

## ***Miramichi Leader Weekend, (le 19 juillet 1996, p. 23)***

### **Ceremony on July 23 salutes historic home in Neguac**

by Denise Berthelotte

NEGUAC - A house built in Neguac around the 1800s is finally receiving historical recognition.

La Maison Otto Robichaud was officially recognized by the province, in 1994 as a historical site.

At 1:30 p.m. on July 23, 1996, the unveiling of a commemorative plaque will mark the official recognition of the site. Ceremonies will take place on site. Everyone is welcome.

The site is on Otto Street just behind the Shell service station in Neguac.

After conducting a two year study on the history of the property, Fernand Robichaud, president of the Neguac historical society, calculates the house was built in 1795.

But because the date was based on assumptions based on factual events, the society and the Province agreed the plaque should read around the 1800s.

Neguac historical society and the owner of the house and property are now discussing transferring the site to the society. Edouard Savoie owns the house now.

Both parties have agreed the house should be developed into a tourism attraction.

### **Deported Acadian returns becomes justice of peace**

NEGUAC - A house fit for a justice of the peace is expected to promote tourism in Neguac almost 200 years after it was built.

It was built by Otto Robichaud, who was an Acadian deported by the British in the 1750s.

Otto was from a well-to-do merchant family in Nova Scotia before the 1755 Acadian deportation.

Somehow they managed to continue to prosper after the deportation.

The family settled in Cambridge, outside of Boston when Otto was just a young boy.

As an adult, Otto followed in his father's footsteps. He bought a sail boat and started to build his future as a merchant. In 1776 he followed the loyalists to Quebec city.

He frequented the Miramichi River often to purchase wood, fish and other products. Otto took advantage of the trips to visit a female cousin who lived in Neguac.

When she decided to move to Gaspé, Quebec he bought the land and property she owned in the village and settled there. The concession of property was accepted by the province in 1794.

That same year, Otto was appointed justice of the peace.

For this reason it is believed he must have built a second house shortly after. It was much larger than the first and was intended to accommodate the needs of a man of this power.

In 1799, he was appointed militia captain of a local company. "He was a man of many titles," said Fernand Robichaud, president of the Neguac historical Society

Robichaud conducted a two year indepth study on the origin of the house to present his findings to province so the house would be declared a historical site.

The declaration was made by the province in 1994.

Robichaud said Otto was a man of power with many contacts and highly respected within the community.

"He was heavily involved in politics as well as social and religious events."

He was said to be well acquainted with Edward Winslow, a prominent political figure in Fredericton at the time. The two met in Boston.

Otto Robichaud married Marie-Louise Thibodeau from Bay du Vin in 1789. They had 12 children.

Their eldest was a daughter, Adelaide. Louis was the eldest of their sons. He continued in his father's footsteps. Then came Marguerite, Marie Jeanne, Otto, Monique, Olivier Vénéralte, Esther, Geneviève and Suzanne.

Ironically, five of Otto's children (Adelaide, Louis, Marguerite, Marie Jeanne and Monique) went on to marry five children of a Caraquet man named Joseph Poirier.

Six generations after Otho Robichaud's house was built, it is still in the family.

Otto's eldest son, Louis, was the first to inherit the house. He then left it to his son, Agapit.

Agapit left it to his niece's (an Allain and daughter of one of Otto's children), husband, Agapit Godin who left it to his son Azade Godin.

Azade left it to his adopted son Zoel Godin who sold it to his uncle, and present owner of the house, Edouard Savoie.

## **Book launching**

A book describing the life of Otto Robichaud will also be launched during the official unveiling of the historical plaque on la Maison Otto Robichaud on July 23 at 1:30 p.m. The author, Maurice Basque, is a historian at Université de Moncton. The book is called *Hommes de Pouvoirs*.