

Another Bernier before him worked for the Canadian Government in the Arctic, namely Captain Joseph E. Bernier.

## STORY OF EUGENE BERNIER

as told by Joseph Bernier

Eugene Bernier, son of Francois Bernier and Adeline Landry, was born in St. Jean Baptiste, Manitoba on June 21, 1905. He lived on the farm helping his father and brothers, but Eugene was accident prone. At the age of seven, he received a blow to the head which made him unconscious for two weeks. He had gone to water the horses at the river (Red) with several other boys, and coming back they would hang on to the horses tail, — it was an easy way up the bank. The quiet old horse Eugene was hanging on to unexpectedly kicked, hitting Eugene on the forehead, pushing his forehead in, an imprint that stayed with him for life.



Eugene Bernier.

Seven years later, in the fall of 1919, while threshing with his brother Joe's threshing crew, near Arnaud, Manitoba, Eugene had another farming accident. Each day after threshing was finished, Eugene and several other boys would ride home to St. Jean Baptiste, on their team. One evening Eugene unhitched his team, separated them, giving the slower horse to the field pitcher, he rode the other. They did not follow the road as usual, but decided to go across country. The horse Eugene rode was not only fast, he loved jumping over obstacles, and he took

Eugene on a fast ride, jumping over stooks and ditches. When he came to a wider ditch he didn't make it across, landing on the bank with a jolt, which sent Eugene flying, tangling in the harness. Eugene was dragged about half a mile, being hit by the horse with every trotting step he took. Finally, unconscious, Eugene fell out of the harness, and was picked up by the field pitcher, who was coming behind. Fourteen year old Eugene was unconscious for four days. The doctor came every day, for four days, but nothing could be done.

In June 1932, Eugene helped his brother Joseph move to Fisher Branch, traveling by rail with the cattle car. When he arrived in Winnipeg the cattle car was switched and stayed in Winnipeg until the next morning when the train would leave for Fisher Branch. Eugene had ten cows to milk, but what to do with the milk? (one pig and four calves certainly could not consume all the milk). His question was answered when children came to watch him milk the cows. He told them he would give them milk if they got containers. Fresh milk, free for the asking in the depression years in the city, seemed fair enough, and, as the milk was being hauled away, more and more children showed up with containers. Soon all the extra milk was gone and Eugene's problem was solved. The same thing was repeated again the next morning when milking time rolled around. Arriving in Fisher Branch, Eugene and Joseph unloaded the cattle from the box car and drove them to the farm. Eugene stayed with Joe and his family for one week before returning to his own farm in St. Jean Baptiste.

In 1944 Eugene and Alphonse sold the farm and moved to town with their aging mother. In 1947 Eugene made several trips to Fisher Branch, no doubt to visit his brother Joseph and family, but Eugene also had other intentions as well! On April 21, 1948, he married Georgine (Georgette) Conan and they made their home on S.E. ¼ 36-24-2W. Over the years six sons were born; **Henri, Lucien, Edward, George, Robert, and Johnny**. With the help of his wife and sons, Eugene farmed one and a half sections of land, until his accidental death on his farm west of Fisher Branch on September 11, 1972, at the age of sixty-seven.

## ADOLPH AND POLLY BOCEK

Not always do boys' dreams come true, but to Adolph and Frank Bocek they did. These two brothers, along with their sister, Agnes, ventured north to Canada from Braidwood, Illinois. They homesteaded near Broad Valley.

To a nine-year-old girl, in Kolamaya, Poland, news of going to live in Canada was very exciting. In 1912, Paraska (Polly) Oleksuk boarded the boat with