Please note:

The following scan was the best we were able to obtain. The version in the Fogler Library Special Collections is a photocopy rather than an original document.

We have no additional information about the location of the original.
Jean Magloire Belanger (thus baptized) seems to have been known as Magloire Belanger, without the given name of Jean. Was this simply because the name Jean was used only for baptismal purposes and that his first name was actually Magloire? Was he ever called Jean? According to the U.S. Census for 1900, he was going by the name of John Baker. Thus, it would seem that he had already Anglicized his name before this Census. Perhaps he did this when he became a naturalized citizen in 1865. If he did, we can easily understand how Jean became John; a straight translation from the French. But how did Belanger become Baker? If he wanted a "good English name" why didn't he choose "Smith" or "Jones" or some other "neutral" name for business purposes? We suspect that "Baker" was chosen because it sounded quite similar to the French word for a baker of bread: boulanger. It is a mystery which cannot be resolved. We do know that his children went by both Belanger and Baker. His grandchildren, however, are known only as Baker, except on their baptismal records where the name Baker-Belanger often appears.

Some Related After-Thoughts

- Is the word belanger translatable? If the first "e" did not carry an accent aigu, (Bélanger), then a very tenuous and appealing translation could be: Bel + Ange = Pretty Angel. However, it does not seem linguistically feasible that Belanger did not have the accent.

- Magloire, on the other hand, can be rendered into English: Ma + Gloire = My Glory.
JEAN MAGLOIRE BELANGER

A. CANADA

1. Jean was born at St. Roch-des Aulaines, Province of Quebec, Canada, on October 11, 1844. This town is on the Eastern bank of the St. Lawrence River, 67 miles northeast of Quebec City.

2. His father was Pierre Belanger. His mother was Pierre's second wife, Marguerite (Pelletier) Belanger.

3. Jean had six brothers and sisters, along with six half-brothers; a family of 14 souls.

4. When he was eight years of age, Jean left home to work for various families in exchange for room and board, as his own family was very poor.

5. At the age of seventeen or eighteen, he married a young school teacher. Celina Lapointe was about 21 years old, and came from a town on the eastern bank of the St. Lawrence River, ten miles southeast of Quebec City, called Levis.

6. In a marriage that would eventually produce thirteen children, two were born in Canada; Peter and Claudia.

B. JEAN COMES TO MAINE

1. In 1862 Jean arrived in Old Town, Maine. His wife and the two children remained in Canada.

2. After working at a sawmill for about one year, Jean went back to Canada and returned to Old Town with Celina and their two children. (We assume that they took up residence in a predominantly French-Canadian section known locally as "French Island".

3. From 1864 to (?) 1871, Jean cut logs and peeled bark for a tannery in Alton Township, located several miles west of Old Town.

C. FROM LABORER TO FOREMAN

1. From 1872 to (?) 1876, Jean operated a Birch mill at Lower Ebeemee Lake, six miles northeast of Brownville Junction, Maine. This lake was in the Lakeview Plantation. While living here we know that Jean supervised a crew which cleared the right-of-way for a rail spur to the Katahdin Iron Works. Also, we have ample evidence that his family joined him there and remained at this
Plantation until at least January, 1881, when one son was born there, John Baptiste Baker. The U. S. census for 1880 shows the following:

Township # 5-R4 (Lakeview Plantation), Piscatiquis County, Maine

Household of John G. (sic) Baker: U.S. Census 1880

- Selena (sic) 37 Quebec
- Peter 16 Quebec
- Claudia 14 Quebec
- Emil* 13
- Joseph 10
- George 7
- Helen* 6
- Edward 4
- Christine 3

* This is the only record which indicates the existence of these two children. We assume that they died rather young. And since there were 13 children born into this marriage, there was one other child for whom we have no record whatsoever. (Children not shown above are recorded elsewhere in this study.)

D. FROM FOREMAN TO BIG OPERATOR (In the Lower Valley of the Union River)

1. In May, 1887, Jean (John) recruited crews of lumbermen from Old Town and Bangor to work for him in and around the Ellsworth-Great Pond-Alligator Lake areas. For several years, John and his men supplied millions of board feet to saw mills near Ellsworth. He also sold tons of hemlock bark to a tannery in Aurora. Tannic acid was extracted from this bark which was used in the process of tanning animal hides.

2. In 1890, this "Alligator Operation" came to an end. We suspect that John was going broke.

3. He now turned his attention to an area twenty miles northward up the Union River watershed. He and his family went to a small community in Township # 39. There was a tannery here on the bank of Buffalo Stream and John went to work here for a short time. This tannery, owned and operated by the Shaw Brothers, was twenty miles northeast of Old Town.
E. THE UPPER VALLEY YEARS

1. After working briefly for the tannery, John again placed many crews to work cutting and driving logs, while others supplied hemlock bark for the tannery. Most of the timber was transported by water to saw mills in or near Ellsworth.

Note: At this juncture, perhaps a brief definition of the term "driving" would be in order for those of us who may not understand it. Because there were few roads and no trucks, logs were floated down a river or tributary to a saw mill. This was done during the Spring when the waters were at their highest level. Thus, a "drive" was a large collection of logs guided down these waterways by lumbermen to a saw mill or, in the case of pulpwood, to a paper mill.

2. With his headquarters at the 39 Tannery, Jean now had crews working in Townships # 2, 34, 39, and 40.

3. During the years (?) 1900 - (?) 1905, Jean built a three-story home comparable to the best homes constructed in this era. It was located about 100 yards south of the tannery/mill proper. An ell 20' by 16' connected it to a barn 100' by 60'. This barn provided storage space for 125 tons of hay, stabling for 15 teams of horses, 12 head of cattle, along with some pigs, chickens, and other livestock. An ice house was also built close to the barn.

F. THE LATER YEARS

1. With the rapid growth of the paper industry there arose a corresponding demand for pulpwood. Jean and his son, John Baptiste Baker, were quick to capitalize on this. Additional crews were recruited to cut, peel, and transport pulpwood. Although these two Bakers continued to supply timber to sawmills, their main business seems to have shifted more toward pulpwood.

2. It was during these latter years that Jean and his son transferred their base of operations to Bradley, Maine; to a home which Jean had previously purchased in (?) 1886.

3. In 1918, Jean (John) Magloire Belanger (Baker) was fatally wounded when he was kicked by a horse. He was 77 years old at the time of his death.

4. Eight years later, in 1926, his wife, Celina, died at the age of 86.

Note: Part of the basic outline for the above was taken from the book Munsungun To The Sea by George and Marjorie Baker, Vantage Press, 1972.
worked by John Magloire Baker & his crews c. 1887-1890
(Scale of map: approximate)
THE "39" TANNERY

During the late 19th and early 20th Centuries there were many tanneries in New England. These small mills were usually located on the bank of a body of water, and also needed to be relatively close to a good supply of hemlock trees. From the bark of the hemlock trees was extracted tannic acid, used in the "tanning" or transformation of animal hides into leather. Thus, these leather producing sites offered employment for lumbermen who could supply the bark, and also for those who might work at the tannery proper. So, it is not surprising that small communities sprung up around these tanning mills. They were communitites deep in the woods and somewhat isolated and distant from "civilization".

One of these tanneries which directly concerns us was located on the bank of Buffalo Stream in Township # 39, in Maine, twenty miles northeast of Old Town. It was here that Jean Magloire Belanger (Baker) brought his family in 1890.

At the time of his arrival the population of this small community would have been approximately fifty to sixty people living in an area of about 126 acres. Some of these inhabitants lived in the Company boarding house, while others either lived in their own homes or boarded with those who did have homes.

For further discussion of this community we resort to an outline format.

A. MISCELLANEOUS DATA

1. The 126 acres previously mentioned were, for the most part, within the confines of two geographical areas. One, atop Baker Hill, was known as the Upper Field. It extended for about a thousand yards in length and four hundred in width. In this field crops were grown along with much hay. Many cattle also grazed here. The second area lay at the foot of Baker Hill and was called the Lower Field. It was about one half the size of the Upper Field and part of it bordered on Buffalo Stream. Here could be found the tannery mill, the company boarding house, and several private homes, one of which was the Baker home/farm.

2. This settlement (the Tannery) was also known as Riceville. We suspect it was thus called because of a certain Frank Rice who owned and operated the only General Store in this community. Since his store also served as the Post Office, it does not seem unlikely that mail destined for the Tannery was probably forwarded to Old Town and addressed: c/o Rice's Store, The # 39 Tannery. Mail arrived twice weekly at the store, transported by stage coach.

3. The buffalo hides that were processed came from the Mid-West by railroad to Old Town. From Old Town they were transported to Greenfield, and then to the tannery by horse-drawn wagons over a corduroy road. It seems logical to assume that Buffalo and Little Buffalo Streams were thus named because it was buffalo hides that were tanned here.
4. Some of the homes had running water piped from a very large spring located on the side of Baker Hill. The Baker house/farm got water from its own well.

5. The everyday beverage was tea; coffee was seldom drunk.

6. Flour was sold in 250 pound barrels; crackers were also sold by the barrel.

7. In 1902, a telephone line was installed from Greensfield to the Tannery.

8. This community had a saw mill and a livery stable.

9. The names of some of the families who had their own homes were: Baker, Brooks, Buck, Smith, Priest, and MacDonald.

10. A Catholic priest (probably from St. Joseph's in Old Town) came twice a year to attend to various religious matters. While there he said "the Beads" (the Rosary) at the Baker house in front of a small shrine that Celina Baker had made.

B. SCHOOLING

1. There was a one room schoolhouse at the North end of Main Street. This street led out of the Tannery/Riceville.

2. Several of the teachers who taught at the school were: Mr. Madden, who later became a medical doctor, a Miss Mae Shed from New Hampshire, and Mr. Hiram Archer from Great Pond, Maine. Although Celina Baker had taught school previously, in Canada, there is no evidence to suggest that she taught here at the Tannery.

C. ENTERTAINMENT

1. There was a roller skating rink run by a Mr. Moxie. Since there were dances held from time to time, we assume they were held at this rink.

2. On many Sundays during the summer, people would go on a picnic down on the shore of Brandy Pond; a trek of about one and a half miles through the woods. While there, some went fishing, while others preferred to go swimming. The women and girls who "went for a swim" never ventured out into the water above their knees. The men and boys, however, swam about as they pleased.

3. From time to time, some of the unmarried women would prepare a "box lunch" and auction it off to the highest male bidder. The lucky bidder would then have the opportunity to share the lunch with the lady who made it. (One can only imagine how many romances this activity might have promoted.)
4. During the months of July and August a somewhat similar event took place. Many pies were made from the recently picked wild berries. These strawberry, blueberry, and raspberry pies were auctioned. Money realized from these auctions was usually put aside for Christmas gifts.

5. In the winter, children often went sliding down Baker Hill or skated on Buffalo Stream.

6. Winter was also a time for an occasional minstrel show. A certain Joe Patterson traveled to the Tannery from his home in Great Pond and put on quite a show. Joe, dressed as a Negro comedian, played a banjo, sang songs, and told tales of Southern folklore. No one ever wanted to miss a performance by the talented Joe Patterson.

D. THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF THE TANNERY COMMUNITY

1. In March, 1906, the Tannery building (mill) burned to the ground. Its owners the Shaw Brothers, decided not to rebuild. No longer would hides be tanned in Township # 39; no longer was there employment for the suppliers of hemlock bark nor for those who worked at the Tannery mill.

2. Gradually, most of the inhabitants (except for those who worked for John Magloire Belanger-Baker in his lumbering business), salvaged what they were able and sought work elsewhere. Many returned to Canada; others to New Hampshire, and some resettled in Maine.

3. It would appear that John Magloire moved his family to Bradley, Maine after the mill burned. However, it is possible that his family may have been resettled in Bradley before the demise of the Tannery community. Evidence would suggest that John had two homes as early as 1902. One at the Tannery and one in Bradley. Bradley town records show that John Magloire Belanger (Baker) sold a cow to another Bradley resident in May of 1902. After the Tannery fire we do know that his home at Riceville (Tannery) was still used as part of his lumbering business. We also know that his house was the last one to be torn down and that it served as a hunting camp for several years.

Note: The above data about the Tannery was derived mainly from two sources:

1. Conversations with Lena Lozier who was born at the Tannery in 1894. Her mother was Mary Baker Buck.
2. Munsungun to the Sea, co-authored by George Baker and his wife, Marjorie. George was the grandson of Jean Magloire Belanger and was born at the Tannery in 1898.
Notes:

1. If we were to visit the Tannery today without a knowledgeable guide, we would be hard pressed to find any evidence of this former little community. However, there is one remnant which we might find without too much assistance. If we were to search about 100 feet upstream from where Little Buffalo Stream joins Buffalo Stream, we would find a small section of the "Old Tannery Wall" on the East bank of Buffalo Stream.

2. The Tannery community, which came to be known as Riceville or the Riceville Plantation, was never officially designated by either name on any old maps of Maine ... that we are aware of.

3. The geographical coordinates of Baker Hill are: latitude 45°-03' north; longitude 68°-36' west. (Those of Old Town are: latitude 44°-56' north; longitude 68°-36' west.)

4. Jean Magloire Belanger-Baker built his home at the Tannery; the home in Bradley he purchased from an A. E. Perkins around 1896 and is still standing on Main Street. (It is not certain why he had two homes at the same time.)

5. Brandy Pond was first known as Williams Pond, taking this name after the Williams' family which first lumbered in this area. How it became known as "Brandy Pond" is filled with legend and not within the scope of this work.

April, 1993
Bradley Grammar School
All of generation #9 went here to school.

Philip Fleming & Mary Baker
Generation #8

Some ear' Bakers at Brandy Pond
Left to right: Celina LaPointe Belanger-Baker (wife of Jean Magloire Belanger-Baker, generation #7; Edward Belanger-Baker, generation #8; 1st boy is George Baker (holding horn), son of Joseph Belanger-Baker, generation #8; the next woman is Adelia Blanchette Belanger-Baker, wife of John Baptiste Belanger-Baker, generation #8. The 3 young girls from left to right: Leona Baker, generation #9, Lillian Baker, generation #9, (both are daughters of Edward Belanger-Baker, generation #8); Rose Baker, daughter of Joseph Belanger-Baker, generation #8, and the final woman is Marion Violette Belanger-Baker, wife of Edward Belanger-Baker, generation #8.

Photo perhaps taken at the #39 Tannery c. 1905.
Remnant of Tannery wall in Township #39, c. 1954

Boarding house for workers at the Shaw Brothers' Tannery in Township #39, c. 1895