Guide to the Moses Joseph Rabideau Family Papers

2003.2

Special Collections
Benjamin F. Feinberg Library
State University of New York College at Plattsburgh
2 Draper Avenue
Plattsburgh, NY   12901

By
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Revised by
Dr. Gordon Pollard
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Title: Moses Joseph Rabideau Family Papers
Dates: ca. 1890-2003
ID: Collection 2003.2
Creator: Moses Joseph Rabideau family
Extent: 0.5 linear feet
Language of Material: English
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Subject Headings:
Rabideau, Moses Joseph. 1864-1946
Rabideau family
Plattsburgh (N.Y.)--History
Clinton County (N.Y.)--History
St. Jean the Baptist Society (Plattsburgh, N.Y.)
French-Canadians--Genealogy
Moses J. Rabideau w/ His Six Daughters in 1944
Left to Right: Anita Jackson, Albina Provost, Edythe McDonald, Moses Joseph Rabideau, Eva Myette, Anna Bourgeois, Vina Morrison
Edouard Rabideau, the only son of MJR, died from a fall in a construction accident in 1923.

Moses J. Rabideau with two of his nineteen grandchildren in 1937
Left: James Provost, Right: Katherine Jackson

Picture Presentation of Moses J. Rabideau and Achievement Award from St. Jean the Baptist Association
Special Collections, Feinberg Library, SUNY Plattsburgh, July 11, 2004
Left to Right: Eric Clark, Katherine Clark, Donald Jackson, Dr. John Etting (SUNY Plattsburgh President), Wayne Carter
Katherine Jackson Clark and Donald Jackson are Grandchildren of Moses J. Rabideau
Eric Clark and Wayne Carter are Great-Grandchildren of Moses J. Rabideau

Digital Photographs Courtesy Donald Jackson
Biographical Note

Moses Joseph Rabideau was born in St. Phillipe, Quebec, Canada, on October 10, 1864. His parents were Edward and Celeste (Rielle) Robidoux, and the family immigrated to Plattsburgh, New York, in 1865. Moses’ genealogy traces back to the first Robidou of North America, Andre Robidou, who married Jeanne Denote in Quebec City in 1667. About 1882 Moses Rabideau married Olive Gebo [Gibeau], with whom he had seven children, Edward, Anita, Albina, Edythe, Eva, Anna, and Vina. After Olive’s death in 1905, Moses married Lena Perrault (Paro) Varno, a widower, on Dec. 30, 1907. They had no children, but Lena had two sons by her previous marriage, Oscar and Wilfred Varno.

Moses Rabideau’s work as a prominent North Country contractor and builder began with him becoming a carpenter’s apprentice as a young man. As a lifelong resident of Plattsburgh, his ensuing career produced an impressive set of contributions to our region’s development. When he was 26, Moses had a supervisory role in the construction of the first Normal School in Plattsburgh, which opened in 1890. Other buildings that rose with his supervision included the capitol in Albany, the original Hotel Champlain, the Fort William Henry Hotel, the Glens Falls bridge, much of Trudeau Sanitarium, the Lake Placid Club, and the Saranac Inn. Additional works included development construction at Ausable Chasm and the hotel there, the first train and boat station at the south end of Lake George, much of the renovation and modification of the Plattsburgh Barracks, and a number of houses and buildings in Plattsburgh. Moses also planned and built the home of Rockwell Kent in Ausable Forks. Following the fire that consumed a large portion of Ausable Forks in 1925, Moses supervised much of the reconstruction work. Working with R. Prescott & Sons in 1926, he also supervised the rebuilding of St. John the Baptist Church in Keeseville after it was destroyed by fire earlier in that year. The houses he built for family members on Rugar Street, known as “Rabideau Court,” were taken down in the 1960s when the land became part of the Plattsburgh State campus and the site of Kent and Mason residence halls.

Moses Rabideau was an active member of the St. Jean Baptist Association of St. Peter’s Church in Plattsburgh for more than 50 years. He was elected to serve as Alderman for Ward 5 in Plattsburgh in 1913. After a long and successful career, Moses died at his home in Plattsburgh on August 11, 1946, at the age of 81, survived by his wife, six daughters, 19 grandchildren, and 16 great-grandchildren. Moses was interred in the family plot in St. Peter’s Cemetery in Plattsburgh, New York.

Scope of the Collection

The collection consists of a wide array family photos, documents, letters, and genealogical information related to the life, work, and families of Moses Joseph Rabideau. The bulk of the materials were compiled, arranged and presented in binders by the donors, Donald E. Jackson and other direct descendants of Moses J. Rabideau. Mr. Jackson, a grandson of Moses Rabideau, gives credit to graphic designer Nasser Fathi, and Azim Safaie, co-owners of Montgomery Printing Services, for the help with
this project. Frames were designed and constructed by Roger Moore of Rockville Art and Frame, Rockville, Maryland.

Container List

Box/folder:

1/1 Volume I binder titled “A Memorial Tribute to the Life of Moses Joseph Rabideau 1864-1946, Contractor and Builder, Plattsburgh, New York.” Sections include captioned photographs and notations

Section 1: Significant dates in the life of Moses Joseph Rabideau. Major building accomplishments in Plattsburgh and Northern New York
Section 2: The family of Moses Joseph Rabideau. The genealogy of Moses Joseph Rabideau back to the first Rabideau in North America, Andre Robidou, Quebec City, Canada, 1667
Section 3: The family homes built by Moses J. Rabideau in Rabideau Court on the properties of 49 through 57 Rugar Street, and the expansion of the SUNY Campus in the 1960s
Section 4: Champlain Valley Hall, formerly the Nurses’ Residence of the Champlain Valley Hospital and its connection to the family of Moses Joseph Rabideau
Section 5: St. Peter’s Church, a French-Canadian Parish in Plattsburgh and the family of Moses Joseph Rabideau
Section 6: The death of Moses Joseph Rabideau on Sunday, August 11, 1946. Includes photocopies and transcriptions of newspaper obituary notices, and genealogical data from The Robidou Genealogy compiled by Clyde M. Rabideau, copyright 2000

1/2 Volume II binder titled “A Memorial Tribute to the Life of Moses Joseph Rabideau 1864-1946, Contractor and Builder, Plattsburgh, New York. Appendix.” Sections include photographs, photocopies of documents and newspaper articles, family correspondence related to genealogy, and genealogical data from The Robidou Genealogy compiled by Clyde M. Rabideau, copyright 2000

Section 1: Copy of the Will of Moses J. Rabideau. Copy of land purchase of 57 Rugar St. recorded in Clinton County Court 1902. Copy of law suit settlement
Section 2: The Morrison Family. Malvina Rabideau marries Frank Morrison, Sr.
Section 3: The Rabideau Family. Edouard Rabideau marries Sophia Downs
Section 4: The Bourgeois Family. Anna Rabideau marries Charles Bourgeois
Section 5: The Myette Family. Eva Rabideau marries Joseph Myette
Section 6: The McDonald Family. Edythe Rabideau marries Frank McDonald
Section 7: The Provost Family. Albina Rabideau marries Frank L. Provost
Account ledger of “M.J. Rabideau Plattsburgh, N.Y. Contractor and Builder 1915" for construction projects, itemizing materials and labor costs. Approximately 28 pages of entries at the beginning of the ledger had been cut out. The first surviving entry is on page 29 and dates to June of 1919; other entries run as late as December 1931.


A document giving special recognition and thanks from Donald Edward Jackson to three people from Rockville, MD, for their assistance with the compilation of this collection and the printing and framing of various parts of it.

Box 2: Oversize

Framed Honorary Membership certificate of Moses Rabideau in the St. Jean Baptist Association of Plattsburg, New York, for having been a member in good standing for 50 consecutive years, issued Feb. 6, 1940.


Background Sources Located in Special Collections

Rabideau, Clyde M. The Robidou Genealogy. Plattsburgh, N.Y., compiled and copyright 2000 by Clyde M. Rabideau
See also: Morrison Family Papers, MM23 (Miscellaneous Manuscripts)