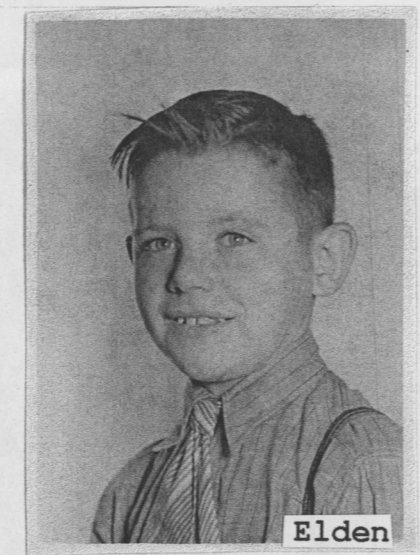


Florence

Below: School Photos



Adrien



Elden



Lewis



Gerard



Armand



Bertrand

**Les Gens d'Daigle** - When they visited, Mama would take out her best tablecloths and best dishes - we didn't call dishes "china" on the farm; nevertheless, Mama would prepare a meal fit for royalty. I have very fond memories of Grandmère's sisters and brothers. It was quite a special occasion when they visited. We all loved their visits - they were interesting people. The ones who came more often were Tante Edith and Uncle Rene Pelletier, Uncle Willie and Tante Ozithe Daigle and Uncle Joseph and Tante Anna Daigle. Once in a while Tante Annie and Uncle Dominique Daigle would also visit. These people were my father's aunts and uncles. Since my father did not have living brothers, and only one sister, we children considered them our own aunts and uncles. They were so warm, lovable, and fascinating. We were most happy when Fernande, Buddy and Joan would come with them. They were our age and we had grand times together.

I remember my grandparents going on mini vacations to Daigle, Maine, visiting for three - four days. I recall Grandpa would drive the old Chevrolet. Grandma loved these special excursions.

In 1948, after graduating from Our Lady of Wisdom in Sainte Agathe, Fernande pursued her studies with the Medical Mission Sisters. Aunt Edith sent this photograph to my Grandmother Daigle. Briefly, on the back she wrote, "I am sending you this photo of Fernande. She told me when I went to see her, 'Maman there has not been one day that I thought why didn't I stay home. I thank God for giving me this idea every day.' She is very happy - I am very glad."



Sister Fernande  
with her Mother,  
Edith Daigle Pelletier  
Medical Mission Sisters  
Philadelphia - 1949

*Je ten voi ce petit portrait  
il est pas tres bon il  
falait la poser en  
cassette mais elle ma  
dit quel alait pouvoi  
faire faire un portrait  
cette annie la va te  
donner une idee fille  
Sais tu quel ma dit  
quand je sui aller la  
voir Maman il a pas rime  
une journey quel a  
penser pour quoi que j'ai  
pas resté chey nous  
Elle dit je remercie Dieu  
de Ma voir donner cette  
idée toute les jours  
elle est tres heureuse  
Je suis tres content*

## Sister's roots prepared her for life of service in Africa

by Debra Durkin

**FORT KENT** - Sister Fernande Pelletier knew from a very early age she would serve as a missionary in Africa. For the past 39 years she has done just that as a medical doctor in Berekum, Ghana.

"I always had it in my heart to go to Africa," said the spry 68-year-old member of the Catholic Medical Mission Sisters, during a recent visit to the Valley.

Born in Daigle and educated at the Daughter's of Wisdom School in St. Agatha, Pelletier said she has two homes, the one of her roots which she comes back to for periodic visits, and her home at the hospital in Africa where she has spent her adult life working in the service of others.

Seated at the kitchen table in her brother's Fort Kent home, Pelletier was more inclined to speak about the Medical Mission Sisters, the people of her community or the hospital she has seen grow these past four decades, than she was inclined to speak about herself.

There are similarities between the Valley and her adopted home. "Family means a lot," in both cultures, said Pelletier. "If you come from this area, it's very family based. In Ghana, the family is very important. That stability of a good family and 'you're not afraid to work,'" are similarities between her two homes. "Religious faith is very deep, here. It's not superficial. That helps you to get through," she added.

Pelletier travels to her northern home every five years. This affords her a longer visit, rather than shorter, more frequent visits. "I'm always glad to come up here and experience the peace, the joy of being alive and the friendliness. That's what is similar (to Africa)," she said.

Immediately following her graduation from Wisdom in 1948, Pelletier entered the Medical Mission Sisters who provided her with her medical education, first attending Trinity College in Washington, D. C. then Georgetown University Medical School.

Pelletier, who is a tropical medicine doctor, described herself as "like a family practitioner."

Serving as the only doctor at the then-small facility in Berekum,

Pelletier was initially called upon to perform everything, from surgery to helping with basic sanitary needs. Prior to the opening of the hospital, Pelletier said the community "only had traditional ways of dealing with health." The sisters were called upon to provide "for medical needs - not just Band-Aids," she said. From a medical point of view, Pelletier said disease patterns and the long term affects of illnesses such as malaria and its impact on the children in the community is her speciality. During her years in Africa, Pelletier said she has seen first hand the impact of the use of immunization programs and the beneficial work of the World Health Organization. Where she lives, Pelletier said malaria is a disease that leaves its survivors afflicted with anemia. Increasingly, Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome, commonly referred to as AIDS, is a growing community health concern.

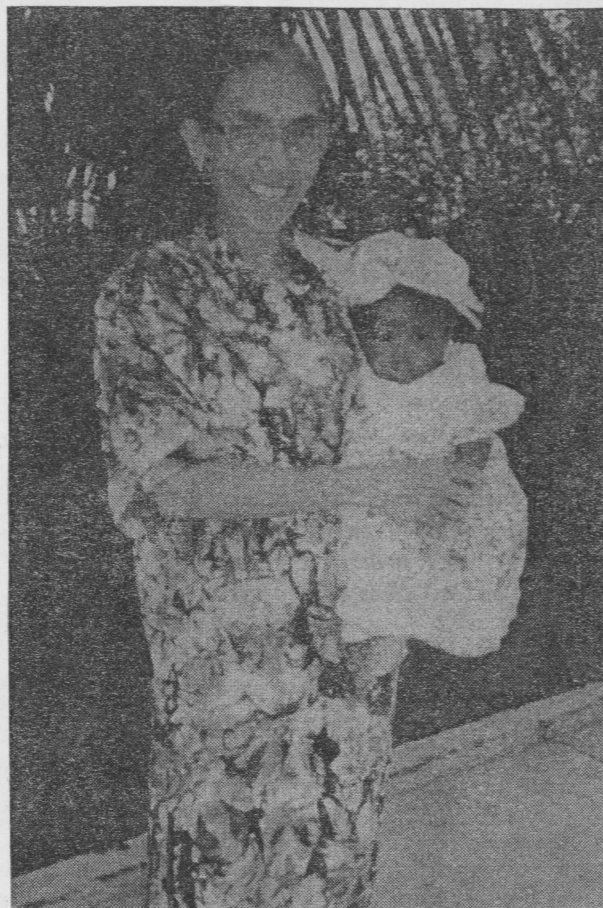
Pelletier said, she was well prepared for the life she was entering. She received training about the customs of the community she would adopt as her own and found, "very nice, very cheerful people," there to welcome her.

It was, in fact, the chief of the Berekum Traditional Area who approached the Catholic church 1948 with a request for medical assistance. The sisters, already established as a medical mission within the church hierarchy, became the vehicle to provide the care, said Pelletier.

From the beginning, there has been a real sense of community ownership and pride in the hospital. "The people gave a piece of their own land - a large piece. They cleared the land, built the first house and met the (first) sisters with drumming and food and handkerchiefs," said Pelletier. There was so much food at the welcoming, the sisters had to tell them to stop, she said.

From its humble beginnings as a "simple dispensary in 1948," the facility is now a 185-bed district hospital and serves as the base for a nurses' training college and a mid-wifery school.

Although it is not the type of hospital one finds in Maine, nonetheless, Pelletier described it



**LIFE IN SERVICE** - Sister Fernande Pelletier MD with her namesake Abena Fernande in Berekum, Ghana.

--Contributed photo.

as, "modern in a sense," with an x-ray machine availability of ultra sound, a room for surgery and computers. Creative invention also appears to enter into the equation. Pelletier described an incubator unit devised by the hospital staff as a wooden box and a light which, she said, worked quite well.

No one in need of medical assistance is turned away, regardless of religious affiliation. In addition, the area's diverse religious denominations - Muslim, Presbyterian, Methodists, apostolic religions, and Tradition religion of the region - all contribute to the welfare of the hospital and school through volunteer or service work.

Although modest about her own accomplishments, a broad smile

spreads across Pelletier's face as she explains a stack of photos depicting the 50th anniversary celebration of the hospital.

There she stands, petite Sister Pelletier, M.D., the same generous smile on her face, wearing a 50th anniversary t-shirt and a long dye-printed skirt, in various shots surrounded by nurses trained at the hospital, hospital administrators and local dignitaries, under a bright yellow and orange awning, celebrating where they have come from and where they are going, together.

As Pelletier explained, "Our approach is to let your light shine. By your works you portray who you are, not by trying to convert."

Courtesy Sr. Fernande Pelletier, M.D., and St. John Valley Times

Grandmère missed her brothers and sisters and was always lonesome for the place where she was raised. She often talked of life as it was for her, growing up in Daigle, Maine, before, during and after the turn of the century - 1900. I loved to listen to her life stories. She spoke of simple joys and complex sorrow. She reminisced about "le Petit Lac Noir" (Little Black Lake) where she would go with her parents when she was young. She spoke of her grandfather, Francois Regis Daigle, nicknamed Crique, marrying a second time.

Grandma never knew her biological grandmother, only her Step Grandmother, Modeste Martin Cyr Daigle and loved her. She talked and prayed for her young brother, Hilaire, nicknamed "tit Crique," who disappeared, never to be seen again. I remember her prayer book with a small photo pasted by a prayer for the missing persons. For years I have faithfully preserved my grandmother's tin box with a few very dear personal articles and her genealogy given to her by Sister Malvina through me.

**Great Grandmother Daigle** - When Great Grandmother (we called her Grandmère Hilaire) was at the hospital in Saint Basile, Grandpa and Grandma would sometimes take my sister Doris and me with them to visit her. This was 1935 to 1936 as Grandmère Hilaire died in July of 1936. On these visits, my grandparents would also visit Soeur Malvina, grandmother's aunt - sister to Grandma's father, Hilaire. I remember meeting Sister Malvina on these occasions and so does Doris. I recall we would wait for her in the reception room and she would come down a beautiful winding staircase.

On one of those visits on a beautiful warm Sunday afternoon with our parents and grandma, we had an accident on the way back with the old Hupmobile. A car hit us - a Daigle - as he was backing out of his driveway. We tumbled down a steep embankment, where a small tree held the car from a major disaster. We managed to walk to the bottom where a man and a woman came to our rescue; I remember Doris and I were bleeding. It was a miracle that no one was really hurt, even the car could be repaired.

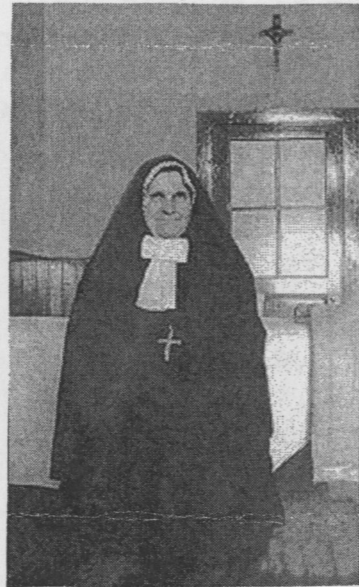
For the children the disaster was that Grandma had told us she had a treat of chocolate in her purse for us on the way home if we were good and behaved well. The sad part is the chocolate got all squashed in the accident and in the heat had melted. What a mess in her purse!

**Sister Malvina** - In 1937 I met with Sister Malvina again. I was really happy to recognize her, as being in a strange place like a hospital was a traumatic experience for a five-year-old.

I had suffered a ruptured appendicitis and had been taken to the Saint Basile Hospital. While I was recuperating she visited me every day and always had a cookie, a glass of milk, or occasionally, a little toy to cheer me up. I remember especially one toy looked like a pencil sharpener with a little fan. I still can clearly visualize Soeur Malvina coming through the doors on the left. I was in a room with several beds. My crib was at the end by the windows and I could see everything going on. I remember the big pile of keys dangling by her side. The door my father would come in was on the right. When she came to see me, she talked of my grandmother whom I loved. I stayed at the hospital three weeks. Nearing the end when Sister Malvina came to see me I always asked her when I would go home. I recalled she telling me, "when you see your mother come to visit you that will be the day you will go home." The day I saw my mother walk in with my father, no words could express my happiness. I knew I was on my way home. As it was during the winter only Papa could come to see me. He would leave his horse and sleigh over Fred Daigle, a relative, and cross the river on snowshoes. I left the hospital with my parents and our neighbor, Mr. Willie Cyr, who drove us home in his car.

Before leaving the hospital, Soeur Malvina gave me a little card with the names of my siblings and a message for my grandmother. She also gave me the Daigle genealogy for my grandmother's lineage. Grandma kept these and gave them to me when I was twelve years old. To this day I have preserved these.

When I visited Saint Basile in 1996, I recalled these recollections with Sister Viola and she said my memories were correct and she was amazed at what I remembered. She recognized the photo of Sister Malvina that had belonged to my grandmother and expressed a desire to have the photo for their archives.



Sr. Malvina in her room - 1937

Courtesy of Archives des Religieuses Hospitalières, Saint-Basile, N.B.

**Uncle Elias Daigle** - I recall going on "nostalgia trips" with grandma through her photo album and photos of Uncle Elias and his family. She also had letters (late 1920s and early 1930s) Elias had written to his mother, my great grandmother. Some of these letters have survived. Among the photos was a large photograph of Velma Jeanne, Elias' daughter. As Doris and I were growing up, that precious photo of Velma Jeanne graced our bureau top. How I dreamed of some day meeting her. Grandma used to tell us stories of her youngest brother, Elias. Grandma was married and had children of her own by the time he was born. I frequently wondered why Elias' pictures were the only ones we had. One day it occurred to me that perhaps at that time he was the only one with a camera.

In 1977 on our way out West, my husband, Harry, and I first stopped in Florida to visit Uncle Elias and Aunt Elianne, as she was known in Daigle, Maine. Her name was Lillian. What a joy it was for me to finally meet them. I was the only one in our family who had not met them. Every time they came home to visit Grandma, I was always away either baby-sitting, taking care of Aunt Anna, or over Eloi and Lillian Daigle in Fort Kent.

We spent one of the most memorable evenings of my life with them reminiscing, talking about Daigle, Maine, and his life in the Navy. I had a letter that he had written when he was boarding at Saint Louis Convent School at the age of 14. It was a letter beautifully written in French to his parents at Christmas time and the start of the New Year 1913. Our visit with them was very enjoyable.



Velma Jeanne Daigle  
(Mrs. Lynwood Jerome Roy)

Their home was spacious and beautiful - everything had a special meaning and story. Aunt Lillian had crocheted the bedspreads on her beds, which were gorgeous. She had a piano in their bedroom. They showed us a Fifty-year Marriage Memorial Certificate blessed by the Pope. At that time they were working on a lovely hand-hooked rug for their daughter. Aunt Lillian served us a delicious parfait at the end of the evening. It was indeed a very special visit and treat to share a few hours with a marvelous great Aunt and Uncle. While visiting I gave Uncle Elias the letter found among my grandmother's old letters. Following is the cherished letter written by Elias to his beloved parents. (Translation below)

*Convent St. Louis  
Fort Kent*

*A mes bien-aimés Parents.*

*Cher Papa chère Maman  
Quelle douce  
joie pour moi, de venir  
au retour de la nou-  
velle année vous recevoir  
l'expression de ma filiale  
et sincère affection  
et vous souhaiter une  
bonne santé et bonheur  
année 1913!*

*Oh! chers parents  
vous ne sauriez croire  
comme je vous aime et  
reconnaisant de toute  
la sollicitude et de tout  
le dévouement que  
vous avez pour moi.  
Afin de vous recom-  
penser des sacrifices  
que je vous ai  
souhaités. Je prie le*

*petit Jésus de répandre  
sur vous ses faveurs  
les plus choisis, ses  
plus chers. Bénédiction  
de vous conserver de  
longues longues  
années.*

*Tels sont les  
vœux que je sollicite  
pour vous au pied  
de la crèche en ce  
beau jour de Noël.  
Le plus si mes  
prières sont exaucés,  
vous aurez un parfait  
petit garçon qui  
redoublera d'application  
trou au travail  
afin de contribuer  
par là à votre bon-  
heur.*

*Votre enfant  
bien aimé Elias.*



Elias Daigle at  
Saint Louis School  
Fort Kent, Maine.  
Elias is sitting  
on right.

Photo:  
Courtesy of  
Marguerite and  
Noel Daigle

Saint Louis Convent - Fort Kent (Maine),

To my beloved Parents -

Dear Papa Dear Maman,

What a pleasant joy for me at the start of the new year to again repeat the expression of my sincere affection and wish you a holy and happy new year 1913!

Oh! dear parents you will never know how much I love you and how grateful I am for all the concern and devotion you have for me.

In return for all the sacrifices you have made for me, I pray to the Infant Jesus to bestow upon you his choicest blessings, his dearest benedictions to conserve you for many more years.

These are the wishes that I will solicit for you at the foot of the "crèche" during this beautiful day of Christmas.

Moreover, if my prayers are granted you will have a perfect son who will double his effort in his work to finally contribute by it to your happiness.

Your beloved child, Elias

## FOND FLASHBACKS

As I reflected on my childhood days on the farm with my siblings, I discovered a wealth of flashbacks, which I must share.

Upon reminiscing on our farm life, one flashback that often comes to mind is when the roads in our Concession during the winter were not plowed. They were rolled with a huge roller driven by three or four teams of horses depending on the condition and amount of snow. After the road had been rolled and frozen, a car could be driven on it; however, my father did not drive his car in the winter until after 1937. The roads were first opened (plowed) during the spring thaw of 1937. That was quite an excitement in the Concession. Someone mentioned it was Fedime Morin operating the plow, which was a huge track vehicle. We, children, were all in the window watching and barely understanding what was going on; we were somewhat scared. I remember when we were youngsters going on picnics with our parents over Willie Beaulieu's farm by the lake, near my Grandparents Cyr and playing on one of these snow rollers.

When the snow melted in the spring it created a muddy mess. Muddy roads in our area lasted many long years after the roads were plowed. I recall even when I was in high school the road in our Concession was impassable for weeks. Vehicles could not go through, including the school bus at times. My father had a flat-bed trailer hitched to the tractor and for weeks that would be our mode of traveling to the car, which was parked at the corner where Beaulieu Road intersected our road, then called Vetal Daigle Road. Going to church on Sunday we sat on chairs in the trailer and with the tractor drove to the car.

During the period of the muddy roads, on one occasion, Doris and I had dates for a movie with high school boyfriends. It was arranged that we would meet them at the corner of Beaulieu Road. Our brother, Leonard, drove us there with the tractor. We were sitting on kitchen chairs in the flatbed trailer looking forward to our dates. Upon approaching a mud hole, he accelerated and the mud splashed all over us. When we arrived to meet our dates we were a sight to behold. These boys were also Leonard's friends so they somewhat enjoyed the whole episode. We managed to brush off some of the mud and went on our date, however we did not attend the movies. We parked by the sidewalk in front of J. J. Newberry Store and spent the evening talking and people-watching.

\* \* \* \*

A fond flashback, in my family which, we often enjoy reminiscing, is the myth that "les sauvages" (the Indians) brought us. When a baby was born, we were told the Indians brought the baby; and at the same time broke our mother's leg - the reason she remained in bed for forty days. Unlike the children of today, the facts of life, for us, was a big secret. I knew something was strange when Leo was born during a snowstorm in 1940. I remember waking up and hearing people talking; I then got up to investigate. It was Doctor Faucher and Mr. Simon Beaulieu chatting with my grandmother. Upon seeing me she quickly escorted me back to bed. When I asked what was going on, she said there was a storm and they had come in to warm up. In the morning grandma announced that the Indians had come during the night and brought a beautiful baby brother. I had no more questions, however, I knew there was much to be learned about the Indians! Mr. Simon had helped the Doctor as he was stranded in the storm.

\* \* \* \*

A charming incident that occurred in the late 1930s or early 1940 dealt with bootlegging. As I recall a former neighbor and long lost friend of my father's knocked on our door one cold winter evening and asked my father to come out. At the time my grandfather was asleep upstairs and unaware of the visitor. It turned out that Papa's friend had a load of contraband liquor in his car that needed to be hidden. My father let him put his car in the front room of the potato house for a few hours and told him he had to be out by morning. Before coming to our house, he apparently had visited his brother, and his brother's wife did not want anything to do with his load of illegal moonshine. Papa did not say a word, about this visitor not even to Mama. The next day the police showed up at our neighbor inquiring about his brother, Alphonse. Since Willie was not at home that evening he was unaware of his brother, and his wife had not mentioned a word either. The police then came to our house to see if we had noticed any unusual activity the previous evening. My grandfather did not know anything of the sort. When the police questioned my grandfather, Papa was not around. In the meantime, my father maintained his silence regarding this incident. A few weeks later my grandfather was summoned to court in Houlton, Maine. Gretchen, Vetal Daigle's wife, accompanied grandpa to court. She was English speaking, however had some knowledge of French and could translate for him. Nothing ever happened to grandpa because he truly did not know. Years later my father told him of his infamous visitor.

\* \* \* \*

Another incident enshrined in my memory is the time I stole a box of raisins and hid it on the top board of the lean-to of the garage. Mama had gone to the grocery store with Papa and

bought two boxes of raisins to make pies for some occasion. When she started to make her pies only one box could be found. She accused Papa of eating the raisins, as she knew how much he loved raisins. In the meantime, every day I would climb the lean-to and would eat a handful of raisins, savoring, and making them last as long as possible. Mama must have added more water in order to make the number of pies she needed. Only after I was an adult and living away from home did I confess to Mama - poor Papa carrying the blame all these years. Just a little added note to give you an idea of how much I liked raisins: When I was about four years old I enjoyed being outdoors during the winter. A couple times my mother caught me walking in the sheep path and eating the "raisins" the sheep left in the path! She really had to scold me to make me understand these were not raisins.

\* \* \* \*

My mind flashes back to going from house to house in our neighborhood selling Cloverine Salve. If my recollection is correct, the Cloverine boxes came in a tube of twelve with pictures to give away as we sold the Salve. One picture I remember well was of a guardian angel following two youngsters. Leonard had sold the most - enough for a set of blue bubble glass dinnerware. He was quite proud of himself.

\* \* \* \*

Another incident involving Leonard was the time Louis, Lillian and Aunt Odile from Biddeford, Maine, came to visit Grandpère and Grandmère when Louis was on a furlough from WWII Service. Mama was always on the lookout for different foods. She used her ingenuity and determination to take the new foods she found and turn them into tempting dishes. Jell-O was a new food item for her so she had prepared a bowl of it with bananas, and maraschino cherries. We had never seen Jell-O before so when Mama proudly set her dish on the table, Leonard blurted out, "What is that?" Mama quickly answered, "It's Jell-O, you have eaten Jell-O before." To which Leonard answered, "Non, non, ont a jamais mange du Jell-O icite" (no, no we never ate Jell-O here). Poor Mama she was just trying to impress her company.

\* \* \* \*

I remember when the bread would get stale Mama would put the slices in a colander over a pan of boiling water. It was delicious - a trick I have retained.

\* \* \* \*

On one of my visit home from the city, I was all excited when I found a little boot in the attic of the old house. Papa recalled it was his and that Sophie had made it. She was Mrs. Simon Beaulieu, Paul's mother. She made "supacs" (moccasin). Then later on when Pa was about 14 years old she made shoes and boots with grommets. This little boot I treasure and have

decorated it with imitation of "hens and chickens" (Sempervivums). When I found this boot I recall showing it to Simone, Mrs. Paul Beaulieu, of course it was dirty and not too attractive, still I relive her burst of laughter as she said, "Qu'est-ce que tu va faire avec sa?" (What are going to do with that?)

\* \* \* \*

Another flash in my memory is frequently going barefoot in the summer; and also putting heavy cardboard in our shoes to cover the holes in hopes of making them last throughout summer.

\* \* \* \*

One of a recurring flashback is the making of "sucre à la crème" (fudge). On the farm we had all the ingredients handy. There was fresh cream twice daily, plenty of butter and always "d'la cassonade" (brown sugar). Doris, Leonard and I very often made this delicious treat - especially when the folks left us to baby sit our younger siblings.

\* \* \* \*

As a youngster, I was not afraid of anything. On the other hand Doris was afraid of her own shadow. Being scared was not something I understood too well because I would never have frightened Doris so often. As we did not have electricity one has to admit that it was quite dark in the bedrooms. Just a few minutes before the signal was given for bedtime, I would sneak upstairs and hide under the bed and as Doris would get into bed, with my back, I would raise the soft wire-linked spring. Doris would jump out of bed screaming and run downstairs; I'd quickly jump in bed and as Mama would come to investigate she did not see anything and Doris would climb back in bed. This would happen every now and then. Papa must have gotten wise to what was happening because on one such occasion I hid behind the bedroom door; as Doris was about to enter I stuck my hand out. Doris let out such a loud yell Papa was upstairs so fast I did not have time to get out of hiding. He looked behind the door and with his big hand pulled me out. He did not spank - just the look was enough. It took me years to figure how he was up there so quickly - he had to have followed Doris upstairs on this one evening. Scaring my older sister ended that evening.

\* \* \* \*

In our early childhood the only place our parents brought us with them was once at Uncle Lewis. We were told to behave otherwise we would not visit again. Somehow Leonard killed a toad. Uncle Lewis told him he would go to hell for doing that. Afterwards Leonard would ask grandma as she was helping Mama getting us ready for bed, "Is it true, grandma that I will go to hell because I killed a toad?" This nightly ritual went on for months. And, we never returned over Uncle Lewis any too soon!

\* \* \* \*

One flashback from our childhood days that the older siblings will remember was when grandma gave us a little too much to drink. Our parents had gone to the Isaie Cyr Fair in town and left us in Grandma's care. She seized the opportunity to have us clean the yard, pick up sticks, rake leaves, et cetera. She told us if we did a good job she would give us a little taste of the beer Papa was brewing. After the first small cup we wanted a little more. When our parents came home, one by one, we began to be sick. Mama wanted to call the doctor but Grandmère spoke up and said that perhaps she had given us too much beer. Mama proceeded to take care of us and put us to bed. As I recall we were all fine the next day.

\* \* \* \*

Grandma used to take good care of her little girls. I remember those famous buttermilk baths she gave us. Little girls were not supposed to have a suntan in summer. Tans were not fashionable in my grandmother's days. Our skin had to be white and she made us wear long sleeves to cover our arms and hats to protect our face. I also recall she giving us treatments of olive oil on our scalp. Perhaps my fondness for hats goes back to my early childhood days.

\* \* \* \*

Every now and then I flash back to bath time in our early childhood. The big galvanized tub would be set up in the middle of the kitchen and filled with warm water. Then the bathing would start with the youngest first - our ages then were about one to ten years old. I especially remember our Saturday evening baths. Mama prepared us for Church from seeing that our shoes were polished to finding our Sunday's hats.

\* \* \* \*

Another flashback from our childhood days was the time we were playing hide and seek and had left Germaine near the spring unattended. All of a sudden the hired man who was playing with us, hollered, "Oops there is one in the water." Mama was on her way from milking the cows carrying two big pails full of milk. Upon hearing this Mama dropped her pails and ran for the spring where Germaine had fallen. She retrieved Germaine surfacing for the third time. She was turning blue and choking lamenting that the trout had bit her knee. (A trout was kept in the spring for the purpose of keeping the spring clean. Her knee was bruised as it hit the pipe in the spring that carried the water to the barn.) In retrospect, I often wonder why didn't the hired man run to the spring instead of just standing there. Thank the Good Lord he at least hollered.

\* \* \* \*

A tragic flashback is the time on a cold winter evening our neighbor, Willie, lost his potato house with all his harvest to

fire. The snowstorm had just ended and everyone was huddled around the stove trying to keep warm. We did not notice the fire. By the time that someone ran down for help, the potato house was all engulfed with flames. What a shocking sight it was. Papa ran up with his hand fire extinguisher, which was useless. The fire truck was unable to come, as the road had not yet been plowed from the snowstorm. The potato house with all its content burned to the ground. I remember visiting our friends, Gerald, Ronaldo, Velma and Clarence the following day and going to the potato house. It was disheartening. The odor of burnt potatoes permeated the air as the contents smoldered for days.

Recalling this catastrophic event brings to mind a related little story. This sad event happened sometime between Christmas of 1945, and New Year's Day. As I recall my parents had gone out with Mr. and Mrs. Cyr (Willie and Laura) on New Year's Day. Mostly what I remember about my parents and our neighbors was that on their way home in the evening, during another snow and ice storm, Papa's car got stuck in Simon's Hill. The next day listening to Mama and Laura relating their evening to us, the story had a touch of sadness and at the same time was humorous. Apparently after much time of pushing, shoveling and falling, as it was also icy, the ladies decided to leave the men there and crawled home. Not long after, the men left the car stuck in the snow bank and came home. It seems what bothered my Mother and Mrs. Cyr the most was that they had ruined their nylon stockings while crawling - that's all they talked about. (In those days nylon stocking was a rarity and if a woman was fortunate enough to own a pair she took great care of them.) Also we could detect that they were not too pleased with their men as they had taken "un petit coup d'trop" (one little drink too many).

Looking back Mama and Laura must have been a sight in that snowstorm - just thinking that back then the women did not wear high boots up to the knees as the women of today and wearing slacks was not in vogue. If they were wearing nylon stockings, it meant they did not have "long johns." Leaves me to assume - they were not too well dressed for the horrible weather.

\* \* \* \*

The green apple episode with Albertine vividly comes to mind. Albertine had a craving for those little green apples that we were not suppose to eat - the saying being that it would infect us with worms. Albertine would hide to eat her green apples. One day she was missing and could not be found. We checked the water barrel in the stable, the spring, searched the barn, the fields, and the entire house. After a few hours of

looking for her desperation set in. Suddenly my father looked behind the big heavy door between the summer kitchen and the "grand maison" - Butine sheepishly came out. What a time of anguish that was for our parents.

\* \* \* \*

I have a clear memory of the time during a blinding snowstorm arguing with Papa and unable to get my own way, I told him I was going to leave home. Papa calmly said, "Leave." Stunned with his reply, I stormed out of the kitchen and went upstairs. Once alone in my bedroom I thought, "Oh my, I must make an attempt to leave, hoping Papa will stop me." I grabbed an old suitcase put on a hat and coat and went downstairs with an empty suitcase praying silently that Papa would change his mind. As my hand reached the doorknob, Papa yelled, "Where do you think you're going in this snowstorm? Go put that suitcase away and behave yourself." I abruptly made an about face, pretending to be angry, though joyfully relieved and disappeared from his view. At seventeen I was not prepared to leave home. If Papa had not stopped me I would have walked to our neighbor, Simone, and felt she would persuade my father to let me return home. My father had a subtle way of dealing with these childish crises.

\* \* \* \*

A flashback uppermost in my mind is when I was about six years old and was watching grandpa fixing the fence near the pigsty. It was in the spring because on my way to see grandpa I had gathered in a pile by the woodshed all the green tags thrown out from the fertilizer bags. Grandpa sent me to ask Mama for matches, which I did and gave them to him. A little while later I went for some more matches, which she again gave me. This time I did not give them to grandpa; I used them to light my pile of green tags. Not succeeding, I went back in the house and told Mama grandpa wanted more matches. At this point Mama went out to see why he needed so many matches; then wise Mama asked me what I had done with the matches. I showed her my pile of tags with the failed attempt - thank God again. That day another good lesson was learned. In retrospect, how important and wonderful to have had loving supervision at a young age.

\* \* \* \*

I remember enjoying baking gingerbread. I may be unique in having experienced the horror on my Uncle Lucien's face when he took his first bite into a warm gingerbread just minutes out of the oven, in which I had inadvertently substituted salt for sugar - yes, two full cups of salt! Someone had put the salt where the sugar usually was in the cupboard; I did not look, I just poured assuming it was sugar. An unforgettable lesson was learned - read labels.

\* \* \* \*

A fond flashback is remembering my mother and grandmother standing before the wood stove while cooking always wearing a huge apron protecting their dresses. Also I can visualize my mother making delicious doughnuts - filling a huge crock.

\* \* \* \*

I delight in remembering all the times we cooked raw potato slices on the old cast-iron stove. This usually occurred when we were baby-sitting our younger siblings.

\* \* \* \*

After Doris left by train for employment in Massachusetts, whenever I heard the haunting whistle of a distant train, a sense of loneliness would descend upon me. I really missed her.

\* \* \* \*

I remember Papa telling us the reason our mother was extremely afraid of toads. He recounted how one time as Mama was washing clothes she dropped the soap bar in the wash. With her hand feeling around in the washing machine trying to find it, she retrieved a toad instead of the soap. That really frightened her. In the summertime the washing machine was wheeled outside the summer kitchen. She had sorted the clothes on the porch and picked up a toad unknowingly. From then on she did the clothes sorting indoors.

\* \* \* \*

I recall fondly one beautiful winter day when I was about four years old, mother bundled me in my little black fur-like coat and my red beret and let me go outside, cautioning me to stay near the house. I disregarded her warning and wandered out into the deep snow and became stuck to my armpits. As I looked up I saw my father with his horses hitched to the bobsled coming toward me. For a moment I was paralyzed with fright and froze in place, certain to be run over. Apparently my father saw me and stopped his team, jumped off and swept me into his strong arms and carried me near the house. The act was so full of gentleness that I still remember as if it happened yesterday.

\* \* \* \*

Remembering how many times Leonard and I teased and pick on Doris are not my favorite stories. As we all enjoyed building sleds and carts, this particular cart was built with two wagon wheels, a platform and two handles to carry hay for our pet calf. One day after our homemade wagon was loaded with hay, we asked who wanted to ride on the load; knowing well that Doris would say, "Me." She climbed on top with baby Leo. On the way to the calf, down the hill, Leonard and I looked at each other and simultaneously let go of the handles. The wagon rolled down the hill and stopped on a rock pile, dumping the hay load and Doris and Leo. Leo didn't get hurt but Doris hurt her shoulder, and had her arm in a sling all summer.

\* \* \* \*

Recalling the picking of the "noisettes" (wild hazelnuts) on the farm always bring back fond memories. Hazelnut gathering was a tradition in our family passed down through the generations, which we initially experienced with our grandmother. Papa also enjoyed gathering with us when grandma could no longer join us. In late summer we had to try to beat the squirrels and the chipmunks and at the same time leave some for their winter food. These nuts were enclosed in a green bristlelike covering, which was difficult to remove. The nuts were put in a burlap bag and beaten on a boulder loosening the prickly husks. The hazelnuts were then easily picked out. Grandmère would give us ten cent per each small glassful of this delicious nut. If we had an over abundance, Mrs. Hornbrook was always happy to buy our extra hazelnuts. I remember once walking by some hazelnut bushes and decided to gather a few. As I did not have a container, I made several small piles along the border of the field. Upon obtaining a pail I came back to gather the nuts only to find the squirrels and/or chipmunks had stolen all my "noisettes."

\* \* \* \*

I vividly recall "les tonne d'eau" (empty one-ton barrels of molasses). These huge barrels were used to collect water from the spring. There were about five of them in a row located across the road from the old homestead and the spring. The water would cross the road through a pipe, in the culvert. This was a source of farm water for watering and spraying the crop when needed, and for various other chores like washing the car. I must add it was a place for us to play during the summer. We would disconnect the pipe to the last two barrels enabling the sun to warm the water; thereupon we would jump in the barrels in our bathing suits and play. Lacking a readily source of water, on their land, our neighbors, Willie Cyr and Paul Beaulieu would come for water especially in the winter. What stands out in my memory was Paul's well-groomed horses with the "crin" (horse-hair) braided with red bows, and the bells on the harnesses.

\* \* \* \*

In our family it seems we suffered all the childhood diseases imaginable, from the measles to diphtheria of which we were quarantined - a period of 40 days. I especially recall when we were all sick with the mumps (an acute contagious viral disease marked by fever and swelling of the parotid gland - ear and neck area). The home remedy for this ailment was to place a strand of red wool yarn around the neck, for the boys; while the cure for the girls was to rub the neck with a splinter from "l'auge a cochons" (the pigs' trough). Everything was fine until my turn - I refused to let Mama rub my neck with "l'auge a cochons." (It is interesting to note that my siblings recuperated quickly, however I lingered for weeks.)

\* \* \* \*



Recollecting a time when Mama was furious at us was the cold winter morning while waiting for the school bus we were gathered around the black cast-iron stove trying to keep warm - all seven of us. It must have been on a Monday because Papa had filled the copper boiler with water and set it on the stove to heat up as Mama was preparing to wash clothes.

All of a sudden the stove collapsed dumping this huge boiler with its content of water on the floor. At that specific moment, the bus driver, Paul Beaulieu's brother, "Coon" (Medley), came in to warm himself as the bus had frozen and stopped. I cannot fathom the disgusting mess. The only thing positive about this episode was the water had extinguished the fire. It could have been a worst disaster. The bus driver managed to restart his bus and on to school we all went. After this disruption my father went in Willie's old house and brought the old stove that was there - another old cast-iron stove similar to ours - and set it up for the time being. (To this day it is difficult for me to conceive how Mama had managed to clean that disaster.)

When we returned from school, there was a new stove in the corner! I am sure my mother never washed clothes that day. The new stove was never set up in the old homestead. At the time my father had bought the abandoned schoolhouse which was going to be remodeled for the family. The new stove was white, had an oven and a built-in hot water reservoir.

Many years later upon reminiscing with Albertine on this incident, she related to me that she was the one who had knocked down the stove leg. I am certain this story must have given Mama a few gray hairs.

\* \* \* \*

As we grew up and began going with our friends, Mama was always interested, and enjoyed listening about our evenings out. She encouraged us to have a good time because she felt she had missed out on that very special time in her life.

\* \* \* \*

Mama's Advice that I never forgot: One day as I was complaining, Mama said to me, "If there are instances where you think I was wrong or you feel I should have done differently, you go do better."

\* \* \* \*

Papa's Advice as we complained about being poor, Papa would say, "Do the best you can with what you have. When you're sad because you do not have much, go where someone has much less and you will return with a happier heart and grateful for your blessings."

\* \* \* \*

I remember the excitement when the Sears Roebuck and Montgomery Wards Catalogs arrived in the mail. How we treasured those great books. We would browse through them and checked out what we would like to order - even if we knew it was unlikely. We looked at the styles and then asked Mama to fashion us nice outfits. Our parents ordered what was needed in clothing and household items, as these catalogs would serve as our department stores; in a way it was like going to the Malls for us today in 2000, only then, we shopped in the comfort of our home - what a beautiful uncomplicated life.

\* \* \* \*

We were great at learning lessons from each other and playing pranks. What comes to mind is the incident of the beautiful red apple. Albertine loved apples - little green ones and big red ones! Butine would always take the best apple. One time we siblings got together and played a trick on her by choosing a nice red apple, polishing it, cutting a slice off, filling the beautiful apple with horse manure, and carefully putting the slice back on the apple. We then passed the platter around and Butine took the best one, proceeded to take a good bite and ended up with a mouth full of horse fertilizer.

\* \* \* \*

I remember the days when most of the parishioners paid an annual fee for their own pews in Saint David Church. Grandpère and Grandmère Daigle were assigned Pew #9 in the center aisle - no one could ever sit in that pew other than members of their family. The grandchildren each would take turns at sitting with them. The rest of us sat in the second pew in the gallery with our parents. When Leo was about four years old upon seeing grandma and grandpa downstairs he began to cry and wanted to go sit with them. In the middle of the Mass service, I was assigned to take him down. As I lead him to the pew he loudly exclaimed, "Pas s'ta grandmère la" (not that grandmother). I embarrassingly turned and went outside with my crying baby brother.

\* \* \* \*

When I was in High School, how I would have loved to play basketball on the girls' team. All the spare moments I had even while waiting for the bus after school I would go in the gym and get involved in playing table tennis, basketball, et cetera. One night some of the kids were practicing boxing on the stage. They bribed me to put on the gloves, which I did without hesitation and proceeded to have fun. Well, I missed the bus home. What a predicament to be in; how do I tell my parents that their "deplaisante" (annoying) daughter had one more fault - boxing! I did not panic I went to Willie's, our former farm neighbors, where we were instructed to go, if we were ever stranded in town. Mama and Papa came to get me - obviously not too pleased.

\* \* \* \*

The next story is one that we often recounted. In the spring of 1946, I remember being stranded in a severe fast-moving snowstorm on our way home from school. Doris, my sister, recalled it was a late spring storm that had taken every one by surprise. It was during this storm that the school bus had broken down at the bottom of Gagnon Road, and the bus driver instructed the schoolchildren to walk home. For my sisters and brothers, home was approximately five miles away. As it was springtime, the children were not properly dressed for such a fierce storm. (This was one time my siblings and I were happy our parents insisted it was too early to stop wearing boots.)

This was quite an ordeal as in no time we had the snow to our knees. The older girls each carried a young child on their backs. It was difficult trudging in that snow especially with a load on our backs. The older boys had gone ahead; only Oneil Deschaine stayed with the girls and helped with the younger kids. I recall the girls were angry with the boys. We walked as far as the Mathias Albert farm. At that point, the boys met us with help; George Emile Dionne gave us a ride in his panel truck to the Ben and Alice Albert residence.

When we arrived, Mr. and Mrs. Albert said that we were not going any farther in that terrible weather. We were unable to reach our parents as the telephone lines were down. In no time Mrs. Albert had food on the table to feed everyone. After supper my brother, Leonard, and Francois Cyr decided to walk home, stopping along the way alerting the parents that the children were spending the night at the Alberts.

With the snow above their knees, the way home was strenuous. They guided themselves by the telephone poles. Leonard related that Paul Beaulieu had come out with his team and sled looking for the schoolchildren and met Leonard and François in the curve by Levite à Theodule Cyr. Paul turned around and took them home, which Leonard recalled was nine o'clock in the evening and that he was exhausted.

Back at the Alberts, after the supper dishes were put away, we all knelt and said the rosary. Leo, our youngest sibling, started crying and we could not make him stop; he wanted Mama and Papa. After a while, Mrs. Albert assumed Mama's place, rocked him, and was finally able to console him. She prepared beds for all of us, five per bed - sleeping crosswise. The next morning Mr. Felix Cyr came with his team of horses and a "trainé à spanne" (a huge sled) and took all the stranded children home.

After all these years, trying to remember all the details of this ordeal we find many unanswered questions. Nevertheless, I am happy and most appreciative that Mr. and Mrs. Albert had the presence of mind and heart to share their home with us on that long-ago treacherous evening.

\* \* \* \*

One fond memory of our early childhood days was when grand-mère would prepare a lunch and would take all the kids on a picnic under the apple trees or in the poplar trees. I vividly remember especially on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. She would give us small American Flags and taught us to wave the flags and say, "Vive le 4 de juillet!" Our grandmère was also very patriotic.

\* \* \* \*

I fondly relive the days we played hide and seek. On the farm there were so many places to hide. The barn was by far our favorite place. We would hide in the haymows, granary, on top of the hayloft and under the wagons. We often climbed on the beams and stood quietly in hopes the "seeker" would not look up.

\* \* \* \*

Reflecting on times spent away from home, I joyfully think of the weekends, I spent at Eloi and Lillian Daigle's residence while in High School. Eloi was my father's first cousin; his mother and my grandfather were sister and brother, respectively. Eloi and Lillian were both teachers and often times needed a sitter for their two little daughters, Duanne and Eula Mae, while they would attend teachers' functions and social engagements. I would also do weekend cleaning, vacuuming, wash, iron clothes, et cetera. I never had to cook, thank the good Lord! Mrs. Daigle was a wonderful cook. On Saturday afternoon, while their parents would be shopping, I often attended the movies with Duanne and Eula Mae. I spent many weekends and the summer of my junior year with them. I cherish many fond memories of the special times "au Grand Platin" (at the Grand Plantation).

On the weekends that I would spend at the Daigle residence in Fort Kent, I would come to school prepared with my overnight suitcase and take the school bus to their home. Mr. Daigle had a bus for transporting the High School students from Frenchville to the Madawaska High School. Usually one of the seniors, often times living with the Daigles, would drive the school bus. I remember Millie Babkirk, always so full of energy, driving for a couple of years, while living with them. I recall Reno Daigle, Clifford Babkirk, Leon Albert Guimond and Rudy Morneault, who also drove the bus and perhaps there were others. I relive the rides on that bus and remember singing and harmonizing with a few other students especially the song, "Remember Me." Today, many years later, I look back on those days and feel blessed.

\* \* \* \*

After we left home for the big cities, oh, how we loved to come "chez nous" (home) for our vacations. Albertine and I for many years scheduled our two weeks out of the cities at the same time. We would meet in Boston - she would fly from Washington, D.C. and I from Connecticut. Together, we then would fly "chez nous." Our parents would meet us at Presque Isle Airport and it was exciting times. We were happy to just stay on the farm and enjoy the beauty, the peace and tranquility of home. Mama wanted to get on the merry-go-round and take us visiting everywhere; we wanted to get off the merry-go-round! We preferred to remain on the farm; she thought something was wrong with us. City life had changed her "little girls." It had! It made us appreciate "our humble beginning" and what we had at home.

\* \* \* \*

I look back fondly of the time I invited Harry for a visit on the farm to introduce him to my uncomplicated way of life where I was raised. I wanted to show him "God's little acre" that I left behind in Madawaska, when I moved to the city. Harry had already met my parents and siblings; nonetheless, it was important to me that I acquainted him with my "whole" family (relatives, neighbors, friends), and the patch of beauty "chez nous" I called home. The evening of the day we arrived home, our neighbors, Mr. and Mrs.

Henri V. Cyr, paid my parents an impromptu visit. They came with their horse and buggy. I couldn't have been more thrilled at seeing their mode of travel. That was the kind of "unrehearsed" life I had been accustomed to and was glad at having the chance at sharing a little taste of my childhood memories with Harry. I relive this special evening with much joy.



Right: Harry and Candide in our Neighbor's Carriage.

\* \* \* \*

Some of my most cherished memories are of the many times I returned to the Saint John Valley after leaving for the city. Going home with my husband at every opportunity was always a highlight in my life. The "welcome" home warmed our hearts as we were cheerfully greeted with opened arms. It was indeed very special and energizing times returning "chez nous" (home).

There are many more untold memorable episodes, however I have arrived at the conclusion of my early childhood memories and history. With this thought in mind I now enter into other interesting chapters in my life: marriage, purchasing the family farm - 1969, and retirement. These chapters remain to be told at a future time.

I have attempted to relate an account of my childhood days as recalled from memory.

Every family is unique with its own special and favorite stories; though, each individual in a family could tell or view the same episode differently.

These "petite histoires" have made me what I am. These were threads that form the fabric of my life - what I became.

\* \* \* \*



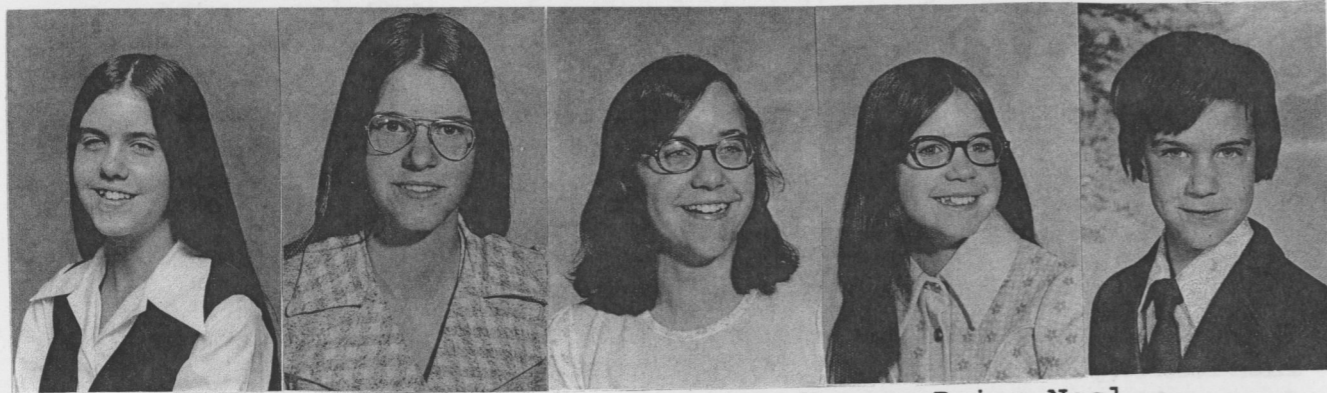
1969  
40<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary  
Alphonse and Marie Daigle



1989 - Mama's 80<sup>th</sup> Birthday

Left to Right: Joanne, Doris, Leonard,  
Albertine, Germaine, Candide,  
Sitting: Marie Daigle (Mrs. Alphonse)

Nieces and Nephews - School Photos



Janice, Jacqueline, Nanette, Karen, Brian Noel



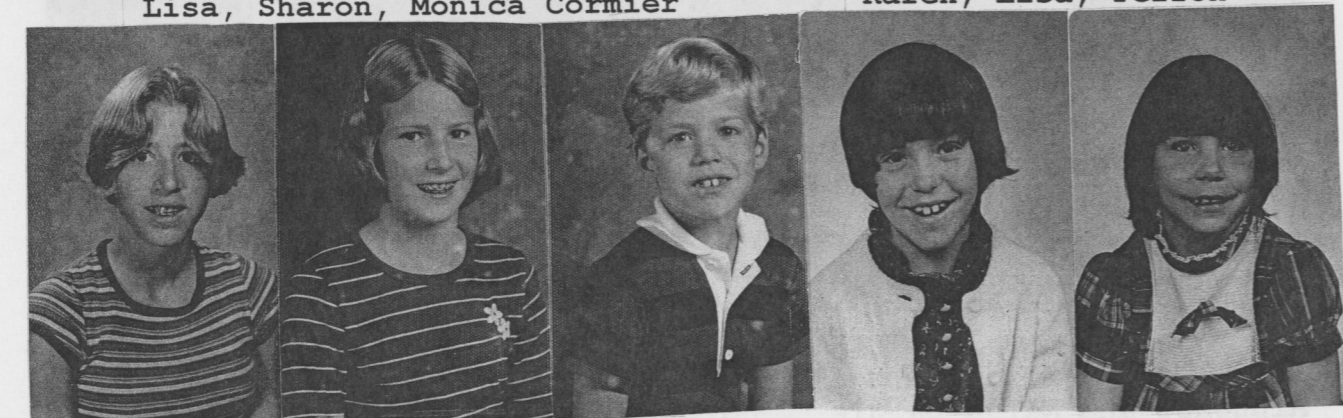
Michael, Carl, Gail Daigle

Teresa, Cynthia Parent



Lisa, Sharon, Monica Cormier

Karen, Lisa, Perron



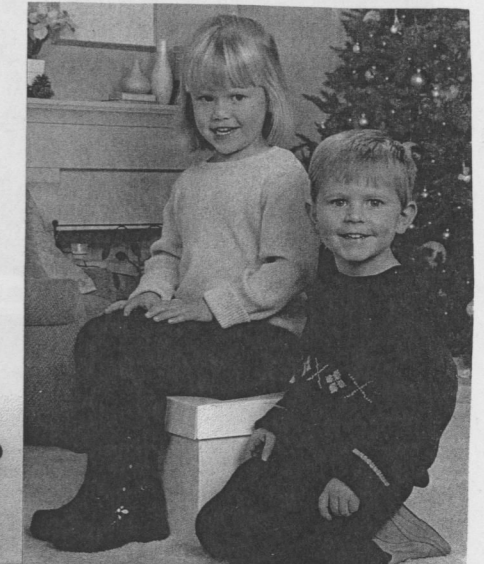
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Julie, Denise Daigle

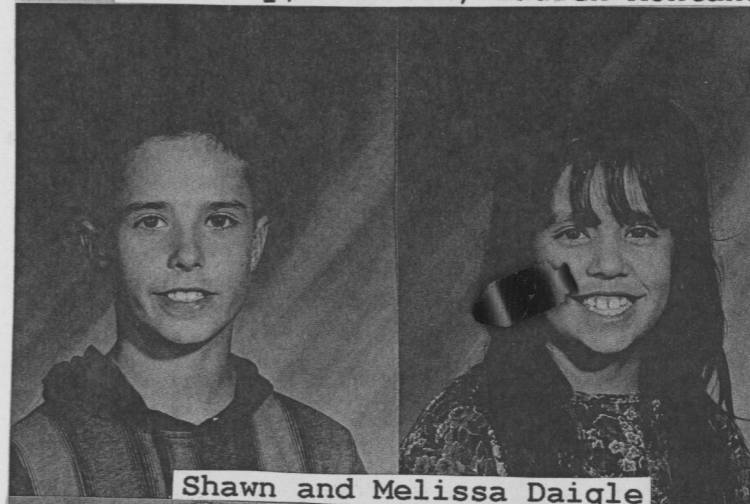
Grand Nieces and Grand Nephews



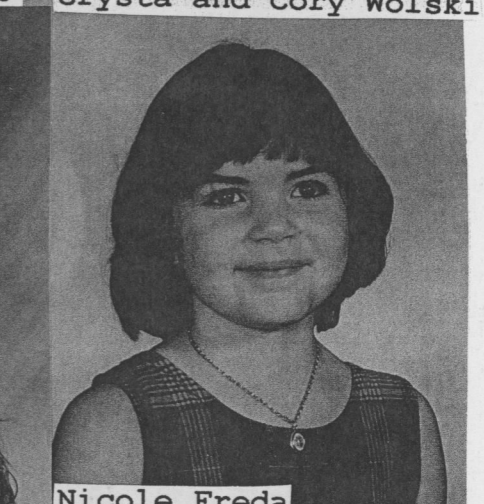
Brittany, Kristen, Lauren Montano



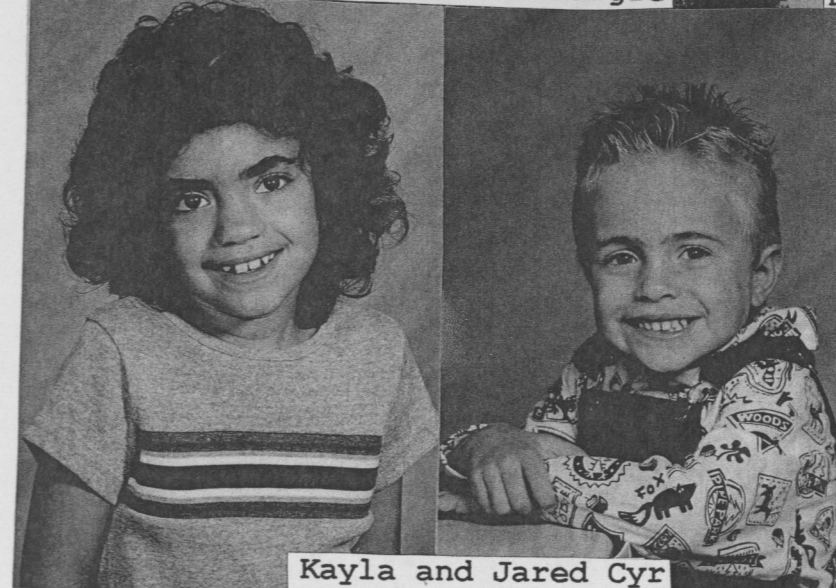
Crysta and Cory Wolski



Shawn and Melissa Daigle



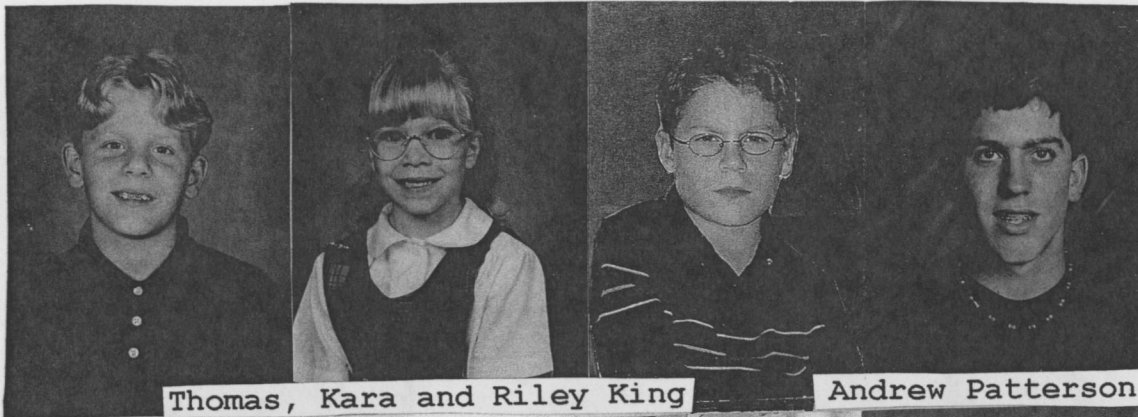
Nicole Freda



Kayla and Jared Cyr

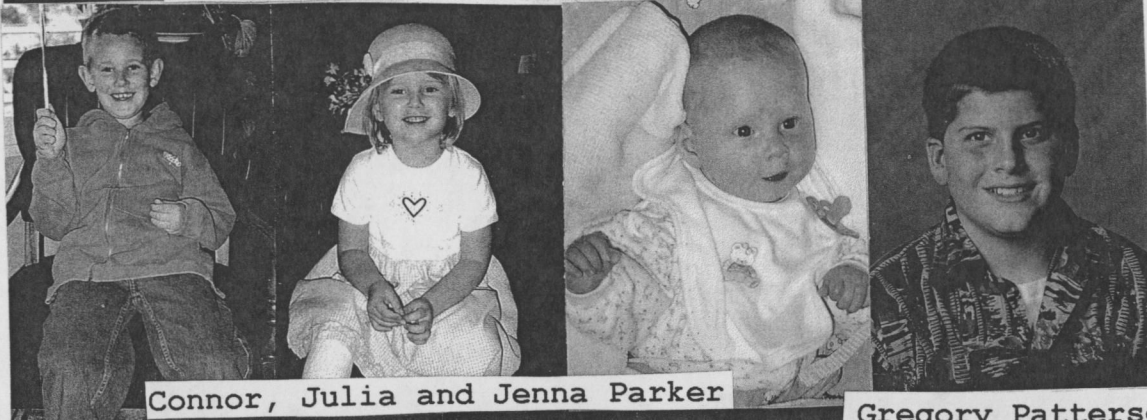


Angela Marie Daigle



Thomas, Kara and Riley King

Andrew Patterson



Connor, Julia and Jenna Parker

Gregory Patterson



Danielle Buczko

Amanda and Meghan Schroll



Taylor Kilduff

Rachel and Jake Babon