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## An 80-Year Legacy That Continues To Grow



The Gardner Franco American Federal Credit Union's first location was the living room of Linus Allain's home in Gardner, MA, pictured here.

(Photo courtesy of GFA)

GFA Federal Credit Union will celebrate its 80-year anniversary this year. From humble origins to a newly built branch in Peterborough with state-of-the-art technology in an open concept floor plan, GFA continues to grow.

GFA, or "Gardner Franco American Credit Union" as it was once known, was the product of an idea by Linus Allain, a French-Canadian immigrant living in Gardner, MA. It was Allain's wish to create a credit union that would provide financial options to the then thousands of French-Canadian immigrants living and working in the Gardner furniture manufacturing industry. Allain presented his idea to the Bon Amis social club comprised exclusively of businessmen of French-Canadian origin in the Gardner area and, with substantial impetus and enthusiasm, the plans went forward to bring GFA Credit Union into existence. The by-laws by which the credit union would be governed were written and approved and after successfully

petitioning for approval by the state, the charter for the Gardner Franco-American Credit Union was issued on November 25, 1938.

Once the petition was granted, the 20 founding fathers pledged a total of \$755 and GFA was launched from the living room of Allain's Gardner home. It would remain there until 1941 when it would relocate to Parker Street in Gardner, where GFA's main branch still stands today. Eighty years later, GFA continues to grow, now offering membership to all those who live and work within central Massachusetts and southern New Hampshire, spanning nine branches in those respective regions. The new Peterborough branch stands to mark the growth of the credit union, as well as its ability to adapt and change with the times. From the living room couch of Linus Allain, to a fully equipped electronic discovery center in the new branch, GFA's goal has always been better banking for its members.



A patriotic bunting is hung with a "You'll like Keene" sign mounted on the roof placed by the Keene Development Company to promote the city as an industrial site, circa 1915. The Congregational Church, B. F. Tyler Confectioner, Central Market, Rossman's Gas & Electric, and Dodge's Pharmacy are pictured in this photo.

(Photo courtesy of Historical Society of Cheshire County)

## The Statue Of Liberty

On October 28, 1886, The Statue of Liberty was dedicated by President Grover Cleveland in New York Harbor.

The huge sculpture, by French artist Auguste Bartholdi, provided the beacon to millions of immigrants and citizens who would pass its position in the decades to come.

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