

Chapter 6 - History of the Violette Family, Rita Violette-Lippé

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*(Note to the Reader: This is the first draft of a chapter that will be part of an upcoming book with a working title of A **Violette History**. The authors welcome comments, criticism, corrections, or additions to the text during its draft review period. Address comments directly using the emails above or through the feedback link at the web site for the Violette Family Association – www.VioletteFamily.org.)*

*(Note to the Reader: This work was written by Rita Violette-Lippé and is excerpted from “**The Descendants of François Violet**”, published by Naiman Press, Lawrence MA, 1984. It is republished here by permission; the book is now out of print. The original publication contained genealogical tables consisting of some 9,600 Violette descendants of François. The content included here is from the front matter of the book. The editors have added some comments to help in understanding, as well as to update the text with more recent information. The editors also added the maps.)*

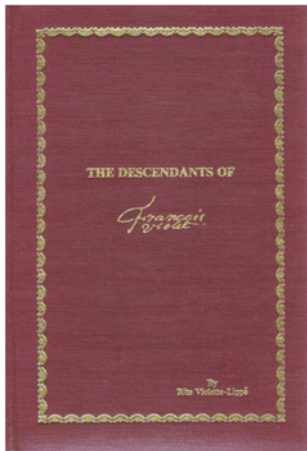


Figure 1: Rita's book, "The Descendants of François Violet", was published in 1984



Figure 2: The last copy of Rita's book was raffled off at Reunion 2008. Richard Violette (VFA #7, Rita's brother); Rita (VFA #1); raffle winner Peter Girard (VFA #1330) of Rocky Hill CT

Foreword

As a Violette, I have always been somewhat interested in the Violette name and in the origin of the Violette Family. In 1947 and 1948, while in high school, my curiosity was aroused by my religious teachers, the Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, many of whom had previously taught Violettes in the Van Buren, Maine, area. Was I, perchance, related to the Violettes of the St. John Valley, they wondered? I knew very little of my heritage and ancestry then, but was

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aware that Van Buren had played a significant part in them. A correspondence then began with Dorothy Violette of Van Buren, presently Sister Dorothy Violette SCIM. Four years later, I boarded a bus in Lawrence, Massachusetts, headed for what I considered the all-important town of Van Buren, Maine. During this two-week long visit, I became fairly well acquainted with the St. John Valley area and simply fell in love with it. I was introduced to many elderly Violettes and had several lengthy conversations with them. However, I was young and inexperienced in genealogy and my interest subsided.

In 1973, my interest in genealogy was rekindled. At this time, I realized that my father remembered a great deal about his childhood, although he had not once returned to New Brunswick since his departure some fifty-five years prior. It was in the month of August when my husband, daughter, Mom, Dad and I returned to the land of Dad's birth and childhood. We visited Drummond, St. Basile and St. Quentin, New Brunswick, as well as the entire St. John Valley.

This vacation proved to be a turning point: my curiosity and fascination with the past was to remain with me throughout my lifetime. Immediately upon our return home, serious research began. Letters were written, books read and maps carefully examined. A year later, another trip took place. This time Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, was the destination, the soil where our ancestors had landed back in 1749. The Fortress of Louisbourg fascinated us. We visited the archives and questioned the Chief Historian, Gilles Proulx, rather extensively. We learned that Charles Violet was not a military person but a "couvreur de toits", a roofer. Other information pertaining to the death of Charles Violet's wife, Marie David, his re-marriage and his other children was made available to us.

Shortly after returning home, I wrote to Louisbourg for additional information. It is then that I received two documents concerning Charles, Francois and Charles' step-son, Alexis Hilaret. These documents will be discussed later. From here on, my interest in genealogy in general, and in the Violette Family in particular, took on a whole new dimension leading eventually to the publishing of the Violette Genealogy "***The Descendants of Francois Violet***".

By no means is research complete on the descendants of Francois. Genealogy is a living and vibrant study. Many important details remain hidden in the past. Hence, this is an ongoing project. This book is merely a compilation of my personal research on the Violettes to date (***Ed note: 1984***). It is hoped that this publication will encourage many of you to share the information you have with me, that errors might be corrected and the listing of Violettes made more complete. (***Ed note: Rod Violette, VFA#12, has continued and expanded on Rita's work. Rod moved the genealogical info into a database format and has expanded it from Rita's 9,600 Violettes to more than 24,000 Violettes plus another 40,000 associated persons.***)

When possible, the children of female Violettes are also listed in this study along with all available information. In the interest of clarity, the organization of the genealogical sections is such that the Violette surname appears in the first section exclusively. Other surnames, the offspring of the female Violettes, are listed in the second section. The third section concerns those Violettes whom I have been unable to tie into the Francois lineage at this time.

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Information relating to the Violette Genealogy was gathered from State Archives and Vital Statistics Records, micro-films from the Church of Latter-Day Saints in Salt Lake City, Catholic Church Records, newspaper obituaries, Marriage Repertoires, personal contacts and verbal and written communications. Since the Catholic Church Records deal with baptisms, many birth dates and places of birth listed in this study are actually baptism dates and places of baptism. Occasionally, this situation leads to certain discrepancies. Should the reader be aware of such, he or she is encouraged to forward all additions and corrections to the author at (*Ed note: Rita's prior address is removed from this text. For questions, additions, and corrections please contact Rod Violette, VFA #12, 1775 Barn Valley Lane, Lincoln, CA 95648, Tel: 916-434-8136, Fax: 916-434-8136, Email: rviolette@att.net.*)

(End of Rita's section "Foreword")

History of the Violette Family

(*Ed note: The material quoted here contains much that is repetitive of material in the earlier chapters of this book. Rita's work was done earlier and formed the basis for much work that came after. Where later research has shed new light on the topics covered by Rita we have inserted editor notes with the most current information.*) The very first mention of our ancestors on this continent coincides with the arrival of the ship L'INTREPIDE in Louisbourg, Nova Scotia, in 1749. Listed as passengers on the INTREPIDE are Charles Violet, his wife Marie David and their son, Francois. The records in Louisbourg show that Charles was not a military person but a "couvreur de toits", a roofer.



The image at left shows a naval battle between the L'Intrepide (left background) rushing to the aid of the French ship "The Thunderer" (right foreground) attacked by several British ships at the height of Cape Finisterre in Brittany, October 17, 1747. This was two years before L'Intrepide was the ship in a convoy to Louisbourg on which Charles, Marie, Alexis, and François traveled. The painting was done by Pierre Julien Gilbert and is available for purchase at art.com.

Ed note: The French ship L'Intrepide was of a type called a xebec. These were small, fast ships primarily used for trading in the Mediterranean Sea. Xebecs were similar to the galleys used by Berber corsairs and Barbary pirates and had both lateen sails and oars for propulsion. The early xebecs had two masts, the later ones three. Xebecs had displacements in the range of 150-200 tons burden and they were armed with from 18-24 guns. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a large polacre-xebec carried a square rig on the foremast, lateen sails

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on the other masts, a bowsprit, and two headsails. L'Intrepide appears to be of this type of xebec. These types of ships were often used as "corsairs", another term for the privateers commissioned by the French King to conduct raids on ships of the French enemies. They were well suited to this use because they were small and built for fast maneuvering, and by having oars they could approach quietly from any direction regardless of wind conditions.

Exactly who was this Violet family and where did they come from? Charles Violet and Marie David (also spelled Davy on some documents) were married on December 6, 1741 in the Church of St. Vivien in Saintes, France. Charles was born on February 13, 1716 in Villejesus, France, the son of Louis Violet and Marie Doux. Marie David was born on May 10, 1705 in Saintes, France, the daughter of Jean David and Marie Gaindet. Three children were born to this couple:

1. Elie b. July 22, 1743 Saintes, France; d. September 2, 1746 Rochefort, France
2. Francois b. October 16, 1744 Saintes, France; d. April 10, 1824 St. Basile, New Brunswick (*Ed note: More recent records show François' birthdate as December 16, 1744.*)
3. Marie b. January 31, 1747 Rochefort, France; d. October 14, 1747 Rochefort, France

These births and deaths show us that all descendants of Charles Violet and Marie David come from one child, Francois, our ancestor. It is very likely that Charles has other descendants in France from his second wife, Marie Sudois, and from his third wife, Catherine Estie. Research has not come up with the marriages of any of the children from the second and third wives. (*Ed note: Chapter 14 will provide more information about Marie Sudois and her children and Catherine Estie and her children. Catherine's last name is shown as Ytier in current genealogical records.*) Surely we must be distantly related to the Violets in Saintes, Villejesus and the entire Charente Maritime area. Just where the tie comes in is unknown due to the lack of marriage documentation of Charles' other children. (*Ed note: Actually, this is due to a lack of information about Louis's parents.*)

It was not long after Charles Violet and Marie David's arrival in Louisbourg that tragedy struck this adventurous family. On May 26, 1751, in Louisbourg, Marie David Violet passed away. (*Ed note: We have since found Louisbourg Parish death records and know she died on May 28, 1751.*) Her death record shows that she was the wife of Charles Violet and the widow of Jean Hilaret. Very shortly thereafter legal papers dealing with the Violet Family were filed in Louisbourg. Two separate documents were filed: Court of Request #486 dated June 26, 1751 concerning the guardianship of Alexis Hilaret, the stepson of Charles Violet; and Court of Request #487, also dated June 26, 1751 concerning the guardianship of Francois Violette. Apparently Charles deemed it necessary or desirable, in view of his imminent second marriage, to take certain precautions to safeguard and differentiate between the legal rights of his stepson, Alexis, and those of his son, Francois. It would serve little purpose to include these lengthy documents as they are in French and copies of these old documents are hardly legible. (*Ed note: Maurice Violette provided much more detail about these proceedings and we include his work in Chapters 7 and 8 of this book.*) These documents reveal that Pierre Jauvin was named Alexis' principal guardian with several friends and neighbors as subrogate guardians. Alexis at this time was only 18 years of age and the legal age for parental responsibility was 25. However, Charles re-

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mained the principal guardian of Francois with Jacques Labossiere as subrogate guardian. The responsibility for Francois remained totally with his father, Charles. Francois was neither put up for adoption nor abandoned, as some have held, at this tender age of six. The fact that Charles remained the legal guardian is proof of such a statement.

The following day, a very interesting event took place. On June 27, 1751 in Louisbourg, Charles married Marie Sudois, the daughter of Pierre Paul Sudois and Anne Deniot. Five children were born of this marriage:

1. Therese b. April 22, 1751 Louisbourg, Nova Scotia; d. January 31, 1753 Louisbourg, Nova Scotia (*Ed note: Louisbourg Parish records show her birthdate as April 22, 1752.*)
2. Jerome b. June 31, 1753 Louisbourg, Nova Scotia (*Ed note: Louisbourg Parish records show her birthdate as June 17, 1753*)
3. Marie Anne Francoise b. August 21, 1755 Louisbourg, Nova Scotia (*Ed note: Louisbourg Parish birth records show her last name as Le Violet*)
4. Charlotte b. October 10, 1756 Louisbourg, Nova Scotia (*Ed note: Louisbourg Parish birth records show her last name as Viollet*)
5. Marianne b. December 9, 1759 Rochefort, France

These births reveal two very interesting facets in the life of Charles Violet. The baptism record of Marie Anne Francoise in Louisbourg shows her godfather to be none other than Alexis Hilaret, the stepson of Charles. This baptism occurred four years after the Court of Request #486 concerning the guardianship of Alexis Hilaret. Although Charles gave up all responsibility for Alexis, he certainly must have remained close to him. Otherwise, why would Alexis be granted the honor of being the godfather of one of Charles' children? Since Charles kept in such close contact with his stepson, Alexis Hilaret, how much closer must he have remained to Francois, his only son from his first marriage, for whom he remained the principal guardian?

Although Alexis Hilaret is not a Violette descendant, he is a David descendant just as all of us are. So we must view him as at least a distant relative. Were we to be doing the genealogy of Marie David, Alexis, as well as all of us, would be a part of this genealogy. What happened to Alexis? This much we know: on July 2, 1765 in Cayenne, West Indies, Alexis married Cecile Caissie.

Returning now to the children of the second marriage, how is it that Marianne was born in Rochefort, France? The LaRoche, France, records of April 28, 1759 list Charles and his wife, Marie Sudois, as arrivals along with officers, magistrates and various other inhabitants of the "Colonie de l'Isle Royale", inhabitants which, as it is stated, "had left the said location with permission". They disembarked in LaRoche but soon thereafter moved on to Rochefort where Marianne was born of December 9, 1759. This list makes no mention of children with the parents. Was Francois with them? We do not know. All we do know is that we have absolutely no information on Francois from 1751 to 1770 when he married Marie Luce Thibodeau in the New World. Francois would have been 14 years of age when his father and stepmother returned to France. It is entirely possible that he remained in Nova Scotia and it is just as possible that he

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returned to France temporarily. A fourteen-year-old could have gone reluctantly with the determination of returning some day to the land of his childhood. To say he remained, as well as to say he returned to France, would be mere conjecture. This is certainly an interesting subject worthy of future research, a project in itself.

Why did Charles return to France? How did he manage to avoid the "deportement" from Louisbourg in 1758, the very fortress he inhabited at that time? The circumstances which surround Charles' departure from the New World, as well as the reasons for his leaving France originally, remain unknowns. (*Ed note: Actually, Charles and Marie were deported from Louisbourg, along with all the other French civilians and the French military. However, we have no record of Francois in these matters so we do not know if he returned to France with his family and then came back to North America or whether he remained on Île Royale.*)

Charles was not in Rochefort long before he again was left with several small children. Marie Sudois Violet died on November 16, 1760 in Rochefort. Less than five months later, on April 13, 1761 in Rochefort, Charles married Catherine Estie, the widow of Jean Poinsot. A son, Jean Nicolas, was born to Charles and Catherine on January 8, 1766 in Rochefort.

However Charles died on November 13, 1765 in Rochefort before the birth of Jean Nicolas.

There are those who ask: Are we Acadian or are we not Acadian? We certainly are, although the Violet name is not listed among the groups of Acadians who were dispersed from Annapolis and Port Royal, Nova Scotia, in 1755. In that year Charles and his family were residents of Louisbourg. We are Acadian by virtue of the fact that over the period of 1749 to 1758, Charles and his family, as stated earlier, inhabited Louisbourg. Additionally, we are Acadian by virtue of his (*Ed note: François*) marriage to Marie Luce Thibodeau, the Thibodeaus being one of the well known Acadian families. Since Francois was the only Violette in Acadia and since we can account for his presence from the time of his marriage (1770) to the time of his death (1824) there is no basis for assuming that any Violette was deported to the United States, to Quebec or to the Islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.

All the marriages and baptisms referred to in this bit of history, including the marriage of Louis Violet and Marie Doux on January 7, 1715 in Villejesus, France, took place in the Roman Catholic Church. This appears to be in contradiction to that which we have heard in the past, specifically that we may have been Huguenots. A plausible explanation for this earlier inaccuracy is that we once associated Charles with the City of LaRoche, France, a city reportedly 95% Huguenot. But, Charles never lived in LaRoche. He lived in Rochefort, Saintes and Villejesus, all cities and towns primarily of Catholic populations. The marriage of Louis Violet and Marie Doux does not list the names of their parents. For this reason we are unable to extend our lineage beyond 1715. (*Ed note: later research has provided info about the parents of Marie*) Nevertheless, it is possible that prior to 1715 some Violets may have been Huguenots. For the same reason, we cannot claim a connection to any Violet or Violette Coat of Arms. Violette Coats of Arms do exist. However, there is no documentation that any one of these is ours or that we even have one.

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Recorded in the Ecoupag, New Brunswick records by Rev. Charles Bailly is the marriage of Francois Violette to Marie Luce Thibodeau on May 5, 1770. A notation on this document states that this marriage was "rehabilité" which means "blessed". New Brunswick in those days was missionary territory. Priests came from miles away to minister to the spiritual needs of the people. It is also found in the Ecoupag records that Francois' three oldest children, Marguerite, born July 25, 1770; Augustin, born September 15, 1771; and Marie Genevieve, born March 15, 1774 were all baptized on September 15, 1774. Francois and his family were residents of the Kennebecasis, an area serviced by the Missionaries of Ecoupag. Parenthetically, Ecoupag, also spelled Ecoupahag and Aukpague' was an Indian village at Springhill, six miles north of the center of the city of Fredericton and within the city limits.

Those familiar with the history of the Acadians are aware that these unfortunate and courageous colonists were stripped of their lands and possessions, not only as a result of the expulsion from Nova Scotia during the period of 1755 to 1758, but again and again. Some of the Acadians who had settled in the Kennebecasis region lost their homes and lands to the immigrants of New England and to the Loyalist Americans in the 1780's. Lacking formal and legal titles to their lands they simply were put out, causing some of them to migrate to Madawaska, a county situated at that time on both sides of the St. John River in northwestern New Brunswick. (*Ed note: This will be covered in more detail in Chapter 13.*)

Fortunately, two Loyalists, Edward Winslow and Ward Chipman, saw to it that some of these Acadians were made restitution by granting them the land bordering the Kennebecasis or Hammond River, in King's County, New Brunswick. The land grant in question was registered in Fredericton, New Brunswick, on the twelfth day of April 1787. The lengthy, ten page document is entitled "Widow Sarah Hunt and Others" and describes the granting of approximately 6,888 acres divided into 42 lots. Given therein are the names of the recipients and their respective lots: Francois being granted Lot 14, a parcel of land amounting to 210 acres of the Eastern Division. The exact wording follows: "unto the said John Thompson the lot Number Thirteen containing one hundred and eighty five acres, unto the said Francis Violet the lot Number Fourteen containing two hundred and ten acres, unto the said Andrew Sherwood the lot Number Sixteen containing one hundred and seventy acres"

Noteworthy is the fact that all lots in the region were awarded by this document with the exception of one lot, Lot number 15 adjacent to Francois' land on the south side. Why this exception? More about Lot 15 a bit later. Also noteworthy is the fact that grants were awarded such that the Acadians were dispersed among the Loyalists. In Francois' case, his neighbors were John Thompson and Andrew Sherwood.

The document also specifies the conditions of the grant in terms of acreage to be cleared (i.e. three acres per year for each 50 granted), in terms of cattle, in terms of dwelling to be erected within three years (i.e. one good dwelling house to be at least 20 feet in length and 16 feet in breadth), etc. Additionally, payment was to be made at a rate of two shillings per year per hundred acres for a period of ten years, payable at the feast of St. Michael. Annexed to the Land Grant is a plan of the subdivision of the land.

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It is difficult for us who have never had to clear land to appreciate the full significance of these terms. Ponder if you will, the toil, the labor involved in clearing 12 acres - for that was indeed Francois' task - of virgin forest a year, and this with essentially nothing more than hand implements! In addition there was a dwelling to build, food to grow, animals to tend, a few shillings to be earned, etc... Such a task calls for a strong will, determination, physical and emotional strength, and a dedication to and a tremendous capacity for....work.

Undoubtedly, there was much displeasure among the Acadians inhabiting lots intertwined with those of the Loyalists in the Kennebecasis area, as petitions for land in the Madawaska region were soon submitted by Francois and others. One petition for land grants submitted by "Francis Violet and other inhabitants of the French Village on the Little Kennebecasis" is dated August 28, 1789. A second petition submitted by the same people is dated December 21, 1789 and asks for land "below the settlement Madoueska". These petitions intimate that the petitioners were displeased with their conditions in the Kennebecasis region - that is interspersed among the Loyalists on land deemed insufficient for their large families. At the time of the petitions Francois had seven sons and five daughters.

Seemingly, Francois had doubts of ever being granted the lands in Madoueska for within three to four weeks he entered into a contract agreeing to purchase "Lot Fifteen". The contract dated January 15, 1790 bound "Francis Vilette", as it is written in the original, to pay Henry Darling the sum of one hundred pounds of lawful money for Lot Fifteen, the land adjacent his own as we have seen earlier. Among the signatures appearing at the end of the contract we find that of Francois himself, proof that he was literate at least to the extent of being capable of signing his name. This is the first document on which Francois' signature appears.

The January 15, 1790 contract is somewhat puzzling. It would seem that while the Francis Vilette - Henry Darling contract was being drawn up, Francois was not yet aware of the fact that his December 21, 1789 petition for lands in Madoueska had already been granted on December 24, 1789. Exactly when Francois left the Kennebecasis region is not known. (*Ed note: More information about François' activities in the Kennebecasis region will be provided in Chapter 12 –François at Hammond River.*)

However, Francois and his family were settled in the Madoueska region by 1791 since his son, Alexandre, born September 29, 1789 at Kennebecasis, was baptized on June 23, 1791 in St. Basile. This early St. Basile baptism was found in documents in Rimouski, Quebec. Francois' land was situated in St. Basile Parish on both sides of the St. John River in what is known today as St. Leonard, New Brunswick, and Van Buren, Maine. It was the Violettes and the Cyrs who first settled these lands. Francois built and operated the first grist mill in the area. It was located on the brook known as Violette Brook.

This brief history of the Acadians and these few biographical details concerning Francois are a prelude to his most important contribution, that which is the "raison d'etre" of this publication, namely, Francois Violet's descendants. Violettes have since settled throughout Canada and the

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United States. The New England States are the home of the majority of the Violettes today, with Maine boasting their greatest concentration.

Note: When referring to Francois, the author has used the surname Violet, remaining faithful to Francois' own signature. The spelling of the surname soon became Violette and has remained thus with all of his descendants.

(End of Rita's section "History of the Violette Family")

The Birth and Growth of the VIOLETTE FAMILY ASSOCIATION

After having written to literally hundreds of Violettes over a period of three years, in 1977 I began to entertain the thought of having a Violette Family Reunion. Since there were only a dozen or so Violettes in the Greater Lawrence-Greater Lowell area, I was understandably a bit hesitant. Somehow I did not feel that geographically speaking, Methuen, Massachusetts, was a likely place for a successful Violette reunion. Seemingly, Maine would be a more appropriate area for such a function. However, I decided to attempt it.

Ten months prior to the reunion, a letter was sent to all Violettes with whom I had had previous contact. The announcement of the reunion was made specifying that it would be geared to the entire family. A few preliminary details as to date and location were given. A follow-up letter to be mailed approximately three months prior to the reunion was also announced. The main concern at this point was to make Violettes aware of that which was to take place. Then came the final letter with all the details as to the cost, the tentative agenda and the availability of motels in the Methuen, Massachusetts, area. Also included was a registration form to be returned by those who wished to attend. I hadn't the vaguest idea as to the kind of response such an invitation would elicit. Since this was the first time such an endeavor was attempted, I decided that if 50 people attended, the reunion would be considered a great success. July 16, 1978, finally arrived and with it, a gathering of 375 people at St. Theresa's Parish Hall in Methuen, Massachusetts. They came from Rome, the Provinces of Quebec, New Brunswick and Ontario and from the States of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New York, Arizona, California, Illinois, West Virginia, Florida and Indiana. The hall swelled with excitement and warmth. An invisible, but nonetheless real, bond unified all attendees: a vivid interest in one's heritage. All were descendants of Francois Violet. Each Violette, who had pre-registered, found displayed on the wall his or her direct lineage back to France. This made it possible for each and everyone to know his or her relationship to any other Violette in attendance.

The reunion was a tremendous success and too quickly came to an end. However, this was but the beginning. This moment was indeed an opportune one to pursue my search for Violettes and hence was born the idea of a family association. Since all the groundwork had been done for the reunion, the birth of the Association was fairly simple and proceeded very smoothly. Within one month, the first newsletter was sent to all adults who had attended the reunion.

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Their attendance automatically granted them membership into the Association. The Association at this time numbered 281 members representing 175 families.

The \$119 profit realized at the Methuen Reunion provided the funds necessary to organize the Violette Family Association. A Constitution and By-Laws were drafted and officers were named. As Founder of the Association, I became its President-Secretary, Richard Violette of Lowell, Massachusetts, became Vice-President, and Joseph Violette of Methuen, Massachusetts, Treasurer. The motto chosen was the one used at the first reunion: **We Are One**. Our logo consists of a violet flower centered in a white circle and beneath the flower, the words "We Are One". Within six months the Violette Family Association was a registered non-profit organization. During the first year of existence, membership grew to 361.

In 1979 in Augusta, Maine, a second reunion was held. The success of this reunion, organized by Maurice Violette of Augusta, is attested to by the size of the attendance: no less than 550 Violettes gathered at the Calumet Club in Augusta, Maine, on Saturday, August 4, 1979. That very day, the Association membership grew to 620.

Van Buren, Maine, Violette Country! In August of 1981, 800 people traveled up to the St. John Valley, more specifically, to the town of Van Buren, Maine, to attend the third Violette Reunion. Superior Court Judge Elmer Violette of Van Buren served as Chairman. For some this was a return to the homeland they had left many years prior; for others, it was a visit to the homeland of their parents, grandparents or great-grandparents. For all, it was an emotion filled experience. During this two day reunion, the Association erected a monument in memory of our ancestor, Francois. This monument stands on land adjacent to the Violette Brook, the area presently called Violette Brook Park.

In September of 1982, 49 members of the Association traveled to France. At departure time each traveler was given his or her ancestry back to France, enabling each person to establish his or her relationship to each other on the tour. The result was a closely-knit family who would share emotions, experiences and memories to be cherished forever. Over a twelve day period, we visited in depth the Charente Maritime area, namely, Angouleme, Saintes, Rochefort, Villejésus and LaRoche, all towns and cities of our ancestors. Thanks to the foresight of Maurice Violette of Augusta, Maine, in each city we were greeted by the local dignitaries. We were honored with a reception by these dignitaries and townspeople. Words cannot adequately describe the pride and emotion experienced by each and every one of us.

Five and one half years have passed since the inception of the Association (*Ed note: Rita's text was written in 1983*). We now have 1218 members, representative of four Provinces of Canada: Alberta, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick; thirty-two States: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Maine, Vermont, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Illinois, Delaware, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Tennessee, Texas, Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska; and from the countries of Spain, Sweden, France, Italy and Japan. Our present mailing consists of 775 newsletters. (*Ed note: As of July 2011 the Violette Family*

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Association latest member number is 2873 and mailing list includes 980 by email and 592 by mail.)

In August of 1984, our fourth reunion will be held in East Windsor, Connecticut, with Mrs. Gerald Violette (Sandra Pronsky) of Enfield, Connecticut, and Richard Violette of West Hartford, Connecticut, as Co-Chairpersons. It is at this particular event that the Violette Genealogy-“The Descendants of Francois Violet” will be made available to the membership. (*Ed note: Subsequent Reunions have been held in Portland ME (1987), Grand Falls NB (1990), Lewiston ME (1993), Shelburne Falls NH (1996), Westford MA (1999), Edmundston NB (2002), Gorham NH (2005), Windsor Locks CT (2008), and the 13th will be held Van Buren ME (2011).*)

The first reunion was definitely the stepping stone to the formation of our Violette Family Association. Subsequent reunions provided the stage for its rapid growth. The formation of an Association has indeed been very rewarding to all. Bonds have been formed which otherwise never could have materialized. Acquaintances, which lay dormant for 30, 40 and even 50 years, have been renewed. Friendships between brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins have been deepened and strengthened.

It is with much pride in our heritage and with a deep sense of gratitude to our ancestors that we can truly say: **We Are One**”.

(End of Rita’s section “The Birth and Growth of the VIOLETTE FAMILY ASSOCIATION”)