

Chapter 20
A Parish Council

Answering a request by Archdeacon Reed that the men of the parish meet, twenty-seven men from Peninsula, Fontenelle, and Griffon came together in the parsonage on October 8, 1946. The Archdeacon addressed the meeting, dealing at first, according to the minutes, with "the part the men of the parish should take in the general welfare of the church". One of the objects of the meeting was to endeavour to increase subscriptions to the church in order to make a greater contribution to the clergy's stipend and in this way assure the parish of a permanent resident clergyman. Considerable discussion was carried on concerning the amounts contributed to the Diocesan Board and the salaries paid to clergymen. The total contributed by Peninsula at the time was \$400 annually. The last resident clergyman had received an annual salary of \$1346. The meeting concluded with the formation of a committee of twelve men and the two wardens to study matters further and organize a drive for increased support of the church. Mr. S.C. Annett was made chairman of the committee and the wardens were Mr. George Miller, Minister's warden, and Mr. Gilbert Miller, People's warden.

It is interesting to consider the names of the men who met with Archdeacon Reed. They are as follows:

Albert Ascah	Alex Coffin
Cecil Miller	Joseph Fraser
Roland Miller	Earle Roberts
Douglas Phillips	Nelson Phillips
Keith Miller	Thomas Scott
Leonard Annett	Ralph LeGresley
Ernest Mullin	Vincent Stanley
David Rabey	Frank Smith
William McAfee	Bruce Stanley
Norman Adams	Harold Roberts
S.C. Annett	Nelson Roberts
William C. Annett	Wilfred Roberts
George W. Miller	Kenneth Coffin
Howard Mullin	

Only Mr. Albert Ascah was a son of one of the "founders" listed in Chapter 1, Part II (his father was Robert Ascah) and it is noticeable that he was the only Ascah at the meeting. At least eight of the other

men were grandsons of the "founders". Five of the men were from Fontenelle and one (Mr. LeGresley) was from Griffon. Today, thirty-two years later, only seven of the men are still in the parish; eight live elsewhere, and twelve are dead.

By the end of October, the committee had surveyed the parish and found that in Peninsula there were 96 heads of families and potential wage earners sixteen years of age and over and in Fontenelle 28. It was decided to canvass the whole parish and ask for pledges of greater financial support.

This Parish Committee or Parish Council continued to function until 1949, working along with the vestry and the Ladies' Guild at all the undertakings of the parish. The finances did improve somewhat and in 1947 the annual payment to the Diocesan Board was increased to \$525.

The horse shed being in need of extensive repair, it was decided to borrow \$200, interest free, from a parishioner. The repairs were made in 1947 and the loan repaid in full by July, 1949.

The fall of 1947 brought electricity to Peninsula. As people began getting their houses wired, the Guild began thinking of wiring the church and parsonage. To start with, the ladies offered \$200 to the wardens toward wiring the church. However, the Parish Council decided to borrow from the Bank of Toronto the money needed for this change in lighting. The Guild therefore proceeded to use their money for wiring the parsonage. The Ladies' Guild of St. Peter's raised \$90 to assist, Fontenelle gave \$13, and Fox River \$5. The people made individual contributions totalling \$115.50 toward wiring the church. Before the end of 1947, the wiring of both buildings was completed. The cost was as follows:

Wiring church	\$212.20
Fixtures	80.64
Wiring parsonage	239.20
Fixtures	146.00

Chapter 21

Mr. Brett-Perring's Second Incumbency

In November of 1947, Mr. Brett-Perring returned to the Mission of Peninsula and Little Gaspé. He was now a married man and he and Mrs. Brett-Perring remained here five years. Although Mrs. Brett-Perring went home to Toronto for the birth of their son Christopher, his earliest years were spent here in Peninsula.

Heating the parsonage had become a problem as there was difficulty in getting fuel. Previously, when all families were themselves using woodstoves, it had been the accepted practice for each householder to supply a certain amount of wood for both the parsonage and the school. By the late 1940s, several homes had wood furnaces which made some propose that a furnace be installed in the parsonage. Besides, many people seemed to find it too expensive or too difficult to supply their quota of wood. In 1946, it was decided to install an oil heater rather than a furnace, but I do not think this decision was carried out completely. The minutes of the Guild meeting on October 7, 1949 read:

"The oil stove purchased over 2 years ago for the parsonage but never used has now been resold for \$150."

After Mr. Brett-Perring came (February 1948) a resolution at a Parish Council meeting stated that parishioners were to have 1/4 cord of wood for the parsonage placed by the side of the highway by June 1st. In January 1948, five loads of slabs were bought from L. Coffin & Sons for \$30.

Mr. Angus Ascah was the man who took up the work of sexton after Mr. Edward Annett resigned. He carried on for nine years. I remember him as a kindly man and think of him in the church porch with the doors of the cupboards where the books were kept open for the Sunday School pupils on Sunday afternoons. He was well known as an avid reader and also as a "storehouse" of local history. He ceased to be sexton in 1948. Mr. Roy Clyde was the next sexton but for only one year when Mr. Joe Fraser took the job.

During 1948 and 1949, money was raised to pay back the loans

for the horse shed and electricity, and a grant of \$500 was obtained from the Quebec Department of Colonization to paint the church. The roof of the church needed shingling and other repairs were urgent. After several meetings and much discussion, it was decided to borrow a further \$150 to make the repairs and call for tenders to do the following: renew the shingles on the south half of the roof of the church and chancel, and paint the entire outside of the church with two coats. Mr. Forbes Beebe was the only one to tender; during the summer of 1949 he carried out the work at a total cost of \$598.66.

One aftermath of World War II was the continued shortage of commodities in Britain and the resulting severe rationing. Through the church the hardship suffered by some of the clergy in Britain was alleviated by parcels of food sent by congregations in Canada. During 1948, St. Matthew's Church assisted four clergymen. The summary of this undertaking in the minutes of the vestry meeting of January 24, 1949 describes what was done:

"From February to November (inc.) 32 parcels weighing 473 lbs. gross, postage amounting to \$63.50, were sent to four clergymen and their families in England. This work of Christian fellowship has been made possible through the interest of 45 members of our congregation. We wish to place on record, along with their generosity, the faithful and thorough work of Mr. and Mrs. Roland Miller who have ably looked after the packing of the parcels and the regular collections from the various donors."

Mrs. Roland Miller has told me that touching letters of appreciation were received from the clergymen.

The vestry minutes of January 24, 1949, state that during the previous year the church received three gifts: water and wine cruets, a set of purificators, and an altar book desk. Unfortunately, the names of the donors are not given. I believe that the brass candlesticks on the altar were presented at some time during the Brett-Perring's^s stay as I understand that the Joseph W. Child in whose memory they were given was Mrs. Brett-Perring's father. They were given by Mr. Child's grandsons.

Both the Parish Council minutes and the vestry minutes of 1948 mention the retirement of the organist, Mrs. George Miller. About fifty years had passed since she began playing the hymns when Mrs. Louis Annett was absent and in the last twenty or more years she had been at the organ very consistently Sunday after Sunday. Mrs. Roland Miller took up the work in Mrs. George Miller's place.

The Sunday School continued through the years. The Guild gave sums for Sunday School supplies from time to time, and in 1948 the matter of finding a Sunday School superintendent was discussed at a vestry meeting and left in the hands of Mr. Brett-Perring. Some of the teachers in my own days at Sunday School were Mrs. Joe Fraser, Mrs. Albert Ascah, Mr. Gordon Ascah, Mr. Roland Miller, and my mother, Mrs. Thornber Phillips. At that time Sunday School started in the spring and ran through till late fall.

The Guild president, as I have indicated, was at first always the wife or sister of the clergymen. However, after Mrs. Horner's departure, this practice was discontinued except for two brief periods in which Mrs. Berry and Mrs. Godwin each held office for one year. Mrs. Ed Coffin and Mrs. Albert Ascah were the presidents during the 1930s; in the 1940s, there were frequent changes of president, the following being in office for one or two years each: Mrs. Ernest Mullin, Mrs. Earl Eden, Mrs. W.A. Miller, Mrs. S.C. Annett, Mrs. Gilbert Miller, and Mrs. Watson Miller. The clergyman's wife was sometimes listed as honorary president.

In the spring of 1949, Mrs. Brett-Perring presented a new constitution at a meeting of the Ladies' Guild. It was amended slightly and then adopted. I have not been able to find a copy of this constitution. Later in the same year a suggestion by Mrs. Carrington was presented by Mrs. Brett-Perring that the Ladies' Guild affiliate with the Women's Auxiliary. This affiliation was agreed to, and \$5. a year and 25¢ a member were pledged for the W.A. From then on the W.A. prayer was used at the opening of the Guild meeting. Thus the Guild members took on a new responsibility without giving up the old.

It is interesting to note that in this period there were several young women active in Guild and W.A. work, many of them having

married during or just after the war. Three who have worked especially hard for the Guild ever since are Mrs. Ernest (Jimmy) Mullin, Mrs. Wallace McAfee, and Mrs. Ivan Coffin. But also still active in the late 40s were several women who had been members of the Guild for about fifty years. For example, Mrs. Alfred LeMesurier entertained the ladies on September 30, 1948. The first time she had done this was on July 11, 1901. She had joined the Guild as Mary Mullin in 1899. Another example of long service is that of Miss Flora Ascah. The minutes of July 7, 1949, read in part:

"It was moved by Mrs. Brett-Perring, seconded by Mrs. Geo. Miller and carried that a note of thanks be sent to Miss Flora Ascah thanking her for making the altar linen."

The youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert Ascah, Miss Ascah, although crippled by a fall in her babyhood, had in 1949 been working for the Guild for forty-nine years. She and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Albert Ascah, who had been a Guild member for as long a period, were still contributing generously to the church through the Guild and in other ways.

When Mr. Brett-Perring was in Peninsula in the early 1940s, he closed the parsonage during at least one winter and boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Albert Ascah. As he did not have a car during either of his periods as incumbent, he was driven by parishioners both summer and winter. Two of his winter drivers were Mr. William Mullin and Mr. Frank Smith, and in summer one was Mr. Nelson Phillips. Besides having regular services in Little Gaspé and visiting among the people of that parish, Mr. Brett-Perring also went to Fontenelle, Fox River, and Griffon Cove. The Ascachs having left Fame Point by this time he did not have to go there. He kept a record of the services in these "out-stations", considering Fox River and Griffon Cove as attached to the Little Gaspé congregation and Fontenelle to Peninsula. A few examples of his entries are as follows:

30 Nov. '47	Fontenelle	Holy Communion	Congregation	21	11 communicants
11 July '48	Fontenelle	Evening Prayer	"	22	
20 July '48	Griffon Cove	Evening Prayer	"	11	
13 Jan. '50	Fox River	Holy Communion	"	3	3 communicants

When he went to Fox River and Griffon Cove, he would have Evening Prayer on the evening of his arrival and Holy Communion the following morning.

In Griffon Cove, he would put up at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Ernest Bertram and hold services there. In Fox River, Mr. and Mrs. Frank LeGrand entertained him and opened their home for services.

In his report for 1950, some of the statistics Mr. Brett-Perring gave were as follows: No. of services during the year 61, No. of parochial visits made 457, No. of families 62, total population 245, average attendance at services other than Holy Communion 19, No. of Sunday School pupils 41, No. of teachers 7. In that year Mr. Brett-Perring had initiated and organized a Blue Cross Group in the parish which had 31 members.

In 1952, the rebuilding and paving of the highway was undertaken by the provincial government and this entailed the expropriation of a certain amount of land from each landholder in order to widen the road. The church received \$501.25 from the Department of Roads for land taken from the church, parsonage, and cemetery lots and when the work was done during the following two or three summers, the new road came very close to the front side of the church. Also in 1952, Mr. Philias Synnot lumbered the church woodlot on the Griffon Road and paid stumpage of \$262.24.

As no extensive repairs had been done on the parsonage for some time, it was deteriorating very seriously. Therefore, plans were made at the annual vestry meeting of 1952 to have a committee inspect the building and list the repairs needed. At a meeting on June 1, this committee made a report and it was decided to proceed with the repairs.

During the balance of that year and during 1953 much work was done. I have not found a complete list, but work on the roof, the removal of the bay window on the west side and its replacement with a smaller window, tearing down the back kitchen, drilling a new well and building a pumphouse, and covering the outside walls with siding were some of the renovations carried out. The money received from the Roads Department, a donation of \$250 from the Guild, money raised by dances, a contribution from St. Peter's Church and individual contributions from members of St. Peter's congregation, a grant of \$500 from the Department of Colonization, donations amounting to several hundred

dollars from individuals in the parish and from former members living elsewhere, and a contribution of \$25 from Robin, Jones, & Whitman Ltd. were some of the sources of the funds used for the work.

Two of the items listed in the statement of costs in 1952 were: 1,115 man hours of labour \$896.05, and building materials \$456.15. Mr. George Miller supervised the work and the wardens, Mr. Alex Coffin and Mr. Leonard Annett, handled all the work of soliciting funds and making the payments.

Chapter 22
Mid-Century Again

It was during the renovation of the parsonage that the Reverend and Mrs. Brett-Perring left Peninsula and Little Gaspé and were replaced by a stipendiary lay reader, Mr. Gerald L. Norris. Mr. and Mrs. Norris arrived in Gaspé on January 5, 1953. In a letter in answer to my questions, Mr. Norris wrote me from Kentville, N.S. where he and Mrs. Norris now live in retirement, the following description of their arrival:

"We stayed overnight at the Matthews' (Archdeacon and Mrs. Timothy Matthews), then the next day the Archdeacon drove us to Peninsula. We had been led to believe that the rectory was completely furnished; so...we had disposed of all our furniture with the exception of our bedroom suite and our washing machine. You can perhaps imagine our surprise and chagrin when we arrived to find the rectory denuded of any furniture, with the exception of a couple of kitchen chairs, and also in the process of some renovation. We were of course unable to move into the rectory until the men were finished the renovations, so through the kind hospitality of Merle and Dick Wagenaar, Emily, I and Rex (our dog) became star boarders for about two weeks. The poor cats (there were four) were confined to the cellar of the rectory during that period..."

When all the repairs were completed during the following summer, Mr. and Mrs. Norris found "a wonderful improvement in the heating of the house". Coal was being used then to supplement wood.

Two events of the summer and early fall of 1953 were a Clergy Retreat and the ordination of Mr. Norris. The former was held at Fort Peninsula Lodge. This was the officers' mess of Fort Peninsula of World War II converted into a hotel and run by Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Phillips. The Clergy Retreat was directed by Canon Russell Brown and attended by the clergy of the Gaspé Deanery.

Mr. Norris was ordained deacon by Archbishop Carrington at St. Paul's Church, Gaspé, on September 15. A reception was held for the Archbishop and the Reverend and Mrs. Norris at Fort Peninsula Lodge.

Two improvements made in the church at this time were both in the chancel. The lights which had been installed in this part of the

church were not very suitable. They were replaced in 1953 by the two which are on either side of the altar and the round one in the ceiling. These lights were paid for in whole or in part by a donation from Miss Dorothy Dutton in memory of her father, the Reverend Arthur Dutton. Mr. Norris, being an electrician by trade, did the necessary wiring. The second improvement was the altar. A beautiful new altar table was made in Mr. Alex Coffin's woodworking shop and paid for by donations from quite a large number of individuals and the Ladies' Guild.

The church received a generous bequest in 1954, \$500 from the estate of Mrs. A.C. Ascah. She was the widow of the Reverend Clifford Ascah.

The Guild, of course, continued to be active, now under the presidency of Mrs. Watson Miller, except for one year, 1954, in which Mrs. Ivan Coffin was president. It is interesting that the minutes of the June 3, 1954 meeting state in part:

"It was moved by Mrs. Norris seconded by Mrs. Sydney Annett and approved by all that we have one kind of sandwiches and one kind of cookies or two kinds of cookies and no sandwiches at our Guild meeting. Also tea only. A penalty of one dollar will be charged if the rule is broken."

I believe the rule was broken before too long and the choice of refreshments left to the hostess. At this time, the ladies made articles such as layettes for the W.A. as well as supporting the organization financially. Mrs. William Annett looked after the W.A. work.

During the 1950s, Mr. Joe Fraser retired from his work as sexton and in the records of the period Mr. Roy Clyde, Lewis Mullin, Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Annett, and Billie Carson are mentioned as succeeding sextons.

In a report in the "Diocesan Gazette" of 1945, it was stated that Peninsula had participated in a Diocesan W.A. Guide Camp held at Cape Cove. Mrs. Norris continued to run the Brownie Pack which had been started some time earlier, holding meetings in the Gaspé Bay North School.

In the late 1940s, a new school known as the Gaspé Bay North School had been built. It was on a new site about two miles west of the old one. It was suggested at a Parish Council meeting in 1948, when the

old school closed, that it be bought and used as a parish hall. However, it was not purchased then by the church but by an individual, Mrs. Austin Phillips, who also bought the land or school lot. The idea of having a parish hall did not die and in 1956 it was decided to buy the school and the land (from the road to just behind the building) from Mrs. Phillips. The church expenses for February 9, 1956 show: "Mrs. M. Phillips in payment for hall \$400.00". I believe the Guild supplied all or most of this amount, had it wired, and equipped it at least in part by having a "shower for the hall". A kitchen area was equipped upstairs where all meals, lunches, receptions, etc. were served. The large downstairs room was clear for social gatherings. The hall was often rented in succeeding years for wedding receptions, parties, and other events.

One postwar development which was of the utmost importance to the whole of Gaspé was the decision by Noranda Mines to open a copper mine in the interior of the Gaspé Peninsula about sixty miles from Gaspé and a few miles beyond York Lake. A principal part of the undertaking was the building of a town for the miners and other workers and their families. This town, which was named Murdochville, took shape rapidly and the various religious denominations were soon making decisions about the part they would take in the lives of the Murdochville citizens. The members of the Anglican Church began holding services in temporary quarters in 1952 and were served chiefly by the clergy stationed around Gaspé Bay and in other parts of the Gaspé Deanery. Thus the Murdochville congregation, made up of people from other Gaspé communities as well as of newcomers to the area, although far removed from the shore, has been integrated from its beginning with the churches around the Bay.

The congregation of Saint Paul's Roman Catholic Church in Murdochville was founded in 1954 and I believe the church was built then or soon afterward. The United Church of Canada also erected a church there; it was dedicated on May 18, 1959.

For six years the Anglican congregation continued using various temporary locations for services while planning went on for the erection of a church. This building, which was dedicated as St. Philip's, was constructed in 1958 and the first Communion Service held in it on

December 21 of that same year. As this church has been associated more closely with St. Matthew's Church, Peninsula, than with any of the other local churches, it will come into this story from now on.

The 1950s saw the introduction of a denomination new to the Gaspé area. The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada sent a clergyman, the Reverend Roland Bergeron, and in 1957 a church with an attached dwelling house was built in Gaspé on the corner of Jacques Cartier and Mgr. Ross Streets. It was called Evangel Temple. A piece of land for a cemetery was obtained not far beyond the new Catholic cemetery.

This new Catholic cemetery had been made in 1953. A large plot of land bordering the highway just outside the town toward L'Anse aux Cousins was obtained. The old burying ground near where the oldest Roman Catholic Churches had been now had its graves removed to the new site. The old site was then freed for building and the Fisheries Building and a Shell Station were soon occupying the area. Another old cemetery where Reval Street is today was also moved to the new location.

On this side of the Bay two new Catholic churches were built under the leadership of Father Alfred Bujold; the church in Indian Cove, which was about one hundred years old, was torn down and replaced by a new church. It was completed in 1944 or 1945. A fine large church was completed in Cap aux Os in 1952.

In 1958, the fifth Roman Catholic Church in Douglastown was completed. When it became ready for use, its one hundred-year-old predecessor was dismantled.

In the 1950s, far away from Peninsula one of the sons of the parish was studying for the ministry. He was Watson LeMesurier, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry LeMesurier. His ordination to the priesthood in 1955 was the culmination of years of preparation as described in the following account:

"Due for ordination to the Anglican priesthood this Spring is a retired member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Cpl. Watson G. LeMesurier. He was ordained to Holy Orders in Ottawa last fall, while on leave from the R.C.M.P. pending retirement, and presently holds an appointment at Maberly Mission, in Lanark County, Ontario. Prior to his retirement he had studied theology through the Church of

*the Church of England Diocesan Theology School, while stationed with the Mounties' A Division at Ottawa, and had completed nine of the 12 subjects needed for the degree of Scholar of Theology. A native of Gaspé, Cpl. LeMesurier joined the old Preventive Service of the Customs and Excise Department in 1925, becoming a Mountie in 1932 when the service was taken over by the R.C.M.P. He enlisted with the R.C.N. in 1939 and served in several minesweepers during the war, rejoining the force in 1945, being posted to Ottawa and completing his service there."*¹

One Sunday evening in a summer in the late 1950's, probably 1958, Mr. LeMesurier took the service in his home church, St. Matthew's, Peninsula, and preached a fine sermon on family loyalty as exemplified by the story of Ruth and Naomi. A large congregation of relatives and old friends enjoyed his words. Unfortunately, he was not able to serve the church for very long as he died in 1962.

1. Fitz, "On and Off the Record", The Gazette, January 7, 1955.