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Around 1840, in Verchères, on the rural route of Beauce which since then has become the main street in the village of Sainte-Théodosie, a modern but shapely Vulcan - Augustin Lavallée *swings his hammer* and beats time with metronomical precision. Hearth and home are combined: the forge is on one side, while on the other, stands the house where Calixa Lavallée first saw the light of day, on December 28, 1842.

Augustin Lavallée, or rather "Old Gustin" to use the idiom of the country folk was no mean individual. In this man, work and art blend into one and the same thing. Woodcutter, blacksmith, gunsmith, organ-builder, band-leader, conductor, piano teacher, *violinmaker* he was a versatile man "per quem omnia facta sunt". His activities like his talents were multiplied eightfold....

He soon felt the need for more breathing space; Beauce was stifling. He wanted a larger population that could use his various talents, so he moved to Verchères. He acquired a fair number of pupils who in turn became ardent devotees of Music. He formed an orchestra from a group of well known musicians, including the Geoffrions, related to my mother's family, the Dansereaus, kith and kin of the famous violin virtuoso, Alphonse Dansereau whose death was so untimely and of Jean Dansereau, our most illustrious contemporary French-Canadian pianist and also the names of Sénécal, Filiatrault and Desmarais. In 1860, this orchestra was considered