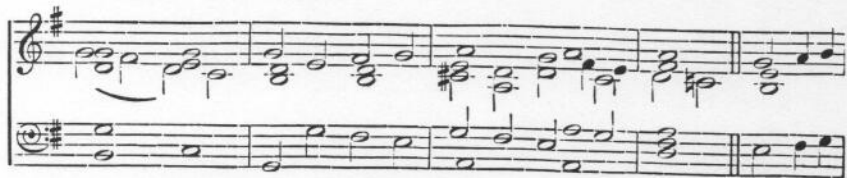
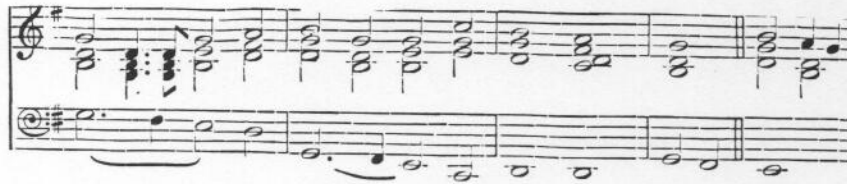


GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CONNEXION

IN GASPESIA

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**S**OLDIERS of CHRIST, arise,  
And put your armour on;  
Strong in the strength which GOD supplies,  
Through his Eternal SON;  
2 Strong in the LORD of hosts,  
And in his mighty power;  
Who in the strength of JESUS trusts  
Is more than conqueror.  
3 Stand then in his great might,  
With all his strength endued;  
And take, to arm you for the fight,  
The panoply of God.

*Rev. Charles Wesley, 1749.*

4 From strength to strength go on,  
Wrestle, and fight, and pray;  
Tread all the powers of darkness down,  
And win the well-fought day.  
5 That having all things done,  
And all your conflicts past,  
Ye may obtain, through CHRIST alone,  
A crown of joy at last.  
6 JESU, Eternal SON,  
We praise thee and adore,  
Who art with GOD the FATHER ONE,  
And SPIRIT evermore.

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST CONNEXION  
IN GASPEZIA

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Beginning in the 1730's the Church of England experienced a remarkable reform movement that originated with the evangelism of the brothers John and Charles Wesley. The influence of the Wesleyan movement spread, in time, across the Atlantic and was felt on the shores of Gaspé Bay. For the Channel Islanders, following a visit of John Wesley to their Islands in 1787, adopted the Methodist doctrine and practice. It was the men and women of Guernsey and Jersey who brought Wesleyan ideas and ideals to Gaspé when they came to settle on our shores and develop the Gaspesian fishery. In this recall of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion in Gaspesia, GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY will attempt to link this important element of the religious heritage of Gaspesians to the origins and experience of its founders and the spread of the Methodist movement overseas.

THE WESLEY FAMILY

The Wesley family of Welswe, near Wells in Somerset, England could trace their lineage back for a century prior to the Norman conquest of England in 1066 A.D. Samuel Wesley, the father of John and Charles, was a graduate of Oxford University and a priest of the Church of England. He married Susanna, the daughter of Dr. Annesley, Vicar of St.Giles, Cripplegate. Of their nineteen children, eight died in infancy. John and Charles were born and grew up in the Rectory of Epworth where their father was rector from 1697 until his death in 1735.

JOHN WESLEY - EARLY LIFE

Born in 1703 the foundation of John Wesley's character was laid by the early training and instruction that he received from his parents and particularly from his mother. He first left home to attend the Charterhouse School whence he entered Christ Church College, Oxford in 1720. That he made good use of time and educational opportunities is evident from his

riding and swimming, at which he was expert. In 1725 he was ordained deacon and three years later was admitted to a priest's orders of the Church of England. As a Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford, he preached frequently in churches near Oxford and also served as his father's curate. He was granted a Masters Degree in 1727 and for two years thereafter assisted his father in Lincolnshire.

### CHARLES WESLEY - EARLY LIFE

When he was a child of two years, Charles Wesley was saved from the fire that totally destroyed the Epworth Rectory. He grew up to enter the Westminster School at the age of nine years and so distinguished himself there that he was named a King's Scholar and School Captain in 1725. A plucky lad, he was known as a scrapper in defence of his friends at school. In 1726 he entered Christ Church College, Oxford, where it is said " he lost his first 12 months in diversions" - not an uncommon experience of many college freshmen to this day! Then, influenced by his elder brother, John, his life changed dramatically and he began to partake regularly of the weekly sacrament and persuade his friends to join with him. A fellow student of the time wrote - "here is a new set of methodists sprung up !" The name caught on and it was thus that Oxford methodism began its course. In 1735 Charles Wesley was ordained to the priesthood of the Church of England.

### WHAT WAS METHODISM ?

The Wesley brothers and their friends had no intention, originally, of founding a separate and distinct religious denomination. Indeed, they were anxious to uphold the established Church of England and to that end sought to infuse it with new life and spiritual energy. Their preaching emphasized the doctrine of assurance, conversion, holiness, personal experience and fellowship in Christian service. They proclaimed that all Christian perfection lay in "the love of God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength". They stressed a freedom of the spirit as opposed to the bondage of an organization. Their appeal was based on the reality of personal experience - of



spiritual emancipation through faith in Christ.

Ironically, it was to be this stress on spiritual freedom that brought the Wesleys and early Methodists into serious conflict with the established Church of which they were members and which they sought to reform and uphold. For when they preached that the wrongdoer and prisoner could be saved as easily as the virtuous, if they felt and accepted the power of God's love, the Church took the position that this doctrine encouraged licentious conduct. When banned from preaching from Church pulpits, the Methodists were forced to preach out of doors to the poor. John Wesley, during his career, is said to have ridden 225,000 tortuous miles on horseback to bring his gospel to the people of England. Forbidden, on occasion, to preach in the church of his late father, he spoke successively for seven nights in the churchyard, standing on his father's tombstone.

MISSION TO GEORGIA

In 1736, a year after the death of their father, John and Charles Wesley sailed for America as missionaries of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in the Colony of Georgia. They hoped to evangelize the Indians and though this plan did not succeed their Georgia experience was significant in that it gave perspective to their work and laid the foundations on which methodism would proceed and succeed. On their return to England a first Methodist Society was formed and its fundamental rules adopted. From this beginning the message of the Methodists was carried throught the British Isles and eventually overseas.

METHODISTS IN CANADA

While it is beyond the scope of this article to recall the introduction and spread of methodism in the American Colonies, suffice it to note that it had a continuous and

the Methodist Episcopal Church in America was established by a Conference held at Baltimore, Maryland.

Newfoundland was the first province of present day Canada to experience the Methodist influence. One of the Wesleyan converts, Laurence Coughland, began his preaching career there in 1765.

In 1787 William Black, who had been converted by newly arrived Yorkshire Methodists to Nova Scotia, began correspondence with John Wesley and in 1791 succeeded in bringing to that province six Methodist missionaries from the United States. From Nova Scotia the Wesleyan Methodist message spread to communities in New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. In 1804 the American missionaries withdrew to be replaced by preachers from England. The Wesleyan Conference of Eastern British America dates from 1855.

In the City of Québec, a Methodist by the name of Tuffy, an officer of the 44th Regiment, British Army, held the first Methodist service in 1780. Though Officer Tuffy returned to England in 1783, other Methodist preachers from England continued the work that he had begun in Québec. In Upper Canada, until the bitter War of 1812-1814, Methodist missionaries from the adjoining American states were active.

#### LA CHAPELLE DE LA COVE ST.GEORGE

In her remarkable and invaluable book, ST.MATTHEW'S CHURCH, PENINSULA, published in 1979, the Gaspesian historian and author, Dorothy Phillips, has recorded in interesting detail the arrival in Gaspé of the Guernsey Methodist, Peter Simon, and of the building of the Methodist Chapel at St.George's Cove in 1819. It was at St.George's Cove that Archdeacon George Jehoshaphat Mountain was invited to preach, in French, to the Guernsey Methodist congregation on his second visit to Gaspesia in the summer of 1826 and where he baptised and married. The reader will find the Archdeacon's comments, to be found in Miss Phillips book, of great interest. The following record of the baptisms and marriages will serve to recall some of the family

names of the community in 1826.

### BAPTISMS

- . Esther, daughter of Pierre LeMasurier and the late Mary LaFour.
- . Nancy daughter of Pierre LeMasurier and Rachel de Gavis.
- . Elizabeth, daughter of Joshua Dennis and Elizabeth LeMasurier.
- . John, son of Charles LeMasurier and Mary Thompson.
- . Enoch, son of Thomas Kinsela and Marie Lenfesty.
- . Jean, son of Pierre Simon and Marguerite LeMasurier.
- . Alexander Robert, son of Pierre Robert and Margaret Boyce.
- . Sophie, daughter of Pierre LeMasurier and the late Mary LaFour

God-parents for the baptisms above included:

Thomas Ahier; Marie LeMasurier; John and Thomas Brouard;  
William Simon; Jean LeMasurier.

### MARRIAGES

- . Thomas LeMasurier of St.George's Cove, fisherman, by licence, to Elizabeth Lenfesty, spinster, daughter of Nicholas Lenfesty, lately of St.George's Cove but now (1826) of the Island of Guernsey.
- . Philip Ahier of Indian Cove, fisherman, by licence, to Marie LeMasurier, daughter of Pierre LeMasurier of St.George(s) Cove, trader, both single persons.

Witnesses to these marriages included:

Thomas Langlois; Marie Kinsela; Francois Ahier; Philip Ahier;  
Elizabeth LeMasurier Dennis.

The historical literature on Gaspé has few, if any, more eloquent and touching tributes to its pioneers than that given by the late Dr. John Mason Clarke in "THE HEART OF GASPE" to the Guernsey settlers of the Forillon.



## MINISTRY TO THE GASPE METHODISTS

Perhaps one reason for the invitation extended to Archdeacon Mountain in 1826 to minister to the Methodist congregation of the Forillon was the bitter memory of their experience soon after the establishment of St. George's Chapel. For, according to the Report of Dr. Antoine Von Iffland (SPEC of early date) a radical preacher by the name of Hiran Lord had arrived at the Forillon from Jersey and, by his inflammatory preaching and intolerant actions, had set the passions of the settlements aflame. The Methodist Chapel, where he preached, was sacked by irate Catholics and the possessions of the Methodist settlers threatened. Dr. Von Iffland did not identify the religious denomination of Hiram Lord who he described as "fanatic, insane and likely a maniac".

In Archdeacon Mountain, descendent of a French Huguenot family that had found refuge in England from religious persecution, the Guernsey and Jersey Methodists found one who could understand, if not formally accept, their position as a dissentient minority. It is significant that in the decades following his visit to St. George's Cove it was the Anglican clergy resident in Gaspé that baptised, married and buried for the Methodist congregation of Gaspé Bay until there was a resident Methodist missionary.

## METHODIST MISSION OF GASPE

A 19th century book entitled, "A CYCLOPAEDIA OF METHODISM - From the Beginning of Methodism in the several Provinces to the Union of 1874" provides a wealth of information, including an official record of the Wesleyan Methodist Mission of Gaspé. The Gaspé Mission is shown as having begun in 1855 with the arrival in Gaspé of the Methodist missionary, Edmund S. Ingalls. For the next three years the Mission was vacant but in 1859 Isaac B. Tallman, whose life and work finds reference in the writing of Dorothy Phillips, arrived in Gaspé and remained until 1862. During the next four years the Methodists were served by David Jennings and Samuel E. Maudsley until the return in 1866 of Isaac Tallman for another period of two years. In 1872-73 Thomas Haddon was responsible for the Mission. From 1874 the Gaspé Methodists were an integral part of the Montreal Conference. John Lawrence followed Haddon and was assisted by

THE INWARD WITNESS

7.

William F. Marceau. The final listing of the "CYCLOPAEDIA" for the Gaspé Mission was John G. Brick who served from 1877 until 1880

As Isaac Tallman was a prominent pioneer of the Gaspé Methodist Mission it may be of interest to note that in 1872 he removed to the United States where he served the Michigan Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church. In 1874 he was stationed at Coloma in the Niles District of that Conference. As reported by Dorothy Phillips his wife was Felicia Shaw, the daughter of Joseph Shaw of Gaspé Basin.

ON A PERSONAL NOTE

In those seemingly distant days when I was a school-boy at Gaspé Intermediate School overlooking the inner Basin, the Methodist Church and its adjoining cemetery lay adjacent to the cemetery of St. Paul's Anglican Church. It was the Church of my maternal grandfather, Charles Brien, a Wesleyan Methodist from Jersey who had come to Canada with the Fruing Company. Though the Church building is long gone many members of its former congregation are buried in its tree-shaded cemetery, including my maternal grand-parents. Time and tide have brought many changes to Gaspé but there remains a heritage of the Wesleyan Methodists that is worthy of more detailed and scholarly recall than this article can convey.



# THE INWARD WITNESS

"Leisure and I have taken leave of one another," wrote Evangelist John Wesley in 1726. "I propose to be busy as long as I live. . . ." In the 65 years that followed, Wesley not only founded the Methodist Church, but also found time to set up the first Sunday schools in England, write a treatise on how to cure rheumatism with electricity, and ride 225,000 tortuous miles on horseback to bring the gospel to the poor folk of England.

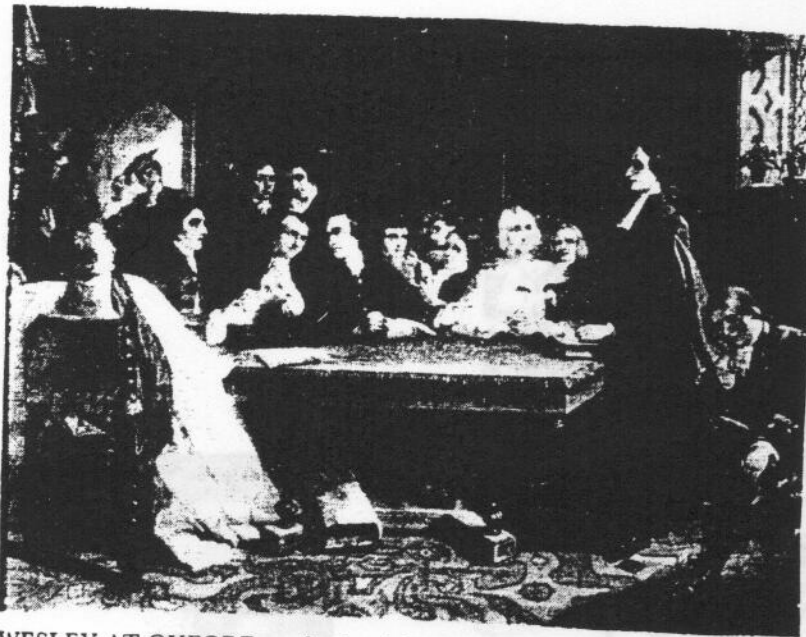


GOING AMONG THE NEGLECTED POOR, WESLEY TELLS MEN, GOD'S GRACE COMES FROM WITHIN.

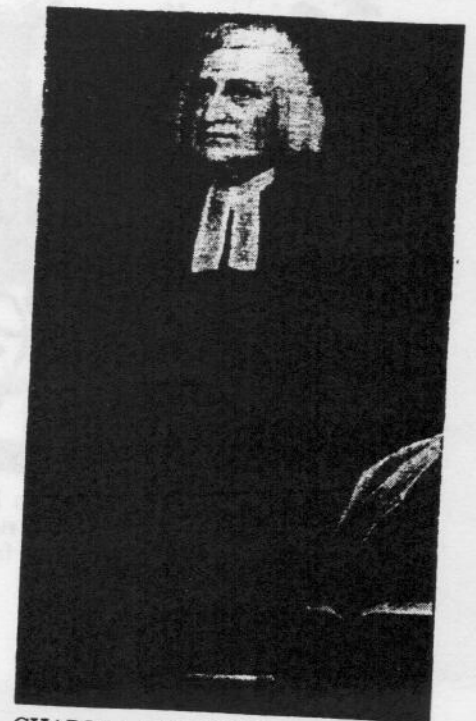
# FOUNDING

Pure and pious John Wesley  
was a wonder even to himself

John Wesley, born in 1703 in Epworth, was, when a young priest of the Church of England, an earnest man in an age of religious indifference. As a missionary in America he tried to impose on the Indians of Georgia all the formality and ritual of the church. When the girl he loved married another man, he excommunicated her from his church. Back in England one day in 1738, he had a revelation. "I felt my heart strangely warmed," he said. "Christ . . . had saved me from the law of sin and death." His friend George Whitefield had the same experience. Together the two set out to tell men that Christ could save them and to rouse them to live righteously. They worked in slums and prisons, hooted by unfriendly listeners. But Methodist societies grew and, after Wesley's death at 88, officially separated from the Church of England. In his lifetime Wesley rode hundreds of thousands of miles on horseback and preached 42,000 sermons, a record which moved him, at 83, to write, "I am a wonder to myself."



**WESLEY AT OXFORD** was leader of the Holy Club, a group of pious students. They met in room of Wesley (*standing, right*). Here Methodism had its origin in Spartan rules of praying regularly and receiving Communion weekly as a group.

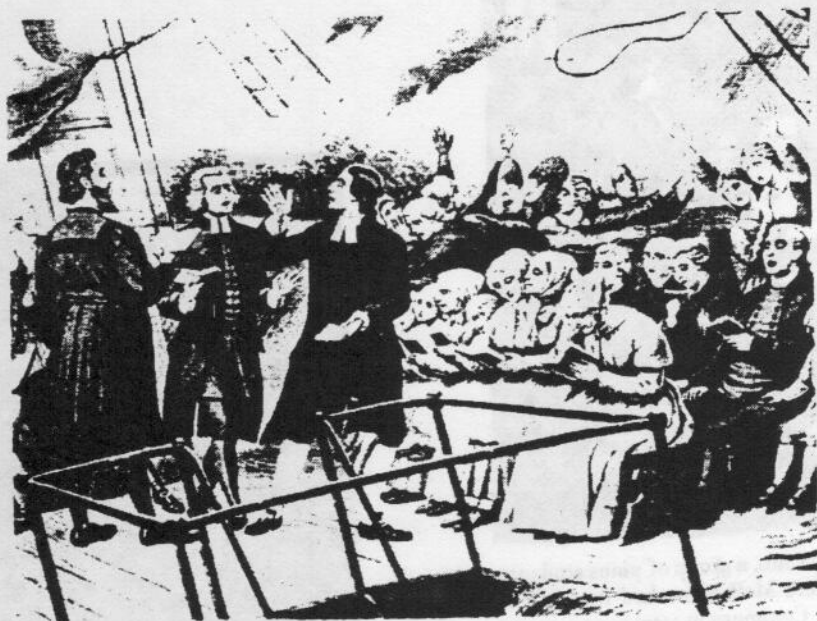


**CHARLES WESLEY**, brother of John, wrote 6,500 Methodist hymns, including "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing."





**STREET SERMONS IN ENGLAND**, which Wesley preached after coming back from America, were disrupted by mobs that heckled and threw stones. Wesley had to take to open-air preaching because he was barred from pulpits.



**ON THE WAY TO AMERICA** in 1735, Wesley sailed with hymn-singing Moravian exiles from Germany. Their strict morality greatly impressed Wesley, as did their serenity during storms which frightened the other passengers (*background*).



**HONOR CIRCUITRIDER**