

CHAPTER TWELVE

The children of Lucien Bélanger (1868/9 - 1939) & Leda Gagnon (1870 - 1943)

Except for the story about Gerald, my father, this chapter contains the information I was able to get about my aunts and uncles. Lucien Belanger and Leda Gagnon had 12 children.



Alice (1888 - 1980)

Aunt Alice was the marrying Aunt as she married three times. She first married Phydime Cote and had one daughter, Rena. She then married Elize Ouellette (and Alice was Elize's third wife) and had four children. After Elize died, Alice married Anselme Dionne and they had no children. There is some reason to believe that Elize may have spelled his name Elisé.

Elizé Ouellette came from Notre Dame du Lac, Quebec and arrived in Drummond in 1892. He was Alice's second husband and was the oldest of nine children by Joseph Ouellette and Delvina Laforest. Joseph and Delvina LaForest married at St Andre de Kamouraska, PQ on 27 January 1879. They later moved their family to Drummond, New Brunswick where they cleared land for a farm. On 30 March 1900 Joseph purchased another 100 acres which is shown as lot 21 on the land subdivision map in Drummond.

As a minor, at the age of 20, Elizé wed Eliza Desjardins on 31 July 1900. Eliza was the daughter of Narcisse Desjardins and Emilie Lagace. This marriage brought one daughter, Elmina, who died on 4 Jan 1919 at the age of 16 years. Eliza died on 17 Feb 1903 at the age of 23. Elizé remarried on 15 February 1904 to Clementine Morin, the daughter of William Morin and Celanire Tardif. Their marriage lasted fourteen years during which time they had seven children. In 1918 Spanish Influenza was raging in the area and this terrible disease took the life of Clementine (at age 32) on 10 Nov 1918. Elizé, needing a wife to tend to his many children, remarried for the third time, three months later, on 10 Feb 1919 to Alice Bélanger the widow of Phydime Cote. Since Alice had a daughter named Rena, this marriage added yet another child to the already large family. Elize and Alice then had 4 more children of their own. They were: Lucien who married Gilberte Beaulieu; Laurette (Dawn) who died on 9 Feb 1925 at the age of 3 years, 9 months; Blanche who married Hermel Dumont; and Isabelle who married Omer Martin.

Elize and Clementine Morin's children, who were raised by Alice, were: Marie who married Edwin Sirois; Yvonne who married Elmer Rossignol; Adrien who married Odelie Bernier; Louis who died at the age of 23; Rose who married William Smith; Antoine who married Ozielle (Teddy) Levasseur; and Marthe who married William Bellefleur.

Prior to his marriage to Alice, Elize had left his fatherland to buy a farm in Drummond where he established himself. He only lived on this farm for a few years before he sold it to Joseph Gagne who sold it to Auguste Cote who passed it on to his son Johnny. In 1990, that same farm was owned by Romeo Beaulieu. In 1916, after having sold his farm, Elize purchased a piece of land from Auguste Cote on the rue Principale (Principal Street). He purchased a carpenter's cabin which had been used during the construction of the railroad and hauled it onto his new lot. Using this cabin as a base for a new home he added to it so that it would accomodate his rapidly growing family. Elize was especially skillful with his hands so it was natural for him to earn a living as a joiner and finish carpenter. Following the seasons, he was employed as a carpenter through the spring, summer and fall.

Although he did very little farming, he was heavily involved in merchandising potatoes grown in Drummond. At harvest time and during the winter months, he was an agent for the Porter Company of Andover and bought vegetables from the local farmers. His exchange was located close to the railroad tracks at a place called Cote Station which was right next to a fertilizer plant operated by McCain. Since farmers had to store their potato crop in the basements of their homes during winter, they could not store large amounts. When a farmer became successful and had a large yield, he needed to market the produce before it went bad during winter. Elize bought produce in such quantities that he had to build two storage buildings in which he sorted the produce while waiting to market

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it. He was aptly supported by his mate (Alice) who helped him in his business as an accomplished administrator and accountant. She not only helped her husband run his business but she administered the local school budget, collected the local school taxes and paid the teachers.

During his marriage with Alice, Elize became known as an accomplished inventor. In 1928 he invented and manufactured his own potato sorting rack ("rack-a-patates") and had a patent registered in Ottawa. A sign was made for one of the original antique racks which read, "Fruit & Vegetable Sorting and Grading Machine Patented in Canada 1928 NO.252 649 MNFD By E.J. Ouellet - Grand Falls N B". Among other implements used in the potato industry, he invented a device which removed potato shoots which had grown during winter storage. Elize liked to socialize and this inspired him to join many organizations such as the Knights of Columbus of Grand Falls whose meeting house just happened to be next door to Elize's home. This meeting house was named Salle des Forestiers (House of Foresters) and was used for various other functions. This is where they held school reunions, voted for elections and other meeting functions. Elize liked to see the development of the middle class and served on various other committees.

Elize was also a very religious man. One night, inspired by the Christmas program in which he was a participant and the church, lit by lanterns, he entertained the youngsters with his own rendition of "Minuit Chretien". He was thenceforth known for yet another talent. Elize died at the age of 50 on 13 June 1930 but Alice survived him through a third marriage until her death on 21 September 1980 at the age of 92.

ALMA (1889 - 1951)

Alma married Louis Beaulieu who was a blacksmith like Lucien. Alma and Louis lived upstairs above Louis' blacksmith shop. Although Alma has left children and grandchildren behind, I have not been able to obtain any significant information on her and Louis Beaulieu's life. The exact date of Alma's birth is not know but the year was 1889 and she was born in Fall River, Massachusetts. She married Louis Beaulieu, son of Vital Beaulieu and Sophie Mongeon, on 27 April 1908 in Grand Falls, New Brunswick. Alma and Louis had 13 children, 6 boys and 7 girls.

STELLA (1892 - 1974)

Aunt Stella (Emma Estelle) was Gerald's sister. She was born 20 September 1892 in St. Pascal, Quebec after Lucien and Leda moved back from Fall River, Massachusetts with Alma and Alice. When Stella was growing up, she wasn't the quiet little girl one might expect. The Belangers lived in the same neighborhood as the Pirie's. F.W. Pirie experienced much success in potato farming and exported much of his crop to Cuba. While other farmers rotated crops; 2 years in potatoes, 1 year in grain and 2 years in hay, Mr. Pirie continually planted potatoes. This made his family one of the wealthiest in the area.

Mrs. Pirie suffered from "consumption" and often slept in a tent outside. Mrs. Pirie sat on her balcony and rocked as the kids walked by and she would give them the devil about how they dressed or whatever struck her fancy. Mrs. Pirie always wore a lot of powder and makeup and, it appeared to Stella that, she had a white face. Stella, one day, painted her behind with powder and a face so, she thought, it looked like Mrs. Pirie's face. As she walked by and Mrs. Pirie scolded her, as Stella knew she would, Stella mooned her. Mrs. Pirie told Pepère Bélanger and Stella got into trouble. Stella fixed Mrs. Pirie. The Pirie family was decorating the house and had all their furniture in a tent on the lawn. Stella got a goat and tied it up in Mrs. Pirie's tent after feeding it cabbage. The goat decorated the tent's furniture in good fashion.

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Stella married Joseph Berube when Gerald was only 20 months of age. She had two sons, Adrien and Gilbert. Gilbert was born premature and, according to Irene, he was so small that they used a shoe box with cotton batting as a crib. Adrien always "took care of" his little brother. In his adult years, Adrien operated an appliance store on Main Street in Grand Falls. Joe Berube died prior to 1923, which meant the boys were 6 years of age or younger.

Stella then married Joe McClure and they never had any children. Joe's family came from St Cyprien, Quebec and Joe had 13 brothers and sisters. Joe's parents, Auguste and Elise Cote were married and moved to Drummond, New Brunswick with one horse, one wagon, their furnishings and three children. The trip took them three days and when they arrived, they rented a farm from William Morin for a year. They then moved to another farm rented from Alexis Daigle where they stayed for three years. Auguste then moved his family to a farm he purchased across the street from the Boat Landing School. This had been the farm owned by Gerard Dionne for many years. Joe's father, Auguste, remarried to Rose Dionne and they had an additional three children before he died, at age 86 years 2 months, on 6 March 1942.

Joe and Stella operated a restaurant on Broadway (in Grand Falls) which was close to the Bélanger homestead and blacksmith shop. Later, Joe became manager of a tourist attraction associated with the Falls called Wells in Rocks. As children, we used to visit there often.

EMILE (1894 - 1958)

Emile, his oldest son, left home at the age of 21 with \$10 in his pocket to seek his fortune in Caribou, Maine. He later moved to Van Buren, Maine where he opened a machine shop as a result of the experience he had received working for his father. Emile anglicized his business name and called it Baker's Machine Shop. This may have been the loose interpretation of the name Bélanger which was close to Boulanger, which is the French word for Baker.

Claude Guimont said that Emile Bélanger did very well for himself at his Van Buren based business. People from Grand Falls regularly came to this small Maine community to get their machinery serviced. When Emile left home, he advised his two younger brothers to stay and work with their father until at least the age of 21. They did better than that, Arthur and George worked for their father for 24 years together.

ROSEANNA (STILLBORN 1895)

ALEXINA (SENA) (1897 - 1978)

Sena always said Dollard had the devil in him. She really believed that he was, at times, evil. One day Dollard convinced Gerald to help him play a trick on Sena. Dollard brought Gerald in the attic space above the apartment and showed him how to take apart the connection for the electric lights. Dollard told Gerald, "when you hear me say 'lights go out', you pull the connection apart. When you hear me say 'lights go on' you put them back together." And so it was, Dollard went and knocked on the door of Sena's apartment and she let him in. He told her she was right, he did indeed have the devil in him and if she didn't treat him better he would do something awful to her. He then

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showed her how he really did have superior powers and said, "watch how the lights even obey me, lights go out" (and Gerald took the connection apart); "lights go on" (and Gerald put them back together)". From that day on Sena never knew for sure what to make of Dollard.

Sena married Jean Baptiste Lavoie, the son of Auguste Lavoie and Eugenie Pare. To have some idea of the family Sena married into, one really needs to cover a little history of the Lavoie family.

Sena's husband, Jean Baptiste, had great grandparents named Jean Lavoie and Anastasie Levesque. They had a son (Jean Baptiste's grandfather) named Hyacinthe Lavoie who was born in 1831. On 13 September 1853 Hyacinthe Lavoie married Rosalie Grenier at Riviere Ouelle, Quebec. Rosalie was the daughter of Jean Baptiste Grenier and Rose Gaudreau. Hyacinthe and Rosalie had four children, two girls and two boys. Jean Baptiste and Auguste, established themselves in the Drummond, New Brunswick area.

Jean Baptiste married Arthemise Ouellette, daughter of Joseph Ouellette, at L'Isle Verte, Quebec. They had 11 children. Arthemise and Jean Baptiste, who by this time was called Baptiste, moved to Drummond about 1896 on a 50 acre parcel on the Desjardins road. Baptiste brought his father along with him and the two of them cleared land and set up a maple sugar operation making maple syrup and maple taffy. Baptiste was an accomplished carpenter and built many of the homes for the farmers of the area. Baptist's family stayed on and provided many descendants in the Drummond area. Auguste, Baptist's brother, married Eugenie Pare.

Auguste was born on 25 December 1861 at St Cecile du Bic. He married Eugenie Pare, the daughter of Joseph and Delvina Guimond on 15 April 1890 at St Epiphane, the birth parish of Eugenie who was born 9 June 1868. In the years that followed their marriage, Auguste and Eugenie went from St Epiphane to St Hubert. Auguste worked as a land clearer while looking for an opportunity to get into farming. His father, Hyacinthe, spoke so highly of the farmland in Drummond that, in 1900, Auguste and Eugenie came to establish themselves in Drummond. Auguste arrived a few days early so that he might meet the train when it arrived carrying his wife and eight children. These children were: Omer who died at age 17 years in November 1908; Marie Louise who married Onesime Theriault; Augustine who died at age 15 years in October 1908; Georgine who married Alphonse Ouellette; Rose Aimee who married Louis Philippe Cote; Elmire who married James Diccico; Angeline who entered the religious order; and Jean Baptiste who married Aunt Alexina Bélanger.

Upon their arrival, Auguste purchased a 120 acre farm from Pierre Bourgoin of which only eight acres had been cleared. This land is situated along the Desjardins road. It was on this farm that they had seven other children. They were: Amedee who married Yvonne Rioux; Sara who married Francois Langlais; Leon who died at the age of one in October 1905; Joseph Pierre who married Marie Anne Ouellette; Narcisse who died at age 2 months in September 1908; Felix who married Florence Langlais and Azade who married Emma Ouellette. Blessed with a strong love for their children, a great generosity and without fear of work, they adopted their grand niece Stella Michaud at the age of 3 weeks who had become orphaned a few days after birth.

During the first few years, they all lived in a small 18 by 20 foot cabin, hand hewn from logs. The logs were squared with an axe and the tables, chairs, benches and even the beds were hand made and simple. All these were made by the grandparents, Hyacinthe Lavoie and Joseph Pare. These two were ingenious in making the most of simple furniture. At night, one would open the bench and take a large box from under the bed which stored mattress pads and feather mattresses for the children. Linen and cotton curtains would divide the room into sleeping chambers. In 1912, Auguste added a second story of 30 by 34 feet with pine logs sawed at the mill of Damase Cote. Sawdust was used as insulation between the walls. Auguste worked from daylight to dusk without stopping to eat at

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midday. Come rain or shine, Sunday would find the family in a horse drawn wagon on the way to church.

Eugenie was a hard worker and accomplished in many areas. She not only kept a good house and home but raised quite a group of children. She carded wool and made clothes for use and for sale as well as straw hats and mocassins to sell. Auguste also grew his own tobacco and found great pleasure in smoking his pipe which he would light with matches he made from cedar. Everyone would pitch in to lend a hand at what had to be done without reservation. During winter, Auguste would hire himself out in the logging yards until the log drive down the river. Life kept on in this fashion until many of the youngsters had grown and left home.

Azade, the youngest, was the last to work the farm and saw the time when oxen were replaced by horses and the family was doing well enough to dig a well and install a hand pump instead of hauling water from the stream. Azade and his wife Emma bought the farm from his parents who lived with them until their death. Auguste died on 12 September 1937 at 75 years 8 months and Eugenie died on 7 January 1952 at 83 years 7 months. Azade invented a conveyer belt for potatoes, worked the farm and was an accomplished carpenter and cabinet maker. Azade always had a secret dream to relocate to the Isle of Orleans to find an easier market for his potatoes. In July 1953, he sold the family farm to Pierre Ouellette and pursued his lifelong ambition.

ROSANNA (1899 - 1959)

This author has no information on Rosanna except that she was born about 1899, married Eddie Graves and died in Hartford, Connecticut at age 60 of a heart attack.

ARTHUR (1901 - 1976)

Arthur stayed with his father, as he had been advised by Emile. Arthur started to shoe horses when he was 13 and learned the trade from his father until he left to be on his own. When we were young children, we would go to Uncle Arthur's. I never knew my cousins very well. There were 12 of them and I remember being in their house on the farm and the kids sitting on the steps going upstairs; one on every step. My brothers knew Uncle Arthur better than I did because they would go there with our father more often. Uncle Arthur lived on a farm belonging to Uncle Dollard (Where Eduoard lives today), near the golf course. He later moved to Plaster Rock and had a small repair business there. Aunt Rose came home and lived on the farm for a while when Eddie was ill.

YVONNE (1902 - 1989)

Yvonne lived in Lewiston and married Louis Gagnon. Gerald and Jim went to visit her once. Aunt Yvonne had a pet parakeet that she would allow to fly about the house. This fascinated Jim, especially at breakfast one morning. The bird flew and perched on the edge of Aunt Yvonne's bowl. As she was eating her cereal, the bird doo-dooed in the bowl, to Jim's surprise. When Jim told his Aunt about it, she replied, "that's why I always eat all bran cereal, so I can't see it". She continued to eat her cereal as if nothing happened. Jim and Sandy visited Aunt Yvonne on several occasions when they lived in Brunswick, Maine. Aunt Yvonne had a small statue of the Blessed Virgin and Jim always liked it. On one of the visits, she gave it to him.

GEORGE (1904 - 1991)¹

George started into his father's business at the age of 11. He stayed long after Arthur left and finally made a change to a machine shop business. In 1939, George opened a business called, O & K Enterprises, a company which still does business in Grand Falls as of 1990.

George said, "One day at the shop we shod 42 horses. The next day the number was 40, then the next it was 38". He noted that they would go straight through the day without even stopping for dinner. He told about a time when there was a mare with a reputation for kicking a lot when she was to be shod. George straightened her out one day by flipping her onto her back and doing the job with the mare in that position. When the same mare came in again, later, it was Arthur who was on hand to apply the shoes. The mare was acting up, as usual, when George came in and bellowed at her. At the sound of his voice, the mare stood still and lifted her hoof in full cooperation. "Arthur was not aware of what had happened before so when he saw how the mare stood still he asked me what I had done to her," chuckled George. Lucien taught many people the blacksmith trade.

Between 1916 and 1918, George worked in a lumber camp in the Allagash region of Northern Maine. His father was the foreman of the 16 men employed as blacksmiths to keep all the horses in mint condition for hauling logs. Some of these treks, through the woods, were as long as 60 miles. George is said to have run the entire 60 miles to get to a dentist. He had a miserable toothache and needed relief as quickly as possible. He said that once he arrived at the doctor's office in St. Pamphille, he had to wait because the doctor was not in. When the dentist returned, he pulled George's tooth and charged him fifty cents. George said, "Most people won't believe I ran the whole sixty miles, but I did". George then went to a hotel to rest before his journey back to camp. He could not return for two days, however, since he could not move his legs the following morning. The run had caused a temporary paralysis in his legs and he was immobilized for the entire two days.

George operated Bélanger's Welding and Machine Shop until he sold it in 1979. This business was later renamed O & K Enterprises. He was a member of the fire department for 30 years and was active in the Knights of Columbus for over 52 years. George says that he is a descendant of two Belangers who came to North America from Europe in the early 1600s. One of them is supposed to have settled in Quebec while the other went to New York.

Uncle George was a machinist and a darn good one! He married Mary Anne Mockler. Aunt Mary Anne (Ma Tante Annie) was a tall, spare woman. She was always very kind and hospitable. Like most wives, she humored George, nagged him about his drinking, complained about him some of the time, but, beneath it all; she loved him very much. She died in May 1978. They had 5 children; Barbara, George Jr., Marina, Claudette and Judy. George Jr. was a bachelor for a long time and he worked for the power company. He started corresponding with Louise Scalzo in Connecticut through his sister Barbara. He married Louise and was later promoted within the power company and had to move to Fredericton. They lived and raised their family there. George Jr. died of cancer in September of 1990. Claudette was a nurse and she married James McManus of Van Buren, Maine. Jim was a classmate of my brother Dick's and somehow we always kept in contact with his family. (Jim's mother was Phyllis' kindergarten teacher.) They later moved to Millinocket where Jim was a school superintendent and they raised their family there. Judy stayed in Grand Falls most of her life. She was a single parent and lived at home with her children and was there to take care of her elderly parents when the time came. Marina married Neville McCormick and lived on the Portage Road in Grand Falls where she raised her family.

¹Quotes from George were taken from an interview he did for the newspaper, La Cataracte, printed March 7, 1990

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Uncle George was quite a character! He was very short and stocky, strong as a bull and he liked his "petit coup" (small drink). He loved to tell stories about the old days. Although a machinist, in his later years, he was also an accomplished blacksmith, like his father had been. George, at one time, was commissioned to make shoes for the oxen that were used in the deep woods in the lumber camps to haul logs. This was quite a trade and, although the art of making the shoes was one to be proud of, shoeing an oxen was an even greater feat!

George and Gerald were fishing buddies. When Gerald got fed up with work, he would take a day off and head for Grand Falls to see George. They might go fishing or "quisining" (visiting) which Gerald loved to do. They ate boudin and ployes and had an all around good time. Of course, this was later in their lives - like when Gerald was living in Caribou. Uncle George and some of his buddies, like Ti Noir, had a fishing camp where he and Gerald would go for a few days. Jim McManus would go with them if he was up on vacation and my brother Bill may have gone a few times. In fact, Gerald had been on a few days of "fishing getaway" with George and the boys the weekend before he died.

George was the last surviving Bélanger of that generation. Whenever my brothers would come up to visit, they would go to see him since he reminded them so much of their father and it gave them a tie to the family, now gone. Bill and his family would stop in and visit on many a Sunday which always pleased George. Judy once brought in George's welding splattered eye glasses for repair to Bill's eye wear shop. Bill made him a whole new pair and delivered them personally to make sure they fit; all at no cost "for Uncle George". George was very proud of the special service he received.

George had asked Pete (my brother Lawrence) to be a pall bearer at his funeral when he died. It seemed to be a solemn promise between the two which could never be honored. When George did pass away, Pete had just returned home from triple bypass surgery and could not keep his promise to his old buddy. John happened to be visiting Pete in Connecticut, at the time, and Pete appointed John as his personal stand-in for the funeral. Phyllis, John and Bill were there representing Gerald's side of the family.

GEORGE ACCORDING TO HIS DAUGHTER BARBARA

Our dad, George, was a lover of music. He played the mouth organ and loved to dance. I remember him doing the French jig and he also played in the Grand Falls Band for over 30 years. He was a volunteer policeman as well as a volunteer fireman. As my sister Marina and I talked about our Dad, she reminded me that Dad was also a great roller skater. Dad, third from the last child of Lucien, married Mary Ann Mockler (Annie) in 1924. They had an evening wedding and they honeymooned to Van Buren, Maine. Dad worked in the blacksmith shop with his brother Arthur and their father. The shop later became known as Bélanger's Welding and Machine Shop until it was sold in 1979. Dad loved to fish and hunt and one of his fishing buddies was his brother Gerald. George and Annie had five children.

Barbara, the first child became an R.N. and married Joseph Dumond. They had seven children. Carol married Kenneth Faraci (no children); Sallie married Michael Milardo (three children, Amber, Juston and Brent); Sandra married Peter Swider (two children, Audra and Nicholas); Frank married Melinda Foell (two children, Ashlee and Matthew); Dawn married Owen Flannery (two children, Michael and Mark); Peter married Dawn Rogers (three children, Kimberly, Randall and Christopher); Mark married Connie Johnson (one child, Shelby).

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George (deceased), the second child graduated from St. Joseph's University and married Louise Scalzo. They had three children. Michael married Terry Hazlett (three children, Ferran, Justin and George); Brent married Julie Borghese (no children) and Susan is unwed.

Claudette, the third child also became an R.N. and married James McManus. They had three children. David married Lora Wilford (no children); Daniel married Donna Barnes (two children, Matthew and James); and Kathy is unwed.

Marina, the fourth child, became a teacher and married Neville McCormick. They had five children. Mark married Barbara Boone (two children, Sean and Alexander); Anne married Dale Jensen (divorced with one child, Ryan); Michelle married Brent Hatchard (two children, Brandon and Taylor); Beth is unmarried and Dawn married Ian Bailey (one daughter, Alexa).

Judith, the fifth child, married Ray Grant (deceased) and they had a daughter named Rae Anne. Rae Anne married Steven De la Haye (three children, Christopher, Jennifer and Matthew). Judy also had a son, David Bruner, and he married Jose Desjardins (no children).

George, our father, had no formal education but he was an avid reader and educated himself in that way. He excelled at his chosen trade of being a blacksmith and machinist. His goal was to make sure his children had the education he was unable to have and he succeeded admirably in that. He took great pride in his children, 20 grandchildren and many great grandchildren.

Dad was a very charitable man and was always helping people in need. It seems, when I was growing up, we always had someone living in our house that was not a member of our immediate family. George and Annie celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary together.

End of Barbara's account of her family.

DOLLARD (1906 - 1976)

Dollard G. Bélanger is noted in Grand Falls for his many contributions. He started off as an electrician, then became a respected town councilor. It was he who originally ordered the trees which, as of 1993, still decorate the Broadway Boulevard in Grand Falls. The provincial offices building on Broadway holds the name of the Dollard Bélanger Building as a tribute to his contributions.

FROM THE CATARACT WEEKLY OF SEPT 27, 1989, PAGE 18-B

An old fashioned type of businessman, not the type looking for continuous handouts from the government nor a man with multiple college degrees, best describes the late Dollard [G.] Bélanger who, at the time of his death on November 12, 1976, had become a very successful and respected man, being President of Northern Construction and Suppliers Ltd.

A plaque was recently placed on the provincial building, honoring this man who worked for his family and community for so many years. The building itself was constructed by Mr. Bélanger's firm in 1958 and later sold to the provincial government. Some of the more noted buildings which Mr. Bélanger's company constructed include the John Caldwell School and the St. George Parish Church. Many of the town's streets were also first paved by his company as well as the construction of the modern water and sewerage and filtration plants.

Mr. Bélanger was the type of man who worked hard and long hours, shoulder to shoulder with the men in his crews. Even though he held the position of President of his company, he never adopted an air of superiority. He served his community for 36 years as a member of the Town

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Council, numerous [years] as Deputy Mayor and prior to that had served for many years as a member of the county Council and District School Board until their abolition in 1967.

Although, at times, Mr. Bélanger could appear gruff, he always found time to help a friend, either through counseling or financial help. A life long resident of Grand Falls, he was very much of a family man, devoting as much time as possible to his wife, Alphena and family of two sons and four daughters. Today, his two sons, Raymond and Edward [Edouard], operate the family business.

Interviewed by The Cataract, in 1972, Mr. Bélanger's character can be summed up by several statements which he made at that time, namely "I always respected the fellows who were trained and hired to do specialized work for me - - but I also respected all the men. I learned to assess a man by the way that I saw him work and live, not by who or what he was." While a councilor, a number of his pet projects included seeing the construction of a nursing home, a municipal airport and the development of the Falls and Gorge.

GERALD (1910 - 1976)

OUR FATHER

Gerald L. Bélanger was born 28 January 1910 in Grand Falls, New Brunswick Canada, the 12th child of Lucien and Leda Parmella Gagnon. Gerald was baptized on 30 January 1910 by Father Henry Jayner in Grand Falls. The Godparents were Mr. and Mrs. Louis Beaulieu (Aunt Alma). Gerald was confirmed on 20 June 1920 by Bishop O'Leary at Assumption Church in Grand Falls. Gerald and Irene were married by Rev J.J. Fournier, SM, in the presence of Lucien Bélanger and Louis Philippe Michaud. Gerald was naturalized as a United States Citizen in Caribou, Maine on 5 February 1941. He signed the paper as Gerald Louis Bélanger but the authorities typed in Gerald Lewis. They also noted that his nationality was British! Gerald was 31 at the time.

The story of Gerald is better told by reading the next chapter.

UNCLE PIT

Paul (Pit) Gagnon, Mémère Bélanger's brother, had a small store two buildings up from Aunt Stella's restaurant. On Sundays, Gerald had to go visit in Grand Falls and often ended up at Uncle Pit's. His wife was called aunt Mary (pronounced by all as Merre-ray). She was rather rough and often acted like "one of the boys". The store was really a long narrow room with chairs along one wall. Everyone sat in the chairs, tipped them back until the backs of the chairs rested against the wall, as they talked and used the row of spittoons to expectorate.

Building Named to Honor Late Dollard Belanger



Dollard G. Belanger

In a recent communique from M.L.A. Paul Duffie, he announced the naming of the Provincial building, which houses the court, in memory of the late Dollard Belanger.

MLA's Message

"As the M.L.A. for Grand Falls - Drummond - Portage and on behalf of the Government of New Brunswick, I am pleased to announce that the provincial building in Grand Falls has now been officially named the Dollard G. Belanger Building. The building was named as tribute to Mr. Belanger who was a longtime public servant and a respected businessman. He dedicated so much of his life to helping people and seeing to our communities' needs. I am pleased that we are taking the opportunity to honor Mr. Belanger and his family by the naming of the provincial building the 'Dollard G. Belanger Building'."

Commenting on the naming of the building to the memory of Mr. Belanger, Mayor Ronald Ouellette said "We are pleased to learn that our M.L.A., Mr. Paul Duffie, has taken his initiative in honouring Mr. Dollard Belanger, a former Town Councillor, a distinguished and successful businessman and a person dedicated to the welfare of others, by naming the provincial building 'The Dollard Belanger Building'. Town Council is proud to support this proposition in honour of Mr. Belanger and his family. We join Mr. Duffie in offering the Belanger family our most sincere congratulations in this tribute to Mr. Dollard Belanger."

Rare Businessman

An old fashioned type of business-



Shown above is the plaque on the provincial building located just near

the corner of Broadway and Main Street.

man - not the type looking for continuous handouts from the government - nor a man with multiple college degrees, best describes the late Dollard J. Belanger, who at the time of his death on November 12, 1976, had become a very successful and respected man, being President of Northern Construction and Suppliers Ltd.

A plaque was recently placed on the provincial building, honoring this man who worked for his family and community for so many years. The building itself was constructed by Mr. Belanger's firm in 1958 and later sold to the provincial government.

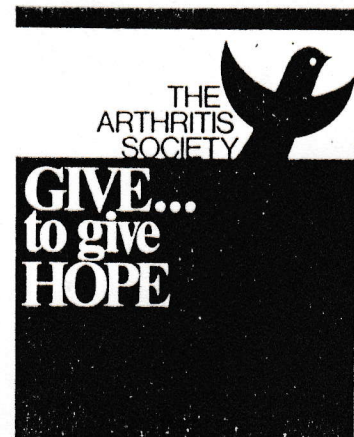
Some of the more noted buildings which Mr. Belanger's company constructed includes the John Caldwell School and the St. George Parish Church. Many of the town's streets were also first paved by his company as well as the construction of the modern water and sewerage and filtration plants.

Mr. Belanger was the type of man who worked hard and long hours, shoulder-to-shoulder with the men in his crews. Even though he held the position of President of his company, he never adopted an air of superiority. He served his community for 36 years as a member of the Town Council, numerous as Deputy Mayor and prior to that had served for many years as a member of the County Council and District School Board until their abolition in 1967.

Although, at times, Mr. Belanger could appear gruff, he always found time to help a friend, either through counselling or financial help.

A life-long resident of Grand Falls, he was very much of a family man, devoting as much time as possible to his wife, Alphena and family of two sons and four daughters. Today, his two sons, Raymond and Edward, operate the family business.

Interviewed by The Cataract back in 1972, Mr. Belanger's character can be summed up by several statements which he made at that time, namely "I always respected the fellows who were trained and hired to do specialized work for me ... but I also respected all the men. I learned to assess a man by the way that I saw him work and live, not by who or what he was." While a councillor, a number of his pet projects included seeing the construction of a nursing home, a municipal airport and the development of the Falls and Gorge.



Hommage rendu à Dollard G. Bélanger

Le député de Grand-Sault, Drummond et Portage, M. Paul Duffie, dans un communiqué récent, annonçait que dorénavant l'édifice provincial situé au coin des rues Broadway et Main sera connu comme "L'édifice Dollard G. Bélanger".

"L'édifice a été ci-nommé en hommage à M. Bélanger qui a oeuvré de longues années au service du public et qui fut un homme d'affaires respecté," de dire le député Duffie. "Une grande partie de sa vie fut dédiée au service de ses concitoyens et de sa communauté," a-t-il ajouté.

"Nous sommes fiers d'apprendre que notre député à l'Assemblée législative, Paul Duffie, a pris l'initiative d'honorer M. Dollard Bélanger, un ancien conseiller, un homme d'affaires distingué ainsi qu'un citoyen ayant donné beaucoup de lui-même au service des autres, en nommant l'édifice provincial en son nom," déclare le maire de Grand-Sault, M. Ronald Ouellette.

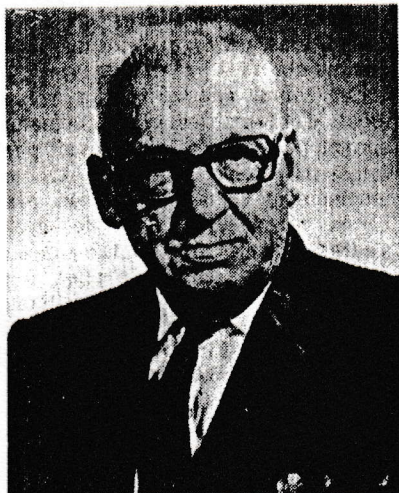
"Le Conseil de Ville a donné son appui à cette proposition en l'honneur de M. Bélanger ainsi que les membres de sa famille. Nous nous joignons à M. Duffie pour offrir à la famille Bélanger nos sincères félicitations ainsi que nos propres hommages à M. Bélanger," de conclure M. Ouellette.

Un homme d'affaires rare

Un Homme d'affaires qui ne sollicitait pas d'octrois gouvernementaux et qui ne comptait pas de multiples degrés universitaires, le défunt Dollard G. Bélanger était bien et bien respecté. Au moment de son décès, il était président de la Construction and Suppliers de Grand-Sault.

Une plaque fut récemment apposée sur l'édifice provincial qui porte son nom, honorant cet homme qui a oeuvré pour sa famille et sa communauté pendant plusieurs années. L'édifice lui-même fut construit par la compagnie de M. Bélanger en 1958 et vendu plus tard au gouvernement provincial.

Quelques autres édifices ont été nommés par cette même compagnie, dont l'Ecole John Caldwell et



Dollard G. Bélanger

de St-Georges. La plupart des rues de la ville furent pavées par sa compagnie de même que la construction d'usines modernes d'épuration et de traitement d'eau usagée.

M. Bélanger était le genre d'individu qui travaille fort et de nombreuses heures, épaulant ses employés. Même s'il détenait le titre de président de la

compagnie, il n'avait jamais adopté d'air supérieur. Il a desservi sa communauté pendant 36 ans à titre de membre du Conseil de Ville en plus de plusieurs années comme maire suppléant, membre du Conseil de Comité et sur la Commission scolaire.

Natif de Grand-Sault, M. Bélanger était très dévoué à sa famille. M. Bélanger et son épouse, Alphena, étaient les parents de deux fils et quatre filles. Aujourd'hui, ces deux fils, Raymond et Edward, s'occupent de l'entreprise familiale.

Dans une interview publiée dans La Cataracte en 1972, le caractère de M. Bélanger fut résumé par quelques déclarations faites par ce dernier, notamment "J'ai toujours respecté les personnes avec qui j'ai travaillé ... mais je respectais tout le monde. J'ai appris à évaluer un homme par la façon dont il travaillait et vivait et non qui il était ou ce qu'il faisait." Comme conseiller municipal, ces projets favorisés furent la construction d'un foyer de soins, un aéroport municipal et le développement des chutes et de la gorge.



BINGO
Club de Golf
Grand-Sault

Belanger family helped pound out



George Belanger pounds out a good luck charm on his father's anvil. Belanger, along with his father, Lucien and brother Arthur, turned out many horseshoes over the years in their blacksmith shop on Main Street.

By **JOE SULLIVAN**

Many years ago, the ringing sound of a blacksmith's hammer striking a steel horseshoe was a common occurrence. Long before the days of cars and motor mechanics, these were the men who made sure the main staple of travelling, the horse, was in tip top shape for a journey. As common as today's car mechanic, they littered the countryside of early Grand Falls life.

Probably the best known family of blacksmith's were the Belangers. George Belanger of Grand Falls is the last living member of this family.

Lucien Belanger was the patriarch of the family. He was originally born and brought up in Saint Alexander in the province of Quebec. George Belanger said his father went by the initials of J.L. to most who knew him.

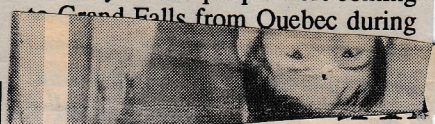
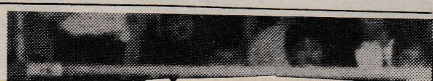
At the age of 14, he went to Green Island, which is located below Riviere-de-Loup. He began here as an apprentice to a blacksmith for a salary of five cents per day. He met his future wife, Linda Gagnon, while working at Green Island. The couple were married when Lucien was 18.

They moved to Fall River, Mass. and Belanger went to work as a blacksmith for a family by the name of Partridge. They remained there for seven years, during which time their three oldest daughters, Alice, Alma, and Stella, were born. They were forced to move back to Quebec when a doctor told Linda she could no longer remain in the cotton factory where she worked. The conditions within did not agree with her health and she was advised to move back to a country setting.

Many French people were coming to Grand Falls from Quebec during

Around 20 people a day would pass through the shop to have their shoes sharpened for the ice races. "These were well-made, fancy shoes, not coarse. They would never come apart," said Guimont. There were two versions of horse- of Grand Falls.

at her. At the sound of his voice, the mare stood still and lifted her hoof in full cooperation. "Arthur wasn't aware of what had happened before so when he saw how the mare stood still he asked me what I had done to her," chuckled



it early history of Grand Falls

blacksmith profession. Counted among these were three of his sons-in-law, Fitzienne Côté, Louis Beaulieu, and Philip Gagnon. They all became blacksmiths in their own right.

The oldest of the Belanger sons was Emile. He left home at the age of 21 with \$10 in his pocket and went to Caribou. He later continued onward to Van Buren where he opened a machine shop. Claude Guimont said Belanger did very well for himself at this establishment. People from

Grand Falls would travel to the Maine community regularly to have machinery serviced. Guimont regarded him as an extremely intelligent person who died a rich man.

When he left home, the eldest son advised two of his younger brothers, George and Arthur, to remain in the business until they were at least 21.

They did better than that, as they worked in their father's shop for 24 years together. Arthur started to shoe horses when he was 13-years-old while George took to the business at 11. George stayed on after Arthur left and eventually turned his eyes to the machine shop trade. In 1939 he opened O & K Enterprises, a company which still does business today in Grand Falls.

RECALLING THE PAST

George Belanger recounted some stories of his days in the blacksmith shop with his brother and father.

"One day at the shop, we shod 42 horses. The next day the number was 40, then the next it was 38," said Belanger. He added they would go straight through the day, without even stopping for dinner.

Another time there was a mare with a reputation for kicking a lot when she was to be shod. George straightened her out one day by flipping her onto her back and doing the job. When the same mare came in again later, it was Arthur who was on hand to apply the shoes to her hooves. The mare was acting up as usual when George came in and bellowed

Belanger.

Guimont said he did not know of another blacksmith shop in this part of the country which measured up to the Belangers.

"His (George's) father taught many people the blacksmith trade."

Between 1916-18, George worked in a lumber camp up in the Allagash. His father was foreman of the 16 men who were employed as blacksmiths to keep all the horses in mint condition for hauling logs. Some of these treks were as long as 60 miles.

60 MILES TO RELIEF

George Belanger once ran the entire 60 miles to get to a dentist. He had a miserable toothache and needed relief as quickly as possible. He said once he arrived at the doctor's office in St. Panfille, he had an additional wait because the physician was not in. When he finally did return, he

quickly pulled the inflamed tooth, charging Belanger 50 cents.

"Most people won't believe I ran the whole 60 miles but I did."

After the quick operation, Belanger went to a hotel to rest for the evening. He ended up staying longer than he had planned as he couldn't move his legs when he awoke the following morning. The long jog had temporarily paralyzed him. He remained in bed for two days before being well enough to return to the camp.

Ice racing was one of the big sports in Grand Falls during the early years of the 20th century. Whenever racers from Maine and New Brunswick communities came to town for competition, they would stop by the Belanger shop to have their horses prepared. Depending on the type of racer, the forms of shoe varied, said Belanger. Trotters had toe weights on their front shoes. This would allow the horse to go faster because on each step they would cover an extra inch

with the added weight up front.

Pacers, on the other hand, had side weights on their back hooves. These were a little heavier and helped prevent the back feet from striking the front while they were running.

shoes for regular working types: the snow shoe and the summer shoe. The summer shoe was the regular form, which was fine for a horse as long as there wasn't snow on the ground. Snow would gather up within the shoe and every once in awhile would be tossed back at the horses driver. The Belangers made a special shoe for winter conditions. The inside was concave, thus not allowing any snow to build up.

Aside from horses, Lucien Belanger would put shoes on bulls and mules. The latter proved especially difficult because their hooves would be thick, hard and narrow. A mule was one animal which would automatically have to be destroyed if it broke a limb. The animal has no marrow in its bones, thus leaving no hope of a break healing.

EAGER TO LEARN

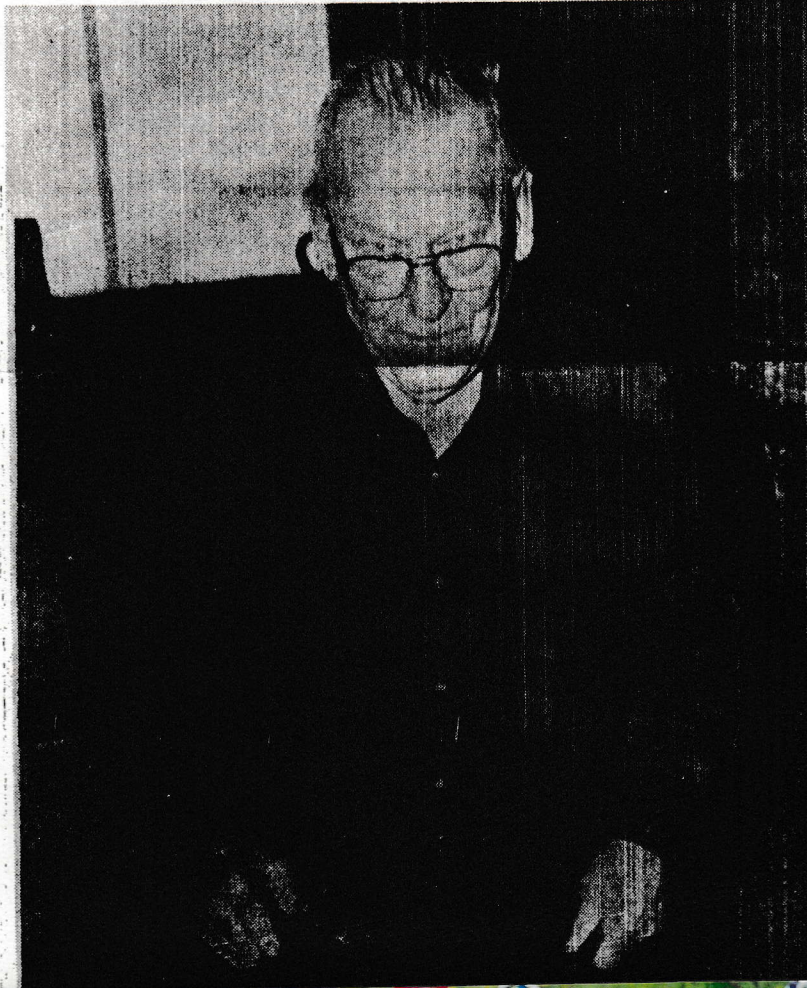
Lucien Belanger was always ready to learn why certain ailments would afflict animals. When a lame horse died, he would cut off the ailing foot and study it, trying to determine why the horse went on the limp in the first place. He would then reshod the foot the right way and tuck the information away for future reference.

Lucien also provided barbers with their implements, making straight razors. He learned this process while working for Mr. Partridge in Fall River, Mass. He would send some of these to Boston until he was stopped for not having a license to do so.

Dollard Belanger, a brother to George, is noted in town for his many contributions. He started off as an electrician, then became a respected town councillor. It was he who originally ordered the trees which decorate Broadway Blvd. The provincial offices building on Broadway now holds the name of the Dollard Belanger Building as a tribute to his contributions.

George himself has become a well-known member of the community. He operated O & K Enterprises until 1979, the sold it. A member of the fire department for 30 years, he has been active in the Knights of Columbus for 52 years. Like the rest of his family, he is originally descended from two

Belanger family helped pound ou



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A family that shaped Grand Falls history...



The family of Lucien and Linda Belanger played a large role in shaping early Grand Falls history. Moving to the area from Quebec at the turn of the century, they developed a blacksmith business which had a large reputation all along the St. John Valley. They shod horses for ice races on both sides of the border. Standing, left to right, are George, Alice, Alma, Gerald, Stella, Arthur, Alexina, Roseanna and Yvonne. Those who are seated include Emile, Lucien, Linda and Dollard.