

Irenee Cyr Collection
MCC-00526

Total Boxes: 2
Linear Feet: 0.72ft

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Fort Kent, Maine
September 2022

Irenee Cyr Collection (MCC-00526)

Shelf List Number: UM-526, UP-526, V15-526

Collection Overview

Creator

Claude Gregory (Greg) Cyr

Dates

Undated

1922-06-29

c.1947

c.1957-10-09

Extent

3 folders, 1 photographic box, and 1 oversized oil painting.

0.90 cubic ft.

Provenance

Donated by Claude “Greg” Cyr, Irenee’s grandson

Language

English

Conservation Notes

Handle photographs and oil painting with care.

Conditions Governing Access and Use

Restrictions

Access: Not applicable

Physical: Not applicable

Technical: Not applicable

Rights Statement

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Recommended Citation

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Collection Description

Historical and Biographical Information

Claude “Greg” Cyr was born and raised in Fort Kent, Maine. His grandfather, Irene, was in the Maine legislature and helped keep the Normal School-one of UMFK’s former names’ open. Claude’s middle name is Greg and he has always gone by this name, so from here on out, he will be referred to as Greg. After high school, Greg enlisted in the navy and served for twenty years. After getting out of the navy, he worked in intelligence in the Maryland and Washington D.C. areas. He currently lives in West Virginia and visits family and friends in Maine and Fort Kent about once a year (minus 2020-2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic.)

This painting was sent to him by a family member, but he isn’t sure which one. He doesn’t have any provenance on when, where, or why it was created, but there is a tag on the back from a business in Maryland that made him think a relative in Maryland sent it to him, which turned out to not be the case. Because Greg is getting older and does not believe his family will keep the photo, he donated it to the Acadian Archives hoping we can use it and preserve it. He also donated some pictures of his grandfather and other relatives as well as related materials from his family about his grandfather and his career in the U.S. Postal Service and State Legislature that he thought would be related to the painting.

Irene Cyr was born on August 22, 1874 in Grand Isle, Maine as one of eleven children born to Eloi and Ozithe (Levasseur) Cyr. Irene and his family lived in Old Town and later Caribou before moving to Fort Kent in 1895. Irene’s first job was as a carpenter, a career he kept for twenty years. He was a musician, playing the saxophone, clarinet, bass fiddle, guitar, and banjo. Irene also helped organize the first band in Fort Kent- the Fort Kent Brass Band in 1898. He also enjoyed dancing and was active in baseball, fishing, hunting, and theater.

Irene Cyr met his future wife, Elodie Pinette at her graduation from the Madawaska Training School, where his cousin, Vital Cyr, was the principal. They were married in January 15, 1900 and had eleven children.

In 1904 Cyr went into the furniture business with the late Cleopha Nadeau. From 1907 to 1910, he was foreman of the local telephone company. Starting in 1910, he served on the school board on and off for 30 years and was chairman for several years. Irene Cyr was also one of the founders of the local Union St. Jean Baptiste and a trustee of the St. Jean Society. He served as a grand knight of the Union St. Jean Baptists of America, and was the financial secretary for several years of the Catholic Order of Foresters in addition to being a longtime member. He was secretary of the Modern Woodmen of America, and a charter member of the Knights of Columbus.

Mr. Cyr was appointed postmaster of Fort Kent, in 1913, by President Wilson for a four-year term. He was later appointed to another term in 1920. From 1934 to 1948, he served again as postmaster. He resigned because of age limits in 1948. He was cashier at the First National Bank from 1924 to 1929; then, in 1939 he was elected first selectman of the town of Fort Kent and served until 1933.

Cyr was one of the most influential supporters of the Democratic Party in the St. John Valley, and was elected to the state legislature in 1911, where he served for seven years, where he acquired funds to remodel the Fort Kent area schools. During his time in the legislature, Cyr served on the Committees on County estimates and interior waters. In 1955 he fought

successfully to have the Madawaska Training School kept open when the state wanted to close it; at this time, it was re-established under the name of the State Normal School.

Scope and Content

This collection consists of newspaper clippings relating to/on Irenee Cyr, copies of genealogical charts on his family history, photographs of Irenee and friends/family and an oil painting of him. This collection was donated by Irenee's grandson, Claude.

Arrangement

Due to the small nature of this collection, only three series were made: manuscript materials, photographic materials, and an oversized painting. The processing archivist tried to keep the materials from this collection in the order they came in. They were put in folders based on their subject material: copies of newspaper clipping, genealogical charts, and a biography created by a grandchild, photographs, and an oil painting.

Separated Materials (If Applicable)

Not applicable

Subject Headings

Banks and banking

Biography

Clippings (Books, newspapers, etc.)

Genealogy

Photographs

Related Materials

First National Bank of Fort Kent: Minutes and Related Documents, 1919-1955, MCC-00007, Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

The First National Bank News bulletin and share certificate, Fort Kent, Maine, MCC-00392, Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent

Paul D. Thibodeau family collection MCC-00427. Acadian Archives/Archives acadiennes, University of Maine at Fort Kent.

Collection Inventory

Box	Folder	Description	Date(s)
Series I: Manuscript materials			
1	1	Copies of Irenee Cyr genealogical records	Undated
1	2	Copies of newspaper clippings on Irenee Cyr; \$5 bill from the First National Bank of Fort Kent signed by Irenee	Undated
1	3	A biography of Irenee Cyr written by his grandchild Louise Levesque and a second copy typed by the Acadian Archives processing archivist.	Undated
Series II: Photographic materials			
2		[] Stevens, Pat Ryan are sitting and Irenee Cyr is standing behind the tellers desk at the First National Bank at Fort Kent	1922-06-29

2	Irenee & Elodie (Pinette) Cyr Family picture legend	Undated
2	Picture likely taken after Elodie's funeral/burial service. Standing back row L to R: Armand, Leo, Arthur, Claude; Sitting front row L to R: Yonne, Irene, Bernice (Irene), Frank	c.1957-10-09
2	Picture likely taken after Elodie's funeral/burial service. Standing back row L to R: Armand, Leo, Arthur, Claude; Sitting front row L to R: *Patrick, Yonne, Irene, Bernice (Irene), Frank, *Elodie ¹	c.1957-10-09
2	Mr. & Mrs. Irene Cyr- Fort Kent	c.1947
Series III: Oversized painting		
Map drawer	A painting of Irene Cyr from when he was serving in the State Legislature. Artist and date are unknown.	Undated

¹ According to legend: *These two individuals were not present for the photograph but were superimposed after.