

## **Pascal Poirier House Shediac, New Brunswick**

The oldest house in the seaside town of Shediac looks perfectly at home in a neighbourhood of sweeping lawns, gardens and Victorian trim.

The one and a half storey woodframe house was the birthplace and home of a great Acadian patriot, Pascal Poirier (1852-1933). Pascal was the 12th and last child of Simon Poirier and Henriette Arsenault, natives of Grande-Digue, a few kilometres away on Shediac Bay.

Pascal Poirier was a brilliant young man, educated at College Saint-Joseph in Memramcook. During his lifetime, Poirier earned a reputation as an advocate of Acadian causes, an able lawyer, writer and literary man, and civil servant. In 1885, he was chosen by Prime Minister John A. Macdonald to serve as the first Senator from Acadian Canada.

For more than 150 years, the house remained in the Poirier family. When the town of Shediac acquired the house to preserve as an historical museum, heritage planners discovered that appearances could be deceiving. Bellemare LeBlanc, a specialist in Acadian houses at the University of Moncton, searched beneath the roof shingles and even under the floorboards to find clues to the truth about the Poirier House.

The first mystery concerns the age of the house. Oral tradition says the house was transported from Grande-Digue by Simon Poirier when the family moved to Shediac in 1829. That means it was built sometime



before 1829, because it would have made no sense to move a newly built house.

The Acadian pedigree of the house is certain. Tell-tale features are the hand-hewn timber frame, traces of a masonry fireplace, for heat and a cooking fire, and evidence of a grenier, or granary, on the second level. Another Acadian feature is the summer kitchen which juts out behind the house. LeBlanc looked to the very bones of the house to find an unmistakable feature of Acadian construction: the H-bend, where the joists of the main floor meet the ceiling. Neither French nor English builders used this method. Over the years, the changes the Poiriers made to their home reflected new technologies and fashions.



Carmel Brun, a Shediac councillor involved in the conservation of Pascal Poirier House

Photo contributed by Studio Sormany

“There is no known surviving example of an Acadian home from before the Expulsion,” Bellemare LeBlanc said. Every Acadian house is a treasure. That makes the birthplace and home of Senator Pascal Poirier precious.

For more information, follow this link:

[http://www.historicplaces.ca/rep-reg/affichage-display\\_e.aspx?id=1249](http://www.historicplaces.ca/rep-reg/affichage-display_e.aspx?id=1249)