

Chapter 25  
The Coming of the Park

It is appropriate that a decade which was to bring the most devastating changes of its whole history to St. Matthew's Church and its people should begin with a flash of lightning and a thunder clap. One day in the summer of 1970, July 11, to be exact, during a shower, the church steeple was struck by lightning and badly damaged. The insurance adjustor estimated the value of the damage at \$882.20, and, this amount being accepted, Mr. Ivan Coffin agreed to make the repairs. It was found when the repairs were made that the foundation of the steeple needed attention. The Guild paid Mr. Alex Coffin to renew the post and foundation at a cost of \$480.65.

Earlier in the year a car had driven off the road and struck the garage, damaging one corner. The repairs were paid for by the car driver and made by Mr. Alex Coffin.

It was in the spring and summer of 1970 that the first public meetings were held and first official notices received about expropriation for the Forillon National Park. All the land for the Park was expropriated as of July 22, 1970, and landowners had eighteen months from that date to vacate their property. As this expropriation applied to many of the people of Peninsula and all but two or three families in the Little Gaspé congregation, St. Peter's Church itself, and the cemetery and woodlot of St. Matthew's Church, the church was very much involved in the resulting upheaval. Some Peninsula people, such as Mr. and Mrs. Neil Ascah and Mr. and Mrs. Elmer Ascah, who went away each winter, moved away permanently that fall. The rest began making plans about rebuilding and relocating the following year. By December 1971 all the houses from Mr. Roland Miller's east line eastward to the west line of Mrs. Harold Roberts' property in Cap aux Os, as well as almost all the buildings from St. Peter's Church eastward through Little Gaspé, Grande Grève, Indian Cove, and Ship Head, and, on the other shore, nearly all buildings in Cap des Rosiers East and some elsewhere, such as on the Griffon Road, were vacated and were soon torn down and burned.

Few of the people moved far away, the great majority of them finding property in one of the remaining communities around the Bay.

Mr. and Mrs. Earl Phillips rented the parsonage in the summer of 1971 (there was no student minister here that year), as their summer home had been expropriated. In August, the Guild bought equipment consisting of tables, cutlery, plates, and venetian blinds for the hall from Mr. and Mrs. Nelson Phillips, who were moving out of Fort Peninsula Lodge. Also in August, the church received reimbursement of \$2120 for the woodlot it owned on the Griffon Road and which was expropriated. Unlike the rest of the church property, this lot was deeded in the name of the church and not of Church Society.

A meeting of the vestry under the chairmanship of the Reverend Grover Kendrick was held in the hall on August 16, 1971, to discuss the future of the parish. We were told that Bishop Matthews wished to have the parsonage kept in good condition in case a chaplain were appointed at the new regional school being built in Gaspé. In this event, the chaplain could use the parsonage which would also be available during the four summer months to the Reverend Harold Brazel who was now incumbent at Murdochville. Much discussion of possible renovations resulted in an estimate of \$7000 being made as the sum required to put the building in good condition. It was decided that \$1000 of the money received from the expropriation of the woodlot be spent on essential repairs on the parsonage and the remaining \$1120 on the church.

The last matter of business was the only one which was really of importance as it dealt with the union of the Missions of Murdochville and Peninsula and was actually carried out. The plans for the parsonage were later abandoned. Mr. Kendrick explained that a union of Murdochville and Peninsula was proposed as the only feasible way of ensuring the services of a clergyman in Peninsula, and a vote of the vestry favouring this union was requested. After considerable discussion and expressions of doubt about the practicability of such an arrangement owing to the distance between the churches and the severity of the winter weather, it was moved, seconded, and carried that St. Matthew's Church wished to become a part of this new two-unit mission-parish.

St. Peter's Church had already been closed. The last service

was conducted by Mr. Kendrick in the summer of 1971. The Park officials had indicated that, although it was expropriated, this church was going to be retained as an ecumenical chapel for Park visitors. Therefore, it was not deconsecrated. Much of the furniture in it was removed, several of the pieces being placed in St. Matthew's Church as a good number of the Little Gaspé congregation had moved into Farewell Cove, Rose Bridge, and Fontenelle and were now a part of the Parish of St. Matthew's. Some of these pieces were: the altar book desk given in memory of Robert Roberts who died in World War II, by his parents, Mr. and Mrs. Percy Roberts, and his brother; the prayer desk given in memory of Mr. Charles Bartlett who was such an active member of St. Peter's for so long; and the electric organ. The last entry in the minute book of St. Peter's Ladies' Guild was made on June 28, 1971.

The Roman Catholic Church and the United Church in Indian Cove were both expropriated and destroyed. By the late fall of 1971, as I have already indicated, almost every family from the Little Gaspé church eastward to Ship Head had moved away and these formerly active little communities were empty.

Great concern was felt about the cemeteries which fell within the Park limits, but, in general, the Park policy in dealing with them was approved and appreciated. The cemeteries were expropriated and paid for but were not moved or destroyed. They are maintained by the Park. Further burials in them are restricted to those whose spouse is already buried there. In the little United Church cemetery in St. George's Cove now stands a stone on which is a plaque engraved as follows:

They came on the sea  
 From the Channel  
 Islands of Guernsey  
 and Jersey;  
 Beside the sea  
 They built homes;  
 Churches and schools;  
 From the sea  
 They lived;  
 And by the sea  
 They rest.

St. George's Cove  
 Cemetery  
 1819-1973

A similar plaque may be seen in the Roman Catholic and United Church cemeteries in Indian Cove.

The arrangements for Peninsula were somewhat different from this. The cemetery was expropriated because it is on the front side of the road, all the land on the front side of the road as far west as Shallop Point being within the Park boundaries. The church continues to care for the cemetery in the summer and an annual allowance for this care is paid to the church by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. The church was required to acquire land and establish a new burial ground. The amount received for the expropriation of the cemetery, with interest, was \$5577.50. In the meantime, the cemetery could continue to be used for two years.

The early months of 1972 were a time of adjustment as many people became accustomed to their new homes and new neighbours. A note in the Guild minutes of June 16, 1972 reads: "We were glad to have the ladies from St. Peter's with us." Several of the women from Little Gaspé became active members of St. Matthew's Ladies' Guild and with the gradual integration of the St. Peter's people into all church activities, another union, unexpected and unplanned, took place.

Mr. Brazel, who had held services in Peninsula through the winter of 1971-1972, thus inaugurating the union with Murdochville, moved away in the summer.

At this time a young man directly descended from some of the families who founded the church in Peninsula was entering the ministry. A great-grandson of Philip Coffin and Alpheus Ascah, he cannot be called a Gaspesian because he was born and grew up elsewhere. He is Peter Coffin, son of Brigadier General and Mrs. Gerald Coffin. He was ordained in April, 1971, after completing his studies at Trinity College, Toronto. He is at present in Hull in the Diocese of Ottawa. On Sunday, July 9, 1978, he conducted the morning service in St. Matthew's Church, Peninsula.

It was, as the subsequent ministers' reports indicated, an understatement by Mr. Tallman when he wrote in 1867, "It will require not a little exertion and effort to build a church at Gaspé Basin...."

One wonders how he would have described the method by which the second and present United Church in Gaspé was obtained. A foundation was prepared on a new site a little to the east of the old one. In 1974, the church built in Murdochville and closed after only a few years of use was moved over the sixty miles to Gaspé and set on the foundation. Called Trinity United Church, it draws its congregation not only from the Town of Gaspé but from Sandy Beach and other neighbouring communities where members of the congregation of the Indian Cove Church settled after the expropriation for the Forillon Park.

The United Church in Rose Bridge continues to be very active, but the little United Church in Cap aux Os is seldom used now as almost none of its former congregation lives nearby. The old parsonage there was renovated in the time of Mr. Findly but was closed in the time of the Reverend E.G. Fulerton (1955-1959). The old manse in Gaspé, which had been rented for years, has been used ever since as the residence of the clergyman. For a few summers the Cap aux Os parsonage was used as a summer camp for the children of the United Church congregation. It was called Camp Tallman.

## Chapter 26

## The Incumbency of the Rev. Ruth H. Matthews

In the fall of 1972, Miss Ruth Matthews came to take charge of the parishes of Murdochville and Peninsula. Her first months here were busy ones in St. Matthew's Church. A group in the community applied for a grant under the Local Initiatives Programme which the Federal Government was sponsoring at the time. Various organizations planned work to be done under this project, the United Church in Rose Bridge, St. Matthew's Church, Peninsula, and the Ladies' Guild being three of these organizations. Many, many meetings were held by the various committees concerned and by the time the work was finished in May much had been accomplished.

In St. Matthew's Church, the first undertaking was to put in a new floor. The pews were removed and the old floor taken up. A new sill on the north side and new joists were put in. Insulation was put under the new floor and then tiles were laid. The platform which had been in the choir area was not replaced and one pew was not replaced at the front of the north side of the church to allow more space around the pulpit. The chancel floor was not renewed but insulation was placed under this part of the church, as well. The porch floor was renewed and raised to be level with the church floor. New outside doors were installed.

The walls and ceiling of the interior of the church were cleaned. As the higher areas had probably never been cleaned before, the resulting change was quite startling. The baseboard and other trimmings were stained and the walls and ceiling varnished, so that the whole looked just as it must have when the first staining and varnishing were done in 1899.

One further job done at the church was enlarging the vestry which was a badly needed improvement. The following fall, storm windows were installed on the north windows and the chancel window.

As the LIP grant paid only for labour, the materials for all the work had to be supplied by the organization concerned. For the

work on the church, the money received from the expropriation of the woodlot and money contributed by the parishioners provided the necessary funds to buy materials. Besides, a few donations were received such as blocks for the foundation from Mr. Howard Mullin, wire netting to support the insulation under the floor from Mr. David Phillips, and the door for the new vestry from Mrs. Gordon Mullin. The total spent on materials was \$2392.91. The workers were unemployed men in the municipality (actually in the former Municipality of Gaspé Bay North as fusion of all such small municipalities into the Municipality of Gaspé had taken place in 1970). They were under the direction of Mr. Ivan Coffin. One worker who distinguished himself was Mr. Florian Bernier who ably did the cleaning of the highest parts of the walls and ceiling.

Mr. Ivan Coffin tells me that some of the tools used in this work were the traditional ones, hammers, handsaws, axes, and paint brushes with which the founders of the church were very familiar. On the other hand, our ancestors would have been intrigued with the stapler, electric saw, electric plane, and chain saw which also played a large part in the putting in of the new floor.

While the work was going on in the church, services were held in the basement of the Gaspé Bay North School. The work began on January 31 and the church was ready for use again in less than three months, by Easter Sunday, April 22.

The Ladies' Guild first undertook to have a kitchen built on the back of the hall. A roomy and convenient kitchen was built at a cost of \$920.61 for materials and \$295 for wiring. The hall and kitchen were painted inside. At least three of the items used in completing the renovations of the hall at this time were given by Mr. Nelson Phillips: the wood stove, the half-glass door, and the screen door on the kitchen. The freshly painted hall and new kitchen were first used in May when a wedding shower was held for Miss Joanne Phillips who was married July 14 of that year. The wedding reception, like many others before and since, was also held in the hall.

The Guild's second project was to raise money to buy a carpet

for the aisle and chancel of the church. Two pot luck suppers were held, one at Mr. Ivan Coffin's on February 24 and the second in the hall on June 30. These suppers yielded \$264.68. In addition, \$75 given in memory of my father, Thornber Phillips, who had died in 1971, and \$26 in other donations made a total of \$365.68. The carpet was supplied and installed by Mr. Fabien Sinnett of Gaspé at a cost of \$561.75, the balance being paid from the Guild funds.

In the midst of all the renovations several other changes occurred. It was decided at the annual vestry meeting held on February 4, 1973, that a treasurer would be elected to take charge of all church funds, a responsibility always assumed previously by the people's warden. Miss Mary Annett was elected the first treasurer. Mr. Cyril Roberts who had been people's warden for several years was replaced briefly by Mr. Irvin Phillips. When he decided not to continue Mr. Alex Coffin became warden until the renovating of the church was completed. At that time, Mr. Lester Coffin accepted the position and kept it until he returned to Montreal the following year. Under his leadership, the men of the parish cut and sold 42 Christmas trees in 1973 which brought in \$94. Mr. Ralph Roberts was then elected people's warden and continued as such until the end of 1975 at which time Mr. Murray Roberts replaced him. At the end of 1973, Mr. Wallace McAfee ceased to be minister's warden and Mr. Wilfred Roberts accepted when Miss Matthews appointed him to this position. When Mr. Howard Mullin became unable to carry on as sexton, Mr. Wallace McAfee took up the work for several months. He was replaced by Mr. David Phillips in 1974, who continued the work until 1978. Mr. Wilfred Roberts then became sexton.

1973 was the year of the first Youth Synod in the Diocese of Quebec, and Peninsula sent a delegate, the Guild paying the required expenses. Each of the following three years, delegates attended from Peninsula, Cheryl Phillips, Bertha Ann Roberts, Cindy Phillips, Bentley Roberts, and Ann Roberts being the young people chosen to go.

When Miss Matthews took her vacation in July of 1973, she was replaced by the Reverend L.G. Westman, who with his family, occupied the parsonage during their stay. Other summers, her replacements were



lay readers in the area, Messrs. Howard Patterson, William Howes, and Terry Tait.

In September of 1973, a decision was reached about the site of the new cemetery. At a vestry meeting, at which Archdeacon Gourley was present, it was decided to dispose of the parsonage and use the parsonage property as a cemetery, if approved by the bishop. Mr. Reginald Annett had offered, prior to this, to give a piece of his land for a burial ground, but the Health Department condemned the location.

In July, 1974, Bishop Matthews attended a vestry meeting at which important decisions were made. A cemetery committee was set up to begin planning the landscaping of the new cemetery. A committee composed of the Ladies' Guild and the wardens was formed to dispose of the parsonage. The use of the cemetery expropriation money was discussed; the Bishop agreed that if there was a balance remaining after the graveyard was completed, it could be spent on a replacement for the parsonage. This replacement had been already considered pretty thoroughly and at the meeting it was decided to convert the upstairs of the hall into an apartment for the use of the minister in the summer.

Soon after this meeting, Mr. Irvin Phillips offered to buy the parsonage for \$500, remove it, and clear the site. As no other offers were made, that of Mr. Phillips was accepted. During the fall and the months of the following spring, he prepared the parsonage for moving and it was moved to its new site on his property in early September of 1975. His intention was to convert it into three apartments, but he died very suddenly in October. The building was then sold to Mr. and Mrs. Ronald Clark who now live in it. It is satisfying to many that a building which was put up and maintained through the efforts of generations of people and lived in by so many should remain a home not far from where it was built.

The cemetery committee held several meetings in 1974 and its decisions resulted in the leveling of the ground and fencing the area with a chain link fence. It was decided to use only the north portion of the lot and leave the part near the road, for the time being at least, for parking. An ornamental iron gate and the fence posts were

made by Miller Welding of Sandy Beach. The brick gateposts were erected by Mr. Cyril Roberts. Mr. Howard Mullin donated the earth fill used in the leveling. The total cost of the cemetery including trucking, leveling, gravel for the parking area, chain, posts, gate, fertilizer, lime, seed, cement, welding, and labour was about \$5000, broken down as follows:

Materials	\$1758.86
Gate	605.00
Posts & extra welding	391.00
Ground work	1374.00
Labour	953.60

Most of this work was done in the summer of 1975, but it was not completed until the summer of 1977. The Forillon National Park had, by this time, replaced the remaining paling fence panels around the other cemetery with a chain fence. Mrs. Willa Carter bought the paling fence from the church.

The first burial in the new cemetery was the infant daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Calvin Roberts (née Nancy LeMesurier) on September 26, 1973. The next burial was that of Mrs. Herbert Bourgaize on May 3, 1974. The ground was consecrated on August 6, 1975 by Bishop Matthews. Although some burials are still carried out in the old cemetery because a husband or wife is buried there, the new cemetery already contains twelve graves.

Converting the second floor of the hall into an apartment was accomplished in the spring of 1975. The Guild voted \$1000 for the work. Mr. Ivan Coffin and other men of the parish planned the rooms and put up the partitions, made the cupboards, rearranged the inside stairs, built the outside stairs, and did the plumbing. Several Guild members helped with papering, painting, and other work. Much of the work was done free of charge. The furniture from the parsonage was moved into the apartment, a carpet was bought for the living-room, and other necessary household articles were purchased. An electric range had been donated to the Guild by Miss Matthews, the Guild paying the cost of crating and shipping from where it was stored to Gaspé. This stove was installed in the apartment kitchen.

Miss Matthews began to use the apartment in June and on July

5, with the help of the Guild, she held an Open House in the hall to give the people a chance to see the apartment.

While she supervised all the developments I have described, the Reverend Ruth H. Matthews was driving back and forth between Murdochville and Peninsula, dividing her time as equally as possible between the two missions. She had come here as a deaconess after several years of experience in the Yukon and in churches in the Province of Quebec. On June 25, 1973, she was ordained deacon. Her ordination was conducted by Bishop Matthews in St. Philip's Church, Murdochville.

Miss Matthews made arrangements to have a room and obtain her meals when she was to be out here in the winter at one of the houses run by the Soeurs des Ursulines in Gaspé. The church paid for the room and she paid for her meals. One weekend of each month in winter, she had Sunday School on Saturday morning in the Gaspé Bay North School and in the afternoon had Confirmation Class and sometimes a service for the young people. Several of the children of the parish also attended Sunday School each Sunday in the Rose Bridge United Church.

For two or three weeks during each of two or three summers, Miss Matthews arranged for a Daily Vacation Bible School for the children. Usually a couple of young people or a visiting clergyman and his family helped with the school. She also had a Bible Class one evening a week and prayer meetings.

These activities in addition to the regular church services, Holy Communion for the shut-ins, visiting the homes, holding funerals and marriages, and the many other responsibilities of a clergyman kept Miss Matthews very busy. As there was no regular organist in St. Matthew's Church, Miss Matthews often brought Mrs. Thelma Patterson out from Murdochville to play, or else led the singing and sometimes played herself.

For several reasons, among which were a long period of regular services and the addition to the parish of several families from St. Peter's Church, the financial position of the church improved over what it had been in the 1960s. The assessment to the Diocesan Board was increased by \$500 in 1974 and by \$1000 in 1977.

In January of 1977, Miss Matthews left to take up work in the Parish of Drummondville. Soon after this (June 5, 1977) she was ordained priest, the first woman to be ordained in the Diocese of Quebec. This placed her at the centre of one of the most controversial issues in the church today, as there is so far little agreement on whether or not women should be ordained. The ordination of women was one of the topics on the agenda of the Lambeth Conference held this summer (1978), and there the delegates agreed to a compromise which allows each Province of the church to adopt the policy of ordaining women or not, as it pleases, but requires each to respect the decision of the others.

Chapter 27  
The Present Time

For the three months following Miss Matthews' departure, lay readers held the Sunday services in St. Matthew's Church. Mr. Curtis Patterson of York came most regularly and he was assisted by Mrs. Walter Clark, formerly Miss Mary Annett, who had decided to train to be a lay reader. Archdeacon Gourley held the Easter service and at least one other Communion service, as well as having Communion at the homes of the shut-ins after Easter.

In May, 1977, the Reverend Hubert Vallis moved to Murdochville from the Magdalen Islands to take up the work in Murdochville and Peninsula. Mr. and Mrs. Vallis <sup>are</sup> ~~were~~ <sup>natives of Newfoundland.</sup> both ~~born in Newfoundland and~~ <sup>Mr. Vallis studied</sup> ~~spent the early part of their lives there.~~ After ~~studying at Diocesan~~ <sup>then took up work in northwestern Ontario. After</sup> ~~College in Montreal and being ordained in that city, Mr. Vallis served~~ <sup>many years there, including service in several rural churches and a long</sup> ~~in churches in northern Ontario. He then became Rector of St. Luke's~~ <sup>stay in St. Luke's Church, Thunder Bay, Mr. and Mrs. Vallis went to the</sup> ~~Church in Thunder Bay. After many years there, he went for four years~~ <sup>to the Magdalen Islands. Magdalen Islands for four years.</sup> ~~to the Magdalen Islands.~~

Several special services have highlighted the year that Mr. and Mrs. Vallis have been here. The first was the service of Confirmation in St. James' Church, Wakeham, on July 3, at which eight children from St. Matthew's Church joined the children of Wakeham and York to be confirmed by Bishop Matthews. This was, I believe, one of Bishop Matthews' last Confirmations as he retired very soon afterward.

The clergy of the various denominations in co-operation with the officials of the Forillon National Park arranged to hold services during July and August in St. Peter's Church, Little Gaspé, now referred to as an Ecumenical Chapel. The first service, conducted by Mr. Vallis on July 10, was a memorable occasion. Over a hundred people, many of them former parishioners, came to worship in the beautiful old church that Sunday afternoon. Services there during the rest of the summer rotated among the United Church, Roman Catholic, and Anglican denominations except for one Sunday when an ecumenical service was held.

On July 17, an Induction Service for Mr. Vallis was held in St. Matthew's Church. It was attended by a large crowd including many

from Murdochville. A choir from the Wakeham and York churches, with Mrs. Kendrick as organist, added much to the service. Bishop Matthews led the Service of Induction assisted by Archdeacon Gourley and Canon Kendrick. After the service, the Guild served refreshments in the hall and this social hour was greatly enjoyed.

The ordination of Mr. Curtis Patterson as deacon took place in St. Andrew's Church, York on October 16, 1977. Mr. Patterson had had a lifelong interest in many kinds of church work and had been a lay reader for several years. He was the tenth young man from around the Bay to become an Anglican clergyman. He left the following day with his wife and family to take responsibility for several congregations in St. Clement's Mission on the North Shore.

Mr. Patterson was ordained by the Rt. Reverend Allen Goodings. Bishop Goodings had been consecrated the tenth Bishop of the Diocese of Quebec a month earlier, September 18. In the tradition of so many of the clergy during the long history of the Diocese, Bishop Goodings came to Canada from England. He had been Dean of Quebec before his election as Bishop.

At an afternoon service in St. Matthew's Church on February 12, 1978, Archdeacon Gourley inducted Mrs. Walter Clark as lay reader. Mary, as she is familiarly known, is a great-granddaughter of Mr. Edward Annett and a descendant of other people who made contributions to St. Matthew's Church in the past. She assists Mr. Vallis regularly.

Mr. Gourley, never in good health in recent years, became ill soon after this service, and following some weeks in the hospital, he passed away on May 1. He had come to Gaspé only in 1972, but he had served in the Diocese of Quebec for a total of 39 years with time out as chaplain overseas in World War II. Like his early predecessors in St. Paul's Church, Mr. Arnold, Mr. Richmond, and Mr. Wayman, he died while still the incumbent. A memorial service was held in St. Paul's Church before his body was taken to Moncton for burial.

Changes came with Mr. Gourley's death. Canon, the Reverend Grover Kendrick, Rector of Wakeham and York, was appointed Archdeacon of Gaspé. A new face appeared among the clergy with the arrival at

the end of the summer of the Reverend Gerald Shaw to become the Rector of Gaspé and Sandy Beach. The remaining clergy in the churches around the Bay are the Reverend William McMillan of the Parish of Mal Bay which includes St. John's Church, L'Anse à <sup>Brilliant</sup> Brilliant, and the Reverend Hubert Vallis who is in charge of Murdochville and Peninsula.

In St. Matthew's Church more renovations were made on the Church in September 1977. Of most interest was the wiring of the church for electric heating. Although the following winter was a very moderate one which did not test the limits of the new heating system, the warm pews and comfortable temperatures at floor level and elsewhere were appreciated. There had been two wood stoves for many years, but for the last few years the heating had been done by one wood stove and an oil stove. Recently the stoves, pipes, and chimney were removed, just one hundred and two years from the time Mr. Ker reported "stove and stove-pipes set in place".

The other work done on the church was the insulating of the ceiling, reshingling the back of the roof, repairing the back wall and the belfry, replacing some clapboards, and shortening the kneeling benches to allow for the electric heaters along the baseboards. A sum of about \$15,000 was given in 1975 by the Quebec Government as <sup>a</sup> supplementary expropriation grant for the property of St. Peter's Church. As the former members of St. Peter's Church wished this money to be spent on St. Matthew's Church of which many of them are now members, an application was made to Church Society for it. It was part of this money which was used for the electric wiring and other work. The total cost was \$5672.46. Some clapboards were donated by Mr. Reginald Annett to replace defective ones on the back of the church.

Mr. Vallis requested two pieces of office equipment, a typewriter and a Gestetener, for use by the two churches; the cost was divided between St. Philip's and St. Matthew's, the Guild paying our share for the typewriter and the church our share of the cost of the copying machine. For the past four years, St. Matthew's has paid \$250 a year toward the cost of heating and electricity in the rectory in Murdochville.

The Guild report for 1977 contained some points which help us

compare it with the Guild of eighty or more years ago. Twelve meetings were held just as there were then, but the dues collected came to \$156.95 or an average of over \$13 a meeting. The average attendance at the Guild meetings was probably about ten ladies. During the year there were two food sales, the annual summer sale and tea, and the annual Christmas sale. The total receipts came to \$1712.65. The biggest single expenditure in 1977 was \$500 toward the insurance premium of \$731 for all the church property. \$201.62 was the cost of materials for making goods for sale. This included embroidery thread at 35¢ a skein, Phentex at about \$2.25 for a 6-oz. ball, crochet cotton at about \$1.25 a ball, and other materials such as knitting wool and dishtoweling. Thus, while there is a great difference in amounts of money handled compared to those of years ago, there is no great change in the purpose of the work and types of activities carried on by the members of St. Matthew's Ladies' Guild of today.

From time to time, I have mentioned the participation in church affairs of "former parishioners living elsewhere". These former parishioners have contributed much in financial and moral support by their interest in their old church; each year some return to worship in it. It is true, too, that many of these former parishioners are contributing to other churches in many parts of North America as lay readers, wardens, choir members, members of men's and women's groups, Sunday School teachers, or as just parishioners.

What Mr. and Mrs. Vallis must have heard most frequently when they arrived in Peninsula was "So and so has left" or "This person will be leaving next month" or "That family is going to Alberta...or Ontario". In fact, the spring and summer of 1977 saw the departure of about fifty members of the congregation. Many factors contributed to the departure of so many people, some of them, I believe, being dissatisfaction with the political situation in Quebec, a delayed reaction to the unsettling effect of the expropriation of six years earlier, and the poor economic situation in Quebec as a whole and Gaspé in particular. No two families left for exactly the same reasons, but once one or two made the move, it seemed easy for others to follow. By the end of August, many of our



people were settling down in Cambridge, Hamilton, St. Catharines, and other towns in Ontario and in Calgary and elsewhere in Alberta. The exodus was not restricted to this side of the Bay as every community saw the departure of some of its members, and some are still leaving.

In 1978, the statistics for Peninsula are different again from the many others I have quoted. There are about 40 houses inhabited the year around in the former "Parish of Peninsula", that is, from Three Runs to Mosher's Brook. The eastern third of this area is now empty because of the Park. The total population is only about 140 as the families are almost all small. About 18 houses are the homes of Anglicans; almost all the rest are the homes of Roman Catholics who are part of the Cap aux Os Parish. Of the old names, there are no Ascah or Annett or LeMesurier families, only one Miller family, three Coffin families, four Mullin families, and three Phillips families. The remaining names of Anglicans residing in the area of the Parish of Peninsula are Bourgaize, Beebe, Clark, McAfee and Roberts. Some of the non-Anglican families are: Couture, Jacques, Synnott, Fortin, Leduc and Poupart.

St. Matthew's congregation includes, in addition to these Peninsula families, six families in Cap aux Os which is now called Forillon for postal purposes, five families in Rose Bridge, and about twenty families in Fontenelle. The statistical report of Church Society for 1977 gave 53 households and 139 souls in St. Matthew's Church.

Since Bishop Inglis visited Gaspé Bay in 1789 and observed "There is no place of worship at Gaspee", nearly fifty such places have been built. (I have found records of and written about 48, including the ones at Jersey Cove and Murdochville.) This is an average of one new church about every four years in the 189 years since. Today (1978), 18 churches (including those at Murdochville) are in regular use: 7 of them are Anglican, 7 Roman Catholic, 2 United Church, 1 Pentecostal, and 1 Witnesses of Jehovah. Of these church buildings the oldest is the Catholic church (the main part of it) in St. Georges de Malbaie, the second oldest is St. Matthew's Church, Peninsula, and the third oldest is St. James' Church, Wakeham.

The distribution of the population around the Bay according to religious denomination in 1977 may be seen in the following statistics:

		<u>Households</u>	<u>Souls</u>	
Roman Catholic <sup>1</sup>	Cap aux Os	113	558	
	Saint Majorique	227	1,060	
	Point Navarre	65	284	
	Gaspé	1,150	4,400	
	Douglastown	200	747	
	St. Georges de Malbaie	116	<u>493</u>	
			7,542	7,542
Anglican <sup>2</sup>	Peninsula	53	139	
	Gaspé	65	175	
	Wakeham	145	499	
	York	135	431	
	Sandy Beach	97	178	
	L'Anse à Brilliant <sup>3</sup>		<u>55</u>	
			1,477	1,477
United Church <sup>4</sup>	Gaspé and Rosebridge	116	207	207
			(includes 40 non-res.)	
Pentecostal <sup>5</sup>	Gaspé		45	45
Jehovah's Witnesses <sup>6</sup>			60	60
Semple-ites <sup>7</sup>			20	20
Jews <sup>8</sup>		2	6	<u>6</u>
				9,357
Murdochville	Roman Catholic <sup>1</sup>	680	2,500	
	Anglican <sup>2</sup>	65	<u>200</u>	
			2,700	2,700

1. Statistiques: Diocese de Gaspé, 31 Décembre 1977

2. One Hundred and Thirty-sixth Report of the Church Society of the Diocese of Quebec, December 31, 1977.

3. Estimate given by Mrs. Cecil De Vouge

4. United Church of Canada Committee on Archives, Toronto, Ont.

5. Estimate given by the Rev. David Boyd, Pastor, Evangel Temple, Gaspé.

6. Estimate given by a member of the Jehovah's Witnesses

7. My own estimate

8. Two teachers at the Regional School, Gaspé and their wives and families.

The sixteen churches around the Bay are serving nearly ten thousand people today, a very great increase over the 1,189 people in the same area in 1831 and a far greater increase over the 68 counted two hundred years ago (1777). In 1831, when there were 613 Anglicans, there was one Anglican church and one minister. Today the 1,477 Anglicans have six churches and two full-time ministers and two ministers shared with other churches. Correspondingly, there were only 552 Roman Catholics around the Bay in 1831, and they had only three chapels and no resident clergyman compared to the 7,542 today who have a Bishop and several clergymen among them. In 1831 only 15 Methodists were listed, although I believe there were a few more than the census indicated, and they had one church and no resident clergyman; today the 207 United Church people have two churches and one clergyman.

The story I have told is about the efforts of many men and women and their families under the leadership of their clergy to bring about conditions conducive to worship. The clergy themselves struggled under the same physical and moral weaknesses as their parishioners and against the same temptations. Whether or not the men who composed the first resolution in the minutes of the meeting which began St. John's Church, Sandy Beach, would now describe the coast as being in a state of "religious destitution" I do not know. However, I am sure they would still see a challenge to pursue "the advancement of Christian Knowledge and virtue".