



DURAND HERITAGE FOUNDATION

Dedicated to the Preservation of our Family Heritage

BULLETIN #1

JANUARY 1, 2026



UPDATES

John Durand Scholarship Program

Application criteria and deadline information for the John Durand Scholarship Program are now available for the 2026-2027 school year. Click on the "2026-2027 Scholarship" button on the Durand Foundation website home page for more information.

Board Activity

The 2025 annual meeting was held on Oct 25. Meeting minutes are posted under the "About" banner item on the DHF website. Look for "Board Minutes".

Subscriber Legacy Library

The library has been expanded and access unrestricted. Library items can be viewed but not edited. A "Card Catalog" needs to be developed. Any volunteers? Access the Legacy Library under the "About" banner item on the DHF website.

Family Tree Online

Updates to the DHF online family tree will be suspended while a merge with Canadian Jean Durand descendants occurs through the winter and spring. Updates to the tree will continue but will not be posted until the merger occurs. The April 2026 Bulletin will explain the project's beginnings and significance.

FEATURES

"The Year is 2026....." by John Durand

Cousin John left us in September 2020. In 2006, one year into his tenure as DHF Chairman, he wrote a Winter 2006 article prophesizing how our next year will appear. Read it and see if he is talking to you today. Write down your thoughts and send them to us at info@durandfoundation.com.

Msgr. Arthur H. Durand Survey Project

A query to the DHF by Linda Morelan Manke last summer triggered an expanding project about the early pioneer days of our Durand ancestors and cousins as they spent their early years in the Faribault, Rice County, MN area. Read about this project beginning on page XXX.

Willard Edmund Durand by Janet Durand Schultz

Spring 1999 Newsletter reprint

WE REMEMBER

Obituaries:

Jacqueline "Jackie" Durand Delany Mestad Backer (October 30, 1941 - October 12, 2025)

Rose Marie Durand Wong (August 8, 1940 - September 8, 2025)

The Year is 2026 ...

by John Durand

The year is 2026. Stuart, my newest grandson, is 20 years old, but I am dead and gone.

Indeed, almost everyone who helped start the Durand Heritage Foundation back in 1998 is but a memory. But the DHF? It's still going strong!

The newsletter has been in publication for almost thirty years, and those who inherited a collection of the early issues consider each one a treasure, no matter how crude an effort.

In northern Wisconsin the DHF owns a small building, the Durand Heritage Center. The Center houses a fire-proof archives room where visitors can view family artifacts – photos, manuscripts, family albums, tools, even homemade clothes. Volunteers keep the Center going during the summer months. My grandchildren have visited the Center many times, and from what he learned there my grandson Ellis even wrote a school paper about his pioneering great-grandpa (and got an A!)

Because family manuscripts and documents continue to turn up, be printed, or converted into electronic media, the inventory of family-related publications for sale through the Durand Heritage Center has grown from 5 items to 23.

The DHF genealogy contains almost 17,000 records. My grandchildren can trace their Durand ancestry back fourteen generations. When they were younger they used to make fun of some of the old-fashioned names.

But in 2026 the DHF is not just about old-timey stuff. Several years ago my granddaughter Giselle spent two weeks of her summer break living with a Durand family in rural Quebec. Her experience was part of an exchange program arranged through the DHF. That same summer the host family's daughter lived for two weeks in Minneapolis with Giselle. They both loved their experience, and as adults continue to exchange occasional visits. I wish I

could hear them chatter in their curious mixture of French and English.

In 2026 the DHF Scholarship fund has grown to over \$200,000. It awards several \$2,500 scholarships each year. Since its small beginning with the first JohnnyRide in 2004, the DHF scholarship fund has boosted the educational aspirations of almost 100 young people. Of course, the annual JohnnyRides are but a dim memory, but through gifts and bequests to the DHF scholarship Fund (including a couple generous ones from scholarship recipients) the fund continues to grow.¹

Poppycrack!

Is this all poppycock? Absolutely... if you think the DHF is but a passing fancy.

There seem to be three basic views of the DHF and its work:

1. One view, perhaps by the majority, is that the DHF is a nice little enterprise for the time being, but it will wither and die when its aging founders wither and die, so let's just sit back and enjoy its benefits while we can. After all, it costs only twenty-five bucks a year to keep it on life support.

2. Another view is that the DHF seems like a good idea, but the board tries to be too big for its britches. Why do we need a fancy newsletter and a website and all that other stuff? We can't afford to be so grandiose. Cut back on that stuff so you're not always asking for money.

3. The third view, shared by just a few, sees the DHF as a long-term enterprise that will strengthen and grow with the passing years. That is why those few have willingly donated untold hours and coped with considerable stress to build a solid footing for the Foundation to grow on.

I count myself among those few.

We may fail, of course. The DHF may wither and die. We may someday be no more than a handful of fading, misplaced newsletters and a printed genealogy that was out of date as soon as it was published back in 2004.

A Legacy Fund

But if we few fail it won't be for lack of trying. That is why the DHF board of directors is re-visiting the idea to establish a special fund to help the foundation stay alive.

Like the scholarship fund, this

new fund will be invested to grow and provide income. Donations will be tax-deductible and no personal benefit will accrue to anyone connected with the DHF. The principal will stay intact. Income from the fund will be used only to forward DHF projects, i.e. bringing out new publications, securing a place for our family artifacts, converting more documents to electronic media, etc.

Why do we need a Legacy Fund? There are several reasons:

1. Membership dues provide barely enough income to produce the newsletter and maintain the website. If we want to produce a cookbook or other publication, someone on the board has to front the money and hope to get reimbursed. It's the same with everything else. That situation simply isn't fair to those who already commit so much time and energy to the DHF.

2. Suppose someone asks, "Say I want to leave some money to the DHF... how will you handle it?" Frankly, we don't have a good answer to that right now.

3. We're reaching the time when people like me are making provision to leave a bequest to the DHF. We want it to be a legal, tax-deductible transaction, and we want to be sure it isn't frittered away.

Now what?

The DHF board of directors is reviewing a set of by-laws for this new Legacy Fund. Whether we proceed to establish this fund depends in large part on feedback from you. If you want to see these draft bylaws, let me know and I'll send you a copy.

If you don't care about the bylaws but do want to see the DHF around in 2026, and think we might need something like a Legacy Fund in place to keep it going, let me know... a note, an e-mail, a phone call. I probably won't be around to see a flourishing DHF, then, but I along with the rest of the board will help to ensure that it's still alive and well. ♣

¹ A slightly worn JohnnyRide tee shirt from 2004 recently sold on eBay for \$152. In 2006 these shirts were offered at a Durand family reunion for \$5, but few bought them.



St. John's Catholic Church 1960 1st communion class with Msgr. Durand, center front, and Linda Manke, row 3. Read the Manke article below and see if you can pick her out.

Linda Ann (Morelan) Manke (see above) submitted a letter, which follows, to the Durand Heritage Foundation (DHF) and is allowing us to print it in our monthly bulletin. I don't remember my first communion, but she remembers hers.

A bit of history regarding the letter:

Linda contacted the DHF in early June. She was searching for a copy of Msgr. Arthur H. Durand's 1978 autobiography. Early in her search she was unable to find a copy in the Little Canada area. She did manage to locate copies at the University of St. Thomas and the Minnesota Historical Society libraries, but these two sources were not easily accessible to her. She continued her search which led to the DHF perhaps because Msgr. Durand's autobiography extracts have been feature articles in at least three or four DHF newsletters written by our Msgr. Durand expert, Ed Durand.

I received her inquiry addressed to info@durandfoundation.com. I knew I had a copy of the original autobiography but didn't realize that I had two other xeroxed copies. (My parents loved to go to auctions in the Faribault area and knew that I love local history books, so my bookshelves are loaded with many of their "finds".) When I contacted Linda, she offered to purchase one of the copies. I told her I'd give her a copy if she would pen an article explaining why a non-Durand relative would be interested in Msgr. Durand's autobiography written almost forty years ago. She agreed and my wife Carol and I met Linda for coffee and gave her a copy.

We learned that Linda had been a student at the St. John's Catholic school in Little Canada. Msgr. Durand was pastor there for over 30 years and Linda remembers several aspects of his pastoral duties related to the growing church and the parochial school. He also gave weekly catechism instructions to the students in the school.

She had many fond memories of Msgr. Durand in and out of class and recounted a number of them to Carol and me. Not one negative story!

Linda's description of Msgr. Durand was a bit different than those heard over the years. Most of the "off the cuff" stories told to me from firsthand acquaintances suggested that he might have been a rather stubborn man when dealing with subordinates and church hierarchy. Indeed, his own autobiography highlighted friction with the teaching nuns and the archbishop regarding a number of management issues. He was NOT a fan of the ecumenical movement occurring during the 60's and 70's.

After listening to Linda's stories, we said our goodbyes, and I reminded her that the "payment" for the autobiography copy was an article for the newsletter.

On the drive home, I remarked to Carol about how similar her description of Msgr. Durand was to that of a Mr. Ron Eustice when I met him in 1996. Years before, Ron had been researching his Perron family roots in the Faribault area when he learned of a historical survey by Msgr. Durand of French speaking Sacred Heart Catholic Church parishioners just before he was assigned to St. John's in Little Canada in 1940. Ron visited Msgr. Durand in a nursing home shortly before Durand's death in 1986.

Once I read Linda's article, I vowed to try and contact Ron and share Linda's touching story. I was successful and the results of that meeting will be one of the "Features" of the April 1 2026 DHF Bulletin.

Linda's article follows.

Roger Durand

**MY MEMORIES OF MONSIGNOR ARTHUR H. DURAND
BY LINDA ANN (MORELAN) MANKE**

Email: sacajo7@aol.com

DATED JULY 2025

I was asked by the Durand Foundation to share my memories of Msgr. Durand to be added to their historical records for posterity purposes.

My parents lived in Faribault, Minnesota prior to my birth. They knew Father Durand during their time there. Father Durand moved to St. John the Evangelist Parish of Little Canada in the 1940's. My parents moved to Little Canada, Minnesota in 1950 and I was born two years later.

Most of my memories of him began when I started grade school in 1958. I attended St. John's Parish School, which was located on the church's property. I'm not sure when the honorific title of Monsignor was bestowed on him by the archbishop, but that's the only title that I ever knew him by.

Monsignor Durand was a very formidable force in the church and the school. Many of my fellow students were fearful and apprehensive around him. His voice "thundered" when he spoke passionately about something or if he was angry. I didn't share those feelings. To me, he was a man for whom I had deep respect. I honestly thought he was the holiest man on earth, outside of the Pope. His commitment to the Catholic faith and his moral compass were beyond reproach. He never wavered on them, even if someone challenged him. He was a very decisive, outspoken person, especially when it came to matters of faith. Many of his sermons were filled with "fire and brimstone". He had my complete attention when he preached, and I always learned something from listening to him.

My earliest memory of life was when I was four years old and I met my little brother for the first time. I can still picture my parents coming through the back door and into the kitchen with my mom holding a blanket in her arms. I asked her where the baby was, and she bent down to unwrap the blanket and show him to me. I was mesmerized by this little being.

My first memory of Msgr. Durand was at that same brother's baptism. Again, I can picture lots of people surrounding the baptismal font in the room off to the side of the church's main entrance. Relatives had come from Faribault, MN to serve as his godparents. Next, I remember everything being put on pause, and the happy occasion

had turned into all the adults being upset. I had no idea what had happened until my mother told me the story years later.

My parents had wanted to name my brother Merle Kenneth, after my father. Monsignor Durand told them that could not happen. They could only choose the name of a known saint, and he said there was no St. Merle or St. Kenneth. Eventually, they settled on Merle Steven. Monsignor allowed that because there was a St. Stephen. He acquiesced to the different spelling.

My older brother said something like this happened to another Little Canada couple he knew. They wanted to name their daughter Kimberly. Monsignor was dead set against it for a while, but the parents eventually got their way. Monsignor said the name sounded like a "town in Wisconsin." I'm sure there were many other families at St. John's who have similar baptismal stories to tell.

The next personal memory I have of Msgr. Durand was from second grade. I had made my First Communion, and we were gathered in the school gym for a group photo with Msgr. Durand. Unfortunately, I woke up with a stiff neck that day and I could only hold my head at about a 45-degree angle. I was positioned in the center of the third row for the photograph. The nuns were determined to have me not ruin the picture. Two of them were pushing my head, trying to get it upright. This went on for several minutes, and I became more embarrassed by the minute. Finally, Msgr. Durand turned around and spoke in his thundering voice and said, "Leave her alone, her head is just fine. Take the picture!" So that's what they did, and I became immortalized as the only person in the photo with a noticeable head tilt. I kept that photo attached to my bedroom mirror all through grade school. I felt vindicated that day and my respect for Msgr. Durand grew every time I looked at the photo.

I remember a story my dad told me long ago. He had gone to confession and after Msgr. heard his confession and gave him his penance, he said "Merle, turn out the lights on your way out. My dad thought it was so funny that Msgr. broke protocol while in the confessional booth and he retold this story countless times. My parents said this was not an unusual circumstance. If he knew the voice or recognized you as you were coming in (he always kept his curtain slightly open), he addressed you by name. When St. John's Church began offering open confessions where you sat across from the priest, my dad said it was no different than when your confession was heard by the Monsignor.

Msgr. Durand always looked so imposing in his black cassock. He wore it everywhere and I never saw him in anything else. My fellow students used to make fun of him

wearing a dress and they traded ideas about what he might have underneath it. A common guess was either his underwear or nothing at all. Knowing how religious he was, I did not buy into those theories, but of course, one had to wonder.

Another standout memory for me was the day John F. Kennedy was shot. It was a Friday, and we were in Catechism class with Msgr. Durand. The principal of our school came over the loudspeaker around 1:00 pm and announced that the President had been shot. I can still see the image in my head of Msgr. immediately putting his head down, clearly shaken, while he said a prayer out loud. All of us were completely silent and it was obvious even to me, an 11-year-old sixth grader, that something BIG had happened. Monsignor sent us back to class and about 30 minutes later, we were told that the President had died. School was immediately dismissed, and I went home to watch my parents' horrified reaction to the news and to see Lyndon Johnson sworn in as the next President. The family was glued to the television that entire weekend and we saw, in real time, when Jack Ruby assassinated Lee Harvey Oswald two days later. That entire tragedy was etched in stone in my memory.

While preparing this document, I asked my younger brother, Steve, if he had any memories of Monsignor Durand that he wanted to share. Below is what he sent me:

I have lots of memories (mostly unpleasant) of Msgr. Durand. I remember being in his Religion class and using the Baltimore Catechism. We had to memorize the answers to the questions. Msgr. demanded that we study 20 minutes every other night and an hour on Sundays for review. Of course, I didn't do that and when I answered the questions incorrectly, I was "invited" to the rectory for "cake and ice cream" after school. There was no cake or ice cream, just study time one-on-one with Msgr.

Another time he caught a group of us throwing rocks at the school bell mounted high on the outside of the building. He chewed us out and called us "bell busters". I ended up winning that one though - when they demolished the old school, I took the bell from the rubble pile. I eventually gave it to the Little Canada Historical Society.

I also have many memories of being an altar boy with John Pojar and Kelvin Poehls. We were constantly getting into trouble. Msgr. called us the 'Unholy Trio'.

Monsignor Durand left St. John's Church in the early 1970's. He had baptized me, heard my First Confession, gave me my First Communion, and Confirmed me. I was married at the church in May 1975. I was disappointed that he wasn't there to officiate my wedding. It would have meant a lot to me to have had him there for all five of the Sacraments I've received thus far.

Willard Edmund Durand

by Janet Durand Schultz
January 1995

Willard Edmund Durand was born in Ross, North Dakota on February 14, 1909 (a Valentine baby). He was baptized March 6, 1909 at St Joseph's Catholic Church, Stanley ND by Reverend A.J. Arenault. The family moved to Minnesota when Willard was four years old. He attended school in Nary through eighth grade.

Life went along pretty typically on the farm. Willard recalled his father making a weekly trip to town - apparently for supplies and to sell produce grown on the farm. Upon his return, George would bring a five cent bag of peanuts for all the kids to share as their weekly treat. On one trip, George brought home a radio (probably battery operated as there was no electricity). He had traded a bushel of apples for the radio. Both parents knew how to knit

and spent evenings doing so. His mother would sooner knit a pair of socks than wash them out.

Willard always spoke fondly of his mother. Eleanor certainly worked hard. She was firm with discipline but always fair and kind. If the boys fought too much, she would make them kiss and make up. When Willard had port of a finger cut off, Eleanor cared for it. It was never infected. Even though George was a hard worker, he had to sell the farm after Eleanor and the boys left him.

Willard's finger was cut off while Gilbert was chopping wood. Willard and Walter were sitting on the wood pile messing around when Willard lost his balance. He fell with his hand on the chopping block--bad timing. They looked and looked but never found the finger. Hair was a particular problem. The boys didn't get their first



Figure 39. Willard Durand in 1950.



Figure 40. Willard (3 yrs) and Walter (16 months).

hair cut until they went to school. Willard related having his head on his mothers lap every night before bedtime so she could brush his hair.

The kids had to work on the farm, but had fun too. Willard talked about playing leap frog over the buck sheep. Willard didn't remember too much for toys but they did have a ball and bat to play with. It appears each of the boys had a horse of their own. Willard's horse was named "Babe".

Willard's first job away from home was at a logging camp in northern Minnesota. The men spent the entire winter there. In the spring, when Willard returned to the farm, George took his entire winters wages.

Willard wanted something from his winters work so he got a pair of long johns and an old suitcase. George had also sold Willard's horse and kept that money also. Obviously, this didn't sit too well. Willard spent another winter at the logging camp. The following spring he went to Duluth.

Willard met Louise Sande at the Duluth zoo. They were married on September 12, 1932. They lived in Willard's apartment for a very short time, then bought a house at 605 Lake Ave. They moved to 4359 LaYaque Rd. in January 1938. The area is called the "Jackson Project" in Hermantown. At the time friends thought they were crazy for moving "way out there" seven miles from downtown Duluth.

Willard and Louise had three children. Willard Jr. (Buddy) born June 12, 1935. Buddy was killed in a car accident September 19, 1954. Mark Allen was born November 6, 1945 and Janet Louise on September 28, 1947.



Figure 41. Willard on horse in Bemidji.

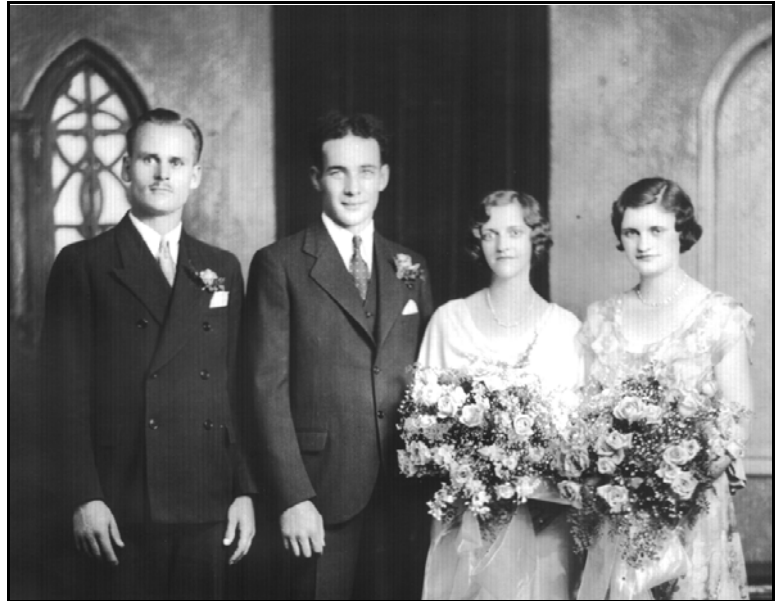


Figure 42. Wedding Day, September 12, 1932.

There was a two year period during WW II when Willard worked for Duluth Iron and Marine. He worked as a machinist building a boat named "Corvette". Because of its speed, heavy build, and maneuverability, the boat acted as a mine sweeper, submarine killer, and also drew enemy fire away from the larger ships.

Other than the two years mentioned above, Willard worked for Marshall-Wells Co. He started with them in 1932 and worked there until its closing in 1959. This was the largest hardware wholesale company in the world at that time. Willard worked at numerous jobs within the company, finally becoming the General Manager. The company was bought out by Kelly-Hau-Thompson and closed. This put four hundred people out of work. It was hard for Willard to leave his friends and job that he had always thought was so secure. He and three friends played cards at lunch every day for 27 years.

The family moved to the twin cities in June of 1959. They lived for a year at 2949 Manson Drive in St Anthony. They then sold the house to buy a hardware store. The store was located at 5301 Chicago Ave., Minneapolis. The building has since burned down. They then lived at 5533 W 107th St. Bloomington. Because you couldn't really expand the store but business was growing, they pulled up stakes and moved to Mankato. They put in a brand new store in the new Hilltop Shopping Center. They then lived in Lake Crystal, MN.

Although Willard had a life-long experience in hardware, he could see there must be an easier and more lucrative way to make a living. In 1969, he found a laundromat-dry cleaner for sale in Chippewa Falls Wisconsin. Another move. This was a good move for them. He was able to semi-retire but still have a job a few hours a day. They were making a good living from the business. Willard was able to buy a few of his beloved horses. He owned several Welsh ponies.

They owned this business at the time of Willards death on April 17, 1975.



Figure 43. Willard and Louise Sande Durand.

Durand Heritage Foundation Newsletter

Dedicated to the Preservation of our French Canadian Heritage

Spring Edition, 1999



Adelard Durand, 1st Army Hdqts. Regt., Hdqts. Co.
Taken near Bordeaux, France 1918

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My Father, in France

By John Durand

My father, Adelard Durand (1888-1957), was the only member of Pierre and Louise Durand's family to serve in France in the Great War, known later as World War I. Why he enlisted at the age of twenty-nine I don't know, but in 1917 he joined more than a hundred other young men from the Spooner area to form Company E of northern Wisconsin's 6th Regiment.

After the fighting ended with the Armistice of November 11, 1918, he traveled in France for almost two weeks, but didn't seek out the birthplace of our French ancestor, Jean Durand. Although Jean Durand's birthplace, Doeil-sur-led-Mignon, is situated within a hundred miles of Bordeaux, where my father was stationed at the time, I suspect he wasn't aware of Doeil's significance to the American Durands. My father actually considered our family roots to be French-Canadian rather than French. Indeed, the Durands paid scant attention to our French connection until Beatrice Derrick (1907-1980), my father's sister, began her genealogical research some thirty years later.



Nonetheless, my father's pictures and letters and postcards and other memorabilia from France, his newspaper clippings concerning the war, and especially his brief diary, are treasured by our family, and reveal a man much taken with the land of his forebears. These wartime artifacts helped me to reconstruct his time in France that so helped shape the rest of his life.

Beatrice Derrick's *Great Scott!* tells how several men from the neighborhood of Pierre and Louise's farm, my father included, walked to Grantsburg, (a distance of about 40 miles), to enlist in Spooner's Company E. Mustered into service in early August, he and a half-dozen friends and acquaintances left Spooner with the company for processing in Camp Douglas on August 23, 1917. After passing his physical (which was something of a test in itself, because some 20% of America's inductees were found unfit for service, while another 20% were considered barely acceptable), he headed for boot camp in Texas in late September on the first of four special trains that left Camp Douglas that week carrying Wisconsin's regiments. I suspect that he returned home for a brief visit before leaving Camp Douglas, because he received a pass from "Retreat" on the 17th of September to "Reveille" on the 21st, time enough to get home by train for a final farewell.

On the train ride to Texas he took note in his diary of the farms and land, and at one point noted that "if they offered me the whole state of Arkansas for my little farm, I would still say, "no, give me my little farm in Wisconsin"

Such passages from my father's diary and letters require a little explanation.

He was not well-schooled. As a boy he completed only four grades in the newly organized one room Gaslyn school near the Durand farm before he quit to help his parents full-time. Moreover, as French was his first language, he spoke English with an accent. In his writing, which was a slow and almost painful process, he often spelled phonetically. Thus his diary is sometimes difficult to decipher. For example, in describing boot camp he wrote: "...we were shouting at a rage of 500 yard we head quite a a time ther 2 or 3 solder kill in the trashes by actices." For readability I would render this passage as: "We were shooting at a range of 500 yards and had quite a time, with two or three soldiers killed in the trenches by accident." I've taken such liber-

ties in drawing on his diary.

Besides his diary, my father wrote four letters to his parents from his first days in France that appeared in the *Spooner Advocate*, which almost every week published letters from men in service. I assume that one of my father's brothers or sisters cleaned up his correspondence for submission to the *Advocate*, but I've also re-worked his letters for clarity.

During his four months training at Camp McArthur near Waco, my father's company was broken up and the men assigned to other units, his new assignment being the 107th Engineers, which included many other men from the Spooner area. Besides the usual drilling and target-practice, his training included gas mask drills and a two-day, 74-mile march with full pack and weapon—some 50 pounds of gear. And a lot of trench-digging, for the war in Europe had bogged down into trench warfare. Armies in stalemate hammered away with artillery and fruitless assaults “over the top.” Thousands died every day for the gain of a few yards, or just to maintain their hold on an entanglement of barb wire trench lines that stretched across the face of Europe from the North Sea to Switzerland. Since the war's beginning in 1914, France had lost more than a million men killed. The American Expeditionary Force, or AEF, as the American contribution was called, would enter a maelstrom of destruction.

Just a few hours before the 107th was scheduled to leave boot camp, my father was transferred to another unit. Fortunately so. Word flashed back to Spooner in February, 1918 that a ship carrying many men of the 107th, the *Tuscania*, had either hit a mine or was torpedoed off the coast of Ireland with loss of life. Luckily, the dead did not include any Spooner men.

Off to War!

My father's new unit would become the Headquarters Company of the 1st Army Headquarters Regiment. This was the regiment he would serve with in France as part of Wisconsin's 32nd Division, first as a cook, later as a military policeman. After leaving Texas and undergoing further training in North Carolina, he sailed from New York and disembarked at St Nazaire, France on April 14 after an uneventful voyage aboard the *Antigone*. From Rest Camp #4 near St Nazaire, he wrote in his first letter to appear in the *Advocate*:

“Well, this is a fine country. The grass is about 6 inches high and everything looks green. It's very pretty to look over the countryside. It's nothing but a big garden.

“We see a lot of French girls and women all over in the camps, and we speak French with them. They're very glad to see that we can speak French.”

“I am still cooking here [just as I cooked] all the way across the sea on the steamboat. We had a nice trip. I don't believe we could have had a nicer one. I was not sick a bit.”

He described the landscape in more detail: “The soil here is mostly all clay and heavy land. It is a good country, only three or four acres of land to a farm. The farms are like gardens in Wisconsin, and they have a lot of fruit trees all over, along the roads and wherever they can find room for a tree. The buildings are mostly all stone and brick...”

After a week or so at St. Nazaire, his unit was transferred to a big training camp near Bordeaux, Camp #1.

My father was a devout man. He attended Catholic mass faithfully, and had great respect for the institutions of the Church. I remember him once encouraging me to learn Latin, because if I ever got in trouble anywhere in the world I'd be able to speak to a priest in Latin. Thus, it's not surprising that as a keepsake from this period he brought back a pass that had permitted him to attend mass in Bordeaux, then a city of some 400,000. One of the pictures that later hung in our house was a photograph of the Cathedral in Bordeaux, which I'm sure was the largest and most ornate church he'd ever seen.

In June he wrote another letter that appeared in the *Advocate*.

“I am cooking all the time every other day, so I am not working very hard, only the day that I cook. I do all the cooking, but I have three helpers who help after breakfast, and they do most all the heavy work.”

"I think the country agrees with me. I weigh 190 and I weighed only 154 last summer, so I think Army life is good for me. I will have my picture taken soon. I wish you would have some pictures taken of you all on the farm and send them to me. I have some little girls here who'd like to see a picture of a farm in the States. I'm going to have some of their pictures soon, and will send them to you. The girls come and see me every day in the kitchen, and on Wednesday and Friday nights I go out to their home and go to the evening prayer at the church, about 1.5 miles away...."

"The people think a lot of the American soldiers here, and they are very kind to us. I have an old lady who brings a big bunch of flowers to the kitchen every day.

"Every farmer has a big flower garden, and every time we go to see them, we have to take a drink of wine, and then they go out and pick us a fine bouquet of flowers. I never was treated any better than I am here, so far from home."

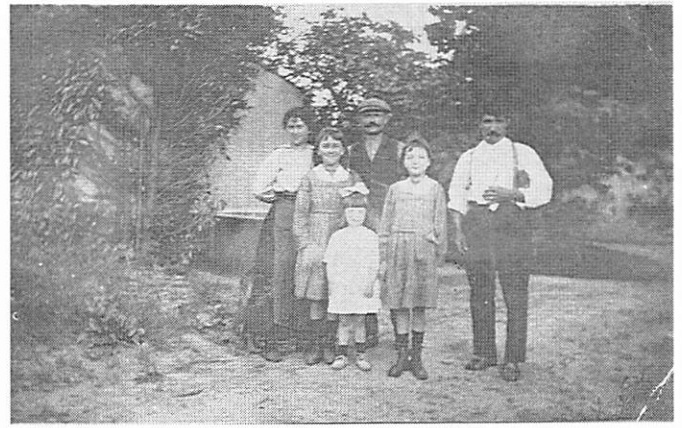
A week later he wrote again on a Sunday evening to describe how he'd spent the early part of the day attending Mass at a church "they call St Mary, just a little ways from our camp. It is a nice little church, but it is very old—about 200 years. It's been repaired several times, but the inside is beautiful."

After lunch that day he was taken by truck with other soldiers to watch a baseball game in a nearby town, probably a game between different Army units put on as a goodwill gesture for the locals. "There were a lot of French people there, and they had some games of their own, and also races, but the Americans were best in running and jumping...Afterwards the Frenchmen came over and shook hands and said that the Americans were the best men. We didn't tell them that our boys were the best we had at those games...."

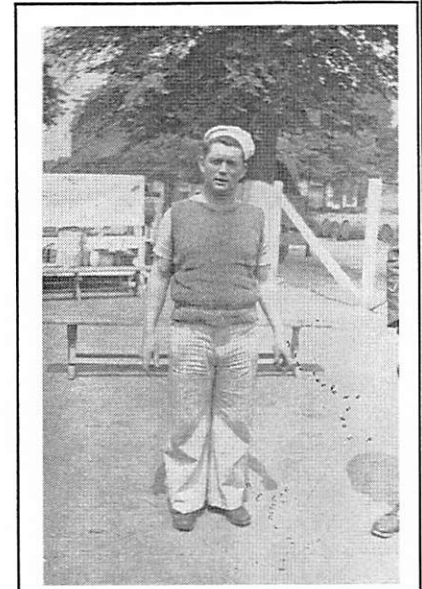
His final letter is so upbeat that I want to see it as dripping with irony. But I don't think it is. I believe he was genuinely happy. In truth, after his arrival in France he seemed a little in awe of what his military experience had brought to his life. With the exception of his first years of childhood in St. Paul, he'd known only a life mostly of farming, and pioneer farming at that. I assume that he'd spent time in the Twin Cities area visiting relatives, but not much. Perhaps, as he and some of his brothers did later, he'd traveled to North Dakota to work the wheat harvests. For a brief time he'd also worked as a brakeman on the railroad in Spooner, but I doubt that his train work took him very far from home. Thus, when he listed in his diary the eighteen states he'd crossed from Wisconsin to Texas to New York, and when he reflected in France that he was 7,000 miles from home, I can almost see the wonderment in his eyes. Only America's mobilization for war could have given him such opportunities for travel.

Like two of the other letters, this final letter is datelined "Somewhere in France," although we know that he was still stationed near Bordeaux, perhaps near present-day Camp de Souge, where the Americans were making final preparations to join a major action in the war. On July 8 he wrote:

"I'm in the very best of health. I don't think I could get any fatter. I weighed 189 pounds on July 4th. I think I will stay in the army after this if I only know enough to sign up for another war. I think there is nothing like army life. It's the only life I ever really enjoyed. We don't have to worry where the next meal is coming from, for we have someone to look after that. We have plenty of room on the ground to put our blankets, and we always have the moon and stars to keep shelter over us. So what more do we want? If the sun gets too warm in the day we can always find a barb-wire fence to furnish shade."



Picture— French Family near Bordeaux, France
"Little girls" that came to visit, and, where
Adelard would go to visit the family



The Minnesota and Wisconsin French Connection Revisited

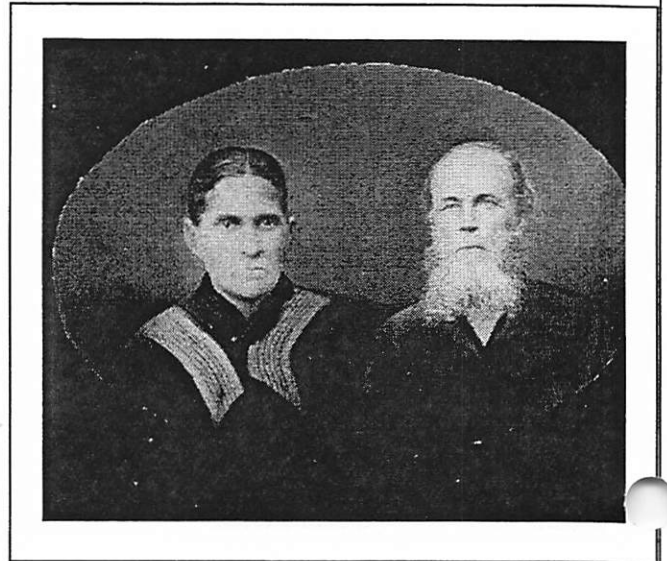
By Roger Durand

JOSEPH DURAND (1770-1835), ELIZABETH VADNAIS, and LOUISE SARRAZIN

Joseph Durand was born in 1770 at Berthier, Quebec and died in 1835 at St. Cuthbert, Quebec. Joseph is the first common Durand ancestor to the majority of the Minnesota and Wisconsin Durand families. His first wife was Marie Elizabeth Vadnais. They were married in 1793 in St. Cuthbert and they had seven children. After Elizabeth died, Joseph married Louise Sarrazin in 1805 at St. Cuthbert, Quebec. Louise and Joseph had fifteen children which made Joseph the father of twenty-two children! Joseph was a farmer and his farm remained in the family for many generations.

Jean-Baptiste Durand, ancestor to most of the Minnesota Durand families.

Three of Joseph and Louise Sarrazin's grandchildren, children of their son **Jean-Baptiste Durand**, immigrated to Faribault, MN. Nazaire, (right) Joseph, and Eugenie Durand Champagne all lived in Faribault and started their families there. Their sister, Euphemie Durand, married a Charpentier and their children also moved to the Minnesota area.



See p4 summary 99.11 Nazaire
Picture-Nazaire and Leocadie (Berneche) Durand are Great Grandparents to many of the MN Durands, immigrated to Faribault MN from Canada in the 1860's and settled in Cannon City, just to the northeast of Faribault. They had 11 children. Marie Archilie (Sarah), Joseph Albert, Mary Clara and Marie Rosanna (Rose), Joseph Patircuis, Joseph George, Mary Elizabeth, Mary Jenevieve (Jennie), Joseph Nazaire, and Alfred Frederic.

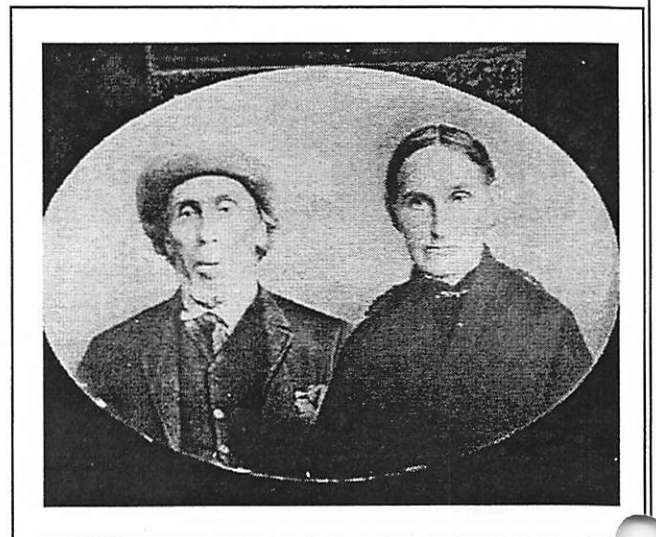
Francois Durand, ancestor to most of the Wisconsin Durand families.

Three of Joseph and Elizabeth Vadnais grandchildren, children of their son **Francois**, also emigrated to the Faribault area (Pierre, (see picture below) Felix, and Olivia Durand Thibodeau).

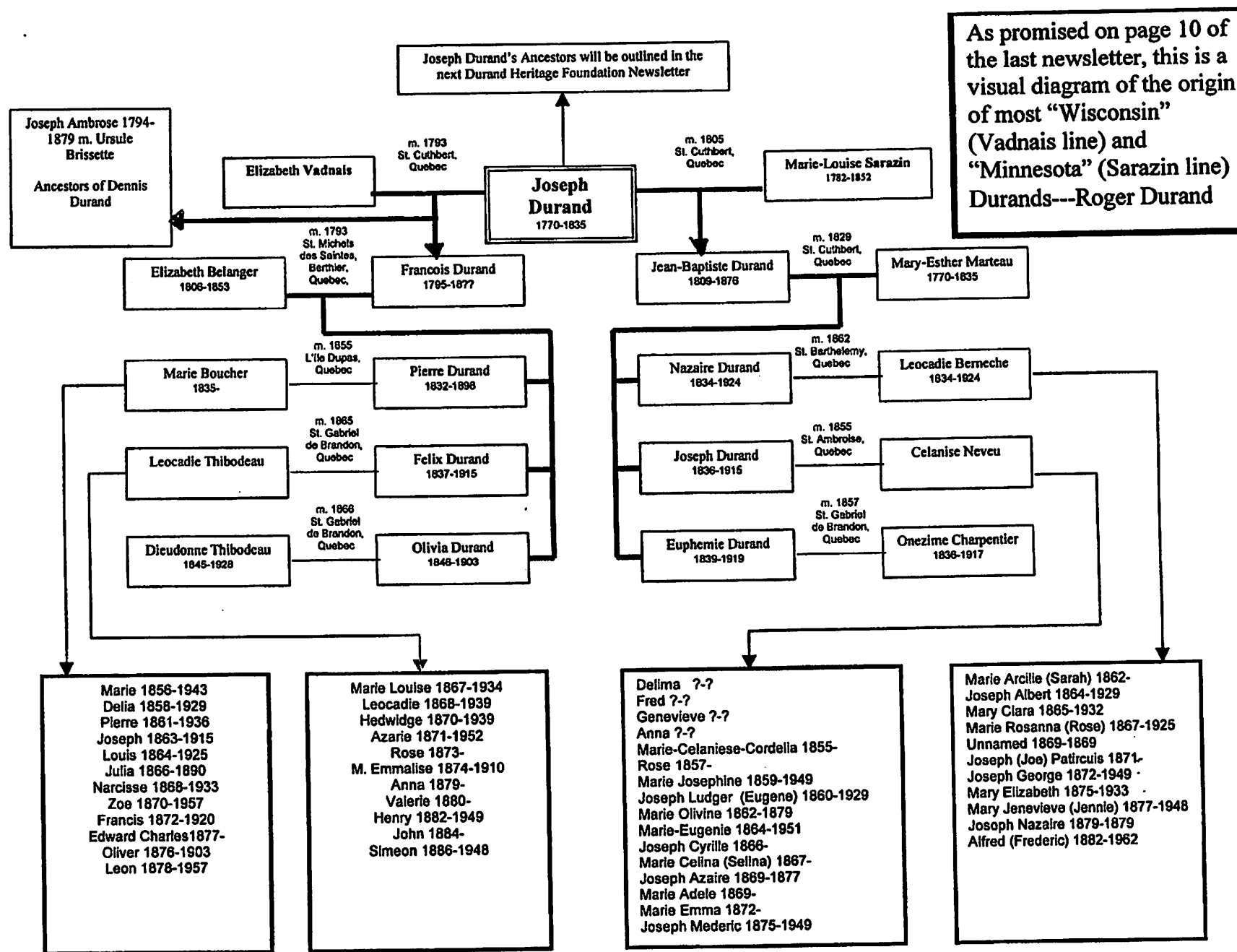
Picture- Pierre and Marie (Boucher) Durand, Great Grandparents to most of the Wisconsin Durands.

Also immigrated to Faribault MN from Canada, and later moved to Turtle Lake, WI where they died.

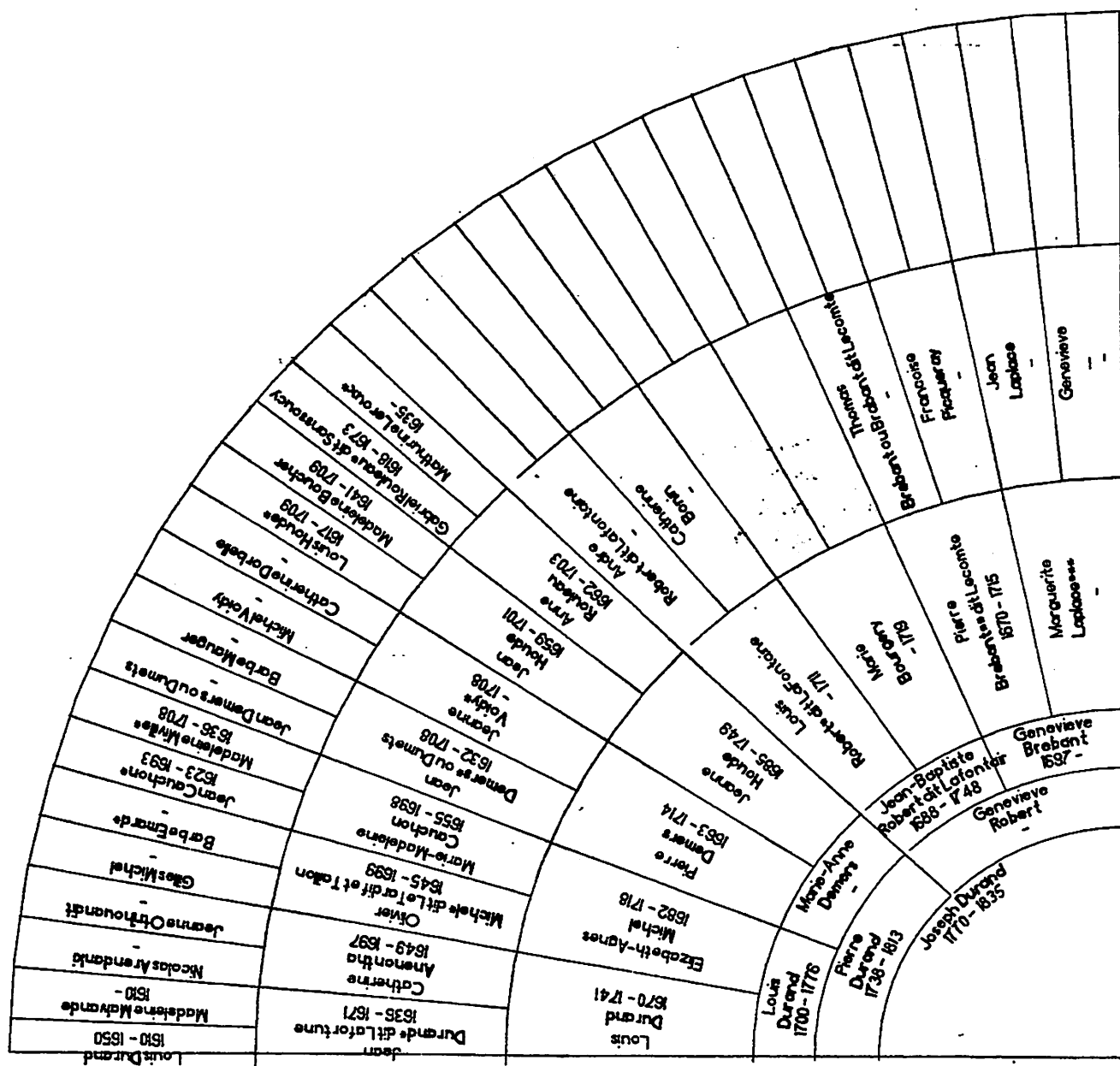
They had 12 children including Pierre Durand, Grandfather to the Spooner WI families. Their children were all born in Canada, their names are; Marie, Delia, Pierre, Joseph, Louis, Julie, Narcisse, Zoe, Francis, Edward, Oliver and Leon. The children married, lived and died in either, Minnesota or Wisconsin, with the exception of Narcisse, and Francis who died in Manitoba, Canada, and Oliver who died in Woodsocket, RI at 27 years of age.



*See illustrations on the next two pages for this article. compiled by Roger Durand



Ancestors of Joseph Durand



On the Frontlines

On August 10, just over a year after he'd signed up, my father and his unit were moved to the warfront near Chateau Thierry. There, according to his diary, he served as acting mess sergeant for the 1st regiment, some 600 men.

Wisconsin's 32nd Division distinguished itself at Chateau Thierry. Indeed, various elements of the Division had been in combat since May, and the 32nd's insignia of a barred red arrow is a symbol derived from its war record of breaking through German lines. It's main action was seen at Chateau Thierry, however, where the Americans provided the push for one of the last great battles of the war, a series of moves and counter moves that seemed to break the back of the German forces and compel them to seek an end to hostilities.

My father wrote nothing of his three months at the front, neither letter nor anything in his diary. Nor can I remember him ever talking about those days he spent in harm's way. One could speculate in looking at his service record that he would have nothing much to say. This record, which appears on the reverse side of his Honorable Discharge, notes "None" for battles, engagements, skirmishes, and expeditions, "None" for decorations and badges, "None" for medals and citations, and "None" for wounds received in service. I suspect that because of his age (he celebrated his 30th birthday shortly after his arrival in France) he was kept in a rear echelon job. The hardships and horror of infantry combat are normally reserved for younger men. Nonetheless, my father's three months at the front must have involved something more than "None." In-coming artillery and mustard gas were hazards for miles behind the front lines. The miseries of a life lived in the mud and cold of trenches and dugouts were shared by all. Perhaps, like so many, my father felt comfortable talking about the war only with other veterans.

Just a week after the Armistice took effect, he was transferred back to the Bordeaux area to a little town called La Teste de la Buch. His assignment was a plum. La Teste is situated near Arcachon, a well-known area of oystering and beaches and summer homes. The very next day he received permission to take a motorcycle into Arcachon, probably to buy shellfish for the officers mess.

By this time he was tired of his mess sergeant responsibilities. In early December he asked to be relieved of his job so that he could take up the duties of a military policeman, a role that would be enhanced by his ability to speak French. Permission granted, he was reduced in rank to Private First Class (PFC), given an armband and an empty sidearm, and began his new career, a brief career that would end in dark days and bitterness.

For week or so he spent his duty hours walking the streets of Arcachon, which I imagine swarmed with American Doughboys lucky enough to get passes. Then he was transferred to the 240th military police company and relocated to Camp de Souge, where he began a daily routine of drills for eight hours a day. Why the drilling? Now that the fighting was stopped, were some of the men getting unruly? Perhaps, but not my father. He received a pass good for visiting several little towns on the periphery of Bordeaux whenever he was off duty.

At the time of the Armistice, the American Expeditionary Force numbered about 1.5 million men and hundreds of women who'd volunteered as Red Cross nurses. Its demobilization involved the breakup of my father's unit. In early 1919, his old Headquarters Company was completely disbanded, and my father and the rest of the men of the 240th were absorbed into the 235th military police company. This was his final assignment of the war. The job of the 235th was to patrol the streets of Bordeaux.

My father had been in military service for 18 months when he received a two-week leave to do some sight-seeing in southern France. His diary indicates that he traveled with other soldiers, but tells nothing about them. Indeed, he summarizes his entire trip in one paragraph. After leaving Bordeaux by train, he stayed overnight in Tarbes, spent a day in Lourdes, several days in Bagnères de Luchon, stopped off in Pau, spent a night in Bayonne, then made a brief visit to Biarritz before returning to Bordeaux. He was gone eleven days.

His interest in Lourdes is not surprising. As a devout man, he must have wanted to seek out this famous source of healing miracles. One of dozens of hot springs resorts near the Pyrenees Mountains, Lourdes had come to prominence in 1858 when a young girl named Bernadette Soubirous claimed to have received repeated

visitations by the Blessed Virgin. As a consequence, the springs grew to be associated with faith-based curative powers. Staying at a boarding house in Lourdes called Clement Abbadie on Place Jeanne d'Arc, my father visited those famous springs. Many years later our entire family trooped into Spooner's Palace Theatre to see "The Song of Bernadette," a film that depicted the Virgin's visitations to *Mlle. Soubirous*. At the time I didn't know that because of his Army experience my father carried a unique context for viewing the film, just one of many discoveries I'd make about his early life long after he was dead.

Bagnères de Luchon is a resort town also famous at the time for its hot springs. Situated at the base of the Pyrenees, Luchon (as my father called it) was a town of fewer than 5,000 people, but after a year and a half of sleeping in tents, I can just imagine the anticipation of my father and his companions for a week in Luchon of rest, relaxation, good food and wine, and long soaks in Luchon's warm baths. Luchon also offered my father an opportunity to experience the exhilaration of mountains for the first time in his life, which he did. "I went up to the top of one mountain, which is 5,818 feet high, and on the other side there was another one 11,045 feet high, but there was too much snow to go up to the top of that one in February." Here was a Midwesterner excited by mountains! Two days later he "walked over the Pyrenees Mountains into Spain," which would have been an up-and-down hike of several miles. He stayed in Luchon a week.

My father's diary seems to show that he was drawn to the Catholic churches of France. While in Luchon he mentions visits to four different churches and chapels, showing an interest in architectural expressions of the Catholic faith that he'd carry with him for the rest of his life. My sister Evelyn (1925-1994) told me that when he took her to Oregon by automobile in 1943 to do defense work, he insisted on stopping in every city along the way that boasted a cathedral just to show her the wonders of the Church.

After leaving the baths of Luchon, he got off the train in Pau, where he .. "saw the King's House." This edifice would have been the Palace Royale, birthplace of King Henry IV of France, a towered castle with extensive grounds and arboreal plantings. I imagine that he also saw a couple of the more notable churches in Pau, a city of over 30,000 at the time. Then he boarded the train again for his final night, which he spent in Bayonne (birthplace of the bayonet), a fortified city near the Atlantic Coast somewhat smaller than Pau. Staying at a hotel by the name of Capagorry (which boasted electricity and a parking garage!), he spent the next day visiting a magnificent Gothic cathedral that dates from the 13th century and taking an excursion to nearby Biarritz, a resort town that became a gathering place for the rich after the wife of Napoleon III fell in love with its year-round salubrious climate. He left Bayonne with a photograph of the Bayonne cathedral that also hung in our dining room. All in all, he must have returned to Bordeaux very satisfied with his travels.

And then a sad experience.....

Then things turned bad. Almost all the rest of his diary is given over to a painfully detailed account of how a prisoner (an American captain) escaped from his custody in Bordeaux on March 30th. Because of the escape, my father spent 19 days in the guardhouse, was reduced in rank to Private, and was confined to barracks and hard labor for three months. To top all, he lost 2/3rds of his pay for three months.

He was embittered by this incident. The American officer, found drunk three days later, had taken advantage of his good offices! What my father perceived as a vast gap between the rights and treatment of an officer compared to the rights and treatment of an enlisted man would stay with him thereafter. For the rest of his life he would concede nothing to those who claimed privilege by rank or wealth or station. The Army had made him a democrat.

Despite the sting of this period of his military service, he ended up recovering his PFC rank and much of his good name, and probably most of his lost pay. Two weeks after his release from the guardhouse he went back to work in the officers mess, then took charge of the company kitchen until his unit left for the States on July 4, 1919. On the voyage home (aboard the *Floridian*) he served as pastry chef for some 85 officers.

Information about what went on for about a month following his return to the States is sketchy. After landing in New York, he went through "the delouser" at Camp Merritt on July 16, was examined, turned in his gear, and took sick. In his diary the only mention he makes of this period is: "...I stayed in the hospital until

the end of July, 1919 at the U.S. Army and Navy Hospital in Hot Springs, Ark.” That’s the last entry. There’s no explanation of what his illness was, or why he would have been gone from New York to Hot Springs for treatment. According to his discharge paper he was mustered out of his military service at Camp Grant, Illinois on September 16, 1919, some 25 months after his induction.

Back home to Wisconsin

He returned to Pierre and Louis Durand’s farm with more money in his pocket than he’d ever had before, and as something of a war hero. In addition to the uniform he wore home, he brought back other memorabilia of the war, including a helmet and gas mask, his bayonet, and an artillery shell casing that would hold an ash-tray in our living room for years and years. In time he’d receive a Good Conduct ribbon and a Victory Medal. His photographs and postcards from France must have enthralled his family and neighbors.

Six years later, while operating a portable sawmill with several brothers in southern Barron County, he met my mother, a young Norwegian schoolteacher some sixteen years his junior. As she later recounted the story, he stopped off at a roadside park where she and her sisters and friends were having a wiener roast. He was dressed to the nines for a neighborhood dance, and wore a big, diamond stickpin in his tie, a stickpin he’d acquired in France. Soon after he told her that he’d traveled half-way around the world to find the right woman to marry, and found her living within 50 miles of home. I guess he had a certain French charm.

There were loose ends to his military service. On December 31, 1930, 11 years after his discharge, my father was granted a disability pension of \$12 per month based on a 25% permanent disability. What was his disability? We don’t know, but it apparently had something to do with his stomach. His brother Raymond (1903-1989) maintained that the escaping captain had hit my father a severe blow to the stomach in making his getaway, but my father’s diary makes no mention of that fact. Others have speculated that he was gassed at the front. I’ve been unable to corroborate either story. Unfortunately, his service records can’t help. They were destroyed in a big fire at the Army records center in St Louis. All now is speculation. I know, however, that his stomach troubles persisted. One day when we were looking at the now-familiar picture of Pierre and Louise Durand’s eleven sons and three daughters gathered for their parents’ 50th wedding anniversary in 1933, my mother remembered how sick to the stomach my father had been that day, so sick he was unable to eat.

In 1957 he died of a cancerous stomach. Who knows when the seeds of his destruction took root, or when our own have taken root? Had his cancerous end begun in France? Was it a blow to the stomach, or mustard gas, or the awful stress of imprisonment and a good name besmirched? Perhaps it doesn’t matter now, but I believe that he came back from France with something gnawing at his insides, and I want to confess that I’ve dreamed of an escaping captain wheeling around to strike my father a mortal blow, and have wondered from time to time what ever became of that man that so darkened my father’s final days in France.

The American dead in the Great War numbered 126,000, while more than 200,000 more were wounded. Not all of the dead lost their lives in combat. Many died in training and transport accidents, and many, many more in the great Spanish flu epidemic of 1918 that scoured the country and the military training camps, an epidemic that claimed some 20 million lives world-wide. Thus, while my father died of something that may have taken root in the Great War, he at least survived that period, and lived for almost 40 years after his military service, and to me, as the poet Robert Frost said in his famous poem, The Road Not Taken, “**and that has made all the difference!**”

John Durand, Madison, WI 2/25/99

Other Sources

Encyclopedia Britannica. 11th, 12th, and 13th editions. The three-volume 12th edition, published in 1922, contains long articles about the “World War.”

Washburn County, Wisconsin in World War I, compiled by Helen Bethel and Sharon Tarr, from The Presses of the Spooner Advocate, 1980.

Spooner Advocate, University of Wisconsin Historical Society Microfilm, #78-893

The Road Not Taken

Robert Frost (1874-1963)

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence;
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I—
I took the one less traveled by,
And that has made all the difference.

Tribute to Mary Ann Durand

By Susanne Krasovich

Mike;

I hope this is not too late to put in the newsletter. At the last meeting of the board members, we discussed putting in information on people in our present day families. Little did we suspect the first bit of news would be sad. On February 14th, 1999, Mary Ann Durand, wife of Lawrence Durand, son of Elzear and Eva Durand, died at Reedsburg, WI. This was just days after she and Uncle Larry had celebrated their 43rd wedding anniversary. Mary Ann was my aunt. She left a profound and lasting mark on me. She always made me feel loved and important. She was my mentor and my ideal. French, music and family were our common bonds. Mary Ann taught me so much about all of these things, yet I still have much to learn; and for one will deeply miss her guiding hand. Everyone who came to Mary Ann's funeral spoke of

Mary Ann Durand, Tribute cont.

her kindness and her "joie de vivre", (joy of living). Mary Ann was that rare rose in the garden of thorns that make up for the rest of us. I have set a lofty goal for my life—that is to become 1/10th the woman Mary Ann was. Following are my thoughts.....

Love was in her smile
when she awoke

Love was in the words she used
when she spoke

Love was in the laughter
that came from her heart

Love was in the caring
thoughts and deeds she did impart

Love was at the piano
magic, in her fingertips

Love was in the music
that flowed from her lips

Love was in the French and music classes
that she taught

Love was in the happiness
to one and all she brought

Love was in her hands
when she hugged and held you tight

Love was in kisses
she gave her family each night

Love was in her eyes
Love was in her soul
Love was the reflection
of Mary Ann as a whole

Love was everything
she ever said or did
For everyday Mary Ann
held God's hand and lived

Though she is now in heaven
and our hearts are filled with pain
If we hold God's hand as she did
we will see her once again.

Notes and Letters from Readers

Dear Mike

.....by the way, I think, 1982 Andre, Stephanie and I went to Quebec to walk over the land once owned by our ancestor. Among other things we went to see the grounds and library of the Usceline Convent and also took a bus to the small town of Cap Rouge and walked to the area where the Cap Rouge flows into the St. Lawrence. It was supposedly the spot where Catherine ferried residents from one side of the small Cap Rouge to the other. Very peaceful wooded area. Just sat there for a half hour on the hillside & thought about it all. Wish I could have spoken more than a few words of French. Anyway it was a good trip.

Sincerely

Rosemarie Durand/Wong
Goleta, CA

Mike

Sorry it took me this long to respond. Of course I am interested and enjoy reading the newsletter very much.

Your cousin

Irene Durand/Harris
Hastings, MN

Mike

Please do not remove my name from the mailing list of the newsletter. I don't want to miss any copy, or word of any issue. Enclosed is a check.

We Durand children have been so blessed to have been born into such a grand family. I have so many good memories of our Aunts and Uncles, and of course the Cousins. Good job—keep up the interesting work.

Ione Durand/Brooks
Stewartville, MN

Dear Mike;

Before I procrastinate again, I enclose a check. I read the Newsletter with interest and am pleased so many of my generation and descendants have expressed interest in this project. My siblings, Ellen Olson, Alice Keppel and John Durand discussed this with me when they were here in Lakewood, CO Feb. 5th for my 70th birthday.

As you know, my wife Florence died three years ago and I remain at this address of over 34 years,

despite its size and my reduced needs.

We had two children.

Both sons graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy. Jim (35) is a Major, USMC and will complete six years of tours in S. Korea, in addition to other assignments spanning seven years. He is fluent in Korean and knowledgeable of that culture. He expects reassignment to Camp Pendleton, CA in June. He has one son.

Bob (32), a Lt. CMDR, USN Reserves, lives in Austin, TX and goes to Dallas each month to fulfill his Reserve requirement. By coincidence, he left the active Navy when Florence died. He was several years on the "blue water", two years at the Pentagon, and his last assignment was Public Affairs Officer on the carrier NIMITZ. He has three children.

I apologize for not joining earlier.

Eugene (Gene) Durand, Lakewood, CO



Famous Quote

All the ills of mankind,
all the tragic misfortunes
that fill the history books,
all the political blunders,
all the failure of great leaders,
have arisen merely from
a lack of skill at dancing.

Moliere

Gilbert Durand Honored

by Hometown

By Mike Durand

Gilbert Durand, Uncle Bert, Gib, Dad, Grandpa, however you may have known him, left a lasting impression in many of our lives. Uncle Bert was always one of my favorite Uncles. He was a smooth Frenchman, the baby of the family, the last of 17 children, (14 survived), born to Pierre (1861-1936) and Marie Durand.

Uncle Bert was a shaker and a mover long before the modern day term was even coined. He made things happen! His gentle and patient, but hard – driving approach got results! He was successful at most everything he did. Gilbert was a family man, a business man, a community organizer and a volunteer.

Gilbert Durand was featured this past summer in an article by the Spooner Advocate, a local paper, for his contributions and driving force in founding and organizing the Spooner Rodeo at Spooner WI, which celebrated it's 45th anniversary.

Aunt Fern, his widow, and son, Bob, remember well, "he headed the original steering committee for the rodeo". Gilbert was President of the Spooner Chamber of Commerce when this all first came about. "He got behind the idea". At the first meeting, they had only five people present. They brought up the subject of a rodeo, but nobody was interested—Gilbert even had to dismiss the meeting because there was not enough interest.

Gilbert told them at that first meeting that "each man should bring back as many people interested in a rodeo as possible for the next meeting"—that got the thing going. Spooner's previous summer event, a Tommy Bartlett water show on the Yellow River was dying. But the idea of changing to a different event was met with a few snarls. There was a lot of opposition, recalled Bob, age 21 at the time. "For advertising that first year we printed bumper stickers and put them on cars. One lady chewed Dad out because we put one on hers, and I had to go take it off. All the while she stood behind me scowling and tapping her foot— some people just hated the idea", Bob recalls.

But something clicked that first year as the Barnes Rodeo played out in the little hand-built arena with poles cut from Bob LeMoine's farm. "The nay-sayers were proven wrong—people loved it, and the rodeo came back for a second year in 1955" Bob said.

Through the years Gilbert remained dedicated to the rodeo until his health began to decline. At the Spooner Rodeo's 20th anniversary his contributions were recognized with a plaque that read, *In appreciation to Gilbert Durand for originating a new idea...our first rodeo. Spooner Chamber of Commerce, 1954-1973.* Then in 1983 he was awarded a 30-year certificate of appreciation from Barnes PRCA Rodeo for his continuous support.*

Gilbert met his wife Fern (Ridgway) in 1929 at a Durand family picnic at his brother Lewis and Jenny Durand's residence. They married in 1931. Gilbert completed only a little over two years of high school. As a young man he traveled to the West Coast with his brother Adelard to work on a construction project. Later they found out they had been working on a "secret blimp project". In his early years he also worked in the CCC Camps and WPA projects. Gilbert later started in construction on his own, Durand Construction, and built numerous Catholic Churches, Schools, Hospitals, Motels, etc. in Northwest WI. Gilbert and Fern also farmed in addition to owning the construction company.

Gilbert and Fern had a family of 11 children, their names are, Robert, Richard, Joyce, Jeanne & Joanne (twins), Ronald, Thomas, James, Linda, Roger and Dee Ann. Although Gilbert's accomplishments were many, behind every successful man stands a good woman. God bless you, Aunt Fern!



Gilbert Durand (1911 -1984)

Membership Chairperson Mary Brusegard and son Derek, assigns user name and password for the Archives

If you have a computer and have visited our web site at www.Durandfoundation.com you will notice in the library section there is also an entry to pass into the Archives. Derek Brusegard and I have been working on this for quite some time now. By having a user name and a password, it restricts others from entering this area. The user name and password is your personal entry key to the Archives. Please safeguard them, and also do not give them out. It would be like giving someone the keys to your house. If you lose it, you will have to call in or write to have Derek or Mary Brusegard tell you what they are. Also, because this log-in process is case sensitive, type the letters just as you see them. In other words, don't change a lower case letter into a capital letter, because the key won't work then.

Eventually, there will be thousands of pages of documents, pictures and articles in the Durand Heritage Foundation Archives. It takes considerable time to do all this, and especially to ensure that if there are copyright issues, we address those issues first. We especially need your help to locate and collect documents so that we can file and store them electronically. The original documents are returned to the owners. Do you have pictures etc. that you would like to have us file? Contact one of the officers or any member that is actively engaged in this process. We will ensure that the original documents and pictures are returned to you, and will safeguard them while in our possession. There currently are a lot more items in the Archives now than you can actually view. That's because we are running a little behind in this time consuming process.

Stick with us!

Listed below is your personal user name and password to enter into the Archives.

User name rdurand
Password master

Board of Directors Meeting Scheduled For April 18th

The Board of Directors of the Durand Heritage Foundation meet twice a year, usually a Spring and Fall meeting. The next meeting will be April 18th from 10:30 AM to 3:30PM at the Roger and Carol Durand residence at 76 Marcin Hill in Burnsville, MN. The meetings are open to any member who would like to come. Although an announcement like this sounds so official, the meetings are really just an opportunity to pull together and discuss issues, make plans, evaluate our progress, and of course try to bring in new people to assist in all the various projects that we are working on. If you are interested in attending the meeting, please call Roger and Carol at 612- 898-2896 as a common courtesy and also for directions. Roger can also be reached by e-mail at rogdurand@msn.com.

Classical Photos Wanted

Do you, or someone you know, have copies of classical family photos? What's a classical photo, you ask? Well take a look at this issue. Any photograph in this issue could be considered a classical one. They are photographs that illustrate a person, time and event. Especially old family pictures, for example the pictures of Pierre and Marie Durand, Nazaire and Leocadia Durand. Other examples are your wedding pictures, your parents wedding pictures, and family pictures etc. The picture of Adelard Durand is also a classical picture because it is valuable in understanding his life and times.

During these winter evenings, (at least up here in the mid-west, we just had over 16 inches of snow) it's a great time to go through old boxes and albums of pictures. You might find some real treasures. It only takes us a couple of minutes to scan them in and store them electronically in our Archives. This way you can share them with other members of your family.

Other photographs of interest would be pictures of old farming practices, horses, tractors, trucks cars etc.

If you have pictures that you think would be valuable, here's what you can do. Contact any one of the Officers, or Roger or Richard Durand, because they are working in the research area. We will ensure that the pictures get returned to you.

List of Main Contact People

This is a list of people who have assumed areas of responsibility in addition to the listing on page two.

Research Committee

Roger Durand, Chairman
76 Marcin Hill
Burnsville, MN 55337
tel. 612-898-2896 e-mail, rogdurand@msn.com

Richard Durand
320 Em St.
Spooner, WI 54801
tel. 715-635-3888

Family Stories/Research

John Durand, Chairman
931 Jennifer St.
Madison, WI 53703
tel. 608-255-2662 e-mail jcdurand@aol.com

Ellen Olson
1020 Edgewood Ave.
Mill Valley, CA 94941
tel. 415-388-3911 ellenolson@aol.com

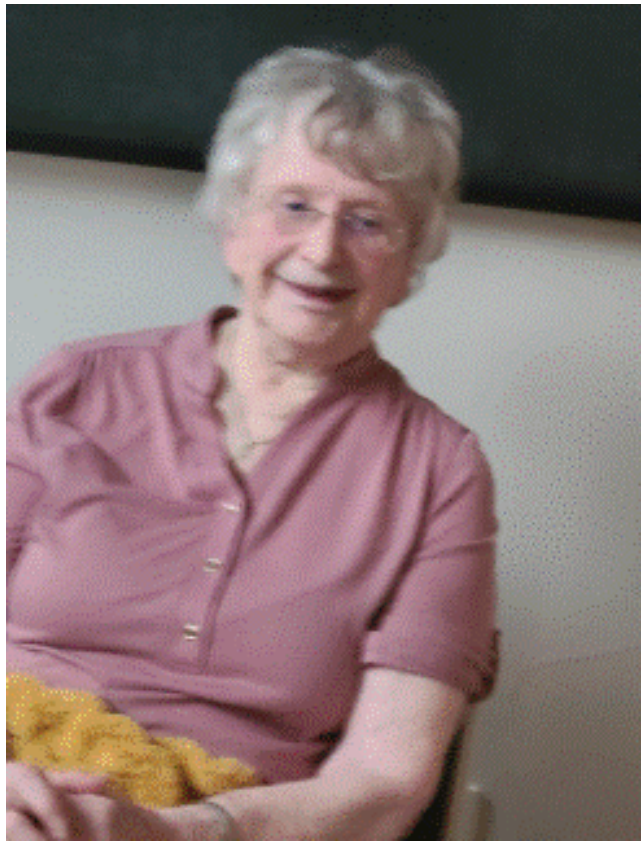
Membership

Mary Brusegard, Chairperson
Derek Brusegard
6425 Eagle Lake Dr.
Maple Grove, MN 55369
tel. 612-533-9879 e-mail dj@pconline.com

Volunteers Needed

We are looking for help in many different areas to assist us in our numerous on-going project. Do you have special interests and skills that you would like to help out with? If so, contact anyone of the Officers or one of the contact people listed above. For example, some volunteers might be interested in life events during the 1950's. This could involve the collection of pictures and stories from those times. You could team together with other friends to make it a fun project.





Obituary

Rose Marie Durand Wong (Aug 8, 1940 – Sept 8, 2025), age 85

Rose Marie, daughter of Art and Elinor Durand of Spooner, Wisconsin, passed away on September 8, 2025, due to complication of metastasized breast cancer at the age of 85. She grew up in her family farm in rural Wisconsin with four siblings, an older brother, William (Bill) Durand, now living in Superior, WI, an older sister, Marylou, who passed away due to skin cancer, about 30 years ago and a younger brother, Art Durand, passed away about 15 years ago due to pancreatic cancer. Rose Marie and Raymond met while she was in her second year of graduate school majoring in Sociology at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA. Raymond was in his final year of graduate school in Mathematics and receive his PHD from LSU in the summer of 1966. They dated for about 6 months and got married in a Catholic church, September 17, 1966. After graduation from LSU, Raymond spent two post-doctoral years in UCLA (1966) and U of Washington, Seattle (1967) and landed a permanent, professor of mathematics position at University of California, Santa Barbara (1968). While at Santa Barbara, Raymond and Rose Marie raised two children, Andre and Stephanie. Later on, both children moved to Denver, Colorado. So, when Raymond retired in 2004, they decided to move to Denver to be closer to their children. Rose Marie had a very sharp and curious mind. She loved history and had many hobbies: painting, calligraphy, cake decorating and cooking. While she was at Santa Barbara, CA, she met one of the most famous chefs, Julia Child, in her adult ed class. Since then, she found out that she really enjoyed cooking and wanted to try cooking dishes from many different countries: American, Mexican, French, Italian and Oriental and others. She had since collected cooking recipes totaling up to 9 volumes of three-ring binders.



Jackie (on left) with twin Judy.

Obituary

Jacqueline “Jackie” Durand Delany Mestad Backer
(October 30, 1941 - October 12, 2025), age 83

By Edmund F. Durand from research.

Jackie was born in Faribault Minnesota on October 30, 1941, the first of twin girls born to Max Durand and Margaret Thom and died October 12, 2025. She was 83 years young, having died from complications from her broken back in a nursing home in Dodge Center, Minnesota. Jackie was married three times and only had children from her first marriage.

She grew up in Faribault and Rochester, Minnesota. She married James Delaney on Nov. 8, 1958 in Rochester, MN. She divorced him and married James O. Mestad in 1969 and divorced him in 1978. She married William B. Backer in 1979. He died in 2001 in Florida. She returned to Rochester soon after and lived there ever since.

Jackie’s parents, her older sister, and her second and third husbands, predeceased her. Survivors include her older brother Richard, her twin sister Judy, her three children from her first marriage, James and Joseph Delaney and Elizabeth Delaney Solem, stepchildren and grandchildren.

She requested that her ashes be dumped over a Florida State Park, which her son Joseph did. I got my information from three sources, Nazaire Durand 6 Generation Information, Family Search and Minnesota Official Marriage System (MOMS).