

## Chapter 4

## An Organ, A Pulpit, A Demijohn, A Woodlot, Etc.

Mr. Forsythe, Mr. Eames, and Mr. Harding were the clergymen in Sandy Beach during the remainder of the 1880s. They were all young men, I believe, and seem to have carried on their work with much the same earnestness as their older predecessors. I think, however, that there was one difference in the methods of one or more of them, although I have almost no evidence to prove it. In Chapter 5, Part I, I wrote about the beginnings of the Oxford Movement. At some stage in the history of the Gaspé churches, the new practices initiated by this Movement were introduced, and the same controversy took place here as occurred in many other parts of the world with much the same division of opinion between High and Low Church supporters. To a few, the best alternative seemed to be to leave the Church of England and become Methodist. Most could not do this and stood by the Church as the new ideas became accepted and the controversy died down. It died down so completely that it is now forgotten. I could find no one to tell me about it. Even my father was a little too young to remember the details; but he seemed certain of one thing, that the Methodists who formed the little congregation in Haldimand in 1889-90 and built a church there were formerly members of the Sandy Beach church and broke away because of the High Church Movement. Various individuals in other congregations took up Methodism, too.

In reading the reports and minutes in the time of these clergymen, one sees continued progress in Peninsula. Mr. Forsythe reported in 1884 that he held services "on all Sundays except the first and on chief fasts and festivals and on certain week days in Lent". A set of altar linen and a paten had been presented to the church, and an organ had been purchased for \$100.

The purchase of the organ signalled the beginning of an aspect of worship which delighted the congregation for many years. In about 1884, a family returned to Peninsula after spending several years in Rockland, Maine. The family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. John S. Miller and their daughter Emily. They were all musical and Emily had taken

lessons and could play the little melodeon which she brought back with her. They moved into the old Miller home, which was about where Mr. Bert Miller's store was in later years. There the church choir met and practised at first. Of course, Miss Miller (she married Louis Annett in 1886) became the organist at church and continued as organist almost all the rest of her life. She also taught some of the young girls of the place to play, notably Maud Ascah, the Mrs. George Miller to whom I have already referred. In her turn, Mrs. Miller played the church organ. Both she and my mother remember the fine singing in the early years of the church. Mrs. Miller wrote me the following:

*"Mr. Brooke (he came in 1892) and his sister trained the choir and really did a fine job. After working all day, Mrs. Annett and the choir must have got very tired, but never complained. I've heard<sup>heard</sup> Mother say, Mr. B. would stand in different parts of the church & listen & make them go over & over the singing until he was satisfied. When the Baynes came they were both musically gifted so the training went on. Ed Ascah was a tenor, his sister Emily (later Mrs. Luther Coffin) alto, John Miller bass and lots of sopranos."*

My mother tells me that the women sat in the choir seats and the men sat in the front seat on the south side. Some of the men not already mentioned who sang at various times were: Henry Ascah, Charlie Ascah, Eddie Miller, Bert Miller, Roland Miller, Will Annett, and Thornber Phillips. Other women singers were Mrs. John Miller, Mrs. John Arthur Ascah, Mrs. George Ascah, Mrs. William Miller, Mrs. John Mullin, and the Misses Alice Ascah, ~~and~~ Aggie and Olive Phillips, <sup>and Eileen and Audrey Ascah.</sup>

Before Mr. Brooke's time, Mr. Harding and the other clergy encouraged the choir and under their leadership and that of Mrs. Louis Annett established a reputation for music of a very high quality.

Bishop Williams visited the church on July 15, 1884. It was a very important occasion as the church was consecrated by the Bishop. It was dedicated to Saint Matthew. Eleven persons were confirmed, also. Mr. Forsythe commented:

*"The young lady organist trained the choir and enabled them to well render the musical part of the service."*

The church at this time having no chancel, we must view the inside very differently from the way it is today. The three rows of pews

made two aisles, one on each side of the middle row which was short. allowing space at the front and at the back. A small vestry was located in the corner where the pulpit now is and the pulpit was just beside it near the middle of the front. Beside the pulpit was the altar, a table for which in 1885 an altar frontal was obtained and in front of which was a communicants' kneeler which was also procured in 1885. Mr. Eddie Ascah made the stand on which are the words "Holy Holy Holy" for the top of the altar. In what year he made it I do not know. At some time, probably in this earliest decade of the church, the prayer desk and lectern were made. The organ and the choir seats were placed much as they are today. The font, which was made by Mr. Henry Annett, Jr., was also at the front of the church. The wall paper was a light fawn patterned paper. The outside of the church must have been whitewashed, as in 1885 it was resolved that the rough wall be coated with "whiting and paint" and in 1888 they paid H. & S. Veit six dollars for four barrels of lime.

The pulpit was a gift from Captain Annett who had Mr. George Ascah make it for him. Captain Annett was William, the oldest son of John Annett, who was in turn the oldest son of the first Annett.<sup>1</sup> This Captain Annett was a whaler and was renowned for his size and strength. I often think as I look at the pulpit that it epitomizes, as well as does the church itself, the manual skills and the solid, simple ideals of our ancestors who built the church.

Such purchases in 1885 and 1886 as a gallon of coal oil (25¢), a demijohn (15¢), 3 lamps (\$1.20), and a chandelier (\$4.95) indicate that evening services were now held. As there is never a mention of candles, the lighting must always have been by lamps.

An unusual acquisition by the church was a lot of land. It was the west half of Lot 9 on the Griffon Road (Range 2) and the names of the grantees were the Rev. Wm. Thomas Forsythe, Wyndham Miller and Alexander Ascah. The date it was patented was 1884, but it may have been acquired before this. This lot was lumbered several times over the years bringing the church money for stumpage.

The following note from Mr. Forsythe was brought to me recently

1. An Annett genealogy has been prepared under the title "The Annett family of Gaspé" by Mr. Kenneth Annett of Québec.

after it had been found by Mr. Alexander Ascah's granddaughter, Mrs. Ernest Ricketts (née Marjorie Ascah). It throws some light on the use of the lot:

*Sandy Beach Gaspé P.Q.  
Nov. 17, 1884*

*To the churchwardens of S. Matthew's Church  
Peninsula*

*We have acquired a lot of land on the Griffon Road for the benefit of the Church. As some of the people seem to have a difficulty in paying their assessment & wish to cut some wood from this lot to sell to enable them to pay it I am willing to give my consent for this year only to those who are unable to pay their assessment otherwise. It is necessary that you give your consent just to make this legal.*

*Wm. T. Forsythe*

A simple sentence in the minutes of April 14, 1887, "Unanimously agreed that William Ascah Snr. do take the office of Sexton in place of his son", sums up the sympathy of the parish at a time of tragedy. Since 1884 when he was engaged for the sum of six dollars per year, Willie, the teenage son of William Ascah, had been sexton of the church. He was a fine clever boy, so those who remembered him said. On February 15, 1887, he accidentally shot himself when on a hunting trip in the woods.

He was the youngest of eight children. In a time when it was not uncommon for parents to lose children, his parents, William and Harriet Ascah, living in their home up behind the church, had what seems an unfair amount of sorrow. In two days in February 1862, four of the five children they then had died of diphtheria. The one remaining child was a nine-year-old boy, Angus McGregor, who died too, in 1864. Daughters Agnes and Caroline were born and lived, and finally came Willie. A year before he was killed, his mother died of consumption and about that time, too, their house burned. Mr. Ascah's last years must have been a little brighter, fortunately, as he rebuilt his house and Agnes married Edward Annett who moved there with them.

Mr. Forsythe married Mary Jane Grace Harbour of Sandy Beach in 1886 and left the parish. Mr. Eames, who was in Sandy Beach for only the year 1886-87, wrote in his report:

*"The congregation (Peninsula) are much interested in and warmly attached to their little church and attend with great regularity. The responding and singing are very hearty and cheerful."*

He added that there was a good Sunday School in operation.

1887 saw the arrival of the Reverend George T. Harding, an enthusiastic man who was then about 43 years of age. (He lived to be 93.) He wrote in 1888 that he had a Harvest Thanksgiving Service at Peninsula and had regular cottage services once a month in summer. (Having such services in the homes, perhaps partly for the benefit of the old or sick, was a practice for many years.) Mr. Harding said that he remained in Peninsula after morning service to have Litany and catechising at 3 o'clock. Many attended, adults and children, and, Mr. Harding wrote:

*"(they) seem willing to help me in the work, and the free and hearty manner in which they speak out, together with the remarkable intelligence displayed in answering the questions, has helped to make this one of the most cheering services I have."*

The following year, Mr. Harding wrote that the service of catechising in Peninsula was going well and he also had a Bible Class once a fortnight attended by a large number of adults. During Lent that year, he held a ten-day mission at Peninsula with services morning and evening. In 1890, he reported both the catechising and the Bible class were going well and wrote at length about the participation by the people. He said, "Many here are really interested in the study of the Holy Scriptures."

The address given Mr. Harding when he ceased to have charge of Peninsula indicates how much his work was appreciated.

Chapter 5  
A Diarist and a Library

Mr. John Neil Ascah, called by his full name, John Neil, to distinguish him from Captain John Ascah, John Arthur Ascah, and Little John or Johno Ascah, was a young man recently married to Emma Coffin. He lived up on the hill with his uncle Captain John Ascah, where most of us remember his son Mr. Neil Ascah living. He belonged to the Fame Point Ascachs, about whom I shall explain later on, and shared with his uncle the responsibility of keeping the lightship which then marked the south edge of the channel at the end of Sandy Beach Point. For a good number of years he kept a diary, a daily journal full of interesting details which a good diary provides, and which is, in itself, a lively "history" of Peninsula. His granddaughter, Mrs. David McDougall, has provided me with excerpts from it which have enabled me to see the church events of the time in an informal way.

For example, here is his account of the visit of Bishop Williams in July, 1889:

*"July 25: The Bishop came on Wednesday on the "Admiral"<sup>1</sup> and held confirmation service in Sandy Beach yesterday and then came over this morning. He, Mr. Harding and another minister. Charlie Phillips, Tom and Louis took them to Little Gaspé with their horses. Harbours came over for the Bishop and suite this evening.*

*July 27 (Sat.): Annett's whaler went over to Sandy Beach & brought Bishop Williams & Rev. Harding & Washer over. I received confirmation from him with Mr. Geo. Miller, Luther Coffin, John Ascah, John Mullen, Willie Mullen, Emily Mullin, Nora Boyle & Georgianna Ascah. The Bishop delivered a short address and consecrated the graveyard. Annett's whaler then took him to the Basin. Mr. Richmond came for him but he went in the whaler and Louis Ascah & me took Mr. Harding & Mr. Washer over to Sandy Beach."*

As can be seen by this account, many people pitched in on occasions like this, and it must be remembered that the arrangements for all the travelling were made without the help of the telephone. The telegraph could have been employed, however, as it had been in use around the Bay for some years by this time.

1. The "Admiral" was a sidewheel steamer which ran for many years between Dalhousie, N.B. and Gaspé Basin.

That same summer the women had a tea meeting which Mr. John Neil tells about:

*"August 5: There is a meeting in the school house tonight to plan for a tea meeting to be held here soon.*

*August 6: Venetia (his sister) & Miss Eden (Edith Eden, a teacher from the South West) going begging for tea meeting. Fred Annett driving them around.*

*August 7: All the women are down to Phillips making cakes for a tea meeting to be held tomorrow.*

*August 8: Tea meeting going on this evening. I cannot go as it is my turn to light up.*

*August 9: They had their tea meeting last night, had a grand time. Tea at seven in the school and danced all night at Shallop Point. They made twenty dollars and seventy cents. Clem Miller and Walter Coffin came on board the lightship at twelve o'clock and stopped a while. Clem brought over ten girls. Emma did not go as she was not very well. All the Nova Scotians from the "Florence" were there (a mackerel fishing vessel anchored off the mill). They had Jack West for fiddler."*

Whether the tea meeting was in aid of the church or not he does not say, but some interesting diary items about the church are as follows:

*"Sun. May 4, 1890: Mr. Harding preached here this morning. They went over to Sandy Beach for him in a flat. He came out to the Point, they met him there and took him back the same way.*

*May 19, 1890: A crowd was fencing the church around with cedar posts for a wire fence."*

At a vestry meeting on April 3rd that year "John Miller and Louis Annett (were) appointed a committee to take steps to provide a wire fence for the Church property". The work was not completed then or the wire fence did not last, as the minutes of the 1893 meeting say that the wardens were "to see that it was fenced in sometime during the summer. The male members of the congregation offering to do the work". In July of that year, Mr. John Neil says: "They are making paling fence around the church."

*"Sun. August 10, 1890: Mr. Harding preached here this evening. Clifford read the lessons."*

The church organ bought in 1884 could not have been satisfactory as in 1891 it was "moved by Geo. Annett Sec. by Alexander Ascah that organ be sold for 50 dollars". At another meeting soon

after, it was "Agreed that organ now in use be sold for \$50.00 providing that another valued at \$100 with 30% discount be had to replace it". On April 7th of that year Mr. John Neil wrote, "I believe they sold the organ out of the church today for \$50." Then later:

*"Sun. July 26, 1891: I heard the new church organ today - sounds well.*

*August 12, 1891: Emily Annett was around begging money to pay for Church Organ. I gave her 50 cents."*

One addition was made to the Church in the early 1890s. At a meeting on March 9, 1891, it was agreed (not unanimously) to take steps to build a chancel and George Ascah, Luther Coffin, and George Annett were appointed to a building committee. Over a year later, June 22, 1892 Mr. John Neil wrote "...helped Alpheus raise frame of the chancel he is building on the church 13'6" x 12'. He has \$50 to build it."

As has been seen from Mr. Harding's reports, great interest was shown during his period in learning. Besides the catechising class and the Bible Class, the Sunday School was also going on. In 1888, Mr. Harding commented:

*"At Peninsula a good Sunday School is kept up throughout the year ... The congregation there is deeply indebted, and feel very grateful to Miss Laura Ascot (Ascah) for her successful and self-denying labours in the Sunday School during a long period. But she is now married, and has left Gaspé, and her place is occupied by Mr. Wm. Miller, Jr. who, I believe, is thoroughly conscientious, and will likewise be successful."*

One of the reasons for the success of the Sunday School was the sustained interest of the superintendents. As Mr. Harding says, Miss Laura Ascah had worked for a long time. She also taught day school, in Seal Rock for one place, which she would sometimes reach by walking down along shore. My father told about her teaching some Catholic boys their catechism so that they would be ready for confirmation; the boys were the sons of John Lambert, the ferryman.

When Mr. William Miller took the Sunday School over, he remained at the job for twenty years and would probably have continued longer had he not been stricken in 1908 with paralysis from which he never recovered, although he lived until 1938. My mother remembers



Sunday School in her Uncle William's time. He had his class, the oldest pupils, in the middle row of pews. The other teachers had their classes in other parts of the church. Mrs. Roland Miller (née Marion Coffin, who later became Mr. Miller's daughter-in-law) remembers being taught by Alice Ascah, Mr. John Neil's daughter, when Mr. Miller was superintendent.

Beginning in 1908, I believe, Mr. Lewis Ascah, a younger brother of Laura Ascah, became superintendent and he, too, continued for at least twenty years. He is fondly and respectfully remembered by boys of his class who are middle-aged and elderly men today. One of these men has written me that he feels the lessons instilled into his unwilling mind by Mr. Ascah and other teachers have stood him in good stead all his life. Another has told me of the impression Mr. Ascah made on him one day when all the boys in the class knew their lesson perfectly. He said, "Well, boys, it is very good that you all know your lesson. But it shows it was not quite hard enough. I shall have to give you a little harder lesson this time." This was a lesson in itself and was remembered long after the memorized lesson was forgotten.

Sunday School records are very few, but by inquiring from some of the older people I have found that, besides the men and women I have already mentioned and the wives and sisters of the clergy, some of the teachers were Henry LeMesurier, Roland Miller, Irene Annett, Maud Ascah, Hilda Mullin, Angus Ascah and Nellie Phillips. There were many more who gave an hour each Sunday, "plus travelling time" to use a present-day expression, to help train the children. When one considers that in day school the children studied Old Testament history and New Testament history, as well as the Bible, it is plain that worship at that time was no ignorant or blind faith.

Mr. John Neil Ascah mentions Mr. Harding's Bible Class:

*"Friday, January 9, 1891: Mr. Harding had a Bible Class in the school - George Pye brought him over. Subject was 4th Chapt. St. John to verse 20.*

*February 1, 1892: I went around tonight collecting money to buy lamps for school for bible class. I went from lower end of parish to Uncle Willie's. I got \$2.00. Edward Annett went from there up and he got \$2.45, making \$4.45 in all."*

*"February 3, 1892: Edward Annett got the lamps today. 2 hanging lamps and 2 to screw on the wall. He also got blinds for school with money."*

One other activity at church which interested Mr. John Neil greatly was the library. Some of the early entries in his diary read:

*"July 17, 1889: Clara and Venetia went around begging for stuff to make a cake to ticket off to get a library for the Sunday School."*

*July 23, 1889: Spree up at Alexander Ascah's tonight in aid of a library, have given up the idea of ticketing a cake and having a tea instead. 5¢ admission & 10¢ for tea. Emma went up and had a very nice time. Made over \$13.*

*November 24, 1889: They opened the library in the church today. I got No. 1 called "The Good Ship Barbara". Emma took No. 27 called "Little Will".*

Some years later he wrote:

*July 2, 1893: They have 50 new library books. Gord brought me two today, No. 245 Sailing and Sealing, No. 229 Life of Wellington. I believe the new books are nice."*

In his annual report for 1890, in commenting on the Peninsula Sunday School, Mr. Harding wrote:

*"They have now ... an excellent parish library of nearly two hundred volumes, which they hope to add to every year, and which, I am confident will be a means of benefit in many ways to the people."*

As I mentioned earlier, several of the books were S.P.C.K. publications. Where the books were kept at first I do not know, but later, when the porch was built, they were kept in cupboards in it. The women covered each book with a cloth cover and numbered each with ink. Different men acted as librarian over the years and a small charge, "one cent for each book", Mr. Ascah says, was made to the borrowers. He eventually read every book in the library and many others in the parish read them avidly, too. Two or three insatiable readers of that time that I have heard of were my Miller grandparents and Mr. Charles Ascah. My grandfather once read the whole of Macauley's "History of England" and Mr. Ascah was well able to and did discuss the writings of Jeseplus, a Jewish historian of the first century A.D. Some people in the parish subscribed to periodicals. My mother remembers looking at copies of "The Illustrated London News" at Mr. Louis Annett's and

either my Phillips grandfather or his brother subscribed to "The Christian Guardian".

In my own day as a Sunday School pupil I enjoyed reading the church library books. The library was later disposed of as follows. The vestry minutes of January 16, 1955, report that "the old Library books are to be put on sale, proceeds to go to the Sunday School". There are four or five in the bookshelves in my home, so I suppose that many of the books are still here in the community.

One outcome of the interest in learning shown in the last decades of the nineteenth century was the decision by certain young men to study to become clergymen. In Peninsula, two Ascah brothers made this decision, and, in spite of difficulties such as the distance from Montreal, completed their studies at the Montreal Diocesan College and were ordained. They were Clifford and Gordon Ascah, the oldest and youngest sons respectively in the large family of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ascah, every member of which, including Laura and Lewis already mentioned, contributed in some way to the development of the church at home here in Peninsula, or elsewhere. Mr. John Neil recorded in his diary :

*"September 3, 1896: Clifford and Gordon went away on Admiral. Clifford goes out among the Cree Indians as a missionary (Moosonee) and Gordon goes to college in Montreal to study for the ministry."*

The Reverend Clifford Ascah was ordained in the year 1894 and the Reverend Gordon in the year 1905 and they both served most of their lives in the Diocese of Montreal. In Sandy Beach, Captain George Pye took up the same calling. He entered Bishop's University in 1892 and his obituary says that he distinguished himself there in two ways, as a Hebrew scholar and as an oarsman on the Massawippi River. He worked in the Diocese of Quebec for forty years.

Chapter 6  
The 1880s

In his description of Bishop Williams' visit of 1889, Mr. John Neil Ascah mentions that the Bishop consecrated the graveyard. This was the old part of the cemetery which runs east and west along the bank of the creek.

It was believed by the old people <sup>from whom</sup> ~~that~~ I enquired ~~from~~ that in the decades before our church was built the Peninsula people were buried in the cemetery in Gaspé; "in Pat McKenzie's field" my father used to say, meaning the O'Hara cemetery to which I have already referred. He was certain that Neil Ascah who was drowned in 1835 was buried there. It is quite possible that with the coming of Mr. Suddard in 1819, it was thought proper to take the remains to him for burial. Before this there may have been some other practice. According to Henry Johnston's letter burials were then very informal. There are persistent stories that graves were found when the site of the C.N.R station and nearby tracks was being prepared. One of the oldest cemeteries I have found reference to is the McCrae graveyard in Haldimand which Raymond Patterson said dated back to the 1820s. The following record of burial shows it was still in use in the 1860s:

*"Theresa Ascah spinster died May 6, 1862 aged 36 and was buried in a private cemetery on Mr. James McCrae's land in Haldimand on May 8, 1862."*

In Mr. Cusack's time, the first deeds for St. Paul's Church property were drawn up. There are two references to land for a graveyard. On November 18, 1840, the land for "a church site and graveyard" (part of Lot 4) was donated by Mary Ann Cort, widow of Hugh O'Hara. Land for an addition to the graveyard was given by the same person on April 24, 1841. There is no lot number available for this plot. The present St. Paul's Church cemetery is probably on one or both of these plots of land and may have come into use in the 1840s as the old O'Hara graveyard became filled. I have been told that the people of L'Anse aux Cousins buried their dead in the cemetery of St. James' Church, Wakeham.

The earliest record I have found of the use of the cemetery in Peninsula was the following:

*"Brian, son of Richard Mullin Mariner etc. of the North West Arm Gaspé Bay aged six years died on the 7th and was buried on the 9th day of March in 1854 In the Protestant Burial ground at Peninsula.*

*By me Frederick A. Smith Missy  
William Harbour)  
John Harbour ) Witnesses*

Also in the year 1854, two other burials in the "burial ground at Peninsula" were recorded. One was Margaret Annett, wife of Charles Ascah, who died on June 19th and was buried on the 20th, and the other was Eliza, daughter of David Phillips, who died on July 6th and was buried on July 8th.

Most of the clergymen did not mention where burials took place, but, fortunately, Mr. Smith often did.

The site of the graveyard in Peninsula was given to the Church Society by William Ascah, the same Mr. Ascah who gave the land for the church. The date of the deed is the same as that of the church deed, 1865, but the fact that it was being used years before this indicates the land was given long before the formal arrangements for transferring the ownership were made. The graveyard was entered from the east end and was reached by a path or right of way which even in recent years was kept mowed in summer.

The oldest tombstone in the cemetery on which the inscription is decipherable is a white stone with clear black lettering erected to the memory of Anne Eliza Savage, wife of Philip Savage of the Island of Jersey, who died in 1866. There are many stones, worn smooth by the weather, which may be much older. In a little notebook kept by Mr. and Mrs. Louis Annett and in earlier years presumably by his father Mr. John Annett, there is a record of trips to get the doctor for Mrs. Savage and to tell the minister in Sandy Beach of her death, and finally to get the tombstone.

Mr. Milne's diary furnishes information about another little cemetery:

*"July 23, 1850: ... got to Point St. Peter about noon,*

*met by Mr. Short. Went to Mrs. Johnston's. P.M. the Bishop consecrated the private burying ground of the Johnston family."*

Mr. Cecil LeMarquand, who lives in Belle Anse, tells me that the only grave in that burying ground was that of Henry Johnston. When the road was rebuilt in Point St. Peter about ten or twelve years ago this grave was moved to the northwest corner of the new cemetery in Mal Bay.

I have found no description of a funeral service in those early times, but I expect where the death was natural and the minister had the time, a service was held in the house and a brief one at the grave. In times of deaths by contagious disease, the funerals must have been multiple and hasty. Whether the practice of taking the body into the church was adopted as soon as the church was built in Peninsula, or whether it came more slowly, I have not been able to discover. However, I have been told that it was customary for only men to attend funerals, and, in the course of time, formalities such as black crepe mourning bands on sleeves and hats and the carrying of a black pall over the coffin were adopted. The coffin was made by the friends and neighbours of the dead, and the grave was dug by the same people. The women helped, too, in the nursing and care of the dying and the bereaved family. Mr. John Neil Ascah illustrates all this clearly in his account of Captain John Ascah's death:

*"March 13, 1896: Uncle John died.*

*March 14, 1896: The people of the place made Uncle John's coffin today and dug his grave. They have been very kind to us during our trouble, have never left us alone, night or day."*

Some of the customs in practice more than a century ago are still carried on. The neighbours still usually dig the graves, and in some families the remains are laid out in the home, instead of the funeral parlour, and a service is held there before the coffin is taken to the church and cemetery.

In Chapter 3, I quoted Mr. Richmond's account which ended with the hope that the Little Gaspé church could be consecrated "next summer" (1884). It was not ready, however, and several years were spent in

improving the interior. In 1884, the minister reported that "A contract has been entered into, and the work (of ceiling the church) will commence at the beginning of the New Year". I think this contract was with my grandfather John Phillips, and his brother Charles. It was a memorable time in my father's childhood. As the two men would be away a good while, John moved his wife and family over to be with his mother in the older Phillips house, closing up my grandfather's house for the winter. My father, who was seven years old then, connected many events with "the winter Father and Uncle Charlie ceiled the Little Gaspé church".

The church received a number of gifts to help furnish and equip it. Among these gifts were, in the words of the minister's report of 1884, "a really beautiful altar cloth, a set of altar linen, a kneeler and book markers from the Sisters of Killum", and "a bell contributed by the employees and agents of Messrs. Fruing" (1885).

Mr. Forsythe mentions particularly the wardens A. Gavey and A.W. Dolbel and Mr. C. Bartlett who "by personal and pecuniary aid helped to forward the work of the church here". He also mentioned Mr. R. Price Snr. "whose house so near the Church has mostly been my home when here". In 1885, the proceeds of the fishing on St. Peter's Day were again given to the church, and a bazaar was held in December.

All the clergy mentioned again and again the difficulty of serving Little Gaspé from such a distant spot as Sandy Beach. It seems they always reached Little Gaspé by way of Peninsula, coming across the Bay by boat or in winter by horse and sleigh or on foot, depending on the season and travelling conditions, and going down from here with a horse, or else by driving around when the bay could not be crossed by water or ice. Mr. Harding suggested that Peninsula and Little Gaspé be erected into a separate Mission.

In 1888, Mr. Harding wrote:

*"They have never had an organ at Little Gaspé; but the people are naturally musical, and conduct the singing themselves with great credit. I am glad to say we are now raising money to buy an organ, and that two young girls of the congregation are learning to play, in order to take charge of it."*

In 1889, Mr. Harding reported "we have succeeded in procuring an excellent

new organ ... and Miss Lucy Gavey ... will soon be able to take charge of it". Mr. Harding was pleased with the Sunday School operating in Little Gaspé under the leadership of Mr. Charles Bartlett. It was temporarily closed in 1888 as Mr. Bartlett had "gone home to Jersey for the winter".

I believe, although it is not mentioned in the minister's report, that it was in that year, 1889, when Bishop Williams visited Little Gaspé (on July 25, according to Mr. Ascah's diary) that the church was consecrated. Considering its history it was natural that it was dedicated to the fisherman, St. Peter.

The Rev. John G. Brick was the Methodist minister in the Gaspé area from 1878 to 1881 and he commented in his last report that the work here was principally sustained by the Missionary Board. He sounded a little discouraged when he left.

In 1883 the Rev. A.W. Whiteside came, and in most of the churches improvements were made. The parsonage debt was wiped out, and a tea-meeting held by the ladies of St. George's Cove brought in \$57.75. Attention was to be given to finishing the Cap aux Os and Mal Bay churches. The following winter, Mr. Whiteside wrote, was "the longest, roughest, and most severe" for many years. Both farming and fishing had yielded poorly. He said, "Your missionary, however, hast just cause for gratitude that he still survives, without having suffered; and there is yet flour in the barrel, potatoes in the cellar, and a little hay left for the horse". He said he had preached during the year at ten different places including Anticosti Island. That year, too, St. George's Cove church had been reshingled and hanging lamps provided, and they expected to work on the Roseville and "Cape Ozo" churches. He wrote his last letter from Cap Ozo (1887) and said that the Basin church had been reshingled and painted.

The Rev. Barry Pierce <sup>then</sup> came to the Mission, and we learn the most about him and his work from a newspaper clipping of 1921. In that year he returned to Gaspé for a visit and afterward wrote an account of his trip, reminiscing about his experiences as missionary here. He and his wife and family lived in the Cap Ozo parsonage from



which he travelled around the Bay to his different appointments. When he returned in 1921, he renewed many old acquaintances and noticed many, many changes. It was in his time that the Haldimand Methodist Church was built. This church was reported in the Missionary Society Report in 1889-1890. "A new church built at Haldimand, and paid for, costing \$1000". Mr. Irwin Simon tells me that at least some of the lumber used in building it was rafted with great difficulty all the way around the Bay from this side. Use of the church was discontinued when the congregation moved away; the building, Mr. George Ascah wrote me, was eventually sold to Herbert Suddard who used the material in it to build a house. The cemetery remains near the present Lingerlong Motel.

When I introduced John Neil Ascah in Chapter 5, I said he belonged to the Fame Point Ascahs. There is a point of land up along the St. Lawrence between L'Anse à Valteau and Grand Etang where a frigate named the "Fame" was wrecked, giving the point its name. It was decided by the Canadian Government to build a lighthouse there. The light was completed in 1880.

In Peninsula, James Ascah and his wife were living in the house he had built beside the school lot, as I mentioned in Part II, Chapter 1, well before the church was built. They were raising a large family and Mr. Ascah needed work. When asking about another job, I believe, he was offered the Fame Point light and accepted it. Thus, in 1880, he made the move away from Peninsula to be a lightkeeper for the rest of his life. There were eight children in 1880, Alpheus and John Neil being the two oldest and the youngest being a year-old baby. Four more were born at Fame Point.

Mr. Ascah, or Uncle Jimmy, as he was to many of the Peninsula people, and his son Bert, who succeeded him as lightkeeper, faithfully kept the light for over sixty years; but Peninsula remained their home and they always retained an interest in the church, contributing money and many of the furnishings in the church in later years.

As early as 1883, Mr. Richmond mentioned the Fame Point people and fifteen Protestants at Fox River as being part of the Peninsula and Little Gaspé Mission. The Protestants at Griffon and Fox

River were nearly all employees of the various fishing firms. The minister at Peninsula cared for these scattered groups until the 1950s, by which time most of the families had moved away. On July 30, 1893, Mr. John Neil Ascah wrote about one of many trips:

*"Louis Annett and Mr. Brooke left for Fame Point this evening. He preaches at Fox River tonight and goes on tomorrow."*