

County Faces

By Elna Seabrooks
Staff Writer

December kicked off with a spectacular start on the first of the month when the initial shipment of **Louis Pelletier's** just-published book arrived at his home. The non-fiction illustrated hardback is a collaboration between the 90-year-old Allagash native and his daughter Cathie who is a successful novelist and screenwriter.

Louis' memoir, "A is for Allagash. A Lumberjack's Life," is a product that spans more than 20 years of interviews that Cathie did with her father and mother. "This is an exciting day. The press is coming," explained Cathie as her father was busy inspecting and reading his book. "It's very good," said Louis. "We couldn't do much better than this."

According to Cathie, the writing and eventual publication took about 18 months. "The book is almost in the form of a children's alphabet book. So it's for young readers as well as adult readers."

In the A section, Louis introduces the reader to his family and the lifestyle of northernmost Maine in the early 20th century: "Most of the men in our town made a living in the woods as lumberjacks It wasn't an easy way of life for men or horses. Most men were gone from their families until the next spring when they came out with the logs, which were floated down the rivers. My grandfather Nizaire Pelletier was the first one to bring the Pelletier name to Allagash."

In his book, Louis explains that here were no bridges then and his Papa", Tom Pelletier, ran the ferry cross the Allagash for 37 summers. It was, he said, a part of their lives because he, his sisters and brothers heard their Papa honk his horn after they went to bed. Sometimes he ferried passengers who were late and needed a ride across the river after he sat for the night.

The book continues in the alphabetical format with: B is for boats; C is for crosscut; and, so on. The obvious question was: "How did you deal with Z?" Cathie replied: "Z was tough. We said that as the string of Zs that means

bridge was built. He talks about how the flora and the fauna have changed. And, he took part in the log drive every spring. Now, logs are taken by truck, not the river."

Louis, according to his daughter, is still vigorous and not waiting around for things to happen. Now, in his nonagenarian status, she said "he is still trying to start a new business, rides his four-wheeler and plays his violin. He's pretty unstoppable. He built a camp last year that he has for sale and he'll be 91 in April."

Louis was married to Ethel Tressa O'Leary for 59 years until she passed away in December 2000. "There isn't a day goes by that I don't wish she were still here," he says on the dedication page of his book. In addition to Cathie, they had five other children — two boys and three other girls.

"He's a very supportive father. He wanted more than anything for his children to go to college because he only went as far as the eighth grade. It was very important for him and my mother that their children have college educations.

