

Jean Baptiste Cyr dit Croc and the Founding of Crocks Point

Evelyn Fidler

Jean Baptiste Cyr was born in Beaubassin (Chignecto, Nova Scotia) around 1709, the son of Jean Cyr and Françoise Melanson. He was one of at least ten children. He married Marguerite Cormier on January 26, 1734. They had at least nine sons and two daughters.

In 1750, Jean Baptiste moved the family to Fort Beausejour to take part in the unsuccessful defense of the fort in 1755. From there, the family moved up the Kennebecasis River to St. Anne's Point (Fredericton) in 1757. In 1763, after Moses Hazen's raid on St. Anne's Point, he and his family were taken prisoner to Québec. Sometime before 1768, he moved his family to a place now known as Crocks Point on the Lower Saint John River. Jean Baptiste was a maple sugar farmer and was part of international trade sending his maple sugar back to France.

The Acadian settlers, for the most part, were squatters on the property they occupied, meaning they were hard pressed to prove the title to their lands. This was not a big issue, until the arrival of the Loyalists in 1783 who were granted the same land the Acadians occupied. They unsuccessfully petitioned for the titles to their property, but they then asked the government for blocks of land in Madawaska and were successful.

On June 21, 1785 the petition was granted, and two hundred acres was given to each head of a family. Jean Baptiste's family met in his home and it was decided that half of the family would go to Madawaska territory and the other half to other areas granted to Acadian settlers in Northern New Brunswick. The successful resettlement would also provide more visits from Catholic priests out of Québec. This was very important to the settlers.

Jean Baptiste did not live to move with his family. In May 1785, he walked through his farm one last time where he bitterly was heard to have exclaimed "My God! Can it be true that there is no place left on earth for a 'Cayen' (Acadian)?"

How did Jean Baptiste receive the nickname Croc? One source stated that he was known to have said, in regards to his maple sugar customers, "Vont-ils en avoir, de quoi a CROQUER". CROQUER being loosely translated to "crunch".

Sources:

Craig, Beatrice and Dagenais, Maxime. The Land In Between. Gardiner, Maine: Tilbury House, Publishers, 2009. 50-61.

"Jean-Baptiste Cyr dit Croc, II", <https://www.geni.com/people/Jean-Baptiste-Cyr-dit-Croc-II/6000000003469299074> (accessed November 7, 2020)

"Pierre Sire", <https://www.acadian.org/genealogy/families/cyr/pierre-sire/> (accessed November 7, 2020)