

GASPÉ OF YESTERDAY

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THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

BY
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DR. JOHN M. CLARKE

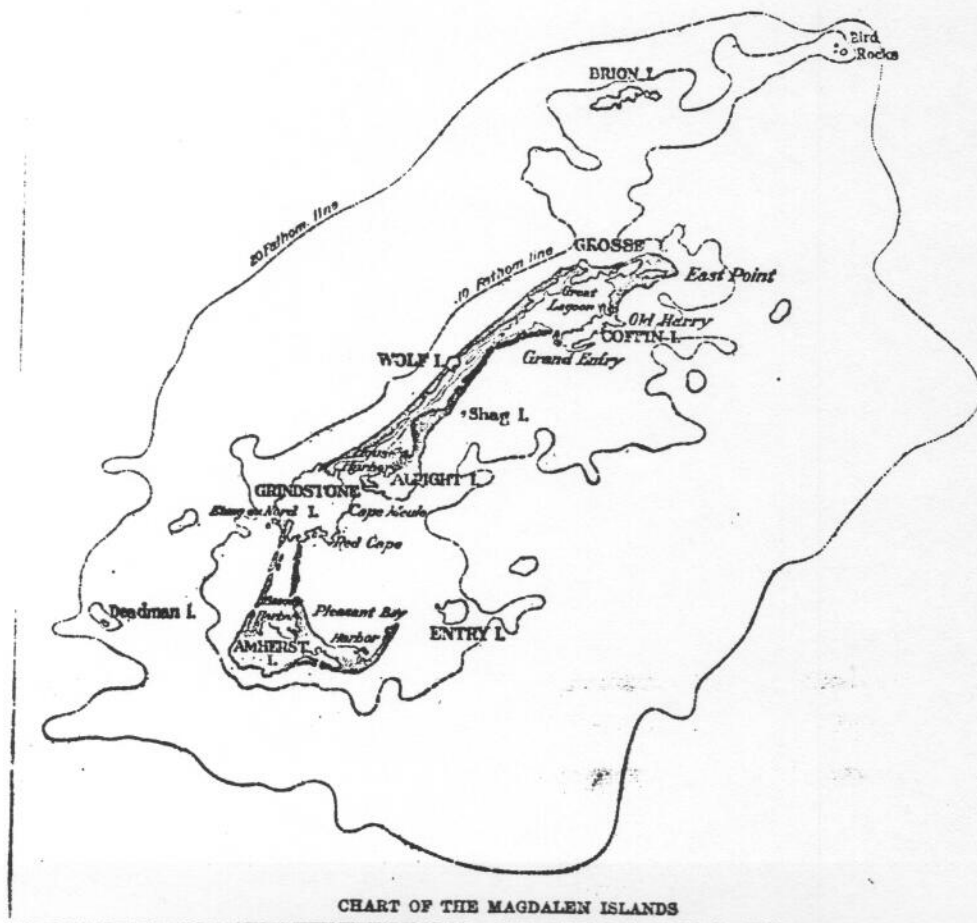


CHART OF THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

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FOREWORD

The generation of those Gaspesians who knew Dr. John M. Clarke personally and had the occasion to share with him their knowledge of Gaspé has passed away but his writings live on to be a part of the Gaspesian heritage. Gaspé of Yesterday has referred to the books of Dr. Clarke in previous issues for, beyond his field of expertise in geology, he acquired a profound knowledge of the history and values of the Gaspesians.

The work and writings of Dr. Clarke extended offshore to the Magdalen Islands, linked administratively to the County of Gaspé, and sharing its maritime traditions. In the following account Dr. Clarke recalls the history of these interesting islands in the Gulf.

KEN ANNETT

THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

The archipelago of the Magdalen Islands (îles de la Madeleine) is located in the Gulf of St. Lawrence about 180 miles from Gaspé, 70 miles from Prince Edward Island and 55 miles from Cape Breton. It is made up of some 12 islands, seven of which are inhabited. The main islands in the group are Havre-Aubert, Étang-du-Nord, Havre-aux-Maisons, Grande-Entrée, Grosse île, l'île d'Entrée, l'île Brion, l'île aux Cochons and Rocher aux Oiseaux.

From a distance, the coastline does not appear to be very irregular, but this impression changes when one draws near and discovers a whole world of curious quirks of nature, where rocks form pillars, overhanging ledges, large crevices, chasms and other odd forms that catch the eye. In general, this indented coastline has been carved in a soft grayish-red rock, but the sea has played a part in adding more colour to the sandstone, gypsum and other volcanic rocks of the islands.

This undulating countryside is criss-crossed in every direction by roads and paths dotted with a variety of buildings. The houses present a spectacle both unique and picturesque, built as they are without regard to direction and giving the impression of leaves scattered by the wind.

The total area of the archipelago is about 55,000 acres. The population, in large part of Acadian origin, is 13,000 inhabitants, including about 1,000 persons of Scottish descent.

Jacques Cartier, discoverer of Canada, reached the Magdalen Islands on June 25, 1534. He spent several days exploring them and was enthusiastic in his description of them in a report to the king of France.

Several of these islands' names go back to Cartier, especially that of l'île Brion, thus named in honour of Philippe Chabot, sieur de Brion, grand admiral of France. The archipelago itself bears the name of the wife of François Doublet (Madeleine Fontaine), first seigneur who attempted to colonize the islands. Champlain had given the archipelago the name of *îles Ramées*, because of the numerous horn-like protrusions found there. The founder of New France also gave Havre-Aubert its name.

THE MAGDALEN ISLANDS

Situation—Relation to Gaspé—Original settlement—Physical characters and geology—The Demoiselles—Entry I.: its people; scenery—Amherst I.: circle center; its harbors and sand bars—Grindstone I.: its gypsum cliffs—House Harbor—The Great Lagoon—Alright I.—Grand Entry—Grosse Isle—Coffin I.—Mouche to navigation—Wrecks on the Islands—Bishop Mountain's experiences in 1850—Magdalen Island pony—Discovery of the islands by Cartier—Later French and English visits in the 16th century—Voyage to Deems—To Doublet—To St. Pierre—To St. Isaac—Coffin—Land tenure established by Coffin—Recent attempts at development—Kingdom of fish—The ancient whaling hunt—Bison I.: Cartier's account of it—The Bird Rocks: their wonderful bird colony; history; their human tragedies.

The Magdalen Islands are a chain of dissected and sea-wrecked remnants of continental land lying in the very heart of the Gulf, ninety miles from Newfoundland at the east, one hundred from Nova Scotia at the south and one hundred and fifty from Gaspé at the northwest. Their land is of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, their government of Quebec, their commerce in the commodities of the sea, and their spirit that of the Acadian communities of the 18th century, the purest expression remaining in Canada of the days of Louisbourg and Grande-Pré. To the outer world, particularly to the navigator of the turbulent waters of the Gulf, they stand to-day as they have stood since the beginning of navigation in these waters, a fearful menace to the sailor and his craft.

Gaspé is a stepmother to the Magdalens. By nature she has little in common with them, whether in history, origin, scenery or commercial association, but she, with the province of Quebec behind her, extends to them the protection of her ægis in the administration of civil and criminal law. They are far away from Gaspé and it is a long and arduous stretch for the arm of Justice, it strains her a little. But Gaspé lets her wards go at that and leaves them to their more natural and intimate relations with Nova Scotia.

The Magdalens are an island Arcady; they have not yet received from any pen the just and sympathetic portrayal which their fascinations of situation, their little romances of history, the tragedies of their simple living and the charms of

their isolation invite. There are stories abroad about them, of late years sterile magazine articles not a few, mostly the work of the tripper whose soul is in his fountain pen but who has never yet caught the spirit of the islands or of their people.

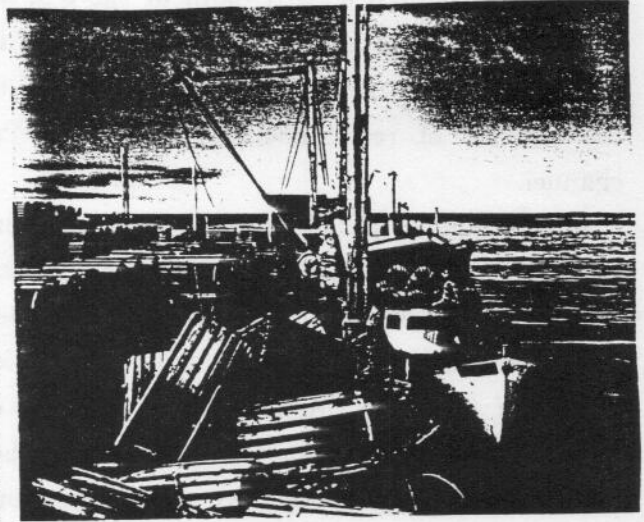
One must know the physical aspect of even such small patches of land if he is to understand the reasons of their existence and the conditions that govern the life upon them. The chart of these islands shows them stretched out like a long key lying crosswise of the waters, with its axis north-east and southwest, the direction of all the fundamental folds of the rocks which govern the topography of the lands of the lower Gulf. If the eye will follow the 20-fathom line on the chart it will be seen what a tremendous rock platform has been carried away by the waves in the gradual washing of the land to this slight depth. An elevation of the sea bottom 20 fathoms would throw all the chain of islands into a single land mass which would have several hundred times the area of the land now remaining. Even the 10-fathom line sweeps about all the islands, tying them into one and reaches out to take in Brion island at the north and the Great and Little Bird Rocks further to the north and east. Brion and the Bird Rocks are to-day distant and isolated platforms of sandstone with sheer sea cliffs. The Magdalens themselves are really but mere specks of rock or land but they are fringed with sand dunes and spits and tied to one another by tremendous bars which the seas from east and west have piled up into a double chain, leaving between the great interior lagoons, Basque Harbor, House Harbor, the Great Lagoon and its branch at the extreme north behind the dunes of Grosse Isle and Old Harry. In these piles of sand the sea has tried to bury the bits of land its still unsated appetite has left behind, tossing back to them the feeble fragments of their own ruins.

The islands of this archipelago seem on the chart to be of considerable size but the most of them is sand, the actual area of rock land small and re-

solved into little insular units of soil and population. And when we speak of the Magdalens as a geographic group we must include Brion and the Birds at the north, even though the broad ten mile channels that separate Brion from the others both north and south have been swept clean of the sand bars that may once have stretched across them. Geologically these northern islands are all of one piece with the interwoven chain of the Magdalens. There is a fundamental and twofold difference of quality in all the members of this group: that of the sand with its broad reaches of undulated dunes here and there, its straggling growth of stunted spruce and dune grass, its arid, wasted, desert surfaces broken in twain now and again by the sea gullies which make an outlet for the interior waters and an inlet for the tides; and that of the rock land with its rounded and graceful demoiselle hills, its richly fertile soil, grassy treeless knolls and low-lying flat plateaus. On each of the habitable land patches, from Amherst, the largest, to Grosse Isle and Northeast Cape, the smallest, there is some of all of these distinguishing contours present.

These differences are simple but they are dependent on the geology of the islands and this is the way of it. Broadly speaking, the rocks of the island units are of three kinds, first, blood red soft sandstones which give an extraordinary brilliancy to the coloring of the shore cliffs; these are horizontal, flat and lie low about the shores. Then, second, gray hard sandstones, which usually underlie the red and stand up in stouter, higher cliffs; while the third is the volcanic rocks which stand often in dark somber cliffs or low sheets but usually rise into the beautifully symmetrical domes that give the graceful skylines to the islands; the demoiselles, as we have called them, taking the name from the hill on Amherst long known to the people as La Demoiselle. Quite incidental or accessory to these varieties of rocks are the abundant masses of gypsum standing out here and there in glistening, white or particolored cliffs, where the volcanic

lavas have come in contact with the sandstones which they have broken through. These are some plain facts about the islands as a whole, and to one who is interested in studying the ancient history of the Gulf, the geology of the Magdalens is inviting and intensely instructive.



The traveler to the Magdalens by the customary route will reach them by boat from Picou, Nova Scotia, and so come upon them from the south. This is the only established line of approach. Lucky souls independent of prescribed procedure may approach them from other directions, but usually one's acquaintance with the chain will begin at the South. The petite *Lady Sybil* which makes this route twice a week, touches on every alternate trip first in the wee hours of early dawn at the busy fishing port of Etang-du-Nord on the west side of Grindstone Island; but the seeker after truth is usually asleep or seasick at this juncture and his first impressive glimpse of the islands is likely to be the blue, gently molded breasts of *Entry Island* at the east, rising starboard into the soft morning light. The way of the boat is through the narrow, risky channel which lies between the hills and meads of *Entry* and the long nine mile sand spit which reaches its arm out from Amherst toward the east as if to grasp the one island in all the group that has maintained its independence of the entangling bars.

From the point the *Ida* (Hunt) of the early navigators who came in from the southeast by way of Cape Ray and Cabot Strait. Isolated from the rest of the group it is unlike them in many ways though but a fragment of the same fabric. It is a traveler's paradise—that's all. From its row of rounded demoiselles which girdle the eastern shore and barricade the lower western plateau against the eternal tooth of the sea, an unbroken carpet of green unrolls, furling itself in and out over the little knolls and fens down to the parterre of red sandstones which line the channel.

At the summits of its heights, if the day be calm and fair, one might fancy himself on some Aegean isle as the eye sweeps the blue domain of the sea to the east and south, just catching the smoky outline of the Cape Breton shore in the scud of haze. At the west and north stretch out the other islands of the chain, fading away into a low nimbus toward Alright, and the sand bars which stretch away to Old Harry. At one's feet are the graceful volcanic mounds which are like the parasitic cones on the sides of Etna; between them lie deep sink holes where the gypsum in the rocks has been dissolved away, a squidgy mat of water weed growing over their tops; down on the lower land are pastures sprinkled with wild strawberries and little quagmires filled with fleurs-de-lis. It boots little that the island is shadeless for even the August sun is bridled by the breeze or tempered by the reintegrating sea fog. The island steamer passes but never touches Entry and the inspiring solitude of the place rests partly on the consciousness that once there, one can not get away save by an extraordinary effort.

The islanders themselves heighten the content of the visitor, for they have won from sea and soil reasonable comfort and with genuine solicitude for the comfort of another, do not obtrude themselves upon one's designs. They are not many, the Entry people, but they are select and silent. They may be perhaps 30 families in cottages scattered back of the plateau along the road which runs from the sandy West Point back to the light on the southeast hill. They are Scotch and

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French in descent to the last of an 20-Saxon settlement in the Magdalens, the lesser ones being at Cross Island and Old Harry. Not a Frenchman is left in the place nor has there been for more than one generation. So while they are not of the primitive island stock, these sturdy folk, coming in mostly from Nova Scotia, have seen well-nigh a century pass without the addition of a single outsider, save by marriage. So they are all of the aristocracy and each is related in nearer or remote degree to everybody else. In-breeding is bad for the race, it violates the primary laws of eugenics. Behold in the sturdy boys and wholesome girls of the present generation how nature on Entry Island laughs at these laws. The noticeable air of general average material comfort here, one fails to see in the other islands. Here the intrusive and prosperous fish merchant is conspicuous by his absence.

But nowhere else in all the group is the promise of the soil so well realized. The Magdalens are the kingdom of fish, their waters teem with an extraordinary profusion of them, poured out freely on every coast; the cod, the herring, the mackerel; the cod again in the autumn, the lobster in early summer and again (by gracious exception of the law) in the fall, and to these crops, the harvest of which depends largely on the inclination of the fishermen, is to be added the seal catch when the ice comes down from the north.

This is the historic wealth of the sea and in the face of it the soil of the islands cries idly. Yet the soil is of extraordinary fertility—in spite of fogs and winds the hay and grain grow bountifully and the return of potatoes and other buried roots, with the very slightest effort at cultivation, is amazing. The Entry people have taken advantage of the soil, have fished less and farmed more and this fact seems to account for their noticeable comfort. For every head of man, there seem to be five head of cattle of excellent stock. Milk is freer than fresh water, butter and cheese and the things to which milk contributes are at hand—and yet one knows nothing of exports from the island save perhaps a little by way of cheese. In

but the islanders live on themselves and enjoy an independence which cares little whether the boat runs or not.

To get out of Entry—if one must—some husky fellow will set you over to Amherst by sail or gasolene, and once there the traveler is in the largest of all the islands, and the center of their political and civic activity. The boat landing at Amherst is at a mere atom of land, hardly visible on the chart, but tied to the rest of the island by a broad sand bar. It is Mt. Gridley, bearing the name, it is said, of an American who a century ago, started a fish business here, but bearing too, what is much more to the point to-day, an historician which for two generations has cordially met and hospitably satisfied the demands of the traveler—the only thing of the kind on the islands. Mt. Gridley is a pretty three-cornered grass plot whereon mushrooms scatter themselves; off toward the west it ends at the Inlet which leads into the Basin, a harbor for all the fishing craft, buried in the armpit of the great nine mile sand bar and protected at the east by the little bar of "Fishtown" which joins Mt. Gridley and the real island. On the "Fishtown" bar are the stores of the merchants and the shacks and cook houses of the fishermen. The bar leads toward the foot of Demoiselle hill, whose graceful summits rise into the sea wall and this hill whose name is a part of the history of the place, stands as the type of all the "demoiselles" of all the islands—a mass of outpoured lava. Though by virtue of her ancient name she stands for all these rounded hills, she is not the highest. That little honor goes to Entry, where St. Lawrence hill rises to a height of 650 feet. Such a figure as that seems rather unimpressive, but in a region of lowland even such a height is a point of great vantage. Between the Demoiselle and Mt. Gridley lies the only outside harbor on all the island coast, Pleasant Bay, a pretty name for a summer day, but of all roadsteads the most treacherous, for it lies open to the northeast whence the storms blow up almost without warning in these uncertain waters. Scores of craft have broken their bones on the sand bar here, caught by a sudden shift in the wind before they could get out and around

into the Basin. From the Demoiselle westward the island runs for ten miles and its inland surface is crossed by irregular volcanic hills, less symmetrical than in the other islands. The fields are less inviting too than in some of the sister islands because the soft red sandstone which lends so much to the fertility of the soil is lacking here save as one gets way across the island to the Southwest Point. Amherst (it is not Sir Jeffrey's but General William's name the island bears; the older French name is Havre Aubert, still the official post-office designation of this port) is dotted over with homes and its population is not less than 1500—a population that is almost of pure Acadian extraction. After the fall of Louisbourg, some of the scattered peasantry and fishermen from the devastated French villages of Nova Scotia and Cape Breton found their way to the Magdalens. They constituted a population which soon became fixed and fixed with it became their language, so that nowhere in Canada is the ancient tongue of the Acadians so well retained as here.

In a civic way, the islands as we have said constitute a subcounty of Gaspé, and of this subcounty Amherst is the shire island with its palais-de-justice, its gaol, its hall of records alongside the post-office of Havre Aubert and to all these on court days Joanna Shea's boarding house, now in its braver new dress dignified as Shea's Hotel, is an indispensable accessory; for county business brings judge and attorneys from the mainland on this deepwater circuit and Shea's Hotel affords most unexpected fullness of comfort.

At the time of my first visit to Amherst there stood on Mt. Gridley an Anglican church, its windows gone, its clapboards stripped away and its altar vestments frayed and discolored. Even this trace of Protestant worship is now gone, and of a population of 1526 "souls" on Amherst, 1525 are Catholics.

Two great sand bars run north from Amherst and inclose the Basque Harbor which finds its connection with the sea by tickles or gullies too narrow to make a passage except for the smallest craft at highwater, but the inhabitants drive along these bars from island to island feeding the tide

is that they can always a perhaps passage if there is a hole in the outside.

Reaching out northward with these long arms Amherst embraces *Grindstone Island*, an almost circular land platform five miles or so across, with rocky shore cliffs all the way around on east and west. Grindstone is a very inviting and fertile island. Its shores are more brilliantly decked out in the blood red cliffs of its lower rock shelves than any other island of the group and between these verdure capped shelves lie here and there broad, hard and beautiful beaches. This large area of red sandstone contributes to the richness of the soil in the southern part of the island while the northern part, with higher lava cliffs and banks of colored gypsum clays is diversified with a surface of knolls and pinholes characteristic of the gypsum bearing rocks. The demoiselle domes are not as conspicuous here as elsewhere but the lava beds are accompanied by vast deposits of gypsum which near the west shore stand out in brilliantly shining silvery towers. Where the boat lands at *Pointe-au-Meule* on the east side, the gray sandstones rise into a high, bare, wave-eaten bluff, and gathered about the wharf and the post-office is the English settlement with the prosperous fish establishment of William Leslie, one of the commercial monuments of the islands. Here are the headquarters and pretentious buildings of the new development companies and from this point south the road which circles the island leads over the fertile sandstone plateau around to the southwest corner where lies the settlement of *Etang-du-Nord*. This is the French end of the island and all is activity in the fishing; indeed it is the chief center of the real concentrated fishing industry of all the islands, typical in all the equipment of the business and the entire devotion of its people to it. Its little bay between its red cliffs harbors a larger fishing fleet than one will find anywhere else in the group, and its odors are eminently and intensely Gas-pesian. There is a hotel at *Etang-du-Nord*, if you will; two indeed, one French, the other English—but what if they are black with flies? Was there ever a fishing station without them? At the north of the island lies the historic settlement

of *Pointe-au-Meule*—the *Harbor*, where the narrow water passes in between Grindstone and *Alright* from the east, entering the long south arm of the Great Lagoon stretching north from Grindstone for 20 miles, hemmed in by *Alright* on the east and the great sand bar on the west,—as far north as *Grosse Isle* where it opens out into the broad reach of inside waters that separates *Grosse Isle* and *North East Cape* from *Grand Entry*. It is a passage that may be sailed along a carefully staked but very sinuous channel where the tide often runs heavy and in a stiff breeze the chance of being blown out of the narrow course and aground on the shallows is ever present. The lagoon is a mile across where narrowest, 12 miles or more where widest behind *Grand Entry*; its shores, barricaded by interminable sand dunes, are the nesting places of innumerable waterfowl.

From Grindstone Island north the islets grow smaller. *Alright Island*, the next north, is a little strip of beautiful demoiselles skirted with orange red cliffs, stretching four miles in coast line but not more than half this in width. The steamer stops at *Pointe-Basse* under the lee of a demoiselle, but there are only a few people to serve; the population is small, though the island has a church and conventual retreat at the south near *House Harbor*. The beautifully molded hills and the red cliffs soon run out at the north into endless sand which stretches away to form the eastern boundary of the great lagoon, as far as *Grand Entry*, the eastern passage through the sand into the harbor within. This is the safest resting place for sailing craft in all the islands and yet it is parlous enough to negotiate in low water and a nor'east blow. I have waited on the sands of *Grand Entry* eight hours while the steamer was standing off outside watching for a chance to take a reasonable risk at the channel. From here all the lands left at the north are mere beads of rock strung together on strands of sand; on the west *Grosse Isle* and its little valet, *Red Island*, lying inside the lagoon; *North East Cape*, *East Island* and *Coffin Island*. Champlain called this string of islets *Les Kamées*, the necklace, a name that stuck to all the islands on many of the early charts. They are all populated, and

quite entirely by English settlers, and they are picturesque indeed with their sparse acres of verdure and their blazing expanse of sand dunes. Grosse Isle is just a half a demoiselle with a fishing cove at its base; joined by a bridge over a branch of the lagoon with another knoll which looks across over another lagoon to the steep slope of North East Cape, another half demoiselle and the highest point on the northern islands, its green sides showing a few white cottages.

Coffin Island was set aside by the proprietor as maintenance for the church and there is an English church here as well as at Grosse Isle. Old Harry Head and Oyster Basin are parts of Coffin Island and their southern sands lead down to the harbor of Grand Entry.

The Magdalen cluster offers to the traveler or student experience in wealth of variety. There is an especial charm in the richness of color of their low-lying shores. The greens are not the darker hues of the spruce forests, but the emerald of grass capped hills and plains. Under the green lie here and there the almost crimson platforms of the soft sandstones into whose fronts the waves have everywhere eaten gullies and caves, obelisks and towers standing feeble guard over the extremities of their little capes. The cliffs of gypsiferous clays rise to greater heights and there are places where they command the eye by their extraordinary play of pink, gray and dull green bands. The bolder points of gray sandstone and dark lavas seem to stand as warders of the island masses and to plead, as it were, for their salvation from the relentless sea. The Gulf is azure in the sunlight on the rare summer days when her waters are at peace, but the tawny sand heaps rolling along the skyline, knoll on knoll, add a tinge of melancholy, speaking of destruction past and destruction to come, of time-long struggle, surrender and of partial restitution.

It is quite in keeping with the history of the Magdalens that there should be such a minor chord in their harmony. The islands and their sands have wrought terrific ruin to skippers and their craft from the time the Europeans began to throng the Gulf. The long low dark coast and treacher-

ous bars have lain like a trap for the unwary navigator, and when beating out of his course for the channels at the north or the south, or in times of stress when nor'east or nor'west gales were driving against rocks and sands, hundreds of craft have been broken on these unlighted shores, hundreds of lives have been lost and the bleaching ribs of dead ships are always to be seen on the coasts. There are castaways on all the islands, and tales of shipwreck make the history of yesterday and the news of to-day. Mr. Brassette, the venerable postmaster at Havre Aubert, has told me that within his life on the island there have been, he thinks, not less than five hundred ships great and small cast away. The season of my first visit I learned of but one wreck in the summer weeks before my arrival. At the time of my second visit, in July of another year, there had already been three during the season with some loss of life.

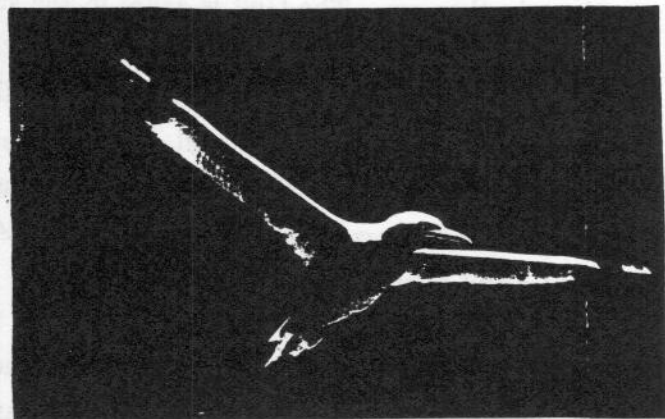
The atmosphere is full of the tragedy of the sea and while by far the greater number of the wrecked craft have met their fate on the northern sands, yet the southern islands have had their full share. One still hears the tale of the wreck of the Gloucester fishing fleet in the "Lord's Day Gale" one summer day of 1873 when by sudden shift of the wind from west to nor'east forty and more vessels were driven ashore in Pleasant Bay. The *Miracle*, an emigrant ship from Ireland with above 400 passengers, went ashore in 1847 at East Cape with terrific loss of life. And so the stories go. On my sideboard is a crest-marked silver tray, tossed up on the shores of Entry from the wreck of the good ship *Cameo* in 1861, and alongside my desk, a mahogany cabin chair washed ashore in Grosse Isle in 1884, from the Norwegian bark *Athene* when the captain, Jorgen Lorentzen and 18 of his crew were lost. The mournful tales are without end and not only do the burying grounds with their rows of nameless graves, as on Mt. Gridley, and in the Protestant churchyard at Grindstone, tell these sad stories, but the contents of the islanders' cottages bear witness of the wreckage. It is at the north along the treacherous sands of East Cape and Grosse Isle where the

And it is not with feelings of unmixed sorrow that the kind-hearted settlers of the north see a vessel laboring in distress in the offing. The story told of many a rough coast is told too of these islands—of the little girl who nightly prayed that she might be a good little girl and “Please, God, send another wreck before morning.” Why should it not be so? A provision ship went ashore on Grosse Isle some twenty years ago in early May. The islanders had had their hardest winter. Food had run very low and among the French all was gone, though the more provident English had saved a few potatoes. Those who had beasts killed them, but very few had them, and wild fowl were about all that was left for food. The poor begged from door to door for their sick families dying of starvation. The winter hung on and the ice showed no signs of breaking till May. May 19th came along the first vessel, by “good luck” a provision boat bound for some distant port. The “hand of Providence” drove her ashore and the wants of the starving were met till the seal came down and the ice gave way to the fishing.

There is no better story of strenuous experiences in these islands and no such lively picture of the life there sixty and more years ago as that told by the Rev'd Dr. George Jehoshaphat Mountain, Third Lord Bishop of Quebec—the first Protestant prelate to visit them. This intrepid man was sixty-one years old when he felt it in the line of his duty to go to the Magdalens and look after the Protestant communities on Grosse Isle and Entry whose existence had been reported to him. So in 1850 “he determined to see those few sheep in the wilderness with his own eyes” and took passage in a small brigantine bound for Halifax and whose captain undertook to put him off, on the islands. As it chanced, the skipper approached the islands in the night and knowing nothing of their coasts was about to lay to, but as a fishing schooner lay near by, the Bishop had himself and his baggage transferred to this vessel,

“an unpainted, roughly finished craft of thirty tons abundantly redolent of cod and manned by six

A vulgar fishermen as unkempt and dirty a set of beings as could well be pictured to the fancy. The wind was damp and chilly, but not relishing the idea of what was considered to be the cabin. I wrapped mine auld cloak about me and sitting down on the little hatchway remained conversing with the man at the helm. I could not help thinking, as he sat bestriding the tiller, with gleams of light thrown partially upon his figure from the mouth of the hatchway (there being a small fire and a miserable greasy, blackened lamp burning below), especially when Placide, a young lad belonging to the crew, brought him, at his command, a coal in the tongs to rekindle his pipe, which helped to discover his beard of about a week's growth;—I could not help thinking what a subject I had before me for the pencil. I felt myself, altogether, in rather a strange situation. I had come upon this occasion without a single companion or attendant, and here I was, now a grey-headed Bishop of the Church of England, having tumbled, as it were, into this rude little fishing vessel which crossed my way by chance, driving alone, in a dark night, upon the waters of the Gulf and seeking to effect a landing, where I knew not, but anywhere upon the islands, which I had never visited before, upon which I did not know a living soul, and after setting my foot upon which I should be at a loss how to proceed or what direction to take, in order to find the persons who could put things in train for me to accomplish the objects of my visit. . . . When it approached eleven o'clock, I went below and saw, to my surprise, a rude stone chimney built into the vessel and a fire of fagots upon the hearth, which I was glad to approach. I sat before it upon a chest occupying the little central space between a couple of berths looking most utterly repulsive. I sat up the whole night over the fire which I took care to keep in activity.”



At half past four they ran inshore off Southwest Point on Amherst Island, in a downpour of rain and nothing in sight but a black pig and two fish houses on a beach strewed with cod heads. Stowing the Bishop's baggage under an overturned flat, the sailors started off to find a horse and some sort of conveyance, for where they had come ashore was twelve miles from Amherst village and sixteen miles from Grindstone which he wished to reach. We can imagine the distinguished and devoted man on the sands of Southwest Point as

"I took my post under my umbrella against one of the boats but presently espying a little cavity which would just fit me sitting, in a low browed cliff of red sandstone, I proceeded to occupy it, and in a few minutes had my horse and harness ready for use. A half the men returned bringing with them two or three people and a low cut of the roughest possible construction, drawn by a wretched looking little rat of a horse,* whose harness, home made, was formed of strips of seal skin with the fur left upon it, the saddle however being worked into a sort of parchment and supported by a parcel of rags. The headstall was a piece of old rope and the reins were of the same

* The Bishop thus had a chance, which no longer exists, to ride behind a *Magdalen island pony*. This breed of tough little beast is now practically extinct, there being to-day but one known to me and that is at Etang-du-Nord. The history of this horselet and how it got to the islands is not known now to any of the islanders, and, so far as I can find, is not a matter of record; at all events fifty years ago this "rat of a horse" was the only kind on the island and at that time had not been crossed with outside stock. There is pony blood still in many of the Acadian horses of the islands. There are good reasons for stating that the ponies were brought over from Sable Island, whose herd of horses dates back to an uncertain shipwreck of a French or Spanish vessel in the 16- or 1700's, from which a cargo of horses swam ashore and have ever since multiplied and flourished, now under government control. The Magdalen pony was in many ways unlike the Sable Island ponies one sees to-day in the Halifax markets where the government auctions off the increase of the herd every four years, but it would not be safe to say that such differences as now exist between them are not too great to have been developed in the course of a century, under the different physical conditions in Sable Island and the Magdalens.

material. Such a cart, it may be understood, had no springs, but there was a board across the middle of it for a seat. My baggage however quite filled it up. The cart was driven by a French lad."

And so the Bishop walked over the sands of Amherst Island in the early morning, umbrella spread against the pouring rain, without a house in sight, nine miles to the tidal gully, which sepa-

rated him from Etang-du-Nord, and then at last to a house where he could dry his clothes and get a breakfast. "of which, having walked about nine miles after being up in the schooner all night, I was thankful to partake." And the bishop adds "with all gratitude" that he would have been much more exhausted by these exertions forty years before than he was then.

The bishop carried out his strenuous plans, reached House Harbor, there procured a boat which took him through the channel to his sheep in the wilderness of Grosse Isle of which he found about fifty, most of whom had never seen a Protestant minister or heard a religious service. The settlement, he says, "in this rude, sequestered, isolated corner," and twenty-two years old, that is, was begun in 1828, and the bishop was deeply impressed by the extreme poverty of the people.*

The visit to Grosse Isle was followed by one to Entry Island, attended by lively experiences. Over on Entry "there was a little question about lights," for his evening service. A canvass of the island, however, produced three candles; "one was set in a candlestick, one forced into a lamp and one stuck in the neck of a bottle." The people heard him gladly and on his departure showed evidence of their better condition in life by loading the vessel bountifully with the products of their island.

Distant as these islands are and must always be from the whirl of human interests, they have

* I can imagine the reverend gentleman's experiences at Grosse Isle. Once, in passing a night there, I was routed out of bed by aborigines who evidently believed me an intruder. I bear such bed fellows no ill will for I know their distinguished pedigree and that their ancestors found homes in the Siurian beds before the human race was conceived. But as I had other nights to stay I demurred to the partnership. My host expressed regret without surprise, but casually remarked that the last person who had slept in the bed was the Rev. J— P—, the English minister.

had their share in the earlier events on the coast. Indeed Cartier visited them before he ever saw and laid claim to New France and so their recorded history runs back a little further than that of the greater country of which they now form such a slender appanage. In his first voyage of 1534 his course into the *Golfo Quadrato* lay south from the Straits of Belle Isle and he made land falls in suc-

cession from the north; first the Bird Rocks which he named the *Isles aux Margaux*, then Brion Island, which has carried from his day the name of the first admiral of France, Philippe Chabot, Sieur de Brion. Here he went ashore and of the Island he wrote such a glorious description as to make the reader feel he had found the Garden of Eden. Some of the later voyagers applied this name, Brion, to the entire group of islands, and Cartier, passing this way the next year, speaks of crossing over from Brion Island, which he revisited, to *Les Araynes*—the sands of Grosse Isle and East Point. By this name and its variants the group was set down on many of the early charts. The maps of the Gulf which date from a time after Cartier's time are not altogether reliable records of position but are of interest as showing the growth of observations concerning the form of the islands and their changes in name, the years of confusion with the Isle St.-Jean (Prince Edward Island) and their gradual distinction from it. Indeed few, if any, of the charts to Champlain's time and later made out the Isle St.-Jean, fifty miles to the west of the Magdalens.

We do not know how soon after Cartier's discovery the men of Normandy and Breton got in among these islands, but by the latter part of the 16th century the stories they brought home of the tremendous number of seals and walruses to be had, reached England and started English expeditions into this quarter. There was a voyage in 1591 by a skipper unknown, on behalf of M. de la-Court, Pré-Ravillon and Grand-Pré, for the purpose of killing "Morses" for "trayne oyl," which of itself indicates previous attempts by the French for the same purpose. Then of the English, George Drake made a passage in 1593, finding the harbors already occupied by "Britons of S. Malo and Basques of S. John de Luz." Drake found that "by coming a day after the Fayre" his efforts were naught; just as Charles Leigh and Sylvester Wyet, who with Drake were the first Englishmen to sail so far within the Gulf, are said on their arrival, to have been confronted by two hundred French, who had planted three pieces of ordnance

on the beach, and three hundred savages—an opposition which led to a sharp sea fight and seems to have effectually dissuaded further attempts on the part of the English to fasten their hold on this business.

These islands were granted in 1653 by the Company of New France to Nicolas Denys as a part of the vast region stretching from Cape Canso at the south to Cap-des-Rosiers at the north, and the next year Denys received from the king letters patent as governor and lieutenant-general to all this great territory.

In these early days land patents in the world of New France were given easily and conflicting claims to the same territory issued from the same source often resulted. So it happened that in 1663 the French government gave to Jean Doublet, a freebooter of Rouen, the "illes de Brion" for the cod and seal fishing. Doublet was also given permission to change the name of the island from Brion to *Madeleine*,* which was the name of his wife. So this name has come down to the present as a memorial of conjugal devotion, though Doublet's attempts at a settlement failed totally and have been almost forgotten.

* Professor Ganong assures me that the name *Maddlene* is attached to these islands on Champlain's map of 1632, which is not now accessible to me. This is a rather singular coincidence in view of the statement made above. Probably the whole history of Doublet's attempts at settlement would have passed with little notice if it were not for a short sharp passage in Denys's *Description Géographique et Historique des Costes de l'Amérique Septentrionale*, 1672, and had not the departmental archives at Rouen afforded in recent years the manuscript journal of Doublet's son, which was edited and printed in 1883 by Bréard, under the title *Journal du Corsaire Jean Doublet de Honfleur*. This is a remarkable story of a freebooter's life in every quarter of the watery globe, beginning with his successful attempt, at the age of seven, to stow himself away aboard his father's ship which came out to the Madeleines in 1663; the experience of the attempted colony there; the return next year to find the colony demoralized, the place abandoned and the venture wholly lost. The younger Doublet declares the islands were named for his mother, by consent of the proprietors.

Like Doublet, Denys failed in his efforts to induce colonization and in 1720 the Magdalens, with S. Jean and Miscou, were ceded by letters patent to the Count de St.-Pierre, Equerry to the Duchess of Orleans. He was commissioned not only to carry on the fisheries but to cultivate the soil and cut the timber. So far as we know, the attempted colonization under this patent effected little and the islands were lost sight of till after the fall of New France, when the English government annexed the islands to Newfoundland. By the Quebec Act they were soon after attached to that province where they now belong.

A new era in their history, however, began in 1798 when they were granted by royal patent to Sir (afterwards Admiral) Isaac Coffin. Captain Coffin, the bright particular star of the prolix New England Coffins, of which the Boston branch were all Loyalists, had fought well in His Majesty's navy during the American war, and in 1788 while transporting to Quebec, his chief and friend, Lord Dorchester, then for the second time governor-general, passed the Madeleines on their course and in jocular mood and haphazard way suggested that he would like to be made proprietor of these islands. The governor-general assented, but it was not till the time of his successor that the royal warrant was issued.*

The new proprietor established at once a feudal system of land tenure which has remained close to the present day as a last flickering expression of medievalism in the English lands of the western world. Sir Isaac Coffin required the occupants of the islands to take titles in the nature of emphyteutic leases or perpetual leases at an irredeemable rent. The islands cover nearly 100,000 acres and at the usual annual return of 20 cents an acre would have produced a considerable ground rent, but this land never was fully leased, the rents never proved collectible and the system resulted in continual contentions between agent and tenant which at times culminated in considerable migrations from the islands. A very in-

* Admiral Coffin's first naval service on these northern waters was in the frigate *Gaspée*; his next, in the *Sybil*: admirable among his later proprietorships.

teresting account of the land tenure on the islands forty years ago was given by Faucher de Saint-Maurice in his *Promenades dans le Golfe de Saint-Laurent* (1874), though it is no longer pertinent to existing conditions and must be regarded as tinged with the author's sympathetic interest in the Acadians. 10.
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In later years the attitude of the hereditary seigneur has been more lenient and the parliament of the province after long investigation of the situation has enacted a regulated form of tenure assuring outstanding tenants the right to become proprietors, and it has further alleviated the really deplorable condition in some of the islands by making repayment to the tenant of one-third the amount necessary to effect a freehold.

Yet in spite of these possible reforms, not a single dweller on Entry Island holds his land in fee -- all pay the rental as in the ancient days. The greater ease of tenantry and the possibility of ownership has, with the tremendous resources of the island waters, helped to increase the population of the archipelago, now reaching 7,000 people. The great majority of them are confined to the larger islands, Amherst and Grindstone.

A few years ago the seigniorial rights of the Coffin heirs were acquired by the Magdalen Island Development Company subject to a controlling restraint by the proprietor, and though the company erected extensive fish houses and equipped the fishermen with gasoline boats, the efforts failed to increase the productiveness of the islands. Still more recently such surviving rights as this company possessed were assumed by the Eastern Canada Fisheries, Limited, which hopes to reap by modern methods the tremendous wealth of both sea and land. But it is just as well to say, in passing, that the "hustler" from Montreal or Boston, or whatever place, who thinks to make the Madeleine island fisherman adapt himself to new modes, to fish when he doesn't want to fish, to go out to the banks when the sun is under or a gale is brewing, or to do any great amount of labor when his credit at the store is good, is likely to suffer from misplaced confidence. Heredity is strong among these folk. They do not feel the

compelling need for more money to help them keep pace with the outside world. In their natural philosophy it is best to keep life simple—it always has been so. These are the Isles of Repose—nobody cares whether the venturers from outside pay dividends or not.

To talk so much of these islands and to say so little of the wealth of their waters would be to pass by what has seemed to the simpler philosophy of islanders and visitors alike the reason for their existence. At any rate it is nature's compensation for those whom choice or fortune compels to live here. The life hereupon is not to be estimated in terms of the summer sea. Blue skies and southerly breezes are but for a day at a time. For nearly half the year the islanders are icebound with no communication with the outside world, save by cable and now in these last days by wireless from the hilltop on Grindstone. The turbulence of the autumn begins as early as September in these uneasy waters and with the breaking of the ice fields in March and April begins the turbulence of the spring. Full half the year is given over to the struggle with the ice. The other half the year is summer, though seed time and harvest stretch the season. Yet if nature seems to have been stingy in her other gifts to the islands, she stinted nothing when it came to fish. The broad rock platforms which surround the islands at slender depths are the natural gathering places of the fish and in spite of the millions taken out, more millions remain. With the disappearance of the ice comes the spring run of cod. The herring still abound in limitless shoals, the mackerel have never yet deserted the islands as they have the Gaspé Coast and with the coming down of the fall the cod return fat and fine for the late fishing. On most of Gaspé only the cod remains, the herring are too few for anything but bait and the mackerel migrated long years ago, only just now coming back here and there to their historic grounds. The islanders have only to reach out and take—but reaching out to take means the roughest and most hazardous work so it is little wonder that the fisherman prefers to venture just so far into this struggle as the neces-

sities of life require and no further. But this is not all the wealth of the water that comes his way. The lobster harvest is tremendous and a million lobsters a year, even at 3 to 4 cents a lobster, mean a lot of money to the islander, to whom, because he is a "poor islander," the Fisheries Commission allows an extra month of fishing in the fall, which the other lobstermen of Gaspé do not get.

And then there are the seal which come with the moving of the northern ice. In the great attack upon the seal as it is carried on by ice-breaking steamers from Newfoundland, the Magdalener has no share. His part in this perilous business is done from the shore or from his light skin boats which do not get out of the island waters. With his facilities he does the best he can, and often very well, but the Newfoundland sealers will get in his way, breaking into his ice and his prospective herds. The season is short and quick—a few days and it is over and the harvest of hooded seal is sometimes 15,000, sometimes, though rarely, 75,000. Here and there on the islands are the remains of the sealers on the Magdalener and they are about all the traces of the business the visitor of summer days can see. The little harbor seal which dot the sandbanks and lagoons on summer days play no part in this battle. So with seal and lobster, cod, herring, mackerel, lobster and cod again, from spring to winter, the Magdalener is really in a marine garden though he may choose to pluck but little. There was once a larger game in abundance here, but its day is long past—the walrus. It was for its rich stores of oil, ivory and leather that the early expeditions to the island were made. Stories are left of the hunt for this big mammal here, and most of them are of doubtful veracity, for I have seen it recorded that the last walrus killed on the islands was in the 1780's, while Professor Packard says that the last killed in the Gulf was on the Labrador in 1841. The records of this old hunt remain beneath the soil of the islands; on the low shores of Grindstone and all along the western shore of Entry where the waves have cut into the land of a century ago, there are layers of bones, tusks

and teeth. I have even dug out a great leaden slug from the skull of one of these creatures. There's a Sea-cow point on Coffin Island, another on the south shore of Amherst, both of which record these activities of the past. And indeed the bone heaps distributed over rock surfaces and beneath 6-10 inches of soil are indications of a slaughter which helps one to understand how the walrus has become extinct in these waters.

There are a few other little dots of rock about this island group. Wolf Island lies buried in the long western bar; Shag, a bare platform, is off the sands of Abight, and Gull is near Etang-du-roux. Deadman's Island—Alezey, it was called by Cartier—is a sarcophagus ten miles southwest of Amherst. Of it, Thomas Moore, on his way home from Canada, sang dolorously a funeral song of shipwreck, though he misplaced the island by putting it off the coast of Newfoundland. What tales of sea and seamen these ragged little rocks enshrine, no one can ever know, nor tell of the bones of skipper and craft buried on the shoals of the White Horse, the Pierre-du-Gros-Cap, on the west of the Amherst, and the Point de la Croix.

Ten miles off to the north of Grosse Isle, with a ten fathom channel between is *Brion Island*, seven miles long, but stretched out thin, with 200 foot cliffs on the west and all a platform of horizontal gray sandstones, grass-topped and inviting. This is the island that its discoverer, Cartier, went into ecstasies over on that June day of 1534, when he anchored and went ashore; and when he expressed his enthusiasm by giving the spot the name of his patron. English charts, with dull insistence, assume that Cartier was mistaken in its name and so they call it Byron. The attractions that Cartier found here on that long ago summer day are not so many now. Its timber is gone, the "morses" which lined its shore departed a century ago, its grapes, its gooseberries are hard to find and its roses are blasted, but its verdure and fertility remain, its sheep produce a wool of extraordinary worth and a mutton of purest flavor. Brion has for two generations been the property of the Dingwall family and its new inhabitants are for the

most part in some relation of dependence upon the descendants. Doubtless, the island has its fascinations to one who will search them out. I have sailed about it and gazed upon it wistfully, but have not yet been ashore.

The *Bird Rocks*, lying out beyond Brion, to the northeast some ten miles, have another sort of story—one of birds and of human tragedy. "Set by God the Lord in the midst of the waters," said Father Javenicus, in the 1600's, they seemed to him like a great dovecote, so covered were they with birds from top to bottom. And since his day and that earlier year when Cartier called them the Isles-aux-margaulx, this great colony of water fowl has been the wonder of navigators, in later years the theme of much writing by the bird men. But of the human tragedies on these remote bits of bare rocks, little has been recorded. The Bird Rocks are three in number now. In the early days, the two little fragments now known as the Little Birds, were evidently one, but the sea has broken them apart. The Great or Northern Bird is a flat rock table, not as large as some ice floes, but composed of horizontal gray sandstones that compose Brion and much of the Magdalen group, and these have sheer vertical walls on all sides, rising to a height of 150 feet at the base of the lighthouse. Its grassy top covers near seven acres of ground. Here on the horizontal ledges of its sheer cliffs roosts what is commonly regarded the largest bird colony on the Atlantic Coast. The discrepancies in the accounts of the number of the birds given by the early writers and the census that the bird students of to-day have taken of the population is so great as to convince us that the settlement has been well-nigh decimated. Here are the gannets, most beautiful of all water fowl, in greatest profusion, murrets and kittiwakes, razor bill auks, puffins and guillemots,—only a short list of species, but an association of most ancient date. And in the old days, there was the great auk, awkward gare-fowl, long ago beaten to death and extinction by the clubs of the sailors. There is one and only one evident cause for the rapid decrease in the number in this bird colony in these later years

and that is the inroads made by the fishermen and "egggers" upon the egg supply—the potential feature of the settlement. In the days when the Gloucester fishing fleet had free access to these waters, the Bird Rock was their resort when provisions ran low, and the "egger" who now assaults the Newfoundland-Labrador colonies in unrestrained license was not checked in his attacks on this island until it was made a bird reserve by the government and put under the care of the lightkeeper. And now it is the bird "lover," the egg collector with commercial proclivities who is carrying the work along. I have encountered one of these "lovers" who had in his possession 237 clutches of eggs of each of the seven known species of birds. This avid murderer had, in one visit, thus put an end to not less than 2,000 members of the community, an offense for which in his own State, he would have been well fined or imprisoned. But let no one visit on the head of the lonely lightkeeper reproach for such performances. His solitude, his delight in a visitor from the big world outside are their own justifications for winking at such a trade.

The real romance of Bird Rock has been depicted in extraordinary portraiture by the marvelous photographs taken by Mr. Herbert K. Job from perilous points of view on the narrow ledges where a foothold is only tenable when one is tied to security by a rope from above. The decrease in the number of the bird population here is a cause of some just solicitude to the conservation of our native fauna, but the remedy is, as we have indicated, not far to seek. The gannet is not to be found elsewhere in the Gulf, except at Bonaventure Island near Percé, and at Perroquet Island off Anticosti, and there is little doubt that, of these settlements, the one at Bonaventure is the largest.

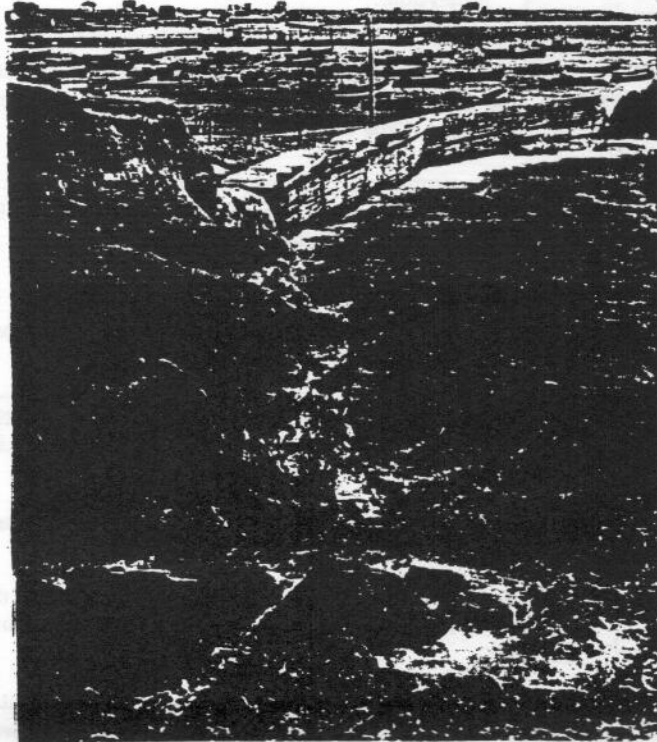
It was not until 1870 that any light was placed on the Bird Rock. Up to that time, being square in the path of navigation through the southern passage, these rocks were a fearful menace to skippers and craft. For many years after the erection of the light, the only means of ascending the rock face was in a crate hauled up the cliff by a windlass and a jib. Some of the early light-

keepers dug out a rough stairway on the cliff face and up these, one and the other, all supplies and all construction material were taken. Ten years ago the government made a more reliable stairway in the rocks with an iron hand rail. It is a precarious passage enough, amid crumbling rock and screaming birds, and even so, the hoist must still serve for heavier loads.

I doubt if the world holds a more isolated light station. Here, during the unfrozen months, the lightkeeper and his little family, usually his wife, a few children and his assistant, have only their dull routine of duties. Once or twice perhaps, in the year, the light inspection steamer with supplies, then the occasional bird student or fisherman. The shipping which the lighthouse serves passes the rock on one side and another and the news of the day is only the passing of another vessel. Perhaps the casual visitor brings in a newspaper or a little talk of the world outside, but for the rest, the eternal sea, the sempiternal screams of the birds, the monotonous round of daily work at the light, the fog horn, the beating of the waves against the rocks, the wind howling for days by gales and storms, till every word on every book and paper has been burned into the brain and every thought thought over a score of times, is it any wonder that more than once, the keeper, mad with his awful solitude, has been taken from the island in a straightjacket? Once there was a cable stretched from here by way of the Magdalens on to Cape Breton but now that is broken and abandoned, a set of International Code flags being the only means the keeper has to make known his distress to his neighbors, if perchance any should be passing, or the lightkeeper at Brion should see them. Some years ago at the down coming of the seal, the keeper and his assistant were floated off on separated ice cakes—the keeper to his death, the assistant to be washed ashore frozen and famished on the distant sands of Cape Breton. In 1912, the tragedy repeated itself and again the keeper was lost in the seal hunt, leaving the anguished wife to tend the light and to signal for succor with the

International Code flags a kind-hearted ministry had placed at their disposal. But so heavy hung the fog banks day upon day that the signals were unavailing and so the stout-hearted widow with babe at breast, steered her shallop through the ice fields to her nearest neighbor on Brion Island. They will tell you on the Magdalens of the time the bomb exploded prematurely, blowing the keeper to fragments and fearfully maiming the assistant, who still lives upon the islands.

And yet, with all its atmosphere of solitude and tragedy, the Durd Rock is a charming spot for a brief stay. Its isolation is sublime, its attractions novel, its mode incomparable. If only one stay through at least one storm and then do not out-stay his welcome.



Convincing clues to the history of a country are embalmed in its place names. I have here given the principal names on these islands with suggestions as to their origin.

Madeleine }
 Magdalen } English } Named for Madeleine Doublet, wife of François
 Magdalene } Doublet, 1663.
 Maudlin — broad French and vulgar English.

Brion }
 Bryon } on most English maps } This name, applied by Cartier, 1534, to the
 Byron } island now bearing it, was often used
 by early explorers for the whole group.
 It was given in honor of Philippe Chabot,
 Sieur de Brion.

Amherst I. }
 I. Aubert } Gen. William Amherst — a name given by the Coffin pat-
 Håvre Aubert } entees. The old French name is Håvre Aubert and this is
 the post office name today. Aubert was commissioner for
 the islands at an early day and the "Håvre" has refer-
 ence to the interior lagoon which has been at various
 times open for small vessels.

Pleasant bay }
 Baie au Plaisance } The broad bay on the east coast of Amherst, a deadly
 anchorage in an easterly gale.

Cabin cove }
 L'anse aux Cabanes } On the south shore of Amherst. Has reference to
 Micmac lodges there at an early day.

West point }
 Sou'west point } On Amherst.
 Sou'west cape }

Mt Gridley } The little triangle of land at Amherst wharf. Gridley was an
 American who established the first lobster fishing here about
 1763.

Demoiselle hill } On Amherst. Takes its name from its symmetrical shape
 which the French thought resembled a maiden's breast,
 in which respect it is like all the volcanic-gypsum hills
 on Grindstone, Alright and Entry.

Basque harbor }
 Harbor Basque } A name dating to the 1600's when the Basques were in
 Håvre aux Basques } possession.

Grindstone I. }
 Pierre Meulière } The English name translates the French; all are due to
 Isle aux Meules } the coarse white sandstone which forms the principal
 Isle Blanche } headland, Cape Meule.

Leslie cove } Named for William Leslie, early pioneer of the lobster busi-
 ness, and still there after 40 years' residence. This is the
 post office name of the eastern part of Grindstone I.

Red cape, Grindstone I. Its blood-red sandstones.

Cape le Trou } Grindstone I. Stands on the hydrographic chart but does not
 seem to be known to the residents.

Hospital cape }
 Cap au hopital } Grindstone I. The origin is lost both to the French and
 English, but the name naturally suggests a wreck and
 rescue.

Etang du Nord } Grindstone I. Pronounced by the English, *Tantanour*.
 The pond is the north pond of Basque Harbor.

Alright I. } Sailor's term. Not older than the Coffin patent. Either this or
 Grindstone I. was called Saunders I., by Bayfield or the
 Coffins.

House harbor }
 Harbor Maison } The harbor between Grindstone and Alright. An
 Håvre aux Maisons } ancient term referring to early settlement, probably
 the first on the islands.

Shag I. This is a bird roost and a shag is a cormorant.

Grand Harbour This passage between L'Ange and L'Anse aux Pins and seems to have been in use from the days of the Vikings and Bretons. It is mentioned in the *Journal de la découverte de la Nouvelle-France*, and was mentioned by Cartier.

Pointe Basée The steeper landing at L'Ange — see in context. Same name.

Pointe L. Named after the discoverer, Sieur Isaac L'Ange.

St. Hubert Bay Named after the patron saint of hunters.

St. Joseph Bay The name of the Magiciens of the Great Magdalen is a reference to the feast of St. Joseph, the patron saint of the fishermen. It is mentioned in the *Journal de la découverte de la Nouvelle-France*.

St. Martin Bay This bay was called *St. Martin* by Cartier, a name still in use by the natives.

St. Pierre Bay This bay was called *St. Pierre* by Cartier. The rocks are called *St. Pierre* and the bay is called *St. Pierre*. It is mentioned in the *Journal de la découverte de la Nouvelle-France*.

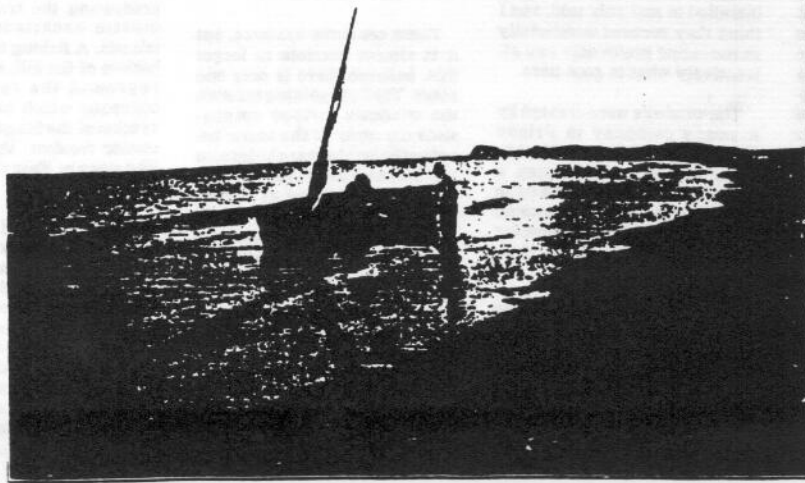
St. Raphael Bay This bay was called *St. Raphael* by Cartier. The name is still in use by the natives.

Ramees Ramea Ramies } Champlain added the name *Ramee-Brion* to the entire group, the name having reference to the way in which the islands are strung together by bars. The name was in use before Champlain's time as it appears in Fisher's narrative of 1501 and Drake's, 1503: "Called by the Britons of S. Malo the Isle of Ramea."

Les Araynes I. des Arenes I. des Arenes I. aux Sabilons I. aux Sabloens I. Duoron } Cartier, in his second voyage, speaks of crossing over from Brion to the sands, "*les araynes*," meaning the sands of Grosse Isle and southward. The name appears on early charts in the alternative forms given and applied to all the group except Brion and Alezey.

Entry I. I. de l'Entree } A very early name, though evidently not Cartier's. It guards the southeastern portal of the group.

MAGDALEN ISLANDS



The beach at Grosse Isle; in the distance the long sand dunes stretching around North cape

Life of islanders depicted in stained glass windows

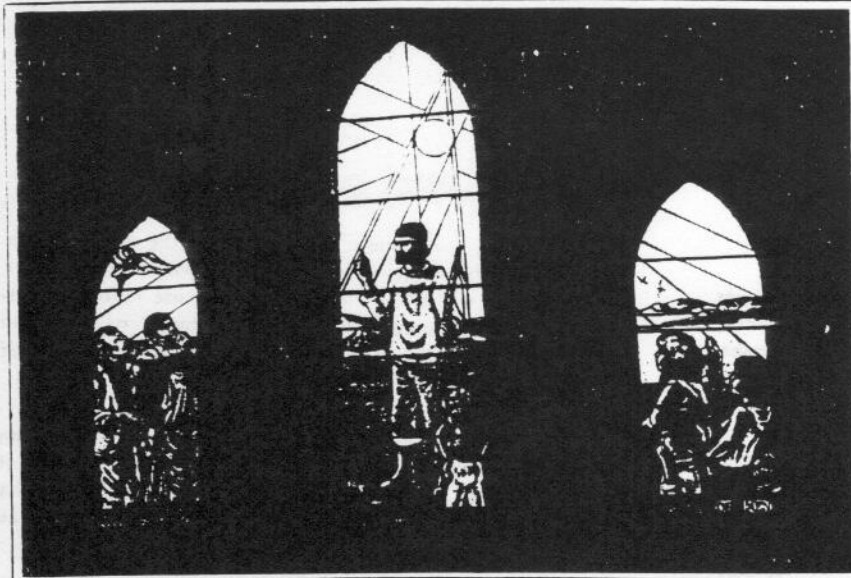
By Bruce D. Nutter

For hundreds and even thousands of years the Church has been a patron of the Arts. Until the period of the Renaissance, after the Reformation of the sixteenth century, the Church was the patron of the Arts. At that time, in the arts—music, drama, architecture, painting, sculpture, and craftsmanship—were for one purpose only: the edification of the soul and the advancement of the Christian cause.

In our day the Arts continue to entertain and move us, and the Church's links to the artistic communities are stronger now than they have been for several centuries. Changes in society since the end of the Second World War, and the subsequent renewal movement in the Anglican and Roman Catholic Churches have brought about a need for new expressions of man's most deeply felt sentiments in his quest for the Eternal.

The most characteristic expression of religious art is stained glass. Ever since the Middle Ages in Europe, stained glass has been used to help the faithful in their knowledge of the great events of the Christian Religion. As an example, until comparatively recent years, most people were unable to read or write. Recognizing this, the Church undertook to depict in stained glass the teachings and life of Jesus. This was a fantastic aid to the devotional life of Christians who could visit their parish churches, and make pilgrimages to the great shrines of the heroes of the faith. At last they were able to see in the richly colored glass the image of Jesus, his mother, the saints and martyrs of the centuries.

As human beings made of flesh and blood we need to be able to see, hear, touch, smell, and taste the elements of the created order, and use them to bring us closer to a loving God. We are not disembodied spirits



On the Magdalen Islands our churches have a minimum of religious art, and what there is falls far short of giving expression to ourselves as people struggling to understand and live the Christian faith on these islands. Some time ago, it was decided to place three stained glass windows in the East wall behind the altar of Holy Trinity Church. Those windows were installed in mid July 1986, and I think they succeed wonderfully at revealing profoundly and attractively what is good here.

The windows were created by a young company in Prince Edward Island (Burden/Hrabi). They are already making a name for themselves, and have been given a major commission to do the Great West Window for the Anglican Cathedral in Halifax, N.S.

When I approached them last fall about the Grosse Ile windows, we came to a very quick understanding about the sort of presentation that was required. One of the two partners in the company had visited the islands

on a number of occasions, and in fact had published a children's colouring book telling the story about a horse on Entry Island who had been separated from its owner. With this kind of background, the two artists were keen to have a commission from the Magdalen Islands.

The windows are unusual for a number of reasons.....

There are three windows, but it is almost possible to forget this, because there is only one scene. The light coming through the windows further emphasizes the unity of the scene because the brightness obliterates the East wall completely. There is an unusual effect of dimension which a number of people have noticed. If one stops, and quietly gazes at the windows for a short time, it is seemingly possible to move into the scene...to put yourself in the window. It is then that the new windows seem to be alive.

There is a lot to these windows. Of course, the first thing

one notices is the bright colour, and the way the light intensifies coming through it. They are modern, contemporary windows, expressing in concrete, ordinary images, the people and the islands they live on. The background shows the interaction of the land and the sea. A blue heron flies overhead, and in the distance, two gulls. On a small hill there is a wooden house representing the traditional domestic architecture of the islands. A fishing boat is at the bottom of the hill, and in the foreground the familiar hay barrique which has become a symbol of the Magdalens. In the center window, the Gibraltar-like slope of East Cape is easily recognized.

At the bottom of the windows you read the words: "Come with me and I will make you fishers of men." Our Lord is portrayed speaking these words not to the Galilean fishermen of 2,000 years ago; but to the people of the Magdalen Islands in our time. He is dressed in a heavy woolen sweater, jeans and rubber boots! The sun is directly

over his head, and two shards of light coming from the sun compass him on both sides. In the elaborate leadwork of this scene, a cross may be discerned which extends at an angle to the right window.

Around Our Lord are the people of the Magdalen islands. On the right, the women and children dressed in windbreakers and exhibiting the red hair characteristic of Scots ancestry. In the background, on the shore, a mysterious figure dressed in blue gazes out to us. It is the Blessed Virgin Mary, and she holds in her arms a bouquet of fleur-de-lys, the symbol of Quebec.

In the left window are the two fishermen representing St. Peter and his brother Andrew. Our Lord has spoken the words to them, and from their expressions one senses that the message has been spoken through their heads into their hearts. Once again, if you stop and move into this scene, something begins to happen. You begin to 'feel' the scene.

The tension becomes almost discernable. Study the look in Peter's eyes. Here is a man on the edge of faith. Jesus the haunting young man has captured his heart and his imagination. What will happen to Peter if he leaves his nets and follows? The tension is so well expressed that it is as if Peter were on the edge of stepping off into a new dimension.

Beyond the impact described above, what is so attractive about the windows is that the Christian faith is not a remote religion for a distant people long dead and far away. But they speak of our dignity as people of the Magdalen Islands, and that Our Lord chooses to make his dwelling place here.

This article appeared in the "First Informer", Magazine of the Magdalen Islands, and has been edited for this publication.

I would point out that these properties did not belong to the church or clergy as some might think, but to the Crown and rents received from the allotment of these reserves were given for the support and maintenance of the Protestant clergy of Lower Canada (Church and State in Canada 1627-1867, John S. Moir, McLelland & Stewart, Toronto).

The Magdalen Islands were granted to Isaac Coffin (later Sir Isaac Coffin) by Letters Patent on April 24, 1798. Pages 4 and 5 of this document expressly state that the extreme eastern Island - "comprising the Northeast point and the Old Harry's point", estimated to be the one-seventh part of the Islands would not be a part of the grant, and that this portion would remain property of the crown or Province for the support and maintenance of a Protestant clergy. This was to fulfil article 36 of the Constitutional Act.

The first Anglican clergy man who came to the Magdalen Islands, (Rev. Felix Boyle) took up residence first at House Harbour later moving to Grindstone, therefore it became necessary for the church to obtain property in this area for the purpose of building a rectory, obtaining firewood and farming. A tract of land (100 acres) was acquired by an Emphyteutic Lease, dated June 11, 1858, from John Fontana (agent for John Townsend Coffin) to the Rev. Felix Boyle, resident Anglican clergy man for the use of the Magdalen Islands Mission. The lease was for a period of 99 years with an option to renew at its expiry date and with an annual rent of one shilling sterling payable each year in the month of June. (See lease from John Fontana to Felix Boyle, Registered at the Registry office for the Magdalen Islands on the 2nd day of September, 1863, No. 24, Register B, Volume 1, page 4) John Townsend Coffin died in England on April 29, 1882 and Isaac Tristram Coffin became proprietor in trust of the Islands. Unrest, discontentment and constant quarreling over the land tenure system on the Islands prompted the Quebec government to intervene and in 1895 an act was passed to replace the system of tenure by lease by one of free tenure, whereby all occupants could become owners of their property by paying any arrears in rent plus rent for the current year at the office of the clerk of the Circuit Court for the Magdalen Islands at Amherst.

On June 14, 1897, a Deed of Commutation, between Isaac Tristram Coffin, (represented by E.A. Brasset, trustee) the Government of Quebec and the Lord Bishop of Quebec, gave the Diocese title to all church properties held from the Coffins under the lease system, namely at, Grindstone, Entry Island, Amherst and Grosse Isle.

In 1959, following a threat of expropriation by the Duplessis government, the Diocese sold the 100 acre tract of land to the Province of Quebec.

In conclusion I would like to say that John Townsend Coffin was considered a valuable friend and supporter of the Anglican church on the Islands during his incumbency as proprietor and made many generous gifts and contributions for its upkeep and maintenance. Whether out of the generosity of his heart or by constant reminders from the clergy and bishops of their needs, we will never know.

Byron Clark - Magdalen Islands, Quebec

Dear Sir:

In the February 14th issue of SPEC, I was amazed at certain references to church property on the Magdalen Islands, in an article by Erica Pomerance which appeared on page 8. The writer states that Coffin Island was given to the Anglican church by "Coffin" who later traded it for property at Grindstone.

Since there were three Coffins involved in the Magdalen Islands, it is not clear from this article which one of the three supposedly made this generous contribution. Obviously it could not have been Admiral Isaac Coffin himself, since he died 12 years before the church was established on the Islands.

Since available space in the publication will only permit a cropped version of the actual facts, I will be as brief as possible:

1. None of the Coffins, including Admiral Sir Isaac Coffin ever owned Coffin Island.

2. The Anglican church never owned any part of Coffin Island with the exception of the present cemetery at Old Harry (1 acre) which was purchased from Daniel Dunn on October 21, 1915 for the amount of \$10.00 (Deed registered at the Registry office for the Magdalen Islands on October 23, 1915, under the number 1777.)

Although undoubtedly written in good faith, what is disturbing about this statement is that no documentary evidence is mentioned to support the theory that such a transaction ever took place, and many people would accept this statement as historical fact because it appeared in print.

It is true that Coffin Island was known as the "Clergy Reserves" prior to 1854, in fact, one-seventh of all Lower Canada was reserved for this purpose under the Constitutional Act of 1791 but

Byron Clark

Box no. 2111 P.O.

Magdalen Islands, Lac.

St. B. 1. 11

April 12, 1984

Mr. Kenneth E. Annett,
1225 Lavigerie Ave.,
St. Jov, Quebec,
H1W 3W8.

Dear Mr. Annett:-

Thank you for your letter of April 4th, and your interest in my response to an article which had appeared in a February issue of SPEC. Unfortunately they only printed about half of the original article, probably for the want of space, and to me it made the whole thing rather meaningless.

It is strange that you should inquire about Judge Edward Bowen, as I have been trying to find out some information about him, also, as I have reasons to believe that he may have performed several civil marriages on the Islands in 1847 or 1848.

It was he who was responsible for making the Church of England aware of the fact that there were several English speaking Protestants on the Islands, and during his last visit here in 1848 was accompanied by the Rev. R. Short, the clergyman from Perce. It was during this particular visit that he took ill or had an accident whichever happened.

Unfortunately, the only information that I have concerning this incident is an article which appeared in The Canadian Ecclesiastical Gazette, September 12, 1850, Vol. 1, No. 4. Mine is a Xerox copy and is not legible enough to recopy. You could obtain a copy of this by contacting the Librarian, Bishop's University, Lennoxville. Tell him you want pages 30 - 31 and 32 of this issue, and specify that it concerns Bishop Mountain's first visit to Magdalen Islands.

All that the article mentions is that the Judge took seriously ill while on the Islands, (resulting in his death, later) and it appears that they were of the impression that it was some type of sickness or disease that he had contacted on the Islands. Apparently, this sickness had broke out on the Islands at the time. It states that he was forced to curtail his visit, which allowed the Rev. Short to visit Entry Island only where he only performed about 10 baptisms.

As I mentioned, I was trying to obtain records which may have been kept by Judge Bowen during some of his visits to the Islands to see if he had performed any civil marriages.

In the entry in the church register concerning my great-grandfather's marriage it states that he had previously been married by a Justice of the Peace due to the lack of a Protestant clergyman on the Islands. The marriage was convalidated by the church in January 1851 by the Rev. Felix Boyle, the first resident clergyman on the Islands. I might mention that he was also a native of the Gaspe.

My great-grandfather's name was Henry Clarke, and he married a Flora Driscoll.

So far I have been unable to find any of these records. I wrote the clerk of the court at Perce as I thought that they might be there but he didn't even look and wrote back to say that I should contact the clerk of the court here at Amherst.

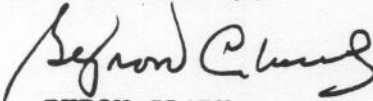
I contacted the chap here and he promised to look and let me know but have had no word from him. I doubt if there is any records here as it would be doubtful if the records office or courthouse was established here at that time. Most likely the annual Circuit Court was held in a schoolhouse or some such building and the records taken back to Perce.

I would place the marriage in 1848 or 1849, and it may have been in 1850 by Judge DeBlois (Judge Bowen's successor) Yet it could have been as early as 1847, but doubtful.

If you should uncover any more information concerning the Judge's accident or illness, I would be pleased to hear about it, and if I can come up with something more from here will certainly pass it along to you. Possibly you might have a suggestion as to where I might look for this marriage record.

Good luck with your research!

Yours sincerely,


BYRON CLARK

P:S: Was a bit curious, if someone gave you my name, or if it was just from the article in Spec.

Excuse the mistakes as I'm using an electric typewriter which I am not used to.

Reply
May 09/84

Leisure and Communications

Project

Box 33, Leslie P.O.

Grosse Isle, Magdalen Islands

Que., G0B 1M0

April 30, 1984

Dear Mr. Annette:

We recently wrote to C.A.S.A. asking for information about Loyalists who came to the Magdalen Islands. We were given your name as the best person to contact.

Some of the family names here are: Burke, Rankin, McLean, Chennell, Welsh (Walsh), Cassidy, Turnbull, Craig, Richards, Dunn, Clark, Dickson, (Lixon), Keating (Keaton), Driscoll, Tager (Tager).

Any information you could send to us would be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Nina Clark

Nina Clark

Nina Clark
NINA CLARK