

**A Guide to the
“Saint John Valley Times, 1991-1999 [microfilm]”
MCC-00193**

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General Information

Collection Title: "Saint John Valley Times, 1991-1999 [microfilm]"

Date Range: January 1991 - December 1999

Accession Number: MCC-00193

Shelf Numbers: AF-202-219, UF-202-219

Quantity: 36 35mm microfilms (18 negatives, 18 use copies)

Introduction.

The "Saint John Valley Times, 1991-1999 [microfilm]" is a preservation microfilm of the Madawaska, Maine newspaper, Saint John Valley Times, covering the period January 1991 to December 1999. The Archives owns both the original negatives and a used copy of this microfilm edition.

Provenance.

This microfilm edition was produced for the Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes by Archival Microfilm Services of Hamden, Connecticut, using newspapers supplied by the Acadian Archives from their own collection supplemented by copies from Blake Library and Madawaska Public Library.

Acknowledgements.

This project was made possible in part by a matching grant from the New Century Community Program, a statewide cultural initiative funded by the people of Maine. The Archives previously produced a preservation microfilm edition of the St. John Valley Times for the years 1957-1990.

A number of individuals and institutions have helped smooth the way toward the completion of this project and we happily acknowledge their help. The Archives gratefully acknowledge the invaluable assistance of RSVP volunteers Hernelle Pelletier, Simone Pelletier, and Patricia Dow in reviewing the Archives' collection of the St. John Valley Times for completeness and print quality. Our thanks also go to the Madawaska Public Library and the University of Maine at Fort Kent's Blake Library for permission to borrow replacement pages. We are very grateful to St. John Valley Times publisher Don Levesque for permission to produce and for publication rights to this preservation microfilm. Thanks also to Anne Ball, New Century Preservation Grant officer, for her prompt and courteous replies to our many questions. Finally, to the Maine State Legislature and the people of Maine, thank you for this opportunity to help preserve our region's history.

Pagination and Print Quality Note. Please note that the pagination of the St. John Valley Times for the period 1991-1999 is occasionally erratic or incomplete. Information concerning publication dates, volumes, and numbers also contains errors and inconsistencies. Although the print quality of the Times has improved dramatically since

it's founding, problems such as print-through, smears, and poor resolution still occasionally occur. Archives staff and volunteers reviewed this edition for completeness and print-quality prior to microfilming. To the best of our knowledge, this microfilm edition is complete for the issues contained herein. Whenever possible, substitutes for poorly printed or mutilated pages have been provided.

Saint John Valley Times Historical Note.

In 1957, Emile Genest and Joe Falter, respectively editor and advertising manager of the Thomaston Express (Thomaston, Conn.), decided to start their own English-language weekly newspaper. Although neither was a native of the Saint John Valley, they had both visited the area and they concluded that the communities of Van Buren, Madawaska, and Fort Kent could support a weekly paper.

With financing through sale of stock to friends, relatives, and a few valley residents, Falter and Genest set up an offset printing press in an old apartment building at 372 East Main Street in Madawaska. On 2 October 1957, some 6,000 copies of the first 16-page tabloid-size issue went on sale.¹

In an editorial introduction, Falter explained that the St. John Valley Times would be a weekly paper, published every Wednesday, serving an area stretching from Van Buren on the east to Saint Francis on the west and as far south as Eagle Lake. According to Falter, the Times, founded on the principle of public service, would fill the Valley's need for a newspaper to carry local news and views.

Genest sold his interest to Falter in 1958, shortly thereafter Falter's brother-in-law, Forrest "Whitey" Rahrig, joined the staff. After a difficult first few years, the Times stabilized financially and began to grow. Circulation increased and the format expanded from 16- and 24-page issues. For approximately nine months beginning in late August 1959, the Times included a four-page family-oriented "Emerald Section" printed in black ink on green stock. A four-page "Canadian Section," covering local news and events on the New Brunswick side of the Saint John River, began in 1960 and continued until 1973. In 1967, the Times moved to larger quarters at its present location on 696 Main Street in Madawaska.

Falter sold the newspaper to Rahrig in 1971, and two years later Rahrig sold out to Walls Newspaper, Inc, (currently known as Cleveland Newspapers) of Cleveland, Tennessee. Other publishers after Rahrig were Barry Stokes (1980-1986), Emery L. "Legs" Labbe (1986-1996), and present publisher Don Levesque.

The St. John Valley Times has come out on an uninterrupted weekly basis since its first printing. With the exception of a four-page special edition published in November 1958, there have been no extra issues. At present, the Times news coverage area spans east-west from

¹An unrelated weekly newspaper of the same name was published for an undetermined number of years in Fort Kent beginning in the latter half of the 1930s. Early editor/publishers were Lathrop Aroniss and Ella Austin Leidy.

Hamlin to Allagash and extends as far south as Winterville. Its current circulation is 6,500. Approximately 5,000 copies are sold within a fifty-mile radius of Madawaska, with additional distribution in Canada and central Aroostook County. Another 1,200 copies are mailed to out-of-state subscribers, primarily in New England and Florida, many of whom are former Valley residents.

The Times's page size has always been a five-column-by-sixteen-inch tabloid. Initially, type was set eight point on a nine-point slug. However, in 1975 the Times opted for eight-point type on an eight-point slug, a cost-efficiency move which gained 12% more room for news in the same amount of space. Since the mid-1990s, the Times has used automatic leading with a 10-point type. The Times was generally printed on heavy offset white paper stock for the first seven years of publication, but it has been printed on newsprint since 1965.