

A Story of
ST. MATTHEW'S CHURCH, PENINSULA
and
The Other Churches Around Gaspé Bay

Round picture of church

by
Dorothy Phillips

There's a lot to be said for an old, old church,
For the peace and tranquility there;
And what blessed relief can be found in belief
When we silently offer a prayer.

From "The Simple Things in Life"
by Irene Beraerts

IN APPRECIATION

The idea that this story should be written came to me one day ten or more years ago when my father, sitting in his rocking chair by the window in our old home, described to me the steps in the erection of our church, St. Matthew's Church, Peninsula. Of course, when I eventually began to write the story in the fall of 1976, I had forgotten most of his words. However, with his account as my inspiration and knowing I would have my mother's recollections as a further support, I began.

Fortunately, I had friends who were doing research into Gaspé history and they generously shared with me their findings. Much of the early part of the story is based on copies of documents and other historical material sent to me by Mr. Kenneth Annett and Dr. and Mrs. David McDougall.

I have mentioned my mother's recollections. She, now 93, was not my only living source of information about the very early days of the church. Mrs. George Miller, 94, Mr. George Ascah, 95, and Mr. William Annett, 87, all wrote me many details about remembered events of their youth.

Some of the clergy who once served in the Gaspé Bay area sent me interesting recollections of their time here. I had letters from the Rev. A.E. Godwin, the Rev. C.S. Brett-Perring, the Rev. G.L. Norris, and the Rt. Rev. Timothy Matthews. The wives of clergymen who answered my questions with most helpful information were Mrs. R.A. Carson, Mrs. G.L. Norris, and Mrs. Ernest Reed. The clergy serving here during my search for material also helped me greatly by letting me see old records and by checking facts for me. The Rev. Ruth H. Matthews, the Rev. Hubert Vallis, and the Venerable Grover Kendrick all helped me in this way.

My information about the earliest Methodist developments around the Bay was supplied largely by Mr. Irwin Simon. In addition, The United Church Committee on Archives, Toronto, of which Miss Evelyn Ricker is Assistant, furnished an abundance of local Methodist history. Some of the details of more recent United Church events were supplied by Dr. E. Russell Woodside, Secretary of the Miramichi Presbytery.

A number of the Roman Catholic clergymen supplied me with important information about the past and present developments in their churches. They were the Rev. Louis Bosmans, the Rev. Leonard Dion, the Rev. Michel Lemoignan, M.N.A., Canon, the Rev. Alfred Bujold, Mgr. Paul Joncas and Son Excellence Mgr. Bertrand Blanchet, Bishop of Gaspé.

The Rev. Keith Balkwill and the Rev. David Boyd provided me with facts about the Pentecostal Church.

Certain institutions very kindly sent materials, loaned me books, or allowed me to examine records. They are: the Anglican Church Archives, Toronto, where the Assistant Archivist is Mrs. Margaret Millman; the Prothonotary's Office, Percé; the National Postal Museum, Ottawa, of which the Postal History Research Officer is Dr. Kenneth Mackenzie; St. Matthew's Ladies' Guild; and the Library of Bishop's University, Lennoxville. I have also made wide use of various issues of the "Revue d'Histoire de la Gaspésie".

Mrs. M.S. Cazes, Assistant Secretary-Treasurer and Registrar of the Church Society of the Diocese of Quebec, very kindly made available to me copies of much historical material from the Archives of the Diocese. This material was invaluable in piecing together events of the Nineteenth Century.

Four people who gave me assistance in my work, the Venerable Leslie Gourley, Archdeacon of Gaspé, Mrs. Roland Miller, Mrs. Reginald Annett and Mr. Charles Davis, have all died in recent months.

Other friends and acquaintances who answered my questions or otherwise contributed to the story are: ^{Mr. William N. Roberts,} Mr. Harold Ascah, Mrs. Elton McAfee, Mr. Howard Mullin, Mrs. Wilbert Roberts, Mr. Elmer Ascah, Mrs. Harold Waterman, Mrs. ^{Lee} Watson, Mr. Wilfred Roberts, Mrs. Gordon Mullin, ^{Mr. and} Mr. Lewis Mullin, Miss Dorothy Dutton, Mrs. Angus Ascah, Mrs. Sonny Fournier, Mrs. Cecil DeVouge, Mrs. Bert Ascah, Mr. Alex Coffin, Mrs. John Dumas, Mrs. Dennis Palmer, Mr. Cecil LeMarquand, Mrs. Gerald Phillips, Mrs. Ernest Ricketts, Mr. Ivan Coffin, Mrs. Ernest Mullin, Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Phillips, Mr. Jean Clément, Mrs. L.G. Westman, Mr. Gordon Rabey, ^{Mrs. Russell Miller,} and Mrs. Elmer Mullin.

Finally, a critical reading of a rough version of the story

was done by my mother and a number of my friends: the Rev. and Mrs. Hubert Vallis, Mr. Elmer Ascah, Miss Constance Ascah, Dr. Kathleen Harper, Miss Dorothy Harper, and Dr. and Mrs. David McDougall. Numerous corrections and improvements resulted from their reading. The remaining mistakes and omissions, and I know there are many, are mine. I hope I will be forgiven for them.

Mrs. David McDougall kindly typed the final version of the story for me. Her help in this way and the encouragement and other forms of assistance given me by Dr. and Mrs. McDougall were of great importance in completing the story.

I would like to thank most sincerely all these people who so generously helped me and the many others who assisted me indirectly in the preparation of this story about the churches around Gaspé Bay.

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