



Inc 1988

Frenchville Historical Society

Newsletter

2018

Dear Members and Friends of the
Frenchville Historical Society,

Once again it is time to reflect on the past year. The society faced many challenges, but we are proud of the work accomplished.

Our biggest challenge was repairing the foundation at the Wylie House. The Wylie House was registered in 1920. Needless to say a hundred year old house requires repair. With the help of a grant from the Maine Acadian Heritage Council, society funds, a great carpenter and volunteers, the foundation in the rear of the house has been repaired.

Another challenge was accessing our artifacts. With the help of a grant from the M.A.H.C. all artifacts in the Water Tower, Caboose and Wylie House have been accessed. Our Storage Unit still has some artifacts that need to be identified.

An interesting artifact given to the F.H.S. by Steve Bourgoïn was a winnowing

machine ("Un crible" or "une machine à vanner"). This machine belonged to Dave Castonguay, a local farmer. Winnowing is a process to free (grain) from the lighter particles of chaff and dirt by throwing it in the air and allowing the wind or a force of air to blow the husk away. The seed would land on a suitable platform. This process was also used to remove weevils or other particles from stored grain. This machine had an electric motor. Horse power or even a hand crank was used to create a force of air.

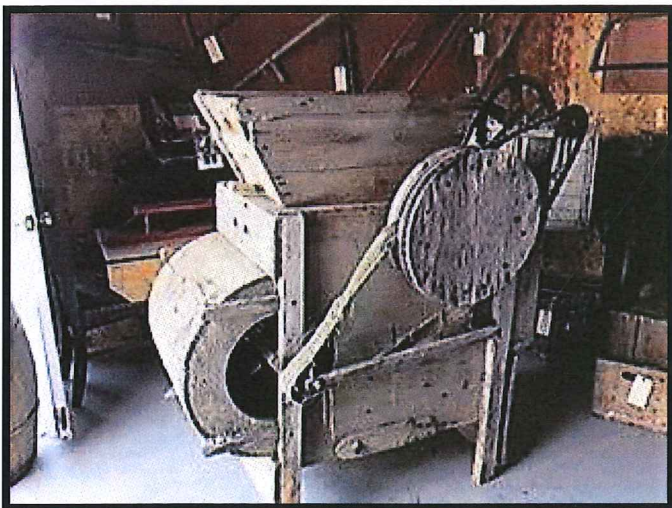
Our feature article in our newsletter shows the life and legacy of Raoul and Lucille Paradis, a local family. It depicts the daily activities, pastimes, family traditions and values from the early 1900's to the present.

We thank you for your continued support. We look forward to seeing you this summer – 2018. We are opened the last week of June through Labor Day weekend on Saturdays and Sundays; or by appointment.

Sincerely,

Donna Levesque

Donna M. Levesque, President
Frenchville Historical Society



Wylie House Preservation Report

Wylie House Foundation Project

In late spring we received a \$ 4,384.50 grant from the Maine Acadian Heritage Council to help offset expenses for repairs to the foundation, rear wall, kitchen floor, and back porch of the Wylie House.

The project included excavating the edge of the rock foundation wall to access rotten parts of the wall, support sill and to do repairs to the existing rock foundation. Repairs to the lower wall and part of the kitchen floor were replaced at that time due to some areas that were unsafe for our volunteers and visitors. A new back door was also installed to allow an easier access for our visitors. Construction of a new back porch, including steps, a ramp, and an overhead roof was also built. Exterior walls were closed up and refinished with materials that matched the old existing finish.

Basement repairs consisted of reinforcing beams and installing support poles. The floor area of the basement was covered with fabric and pea stone to reduce moisture. The interior of the rock foundation walls was also sprayed with foam to prevent future damage.

This project was expensive and reduced our savings, therefore forcing us to look into the possibility of some fundraising efforts in the next coming years. We are currently looking in raffling off a homemade quilt and possibly other items next year. We hope that you will support our efforts by selling/purchasing some raffles tickets when they become available since we really have to improve our financial funds. Details will be forthcoming.



Thank you,

Philip N. Levesque

Treasurer
Frenchville Historical Society



2017 Acquisitions

Harold & Vi Bouchard -

canvas bowling bag with 3 bowling balls

Donna Levesque -

off white rabbit fur muff

Beatrice Ouellette -

wooden planes

photo of Pierre & Helen (Marie) Paradis

book – 'La Source et le Filon

Mariette Bouchard -

radio (Stromberg Carlson)

Family of Leon & Patricia Guimond -

woolen blanket

Lynn & Kelly Stover -

etching of R.R. Station, Caboose, Water tower
files on the 150th Anniversary of Ste Luce Parish
(1843-1993)

Lucille Paradis -

Russian Cossack fur hat

pillow made with men's neckties

3 mink fur collars

4 baby sweaters with pearl buttons

young adult sweater knitted by Lucille Paradis

baby's dress and slip

small lamp shade

2 wide-mouth BALL canning jars

4 albums on the history of 'Acadian Crafts Assn'
1970 - 2000

1 album on the Bicentennial Exposition at the
Kennedy Space Center 1976

wooden hat molds for men and women

Paul & Ginette Gervais -

2 binders of the 'Paper Talk' magazine



Women's wooden hat mold



Men's wooden hat mold

Memorial Donations for 2017

In Memory of **Sylvia Gies** by Donna Levesque, Robert & Colette Bouchard

In Memory of **David Bouchard** by Family Members of Hercules & Jeannette Levesque

In Memory of **Gedeon Corriveau** by Gerry Morin

In Memory of **Kenneth Daigle** by Gerry Morin

The Raoul and Lucille Paradis Legacy

This is the story of our parents' legacy. Raoul and Lucille (Tardif) Paradis were both born and raised in large farm families in St. Agatha in the early 1900s. Our mother's parents, Thomas and Anna Tardif, raised animals and ran a sawmill that provided lumber for the construction of local homes and barns. Our father's parents, Josephel and Victoria, had a potato farm and also raised animals.



Our parents met at the wedding of mom's cousin, Cecile Gagnon, who married our father's older brother, Rosaire. Mom knew of Raoul from church, and had her eyes on the handsome man, but had never formally met him. When they met at the wedding, our father was quite smitten by her and courted her

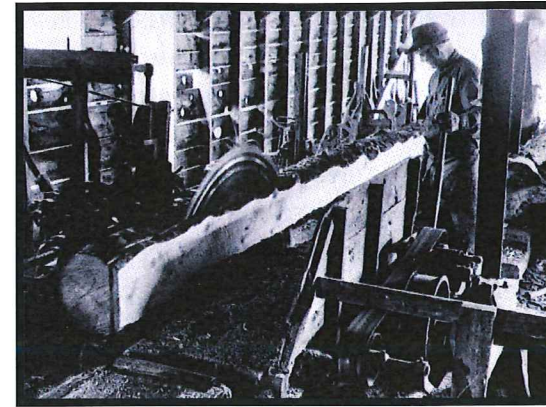
for a year before they married. Our father's younger brother, Valere, and our mother's younger sister, Priscille, met at our parent's wedding, and also got married after a year of courtship. Four Paradis brothers settled in Frenchville, with Raoul and Valere living next door to each other on a short road known as *la rue des Paradis*, which later became Felix Avenue. The boys got together to build assorted play equipment, a lit-up trail for sledding, sleds, ball bats, and wood work to display in the house and out on the lawns. They gathered, with other boys in the



neighborhood, in the basement of our house or the garage to build things, to read and exchange comic books, and have other kinds of fun. They organized neighborhood ball games, hikes, and other adventures.

The girls, of course, played house. With mom and Aunt Priscille's help and guidance, we learned to sew, knit, crochet, embroider, and do other creative things along with learning how to clean, organize, and maintain a household. We learned to prepare meals for large groups and washed a lot of dishes! The boys made cribs and other furniture for our play. They made stoves out of tin cans that we used to cook outdoor meals for house playing. We'd gather vegetables from the garden and potatoes from the cellar, clean them up, slice them, and cook them on those little stoves. It was quite a feat to get a large can for a stove. We used animal fat from the animals that were slaughtered for our food supply, or Crisco to power our little stoves. On rainy days we sewed clothes for our dolls and later for ourselves. Our mother took a lot of pride in dressing us nicely, and we certainly benefited. She recycled clothes into new outfits for the younger ones and bought new fabrics to make stunning outfits for special occasions. We played school and taught lessons to the younger children. Our mother and her sister, aunt Priscille, taught their daughters how to be strong, resourceful women who could face any challenge in life. They taught us their crafts and skills to make our lives more fun, creative, and empowered. We were taught to work hard and be good citizens.

Our father learned the sawmill business from his father-in-law, Thomas Tardif, and later built a sawmill himself in Sinclair in the early 1940s. He did logging at Van Buren Cove and floated the logs across the lake on log rafts in the summer. He also had a small sawmill in Frenchville that he moved around to different locations. In 1948, our father and his cousin, Antoine Paradis, started to build a lumber company in the Ashland area. After a few years, they built a bigger sawmill and kept growing their business. They



were in Ashland all week and home on weekends. It was a successful business, but very difficult for the families. The men were away all week, and in winter they were away for several weeks at a time because it was difficult to travel. This schedule meant the women had to manage the household, the family, and community obligations. It was quite a challenge with their large families. After their 14 children were born, our mother asked our father to be more available to participate in the family upbringing, and he honored her request. He sold his share of the business to his partner, and became a full-time husband and father. It was strange for us as children to have him home every night, but it was a blessing for mom and all of us.



Dad bought a small potato farm from mom's uncle, Philip Gagnon, and started raising potatoes and oats. He was very ambitious and very smart, so he became quite successful with his enterprises. He

continued to do some logging for a few winters as he established his farm. In the summers he did some excavation work with his bulldozer and operated his sawmill in Frenchville, providing an important service for local people who needed logs sawed into lumber for their building projects. He had a big family to feed, and he worked very hard to make sure we lacked nothing. The nine boys in the family worked alongside him and learned his craft and his skills. Some of the boys loved the work, and others did not. But they all learned a strong work ethic, which served them well in their own careers. In the end, they all chose career paths they wished to pursue, and our father supported their choices.

Over the course of his farming years, our father expanded the farm from 170 acres to over 1,000 acres. He bought small farms and parcels of land that became available as farmers retired or had to abandon their farms due to the economy. He cleared some of the wooded land for planting with his bulldozer. Our father retired in 1979, and his sons, Lawrence and Lloyd took over the farm. They followed in our father's footsteps in farming with integrity and expanding their farmland and production.

Dad was a strong believer in contributing to the community and helping neighbors. He was a town selectman and served on the church council for many years. He was active in the Knights of Columbus. He was always available to help those who needed a helping hand. Mom also was active in local organizations like the Ladies of St. Anne and the Daughters of Isabella. She volunteered her time to help us with school projects, sewing costumes or baking goods.





Our mother did not sit at home much. When the children started leaving the nest, she became involved with the creation of "Acadian Crafts," a nonprofit organization that provided local women the opportunity to knit and crochet at home to earn extra money for the families. She was president of the company and designed many of the clothes that were made. She taught a number of women to use a knitting machine to make baby clothes and blankets that were the main product of the company. She and Aunt Priscille taught adult education classes together in Madawaska and St. Agathe to teach women how to knit and crochet. Acadian Crafts flourished for 25 years until labor laws made it too difficult to maintain home cottage industries. She did not stop knitting when Acadian Crafts closed its doors. She continued to knit baby clothes on her knitting machine and made hats, scarves, and mittens for us and the grandchildren. She also made mittens for the children at Dr. Levesque Elementary School.

Mom and Dad had a lot of friends in the community and they liked to have a good time with them. On the weekends they went out or played cards with their friends. They played Charlemagne and *La Bloute*. They also enjoyed snowmobiling and skiing with their friends. They took up cross-country skiing when trails were made in Frenchville. The trail was close to their home, so they went out whenever they could. In the summer, Mom enjoyed gardening while Dad worked. After he retired, Dad went fishing a lot with his friends and sometimes alone. He picked fiddleheads, berries, and enjoyed all those things he didn't have time to do when he was working so hard to provide for his family. He would come home with his "catch of the day" and a big smile on his face.

Mom was a great cook, and everything was always made from scratch with vegetables from her huge garden or her larder of canned and frozen vegetables in the basement; game meat or fish from the freezer; or local meat from the butcher. She never bought meat at the grocery store. When the family visited, she always prepared our favorite foods. Later in life, when she lived alone, she'd be excited to have us visit so she could cook foods she didn't cook just for herself – *la sauce au salmon*, *beignets*, *ployes*, and *popovers*. She always had sweets available. Every meal was concluded with a cup of tea and a sweet made from scratch, of course. When we were young, she taught us how to bake cakes, cookies, pies, and other sweets. Every Saturday morning, she made six or more pies for Sunday and the week – apple, blueberry, strawberry, lemon meringue, butterscotch, and sometimes chocolate, coconut, pecan, sugar, shoofly pie, or mincemeat. Butterscotch was everybody's favorite; mincemeat was the least favorite. There were always special pies or other desserts on holidays.

Mom loved to grow flowers and made bouquets for the house. She shared her flowers with us and made bouquets for special occasions like showers, weddings, and other activities in the community.

Mom and Dad traveled to different parts of the world over the years. Mom really liked to see new places and different ways of life. She especially liked to visit botanical gardens and cathedrals wherever they traveled to. Dad loved to visit new inventions or technologies like big bridges, farms, and industrial equipment.

Over the course of twenty years, they had 14 children – nine sons and five daughters – and they now have 27 grandchildren, and 42 great grandchildren. All the children were delivered by Le Bon Docteur Levesque, who cared for the family all the years of his practice. Mom and Dad were good parents and respected citizens of Frenchville. All the children live respectful lives and visit Frenchville every year for mom's birthday and for some of the holidays.

It was a real gift to have Raoul and Lucille as our parents! And, their legacy lives on in their grandchildren and great grandchildren.



Dad died at the age of 88 in 2003 and continues to smile upon us from above. Mom is 97 years old and recently moved to High View Manor in Madawaska where she continues to impart her wisdom and guidance to us – when we ask.

Theresa married Roland St. Pierre. She is a retired teacher, and they live in Van Buren. They have three daughters and one son; and five grandchildren.

Roland married Phyllis Collin. He is a retired mechanical engineer and plant manager at Fraser Paper Company. They have four sons and six grandchildren

Lawrence married Barbara Fongemie. He died of cancer at 58 years old. They have no children. He (and Lloyd) took over the farm when Dad retired.

Gerard married Doris Belanger, who died of cancer. They have two sons and four grandchildren. He later married Daryl. He was president and co-owner of a machine shop in South Carolina.

Jacqueline is married to William Contois, and they have no children. She is a retired physician.

Robert married Lucy Albert. They have two children and four grandchildren. He retired from Fraser, having held different production and sales positions.

Françoise married twice and has two children and two grandchildren. She is still working as a psychologist in a private practice in Saco.

Daniel married Doreen Cyr. They have three children and two grandchildren. Danny is a retired machinist from Fraser, who went back to work as a machinist for Tardif Machining and Welding, a Frenchville company owned by a distant cousin, Alvin Tardif.

Michael married Jackie Ouellette, and they have two children and four grandchildren. Mike is an electrician and he retired from Twin River in 2017.

Susan married David Morin, and they have two children and four grandchildren. Sue manages their apartments.

Edgar died of cancer at age 24 when he was embarking on a career in photography. He inspired the family to start the Edgar J. Paradis Cancer Fund to provide financial assistance to cancer families so they can travel away from the St. John Valley for diagnosis and treatment. Over 1 million dollars has been given to help these families.

Edward died at 16 years old from a target shooting accident.

Elizabeth married Chris Records and they have three children and two grandchildren. Liz works as a medical technologist.

Lloyd married Judy Lavoie, and they have three children and eight grandchildren. Lloyd is now the only farmer in the family. He and Judy operate the family farm with their son, Adam.

Jacqueline Paradis
Françoise Paradis