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J. B. Couture Publisher of Le Messenger, Dies [Article]

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J. B. Couture ^{H-7-43}

Publisher of Le Messenger, Franco- American Leader, Dies

Jean B. Couture, 76, manager and owner-publisher of Le Messenger, the oldest French daily newspaper in the country, died last night at 6:10 o'clock at his home at 166 Webster Street, Lewiston. Mr. Couture suffered a shock five years ago and had not been in good health since then, although he had been seriously ill for only three weeks.

In 1933 Mr. Couture was awarded the Legion of Honor of France by the French Government for his work in the preservation of the French language.

Mr. Couture came to Lewiston at the age of 17 after serving as an apprentice for four years on "L'Evenement" at Quebec. He became a type setter on Le Messenger, which was founded by Dr. L. J. Martel in 1880. Seven years after the founding of the paper, Mr. Couture became manager, and on Aug. 6, 1891 he and his brother-in-law, Pierre Gullbault, purchased the newspaper.

When Mr. Couture first came to Lewiston, Le Messenger was a weekly publication, but under his guidance it was soon published twice a week and in 1933 daily.

On Liquor Commission

In 1933 Gov. Louis J. Brann appointed Mr. Couture to the first Liquor Commission in Maine. He served on the board until 1927. Mr. Couture has long been active in politics, serving two terms, as a Democrat, in the Maine Legislature.

In August 1938 Mr. Couture opened Lewiston's radio station WCOU.

Mr. Couture was born at Levis, Quebec, March 15, 1866, the son of Oliver and Marie Hebert Couture. His father was a schoolmaster in Quebec and he was one of the 18 children. The family resided in Labrador for three years, then returned to Quebec, where Mr. Couture continued school until he was 13. He attended normal school at the Chateau Frontenac, where he swept and built fires to pay for his education.

In late years Mr. Couture had turned over the business to his two sons, Valdore and Faust. The paper observed its 50th anniversary in 1930.

Active In Musical Organizations

Mr. Couture was active in musical and dramatic circles. He was a charter member of the St. Dominique Association band, the Orpheon, Maple choral society, and co-founder of the Musical-Literary club.

Besides his wife, the former Clara Brunelle, he is survived by his two sons, Faust, a lieutenant in the United States Army Air Forces at Washington, and Valdore, manager of Le Messenger; three daughters, Mrs. Mayard Moulton of Auburn, Mrs. Sybille Coventry and Mrs. Yvette Hashan of Lewiston; seven grandchildren, Jacqueline Coventry, Pauline, Jean-Paul, Constance and Claudette Couture, and Geraldine and Daniel Moulton; two sisters, Miss Alphonsine Couture and Mrs. Arthur Reny of Lewiston; a brother, Xavier of Quebec and several nieces and nephews in Detroit, Montreal, Quebec, Lewiston and Auburn.

DIED

In Lewiston, April 6, J. B. Couture. Remains at Fortin Funeral Home, 70 Horton Street. Date and time of funeral to be announced.