

Joseph P. Peloquin (2nd Cousin 2X Removed of Charles Sieracki)

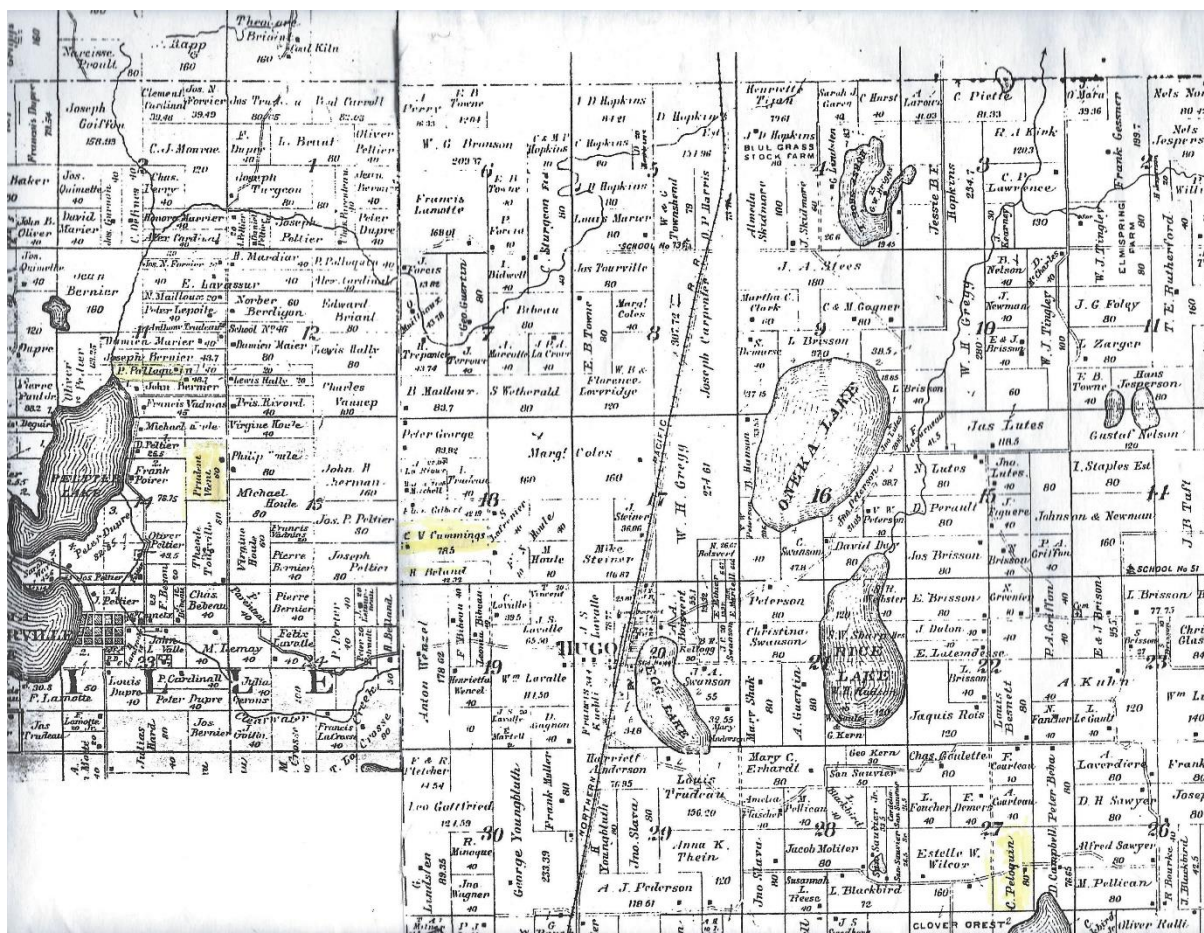
Joe Peloquin's family history parallels the history of my mother's family. Joe's grandfather Prisque Peloquin emigrated from the Sorel area along the St. Lawrence River to Centerville, where he bought a farm, married a French-Canadian, Eleanor Pelletier, and raised a large family. My mother's grandfather, Calix Peloquin, left the Sorel area to emigrate to Centerville, bought a farm, married a French-Canadian, Hedvige Peloquin, and raised a large family. Joe's grandfather was an uncle of my mother's grandfather: both descended from Prisque and Josephte (Bibeau) Peloquin. In point of fact, then, Joe's family shares the history of my mother's family, the history of the descendants of Francois Peloquin who left France as a soldier in the 17th Century and settled to farm in the Sorel area of Quebec.

Prisque Felix and Josephte (Bibeau) Peloquin

Prisque and Marie (Pelletier) Peloquin	Calix and Marie (Millette) Peloquin
Joseph H. and Emma (Dupre) Peloquin	Calix and Hedvige (Peloquin) Peloquin
Joseph P. and Irene (Rainier) Peloquin	Mary (Peloquin) and Alfred Cummings
Joelle (Peloquin) Knopf	Irene Cummings and Ervin Sieracki
	Charles Sieracki

Some years after the passing of her father, Joelle gathered together the treasured stories and pictures of her father, Joe Peloquin, and published them in a kind of annotated family album, entitled I Want to Tell You a Story. Joelle has graciously allowed us to look through the album and get to know what a delightful character her father was. In so doing, we get a glimpse of what life was like in these French-Canadian communities formed in Minnesota by our emigrant forebears, probably very similar to the life in the villages they left behind near Sorel, Canada.

Joe Peloquin stated that the address of the farm originally owned by his grandfather Prisque Peloquin was 7709 20th Avenue N. I joined together a plat map for Centerville and a plat map of a different year for Oneka Township (Hugo) so that we can get a clear idea of how close together were the farms (highlighted in yellow) of my cousin Joe Peloquin, my great-grandfather Prudent Vient, my Grandfather Charles Vient Cummings and my great-grandfather Calix Peloquin. Following the map are pages taken directly from Joelle Knopf's delightful account of the stories told by her father, Joseph P. Peloquin.



Plat Maps of Centerville and Oneka Township (Hugo)

I would like to record the history of my great-grandfather, grandfather, my father and what I can remember. My name is Joseph Peloquin. I was born September 6, 1912, today is July 18, 1992. My great-grandfather, Prisque Peloquin was an adventurous man. He left Sorel, Canada to canoe from the headwaters of the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico. He paddled south with no apparent incident but on his return trip he encountered Indians near what is now St. Paul. He hid in a cave and it is said that an Indian lady fed him while he was there hiding. The only settled area was St. Anthony in what is now Minneapolis. He was able to get there and continue his trip back to Sorel where he married Josette Bibeau.

Following flooding of the St. Lawrence River, and land being scarce and expensive, his son, also named Prisque, set out to acquire new land. Hearing of land available in Centreville in the territory of Minnesota, he set off. He walked down to "take a look". He liked what he saw and walked back to Canada to get money from his parents for the purchase of 40 acres. He returned to claim his land in this new Minnesota. He was 13 years old at this time.

He later built a two-story house and a barn. He married, Eleanor Pelletier who later became a midwife. They had seven children, Lenore,

Mathilda, Margaret, Marie, Alfred, Prisque and my dad Joseph Hercule Peloquin. Joseph lived at home to help run the farm. He married Emma (Rose de Lima) Dupre. Joseph, Emma, Prisque and Eleanor lived together in the house. Soon Joseph's family began to grow, Louis, Edmond, Albert, Alfred, Dennis, Edward, Joseph (me), Ellen and Leonard. Except for Ellen and Leonard all of the others were born in that first house. My brother Edmond died of diphtheria in 1904 at the age of 4.

I remember this first house well. I slept upstairs and the interior was timber with a rough opening to the second floor. My grandfather, Prisque, died in 1912 so I never met him but grandma lived with us until her death in 1921. This original house sat on a hill just southwest of the present day house which is at 7709 20th Ave. No. My father acquired the property about the time of WWI and he purchased an additional 51 acres. With a growing family the old house became small so a new house was built.

Waste not want not. The old house was put into use. It was rolled on logs to sit near the newly built house. The old kitchen became the chicken coop and was separated and placed on a rock foundation. The living room became the granary. The garage was next to the granary and there was a car in that garage from 1917 on. We planted 3



Prisque and Eleanor Pelletier Peloquin



Joseph Hercule and Emma Dupre Peloquin with
sons Louis, Edmond and Albert.

rows of 9 apple trees, some Wealthy and some that were earlier, and 3 plum trees in the backyard. The barn faced east and west, you entered the barn on the upper floor where the hay was stored, and the lower floor was where the cows and horses were. There was also a silo. I married in 1934 and my wife Irene (Rainer) and I lived with my parents so I could help run the farm. I started to paint that silo but never finished because I got a job in the city. The silo is still only partially painted today.

Our farm was located at what is now 7709 20th Avenue No. In those days 20th Avenue was a dirt road called Fort Tuyau. Fort meaning community and Tuyau meaning pipe because each of the houses had a stovepipe sticking out of it. I lived in a community of French Canadians. Our immediate neighbors were Ed Halley, Edward Marier and Anthony Trudeau. We also had a garden in the front of the house toward the road where we grew vegetables and fruit for our own use. A storm knocked down our original barn so we rebuilt it and there was a windmill, and a house for milk. Our milk was brought to the creamery in town. Once, lightning struck our house in the kitchen near the telephone, there was a ball of fire out of the phone and the wallpaper burnt. The house had been built in about 1915. My father gave two

acres of our property on the northeast corner to build Fort Tuyau School. Later Centreville built a school and I went to first grade there. I took the school bus in the summer and a horse drawn vehicle in the winter. Sometimes I would skate across Peltier Lake to St. Genevieve's rectory and walk up the hill to school. The first Centreville school stood where the present day school parking lot is. We played ball where the present school stands. We all spoke French but I remember one of my teachers could not speak French and we could not speak English.

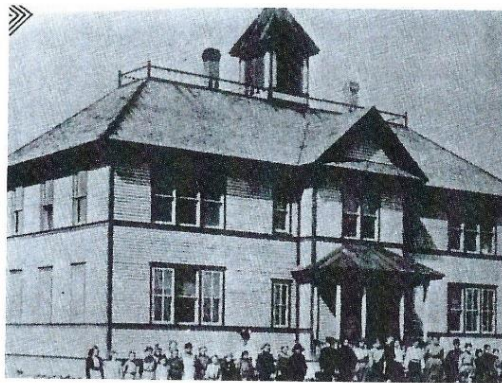
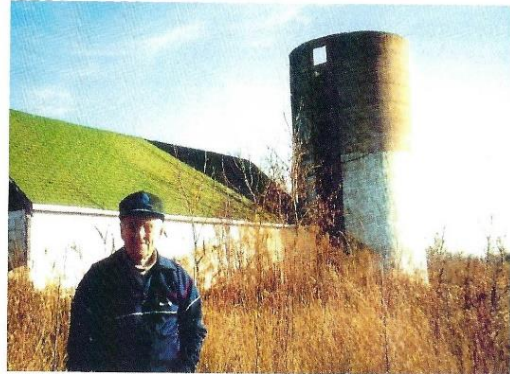
My father owned all his own farm equipment, a grain seeder, a corn seeder, disk, drill and tractor. He often would lend them to other farmers to use. One piece of equipment remains on the property today, the drill. A drill is a planter. There was a step in the back to stand on to load the seed and two horses were used to drive it. It would make a groove in front, the seed would fall into the groove and the chains that dragged in back would make the soil cover the seed as it passed over the groove.

We had 5 or 6 horses on the farm until we got a tractor then we needed only 4. When we had 6 horses some could rest while others worked. Our horses were big and we used 3 on the disk, 2 on the grain or corn seeder and 4 on the plow. It was hard work for the horses.

Fort Tuyau School



Joe and the partially painted silo



Centreville School

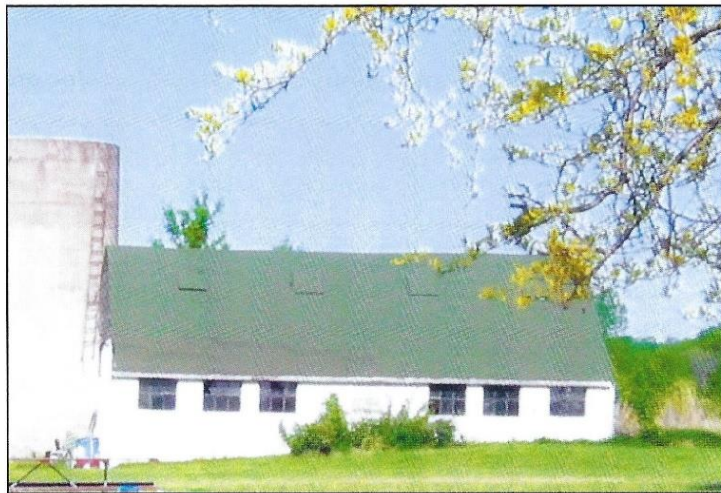


Joe with the original farm drill

The horses were not the only ones who worked hard on the farm. My mother, Emma, worked from sunrise to sunset. With such a large family there was no end to the daily laundry and cooking while my father did the milking, planting and harvesting. All the children also worked doing various farming chores, depending on their age.

I remember the kitchen being always so hot because of the wood burning stove for cooking or boiling the water for the laundry. This took a great deal of wood and my brother Ed and I had the job of going to Peltier Island to chop that wood. Mrs. Peltier owned the island and she lived next to what is now Kelly's Bar. She made a deal with my dad for chopping and delivering the wood, she said, "you give me one load and you can take one load free". We could cut 40 to 50 trees in each load.

The only piece of farm equipment that we needed and did not own was a thrasher. That was owned by Tom Proulx. It took 5 people to operate, one was the engineer, one on the water tank,



Barn at Joseph H. Peloquin Farm, 7709 20th Ave. No., Centerville.

one was an oiler, one was the owner and one a bagger- man. The extras were pitchers. We mostly thrashed oats. We also grew barley, corn and potatoes on our farm. My father would go to market with the harvested vegetables. He would start out about 4 a.m. and arrive at the market in St. Paul at about 6 a.m. He took the same route each time. The horses knew the way back, so my dad would sleep in the wagon

as the horses walked home.

There was a man who owned a store at Rice St. and Roselawn and my dad would sell him potatoes for twenty five cents a bushel just to get rid of them. We grew so many potatoes that some would rot before we could use them.

I Remember ...

Higgins Lake, in Forest Lake, use to be almost dry. It had grass growing on it and you could just walk across. Irene's brothers, Sonny (Joe) and Bud (Walter) and I went pheasant hunting. A roaster got up and I don't know who hit it but it was shot through the heart. How did I know? Any bird that is shot through the heart will fly straight up as far as they can and then they drop. It fell on the highland and all at once it was amongst the chickens at a nearby farm. The chickens were clucking because the pheasant rooster was dead in their coop. Sonny went into the coop and retrieved it. Boy those chickens were excited and the farmer wasn't too happy with us either

Hunting ...

I started hunting when I was 15 or 16. I had an old double-barreled shot gun. One of them had a hammer that didn't work and this one was an old ring barrel, guns are different now. I was going duck hunting and the water was low at the end of our farm near the island where a creek ran. Sometimes during high water it would come way up to our woods but the city would dry it up and all there would be was a creek and that is where I started hunting mud hens and ducks. City guys would come up there to hunt and they would be loud and the ducks would quack and off they would fly. You didn't need a dog. They would go across the water and get onto the island where there were rushes. I got close to the lake and the people were talking loud and they chased the ducks away so I

thought those ducks must be going someplace else to land. Where did they go? I went north with my car. It was a few years after the dry years of 1934, 35 and 36 and they had had peat fires all over Rice Lake and elsewhere. There were some peat fields further north so I parked there. It was an open field with highland and corn. Pretty soon I saw many birds off in the distance. I thought maybe it was pigeons because from far away they sort of look like ducks flying, but why pigeons here? I finally saw that they were mallards, about 100 of them and they landed. I thought my gosh it can't be, this is highland. I started walking toward the highland but could not find them. Where the heck are they? I didn't see any water. What had happened was that the peat had burned an area about 100-200 feet in diameter and there now was water in this area. There they were. I shot so many I had to reload my gun twice.

I didn't go back to the lake after that. I now knew where the hidden water was. The cornfields around the water would hide the area and the ducks could not see you come up to them. I sold them to people and that would pay for my license, shells, gas and I would have a little money left over and best of all, I didn't have to clean them.

I WANT TO TELL YOU A STORY

A group of us went pheasant hunting and we came upon some bird tracks. We stood there and watched Joe get on the ground and check out those tracks. Joe went in one direction, the rest of us went in another. As we were walking, we heard several gunshots in the distance. After hours of hunting and with nothing to show for it, we returned to the cars. Joe was sitting there eating lunch, with his share of birds near by. We had none.

(recalled by son-in-law Chuck Knopf)



My Evening Prayer.

I visualize Jesus when I pray these prayers. The Our Father, The Hail Mary and the Glory Be to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit as it was in the beginning is now and forever shall be, world without end. Saint Ann, Saint Jude, the Holy apostles Peter and Paul and all the saints. To pray to God for my wife, Irene, that she be in heaven with her mother and father of whom she loved very much and also all of her brothers and sisters.

I pray for my father and mother and all my brothers that they also be in heaven.

I Pray for our family, Darlene, Rochelle and Joelle and all their families, for their safety, their welfare and for the salvation of their souls. I pray for all the souls in purgatory and also for my health and happy long life and the salvation of my soul and for a happy death, and when I leave the wonderful earth of ours that I will be in heaven with my wife Irene forever. I pray for my sister and her husband and their welfare and the salvation of their souls and for all the sick, and the lonely that are in hospitals and nursing homes and homebound and still on bended knees

I thank God for this wonderful home, and this bed to rest in.

(Come my little children follow us)

Dad, Grampa and Great-Grampa

This prayer that Joe Peloquin said every night is superimposed on one of his favorite pictures, the Priest River in Idaho.